# SONA Research Participation System

## Guide for Psychology Students (Non-PSY 112 Students)

### Overview

Some psychology instructors encourage their students to participate in research by requiring participation and/or offering extra credit. This guide is intended to familiarize you with how to use an online research participation system called SONA to engage in psychological research at CCSU.

### How do I know if I need to participate in research for my course?

Please refer to your course syllabus or reach out to your psychology instructor to determine whether participating in research is a course requirement and/or extra credit opportunity. If research participation is a REQUIREMENT for your course, please see below for important information.

<u>NOTE</u>: This guide is NOT meant for PSY 112 students. PSY 112 has a departmental research requirement and a separate guide/set of instructions.

### How can I participate in psychological research at CCSU?

You may participate in research in one of two ways, or through a combination of the two:

1. **Option 1**: Participate in faculty/student research projects
2. **Option 2**: Write library research papers on a topic in psychology

Both of these options require you to use a web-based experiment scheduling and tracking system **SONA**. All students MUST register at https://ccsu.sona-systems.com/ to receive "research activity credit(s)" for research participation (option 1) and/or research papers (option 2).

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**Spring 2026 Deadlines**

The deadlines for Spring 2026 are as follows:

1. All research participation (option 1) is due by **FRIDAY MAY 8TH AT 5:00 PM**.
2. All research papers (option 2) are due by **FRIDAY MAY 1ST AT 5:00 PM.**

These are HARD deadlines. <u>Late submissions will not be accepted. NO exceptions!</u>

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### How do I register for SONA?

On your first visit to SONA, you must register as a new user and obtain a password. *Note that you will need to register for a new account even if you have used SONA in previous semesters*. Please follow the steps below to register for SONA:

1. Go to https://ccsu.sona-systems.com/.
2. Click *Request Account*.
3. Under *Account Information*:
   a. Enter your name.
   b. Enter your email address. Be sure to enter an ***existing*** email address that you can access.
   c. Under the Course(s) dropdown menu, carefully find and select your course section.
      i. Be sure to select the **correct course** on SONA by looking at your syllabus and matching the course #, section #, meeting days/times, and instructor. **If you do not select the correct course, you may not receive credit.**
      ii. **NOTE**: You may add additional courses to your SONA account if needed once you register your account (see below for more information).
   d. Click *Request Account*.
4. Within a few seconds, you should receive an email from SONA with your User ID and password.
   a. The email will be sent to the address you entered in step 3b.
   b. The email will be titled "Research Participation System Login Information" and come from an account called "Research Participation System [ccsu-admin@sona-systems.net]." Please do not mistakenly delete this email.
5. Once you receive your login info via email, return to http://CCSU.sona-systems.com.
6. Enter your User ID and password.
   a. Once you log in, you can change your password under the *My Profile* tab if you'd like.
   b. Note that you will not be able to sign up to participate in any research studies until you activate your account by logging in.

## Option 1: Research Participation

Your 1st option for earning research activity credits is to participate in ongoing research projects at CCSU through SONA. Faculty and advanced students in psychology conduct research in their areas of interest. In order to conduct this research, we request that volunteers participate in our projects. Often, psychology students like you serve this role by volunteering to participate in research projects!

All research conducted with people at CCSU is reviewed for ethical acceptability. No questionable research is allowed. You are guaranteed confidentiality and entitled to full, complete information about each study in which you choose to participate.

## Important Information for Courses with <u>REQUIRED</u> Research Participation

If participating in research is a <u>REQUIREMENT</u> for your course, please note the following important information. There are 2 types of studies that you can participate in through SONA:

A. **Standard IN-PERSON Studies**: Research studies that will take place in-person at a specific time and location.
B. **Online Studies**: Research studies with no physical location that you can complete entirely online.

If your course has research requirements, **you are REQUIRED to earn at least 2 CREDITS by completing IN-PERSON STUDIES.**

You will be limited to earning a maximum of 4 SONA credits through **online studies** until you meet the mandatory requirement for **in-person studies** (i.e., 2 SONA credits). Once you have earned at least 2 SONA credits through in-person studies, you may participate in as many in-person or online studies as you would like to earn additional research activity credits. In other words, there will no longer be limits on online study participation once you meet the in-person requirement.

Please note that *2 credits of in-person research are mandatory ONLY for courses with REQUIRED research participation.*

If research participation is **OPTIONAL (or extra credit)** for your course:

1. You are NOT required to complete any in-person studies if you do not want to.
2. There are NO limitations on online research participation.
3. However, you may still choose to complete in-person studies because they offer bonus SONA credits (see <u>below</u> for more info).

**NOTE:** *Participating in research projects is NOT required*. If for any reason you cannot or do not want to participate in research projects, you do not have to. You may earn ALL required/optional research activity credits by completing option 2 instead (see <u>below</u>).

**Rules for Research Participation in SONA**

Once you <u>register your account</u>, you can <u>use SONA to sign up for research studies, view your appointments, track your research activity credits, etc</u>. Please be sure to review the following rules about research participation in SONA:

A. You must be at least 18 years old to consent to participate in research. **If you are under 18, you will need written permission from a parent/guardian**. Please ask your instructor for details.

B. There should be research studies available in SONA within a few weeks of the start of the semester. However, a majority of opportunities for research project participation will likely be posted in March and early April. It is recommended that you regularly check SONA for available research studies throughout the semester. *There will be few studies available for students who wait until the last minute to fulfill their research requirements/extra credit opportunities.*

C. **IN-PERSON STUDIES**
   a. If research participation is *REQUIRED* for your course, you *MUST* earn *at least 2 SONA credits* by completing **in-person studies** (please see more <u>above</u>).
   b. If research participation is *OPTIONAL* for your course, you are NOT required to complete any in-person studies if you do not want to.

   c.  If you make an appointment but do not show up, it will be counted as an *unexcused no-show*. Do not sign up unless you intend to show up.

   d.  If you sign up for an in-person study and need to cancel your appointment, please contact the experimenter as soon as possible. If you cancel your appointment less than 24 hours prior to your scheduled appointment for any reason, you will be penalized.

   e.  If you are late for a scheduled appointment, the researcher reserves the right to penalize you for your late arrival and prevent you from participating in the research session.

   f.  Participants with 3 or more unexcused no-shows or late arrivals will not be allowed to sign up for research studies for the remainder of the semester. They will be restricted to option 2 for earning research activity credits.

D.  **ONLINE STUDIES**

   a.  If research participation is ***REQUIRED*** for your course, you will be limited to earning a maximum of 4 SONA credits through **online studies** until you earn at least 2 SONA credits through **in-person studies**. Once you have earned at least 2 SONA credits through in-person studies, there is NO limit on online study participation (please see more above).

   b.  If research participation is ***OPTIONAL*** for your course, there are no limits on online study participation.

   c.  Once you have signed up for an online study, you must complete it before the participation deadline (i.e., 5/8 at 5:00 pm). It is recommended that you complete your participation as soon as possible to avoid any issues or complications.

   d.  If you sign up for an online study and need to cancel your appointment, please contact the experimenter as soon as possible.

E.  You can earn 1 bonus SONA credit by participating in **standard in-person studies**. For example, if you complete a 30-minute **online study**, you will earn 1 SONA credit. The same 30-minute ***in-person* study** would earn you 2 SONA credits.

F.  You may NOT participate in the same study more than once.

G.  You may NOT use more than one email address to earn credits in the SONA system. Graduate assistants will be monitoring the system to make sure each student is only using one email address to earn credits in SONA throughout the semester.

   a.  Students who fail to follow this rule will not be allowed to sign up for research studies for the remainder of the semester. They will be restricted to option 2 for earning credit.

## **Option 2: Research Paper**

The research paper alternative for earning research activity credits is designed primarily for students who are not able or do not wish to participate in research projects. It is the only option for participants who have received 3 or more unexcused no-shows and/or violated other SONA rules.

You may choose to earn research activity credits through both option 1 and option 2 (up to the maximum number of credits set by your instructor). If you would like to earn credit(s) through option 2, please follow the instructions below:

1. Register for a SONA account (see above).
   a. If you earn all your research activity credits by writing research papers, you do not have to sign up for research studies in SONA. However, **you will only be able to earn and view your research activity credits if you have a SONA account, regardless of which option(s) you choose**.

2. Choose a ***peer-reviewed research article*** to read. Your goal is to complete some in-depth, first-hand reading about psychological research beyond what is covered in your textbook.
   a. You must find a <u>recent, scholarly research article published in a peer-reviewed journal</u> such as *American Psychologist* (i.e., an article from a website like *Psychology Today* is NOT acceptable). Click here to learn more about the difference between scholarly, peer-reviewed research articles and other sources.
   b. You can search for and access peer-reviewed research articles using PsycINFO or another research database available through the CCSU library. Click here for a list of research databases and other helpful resources.
   c. The article you read must be at least <u>2 full pages in length</u> and <u>published within the last 10 years</u>.
   d. If you would like additional support finding a peer-reviewed research article, reach out to a CCSU librarian using the "Ask a Librarian" tool at <u>https://library.ccsu.edu</u>.

3. Write a 1 – 2 page paper about the peer-reviewed research article you read. The purpose of the paper is to demonstrate that you read and understood the research article. Your goal is to reflect on what you personally learned or took away from the research article. The paper should be well-written, but does not have to be a completely polished term paper.
   a. The paper MUST be original and written **IN YOUR OWN WORDS**. We check for plagiarism. According to the CCSU policy, "Plagiarism includes, but is not limited to… copying sentences, phrases, paragraphs, tables, figures, or data directly or in slightly modified form from a book, article, or other academic source without using quotation marks or giving proper acknowledgment to the original author or source…" If plagiarism is detected, you will not receive credit. Plagiarism is a serious offense that could lead to your expulsion. See CCSU's full policy on academic integrity here.

    b. The paper MUST be <u>typed, double-spaced, and spell-checked</u>. We prefer that you save your document in Microsoft Word. Margins should be 1 inch.

4. Email your paper (preferably a Microsoft Word doc) and a copy of the full research article you read (PDF or permalink) to PsychPapers@ccsu.edu no later than <u>Friday, May 1st at 5:00 pm</u>.. Do NOT submit your paper directly to your instructor or the SONA administrator. Please be sure to review the following *prior* to submitting:

   a. **To receive credit, you MUST include all of the following info at the top of your paper:**
      i. Your name, email address, CCSU student ID number, and the date
      ii. Your psychology instructor, course number, section number, and meeting times
      iii. The author, title, and page numbers of the peer-reviewed research article you read
      iv. The name of the journal the article was published in and the date of publication
   b. **To receive credit, you MUST also attach a copy of the research article you read** (as a PDF file or permalink).
   c. If acceptable, you will receive <u>1 research activity credit for each page you write</u>, but <u>NO more than 2 research activity credits for each article you read</u>. As a general rule, 1 page equates to ~250 words.
   d. The HARD deadline for research papers is <u>Friday, May 1st at 5:00 pm</u>. Late papers will NOT be accepted. NO exceptions.
   e. Research papers will be graded and credits will be granted by Monday, May 11th.

## Can I add more than one course to my SONA account?

If you are taking more than one course that grants credit for research participation through SONA, you will need to add each course to your SONA account. To add or delete a course from your SONA account, please follow these directions:

1. Go to https://ccsu.sona-systems.com/ and login.
2. Click on *My Profile* in the upper right corner.
3. Under *Credits*, click the *Change Courses* button.
4. Select the course(s) you would like to add or delete, then click *Save Changes*.

If you have more than one course on your SONA account, you may reallocate any earned credits to whichever course you'd like until the deadline (i.e., 5/8 at 5:00 pm).

## Who should I contact if I have questions or concerns?

If you have any questions or concerns about SONA, please contact your psychology instructor. If you have additional questions after talking to your psychology instructor, please contact Dr. Skyler Sklenarik at s.sklenarik@ccsu.edu or (860) 832-3101.