Purpose of the SONA System

The department would like to encourage students to participate in research in order to enhance their understanding of how the discipline gathers information and tests theories. All faculty and instructors are encouraged to allow students to receive extra credit by participating in approved studies. While you will be able to obtain a report at the end of the semester containing extra credit points students have put towards your class, you (as the instructor) have the freedom to decide how that extra credit is used for your class (see Ways to Effectively Promote Student Participation in Psychological [SONA] Studies below).

Due to the number of approved studies that take place each semester in the Psychology Department, a tracking system (SONA) has been adopted that not only allows students to sign-up for each individual study they would like to participate in but after a student participates in the study, they get the opportunity to choose which psychology course they would like to put their extra credit toward. Students are not granted the extra credit unless they actually participate in the study during the timeslot in which they signed up; this is verified by the researcher (usually a graduate student) who updates this information in the SONA system on a regular basis.

At the beginning of each semester, you will receive information (via email) on how to sign-up for SONA as an instructor, principle investigator, researcher, and participant (student). The purpose of this system is to make your life easier as an instructor and truly requires little effort on your end. Your job is to simply inform students of this extra credit opportunity and how you plan to utilize the points in your class; give the students information on how to sign-up to participate in the studies; and print a report at the end of the semester (from the SONA system) to figure into the student’s grade for the course that you are teaching.

If you have any questions or concerns regarding the extra credit system please feel free to contact the system administrator.

Ways to Effectively Promote Student Participation in Psychological (SONA) Studies

The most common method for enhancing participation is to provide extra credit to compensate students for the time they spend participating in psychological studies. Our current extra credit policy entails earning 0.5 points of extra credit for every 30 minutes of participation in a study, with an additional 1.0 point for travel time if the student has to come in to participate. This means that a student will receive 2.0 points of extra credit for participating in an hour long offline (or lab-based) study.

As an instructor the easiest way of helping to promote participation from your class is to rethink how you will count extra credit points. The least effective method for administering extra credit is to use a one to one ratio where each point of extra credit is equal to one grade point. This method severely limits the number of studies a student can participate in before reaching the maximum allotted number of extra credit points the instructor allows. Below are a few suggested ways of dealing with extra credit that help promote maximum levels of participation without offsetting student grades.

- By increasing the total number of points in a course (e.g. from 500 to 1000) you can decrease the value of each extra credit point and thereby increase the total number of studies students can participate in.
- Make each point of extra credit earned equal to ½ or ¼ of a class point.
- Create an optional class assignment where students can choose to participate in a psychological study and write about their experience. As an added bonus, students would get to use the extra credit they earn in any of their psychology courses.
Instructor Responsibilities

As an instructor you will have very little interaction with the experimental research system. Your primary use of the system will be to check the amount of extra credit your students have earned through participation in research studies in which they have allotted extra credit to your course. To begin, the system administrator will send you an e-mail with your User ID (which should be the same as your UCCS User ID) and a randomly generated numeric password. The email will also have a link to the main experimental systems login page (http://uccs.sona-systems.com). The first time you log on you can change your password or primary email by clicking on the “My Profile” menu. You may also view all currently posted studies on the system by clicking on the “All Studies” menu. Most importantly you may click on the “Course Reports” menu and see a listing of those students in your class who have received extra credit for participating in research studies. Course reports will be 100% up-to-date by the first day of finals. **You are responsible for downloading and printing this report at the end of the semester to calculate into your grades, no later than 3 days after the last final.**

If you do not allow extra credit you should inform the SONA systems administrator so that your course will not be included on the course listings. If you have an extra credit policy that limits the number of points you allow each student to have you should be sure to make this known to the students since the system does not automatically limit the number of points a participant can allocate to any one class. The system also allows participants who are enrolled in multiple psychology courses to reallocate extra credit points from one course to another at any point after the researcher has granted them credit. Students should be reminded that they need to make sure they have assigned their extra credit points to the course(s) they want them to count toward by the day prior to finals each semester.

You may want to consider including in your syllabus your policy concerning participation in research studies and a link to the system: http://uccs.sona-systems.com.

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<th>To sum up, your main responsibilities include:</th>
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<td>• Notifying the administrator if you are not allowing extra credit so that your class can be removed from course listings.</td>
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<td>• Making sure your extra credit policy is understood by your students (e.g., including maximum number of credits allowed, extra credit acceptance deadline etc.)</td>
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<tr>
<td>• Downloading and printing off the extra credit report at the end of the semester (no later than 3 days after last final).</td>
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**Step 1:** Login to the SONA system using your instructor login information at http://uccs.sona-systems.com.

On the main menu that you see after logging in, you will see an option to Generate Course Reports (see image below):

![SONA Main Menu](image)

**Step 2:** Click on the “Generate Course Credit Reports” link. Once you click on the “Generate Course Credit Reports” link, you will see a list of all the courses you are an instructor for and that you have the option to generate reports for.

**Step 3:** Click on the “All Participants” link next to each class to generate a report for that class. You have three choices for the type of report you would like to generate.

1. **ALL PARTICIPANTS** – will list all of the participants in the course.
2. **COMPLETED PARTICIPANTS** – will list only participants who have met or exceeded their extra credit requirements.
3. **INCOMPLETE PARTICIPANTS** – will list only participants who have not met their extra credit requirements.

Choose the “**All Participants**” option (unless you required students to participate in a certain amount of studies, then you might want to select the **COMPLETED PARTICIPANTS** option).

**Step 4:** Print a copy of the report. At the bottom of each report you will see an option to “**Display this Report in a Printer-Friendly Layout**”. Click this link and then hit print from your browser. **Please note:** You do have the option of downloading this report into an excel spreadsheet. The instructions for this are also at the bottom of the report page.