Your Quick Guide to the Research Pool

This information is IMPORTANT. You will be asked to confirm that you have read and understood this information and the policies listed here when you log into your Sona-Systems account for the first time. If you have any questions about this information, please contact icir@ua.edu.

About Sona System and Your Account

Sona-System is a website managed by the Institute for Communication and Information Research to help you manage your study sign-ups and credit as part of the course requirements listed in your syllabus. Your information will be uploaded into the system automatically. If you were registered before the first day of classes, your account will be active on the day your class meets. If you registered for the class after the first meeting, your account will be active within 24 hours of the final “add” date (see the Academic Calendar). If you still do not have an account within 24 hours of that date, contact icir@ua.edu to request an account.

Please DO NOT contact icir@ua.edu until 24 hours AFTER the “add” date, most likely your account information has not been added yet but will be available soon.

To access your account:

- Go to uaicir.sona-systems.com
- In the bottom right corner, click on the link under “Lost your password?”
- Your username is your myBama ID (for example, jsmith001)
- Your password will be sent to your crimson account (change password under “My Profile”)
- Once you have logged in, you will be asked to complete a mandatory pre-screen questionnaire. This information will only be used to determine what studies you are eligible to take.

Participating in Research

The “Study Sign Up” page will display all active studies that will count for credit for your course. Each study listing will give you information about where it is located, how long it will take to complete, and how many credits you will earn by participating in that study. To sign up for a study, click on “view timeslots”.

**Online studies:** there may only be one time slot available, which will indicate what date and time the study will not longer be available. You must sign up for this time slot before you will be able to view the link to the online study. Complete the online study as soon as you sign up for a time slot. Long periods of time between online study sign up and actual completion of an online study may result in unrecorded credit.

**Lab studies:** there will be multiple time slots available. The time slot date and time is the date and time that the researcher expects you to be at the location listed on the study description. Sign up for a time that you will be able to attend. When you go to a lab study, be sure that you remember or write down your Sona System ID. This is the information that the researcher will need so that they can report your credit to your instructor, so memorize it or write it somewhere where you can easily reference it.

Viewing Your Scheduled Studies, Cancelling a Scheduled Study, and Study Notifications

To view the studies you are scheduled to complete, go to “My Schedule and Credits” and click on “view or cancel my study appointments”. This will list the studies that you have signed up for and their information (date, time, location, research contact information).

If you need to cancel your appointment, you may do so here. **NOTE:** Most lab studies require you to cancel at least 24 hours before your scheduled appointment. You may not receive a reminder e-mail before that time, so please check your appointments often in case you must cancel. If you cancel your appointment before the cutoff date/time you will not be penalized for missing that study. If an emergency requires you to miss a study after that 24-hour window but BEFORE the scheduled date and time, contact the researcher to inform them of the cancellation and they will be able to cancel your appointment so that you are not penalized. This
decision is at their discretion, but if you feel that you were penalized for an absence related to an emergency or extenuating circumstance you may contact icir@ua.edu with your complaint.

A reminder e-mail will be sent to your Crimson account the day before you are scheduled to participate in a lab study. It will give you the date and time for the study. If you need to look at additional information related to the study, log into your Sona-Systems account and view your sign up information (see instructions above). This e-mail is a courtesy, not a guarantee. Failure to receive this notification e-mail will not be counted as an excused absence for a missed study. It is your responsibility to view your sign ups often and/or record them in a place to help you remember to attend them.

**Tracking your Credits**

You can view your progress by going to “My Schedule and Credits”. Your credit requirements are automatically assigned and determined by your course’s research participation requirements. Your requirements and awarded credits will be listed on this page. Credits may not be awarded for up to 24 hours after completing a study, so if a recent study has not be credited yet, be patient. If credit for a completed study does not appear after 48 hours from completing the study, please contact the researcher. Please do not contact researchers before 48 hours have passed.

**Other Important Information**

All communications from Sona System, researchers, and the administrator will be sent to your Crimson account. It is your responsibility to check this account at least once per day and to delete old messages to ensure that your account does not run out of space and return sent e-mails. Penalties or unawarded credits resulting from a failure to maintain your account will not be excused.

Your account is already assigned to the course that you are enrolled in. If you are taking two classes that are participating in research studies through the participant pool, you will need to contact the administrator at icir@ua.edu to request that the information be updated for your account. Please include your name, Sona-System ID number (see below), and all of the courses you want associated with your account in this e-mail. If you are signed up for multiple courses, you will have to assign your credits to ONE of them each time you sign up for a study. One study’s credit will not count for multiple courses, and you may not repeat the same study to earn credit multiple times. Credit cannot be reassigned to a course at a later date.

You may be penalized for missed studies. If you sign up for a lab study and do not attend your scheduled time, 0.5 credits will be added to your overall credit requirements. For example, if you are required to complete 2 credits of research for your class and miss a study, your requirements will increase to 2.5 credits. Instructor policies may vary on penalties for missed studies, if you are unsure what the policy is you should ask your instructor. After four (4) missed studies you will no longer be permitted to register for studies and will need to complete the alternative assignment. The details and deadline for this assignment are determined by your instructor and may be listed in your syllabus. This policy is intended to protect you from failing the research component of your course if excessive penalties are accrued.

Your name is not available to researchers. You are assigned a random ID number by Sona-System when your account is created. If you contact a researcher or the administrator with a question or to cancel an appointment, you must give them your ID number as a reference. You can find your ID number under “My Schedule and Credits” page.

**Contact Information**

For information about a specific study, to cancel an appointment after the deadline, or to discuss or dispute credit issues related to a specific study, please e-mail the researcher listed on that study. For more information about alternative assignments to research participation, please consult your syllabus then e-mail your instructor.

For questions, complaints, or concerns that are not addressed by the information on this sheet or by one of the individuals listed above, please contact icir@ua.edu.