



Rutgers, The State University of New Jersey

**Department of Psychology
Faculty of Arts and Sciences, Newark**

**Subject Pool Policy Manual
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Subject Pool Committee (2007-2008)

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INTRODUCTION

Welcome to the Rutgers-Newark Psychology Department Subject Pool Manual. The purpose of the manual is to explain policy, procedures and responsibilities involved in the operation of the subject pool.

Why a subject pool? The Rutgers-Newark psychology department is a research-focused institution. Most of the studies conducted in our department involve human behavior--and as a result department researchers need human participants for their research. Psychology honors students and research assistants, who seek to develop research skills, also need the opportunity that a subject pool affords. And, finally, psychology students need to understand how research “works,” and serving as research participants provides a privileged view of this process. The psychology department subject pool meets these multiple needs.

Subject Pool Operations. The subject pool operates as cooperative venture among students enrolled in the Principles classes, Principles instructors and TAs, the Subject Pool Committee, and faculty and student researchers. Each of these “constituencies” has obligations to the safe, fair, and responsible operation of the pool.

The Subject Pool Manual

The Subject Pool Manual details the policies and procedures by which we strive to meet these goals. It stipulates students’, instructors’, and researchers’ rights and responsibilities; penalties for students and researchers who do not meet their responsibilities; and instructions to students, instructors, and researchers on how to manage their involvement in the subject pool.

The manual is an evolving document, and will reflect ongoing changes in policy and procedures. We welcome input on this document, and on subject pool operations.

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(I) STUDENT PARTICIPATION AND RESPONSIBILITIES

What is an R-point?

- An R-point is the unit of credit given to students enrolled in the two introductory psychology courses (101 and 102, Principles of Psychology) for participation in department research. These classes comprise the department's subject pool.
- Students receive 1 R-point for every 30 minutes of participation in a research study. No more than 3 R-points can be earned in a single study. Only whole R-points can be earned; there are no half-points or quarter points for different time intervals.

Students' R-point requirement

- Students' R-point requirement can never exceed 7 R-pts per semester. It can be less than 7, if supply exceeds demand.
- Students must be 18 years of age to provide true informed consent to participate in a study. Students who are 17 years of age may participate in a study but are not able to provide true informed consent. This means that 17-year-old students must fulfill the R-point requirement, but the data they provide to researchers may not be analyzed for research purposes. If students are not at least 17 years old they are considered to be minors, and are therefore exempt from the R-point requirement.
- Alternative to research participation:
 - Students have the opportunity to summarize a research article from an APA journal as an alternative to the R-point requirement. They must complete one summary for each R-Point. Summaries should be typed (not handwritten) 1 page long, double-spaced, 1 inch margin, pt 12 or smaller font size.
 - Papers must be submitted no later than the last day of scheduled classes (before the beginning of pre-exam "dead week").
 - The subject pool coordinator and TAs inform students of this R-point alternative.
 - Papers must be submitted to the Subject Pool coordinator, who will assign grades of "pass" or "fail" to each summary. The default is "pass"; if the Subject Pool coordinator is concerned about the quality of a particular summary it will be passed along to the Subject Pool committee for review.

Failure to show for a scheduled experiment

- Students who fail to arrive for an experiment, or who arrive more than 15 minutes late for an experiment, will receive no credit for participation.

They will also be penalized one additional 1 R-point. The loss of R-point penalty may be given at the discretion of the researcher, who may wish instead to reschedule. This policy is listed on Sona-systems.

Failure to complete R-Point Requirement

- Students who fail to complete their R-point requirement get a grade that is one letter grade lower than what they would have otherwise earned. When they complete the requirement the following semester, the grade is raised one letter.

(II) RESEARCHER POLICIES AND GENERAL GUIDELINES

Subject pool usage and eligibility

- Tenured, tenure track, and research faculty
- Graduate students
- Undergraduate honors students
- Non-departmental researchers (e.g., CMBN, UMDNJ)
 - Must request usage from the Subject Pool committee via the Subject Pool coordinator.
 - Committee will determine whether request can be granted.
- Subject Pool coordinator must obtain IRB approval number for all researchers via R-points request form.

Human subjects approval

- All studies awarding R-points for participation should have IRB approval prior to entry into the subject pool. This is verified at the time of R-points requests through the listing of an IRB approved protocol number.
- Researchers without full IRB approval for a study protocol may request R-points and will receive an allocation under the following conditions:
 - IRB review must be pending, and approval received by the end of the first IRB cycle of the semester. In the fall semester, this typically is mid to late October; in the spring semester, this typically is mid to late February.
 - Researchers are not permitted to list their studies on Sona Systems nor to begin scheduling participants until full IRB approval has been obtained.
 - Researchers who do not obtain full IRB approval by the end of the first cycle will lose their R-point allocations, which will be redistributed across the other research teams participating in the subject pool.
 - Researchers may include prescreening measures without full IRB approval. However, researchers cannot access their prescreening data until they have received full IRB approval.

R-point allocations

- Allocations are supplied on the basis of distinct research teams.
 - Lab directors complete R-points requests, list all projects in their labs, and indicate total R-points requested.
 - Allocations are made on the basis of distinct research teams. A distinct team is comprised of one or more experimenters. However if the same team conducts multiple studies as a team, then their

allocation is still based on the total requested as a team and not the total requested per study.

Example: “The Chris Lab”

Project A: Faculty Chris	Requests 40
Project B: Faculty Chris and Grad student Pat	Requests 40
Project C: Faculty Chris	Requests 40
Project D: Faculty Chris and Grad student Terry	Requests 40
Project E: Faculty Chris and Grad student Pat	Requests 40

There are three distinct teams from the Chris lab:

1. Chris (Projects A and C)
2. Chris and Pat (Projects B and E)
3. Chris and Terry (Project D)

Allocations:

Total R-points requested = 200
Total distinct teams = 3
Total R-points available = 120
Teamwise allocation = $120/3 = 40$

Chris receives 40 total for use in projects A and C
Chris and Pat receive 40 total for use in projects B and E
Chris and Terry receive 40 total, fulfilling project D requirement

- When DEMAND exceeds SUPPLY (i.e., researchers need more R-points than the pool is able to provide due to enrollment)
 - Total R-points available are divided evenly across all distinct teams regardless of their requests
 - Teams needing fewer R-points than they are allocated “give back” the difference, and these points are then redistributed
 - This process repeats until there are no more points to “give back.”

Participant Recruitment

- Sona Systems: All recruitment from the subject pool is done through the Sona Systems Web page. Researchers acquire a username and password through Subject Pool coordinator.
- Principles of Psychology 101 and 102 constitute the subject pool. Students in other classes are NOT part of the pool and are NOT required to get R-Points.
- In-class recruiting:
 - Experimenters are permitted to obtain subjects outside of the subject pool through in-class recruiting, in classes other than

Principles 101 and 102. See “Research participation for extra credit” below.

Prescreening

- Conducted outside of class online using Sona Systems, generally limited to about 45 minutes in total duration.
- R-point offered = 2 R-points will be offered for prescreening each semester in addition to the required number of R-points. The 2 R-points will be given regardless of whether researchers need prescreening. When prescreening is necessary subjects must sign up on Sona Systems and complete the screening online. If no prescreening is necessary for given semester then the 2 R-points will be given automatically.
- Each semester will have only one single coordinated prescreening. There will not be multiple sets of pre-screening packets.
- Prescreening must be completed online by the last day of classes, but before deadweek. Students who chose to not participate in prescreening must complete the 2 r-points by participating in studies or by writing two 1 page journal reviews.

Inclusion of evening Principles classes

- Evening classes will be recruited, but the requirement will be less than the daytime classes. Currently the requirement for evening students is 3 points (in addition to the 2 points for prescreening; total = 5 R-points).

Summer session R-points

- Summer subjects will be required to earn 5 R-points (for summer evening students, 3 R-points are required), in both 101 and in 102. Two of these required R-Points will come from pre-screening. Because there will only be one prescreening administered to all Principles students, those students who are taking 101 and 102 concurrently will satisfy their entire prescreening requirement (i.e., 4 Rpts) by simply completing the single, available prescreening.
- Access to the summer subject pool will be restricted to psychology faculty, graduate students, and post docs. In order to access the pool, all labs must respond to a dept.-wide inquiry regarding use of the summer subject pool, and must do so by the response deadline.
- Availability and allocation of subjects: Each lab that indicates a desire to use the summer subject pool by the appointed deadline will be allocated an equal share of the available summer R-Points.

- Signup procedure: Sona-systems will be used and the same rules will apply during the summer as during the regular semesters.
- Reporting R-Pts to instructors: We will create Excel spreadsheets, based on class rosters from the Registrar's office. These spreadsheets will include columns with each instructor's names on it. Each experimenter will receive rosters for each Principles class offered in the summer, and will use them to assign credit to each subject from each of these classes that they run. The rosters will then be submitted to the appropriate instructors, who will use this information to confirm R-Point completion.

Research participation for extra credit

- Researchers may recruit in non-Principles classes so long as two conditions are met:
 - Approval of the instructor. Note that determination of how much extra credit students can receive for participation is solely up to the instructor; researchers may provide any additional incentives to participate that they wish to.
 - Completion of their R-points allocation. Researchers are not permitted to recruit outside of the subject pool (i.e., Principles classes) until they have used all the R-points allocated to them.
- Instructors of non-Principles courses wishing to offer R-points as extra credit must coordinate with the Subject Pool Coordinator to have a shell for their course added to Sona Systems. Any extra credit use of R-points must be handled through Sona Systems.
- Researchers typically will recruit non-Principles students through in-class recruitment presentations.
 - Advertising guidelines must be consistent with those mentioned in Sona-systems (see Subject Pool Etiquette).
 - Committee will monitor in class recruiting to determine if it is a problem.
 - This recruitment must be done in a manner that does not intrude substantially on class time (i.e., no more than 3-5 min, max, and preferably at the end of class).
 - Students in these non-R-Pt. classes sign up voluntarily (they are under no obligation to sign up, and are not subject to penalty if they don't show), and receive as inducement whatever the experimenter and/or the teacher is willing to offer.

Paying subjects in the subject pool

- Generally, subjects may not earn R-points and financial compensation in combination.

- Researchers wishing to pay subjects may recruit from the Subject Pool, but this will be handled on a case by case basis through the Subject Pool committee.
- Researchers may offer R-points and financial compensation in combination in the following circumstances:
 - After requesting and receiving approval do so by the Subject Pool committee.
 - If financial compensation is part of the study design, e.g., economic decision making studies for which subjects might be paid some amount within a range of possible amounts as the result of their behavior during the study. The Subject Pool committee must be made aware of these studies.
- Monetary payments must never be advertised in Sona Systems as incentives to participate.

“Free for all”

- Free for all occurs about 3 weeks before the end of the term but can be held earlier if need be based on participation rates in studies; timing of the free for all is determined by the Subject Pool committee.
- At free for all, R-point allocations are lifted and experimenters may recruit as many students as they can.
- Free for all is restricted to experimenters who completed R-Point request surveys at the start of the term (i.e., researchers with studies active on Sona Systems).
- Free for all may be available to experimenters who did not complete the R-Point request, if the remaining supply of R-Points is sufficient. These Experimenters must request access to the subject pool from the Subject Pool committee at least 2 weeks before the free for all period.

(III) SUBJECT POOL ETIQUETTE

Care and treatment of subjects

- Researchers should take care to provide sufficient debriefing.
 - Researchers must follow IRB guidelines for debriefing.
 - We strongly encourage people to debrief more extensively for educational purposes (i.e. verbal and handout sheet debriefing)
- Experimenter no-shows
 - Automatic credit after the subject has waited 15 minutes.
 - Subject needs to go to Sona-systems and contact the Subject Pool Coordinator (Not listed on Sona-systems)
 - If the subject does not have the correct date and time the issue will not be handled further.
 - If the subject does have the correct date and time, the experimenter must assign the credit to the student.
 - This information must be explained to the students on Sona-systems and also by the professors or TAs.

Proper posting of studies

- Advertising on Sona Systems: Only factual information must be presented, such as, “This study involves completing a survey about your favorite television shows and video games, your behavior in social relationships, and your academic interests.” No comparisons should be made to other studies, such as shorter time, more fun, more interesting, etc. Researchers should not make their study sound more attractive than other studies, in order to recruit more subjects.

Proper assignment of R-points for participation

- The number of R-points that can be earned for a study is based on the duration of time a subject spends in the study.
 - 1-30 minutes = 1 R-point
 - 31-60 minutes = 2 R-points
 - 61-90 minutes = 3 R-points
 - 91-120 minutes = 4 R-points
- No more than 4 R-points can be earned in a single study.
- No partial R-points may be given (e.g., 45 minutes = 2 R-points, never 1.5 R-points)

Subject pool allocation requests

- 30 days prior to the end of classes the Subject Pool will implement a FREE FOR ALL in which researchers who need more subjects will be able to recruit all subjects from the Subject Pool despite any underestimation of needed R-points. Researchers who have overestimated may surrender their extra R-points to other researchers.
- Researchers who overestimate their allocation by 20% or more in two consecutive semesters (i.e., requesting more R-points than ultimately are used) may be penalized by the Subject Pool committee through reduced allocation during the subsequent semester.
 - The Subject Pool committee reserves the right to penalize the researcher or research team by reducing the R-point allocation provided to the individual or team by 20% during the subsequent semester.
 - Exceptions will be made for legitimate explanations, such as incapacitation or absence of critical research staff, loss of crucial research apparatus or lab space, or other such unanticipated and severe circumstances. Researchers should notify the Subject Pool Committee of such situations in a timely way, so that assigned R-Pts can be redistributed to other research teams.

(IV) DUTIES AND RESPONSIBILITIES: INSTRUCTORS, TAs, COORDINATOR, and COMMITTEE

- Instructors
 - Provide R-point information to their classes
 - Remind students to register for R-points
 - Instructors will be given an instructor account on Sona-systems so they may check the status of their students.
- TAs
 - Administer Sona-systems training to students
 - Make sure all students login to Sona Systems
 - 6 weeks before the end of the semester subjects must be told those who are not registered will not receive a grade.
- Coordinator
 - Two-semester minimum tenure.
 - Selection of coordinator:
 - Strong computer skills
 - Extremely reliable and conscientious
 - Good one-on-one person skills
 - Available for 2 consecutive semesters
 - Coordinator duties
 - Provide professors and TAs with the necessary information that students need to sign up on Sona-systems. (See Appendix I (A))
 - Provide a spreadsheet with the number of students enrolled in psych. 101 and 102. This information can be obtained from professors, TAs, or registrar office (ext. 5324).
 - Ensure that all students have registered online with Sona-systems.
 - Confirm that all researchers have Rutgers IRB approval.
 - Manages Sona Systems
 - Conducts supply/demand survey
 - Monitors supply/demand during term
 - Monitors student login to Sona-systems
 - By 6 weeks before the end of the semester instructors should receive a list of students who have registered for Sona-systems. The instructors may also check their accounts. They should be informed to remind all students about the requirement.
 - Emails TAs and remind them about the number of weeks left for students to fulfill their research requirement. Obtain roster from either the TA or the Office of the Registrar (ext. 5324).

- Provide a monthly survey to assess the supply and demand of R-points on Sona-systems. (See Appendix (B))
 - Report any concerns raised by professors, TAs, experimenters, etc. to the Subject Pool Committee Leader.
 - Handle technical Sona-systems problems with the computer systems administrator.
 - Train the next Subject Pool coordinator.
 - Coordinator authority
 - All issues should be brought to Subject Pool coordinator and the Subject Pool coordinator will determine the appropriate action if state in the Subject Pool Policy Manual.
 - All issues that cannot be resolved through the Subject Pool coordinator should be resolved through the committee.
- Department technical support
 - Helps trouble-shoot Sona-systems (if necessary)
- Subject Pool Committee
 - Oversees the assessment of researcher needs and provision of R-point allocations each semester.
 - Sets subject pool calendar
 - Coordinates with instructors and TAs re. subject pool operations
 - Determines solutions to supply/demand problems
 - Determines responses to subject pool problems
 - Determines usage by non-departmental researchers
 - Routinely monitors subject pool operations, 3-4 times per semester
 - Policy oversight and revision as needed
 - Reports on policy issues to faculty

(V) R-POINT CALENDAR

[NOTE: “End of Term” refers to last day of scheduled classes]

4 weeks before end of term:

- Distribute R-Point request and Prescreening Inventory to all labs

3 weeks before end of term:

- Send out reminder e-mail regarding R-Points and Prescreening Inventory

2 weeks before end of term:

- R-Points and Prescreening Inventory is due
- Committee determines if prescreening lasts no more than 40 min. If exceeds 40 minutes, convene prescreeners meeting within the week to reduce time.
- Format prescreening document for on-line administration
- Contact Principles instructors: inform them
 - Need to hold meeting with TAs to coordinate subject pool activities
 - TAs’ first meeting with students: Sona Systems training and registration.
 - Inform Principles instructors of subject pool calendar

1 week before end of term:

- Committee meets to coordinate preparatory activities
- Obtain information on Principles classes: Names of instructors, names of TAs, day, time and place of classes. Prepare a document with this information, and supply to Committee.
- Inform prescreening labs to review online prescreen, and to send in comments within one week.
- Final proofing and test-run of prescreening

1 week into term

- Compute R-Pt allocations
 - Obtain enrollment rosters for Principles 101 and 102 classes.
 - Compute supply/demand based on Demand Inventory and class rosters
 - Committee meets: determine R-Pt., allocation, confirm prescreening is set.
 - Inform researchers of R-Pt allocations
- Train TAs in Sona Systems registration, so TAs can instruct students
- Make sure TAs first lab instructs students in Sona Systems
- Coordinator makes presentation to classes:
 - What is R-Point requirement

- Alternative to R-Points
- Sona Systems
- Prescreening
- Penalty for failing to complete R-Points

2 weeks into term

- Experiments available and Prescreening activated
- Inform Instructors, TAs that experiments and prescreening now available

3 weeks into term

- Remind instructors, TAs to encourage students to enroll in experiments, and to complete prescreening
- Remind experimenters to post R-Point slots

4 Weeks into term

- Compute R-Point usage:
 - How many R-points used
 - How many R-Points available to date
- Prepare R-Point usage report on Excel, with graphs

6 weeks into term

- Remind instructors, TAs to encourage students to enroll in experiments, and to complete prescreening
- Remind experimenters to post R-Point slots

8 Weeks into term

- Compute R-Point usage:
 - How many R-points used
 - How many R-Points available to date
- Prepare R-Point usage report on Excel, with graphs

9 weeks into term (or 3 weeks before end of regular classes)

- Free for all begins
- End of regular classes (beginning of “dead week”)
- Experiment participation and prescreening end
- Compute R-Point completion reports, for instructors
- Transmit R-Point completion reports to instructors
- Complete usage reports on Excel (use current template)
- How many R-Points used by labs
- Compare lab request with lab usage

(VI) INFORMATION FOR INSTRUCTORS AND TAs REGARDING SONA SYSTEMS AND R-POINTS

Sona-systems: <http://rutgers.sona-systems.com>

- ❑ Students will be able to obtain a username and password online using Sona-systems.
- ❑ Students should obtain a username and password during one of the first lab sessions.
- ❑ Students may sign up for experiments on Sona-systems following the instructions listed on the website.
- ❑ The Subject Pool Policy Manual will be available on Sona-systems for instructors and experimenters.
- ❑ Important dates (e.g., last day to sign up for experiments) will also be posted on Sona-systems.
- ❑ The Sona-systems website is <http://rutgers.sona-systems.com>

R-point Requirements:

- ❑ (To be determined) R-points are required from each student total (DAY CLASSES)
 - 2 of these R-points may be completed during prescreening
 - of these R-points may be completed by signing up for and completing experiments on Sona-systems
- ❑ (To be determined) R-points are required from each student total (EVENING CLASSES)
 - 2 of these R-points may be completed during prescreening
 - of these R-points may be completed by signing up for and completing experiments on Sona-systems

Prescreening:

- ❑ All students are invited to participate in prescreening. They earn 2 of their required 7 R-Pts by completing prescreening.
- ❑ Prescreening can take no more than 40 minutes to do, and cannot be part of classroom time. Prescreening must be completed online by the date specified by the Subject Pool coordinator.
- ❑ Students who are in 101 and 102 only need to complete the prescreening once.

TA responsibilities:

- ❑ TAs should make sure all students are registered for Sona-systems, and should show their assigned students how to log on to Sona-systems and how to obtain a username and password. The R-points coordinator will check in with the TAs to ensure that students are registered.

- ❑ Students must be informed of the last day to sign up for experiments, the number of R-points required, and how to sign up for experiments using Sona-systems.
- ❑ If there are questions regarding these issues please contact the R-points coordinator.
- ❑ Information regarding the r-point requirement for students and additional information will be posted on Sona-systems for students to access.
- ❑ TAs should remind students to complete the prescreening by the specified date.

Contacts (2007-2008):

- ❑ Dr. Kent Harber, Chair, Subject Pool Committee
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- ❑ Dr. Paul Boxer, Faculty member, Subject Pool Committee
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- ❑ Subject Pool Coordinator: James Thomas
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R-Point Demand and Prescreening Inventory: [DATE]

Dear Psychology Faculty:

In order to get a reasonable estimate of the R-Point demand, please provide the following information on all studies (surveys or laboratory experiments) that will be conducted during the fall semester by you and/or your students. NOTE: THIS SURVEY MUST BE COMPLETED AND RETURNED NO LATER THAN **DECEMBER 14, 2007**. IF RECEIVED PAST THIS DATE, OR NOT RECEIVED, YOU MAY NOT BE ABLE TO ACCESS THE SUBJECT POOL. THE MAXIMUM NUMBER OF R-POINTS ADMINISTERED FOR EACH STUDY IS 3 POINTS. IF MORE ARE REQUIRED YOU MUST PROVIDE A REQUEST TO THE R-POINT COMMITTEE.

Name of faculty member:

Name(s) of student or other researcher(s) directing studies in your lab:

How many studies do you plan to run in the coming semester?

In the table below, please indicate how many R-points you plan to issue PER STUDY. Your best guess is fine—but please do not overestimate so we can provide students with a reasonable request. Recall that 1 R-point is earned for every 30-minute time block, so that any study lasting up to 30 minute earns 1 R-Pt, between 30 min. and 1 hour = 2 R-Pts, etc.

Study	Short Title	Primary experimenter (last name)	IRB Number	(A) # Subjects Needed	(B) # R-Points per Session	Total R-Points Needed (A*B)
1						
2						
3						
Total						

Will you need to pre-screen students, by administering pre-screening measures at the start of the term?

YES NO

If "YES", please indicate how many measures you will administer, and number of items per measure. **The pre-screening survey is administered online.** Please send an electronic version of your items directly to James Thomas via electronic mail (jpthomas@pegasus.rutgers.edu) as soon as possible so that he can begin building the online survey.

Measure	Items Per Measure	Minutes to Complete Measure (Estimated)	Online or In Class Measures
1			
2			
Total			

Please respond by [DATE]. If you need more time to prepare this form please email Paul (pboxer@psychology.rutgers.edu) by this date to let us know. *If we don't hear at all from you by December 14,* we will assume that you are not participating in research this semester, and assign R-Pts. accordingly.