THE INTRODUCTION TO PSYCHOLOGY STUDENT GUIDE

THE RESEARCH REQUIREMENT AND SONA

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Revised August 2019
# TABLE OF CONTENTS

- **The Read Write-Option** .................................................................................................................. 1
- **The Participation Option** .................................................................................................................. 1
- **Combining Both Options** .................................................................................................................. 1-2
- **Participation in Sona Studies** .......................................................................................................... 2-19
  - Study Sign-Up.................................................................................................................................. 2
  - Types of Available Studies ................................................................................................................. 3
    - *The battery and battery supplement* ............................................................................................... 3
    - *Other survey and laboratory studies* ............................................................................................. 3
  - Requesting a Sona Account ............................................................................................................... 3-5
  - Resetting Your Password .................................................................................................................. 5
  - Sona Phone App............................................................................................................................... 6
  - Human Subjects/Privacy Policy.......................................................................................................... 6
  - The Prescreen .................................................................................................................................... 6-7
  - Your Profile...................................................................................................................................... 7-9
    - *Changing your password* ............................................................................................................... 7-8
    - *Receiving study e-mails* ............................................................................................................... 8
    - *Account deletion* .......................................................................................................................... 8-9
  - Viewing and Signing Up for Available Research Studies .................................................................. 9-12
  - Study Appointment Arrival Time ..................................................................................................... 12
  - Cancelling a Scheduled Appointment in Sona .................................................................................. 12-14
  - Researcher Cancellation .................................................................................................................. 14
  - Researcher is a No-Show .................................................................................................................. 14-15
  - Adding/Removing Courses in Sona .................................................................................................. 15
  - Receiving Credit for Research Participation .................................................................................... 15-16
<table>
<thead>
<tr>
<th>Section</th>
<th>Pages</th>
</tr>
</thead>
<tbody>
<tr>
<td>Assigning Credit to your Course(s)</td>
<td>16</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Monitoring Your Progress</td>
<td>16-18</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>The No-Show Policy</td>
<td>18-19</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Extra Credit Policy</td>
<td>19</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Unfulfilled Research Requirement</td>
<td>19</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Archived Study Credits</td>
<td>19-20</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Parental Consent</td>
<td>20</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>For More Information</td>
<td>20-21</td>
</tr>
</tbody>
</table>
One requirement of your Introduction to Psychology course is to fulfill a research requirement. This requirement is designed to make NYU students aware of how knowledge is accumulated in scientific psychology. There are two ways to meet the research requirement. One is to participate as a subject in 7 credit hours of research studies, where you are asked to do various tasks that allow the researcher to learn about psychological processes. This is the **Participation Option**. The other is to read three published research articles and write a two page critique of the methods and knowledge claims. This is the **Read-Write Option**.

We prepared this guide to give you all the information you need to fulfill the research requirement. **PLEASE READ THIS GUIDE CAREFULLY!**

THE READ-WRITE OPTION

Although most students choose the Participation Option, we describe the Read-Write Option first, because there are fewer steps.

To complete the written assignment:

- Choose 3 research articles from a list of the articles that have been approved for the Read-Write Option. These articles may be found under Resources in NYU classes.
- Read the articles and write a two-page critique of each (3 two-page critiques).
- The critiques should identify the scientific claim being made by the researcher, describe the kinds of subjects (participants) used to provide data, summarize the methods used to collect data, describe the way the researcher analyzed and interpreted the data to make the scientific claim. In the last paragraph list what you think are two strengths and two weaknesses of the study.
- E-mail the three critiques to your Head TA by the deadline set by your instructor. The critiques will be graded Pass-Fail and obtaining three passes satisfies your research requirement.

THE PARTICIPATION OPTION

To experience how knowledge in psychology is acquired through research, you may fulfill your research requirement by participating in research studies over the course of the semester. The research studies are being conducted by NYU Department of Psychology faculty and their students and have been approved by NYU’s Institutional Review Board (IRB), the **University Committee on Activities Involving Human Subjects (UCAIHS)**.

Most students find participation in research studies to be educational, interesting, and one of the best parts of the course. In the next pages we describe how to register to be a participant in various studies and how to select studies that provide credits toward the seven-hour requirement.

COMBINING BOTH OPTIONS

Most students choose to either participate in research studies or to write critiques of published studies. However, if a student who has begun to participate in research studies wants to quit further participation, he/she may write one published study critique to offset two hours of research participation. Students who choose this option should let their instructor, Head TA and the Coordinator of Psychology Research Subjects (brenda.woodford@nyu.edu) know of this plan ASAP or by the deadline given to you by your instructor so that accurate accounting is done.
Whether you decide to participate in research studies or do the Read-Write Option, please keep in mind that neither choice is graded. They are both pass-fail but if neither is completed by the end of the semester, you will not receive a grade for your course.

PARTICIPATION IN SONA STUDIES

Study Sign-Up

You sign-up for research studies to fulfill the research participation requirement for a course using the NYU Sona System, https://nyu-psych.sona-systems.com. In a section below, we describe how to set up your Sona account. You will be able to sign-up for studies from the first week through the last day of classes.

It is important for you to keep in mind that you CANNOT receive research participation credit by signing up for studies through other NYU Department or university sites. Before you start signing up for research studies, make sure that you are on the correct website! There have been cases of students who have signed up for research studies through the NYU Psychology Department’s Paid Sona website or through certain labs only to find that those studies they participated in did not count toward their course! So please make sure you are signing up for studies on https://nyu-psych.sona-systems.com.
Types of Available Studies

The battery and battery supplement

Your first opportunity to participate in psychology experiments will take place during the first week of classes where you will be invited to complete an on-line survey, known as the battery. There may be a battery supplement available for you to complete as well. If so, it will be administered shortly after the battery closes. The Coordinator of Psychology Research Subjects will provide you with information regarding the battery and battery supplement on the first or second day of classes.

These surveys provide useful data to studies currently being conducted by faculty and their students in the NYU Department of Psychology. Like all the studies being offered as options, the battery and battery supplement are optional, but they do provide an interesting overview of the kinds of data various researchers collect.

The battery typically takes about 45 to 60 minutes to complete and counts as an hour of participation time. If a battery supplement is administered, it can take less than 30 minutes up to an hour to complete for an additional half hour or hour of participation time. Completing the battery and supplement can give you a head start toward fulfilling your research requirement. No other Sona studies will be available for sign-up until the battery and battery supplement close.

NOTE: If you are under 18 years old, you must obtain parental consent to participate in the battery and battery supplement prior to participating in these surveys. To download the parental permission forms for the battery and the battery supplement, go to http://as.nyu.edu/psychology/research/participate-in-research/parental-consent-forms.html. You must drop off the parental permission form(s) to the Coordinator of Psychology Research Subjects, located in the Meyer building (4 Washington Place), Room 601.

Other survey and laboratory studies

Many NYU psychology studies are lab studies that require you to come in for an in-person session. For these studies, which typically last between 30 minutes to an hour, you will be instructed to go to a room, typically in the Meyer building (4 Washington Place), and engage in various tasks, such as viewing images on a computer screen, responding to visual/auditory stimuli, and completing surveys. On rare occasions, in-person sessions may take place in a location other than a laboratory (e.g., Washington Square Park).

Some studies are online survey studies and will involve you completing an online questionnaire. These online questionnaires usually take between 15 - 60 minutes to complete and can be accessed on the study information page in Sona once you’ve signed-up for the study. It is worth noting that some studies require a greater time commitment, requiring multiple in-person lab sessions or completing more than one survey at different times.

NOTE: Ideally, you should participate in a variety of studies, both in-person and online, so that you can get a broader perspective on the various methods used by psychology researchers.

Requesting a Sona Account

The first thing you will need to do in order to sign-up for research studies is to create an NYU Sona account. An NYU Sona account will allow you to participate in available research studies and check the number of credits you have earned. The account also allows the Coordinator of Psychology Research
Subjects to keep track of your earned credits and provide your professor with a report on your research participation at the end of each semester.

Please note, if you already have a Sona account that was created in a previous semester, you do NOT need to request another account. Simply use your User ID (Net ID) and password to login to your account. If you have forgotten or simply do not have your login information available, you will need to reset your password (See Page 5).

To request your Sona account:

2. On the right hand side of the login page, click on Request Account.

3. Enter all the required information, including your first name, last name, your User ID (which is your Net ID). Your Student ID number (An “N” precedes the 8-digit ID number) and telephone number are optional. You must select the course(s) you are enrolled in and whether you would like to receive a weekly e-mail announcement about available studies. When you have entered all the necessary information, submit your request for an account at the bottom of the page.
4. You will receive your login information including your auto-generated password via your NYU e-mail address within 24 hours.
5. Once your login information is received, you will be able to login to your Sona account using your User ID (Net ID) and password on the left hand side of the Sona login page (https://nyu-psych.sona-systems.com).

Resetting Your Password

If you have forgotten or cannot find your Sona account login information, you can reset your password by clicking Forgot Password? on the NYU Sona login page. If this does not work, contact the Coordinator of Psychology Research Subjects for assistance at brenda.woodford@nyu.edu or at 212-998-7874.
Sona Phone App

If you want to sign-up for research studies using your phone, you can download a Sona Systems Mobile app for iPhone in the Apple App Store or for Android in the Google Play Store. Please go to http://www.sona-systems.com/app-download.aspx.

Human Subjects/Privacy Policy

The first time you log into your Sona account, the Human Subjects/Privacy Policy will appear on your screen. Please make sure to read through this policy carefully so that you familiarize yourself with how your information is used and disclosed, learn your individual rights as a participant and NYU’s responsibility to you, and to know who to contact in the event you have a complaint. Once you have read through the policy, you must agree to its terms in order to continue using the system.

The Prescreen

Prior to being able to view the available studies in Sona, you will be prompted to participate in a short prescreen questionnaire. The purpose of the prescreen questions is to gather information about you and match you with studies for which you may be eligible. For example, if you are left-handed, you will be eligible to participate in studies that require left-handed participants.
If you choose to participate in the prescreen questionnaire, you will have the option to decline to answer each individual question. Declining to answer a question is considered a response. Once you have gone through all the questions, make sure to click on Record Responses at the bottom of the page in order to proceed to your homepage.

Participating in this questionnaire is completely voluntary. If you decide not to participate, you will still be eligible to participate in studies that do not have specific eligibility requirements and are open to everyone.

**Your Profile**

Once you have completed the prescreen questionnaire or have declined participation, you will be taken to your Sona homepage. The first thing you may want to do before viewing available studies is change your password to one you will easily remember. To do this, you must go to your profile page. To access your profile page, click on My Profile on the top toolbar of your homepage or on Change password under My Profile on the left hand side of your homepage.

![Profile Page Screenshot](image)

**Changing your Password**

On the left hand side of your profile page, enter your current password, your new password, and then re-enter your new password. When you are done, click Update at the bottom of the page.
Receiving Study e-mails

On your profile page, you also have the option of selecting whether you would like to receive study invitation e-mails and a weekly e-mail announcement about available studies. Select your preferences, and remember to click on Update at the bottom of your profile page once your selections have been made.

Account Deletion

If at the end of the semester you would like to delete your Sona account, you can submit a request to the Coordinator of Psychology Research Subjects. The request can be submitted on your profile by clicking on the Request Account Deletion button on the right hand side of your profile page.
NOTE: If you are a psychology major and/or will be taking other psychology courses with a research requirement or that offer extra credit by participating in Sona studies, do NOT request a deletion of your account. This way, you will not have to go through the process of requesting a new account each semester and you can view all the studies in which you have previously participated.

**Viewing and Signing Up for Available Research Studies**

When you login to Sona, click on Studies on the top tool bar or on the View Available Studies button on the left hand side of your homepage to be taken to the studies page.

On the studies page, only studies with available time slots will appear on your screen. For each study listed, you will be able to view the credit(s) being offered, a brief description of the study, and any eligibility requirements.
To learn more about a study, click on the Timeslots Available button or the study name to be taken to the study information page.

On the study information page, you can view the study details. The study information includes the duration, the tasks or activities involved in completing the study, the eligibility requirements (e.g., left-handed), the credit(s) being offered, and the sign-up and cancellation deadlines. You will also be able to view the names of the Principal Investigator, the researcher(s) and their contact information. If you are
interested in participating, click on the **View Time Slots for This Study** button to see what appointment times are available.

When selecting an available timeslot, always be mindful of your schedule. Select a date and time that works best for you so that you do not end up having to cancel your appointment at a later date.

For online survey studies, there will only be one timeslot available for students to sign-up. Once you sign-up for the timeslot, you can access the survey link on the study information page and you will have until the participation deadline provided to complete the survey. Please make sure to sign-up for a timeslot **before** completing the survey to ensure that your credit is granted in Sona.
Some studies require a special password (known as an Invitation Code) to sign up. In this case, it will be noted. The researcher should have given you this invitation code. It is not the same as the password you use to log into the system. You will need to enter the invitation code just before you click the Sign Up button to sign up for a timeslot.

Upon signing up for any research study, you will receive an e-mail confirmation including the date, time and location of the study. You will also receive a reminder e-mail the evening before the study is scheduled.

**NOTE:** You cannot participate in a study more than once. Even if you are enrolled in another psychology course with a research requirement in a subsequent semester and see timeslots available for a study you participated in a previous semester, you will not be able to sign-up for that study again. Sona keeps a record of all your study sign-ups.

**Study Appointment Arrival Time**

Make sure to go to your study, and please **be on time**! Most studies have to start on time, because many participants are scheduled around the same time. If you are late, you may miss the study. Although some studies can start late, these are the exception rather than the rule. Give yourself enough time to find the right place, to wait for the elevator, etc. You will receive an email reminder of your appointment the evening before the study is scheduled.

**Cancelling a Scheduled Appointment in Sona**

You may cancel a scheduled appointment in Sona by going to **My Schedule/Credits** on the top toolbar or **View or cancel my study appointments** under My Schedule & Credits on the left hand side of your homepage.
Typically, you have up to 24 hours prior to a study appointment occurring to cancel it in Sona, but for some studies, you may even have up to an hour before your scheduled appointment to cancel online. If you have not missed the cancellation deadline, you will see a Cancel? button available for your study sign-up.

To cancel your study sign-up, click the **Cancel?** button. You will then be taken to the page where you can cancel the appointment. If applicable, you will be warned if your cancellation might affect your ability to participate in other studies you have signed up for due to pre-requisite restrictions.

To proceed with the cancellation, click on the **Yes, I want to cancel** button. Once this is done, you will receive an e-mail confirming the cancellation of your appointment. If you cancel the first part of a two-part study, the second part will also be cancelled. If you cancel the second part of a two-part study, the
first part will not be cancelled, but you will need to ask the researcher to sign you up for the second part again, if you would like to participate in it at a later date.

If you must cancel your study appointment due to an unforeseen event and it is too late to cancel it online, you should always contact the researcher ASAP. Be mindful of the researcher’s time and make it possible for your timeslot to be opened up to other participants. You can either e-mail the researcher or contact him/her by phone if a phone number is provided on the study information page. If you are unable to reach the researcher, contact the Coordinator of Psychology Research Subjects (brenda.woodford@nyu.edu).

**Researcher Cancellation**

Sometimes, it is the researcher who cancels your study appointment due to sickness or an unforeseen event (e.g., equipment malfunction). In the event this happens, you should expect to receive a cancellation e-mail prior to your scheduled appointment and an explanation for the cancellation. The researcher will likely offer you an opportunity to participate in the study at another date and time and may let you know in advance when more timeslots will be posted in Sona. If a researcher cancels your study appointment because data collection has been completed and participants are no longer needed for the study, you will also be contacted in advanced regarding the cancellation.

**Researcher is a No-Show**

If you are scheduled to participate in a study and are on time for your appointment and the researcher is nowhere to be found, wait a few minutes to see if the researcher shows up. It is possible he/she may be running late. Also, make sure you are in the right location. Often times, it is not that the researcher is late or a no-show but that the student is in the wrong location or has mixed up the date and time of the study appointment. Review the information on the study sign-up confirmation or reminder e-mail to verify that you are in the right place and that you do not have the date and time of the appointment mixed up.

If you have confirmed the study details, you know you are in the right location, and have waited for about 5 minutes, e-mail or call the researcher. At this point, you have the option of either waiting for a response to see if the researcher arrives or you can leave.
The researcher should follow-up ASAP and explain what happened. In Sona, you should be marked as an excused no-show and in the comments section, the researcher should include the reason (i.e., Researcher unable to make appointment). The comment will be visible to you.

**Adding/Removing Courses in Sona**

It is your responsibility when you request your Sona account to select the correct course(s) in which you are enrolled. However, students have an opportunity up until the end of the second week of classes to either add or drop courses. In such cases, it is important for you to remember to update your Sona accounts with the correct courses.

If you do not update your course(s) in Sona, your earned research participation credits will not be allocated to the appropriate course, and when your professor receives the report on his/her students’ research participation at the end of the semester, it will seem as though you did not meet your research participation requirement. You **must** assign the correct course(s) to your Sona account to ensure that your research participation credit is appropriately assigned! This is your responsibility.

If you add or drop a course(s) on Albert during the first two weeks of classes and need to update your Sona account, you will have the option to change courses in the system. Click on **My Profile** on the top toolbar of your homepage. Once on your profile page, you will see your courses listed under Credits, on the right hand side of the page. Underneath your listed course(s), you will see the Change Courses button. Click on the **Change Courses** button to add or remove a course(s) from a dropdown menu of courses.

**Receiving Credit for Research Participation**

The credit you receive for participating in a study is dependent on the study’s duration. Please see below:

- **15 - 30 minutes = .5 credits**
- **31 – 60 minutes = 1 credit**
- **61 – 90 minutes = 1.5 credits**
- **91 to 120 minutes = 2 credits**
Only researchers (not professors/TAs) can grant you credit for participation in a research study. Typically, participants will receive credit shortly after their participation in a study. If more than 24 hours have passed and you have not received credit, you should contact the researcher directly. Some researchers may notify their participants in advance if there will be a delay in granting them credit in the system. If you do not receive a response from the researcher after a few days and you still have not received credit, contact the Coordinator of Psychology Research Subjects at brenda.woodford@nyu.edu.

NOTE: It is a departmental policy that psychology studies offering credit must be limited to 2 credit hours. However, occasionally you will find Sona studies that are over 2 hours in length. For these studies, you will receive 2 credits for the first 2 hours of your participation and monetary compensation for any additional time spent to complete the study.

Assigning Credits to your Course(s)

Each time you sign-up for a study, you will have the option to assign the credit you will receive to a specific course. If you are only taking one course, credit granted to you for a study will automatically be assigned to that one course listed in your Sona account. However, if you are enrolled in more than one course in a semester, you will have the option of selecting the course for which you would like the credit to be assigned to from a drop down list of your courses. Please make sure that all of your courses are listed in your Sona account so that you may correctly assign credit to your courses!

Monitoring Your Progress

You can keep track of how many credits you have earned, are pending and required by looking at the Credits Overview section on the right hand side of your homepage.

For more details and to see whether you have received credit for a particular study, you can click on My Schedule & Credits on the top toolbar or on View studies I’ve participated in, and see if credit has been granted on the left hand side of your homepage.
At the top of the credits page, you can see the overall credits you have earned, the overall pending credits and the overall number of credits required to fulfill your research participation requirement for your course(s).

You can also view the studies you have signed up for, whether you have received credit for the study, and what course you assigned to the credit(s). If necessary, you can re-assign earned study credit(s) to another course by clicking on the Reassign button found under course. Lastly, you can view how many credits you have earned for each course.
NOTE: In reviewing the studies for which you have signed up, if you notice that there is no course assigned to a study, you should immediately assign a course to that study so that the credit you will receive is not wasted. It is important that you fix this, because if not, the earned credit will not be assigned to any course and will therefore not count toward your research participation requirement.

The No-Show Policy

Everyone gets sick and special circumstances do come up from time to time for most people. However, if you’re not feeling well or something important gets in the way of you making it to your study appointment, please be responsible and courteous by cancelling your appointment in Sona or contacting the researcher ASAP to let him/her know.

If the time for you to cancel your study appointment online has elapsed and you contact the researcher in advance about being unable to make it to your appointment, even if you reach out 30 minutes or an hour prior to your study appointment, you will be marked as an excused no-show in Sona.

Ideally, you should give the researcher at least a 24 hour notice. This gives the researcher the opportunity to open up your timeslot to other students. Do not waste the researchers’ time; their time is as valuable as yours.

If you fail to cancel your appointment in Sona or to notify the researcher directly that you will be missing your scheduled appointment, you will be marked as an unexcused no show. After 2 unexcused no-shows (two missed appointments that were not excused by the researchers), your Sona account will automatically be blocked/disabled and will remain blocked until you take one of the actions listed below. However, you will receive credit for those studies you completed or are pending sign-ups.

Once your Sona account has been disabled, you will need to do one of the following in order to complete the research requirement for your course:

1. Speak to your professor/Head TA to inquire if you would be able to do the alternative written assignment.
2. Contact the Coordinator of Psychology Research Subjects at brenda.woodford@nyu.edu and explain the reason for the two unexcused no-shows. In some cases a third chance may be granted.
NOTE: If you miss the participation deadline for an online study, you will be marked in the system as an unexcused no-show, just as you would for an in-person lab study. Please be mindful of the participation deadlines for all online studies for which you sign-up to avoid getting marked down as an unexcused no-show and having your account disabled.

EXTRA CREDIT POLICY

Extra credit is offered at the discretion of each individual professor. Your professor will let you know on the first day of classes and it will be on the syllabus whether extra credit will be offered as part of the course. If the extra credit being offered involves participation in additional Sona studies, you may sign-up for additional studies upon completing your required hours at any time during the semester. If you participate in additional studies, please make sure that your professor has offered extra credit, because otherwise, those additional credit hours you earn will be lost, as they will not be applied to any psychology courses you take in the future.

Always be mindful of others. If you have fulfilled your required (and extra credit) research participation hours, please leave the study appointments open to those who may need them.

UNFULFILLED RESEARCH REQUIREMENT

You should do your best to complete the research participation requirement or written assignment for your course(s) each semester! For those who choose to participate in research studies, the best way to do this is to start signing up for studies EARLY on in the semester so that you do not miss any opportunities to participate in studies for which you may be eligible. The number of studies posted in Sona is continuously monitored to ensure that enough studies are available throughout the semester for everyone. However, there is no guarantee that there will be enough studies at the end of the semester. As the end of the semester approaches, it becomes increasingly more difficult to find available studies. A good guideline is to do at least one study per week. If you choose to do the written assignment, the same recommendation applies: start EARLY!

If by the last day of classes, you have not completed the research requirement for your course(s), you will temporarily receive an “I” or incomplete grade until you are able to make-up the missing study credits or complete the written assignment. Please keep in mind that you only have until the end of the subsequent semester to make-up the research requirement and to receive an actual grade. If the requirement is not met within the statutory period, the incomplete will become an F and be calculated in your grade point average. Under special circumstances, professors may agree to give you an extension.

ARCHIVED STUDY CREDITS

At the end of each semester, the Sona system is reset in preparation for the upcoming semester, which means that all earned credits from a previous semester will be archived. If at the end of the semester you find that you were unable to complete the research participation requirement, make a note of how many study credits you completed for your course.

You can also view your archived credits by going to My Schedule/Credits on the top toolbar or View or cancel my study appointments under My Schedule & Credits on the left hand side of your homepage. On the credits page, you can see your archived credits for each study under the Comments column, not under the Credit Status column. Tally up your credits and see how many you have left to fulfill the research participation requirement for your course.
During the second week of the new semester, you will be able to start signing up for studies in Sona in order to complete any missing study credits. If enrolled in the Introduction to Psychology course offered in the spring and are unable to complete the required study credits by the end of the semester, you have the option to complete the missing credits during summer session I and II rather than waiting for the fall semester to fulfill the research participation requirement.

Upon completing the required participation credit hours, e-mail your professor, Head TA and copy the Coordinator of Psychology Research Subjects (brenda.woodford@nyu.edu). Once the Coordinator of Psychology Research Subjects verifies for your professor and Head TA that you have fulfilled your research requirement, your professor will submit your final grade. Please be aware that once your final grade is submitted, it may take several business days for the change of grade to be processed and for it to be reflected on Albert.

**PARENTAL CONSENT**

**IF YOU ARE UNDER THE AGE OF 18, PARENTAL CONSENT IS REQUIRED FOR ALL RESEARCH PARTICIPATION AND CONSENT MUST BE OBTAINED PRIOR TO PARTICIPATION IN ANY STUDIES. STUDENTS WILL FIND THE PARENTAL PERMISSION FORMS AT [http://as.nyu.edu/psychology/research/participate-in-research/parental-consent-forms.html](http://as.nyu.edu/psychology/research/participate-in-research/parental-consent-forms.html).**

Parental consent forms should ideally be handed to the researchers directly on the day of your study appointment. However, if not possible, you may scan and e-mail them to the researchers before your scheduled study appointments.

**FOR MORE INFORMATION**

Any questions you may have related to Sona and research participation should be addressed in the FAQ section in Sona. Click on FAQ on the top toolbar or Find answers to common questions on the left hand side of your homepage under FAQ.
If you are unable to find the answers to your questions, please contact the Coordinator of Psychology Research Subjects (brenda.woodford@nyu.edu).

For a detailed participant tutorial on how to use Sona, it is recommended that you visit https://www.youtube.com/watch?v=_1OnT2ZU6QQ.