



COLLEGE OF
**EDUCATION AND
HUMAN SCIENCES**

Sona Systems Research Subject Pool System

System Login: <http://okstate-coeosu.sona-systems.com>

Policy Documents: <https://education.okstate.edu/research/archive/sona.html>

Information for Researchers

The College of Education and Human Sciences has implemented an active research participation system (often called a subject pool system). The computerized online system, hereafter called its commercial name of Sona, allows **researchers** to post studies for recruitment, **instructors** to encourage student participation, and **students** to sign up for participation in research studies. This system has elements to *assist the researcher with IRB requirements*, to *assist instructors with keeping track of participation*, and to *assist students* by sending out confidential reminder notices.

Researchers in the College of Education and Human Sciences who wish to use the Sona system to recruit subjects and/or collect data must include the *approved procedures for the subject pool in their IRB application* (see Appendix B for a sample statement) and must have IRB approval prior to participating in the recruitment pool. Upon obtaining provisional approval from the IRB, researchers must contact the Sona administrator to register their research project and gain access to the Sona system. Once researchers are registered, the Sona administrator will notify the IRB so that full approval for the project may be granted. Researchers are obligated to accurately record which students participate and enter this information into the Sona system so that instructors may assign the appropriate credit to participating students.

The steps below outline the responsibilities of **researchers** who wish to access the College of Education Sona subject pool.

Researcher Responsibilities:

1. Researchers must have formal IRB provisional approval for projects prior to participating in Sona. Details for Subject Pool recruitment must be included in the IRB application (See Appendix B for Summary of Subject Pool for IRB applications).
2. Researchers must contact the CEHS Sona Administrator (cehssona@okstate.edu) to secure a login and password.
3. Once IRB approval is secured, please send a copy of the IRB approval page to the Administrator for entry into the system.
4. Researchers can then go to the main Sona website at <http://okstate-coeosu.sona-systems.com> and use their login information. Here information about research can be entered and modified.

CEHS-Sona Policy for Researchers – Fall 2020

5. Researchers must assign “timeslots” in the system. If the study is on-line, one timeslot ending on the last day that participants can access the study can be entered.
6. Once this process is complete the study will be activated and become visible to students.
7. The researcher can access the schedule of students who have signed up to participate.
8. If more than enough subjects show up to participate in a study (after having registered through Sona), all students must be granted full credit for having participated. Under no circumstances can they be turned away without receiving full credit.
9. Researchers must appear at the time(s) arranged for testing subjects. If this is not possible, the researcher must make arrangements for those subjects who show up to participate to be processed for full credit.
10. Researchers are expected to grant credit to those who participate in research in a timely manner. Sona participation closes the Friday of pre-finals week (dead week) at 5 pm. Instructors should be able to access their course reports showing credits granted by researchers by the Monday of exam week.

Frequently Asked Questions

Is there a way to look at the system before I sign up?

Yes, if you would like to take a look at the CEHS Sona system prior to adding your study you can use these two accounts to learn more about the system. This way you can know what the system looks like for instructors and for students.

<http://okstate-coeosu.sona-systems.com/>

Researcher login: sample.researcher password: sample
Student login: sample.student 1 password: sample
Sample.student 2 password: sample

If I already have an IRB approved study, but did not mention Sona can I use the system?

Yes, any IRB-approved study can use the system; however, if Sona collection was not mentioned in your original IRB, you will need to file a modification. Use the verbiage from the Appendix below to file your modification.

How much credit should I assign for my study?

Credit is based on how long it takes participants to complete your protocol. One research credit is equal to one hour of participation. If you are using a set of questionnaires which takes approximately 30 minutes to complete, then your study is worth .5 credits.

My study does not appear to be having participation. What's wrong?

The system needs three things for data collection to proceed.

1. The study must be **approved**. Have you emailed the Sona Administrator your IRB approval sheet? If not then you should do this today, you cannot begin collecting data until your study has been approved by the IRB and you provide evidence of this to the Sona Administrator.
2. The study must be **active** (visible). When you set up your study, you must select "YES" on the Active Study? Question.
3. Do you have **Available Timeslots**? Log in to your study and choose View/Administer Timeslots, then Add a Timeslot. Participants must first sign up to participate in your study and in order for them to do this you must have a timeslot available.

Does my online study need a timeslot?

Yes, in order for participants to access your study link, you will need to provide a timeslot for them to sign up. You must have at least one active timeslot. Add a timeslot, put the last day to participate as 5:00 pm of the Friday of pre-finals week (dead week). The number of participants will be from your IRB.

Can I do qualitative research on Sona?

Yes. You will still need active timeslots, though. Timeslots will allow you to designate where and when your data collection procedures will happen. Without timeslots, participants will be unable to sign up.

How do I tell if participants who sign up on the CEHS Sona system actually completed my study?

There are codes you can add for both Survey Monkey and Qualtrics that will import the Sona ID as a variable into your study. To find out how to use this feature, please consult the tutorials below.

Survey Monkey: If you are using SurveyMonkey, add ?c=%SURVEY_CODE% to the end of the URL to make use of this feature. <https://www.sona-systems.com/help/surveymonkey.aspx>

Qualtrics: add "&id=%SURVEY_CODE%" to the end of the URL. Then, go to your study in Qualtrics and set up a spot for embedded data in the survey flow option <https://www.sona-systems.com/help/qualtrics.aspx>

Can I see what studies are available on the CEHS Sona system?

Yes. If you log into your CEHS Sona researcher account, you will be able to choose the “All Studies” tab to see what studies are available to your students. You will not however be able to determine in which studies your students participated. This is in accordance with the confidentiality provision in the IRB approval.

Can I collect data for more than one semester?

Yes, you can collect data for consecutive semesters if your IRB expiration date allows for this. If you will be collecting data for more than one semester, do not delete your study from the Sona system. By keeping your study up, participants will not be allowed to participate in your study again. In this way you can ensure that your participants are each unique subjects and not repeated measures.

Appendix B

Summary of Subject Pool for Inclusion in IRB Application

9. *Will any inducements be offered to the subjects for their participation?*

Yes *No* *If Yes, please explain below.*

Participants will earn course credit for their participation. Many introductory and lower-level College of Education and other courses offer students a small amount of course credit (usually less than 5% of their grade) for participation in the research process. Whether for required credit or extra credit, each course must offer alternatives to research participation for earning credit. For example, in Educational Psychology courses students have the opportunity to earn five “units” of research experience. This requirement may be fulfilled in one of four ways:

- 1) serving as a human participant in current research project(s),
- 2) attending special research events,
- 3) researching and writing 4 page papers on designated research topics, or
- 4) co-creating relevant educational experience with their instructor.

Each hour of participation in a research project as a participant is generally regarded as satisfying one “unit” of the requirement, students completing a half hour will receive 0.5 unit.

Students participating in this study will earn ___ units of credits as this study will take approximately ___ minutes to complete. *(You MUST include this line in your IRB application!)*

If extra course credit is offered, describe the alternative means for obtaining additional credit available to those students who do not wish to participate in the research project.

As mentioned, students in any course within the College of Education and Human Sciences have the opportunity to earn equivalent course credit by participating in the three alternative options.