

Research Participation (PSY/IPN3442) policy 2021-2022

1. General information (for participant and researcher)

1.1 Research participation

As part of the Bachelor's examination, every Psychology and Neuroscience student has to participate as a research participant in scientific research at the Faculty of Psychology and Neuroscience (FPN). Students who started the bachelor FPN in 2013 or later have to participate in research for 20 hours (=participation hours). (*Different requirements apply for students who started the bachelor earlier, see AskPsychology*). Each half hour of participation is awarded 0.5 Sona credit, which is registered in the students' Sona account.

For students who started the bachelor's in 2016 or later, the number of credits that can be earned from online studies is limited to 7, to ensure participants also obtain experience participating in lab studies. *Note: Due to Covid 19, this rule was abolished between March 2020 and August 2021. This means that for students who started in 2020-2021 or earlier, there is no limit on online studies for the remainder of your study program.*

It is recommended to fulfill the required participation hours early in the bachelor program, as research participation in the 3rd year is not always guaranteed due to too much prior knowledge in psychological paradigms. In addition, the required participation hours must be performed before going abroad for an elective in the 3rd year. Failing to do so might result in a delay in graduation. For these reasons, students are encouraged to meet the required participation hours in their first year of the bachelor. Therefore, the FPN has introduced the policy that the remaining five hours will be waived for students who have fulfilled 15 of the 20 required participation hours within their first year. Students who fulfill less than 15 hours in their first year will have to achieve a total of 20 hours in the Bachelor's program. For these students, it is recommended to fulfill the required 20 participation hours before the end of the 2nd year, for the reasons mentioned above.

The Education Office periodically checks to see if a student has collected enough participation points. If so, the ECTS for IPN3442 / PSY3442 (year 3) will be credited (see AskPsy). The ECTS will be added to the transcript of the third year, and they do not count towards the 60 ECTS needed in year one.

Everyone involved in teaching and research at Maastricht University shares the responsibility for maintaining academic integrity (<https://www.maastrichtuniversity.nl/research/integrity-ethics/scientific-integrity>). Serious participation during research is of utmost importance. Sona credits can be withheld in case of suspicion of fraud (see 1.7).

1.2 Recruitment of participants

Recruitment of participants should be done via the Research Participation System (SONA, check out <http://maastricht-fpn.sona-systems.com>). In addition, posters or advertisements can be used. However, before the advertisement can be started, the study must be created in SONA and approved by the coordinator. The SONA coordinator will regularly check the validity and expiration of the posters at the FPN poster board at UNS 40 (level 1 east) to keep an up-to-date overview of available studies on this board.

1.3 Confirmation participation

All participants, who signed up for a study, will be informed about their participation by the researcher. If participants sign up for a timeslot in SONA, they will automatically receive a confirmation with the details of the appointment. If an appointment is made via email, the researcher will contact the participant to set a date and time for the experiment and give information about the location. Once this has been agreed upon, it is possible to cancel the appointment within the deadline. *In case this is not respected, see point 1.4 and 1.5 of this policy.*

1.4 Cancellation by participant

Participants can cancel their appointment or their research participation before the deadline set by the researcher (excluding weekends!) by replying to the email from the researcher or by using the cancellation option in SONA (when timeslots are used) (*see 1.3*). Failure to appear on the confirmed time and place, without timely notification (i.e., the deadline set by the researcher and announced in the confirmation email), will result in the loss of Sona credits equivalent to the credits that would have been gained by attending (penalty credits). This can result in a negative total amount of credits.

If a participant repeatedly fails to show up for confirmed appointments, he/she will receive a warning from the SONA coordinator. When the student persists in failing to attend research appointments, his/her SONA account will be blocked, and the Board of Examiners FPN will be informed.

Note: In case of disagreement, the Sona coordinator decides whether or not a penalty credit is justified (by mandate of the board of examiners).

1.5 Cancellation by researcher

If a researcher needs to cancel the research appointment, he/she should inform the participant by canceling the timeslot in SONA and/or by sending an email to the participant's UM email address (@student.maastrichtuniversity.nl) at least 24 hours (excluding weekends!) before the scheduled appointment.

When a researcher cancels an appointment within 24h before the appointment was due, the participant is entitled to receive the announced number of credits. The researcher should contact the SONA coordinator for this. When a researcher repeatedly fails to cancel timely, he/she can be excluded from using the research participation system for a year.

1.6 Registration of participation credits

The responsible researcher should grant the participation credits to the participant in SONA, within 15 working days after participation has been completed, and in any case before the end of the academic year (i.e., August 31).

The SONA coordinator will closely monitor the correct and timely allocation of participant credits. In case a researcher repeatedly fails to timely grant participation credits, he/she can be excluded from using the research participation system for a year.

1.7 Penalty credits or withholding credits

As described in 1.4, failure to appear on the confirmed time and place, without timely notification (i.e., the deadline set by the researcher and announced in the confirmation email), will result in the loss of Sona credits equivalent to the credits that would have been gained by attending (penalty credits). This only applies to 'lab'-studies and not to online studies. Not filling out an online questionnaire before the deadline is considered as a cancellation by the participant and will be registered in Sona as an 'excused no-show'.

Participants will receive the Sona credits for online studies only when they take the study seriously and complete the whole experiment. Participants have the right to withdraw, if they object to certain questions or tasks. In that case, they should not complete the experiment so that the data is not saved, and the researcher will register them as an 'excused no-show'. However, if they complete the study, but skipped parts of the experiment, did not follow the instructions carefully, or finished it in an unreasonable amount of time without providing a valid reason to the researcher, they will not receive the credits.

1.8 Disagreements

Participants are advised to keep the confirmation emails sent by the researcher. In case the appropriate credit for participating in a study is not received, the participant should first contact the responsible researcher. In case there is any disagreement between researcher and participant, the SONA coordinator will mediate. In that case, the participant should be able to hand in the confirmation email and/or other email communication with the researcher.

1.9 Relation SONA coordinator –Board of Examiners

The SONA coordinator is given the mandate to execute the research participation regulations and e.g., to grant penalty credits when participants do not show up for an appointment (*see 1.4*) or did not perform an online experiment seriously (*see 1.7*). In case of doubt and/or special cases, the SONA coordinator can submit this to the Board of Examiners FPN. In exceptional cases, the Board of Examiners FPN can decide to deviate from these regulations.

2. Information for the participant

2.1 Conditions for waiving 5 hours

For students from cohort 2013-2014 or later, who collected 15 credits within their first year, the remaining 5 hours will be waived. By the end of each month, the SONA coordinator will check who qualifies for this arrangement, and five participation credits will be granted to these participants.

2.2 Exam administration

The Education Office periodically checks to see if you have collected enough participation points. If so, the ECTS for IPN3442 / PSY3442 (year 3) will be credited. The ECTS will be added to the transcript of the third year, and does not count towards the 60 ECTS needed in year one.

- For first year students: monthly ECTS update.
- For second and third year students: ECTS update six times per year (September, December, March, June, July and August)

2.3 Objections to research participation

Students who object to participating as research participants can submit a motivated request to the Board of Examiners FPN for complete or partial exemption. When this request is granted, the Board of Examiners FPN will instruct the SONA coordinator to provide the student with a replacement assignment.

2.4 Credits overview

Students can check their credits overview in SONA.

For students who started the bachelor's in 2016 or later, the number of hours that can be earned from online studies is limited to 7 (*see note in 1.1*). Students are themselves responsible for checking the number of hours from online studies in their credits overview.

3. Information for the researcher

3.1 50/50 ratio staff-/student research

The Research Participation coordinator (SONA coordinator) will ensure a 50/50 ratio of available participation hours over student research (part of internship) and research by staff members. Furthermore, the SONA coordinator assures that requests for research are equally spread over the year to avoid a shortage of participants later in the year. This could mean that a researcher is requested to perform a study at a later date. Particularly, the coordinator will ensure that intern students will not delay their graduation due to preliminary exhaustion of participation hours.

3.2 Ethical approval

Only studies that have been submitted to and approved by the Ethics Review Committee Psychology and Neuroscience (ERCPN) or Medical Ethical Committee Azm/UM (METC) are accepted. Submission of the research protocol to the Ethics Committee is the responsibility of the researcher. Any deviations from the protocol need to be approved by the responsible Ethics Committee.

3.3 Determining participation credits

The SONA coordination determines the reward in participation credits in consultation with the responsible researcher. It is not allowed to deviate from this confirmed reward. The standard reward is

½ credit per ½ hour of participation. It is allowed to round up 20 minutes to ½ credit, and 45 minutes to 1 credit.

When participants need much less time than foreseen, the researcher should adjust the number of credits. Conversely, when participants need much more time than foreseen, the researcher can request an increase in the number of credits by emailing the SONA coordinator.

3.4 Online studies

It is the researcher's responsibility to check and pilot the questionnaire or online study carefully and to prevent invalid answers as much as possible. Student researchers should have their questionnaire checked by their supervisor. A realistic time duration for completing the questionnaire/online study should be given (see also 3.3).

Credits for online studies should be withheld when a questionnaire has been filled in fraudulently or carelessly. Should this occur, the researchers have to inform the Sona coordinator, who will check if it is indeed appropriate to withhold the credit, and if so, will inform the participant.

It is vital that researchers check their online survey data before granting an individual's credit.

Therefore it is not allowed to use the automatic credit granting feature in Sona.

Not filling out an online questionnaire or not taking part in an online study before the deadline is considered as a cancellation by the participant and should be registered in Sona as an 'excused no-show'. It is NOT allowed to register these sign-ups as unexcused no-shows (this is only for lab studies).

3.5 Handling timeslots

All timeslots with a sign-up should be handled timely, i.e. indicate whether a participant participated, or whether it concerns a no-show (excused or unexcused) (see also 1.6 and 1.7). At completion of a study, the researcher should check whether there are any uncredited time-slots, and if so these should be solved as soon as possible.