



University of Illinois at Chicago
Department of Psychology

Parent/Guardian Permission to Participate in Research

Student Name: _____

Student University Identification Number: _____

Dear Parent or Guardian:

The student named above is enrolled in Psychology 100 at the University of Illinois at Chicago (UIC). As part of this course, all students are expected to earn 8 Psychology Experience Credits (PECs). Students may earn PECs by any of three methods.

- (1) They may participate as subjects in research studies sponsored by the Psychology Department.
- (2) They may write summaries of published research articles found in UIC's library.
- (3) Or they may assist in training sessions that teach advanced psychology students how to conduct interviews or given psychological tests by volunteering to be interviewed or tested by those advanced students.

Students may earn all 8 PECs by any one of these methods. Or they may earn some PECs by each method. Like any other course requirement, these credits count toward the students' final course grade.

The student named above would like to earn one or more PECs by participating in research. **However, this student is not yet 18 years old. It is a Federal regulation that under-age students get a parent's or guardian's written permission to participate.** The purpose of this letter is to tell you what students do when they participate in research. This information will help you make an informed choice about whether or not to allow the student to participate.

What Am I Being Asked to Give Permission For?

You are being asked to give the student permission to participate in research sponsored by the Psychology Department at the University of Illinois at Chicago. Your permission is required by law. All students enrolled in Psychology 100 are eligible to participate. Each year between 1600 and 2200 students actually do participate.

Student participation in research is voluntary. Your decision to allow or not allow the student to participate will not affect his or her relationship with either the Department or the University. Nor will it necessarily affect the student's class standing or grades.

If you allow the student to participate, he or she must still decide which particular studies to participate in. He or she may also choose not to participate in any studies. Further, he or she may withdraw from any study at any time, and may do so without penalty.

Why Is This Research Being Done?

Human behavior is a complex and fascinating subject. Much is already known about how and why people behave the way they do. Yet there is still a lot to learn. The purpose of the research sponsored by the Psychology Department is to improve our understanding of human behavior and experience. The specific topics being studied span the entire range of normal human behavior, from basic mental functions (e.g., perception and memory), to complex cognitive processes (e.g.,

learning, reasoning, and attitude change). They also cover a wide range of social and collective behavior (e.g., cooperation, competition, and group decision making).

What Procedures Are Involved?

The specific procedure used in each study will be described to the student so that he or she may make an informed choice about whether or not to participate. These procedures vary widely from study to study. In order to give you an idea of the range of procedures employed, the following examples are offered. Please note that these are merely illustrations. However, they are typical of the types of procedures used in the studies we conduct.

- ◆ Students may be asked to complete one or more questionnaires that assess specific attitudes, values, beliefs, feelings, or preferences. For example, students might be asked about social or political issues, preferred conflict resolution or coping styles, or their beliefs concerning their ability to influence events in the world around them. These questionnaires may also ask about such things as the languages the student knows, whether or not the student is a smoker or has recently tried to lose weight, or whether the student has ever been the victim of a crime. Students' responses to such questions are kept confidential, and are used for research purposes only.
- ◆ Students may be asked to solve simple verbal, mathematical, or visual reasoning problems. Problems of this type are commonly found on tests of academic achievement. In some cases the problems may be presented via computer so that the amount of time students take to solve them can be recorded.
- ◆ Students may be asked to read a text or watch a videotape, and then later recall or make judgments about it. In some cases the content of this material may be purely fictional or abstract. In other cases it may relate to historical events or to scientific discoveries. In still other cases the content may involve realistic portrayals of everyday events. An example of the latter is a videotape of a person giving eyewitness testimony in a courtroom setting.
- ◆ Students may be asked to recall events that put them in a happy, sad, or angry mood. Or, they may be asked to taste different foods or beverages and rate their pleasantness. If they are smokers, they may be asked to smoke a cigarette and to rate its pleasantness or report its effect on their mood.
- ◆ Students may be asked to study a set of instructional materials, and then later to apply what they have learned. They may also be asked to complete a test on the instructional materials, or write an essay using what they learned from that material.
- ◆ Students may be asked to work together in small groups to solve a problem. Or they may be asked to consider a hypothetical situation and then decide how best to handle that situation. Their group interaction may be videotaped so that their problem-solving strategies can later be analyzed.
- ◆ Students also have the opportunity to participate in a "Mass Testing" session at the beginning of the semester in which a set of brief questionnaires are completed (typically 10-15 questionnaires). The questionnaires are used to identify potential participants for studies needing individuals with specific qualifications (e.g., have specific attitudes, values, beliefs, feelings, or preferences). Mass Testing questionnaires are identified by a confidential Personal Identification Number (PIN, such as 1632). Thus, researchers cannot identify who completed the questionnaires unless a student qualifies to participate in subsequent research, signs up to participate in the research, and then actually attends the experiment.

If you allow the student to participate in Psychology Department research as a means of earning PECs, he or she might participate in studies using any of these procedures. Or, he or she might participate in studies using other generally similar procedures that are not specifically described here.

The Psychology Department uses the SONA Systems subject pool management software. SONA essentially works as an online scheduling system that allows researchers to post experiments and students to sign up to participate in those experiments. SONA is a non-UIC data repository and management system (i.e., data is stored outside of UIC). When registering to use SONA, students will complete a short demographic questionnaire that asks for their name, UIC email address, instructor's name, date of birth, gender, race/ethnicity, handedness, and what languages they speak. Their name, email, and instructor's name are required to create a list of experiment credits for each instructor at the end of the semester. The remaining information is optional. The optional information enables the system to display research study sessions and professional training sessions that are most appropriate for each student (e.g., if a particular session is restricted to females only, then that session will be displayed only to female students). For security purposes, SONA will

collect IP addresses, but IP addresses will NOT be shared with third parties. The registration information and experiment participation information will be removed from SONA and stored locally (at UIC) within two years from the end of the semester. The SONA system has been evaluated by the UIC IRB and information technology security representatives at UIC to ensure the SONA system meets security standards necessary for storing FERPA data. Information transferred between UIC and SONA is encrypted during transmission. No protected health information will be collected by SONA.

In accordance with the Protection of Pupil Rights Amendment, as the parent/guardian of the student named above, you have the right to review any instruments (e.g., questionnaires) used to collect data from this student. This includes instruments for individual experiments and for Mass Testing. The instruments will be available for review at the Department of Psychology at UIC (1007 W. Harrison Street, Chicago, IL 60607) during regular business hours (Monday through Friday, 9:00 AM to 5:00 PM). Please contact Dr. Gary Raney (312-413-1314, geraney@uic.edu) if you wish to schedule a time to review the instruments used in the research.

What Are the Potential Risks and Discomforts?

All of the research studies in which the student would be eligible to participate have been reviewed and approved by an ethics review committee at UIC. The purpose of this committee is to examine each study, weigh the risks it may present in light of the benefits that may be gained, and ensure that the study is conducted in accordance with the highest ethical standards. This committee has judged that none of the research studies in which the student is eligible to participate involves more than minimal risk. This means that the risk to the student of participating is no greater than what is encountered in everyday life. Students under the age of 18 are not eligible to participate in research studies that involve more than minimal risk.

Are There Benefits to Taking Part in the Research?

By participating in Psychology Department research studies the student may help to advance the scientific study of human behavior. The student will also gain useful information that will help him or her better understand the material covered in Psychology 100. For example, it will help him or her understand examples given in class and in his or her textbook that illustrate how important psychological phenomena are studied scientifically.

What About Privacy and Confidentiality?

No one will know that the student is participating in research except the Psychology Department's PEC Faculty Coordinators, the researchers conducting the studies in which the student participates, other students who participate in the same mass testing session, and the student's Psychology 100 instructor and teaching assistants (if present). No information about the student, or provided by the student as part of the research, will be shared with others without the student's written permission, except if necessary to protect his/her rights or welfare (for example, when the UIC Institutional Review Board monitors the research or consent process), if required by law; or if the student's responses indicate suicidal ideation (i.e., the student is considering suicide). Further, although the student's Psychology 100 instructor will be told the total number of PECs that the student earned by participating in research (so that the student may be credited for participating), the instructor will not know which specific studies the student participated in, and no information collected as part of that research will be given to the instructor. There could be an exception in which the student will be asked for his/her email address or phone number on one or more of the forms during mass testing. The purpose of requesting the email address or phone number is so that a researcher can contact students who qualify to participate in a specific study. Providing a phone number is completely optional.

If the results of the research are published, or are discussed at scientific meetings, no information will be included that would reveal the student's identity. Any information obtained in these studies that might identify the student will remain confidential and will not be disclosed without the student's permission unless required by law.

Finally, all data obtained in these research studies will be stored in a secure manner to prevent access by unauthorized persons.

Will the Student Receive Credit For Participating in Research?

The student will receive Psychology Experience Credit (PEC) for each study he/she participates in. Credit is given according to the length of the study, where each hour of participation is worth 1 credit. Research studies typically last from 1/2 hour to 3 hours, so students usually earn from 1/2 to 3 PECs for each study they are in. These count toward the total of 8 PECs that the student is expected to earn.

What Other Options are There?

If you wish, you can decide not to give the student permission to participate in any research studies. If he or she is not, permitted to participate, there are still other ways to earn PECs. These include (a) writing summaries of published research reports found in the UIC library, and (b) volunteering to be interviewed or tested by another psychology student who is learning how to conduct an interview or give a psychological test. These alternatives do not involve participating in research, and have already been described to the student in the class handout entitled "The Psychology Experience Credit (PEC) Requirement for Psychology 100: Information for Students." If the student did not receive this handout, he/she may ask the course instructor for a copy. This document is also available on the Psychology Department's main web page, by clicking "Research," then clicking "Subject Pool," then clicking "The Psychology Experience Credit Requirement for Psychology 100 Students."

Can the Student Withdraw or be Removed From a Study?

If you allow the student to participate in research studies sponsored by the Psychology Department, and if he or she volunteers to participate, he or she may still withdraw at any time without consequences of any kind. Withdrawing from a study will not affect his or her class standing or grades at UIC. Alternatively, a researcher may withdraw the student from a study if circumstances warrant doing so. If this happens, the student's class standing will not be affected. The student will not be offered or receive any special consideration for participating in a research study.

Who Should I Contact If I Have Questions?

The faculty member who coordinates the Psychology Department PEC program is Dr. Gary Raney. If you have any questions, or if you would like additional information, please feel free to contact Dr. Raney by telephone at (312) 413-1314, or by email at pecolsus@uic.edu.

What About the Student's Rights as a Research Subject?

If you have any questions about the student's rights as a research subject, you may call UIC's Office for Protection of Research Subjects at (312) 996-1711, or toll free at 866-789-6215.

Remember: Participation in Psychology Department research is voluntary. Your decision whether or not to allow the student to participate will not affect his/her current or future relations with the University. If you decide to allow the student to participate, he/she may still withdraw at any time without affecting that relationship.

Signature of Parent or Guardian

I have read the information given above. I agree to allow the student to participate in those UIC Psychology Department research studies that he or she is eligible to participate in and that he or she chooses to participate in.

Signature of Parent or Guardian

Date

Printed Name

Please also provide your mailing address below. We will send you a confirmation of receipt of this document by U.S. Mail as soon the student returns it to the Psychology Department.

Address Line 1 _____

Address Line 2 _____

City, State, Zip _____