

The Psychology Experience Credit (PEC) Requirement for Psychology 100: Information for Students
UIC Research Protocol # 2004-0162
(Version 11/20/2018)

As a student taking Psychology 100, you are expected to earn 8 Psychology Experience Credits (PECs). Like any other course requirement, these credits will be factored into your final course grade (see course syllabus for details). You may earn your 8 PECs by any of three methods: (1) participating as a subject in IRB-approved research studies conducted under the supervision of Psychology Department faculty, (2) writing summaries of published empirical research, and (3) participating as a simulated client in one or more professional training sessions conducted by advanced undergraduate and graduate students in Psychology. You have the option of earning all 8 PECs by any one of these methods, or you may earn some PECs by each method. The requirement is simply that you earn a total of 8 PECs.

The reason for this requirement is to enhance your understanding of psychology as a science and as a professional practice. The descriptions of psychological research and practice that appear in textbooks offer an incomplete picture of what psychologists actually do. Consequently, there is educational value to be gained by experiencing first-hand some of the various kinds of psychological research studies and professional practice activities that psychology faculty and graduate students at UIC are engaged in. Similar benefits can be gained through supplementary readings that expose you to the published psychological research literature (i.e., beyond your textbook).

Participating in research or in a professional training session has additional benefits beyond enriching your own understanding of psychology. By choosing to participate as a subject in research, you can help to expand our collective understanding of human behavior and capacity. We already know a lot about human behavior, and much of this knowledge is documented in your textbook. But there is still a great deal more to learn, and we obtain this knowledge through new research. Psychological research is possible, however, only if people are willing to volunteer to participate in that research. Indeed, if it were not for the many thousands of people who generously volunteered to participate in the past, we would not know nearly as much about human behavior and experience as we do today. By choosing to participate as a subject in research, you will be helping to produce new knowledge that may benefit society as a whole. By choosing to participate as a simulated client in professional training sessions you will gain a better understanding of some of the specific activities that professional psychologists engage in, and you will be helping students in advanced psychology classes learn the skills and techniques practiced by psychologists in many professional settings. For example, you can help a student learn and practice interviewing skills simply by volunteering to be interviewed. There is nothing special you need to do for this -- just be yourself. If you decide to major in psychology, you might find yourself taking an advanced class of this sort. At that time you will get an opportunity to hone your own skills when other students volunteer to be interviewed by you.

What types of experiments are performed and what are the risks?

The specific procedure used in each study will be described to you prior to beginning an experiment so that you 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.

- You may be asked to complete one or more questionnaires that assess specific attitudes, values, beliefs, feelings, or preferences. For example, you 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 you know, whether or not you are a smoker or have recently tried to lose weight, or whether you have ever been the victim of a crime. Your responses to such questions are kept confidential, and are used for research purposes only.
- You 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 you take to solve them can be recorded.
- You may be asked to read a text or watch a video, 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.

- You may be asked to recall events that put you in a happy, sad, or angry mood. Or, you may be asked to taste different foods or beverages and rate their pleasantness. If you are a smoker, you may be asked to smoke a cigarette and to rate its pleasantness or report its effect on your mood.
- You may be asked to study a set of instructional materials, and then later to apply what you have learned. You may also be asked to complete a test on the instructional materials, or write an essay using what you learned from that material.
- You may be asked to work together in small groups to solve a problem. Or you may be asked to consider a hypothetical situation and then decide how best to handle that situation. The group interaction may be videotaped so that the problem-solving strategies can later be analyzed.

All of the research studies in which you are 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 you are eligible to participate involves more than minimal risk. This means that the risk to you 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.

Who should you contact if you have questions? If you have questions or concerns about the procedures for completing the PEC requirement described below, contact your Psychology 100 TA or Instructor. If your TA or Instructor is unable to answer your questions satisfactorily, contact the PEC Faculty Coordinator, Dr. Eric Leshikar, [office: 1042-D BSB, (312) 355-2739, pecolsus@uic.edu]. If you need special assistance in meeting the PEC requirement (e.g., wheelchair access, accommodation for a visual or hearing disability, etc.) please contact Dr. Leshikar.

1. PROCEDURE FOR PARTICIPATING AS A SUBJECT IN RESEARCH STUDIES

Credit

If you wish, you may earn some or all of your PECs by participating as a subject in research studies. Each hour of participation is worth 1 PEC. A few studies take only 1/2 hour to complete, and so are worth 1/2 PEC each. Many other studies take 1.0, 1.5, or even 2.0 hours to complete, and so are worth 1.0, 1.5 and 2.0 PECs, respectively. Some studies have multiple sessions (meet on multiple days) and can be worth several PECs. The amount of credit that a particular study carries will be noted in the listing for that study given in the on-line sign-up system (see below).

Sign-Up Procedure

If you wish to earn some or all of your PECs by participating as a subject in research studies, you must become familiar with the Department of Psychology On-Line Sign-Up System (called PECOLSUS). Pecolsus stands for Psychology Experience Credit On Line Sign Up System. This system is used to sign-up for both research studies and professional training sessions (described more fully below). The system is accessible online, and should work with any browser.

Pecolsus 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). In the remainder of this document, references to Pecolsus mean the SONA System software.

The URL for the sign-up system is: <https://uic.sona-systems.com/>.

Registering for the On-Line Sign-Up System. First-time users are required to register before using the PECOLSUS system. PECOLSUS can be accessed from the PECOLSUS link on the Psychology Department's web page. Clicking on the PECOLSUS link will take you to the subject pool home page.

First, you will log into Pecolsus after receiving an email with your user and login information. The first time you log in you will be asked to complete a short demographic questionnaire that asks for your name, your UIC email address, your instructor's name, your date of birth, gender, race/ethnicity, handedness, and what languages you speak. Your 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 for you those research study sessions and professional training sessions that are most appropriate for you (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 your IP address, 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.

Once you log in, you will see your unique Participant Identification Number (PIN). This PIN is the only identifying information that will be given to the person(s) running the research participation sessions and professional training sessions that you sign-up for before you attend the session (i.e., researchers do not know who you are in advance). **Please remember this number!** Write it down in a safe location! You will be required to provide your PIN each time you attend a research study session or professional training session, and it is via this PIN that you will receive credit for participating. After recording your PIN, you may log in to the on-line sign-up system at any time to sign up for research study sessions and professional training sessions.

NOTE: If you are less than 18 years old, federal regulations require that you obtain written parental permission to participate in any form of University sponsored research. You will not be allowed to use the on-line sign-up system until you obtain this written parental permission. If you are less than 18 years old, you will be asked to fill out parental permission form entitled "Parent/Guardian Permission to Participate in Research" which you will receive in class or can find on the Psychology department webpage. At this point you may complete the normal registration process, but you will not be allowed to sign up for experiments until you submit the permission form to the PEC Faculty Coordinator. The form is also accessible on the Psychology Department web site (click on *Department* then *Human Subjects*, then *Subject Pool*). Either way, you must obtain a parent's signature on the form, and you must deliver the signed form to the office of the PEC Faculty Coordinator (Dr. Eric Leshikar). Once the PEC Faculty Coordinator has received the signed form, you will be allowed to use the on-line sign-up system.

Mass Testing. Psychological research is sometimes geared toward studying individuals who possess certain attitudes, values, beliefs, or other unique characteristics. In order to conduct such research in an expeditious manner, it is useful to determine ahead of time which potential participants have the target characteristic(s), and what the distribution of the target characteristic(s) is in the Psychology 100 student population. We do this by administering a series of short online questionnaires to students during class at the beginning of each semester. We call this process "Mass Testing." The questionnaires you will be asked to complete will be available online. Please see the form "Agreement to Participate in Research: Psychology Department Mass Testing" for more information about Mass Testing.

Using the On-Line Sign-Up System. After logging in to Pecolus, you will see the main menu bar at the top of the screen. The main menu offers you three primary options.

STUDIES: Clicking on this menu item displays the sessions that are currently available to you for the next 14 days. Each line in the display lists a different session, and each session is identified by a unique study number. The day, date, start time, and length of the session is given, along with the location of the session. This location is the room you must go to in order to participate in the session. Also listed is whether or not there are any special instructions for the session, the number of PECs the session is worth, and the name of the contact person for that session. To sign-up for a session, simply check the checkbox next to the listing for that session. Please note the following important points about signing up.

(a) **Please read any special instructions carefully!** They may indicate that you are not eligible to participate in that particular session. For example, the session may be open only to students who are currently involved in a romantic relationship, or who are native English speakers (i.e., who grew up speaking English as a child, whether or not they have learned additional languages since then). Or, the special instructions may limit participation only to students whose PIN is listed in the special instructions. In the latter case, your PIN must be on the list to be eligible. If you sign up for a session that you are not eligible to participate in according to the special instructions, you will not be allowed to participate in that session, and you will not earn any PECs for it. Again, **read the special instructions carefully.**

(b) Some sessions are labeled with the letters "PTA". This signifies that the session is a Professional Training Activity. PTA activities do not involve research. PTA activities are training opportunities for advanced students. As an example, you could sign-up to serve as a simulated client in a therapeutic testing session (assuming you qualify according to any special instructions that may be posted for it). Professional training activities are described more fully near the end of this document.

(c) After you have signed-up for a session, copy the information (e.g., to the calendar on your phone) so that you can access it later. Copy this information as soon as you sign up so that you will have it as a reminder of your appointment. There is an option to receive an email or text message reminder to attend an experiment. If you want to receive the reminder, you will need to enter your email or phone number, whichever you choose.

(d) If for any reason you need to contact someone about a particular session, you may do so by clicking on the name of the contact person for that session. Doing so enables you to send email to that person.

(e) The number of available sessions that are listed for a particular date can vary from day to day. For example, if you log in to look at a particular date, and log in again the next day, the number of sessions listed for that date may go up, go down, or stay the same. The number of available sessions may go up if researchers add more sessions for that date. The number of available sessions listed for a particular date will go down when other students sign-up for those sessions. When another student signs up for a session, that session may become unavailable to you if the session becomes full (i.e., maximum enrollment is reached).

(f) You may access a list of the sessions you have signed up for from the "Studies" page. Listed are the sessions you signed-up for that have already taken place (past sessions), as well as the sessions you signed-up for that will take place in the future (future sessions). Each session listing contains all of the same information as before, plus an additional field indicating whether or not you attended the session.

Concerning **past sessions**, researchers are expected to record students' attendance no later than midnight on Sunday by the end of the week in which the session occurred. For example, if you participate in a study on a Tuesday and another study on Thursday, by the next Monday morning you should have received credit for both sessions from the previous week. The attendance field may be marked in any of the following four ways:

Unassigned: This means that the researcher has not yet recorded your attendance, and that no PECs have yet been assigned for that session.

If a session from this week is marked "Unassigned," wait until next week to verify that you have been properly credited.

If a session from last week is marked "Unassigned," email the contact person for that session and ask that your attendance be recorded. Be sure to provide the study number, along with the date and time of the session you attended, and your PIN.

Attended: Means that you attended the session and that you earned the number of PECs indicated for that session. Once you are marked as having attended a session, the on-line sign-up system will not allow you to sign-up for any additional sessions from that same study (i.e., sessions bearing the same study number will not be displayed).

No Show: Means that you did not attend the session (or that you showed up so late you could not participate), and that you consequently have forfeited the opportunity to earn 1 PEC by participating in either research or professional training sessions (this forfeiture is described more fully below). If you like, you may sign-up for another session of that same study in the future. But please show up and be on time. If you don't, you will forfeit a second opportunity to earn 1 PEC by participation!

Excused: Means that you were excused from a session without participating (usually due to a legitimate medical or family emergency) and that you neither earned nor lost PECs. If you like, you may sign-up for a session from that same study again in the future.

Concerning **future sessions**, if you change your mind and decide that you do not want to participate in a future session that you have signed-up for, you may remove yourself simply by clicking the "Remove" box next to the listing for that session. If you do this, the session is removed from the list of enrolled session and you are no longer signed up for that session.

Please Note: You can remove yourself only from sessions scheduled on the following day or later. In other words, you must remove yourself by midnight of the day before the session. You cannot remove yourself from sessions run on or before the current day. If you are still signed-up for a session on the day that session is to be run, it is expected that you will show up and that you will be on time for it. If you do not show up, or if you are so late that you cannot participate, you will forfeit the opportunity to earn 1 PEC by participating in either

research or professional training sessions (see below). If there is a legitimate emergency and you need to contact the researcher on the day of the study, you can login to the on-line sign-up system, then click on the name of the contact person for the session in question. This will enable you to send an email to that person. Explain your emergency in your email message and be sure to give (a) the study number of the session, as well as its date, time, and location, (b) your PIN, and (c) an email address or telephone number where you can be contacted if necessary. You may contact the PEC Faculty Coordinator (Dr. Eric Leshikar) if a problem arises (e.g., if you believe you have a valid emergency that the emergency contact person does not consider to be a valid emergency).

Credit is not assigned for a session until after the session has been run. Therefore, all future sessions will be marked "Unassigned."

Total PECs Earned So Far is reported on the page listing the studies you have completed. Also reported there is the maximum number of PECs you may earn by participating either in research studies or in professional training sessions. This maximum is computed by subtracting from 8 the number of sessions marked "No Show." If the maximum shown is less than 8, you will have to make up the difference by one of the written alternative (see below for more details).

SETUP: Clicking this menu item enables you to (a) change the password you set for logging in to the on-line sign-up system, and (b) change your personal information (e.g., email address).

LOGOUT: Clicking on this menu item logs you out of the system.

If You are Late or Do Not Keep an Appointment

It is your responsibility to show up and to be on time for each of the sessions you have signed up for. Therefore, you should sign up only if you are sure you can be there on time. If you are late, even by a minute or two, you may not be able to participate. Sessions generally start on time, and it is usually not possible to join a session once it has begun. **IF YOU DO NOT SHOW UP AT ALL -- OR ARE SO LATE THAT YOU CANNOT PARTICIPATE -- YOU WILL FORFEIT ONE OR MORE FUTURE OPPORTUNITIES TO EARN PECs BY PARTICIPATION.** Specifically, if you fail to show up for a session (regardless of whether it is a research session or a professional training session), you will forfeit the opportunity to earn 1 PEC by participation. This means that you may earn no more than 7 of the required 8 PECs by participating in research and/or professional training sessions; the remaining 1 PEC will have to be earned by one of the written alternatives (see below under "Procedures for Summarizing Published Empirical Research"). If you fail to show up on a second occasion, you will forfeit the opportunity to earn a second PEC by participation (i.e., at least 2 PECs will have to be earned by one of the written alternatives).

Three-Strikes and You're Out! If you fail to show up a third time (i.e., you are involved in 3 separate no-show incidents), you will forfeit all further access to the on-line sign-up system. This restriction will apply for the rest of the semester! This means that all of your remaining PECs will have to be earned by one of the written alternatives.

Waiver of the No-Show Forfeiture. The no-show forfeiture may be waived in the case of a legitimate medical or family emergency. In such cases, please contact the PEC Faculty Coordinator (Dr. Eric Leshikar).

At the Study. If at any time during a study you find anything objectionable and do not want to do it, you have the right to refuse to perform that task. The researcher may ask you to complete other parts of the study, and if you are agreeable you may continue. If, on the other hand, you prefer to leave the study, you may do so without penalty. In either case, you should report the incident to the PEC Faculty Coordinator (Dr. Eric Leshikar).

In order to help make participating in research studies a useful learning experience, each researcher will explain the purpose of the study. If you have questions about the study, feel free to ask them when you have finished participating. Occasionally, a researcher will ask you to wait until all subjects have participated in the study before explaining it in detail. In this case the researcher will tell you when and where you can expect to get additional information about the study.

2. PROCEDURE FOR SUMMARIZING EMPIRICAL RESEARCH

Students may earn some or all of their PECs is by summarizing published empirical research articles. There are two forms of this activity, and these carry different amounts of credit, according to the amount of time and effort required for each. These two forms are (a) writing article summaries, and (b) preparing bibliographic synopses.

(A) Article Summaries

The first form of this activity consists of reading empirical research articles published in any peer-reviewed psychological journal, and then writing brief 400-500 word summaries of those articles.

Credit. Each summary is worth 2 PECs. Thus, one summary is equivalent to 2 hours worth of research participation. Students who wish to do so may earn all 8 PECs by writing a total of four article summaries. Or, you may earn some of your PECs by this method, and some by one of the other methods.

Summaries may be turned in to your Psychology 100 teaching assistant (TA) at any time until the last day of class. Summaries turned in after the last day of class will not be accepted. Your TA will read and evaluate each summary. Summaries will be evaluated on an acceptable/not-acceptable basis. An acceptable summary will include a complete reference to the summarized article, along with a brief description, in your own words, of (a) the purpose of the research, that is, what theory or hypothesis was tested, (b) the basic procedure used to test that theory or hypothesis, (c) what was actually found, and (d) what the findings mean for the theory or hypothesis tested. You might also consider whether there are any personal applications that the results suggest, how society might utilize those findings, and/or what additional research seems appropriate. Along with each summary, you must submit a copy of the abstract from the published article.

You can get ideas about journal articles that you might like to read from the bibliography in your textbook. You might also consider getting the titles of articles written by UIC faculty. Your Psychology 100 teaching assistant can advise you about ways to find such articles. You are encouraged to seek guidance from your Psychology 100 TA both in selecting appropriate articles to read and in writing the summaries. **One easy way to find articles is by using google scholar (scholar.google.com). Choose a topic from psychology that you are interested in, then use that topic area as a key word, and do a google scholar search (scholar.google.com).** Doing this will help allow you find articles that you are most interested in.

(B) Bibliographic Synopsis

The second form of the summarizing activity involves creating bibliographic synopses of small clusters of research articles written by the same researcher and published in any peer-reviewed psychological journal.

Credit. Each synopsis is worth 0.5 PEC. Thus, one synopsis is equivalent to 1/2 hour worth of research participation. Students who wish to do so may earn all 8 PECs by writing a total of sixteen synopses. Or, you may earn some of your PECs by this method, and some by one of the other methods.

The creation of a bibliographic synopsis begins by identifying a key reference cited in the chapter currently being covered in your Psychology 100 class. A key reference is defined as a citation for any empirical research study that is discussed at some length (e.g., a paragraph or more) in the textbook. Then, using the Library's online bibliographic resources (e.g., PsychInfo, Social Sciences Citation Index, etc.) or even google scholar, you should try to identify five additional empirical articles written by the same author but not cited in your Psychology 100 textbook. You should print a copy of the online abstract from each of these five articles, read those abstracts carefully, and write a 3-5 sentence synopsis that identifies the underlying theme common to all five articles and that links them to the key citation found in the textbook. The goal of this activity is to help you see the programmatic approach that most researchers take to their work.

Synopses must be turned in to your Psychology 100 TA by the last day of class. No synopses will be accepted after the last day of class (or later). Your TA will read and evaluate each synopsis. Synopses will be evaluated on an acceptable/not-acceptable basis. Acceptable synopses will include (a) a complete printed reference and abstract for each of the five articles identified, and (b) a 3-5 sentence written statement, in your own words, describing the main theme(s) that tie the five articles to one another and to the key reference found in the textbook. You are encouraged to seek guidance from your Psychology 100 TA both in selecting key references from the textbook and in writing the synopsis.

3. PROCEDURE FOR PARTICIPATING AS A SIMULATED CLIENT IN PROFESSIONAL TRAINING SESSIONS

A final way to earn PECs is by volunteering to serve as a simulated client in one or more professional training sessions conducted by and for students enrolled in advanced undergraduate and graduate-level courses in psychology. These training sessions are used to teach advanced undergraduate and graduate students the skills needed to conduct interviews and administer various kinds of psychological tests, and take place under the close supervision of the Psychology Department faculty teaching those courses.

Please note that these training exercises have no research component whatsoever. Further, the person receiving the training is the advanced undergraduate or graduate student conducting the session, not you. Nevertheless, by choosing to participate in one or more of these sessions you will gain a better understanding of some of the specific activities that many professional psychologists engage in. There is nothing special you need to do for this activity, other than show up on time and be yourself.

Credit. Each hour of participation in professional training sessions is worth 1 PEC. Credit is given in 1/2 hour increments, according to the length of the session. Thus, you earn the same credit for participating in professional training sessions as you would earn for participating for a comparable amount of time in research studies. Because these professional training exercises sometimes call for two or three sessions over a two-to-three-week period, you may be asked to return one or more times. If you do return, you will be given credit for each additional session you attend.

Sign-Up Procedure. The sign-up procedures for participating as a simulated client in professional training sessions are identical to the sign-up procedures for research participation. Thus, you must use the on-line sign-up system to sign-up for these sessions. Professional training activities are signified in the on-line sign-up system by the letters **PTA**.

Please note that professional training sessions in which Psychology 100 students may participate as simulated clients are not available at all times during the semester. They are most commonly available during the final third of the semester.

At the Session. If at any time during a session you find anything objectionable and do not want to do it, you have the right to refuse. The person conducting the session may ask you to complete other parts of the activity, and if you are agreeable you may continue. If, on the other hand, you prefer to leave, you may do so without penalty. In either case, you should report the incident to the PEC Faculty Coordinator (Dr. Eric Leshikar).

WHO SHOULD YOU CONTACT IF YOU HAVE QUESTIONS?

If you have questions or concerns about the procedures for completing the PEC requirement described below, contact your Psychology 100 TA or Instructor. If your TA or Instructor is unable to answer your questions satisfactorily, contact the PEC Faculty Coordinator, Dr. Eric Leshikar, [office: 1042-D BSB, 312-355-2739, leshikar@uic.edu]. If you need special assistance in meeting the PEC requirement (e.g., wheelchair access, accommodation for a visual or hearing disability, etc.) please contact Dr. Leshikar.