

SONA PARTICIPANT (STUDENT) DOCUMENTATION

Getting Started

The system works best if you use any popular web browser that is less than 2 years old, like Internet Explorer, Firefox, Safari, and Chrome. It will work with other web browsers, and with older versions of popular web browsers, but the layout may not be as clean. The software will work if you are using a screen reader or other tools for those hard of hearing or sight. On this system, it is not necessary to use the Back button. You can always use the toolbar on the top to navigate anywhere on the site.

As a student in a course that requires research participation, you will automatically receive login information from the Research Participation System around the end of the second week of the term. If you do not receive your login information, please check your email program's junk mail folder before contacting the administrator at researchadmin@noctrl.edu. The most common reason for not receiving login information is that your email program classified the email as junk mail.

Logging In

Once you have your login information, go to <https://northcentralcollege.sona-systems.com/> and enter your user ID and password to log in. (Once you log in, you may be asked to participate in a prescreening. If so, you will see the Main Menu after you complete the prescreening.)

Your login (also known as a session) will expire after a certain period of inactivity, usually 20 minutes, for security purposes. If this happens, you can always log in again.

Retrieving a Lost Password. If you have forgotten or do not have your password, there are two ways you can get your password.

1. You can have your password emailed to you by sending an email to researchadmin@noctrl.edu.
2. If you are already in SONA (<https://northcentralcollege.sona-systems.com/>), click on the gray toolbar on the right side of the page that says *Lost Password?*. Next, type in your login (the information before the @ in your North Central login). Your password will be emailed after you submit the form and should appear in your North Central email box momentarily.

Logging Out

When you are done using the system, choose *Log Out* from the toolbar on the left side to log out. You are now logged out. It is always a good security measure to close all your browser windows as well, especially if you are using a computer that is shared by others.

Changing Your Password and Other Information

If you would like to change your password or other information about yourself, choose *My Profile* from the top toolbar. If you would like to change your password, type your new password (twice, for confirmation) in the provided boxes. If you would *not* like to change your password, simply leave these boxes empty.

Studies

With SONA, you may view studies and sign up for those that fit your schedule and where you meet any special eligibility restrictions (if there are any). You may also cancel your sign-up through the system.

Viewing Studies

To view a list of studies, click on *Studies* from top toolbar. You will see a list of studies and any special requirements that may restrict your eligibility to participate in a study.

Studies that currently have available participation times (timeslots) will have “TIMESLOTS AVAILABLE” listed next to the name of the study. If no studies have available timeslots, login to the system a few days later to see if new timeslots have been added. You may also select a specific date to view studies with available timeslots on that date.

To view more information about a study, click on the name of the study.

Two-Part Studies. Some studies are two-part studies. In some cases, you must sign up for both parts of the study at once, and the two parts must be scheduled a certain amount of time apart. These studies will be clearly marked, and the system will make sure you are only able to sign up for timeslots with the appropriate amount of time between the first and second part. In other cases, you must complete the first part of the study before you can sign up for the second part. The first study is a prerequisite for the second study; SONA will clearly show that the second study has another study as a prerequisite.

Signing Up For Studies

To sign up to participate in a study, find the study you would like to participate in (see **Viewing Studies** above). You will see a list of any special restrictions or eligibility requirements, as well as the name of a contact person.

If the study has certain *pre-requisites or disqualifiers*, those will be listed, as well as a note about whether you meet those eligibility requirements. If you have already signed up for a study that has another study listed as a disqualifier study, then you will not be able to sign up for the other study.

The study may have other restrictions listed as ***Eligibility Requirements***. An example of an eligibility requirement is “males only.” If an Eligibility Requirement is listed, do not sign up for the study unless you meet this restriction. If you sign up for the study and you do not meet the restrictions, you will not be allowed to participate and will not receive credit for it.

Sign-up and cancellation deadlines for the study will be listed; deadlines are based on the date of each timeslot.

If you are viewing a study which you have signed up for in the past and already participated in, and are not allowed to sign up for it again, then you will not see the list of timeslots for the study.

Some studies require a special password (known as an *Invitation Code*) to sign up. If this is the 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 login to the system. You will need to enter the invitation code just before you click the *Sign Up* button to sign up for a timeslot.

You may only sign up for a timeslot until 2 hours before that timeslot is scheduled to occur. The system will not show a *Sign Up* button for timeslots when it is too late to sign up. If you sign up for a timeslot and you already have another signup in the system at the same time, the system will warn you of the scheduling conflict (though it will not prevent the sign-up).

Once you have determined you meet all the requirements, click on *View Timeslots for This Study* and you will see a list of available timeslots. Choose a timeslot that is convenient for you, and click *Sign Up*.

After you click *Sign Up*, you will see information displayed confirming the time and location of the study you plan to participate in. You will receive an email confirmation, too. You are now signed up for the study.

Canceling a Sign-Up

If you need to cancel a timeslot you have signed up for, choose the *My Schedule/Credits* option from top toolbar.

You will see listed all the studies you have signed up for, as well as those you have completed (see the **Tracking Your Progress** section of this document for more information).

Studies you have signed up for that you are allowed to cancel will have a *Cancel* button next to them. You can cancel through SONA up to 2 hours before the study is to occur; after that, it is too late to cancel. This restriction may be listed at the bottom of the page, or can be found by clicking on the study name and viewing the study details.

Once you click *Cancel*, you will see a confirmation page. You will also be warned if your cancellation might affect your ability to participate in other studies you have signed up for. If the cancellation will affect your ability to participate in another study you are signed up for, it is *your* responsibility to cancel the other study as well. The system will warn you, but will not block the cancellation or cancel the other study.

Click *Yes* to cancel your sign-up, and the sign-up will be cancelled immediately.

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. Remember, you do not get credit for the first part unless you participate in both parts.

Tracking Your Progress

You may track your progress at any time by choosing the *My Schedule/Credits* option from the top toolbar.

When you view this page, you will see at the top a list of the number of credits you are expected to earn, and how many you have earned so far. (You may also have an option to view how many credits you have earned for each course if you are enrolled in more than one course that requires research credit). Below that, if you have signed up for any studies, those are also listed. In the list of studies, you will see information about your credit status.

If you did not show up for a study you signed up for, you were assessed a penalty. The penalty will be shown in your progress information, and it increases the number of credits you must earn. If there is a negative value for the number of credits you have earned, you have more penalties (no-shows) than earned credits.

Frequently Asked Questions

Immediately after I login, as soon as I click on any menu option, I am taken back to the login page and I see a message that my authentication has expired. What does this mean?

Your web browser is not properly configured to accept cookies. You should turn on cookies in your web browser, use a different web browser (for example, try Firefox if you are currently using Internet Explorer), or try a different computer. Detailed instructions can be found if you go to the site and enter the url “cookie_help.aspx” in place of “default.aspx” in the address bar of the browser, when you are on the front page of the site. The easiest thing to do is simply to use another computer. Usually, the computers in the computer labs are configured correctly.

I participated in a study, but I have yet to receive credit. How do I receive credit?

The researcher must grant you credit. This is usually done shortly after your participation. If it has been some time and you have still not received credit, contact the researcher.

Who can see the information about my sign-ups? I don't want everyone to know which studies I signed up for.

Only the researcher of the study may see that you have signed up for it, along with the participant pool administrator. No other users, including other researchers or your instructor, may see this information.

I noticed that with some studies, I can sign up for them again even if I participated before, while others don't allow for this. Why is this?

Researchers can choose if their studies allow you to participate more than once. Most studies do not allow you to participate more than once.

I attempted to sign up for a study, and I couldn't because the study I was trying to sign up for is a disqualifier for another study I am scheduled to participate in. Why is this?

If you have signed up for a study that has disqualifiers (studies you must *not* have participated in to participate in that study), you may not then sign up for the studies that are listed as the disqualifier studies. You *are* allowed to sign up for the disqualifier studies if the disqualifier study will take place after the study with disqualifiers, or if you have already participated in (and received credit for) the study with disqualifiers. The easiest way to sign up for both studies is to schedule the disqualifier study at a time later than the study with disqualifiers.