Psychology Participant Pool

Participant Manual

Department of Psychology
University of Windsor

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Fifth Edition

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All policies within the fifth edition supersede the policies in the previous editions.

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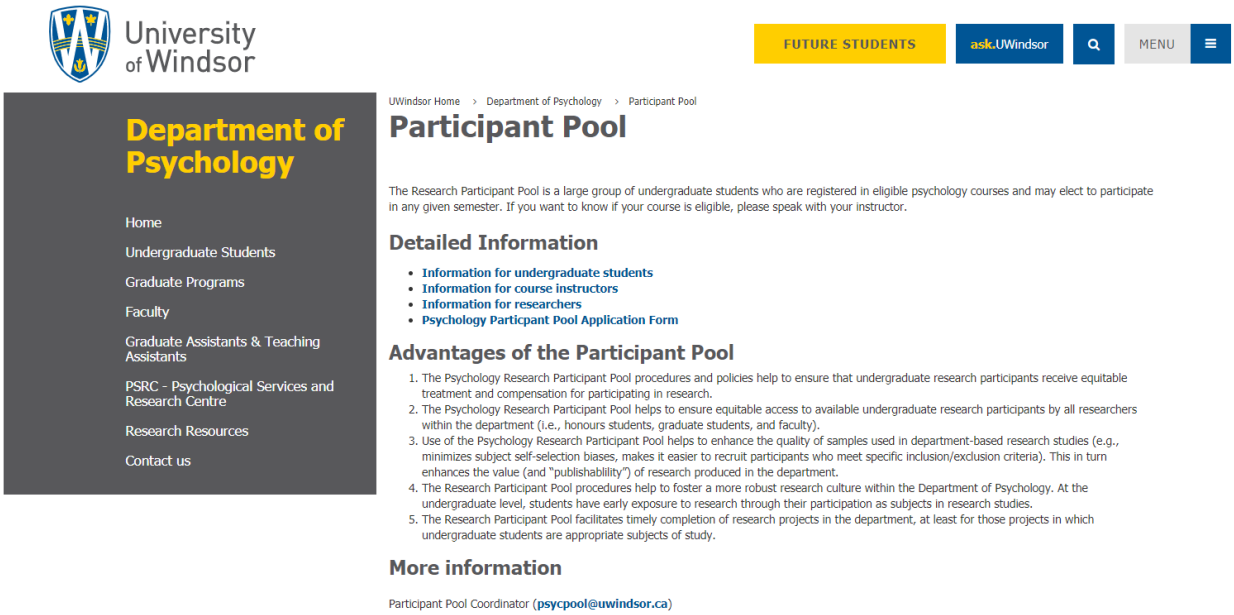
Welcome to the Research Participant Pool

Each term we offer undergraduate students the opportunity to earn bonus points in their psychology courses while at the same time helping researchers in the psychology department collect important and meaningful data. This research enterprise is called the *Psychology Participant Pool*. We would like to welcome you as part of this pool and ask that you participate following the guidelines set out in this manual.

If you choose not to participate in the pool, or find that you are unable to collect any or all of your bonus points through the pool, we encourage you to consult your course syllabi for information on the alternate assignment your professor(s) will be offering to earn bonus points.

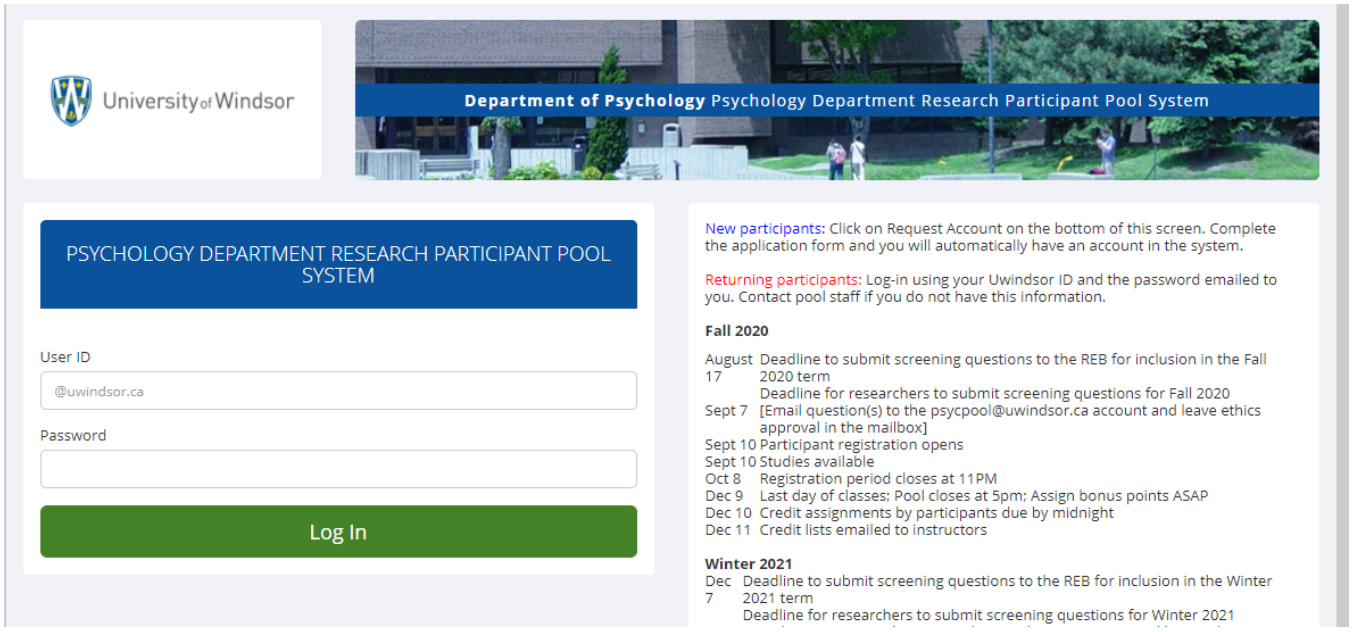
Website address

The participant pool website can be found at: http://uwindsor.sona-systems.com. Instructions and other useful information regarding the participant pool can also be found on the Department of Psychology website at http://www.uwindsor.ca/psychology.



Important dates

Important dates for each term will be posted on http://uwindsor.sona-systems.com.



Important dates to watch for:

- The initial registration period (two to three weeks at the beginning of the term).
- The dates when studies become available.
- The final date to earn credits.
- The date by which credits must be assigned to your courses.

Compensation through the pool

The only form of compensation provided through the Participant Pool is bonus marks. Presently each 30 minutes of research participation is awarded .5 bonus points. Thus:

- 30 minutes = 0.5 points
- 60 minutes = 1 point
- 90 minutes = 1.5 points
- 120 minutes = 2 points
- 150 minutes = 2.5 points
- 180 minutes = 3 points

In-lab studies worth less than 3 points will award participants with an additional .5 point credit for travel time. A bonus point is equivalent to a percentage point added to a student's final grade in a course (i.e., 1 point = 1%).

Responsibilities as a Participant

In the online Participant Pool system, you have a significant amount of responsibility as a participant. Each term you are responsible to:

- register (and re-register) in the pool **(registration includes completion of the pre-screen questionnaire and selection of your courses**)
- sign up for studies (as early as possible in the term to ensure you have time to choose studies and to earn credits throughout the term)
- assign your credits to your courses before the credit assignment deadline
- acquaint yourself with the important dates for the term **(important dates are found on the front page of the SONA System)**
- check your email and the notices posted on the Participant Pool website regularly

As well, once you have consented to participate in a researcher's study, there is a clear expectation that you will participate in **good faith**, which means that you will not deliberately undermine or otherwise adversely impact the researcher's study. Among the ways that participants can deliberately undermine or otherwise adversely impact a researcher's study are:

- Rushing through the study (whether an online survey or an in-person/in-lab performance task, etc.) without reasonable thought and effort;
- Completing a study in considerably less time than the researcher estimated participation should take because you rushed;
- Omitting or otherwise failing to complete parts of the study (including survey items) in order to finish more quickly (which is a problem that is distinct from declining to respond to a survey item or element of a study task because you feel uncomfortable doing so);
- Signing up for timeslots for studies but then failing to show-up or complete your participation within the time frame given.

There are numerous other ways a participant can deliberately undermine or otherwise adversely impact a researcher's study, of course. The point here is that researchers must conduct their studies in an ethically sound manner (whether the study involves the Participant Pool or not) and researchers are trusting participants to participate in accordance with the study instructions and not adversely impact the study.

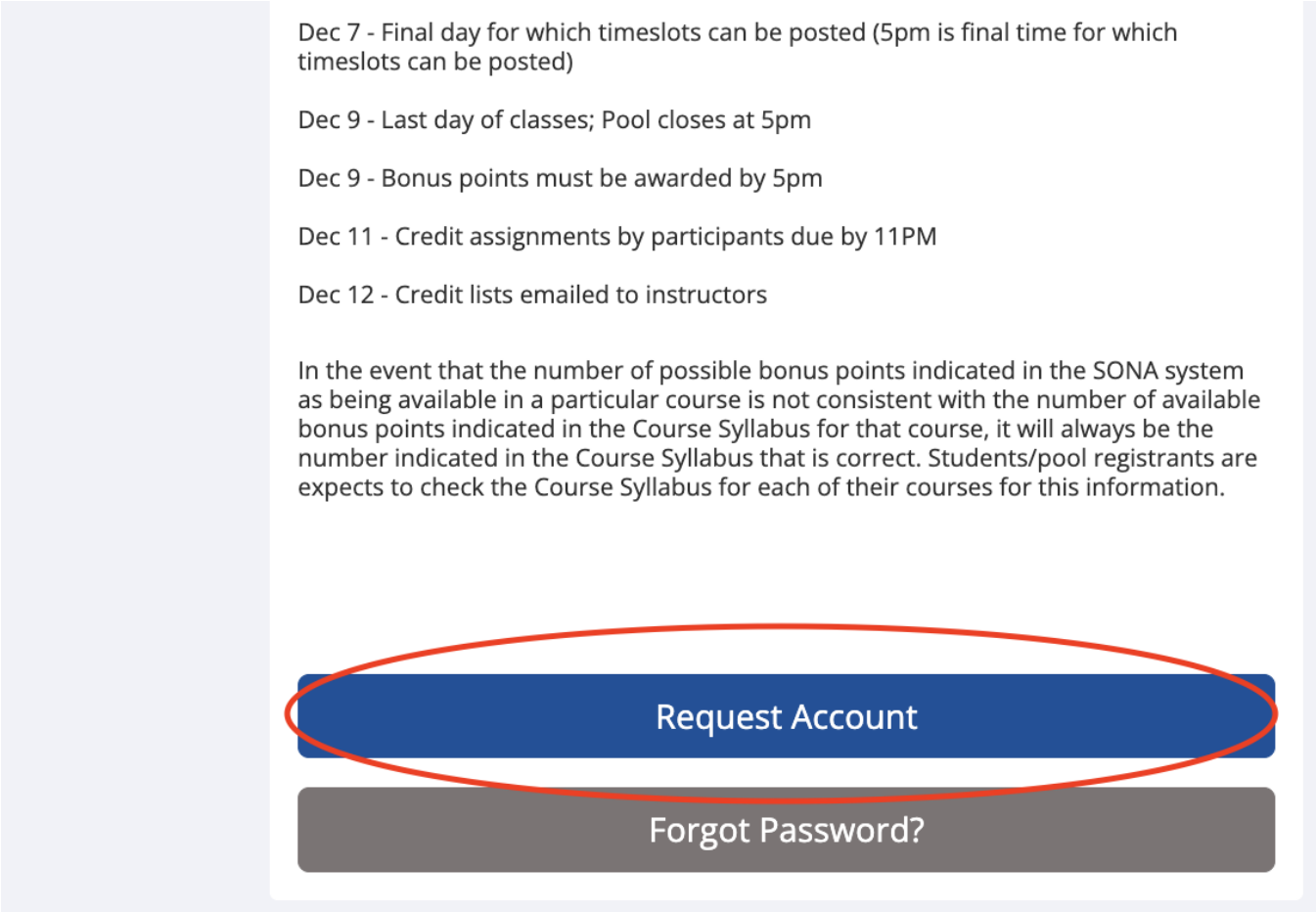
Note that points earned in a given term/semester must be applied in that term/semester and **cannot be carried over to another term/semester for any reason**. If you drop a course for which you have already earned bonus points, you will forfeit the points. Nevertheless, you will have helped out the researcher and have had the opportunity to learn about psychological research.

Other than in exceptional circumstances, all emails directed to the psycpool@uwindsor.ca mailbox will be replied to within **3 business days**. We thank you in advance for your patience. Please review this manual before emailing us, as many routine questions are answered here. **For a quick reference, see the Frequently Asked Questions (FAQ) section on page 21.**

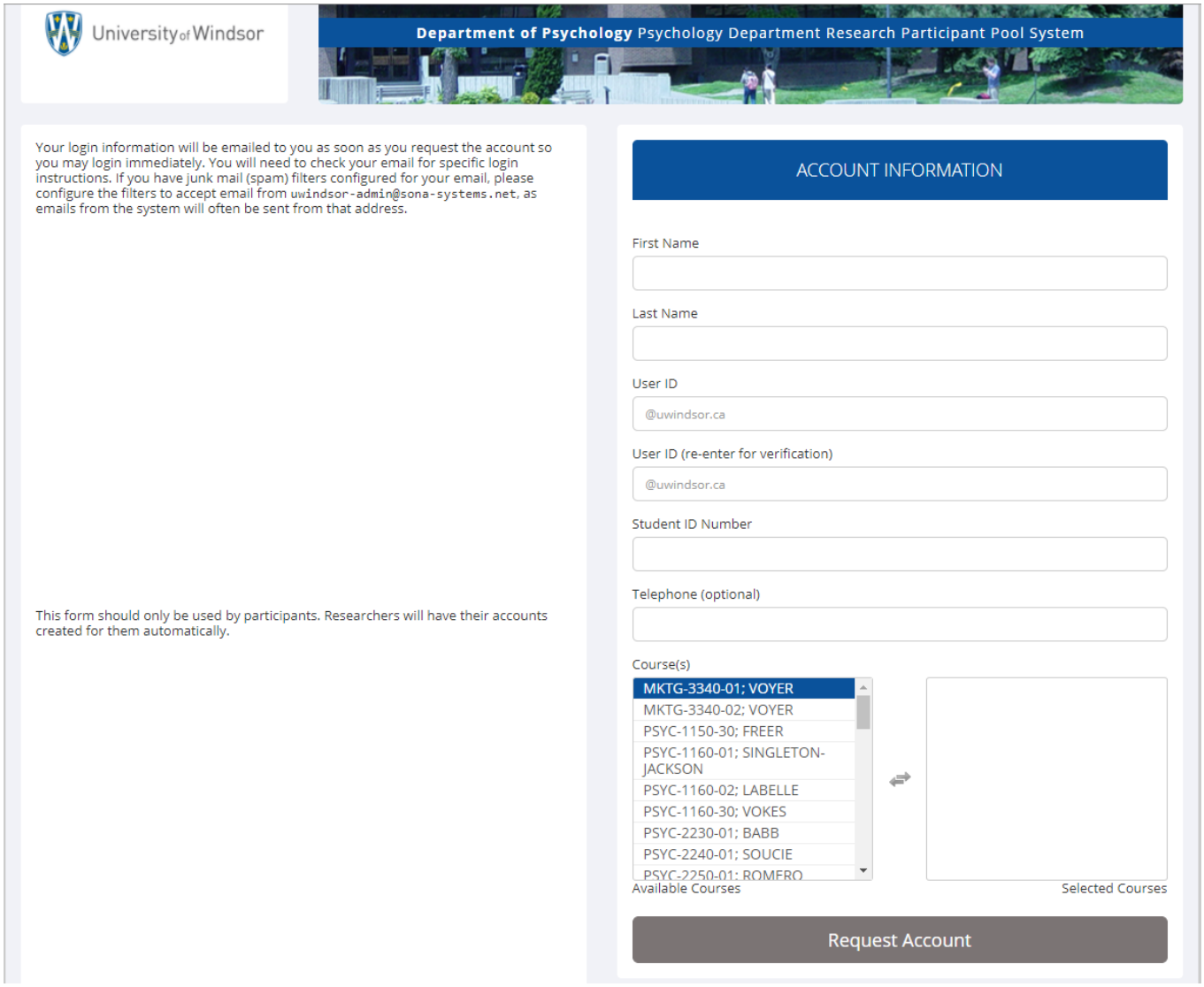
Registering for the Participant Pool

Registration

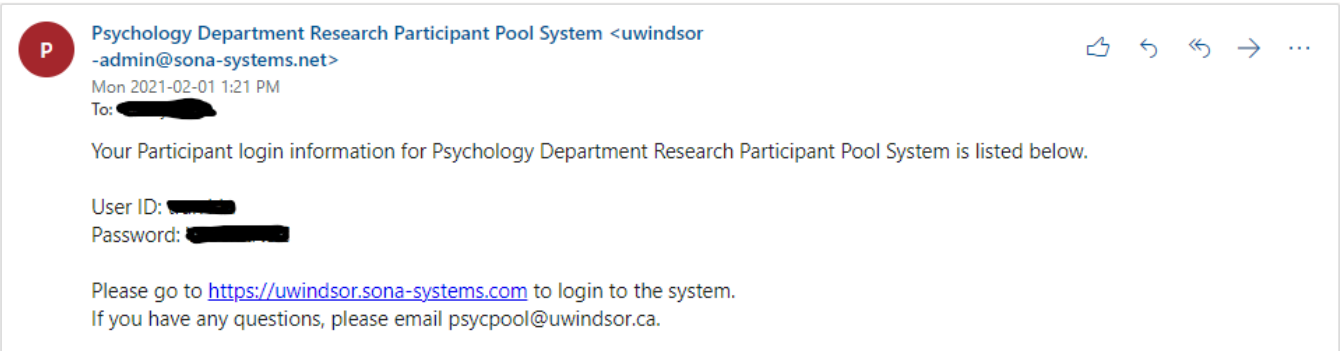
In order to register for the Psychology Participant Pool, go to: http://uwindsor.sona-systems.com/. Click on the "Request Account" link at the bottom of your screen (please scroll to the bottom of the webpage to find it under the important dates).



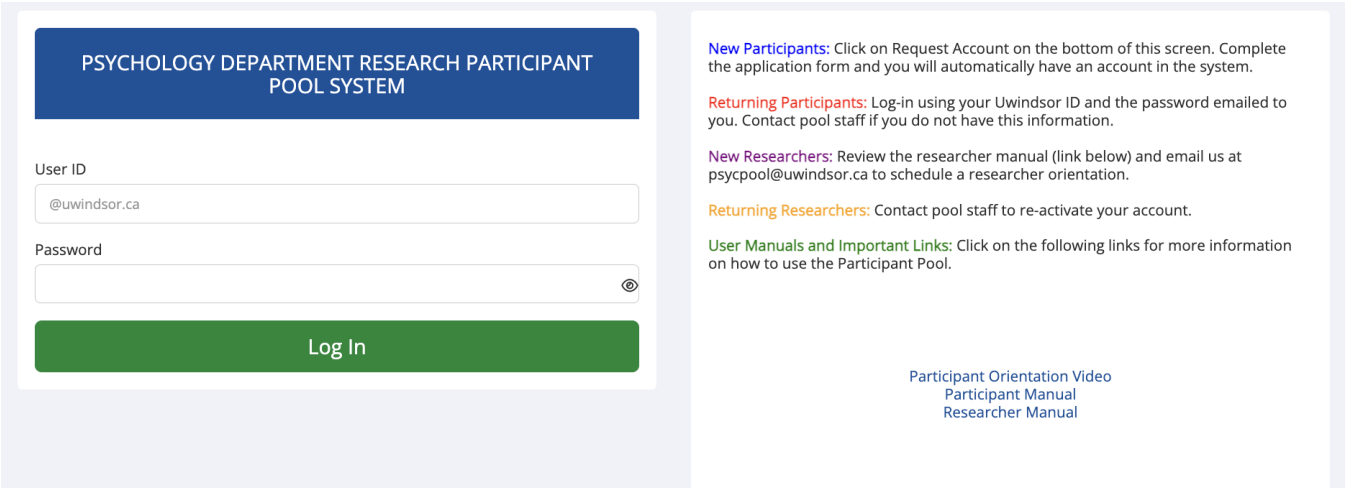
Fill in the information on the new page that appears, including your uwindsor email address, name, student number, courses, and contact information.



A verification email will be generated and sent to the email address under which you have registered. When you receive this verification email, follow the instructions provided within it.

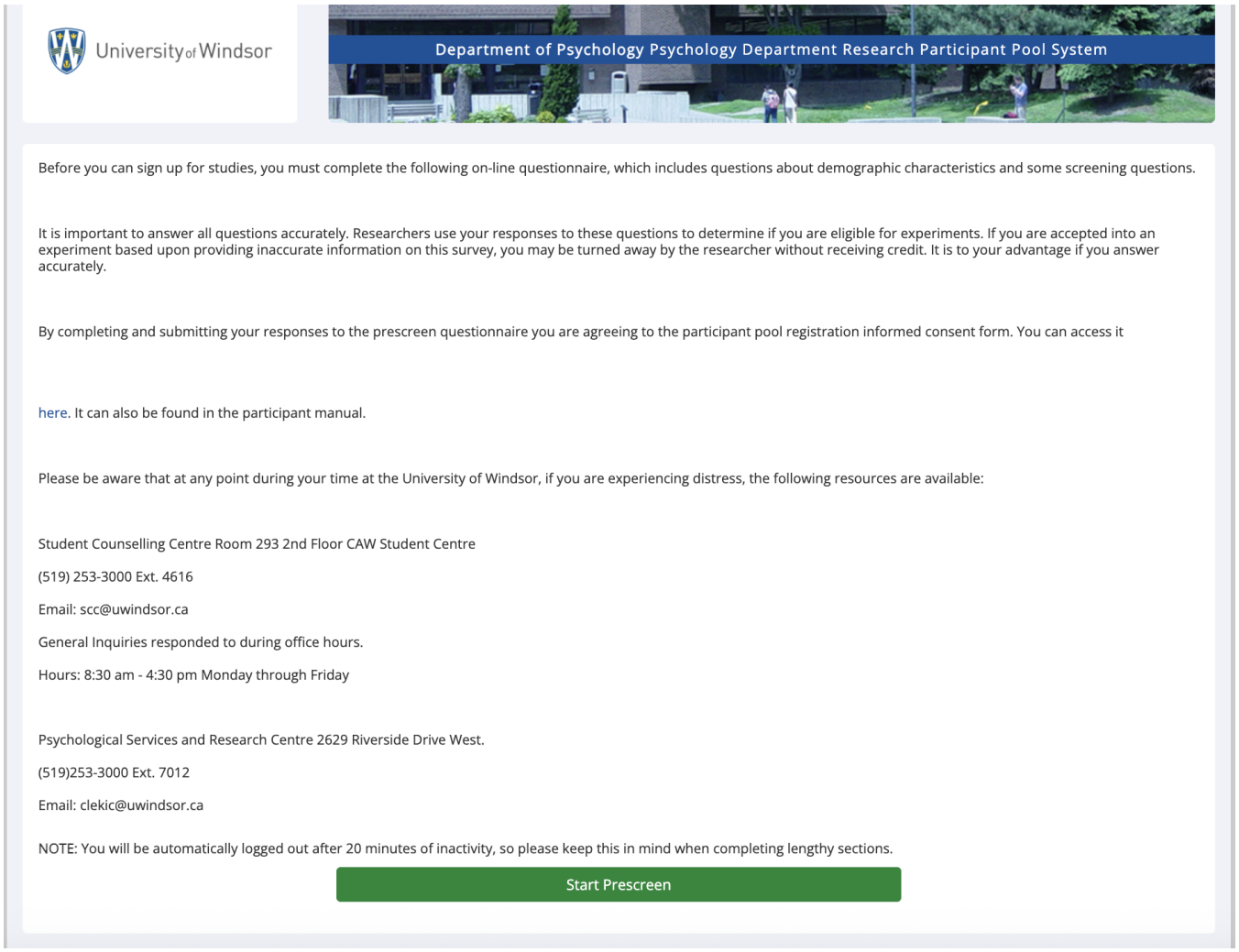


You can then return to the main website to enter the system. You will be asked to agree to the terms and conditions of the website and to complete the pre-screening questionnaire. You can set a new password when you login for the first time.



Pre-screen questionnaire

At the beginning of each semester, each participant is required to complete the pre-screen questionnaire which will determine eligibility for studies available in the system. This is a required component of the registration process. Click “Start Prescreen” to begin.



University of Windsor

Department of Psychology Psychology Department Research Participant Pool System

Before you can sign up for studies, you must complete the following on-line questionnaire, which includes questions about demographic characteristics and some screening questions.

It is important to answer all questions accurately. Researchers use your responses to these questions to determine if you are eligible for experiments. If you are accepted into an experiment based upon providing inaccurate information on this survey, you may be turned away by the researcher without receiving credit. It is to your advantage if you answer accurately.

By completing and submitting your responses to the prescreen questionnaire you are agreeing to the participant pool registration informed consent form. You can access it

here. It can also be found in the participant manual.

Please be aware that at any point during your time at the University of Windsor, if you are experiencing distress, the following resources are available:

Student Counselling Centre Room 293 2nd Floor CAW Student Centre

(519) 253-3000 Ext. 4616

Email: scc@uwindsor.ca

General Inquiries responded to during office hours.

Hours: 8:30 am - 4:30 pm Monday through Friday

Psychological Services and Research Centre 2629 Riverside Drive West.

(519)253-3000 Ext. 7012

Email: clekic@uwindsor.ca

NOTE: You will be automatically logged out after 20 minutes of inactivity, so please keep this in mind when completing lengthy sections.

Start Prescreen

Complete the first section and submit the answers. Continue until you have completed all sections.

(Section 1/3)

Section Questions

Listed below are questions for this section of the prescreen. Please provide a response for every question. If you are given the option to decline to answer a question, then declining to answer is considered a response. Please note: if you choose not to include your phone number(s), then it will limit your access to some studies.

1. What is your gender?

- ○ Man or Boy
- ○ Woman or Girl
- ○ Indigenous or other cultural gender identity (e.g., two-spirit)
- ○ Non-binary, genderqueer, agender, or a similar identity
- ○ Gender not listed
- ☐ Check this box if you do not want to provide an answer for this question

2. Do you identify as transgender, non-binary, or otherwise identify as a gender other than the one you were assigned at birth?

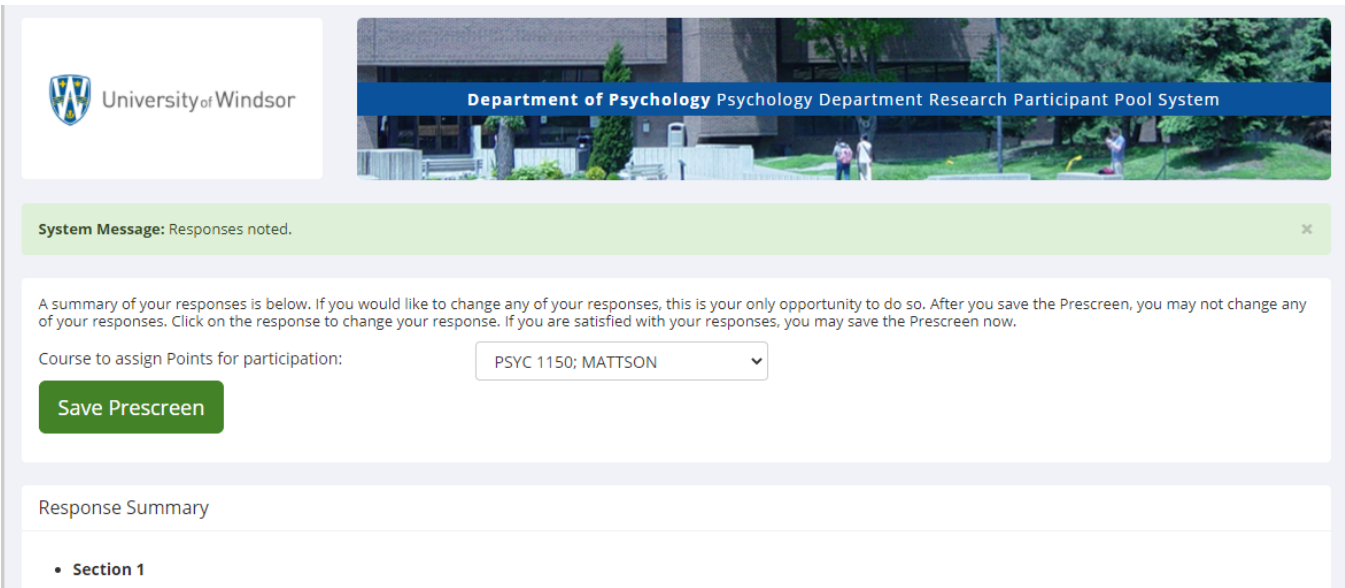
- ○ Yes
- ○ No
- ☐ Check this box if you do not want to provide an answer for this question

3. Your ethnic background

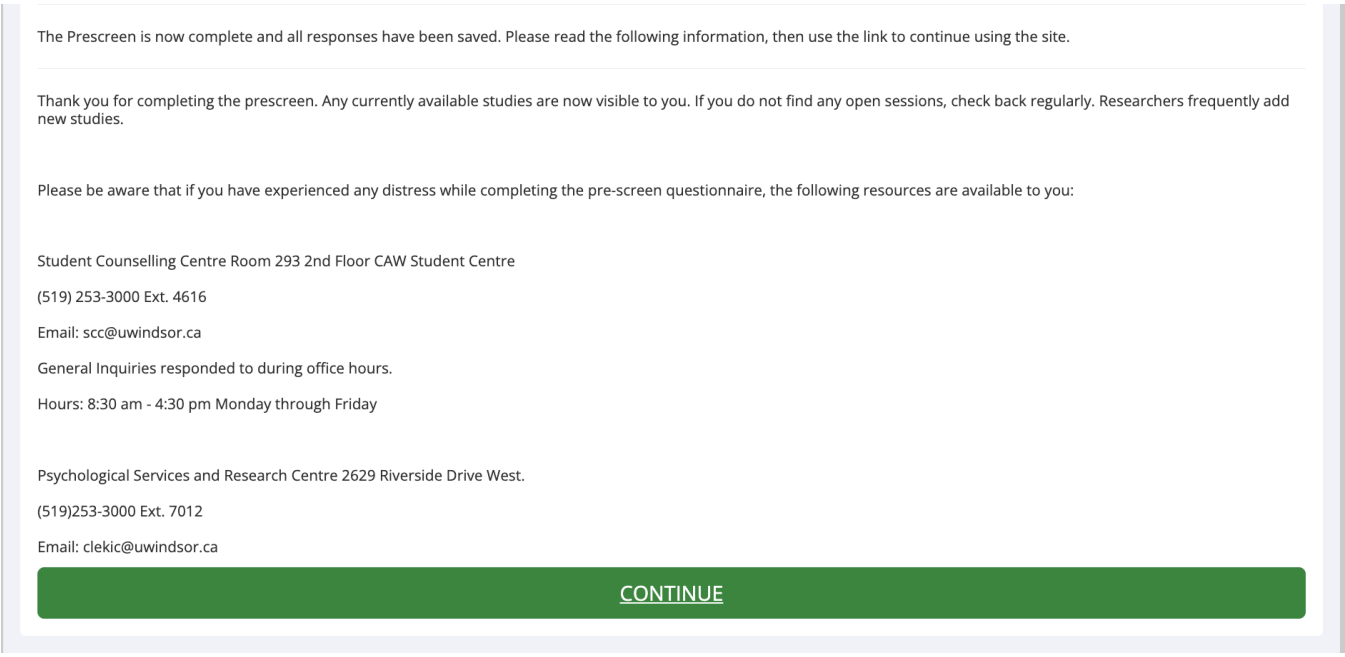
- ○ Aboriginal (North American Indian, Metis, or Inuit)
- ○ White
- ○ Chinese
- ○ Black/African
- ○ Southeast Asian (e.g. Vietnamese, Cambodian, Malaysian, Laotian, etc.)
- ○ West Asian (e.g. Iranian, Afghan, etc)
- ○ South Asian (e.g. East Indian, Pakistani, Sri Lankan, etc.)
- ○ Korean
- ○ Japanese
- ○ Latin American
- ○ Filipino

Note: the number of sections will vary by term, depending on how many screening questions are submitted by researchers.

After completing all sections, you will be asked to review your answers and to “Save Prescreen” by clicking the button at the top of your screen.



A new screen will pop up. Choose “Continue” to proceed to the studies.



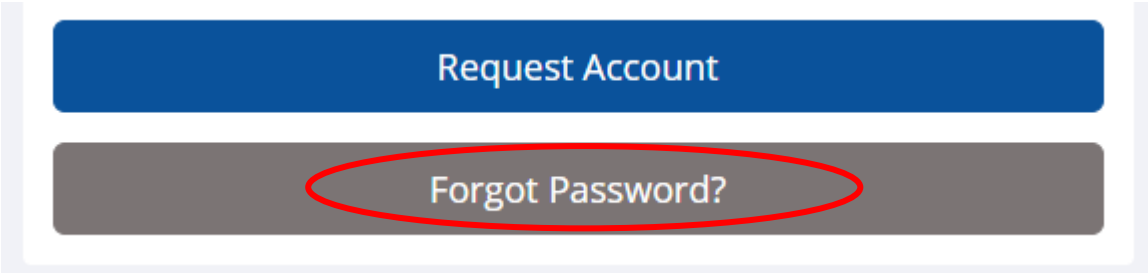
You are given a period of approximately THREE WEEKS in which to register your account at the beginning of the term. **Participant accounts are deactivated at the end of each term, so you must register at the beginning of every term you plan to participate in the pool.**

UWindsor email accounts

As per FAHSS and Psychology department policy, you must use your University of Windsor email address (name@uwindsor.ca) with the Participant Pool. Accounts created with a non-University of Windsor e-mail address will be denied. Additionally*, we will not reply to e-mails sent from a non-University of Windsor account.*

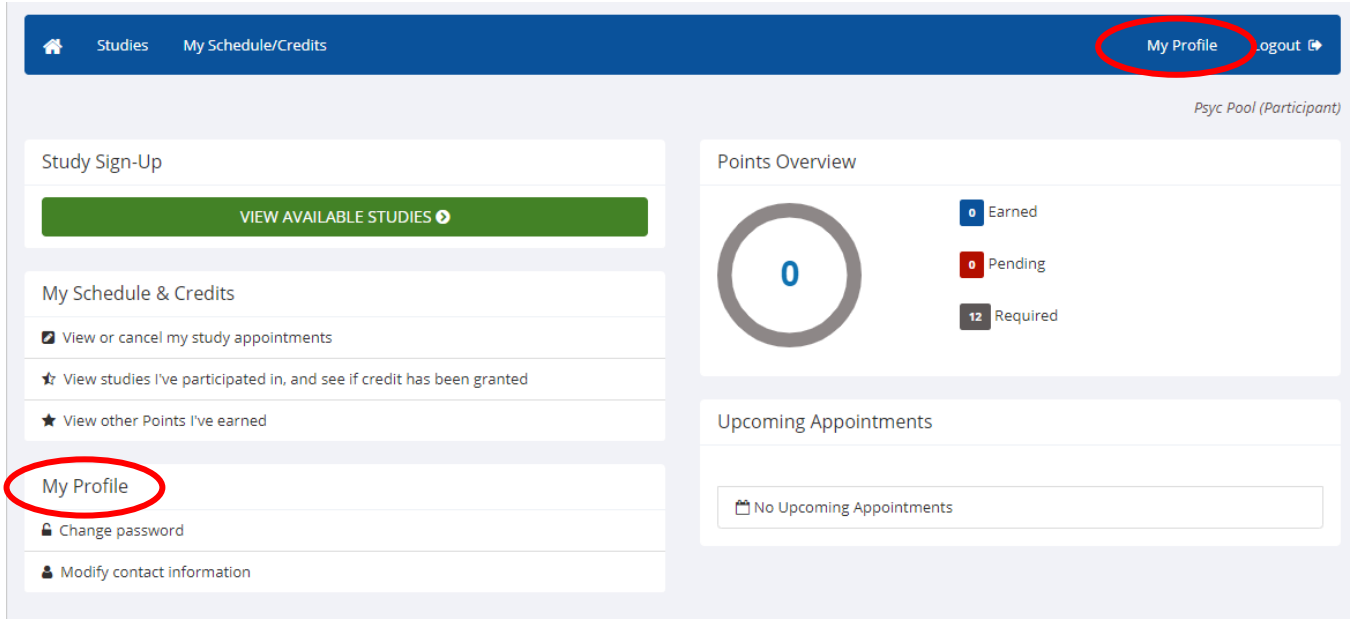
Lost password

If you forget your password at any time, please click the "Forgot Password" heading at the bottom of the screen and the password will be sent to your email address. *We will not reply to emails sent to psycpool@uwindsor.ca requesting your password.*



Changing account details

To change your account details, such as your password or the courses you have previously selected, click on the "My Profile" section of your main login page. If you need to change something that does not appear there, email psycpool@uwindsor.ca with your name and what you would like changed. We will try to assist you and all permissible changes will usually be made within 3 business days.

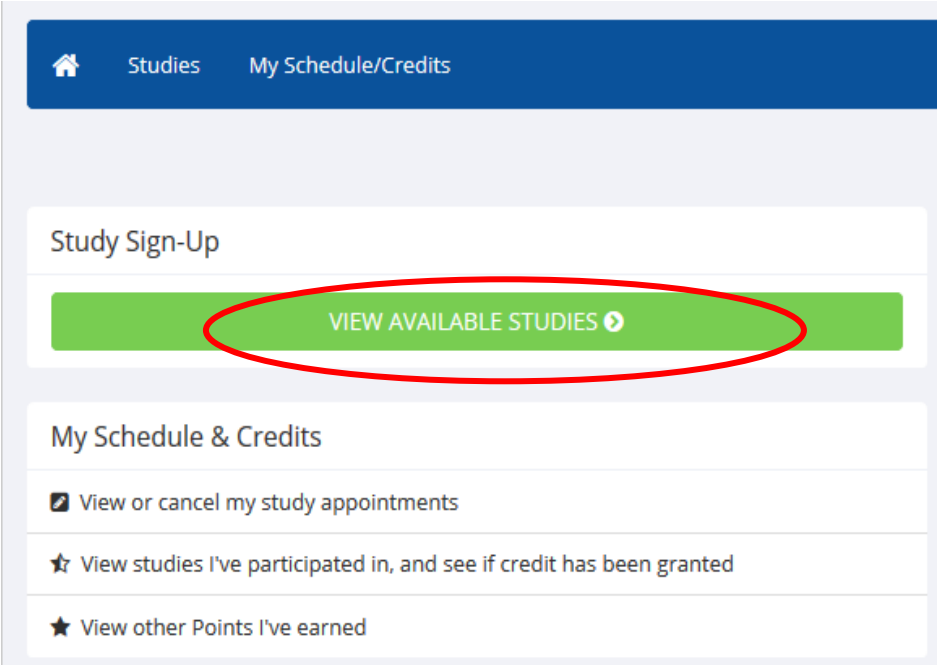


Accessing and Signing up for Studies

Before you will be able to view and sign up for studies, you must agree to the terms and conditions of the website and complete the pre-screening questions. If you do not wish to complete this information, you will need to pursue alternate means of earning your bonus points (e.g., alternate writing assignments determined by your course instructor(s)), as this is an important aspect of the

system that is necessary for accurate research. Information regarding consent for participation in the pool is located at the end of this document (see page 19).

Once you are registered, you will need to wait until the date that studies become available to participants. This date can be found on the front page of the SONA System website. Once studies are made available, login and click on the "View Available Studies" section or the "Studies" tab (Note: you may be contacted by researchers in advance of this date and be invited to take part in a study for which you qualify).



In this section, you will see a list of all of the studies currently available. You can also search for studies by date. The list will show the study titles, study restrictions, and whether they have open timeslots. If you click on a study title, the contact information of the researcher(s), along with the study duration and point value will appear. If you click on the available timeslots, the date, time and location will appear. If you choose to sign up, select the course you would like the points to go towards, and click on the sign-up button.

Please note that you will not be able to sign up for specific experiments until the date published on the sign in page to the pool.

The participant manual can be accessed at: participant manual. Please read the manual carefully before emailing any questions to the psycpool account.

Currently Viewing: **All Studies**

View studies with available timeslots on : Tuesday, 11 May 2021 GO

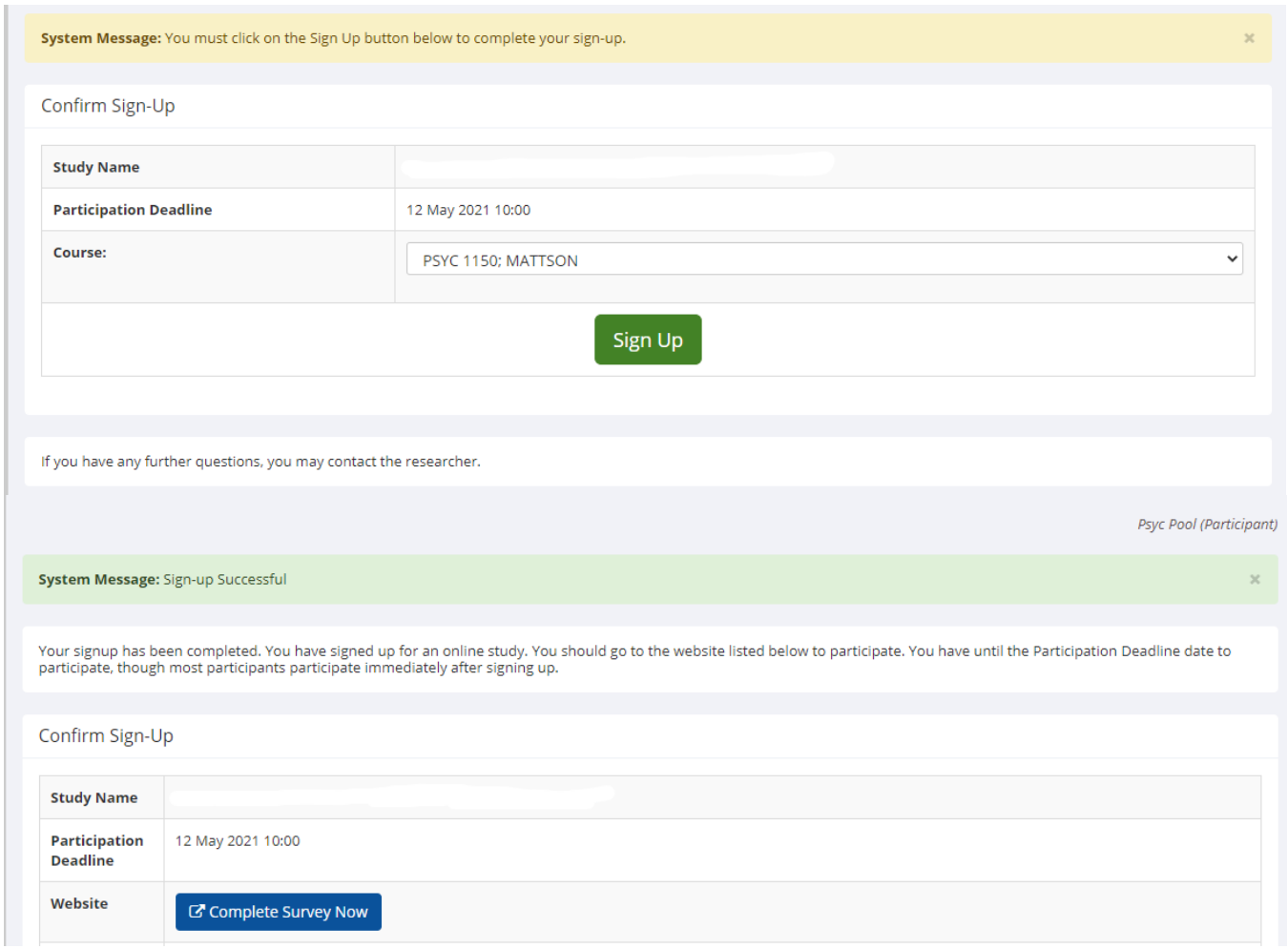
Available?	Study Information	Eligibility
Timeslots Available	(1 Points)	
Timeslots Available	(1.5 Points)	
Timeslots Available	(0.5 Points)	

Website	You may not view the website until you sign up for this study.
Researchers	253-3000
	View Time Slots for This Study

Timeslots for Study

NOTE: This is an online study. Sign up below, and then participate on the study website at any time before the participation deadline that is listed.

Participation Deadline	Sign Up?
Wednesday, 12 May 2021 10:00	Sign Up
Wednesday, 12 May 2021 10:30	Sign Up
Wednesday, 12 May 2021 11:00	Sign Up
Wednesday, 12 May 2021 12:30	Sign Up
Wednesday, 12 May 2021 13:00	Sign Up
Wednesday, 12 May 2021 13:30	Sign Up



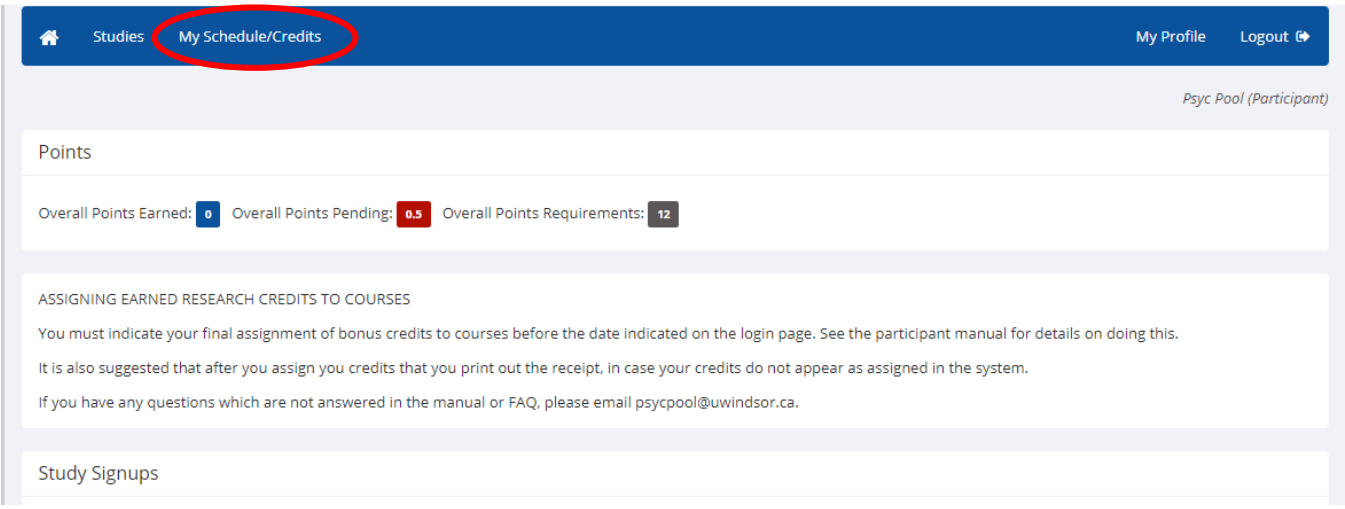
It is to your advantage to login early and sign up for studies, but also to check back often to see new studies that have opened up. There are more participants than there are bonus points to be earned, and as a result, if you wait until the end of the term, you may not earn all of the points you had hoped to. In any case, as early as possible in the term, you should consult your course outlines about alternate assignments to earn bonus points in each of your courses. Further, available studies are highly dependent on researchers and whether they are collecting data or not during the semester. The Pool Coordinators have no control over this. It is recommended that students registered in the Pool keep checking the list of available studies in case new timeslots are posted and/or new studies are posted.

The Participant Pool does not guarantee that you will be able to earn all of your bonus credits through our system. The Participant Pool simply offers one option through which you can earn bonus points.

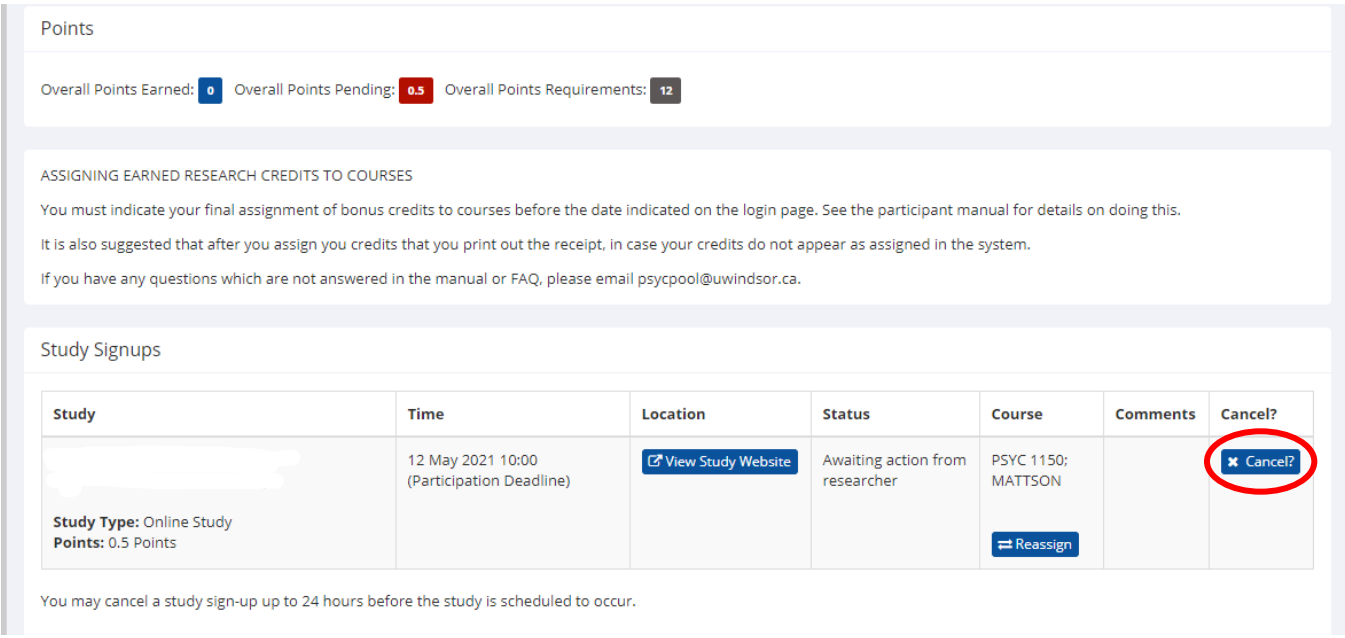
Each time you return to the “Studies” screen, the list of studies is in a new, randomly determined order.

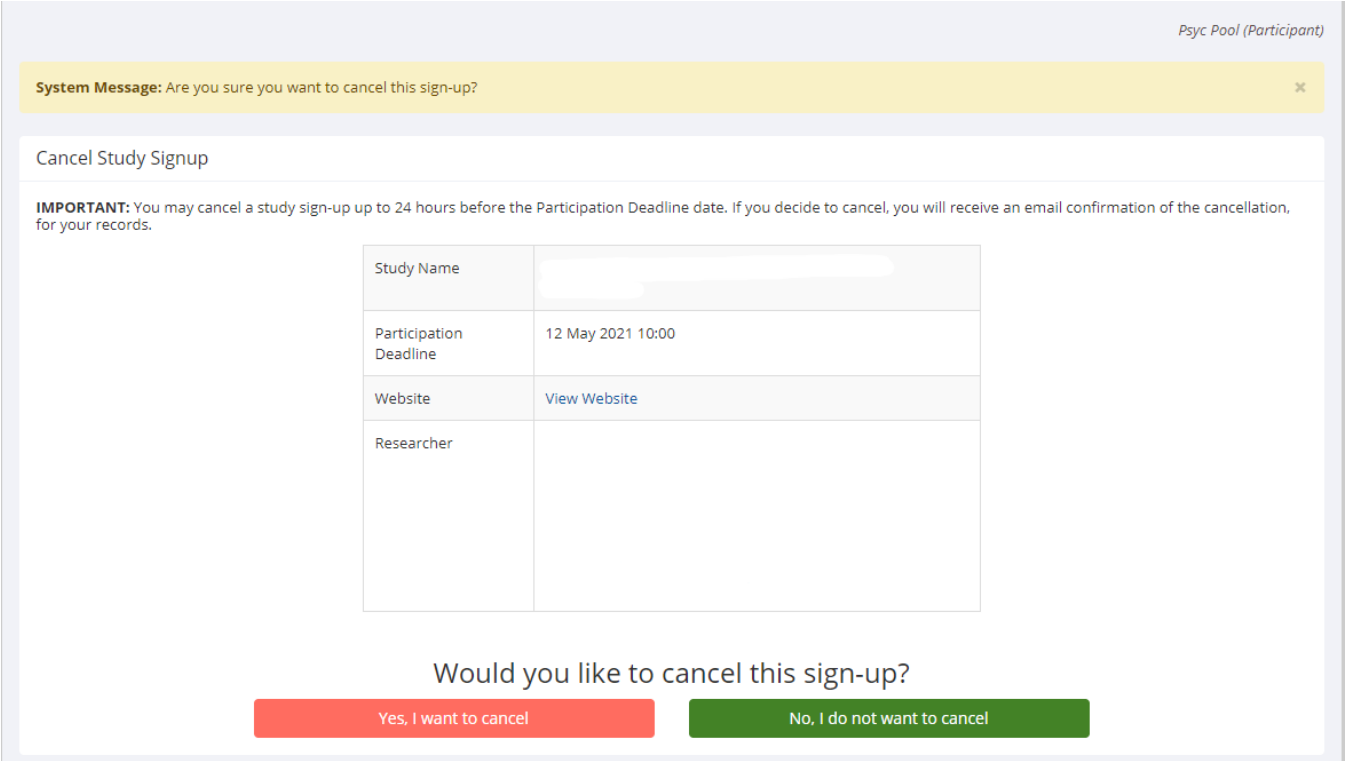
Once you have signed up for a study or studies, you can click on “My Schedule/Credits” and see the points you have earned, the studies you have scheduled, and how many points have been assigned to

each course. This page is where you can cancel appointments and reassign your credits to another course.



To cancel, click on the "Cancel" button to the right of the study information. You can cancel **up to 24 HOURS** prior to a study without penalty. **If you cancel with less than 24-hour notice or do not show up for the study, you will be penalized.** For more details on the No-Show Policy, see page 18.





Researchers can cancel an appointment up to **48 hours in advance**, either through email or telephone notification. If the researcher does not provide this notice, the researcher must award you the points you would have earned had you been able to participate in the study. You are under no obligation to reschedule your appointment if appropriate notice was not given.

However, you may consider rescheduling to assist the researcher, and you will be able to earn additional points. Please contact psycpool@uwindsor.ca if you have any concerns about researcher conduct.

Penalties

Unexcused No-Shows

- If you cancel with less than 24 hours notice or you do not complete the study by the specified due date, you will be assigned an "unexcused no-show" which gives you 0 points.
- You must provide a reasonable explanation (e.g., illness, emergency) to the researcher to avoid the penalty. Contact the researcher directly.
- **3 unexcused no-shows** will result in your participant account being de-activated. You will receive a warning when you allocate 2 unexcused no-shows.

Excused No-Shows

- If you provide more than 24 hours notice regarding your unattendance to a scheduled appointment, you will be assigned an "excused no-show" which gives you 0 points.
- Your account will not be penalized if you are given an "excused no-show".

- Excused no-shows may be granted by researchers who have received from the student a reasonable explanation in order to do so.

IMPORTANT - Assigning credits

All participants who have earned credits in the Participant Pool during the term must assign their credits to their courses – the researcher will not do this for you. You will be asked to select a course to assign your credits to when you sign up for a study. You can change the assignment of your points at any time until the credit assignment deadline, which is posted in the important dates section on the homepage. To change the course to which you assigned credits earned during any one study, go to "My Schedule/Credits", click the "Reassign" link under the course column and select a different course.

Note that the number of credits/points that it is possible for you to assign to any specific course will vary. Course instructors for all first and second year undergraduate courses in psychology are expected to permit up to 3.0 credits/points to be allocated in the Pool system to their course. Course instructors for third and fourth year courses may permit fewer than 3.0 credits/points for their specific course. If there is a discrepancy between the number of credits/points indicated in the Pool system that can be allocated to a specific course and the number of credits/points that a course instructor has indicated in their course outline/syllabus are available to be earned in that course, the discrepancy will always be resolved in favour of the number of credits/points indicated in the course outline/syllabus. Errors of this sort in the course listings in the Pool happen rarely but they can happen.

If you have any questions about credit assignment, please email the Participant Pool at psycpool@uwindsor.ca.

Following the deadline to assign credits, lists will be generated and emailed to course instructors (NOT researchers) so that they may add these to your overall grades.

Note: It is *your* responsibility to ensure you have assigned your credits to your course(s) properly. Credits will not be edited, re-assigned, or otherwise changed by the researcher, the Pool Coordinator, or your course instructor after the credit lists have been distributed.

Receiving credits/points

Note that researchers have 48 hours to assign you the points warranted by your participation in their study. The 48 hours starts as soon as you finish participation in the study. You must *NOT* email a researcher *within that 48 hours* to ask why you have not yet received any points. You should email a researcher *after the 48 hours have passed* if you have not received points.

Participants will receive credit proportional to their participation. Being awarded credit by a researcher when your participation does not merit it undermines the educational mandate of the Pool and awards undeserved academic credit. This also devalues the participation of students who take part fully in studies.

There are some circumstances that a researcher can withhold a proportion of points from students including failure of validity checks or failure to complete a study with authentic engagement (such as answering at random, answering all questions the same, completing a study in very few minutes or much more quickly than a researcher's official estimate of the time needed for participation, etc.). These circumstances may warrant giving less points to participants.

Researchers must describe the ways in which credit (including partial credit) will be determined on the consent form for the study, prior to the start of data collection.

Special Circumstances

Trouble with researchers / complaints

Any complaints or issues that arise with researchers can be directed to psycpool@uwindsor.ca and will be dealt with in a fair and timely manner involving the Chair of the Participant Pool Committee (a full-time member of the Department of Psychology faculty).

Disputing unassigned bonus marks

Due to the requirement that you select a course to assign credits to at study sign-up, you will never lose credits. However, it is your responsibility to ensure you have assigned your credits to the course(s) you wanted them to go toward before the deadline. After midnight, on the last day to assign credits, your credits will go to whichever course(s) you have selected. Although it is the participant's responsibility to ensure that points are assigned to the desired courses, if you believe your points were not correctly added to your grade, you can email psycpool@uwindsor.ca. The Pool Coordinators will work to resolve the issue as quickly as possible. *However, we will not switch the points to a different course after this time.*

Participant Pool missed appointment (no-show) policy

Once you have booked an appointment to participate in a study, it is your responsibility to ensure you attend your scheduled appointment. If you realize that you cannot attend an appointment, you may cancel the appointment up to 24 hours before it is scheduled to occur, with no penalty.

However, if you fail to attend a scheduled appointment three times without 24 hours notice, your Participant Pool account will be de-activated. You will not be able to earn credits toward your courses through the Participant Pool for the duration of the semester.

If a student misses several appointments in successive terms, then the student's Participant Pool account will be suspended indefinitely. Written appeals to overturn an account suspension can be directed to the Chair of the Participant Pool Committee.

Consent to Register for the Psychology Participant Pool

In choosing to submit responses to this brief, web-based registration questionnaire, you are consenting to have the Psychology Research Participant Pool Committee retain the information you provide in a secure database for use by researchers whose studies have received appropriate approval from the University Research Ethics Board (REB) or the Department of Psychology Research Ethics Committee (REC; which is operated under the auspices of the University REB).

It is essential that you respond honestly and accurately to each of the items below because the integrity of all research results is compromised by dishonest responding on your part. We thank you for your assistance in maintaining the integrity of psychological research.

I understand the following:

1. The information I provide on this registration form will be used by the Participant Pool administrators to identify me as a potential participant for studies that are being conducted by undergraduate, graduate, and faculty researchers in the Department of Psychology during the current term.

2. My responses to the questions on the registration form may be used to select me as a potential participant for particular studies.

3. The Participant Pool administrators and any individual researchers who receive information I have provided are charged with maintaining the confidentiality of that information in accordance with ethical guidelines for research with human participants.

4. I am free to decline to participate in any study about which I am contacted, or withdraw my participation from individual studies or the Participant Pool.

5. If I choose to participate in a study, I will be compensated by earning between one-half and three bonus marks (0.5 to 3.0) toward my final grade in eligible Psychology courses in which I am enrolled this term.

6. There are no significant risks to me in completing the Participant Pool registration form. Being registered in the Participant Pool may provide me with opportunities to learn about how psychological research is conducted from the perspective of a participant.

7. If I choose not to self-register for the Participant Pool, or if I am unable to or choose not to participate in any research studies, I can still earn bonus marks in my eligible Psychology courses by completing equivalent, alternate assignments specified by my course instructor in that specific course outline.

8. The Participant Pool Registration procedures have been reviewed by the University of Windsor Research Ethics Board. If I have questions about my rights as a research subject, I may contact the Office of Research Ethics, University of Windsor 401 Sunset Avenue, 2146 Chrysler Hall North, Windsor, ON N9B 3P4. Tel: (519) 253-3000 Ext. 394. Email: ethics@uwindsor.ca.

Frequently Asked Questions

Why can't I log into my account? I keep getting an error message that my account has been disabled.

Accounts are disabled at the end of every term and are re-activated on the day registration opens. You are unable to access your account between semesters.

Another reason for a disabled account is if you failed to complete the registration process in full by the registration deadline. In this case, accounts are automatically deactivated for the duration of the semester.

Why can't I see any studies?

When study timeslots fill up, the study becomes invisible until more open timeslots are added. If you do not see any available studies, check back frequently as researchers add timeslots on a regular basis. Study timeslots fill particularly quickly when there are few studies posted on the Participant Pool, especially early in the semester. However, new studies are added throughout the semester.

Studies will also be hidden from view if you are not eligible to participate due to study restrictions (i.e., based on your responses to the pre-screen questions). Be patient, it is likely studies will eventually be posted for which you are eligible.

Who is responsible for adding studies?

Individual researchers add studies throughout the term when they need to collect data. The number of studies in the Participant Pool varies by term. The Participant Pool Coordinator and the Participant Pool Committee are not responsible for ensuring a minimum number of studies in the Pool each term.

I earned more credits than I need for my class, can I save my credits for next semester?

No. It is not possible to carry credits across semesters. However, you are welcome to continue to participate in studies even after you have earned your allotment of credits.

I participated in a study and earned multiple credits. Can I split the credits to go to different courses?

Currently, the system does not allow credits earned in a single study to be split between courses. However, if it is necessary for you to divide points earned in a single study between courses, please e-mail psycpool@uwindsor.ca and the Pool Coordinators will assist you.

I forgot to register and missed the deadline, is there any way to still sign up for the Pool this semester?

No. If you do not complete the registration process during the registration period, you will not be allowed to sign up for Participant Pool for the duration of that semester.

I haven't found enough studies to sign up for but I need bonus points. What can I do?

If you have not been able to participate in enough studies to earn all of the bonus credits for which you are eligible, please see your course syllabus or course instructor for alternative assignments for bonus credits.