Steps in the Research Process for Psychology Experiments

1) Your psychology professor will reserve several rooms on different days for research projects.
   - Your professor will distribute sign up lists for the rooms.
   - If you are collecting questionnaire data, then it is in your best interest to share a data collection time with other students, so certain rooms will be set aside for questionnaire data collection (these rooms should easily accommodate 2-3 research projects at the same time).
   - Some rooms will be audiovisually equipped for those projects that require TV/VCR/DVD or PowerPoint presentations.
   - You will be limited to a certain number of data collection dates/times to ensure that everyone has an equal opportunity to collect data.
   - You **MUST** have a reviewed and approved IRB proposal/project **BEFORE** you can sign up for a data collection room/time. You will **NOT** be permitted to sign up for data collection if you have not turned in your IRB proposal and/or if it has not received approval from your psychology professor.

2) After receiving IRB approval and signing up for data collection times, you should make a sign up list with:
   - a brief description of your study (enough so students can make an informed decision regarding whether to participate, not enough to reveal your hypotheses, otherwise you will bias your sample)
   - be sure to list the date/times/room in which the study will occur
   - if you need to gather information from students individually or in small groups, you should have sign ups for time slots so students don’t have to wait around to participate in your study
   - if you are gathering questionnaire data and/or can collect from a whole group of students at one time, you can simply have them sign the list indicating that they plan to show up at some time during your assigned data collection times
   - regardless of how you are collecting data (e.g., individually or in a large group), ask students to write their name and email (so you can email them to remind them to show up!)

3) Sign up lists should be posted **NEATLY** on the bulletin board located immediately outside of room B12 in the basement of the AC (and please be courteous, don’t cover up someone else’s sign up sheet or move it to make yours more “eye-catching” – you can rearrange sign up forms SLIGHTLY to make room for more, but please do not reorganize the entire bulletin board – preparation is key…first come, first served!).

4) Check your sign-up list periodically to ensure that you are getting enough participants otherwise you may need to find other ways to recruit (e.g., contacting psych faculty and going to psych classes). Keep in mind that the preferred way to recruit is to use the sign up lists. You **MUST** demonstrate that you have hung your sign up sheet and failed to recruit an adequate sample **BEFORE** you will be permitted to contact psych faculty directly. Because the sign-up lists will be posted in a public area of campus, it might be in your best interest to check on them and replace “filled” lists with “empty” lists to ensure that lists with names do not “disappear.”
5) Email students who signed up 2-3 days prior to data collection to remind them when and where to come for the study. You may also want to email them the day of the study as a final reminder.

6) When students show up for your research projects, you should have students write down their names and the name of a psychology professor for whose class the student would like to obtain extra credit. Alert students that not all psych faculty may provide extra credit, but if they do, students can only write down the name of ONE psychology professor. Students are not allowed to obtain extra credit from more than one faculty member for participation in one study. If they are participating in multiple studies, they can list different faculty members for each.

7) Be VERY aware of your behavior during your data collection sessions!! Remember how demand characteristics can affect behavior…participants will enter your study with a tremendous amount of curiosity regarding your hypotheses so everything you do (e.g., standing in the corner with your co-researchers chatting and laughing), how you are dressed, your mannerisms, and so on will be evaluated and interpreted. You do NOT want your behavior to affect participant responses (unless, of course, that is part of your hypothesis!).

8) If you are able to debrief participants immediately after data collection, please do so. However, some “researchers” are concerned that debriefing participants prior to completing data collection could bias the sample (let’s face it, students talk…). Thus, if you would rather wait until data collection is over to debrief, you may email participants afterwards to debrief them. Your debriefing should include a brief description of the research study and what you expected to find. If you choose to debrief participants via email after data collection is complete, then you should also include a CONCISE overview of your results and a BRIEF explanation of the findings. You MUST debrief all of your participants and you MUST have your debriefing statement approved by your psychology professor PRIOR to distributing it to your participants. Thus, if you are planning to debrief orally immediately after data collection, you must get approval prior to collecting your data!

9) After completing your data collection, provide a list of names of your participants to your psychology professor along with a BRIEF description of the research and the amount of time invested by participants (some faculty give extra credit based on time committed to each project). PLEASE be sure that all information is legible. If we can’t read participants’ names, we can’t give their names to the other psychology professors! Your psychology professor will combine information from all researchers and provide a concise “report” to the other psychology professors. Because your psychology professor will need to compile this list, all names of participants/information regarding your project MUST BE SUBMITTED to your experimental psychology professor by the end of class on the MONDAY of the last week of classes (Note that this is the last week of classes…NOT finals week…).

Other Notes Regarding the Research Process
- If you need to purchase materials (e.g., you are doing a study on the effects of scents on mood and need to purchase various air freshners; you are doing a study of taste perception based on whether participants believe they are eating regular or low-fat oreos and you need to purchase oreos), the psychology department may be able to purchase the
materials for you. You **MUST** see your psychology professor to obtain approval for the purchase **PRIOR** to buying the items. If you purchase the items first, there is no guarantee that you will be reimbursed. After receiving approval, you will need to submit receipts for items purchased to your psychology professor who will obtain the reimbursement.

- Keep in mind that anything purchased by the psychology department becomes a possession of the psychology department. Thus, any purchased materials must be handed over to the psychology department upon completion of your project (obviously we don’t want the consumed oreos back…).

- If you need to make photocopies for your project (e.g., questionnaires, consent forms), you may do so using the psychology department account number. You must see your psychology professor for approval and for information on how to use the copier.