



澳門大學
UNIVERSIDADE DE MACAU
UNIVERSITY OF MACAU

DEPARTMENT OF PSYCHOLOGY

Course Research Component (RC) Guidelines: For Papers and Research Participation

PLEASE PRINT AND KEEP THIS DOCUMENT!
YOU WILL FIND THE ANSWERS TO ALL OF YOUR QUESTIONS HERE!

To: All *General Psychology*, *Personal Growth*, and *Psychology of Everyday Life* students

E-mail: fss.psyresearch@um.edu.mo

Research Participation Web site: <https://umac.sona-systems.com>

Read the entire handout for this course.

The system opens on 25 August 2025 for this Semester.
The DEADLINE for completing this research component of the course is 1 December 2025 for this Semester.

What is this research component of the course?

The Psychology Department regards your exposure to psychological research as an educational experience. This is comparable to a laboratory section of introductory courses in other sciences, and it serves additionally to acquaint the student with a broad cross-section of contemporary psychological research. To ensure exposure to psychological research, all students in PSYC1000 *General Psychology*, GESB1009 *Personal Growth*, and GESB1010 *Psychology of Everyday Life* must satisfy a research component as explained in the next section. This research component constitutes 20% of your course.

How do I satisfy the research component of the course?

Students enrolled in PSYC1000 *General Psychology*, GESB1009 *Personal Growth*, and GESB1010 *Psychology of Everyday Life* must earn **2 points in each of those courses they are taking** to satisfy the course research component.

This can be achieved in 3 ways:

- 1) Writing four short review papers of scholarly articles you read (see guidelines below);
- 2) Volunteering to participate in psychology experiments can be substituted for writing the papers (see instructions for signing up for experiments provided below); or
- 3) A combination of writing a paper and volunteering to participate in an experiment (or experiments).

You will receive 0.5 point for each paper of acceptable quality. If you choose to substitute research participation for writing the paper, you will receive 0.25 point for each half-hour (30 minutes) of participation in an experiment. Volunteering to participate in research experiments is entirely voluntary.

NOTE: You can do any combination of paper writing and experiment participation to get points.

We use **Sona Systems**, an online experiment management programme, as a way to keep track of student's points, for both writing papers and being in experiments, and to match participants with experiments. Please note that Sona uses the term "credits" where we use the term "points." Anytime you see the word "credits" on Sona, think "points."

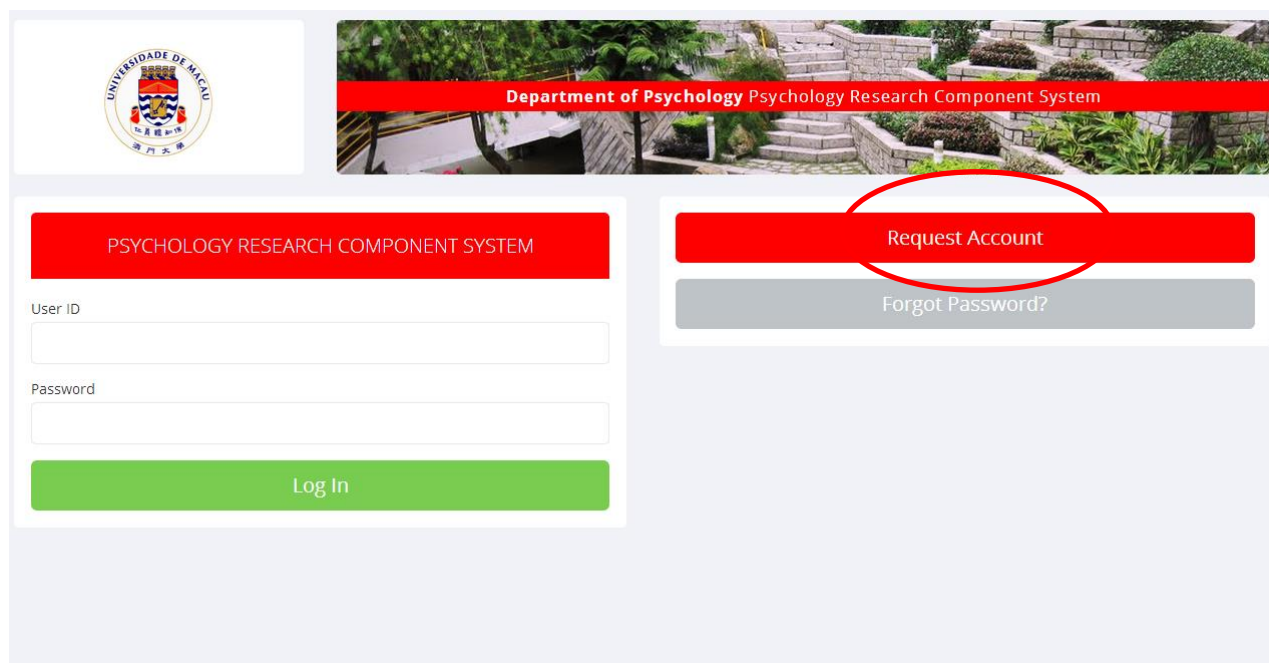
Registering on Sona

You need to register on Sona no matter which option you choose to complete the research component of the course.


First, go to <http://umac.sona-systems.com> on the web

To Register:

- 1) Click "Request account" and register yourself. **Please put your full name in the place for "First Name" and your Student ID in the place for "Last Name". Also use your Student ID as your user ID. And make sure to select the correct course.** This makes it much easier for researchers and instructors to grant proper credit to you. When you type your Student ID, do not use dashes and parentheses. For example, if your Student ID is S-B0-1111-2 put it as SB011112.



The screenshot shows the login and registration interface for the Psychology Research Component System. At the top left is the University of Macau logo. A banner at the top right features a photo of a garden with the text "Department of Psychology Psychology Research Component System". The login section on the left has a red header "PSYCHOLOGY RESEARCH COMPONENT SYSTEM", followed by input fields for "User ID" and "Password", and a green "Log In" button. The registration section on the right has a red button "Request Account" (circled in red) and a grey button "Forgot Password?" below it.



Department of Psychology Psychology Research Component System

Your login information will be emailed to you as soon as you request the account, so you may login immediately. You will need to check your email for specific login instructions. If you have junk mail (spam) filters configured for your email, please configure the filters to accept email from `umac-admin@sona-systems.net`, as emails from the system will often be sent from that address.

You must choose a user ID that is not already in use, and also specify an email address that is not already registered in the system. User IDs may be up to 30 characters in length and contain letters and numbers. This form should only be used by participants. Researchers will have their accounts created for them automatically.

ACCOUNT INFORMATION

First Name

Last Name

User ID

Email Address

Email Address (re-enter for verification)

Student ID Number

Telephone

Course(s)

PSYB111-001 Introduction to Psychology

PSYB111-002 Introduction to Psychology

 PSYB111-003 Introduction to Psychology

Available Courses
Selected Courses

Request Account

Full Name

Student ID

Student ID

- 2) **Within a few hours you will receive your password via email.** Go back to the web site and enter this information under “User ID” and “Password”. You can then change your password by clicking “Change password” under “My Profile” and providing the system-generated password and your chosen password (it will ask you to enter your chosen password twice).
- 3) **Make sure to select your currently enrolled course(s) under “My Profile” (if you do not or you select the wrong course(s), you will not get the points you earned).** If you are enrolled in more than one courses, make sure you select all your courses.

You have to do step #2 within 3 days after completing step #1 or your account will automatically be deleted and you will have to re-register.

For students who participated in Sona before, previous registration lapses at the end of a

semester and therefore you have to register as a “New Participant” every semester.

What are the guidelines for writing Research Article summaries?

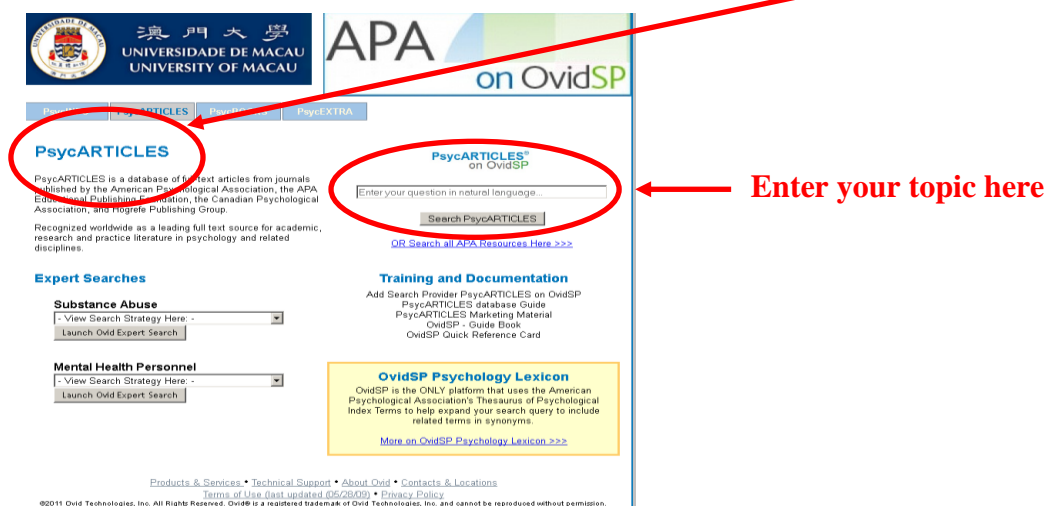
NOTE: EVEN IF YOU ONLY WRITE ARTICLE SUMMARIES YOU MUST *STILL* REGISTER ON SONA SYSTEMS!


The option for writing summaries of research articles is the primary means of earning points for the research component of the course. EACH TWO-PAGE PAPER written, of acceptable quality, will get you 0.5 point toward completion of the research component. It is advisable to adhere to the following guidelines, as work of poor quality will not be accepted. **Note: The most you can earn PER PAPER is 0.5 point, for a total of 2 points for four papers.**

What type of article should I read?

The idea is to do some in-depth reading about psychological research—beyond the coverage in your textbook. It is recommended that you choose a recent **journal** article (within the last five years or so). Be careful, because the article must be related to psychological research in some way (e.g., an article discussing findings from a study). Make sure you chose a psychology **journal** article and not a newspaper or magazine article.

You can search for articles through UM library databases. For example, go to the UM Library website and click on “Databases” then “P” then “PsycARTICLES”. To access this database, students should be connected to the university network (e.g., using a computer in the library or computer lab, or accessing the library databases through UM Secured WLAN). Look at the database being used in the search to make sure it is **PsycARTICLES**.



Where it says “Enter your question in natural language ...”, type in a topic related to an area of psychology in which you are interested and click “Search PsychARTICLES”. A list of articles related to your search term will appear – you may have to scroll down the page a bit to see them. Look through the titles of the articles and find one that looks interesting. Click on the “PDF” icon  of the article to bring up a copy of the article.

Talk to your instructor if you have difficulty finding an article. **All journal articles must be at least 3 pages in length.**

What information should I include with my paper?

1. **A title page with the following** (the title page doesn’t count towards the required page length):

- Your name and student ID number
- Your email address (the one you registered on Sona)
- Psychology class you are taking with your instructor's name
- The article title, the author, the name of the journal & the page numbers of the article

2. **A photocopy of the article you read** stapled to the back of your paper.

What should I include in my paper?

Include information that responds to the following questions:

- a. What was the article about (i.e., briefly summarize the purpose, methods, results, and conclusions)? This part should be around 1 page in length.
- b. Why did you choose this particular article? This part should be around 1/3 of a page in length.
- c. What did you learn as the result of your reading and how did this article relate to class material? This part should be around 2/3 of a page in length.

The purpose of the paper is to demonstrate that you have read and thought about the research article. We want to know that you are familiar with how a psychology journal article is structured and how a study was conducted. It should be partly a summary and partly an astute description of what you got out of the article. Papers that only say things like "I didn't like the article" or "it didn't make much sense" will not be accepted. The paper should be readable, but does not have to be a polished term paper. **It should contain at least two full pages of text (headers and footers do not count towards this length requirement).**

The paper must be typed, written in English, and double-spaced. You must use a **standard 12-point font size with 2.5 cm margins**. Failure to heed these guidelines will result in the paper not being accepted.

Any paper that is entirely or partly copied word-for-word from a research article (or from another student) is **not acceptable**. This is plagiarism, which is a very serious academic offense. Plagiarism in any form will result in failure and you will not earn the point for the paper.

Submit your paper to the RC Coordinator in the Psychology Department main office (E21-3053). There is a box in the office for you to put your paper. Alternatively, you can submit your paper to fss.psyresearch@um.edu.mo through email. If you submit your paper through email, you should receive a confirmation within 2 working days. If you do not get the confirmation in email after 2 working days after submission, please resubmit your paper. The RC Coordinator will award the point through SONA if your paper is acceptable.

How do I sign up for experiments?

The option for volunteering to participate in experiments may be substituted for writing one or both of the short papers to earn points for the research component of the course.

All experiments that are posted on Sona have been reviewed by a committee of experienced researchers to ensure that student's rights and wellbeing are protected. When you arrive at each study, the investigator will explain the study to you and you will have a chance to ask questions about participating.

You have the right to refuse to participate in any study without penalty. If you decide to participate in the study, you will be given a written explanation and asked to give your consent to participate. **You can also discontinue your participation at any time without penalty.**

At the end of an experiment, the researcher will provide what is called a “debriefing” (i.e., further explanation about the study) and answer any questions you might have. If you have any complaints about a study, please contact fss.psyresearch@um.edu.mo and one of the committee members who oversees the research participation system will follow up on your concerns. If you are not yet 18 years old and choose to participate in experiments, please contact fss.psyresearch@um.edu.mo for a permission form for your parent or legal guardian to complete. You do not need a permission form to do the paper writing option.

Before you can sign up for an experiment you must first register on the system (see page 2 for instructions). After you have registered on the system, do the following if you wish to sign up for an experiment:

1. Sign into your account and then click on “View Available Studies”.
2. Scroll down the list of experiments until you find one that interests you. **CLICK THE TITLE** of the experiment to find out more information (i.e. more detail about the study, how long it takes, how many points (Sona calls them credits) you will receive... etc.).
3. Under the heading eligibility, make sure you fit the restrictions of what the study is asking. If the space is blank, there are no eligibility requirements and anyone can sign up for that study. *Some experiments have restrictions on who can participate.*
4. “Timeslots Available” will appear under the heading “Available?” if that study has times for you to sign up. If you would like to sign up for this study click “Timeslots Available” and then “View timeslots for this study” to see a list of available times the study is taking place.
5. Select the time you would like to participate and then click “sign up” to sign up for the study
6. Make sure you **WRITE DOWN** when and where the experiment is or you may miss your appointment.

NOTE 1: Although Sona Systems will email you a reminder of your experiment appointment most of the time, occasionally this does not happen. Even if you are not emailed the appointment reminder, points can be earned only if you arrive in a timely manner and are present to participate in the experiments for which you volunteered.

NOTE 2: While some studies may have a language requirement, e.g., Chinese only, you can still e-mail the researcher(s) to ask whether an English version is available for non-Chinese speakers.

Assigning Points to Courses

If you are enrolled in more than one courses in PSYC1000, PSYC1002, GESB1009 and GES6B1010, you will need to assign points you earn to one of the courses, and you may reassign points from one course to another. To do this, simply click “View Sign-Up History” in “My Schedule/Credits” tab and then use the Reassign button. You may not split points between two courses, for example by assigning 0.5 point of a 1-point study to PSYC1000, and 0.5 point from that study to GESB1010.

What happens if I don’t earn the 2 points for the research component of the course?

Points will be credited to you for the part of the research component that you complete, up to the maximum of 2 points allocated for this part of the course. For example, if you complete 1 paper you will receive 5% credit for the course. Credit will be assigned in a similar way for volunteering to participate in research experiments, or for doing both, namely, writing a paper and volunteering to participate in research experiments.

IMPORTANT: Problems with waiting until the last minute to earn your points.

Some students wait until the end of the semester to start work on earning points for the research component of the course. If you wait until the last minute to earn your research points however, you might have problems completing the work. Therefore you are encouraged to complete the research component of the course as soon as possible and attempt to do so at your earliest convenience.

Common problems with registering and what you should do

The first thing you need to do is register yourself on the web site. Do this by going to <http://umac.sona-systems.com> and follow the instructions given on the second page of this packet. The following are some common problems you may encounter while registering and what you should do.

It won't send me my password

If you have not received your login and password via email within a few hours of registering it means something has gone wrong. Sometimes students incorrectly enter their email address. Sometimes the system just glitches and doesn't send the information. Make sure to first check your e-mail's spam folder and if for whatever reason it does not appear, you should immediately email the RC Coordinator (fss.psyresearch@um.edu.mo) and give your full name (family name first), student ID number, psychology class, class period & professor's name. They can then send you your login and password.

After I input my information it says I "already exist" and won't let me register

Some people, because they incorrectly enter some piece of information the first time, will try to register again. When you register the first time your account is immediately created, even if your inputted information is incorrect, and will stay on the web site for 3 days waiting for you to activate it with your login and password. This is why you can't register again for that 3-day period because your account already exists in the system. You need to email the RC Coordinator.

I just can't seem to get into the web site to register

Usually this means the site is overloaded with traffic and you should try to register at a less busy time (such as later in the evening or early morning).

Another common problem is when people use a bookmark to reach the site (you do this when you set it as one of your favorites). Occasionally the site has changed its web address slightly (don't ask me why) and this makes your bookmark obsolete. Try typing in the <http://umac.sona-systems.com> address manually and you should get to the site.

Sometimes the trouble is with the computer you are using. Your computer may have a very slow internet connection or an outdated version of internet browser. Try registering on

a different computer. Finally, make sure you use Microsoft Internet Explorer, Firefox, Safari or any other frequently used browser.

Common problems with signing up for experiments and what you should do

It asks me for an “authorization code” and I don’t have one

Some experimenters restrict who can sign up for their experiment by creating an authorization code (essentially a password) students use to sign up with. Look at the information posted on the page that lists all the experiments. It may tell you to call or email someone to get the authorization code. Most likely this is so the experimenter can ask you a few questions to ensure you are eligible for the experiment. Other times the study you are trying to sign up for is the second part of a 2-stage study and you have to go through the 1st stage before you get the authorization code to go through the 2nd stage. In this case find the 1st stage experiment and sign up for that.

I get a message about selecting a class before I can sign up

This means you did not indicate which psychology class(es) you are in this semester when first registering. To do this, go back to the main page and click on “profile” and then “change courses”. Click on the class(es) you are taking and then click “save changes”. Now you can go back and sign up for your experiment.

What is Large Group Testing (LGT)?

Large Group Testing (LGT) is conducted periodically by researchers who wish to pre-screen potential research participants. LGT involves completing several questionnaires and can take from 30 minutes to a few hours. Large Group Testing experiments are listed with the prefix “LGT” followed by the experiment number (e.g., LGT 35). Many participants who complete an LGT will be contacted by researchers to participate in additional research. Thus, participating in an LGT provides research opportunities not otherwise available. Therefore, please participate in LGTs with the awareness that you may become eligible to earn points through participation in further research.

How do I cancel an experiment?

After signing into your account click “My Schedule & Credits” and then find the experiment you need to cancel. To cancel your appointment, just click on the “cancel” button. This will send you to a second page that asks “Are you sure you want to cancel this signup?” if you would still like to cancel click the button “Yes, I want to cancel”

NOTE: To cancel this way you are requested to do so AT LEAST 24 hours before your appointment time. If you can’t cancel the normal way please contact THE EXPERIMENTER (NOT the RC Coordinator) and ask the experimenter to cancel your session for you. You can find the experimenter’s contact information by clicking on the study name under “study sign ups” on your “My Schedule & Credits” page (please remember that Sona uses the word “credits” while we use the word “points”).

What happens if I miss an experiment?

If you miss your scheduled appointment without notifying the experimenter, you cannot receive credit for participation. **If this happens twice your account will become locked and you will no longer be able to complete the research component of the course by**

participating in experiments. The points you have earned thus far will still count, but to earn full points could only be done by writing research article summaries. MISSED EXPERIMENTS DO NOT COUNT AGAINST YOU, but you are requested to not miss experiments for which you have volunteered.

But what if I missed an experiment because of some emergency?

As a matter of courtesy, if you miss an experiment because of an emergency please contact THE EXPERIMENTER (NOT the RC Coordinator) as soon as possible and advise him or her of the situation. You can find the experimenter's contact information by clicking on the study name under "study sign ups" on your "My Schedule & Credits" page. The experimenter will simply cancel your appointment, or may ask you to reschedule your appointment.

How do I check my total number of earned points?

To check your point balance (called "credits" by Sona), simply log into your account. Then click "My Schedule and Credits" at the top of the page it will tell you how many points you have earned. This page will also tell you which points are "still pending". Still pending means the experiment you signed up for has already taken place but the experimenter has yet to give you points for it. **This is normal and you should receive points within a few days.** If an experiment is "still pending" after a couple weeks contact **the experimenter** and ask him or her to give you points. You can find the experimenter's contact information by clicking on the study name under "study sign ups" on your "My Schedule & Credits" page.

What if I notice my points are incorrect?

If your points are incorrect please contact the RC Coordinator at fss.psyresearch@um.edu.mo and explain the situation. The coordinator will then take steps to see that the points are corrected.

What if I do not receive replies from the RC Coordinator?

If you do not receive replies to your inquiry from the RC Coordinator fss.psyresearch@um.edu.mo within a week, or you have any complaints about the research component, please directly go to the department office (E21-3053) and ask for help.

A Final Note:

The experience that you will gain from reading and summarizing actual research and/or from participating in research is invaluable. You will learn things about the manner in which psychological research is conducted.

Additionally, we think you will discover that reading about and/or participating in research is actually an enjoyable experience. At times, you might even find yourself having fun.

Please let us know if there is anything that we can do to make your experience with the research a more positive one. Do not hesitate to contact us by e-mail using the information provided on the first page of this handout.