

UG Handbook - Participation Hours

Participation hours refer to time spent serving as participants in psychological research taking place in the department, and provide an educationally valuable opportunity for you to experience real research from the perspective of the participant. Undergraduates are expected to serve as participants in each term of their first two years and complete a total of 9 hours per year. This is a programme requirement and Early Warning Reports are issued on a termly basis to students who do not complete the participation hours. To avoid receiving early warnings you need to have completed a minimum of three hours by the end of the Autumn term, a minimum of six hours by the end of the Spring term and the full nine hours by the end of the academic year. Note that this is a relatively short amount of time and that this is lower than in many other similar Universities such as Leeds, Manchester and Kent.

Students are **required** to collect three participation hours per term, but may, if they wish, collect them within a shorter time frame in order to get ahead (e.g. 5 hours in term one and 4 hours in term).

Please visit the participants' notice board in the Psychology building entrance foyer, and also the website SONA, on which experiment slots are advertised. If you sign on to an experiment through SONA, it will automatically record the participation hours associated with the study. If you do sign up for an experiment and don't turn up, then this will be recorded and you will not be credited with the participation hours. First-year students are advised that they may also collect participation hours for their second year of study during the summer break.

Participation in research is important for a number of reasons. First, active cutting edge research is what defines elite world-class psychology departments. You have joined such a department, which is one of the top 50 departments in the world, and is certainly one of the best departments in the UK. Your teachers are actually the people who produce the research publications that you will be reading in your various courses. They are leaders in their fields, producing ground breaking science.

Second, not only will your lectures be given by people who actually do the research discussed in them, but the expertise of your teachers will also mean the research projects you undertake will be at the cutting edge of knowledge. For example, your third year research project is perhaps the single most important piece of work you will undertake. This will involve an original piece of research supervised by someone who is at the edge of current knowledge.

Third, participation in research is one of the best ways of understanding the processes of perception, memory, emotion, social interactions, language etc. The experience of how research is actually undertaken, combined with the debriefing session at the end of the study where the research is explained, provide a rich learning experience. Indeed, even very experienced researchers find it useful to participate in experiments to gain a better understanding of the cognitive processes involved. Furthermore, you will experience a wide range of research areas, from language to vision to social psychology, and a range of techniques from behaviour to neuroscience (EEG, MRI).

Therefore, research and teaching in Universities are intimately linked. At the degree level of study, a world-class education has to be embedded in a world-class research environment. We hope you enjoy contributing to, and learning from, the research you participate in during your studies in the York Psychology department.