PARTICIPANT PROCEDURE MANUAL:

PARTICIPATING IN THE PROFESSIONAL RESEARCH POOL FOR

CRIMINAL JUSTICE SCIENCE

(www.prpforcjscience.com)

Illinois Law Enforcement Training and Standards Board Executive Institute (ILETSBEI)

Department of Psychology at Western Illinois University (WIU)
# Table of Contents

**INTRODUCTION**

- The Basis of the PRP for CJ Science  
- Your Rights as a Research Participant  

**GETTING STARTED**

- Requesting an Account  
- Logging In
  - *Retrieving a Lost Password*  
- Logging Out  
- Changing your Password and Other Information
  - *Email Address Options*  
- Unique ID Codes

**STUDIES**

- Viewing Studies  
- Two-Part Studies  
- Online Survey Studies  
- Signing Up for Studies  
- Cancelling a Signup  
- Tracking your Progress  
- Online Pre-Screening

**FREQUENTLY ASKED QUESTIONS**
INTRODUCTION

The Basis of the PRP for CJ Science

The WIU Psychology Department believes that it is important for people to have a greater understanding of behavioral research and its methods. Psychological science, for example, is based upon careful observation of behavior and systematic collection of data relevant to issues in a variety of fields including criminal justice. One valuable method for increasing understanding is through direct participation by professionals in the criminal justice field in research. Such participation provides professionals with direct knowledge of the basic processes by which psychology and other behavioral sciences operate. Additionally, information provided by the researchers conducting studies through The PRP can help in our understanding and use of research that finds its way to the field in supporting evidence-based practices and policies.

The ILETSBEI is the technical assistance, research, and executive development branch of the state agency mandated to promote and maintain a high level of professional standards for law enforcement, corrections officers, and others working in the criminal justice system. The ILETSBEI guides the law enforcement community to achieve high standards to enhance the mission of providing professional and just services to communities throughout Illinois and beyond.

ILETSBEI and WIU have partnered to provide needed infra-structure (The PRP) to support standards of professionalism in the field and research development and implementation of evidence-based policies and practices (See Appendix D for Terms of Use and Service). The following sections describe the role of the criminal justice professional as a participant in The PRP. Questions about the following guidelines and procedures should be sent to The PRP Research Administrator at ResearchPool@iletsbei.com.

The Professional Research Pool for Criminal Justice Science (a.k.a.; The PRP) provides an easy method for you to sign up for studies, and track your participation. Everything is done through the software’s web-based interface, so you can access the system at any time, from any computer, using a standard web browser. Participating in research is an invaluable contribution that you as a Criminal Justice Professional can make. Before considering the following sections, please be aware of your rights and responsibilities as a research participant.

Your Rights as a Research Participant

The researchers and professionals at ILETSBEI recognize the value of your participation in Criminal Justice Research; however, your confidentiality, anonymity, and privacy are also valued. Should you have a question or concern regarding a study, researcher, or a procedure please send an email conveying your concerns to: researchpool@iletsbei.com. One of the administrators should respond within 48 hours of your message. Table 1 provides an overview of your rights as a research participant.
Table 1. Rights as a Research Participant

1. Be aware that an ethics committee has reviewed and approved each study before anyone is allowed to participate to insure that volunteers are not mistreated.
2. Before you participate in a study, the researcher will provide information about the things that will occur during the study and you will be asked to sign a statement, or acknowledge consent to participate, indicating that you have been informed of the procedures (i.e., informed consent).
3. After you complete a study, the researcher will provide information to you about the purpose of the study completed. This is also known as a debriefing.
4. You have the right to discontinue participation in a study at any time without penalty.
5. You have the right to expect a researcher to engage in professional conduct during a study including demonstrating appropriate respect and consideration for your time and position.

GETTING STARTED

We hope that your interaction with The PRP will be interesting and beneficial to you as a Criminal Justice Professional. After you log into the system, you can view a list of available studies, any potential restrictions, and sign up as a participant for those studies you want to complete.

The system works best on any popular web browser that is less than 2 years old, such as Internet Explorer, Firefox, Safari, and Chrome. It will also work with other web browsers, and with older versions of web browsers noted above. However the layout may not be as clean. No functionally will be lost when using an older web browser. Additionally, the software will work with a screen reader or other assistive tools for those with disabilities.

This documentation assumes you have a basic knowledge of how to use the web. While using this system, it is not necessary to use the Back button. You can use the toolbar on the top of every screen to navigate the site.

Requesting an Account

There is a link on The PRP web-page (www.prpforcjscience.com), “Join the Pool”, click on that to request an account. Once you click the link, you will be required to provide some basic information. You will receive an email notification immediately with your login information. The email notification will include login instructions for the system. You will be assigned a default password, which you will be allowed to change after your first login. In many cases, you may also provide an alternate email address (after your first login) if you prefer to receive future notifications at a different email address. The email will come from the administrator’s email address (researchpool@iletsbei.com), so be sure to configure your junk mail filters to allow emails from that address.
If you do not receive your login information, please check your email programs junk mail folder before contacting the administrator. One of the most common reasons for not receiving login information is that an email program misclassified that email as junk mail.

**Logging In**

Your login (also known as a session) will expire after a certain period of inactivity, which is usually around 20 minutes. The system will warn you a few minutes before the expiration. This is done for security purposes. If this happens, you can always log in again. Once you are done using the system, it is better to fully log out, to prevent any problems that may arise if someone uses your computer before the session expires. This is especially important if you are using a public computer in a lab.
**Retrieving a Lost Password**

If you forget or do not have your password then you may choose to reset your password. You will see an option on the front login page if this feature is enabled. Using this option, a link to reset your password will be emailed to you after you make the request. This link is valid for 24 hours. Once you click the link, a new password will be generated and emailed to you. If you have provided an alternative email address (see the Email Address Options section of this documentation), it will be sent there. Otherwise, it will be sent to your main email address, which is derived from your user ID. If you requested a password reset and no email from the system has arrived after 30 minutes, check your email program’s junk mail folder in case the email was delivered there. Typically, the email is sent within a few seconds of the request, but sometimes there can be a delay on behalf of some recipient email servers.

**Logging Out**

Once you are done using the system, choose Logout from the top toolbar on the right side to log out. You are now logged out. It is always a good security measure to close all of your browser windows, 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 do not want to change your password, simply leave these boxes empty.

If you change your password, please be sure to select a password that you do not use on any other systems or websites, following good computing practice.
Email Address Options

There are certain events in the system that will cause an email notification to be sent to you. Most often, these include confirmation that you have signed up for a study.

You have two choices for your email address. When you update your profile, you will see a box where you may provide an alternative email address. If you provide such an address (this could be a Yahoo account, for instance), this is the address where all notifications will be sent.

In situations where the system is configured to enter an email address on this page, you will be asked to enter it twice, to ensure that it is typed correctly.

In some cases, depending on how the system is configured, you will be required to provide an email address (which will be listed as “Email Address” instead of “Alternative Email Address”) and all emails sent to you will go to that address.
On some systems, the Alternative Email Address option is not available. In other cases, it is listed but you are not allowed to change it, in which case you should contact the administrator for assistance in changing it.

**Unique ID Codes**

For privacy and confidentiality, the system will automatically assign a unique, **numeric ID** code to you. You should continue to use your normal login ID to log in to the system – the numeric ID serves a different purpose. The purpose of the numeric ID code is to identify you to researchers in a way that does not reveal your identity or compromise your privacy. You will see this ID code when you go to view your profile, as well as, in email confirmations and reminders about your upcoming study sessions that are laboratory or field-based. **You should bring this ID code with you when you go to studies or when communicating with researchers, as they will only know you by your ID code and not your name.**

**STUDIES**

With the system, you may view studies, sign up for studies, and be made aware of any special eligibility restrictions. For example, some studies may want professionals with more experience or less experience depending upon the focus of the research. Or researchers may be focused on correction officers rather than law enforcement officers.

You may also cancel your sign-up through the system. You may see that some studies are online studies. You should read the details of these studies closely, but generally you may participate in them online, without having to go to a lab or field site. It is presumed that you will participate in the study shortly after you sign up for it, although you have until the Participation Deadline Date set by each researcher. Be particularly sensitive to scheduled appointments for field research as these studies require a great deal of investment on behalf of the researchers and site. **If signing up for a field-based study and you later find you are unable to make the appointment, be sure to cancel within the allotted time designated in the system.**

**Viewing Studies**

To view a list of studies, click on “Studies” from the top toolbar. You will see a list of studies. A brief description of each study will be listed, as well as any special requirements that may restrict your eligibility to participate in the study.

Studies that currently have available participation times (timeslots) will have “TIMESLOTS AVAILABLE” listed next to the name of the study. If none of the studies have available timeslots, you may want to log on 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. You must sign up for both parts of the study at once, and the two parts must be scheduled a certain number of days apart. These studies will be clearly marked, and the system will ensure you are only able to sign up for timeslots within the appropriate amount of time between the first and second parts.
Online Survey Studies

Some studies may be online surveys studies that are administered in the system. If you sign-up for one of these studies, you will be taken immediately to the survey. You may withdraw from a survey at any time by clicking the Withdraw button on the top right corner of the screen. With either withdrawal option, all the survey responses you provided are permanently deleted at the time you withdraw.

Signing Up For Studies

To sign up to participate in study find the study you would like to participate in (see Viewing Studies in this documentation) and click on the study name for more information. You will see a list of any special restrictions or eligibility requirements, as well as a contact person if you have questions about the study. A principal researcher will be listed and you can click their name to view full contact information. In most cases, it is preferred that you contact the individual listed as the researcher if you have specific questions related to a study.

Some restrictions are automatically enforced by the system. If the study has certain pre-requisites or disqualifiers (studies you must not have participated in to participate in this study), those may be listed, as well as a note about whether you meet those eligibility requirements. If you have signed up for a study with another study listed as a disqualifier study, then you will be prevented from signing up for the disqualifier study.

The study may have other restrictions listed as Eligibility Requirements. An example of an eligibility requirement is “Left-handed people only”. If listed, the system does not enforce this restriction. However, you should only sign up for the study if you meet this restriction.
If the study is not an online study, then the sign-up and cancellation deadlines for the study will be listed. Those deadlines are based on the date of each timeslot.

If you are viewing a study that you have signed up for in the past and have already participated in, then you will not see the list of timeslots for the study. You may participate in a study only once.

Some studies require a special password (known as an Invitation Code) to sign up. In this 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 in to the system or your SONA-generated numeric ID. You will need to enter the invitation code just before you click the Sign Up button to sign up for a timeslot.

You may also sign up for a timeslot only up until a certain time before that timeslot is scheduled to occur. The system will not show a Sign Up button for timeslots that are too late to sign up for. If you sign up for a timeslot and already have another sign-up in the system that conflicts with that appointment 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 may receive an email confirmation as well. You are now signed up for the study. To cancel your sign-up, see Canceling a Sign-Up in the following section.

**Canceling a Sign-Up**

If you need to cancel a timeslot you have signed up for, you can do this from the My Schedule page. Choose the My Schedule option from the top toolbar.

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

Studies that you have signed up for and that you are allowed to cancel will have a Cancel button next to them. There is a time limit before the study is scheduled to occur, where it will be 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, depending on how cancellation deadlines are configured in your system.
Once you click Cancel to cancel your sign-up, you will see a confirmation page. You will also be warned if your cancellation might affect your ability to participate in other studies that you have signed up for, due to pre-requisites and restrictions. If the cancellation affects your ability to participate in another study you are signed up for, please either find an alternative time for the study you are canceling, or cancel the dependent study as well. The system will warn you, but will not block the cancellation.

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.

**Tracking Your Progress**

You may track your participation in research at any time by choosing the My Schedule option from the top toolbar.

In cases where the study was set up for monetary compensation, your participation will be noted as “participated.” This is done to ensure your eligibility for any studies where the study you just completed is a pre-requisite study.
It is possible that older records of your participation are in the system, but not displayed. If that is the case, you’ll see an option to view your older sign-ups.

**Online Prescreening**

You will be asked to take an online prescreen before you use the system. The pre-screen consists of multiple sections. All questions are either multiple-choice or fill-in (free-entry) answer. At the end of the pre-screen, you may have a chance to review and change any of your responses. After you save all of your responses, you may not participate in the pre-screen again (unless the administrator has allowed this or deleted your existing responses), so answer all questions carefully.

The following questions will ask you general information about yourself. Please choose answers (when applicable) that best represent you.

This research will be used to answer important questions about how individuals respond in real world settings. Please take each question seriously and answer questions truthfully to the best of your ability.

All responses you provide are through a secure website and will remain completely anonymous. It is not possible to identify you as the person providing this information.

Please enter the zipcode where you currently reside.

* Gender
  - Male
  - Female

* Age (use numbers only)

* Is English your primary language?
  - yes
  - no

* Ethnicity
  - Hispanic/Latino(a)
  - Not Hispanic/Latino(a)

* Race
  - Caucasian (white)
  - African American (black)
  - Spanish
  - Asian
  - Bi- or multi-racial
  - Other (please specify)

* What is your occupation?

* How long have you been employed in this profession?
  - less than one year
  - 1 to 5 years
  - 6 to 10 years
  - 11-15 years
  - 15-20 years
FREQUENTLY ASKED QUESTIONS

Immediately after I login and 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 that mean?

Your web browser is not properly configured to accept cookies. You should turn on cookies in your web browser, try to use a different web browser (for example, switch to Firefox if you are currently using Internet Explorer), or try to use a different computer. Detailed instructions can be found if you got 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.

You can also try to use another computer.

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 and principal investigator of a study may see that you have signed up, along with site administrator via a unique ID code assigned to you. No other users, including other researchers can see this information.

How do I change the email address where email notifications from the system are sent?

Provide an Alternate Email address and notifications will be sent there. See the Email Address Options section of this documentation for more information. In some cases, this option may not be available.

I noticed that with some studies, I could 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. Not all studies allow you to participate more than once.

I attempted to sign up for a study, and I was prevented from doing so 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 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. You are allowed to sign up if you have already participated in the study with disqualifiers. The easiest way to sign up for both studies is to schedule the disqualifier study at a later time than the study with disqualifiers.