

Ethics and SONA

WHY SHOULD I READ THIS?

This document sets out how SONA complies with ethical requirements. All researchers using SONA are asked to read this document and abide by it. Nothing in this document replaces the professional guidelines in the dissertation module handbook that students are required to comply with, this document builds on those, specifically relating to SONA. This document should inform the ethical use of SONA, and will hopefully provide material for ethics forms relating to using SONA for recruitment and surveys.

HOW IS SONA USED TO RECRUIT TO STUDIES?

Recruiting participants to a face-to-face study using SONA:

Participants will be recruited using the University of Brighton's secure and anonymised participant pool system (SONA systems) which includes participants from a registered pool of University of Brighton students and staff and members of the public invited to register. Level 4 and Level 5 University of Brighton psychology students are required to earn SONA credits as participants to enable them to use SONA to recruit to their dissertations in their final year. Participants will meet the experimenter in [the University's psychology lab/state location]. Participants are assigned a random anonymous code and arrangements to meet are made anonymously via the SONA system.

Recruiting participants to an online survey using SONA:

Participants will be recruited and surveys administered using the University of Brighton's secure and anonymised participant pool system (SONA systems), which includes participants from a registered pool of University of Brighton students and staff, and any members of the public invited to register. Level 4 and Level 5 University of Brighton psychology students are required to earn SONA credits as participants to enable them to use SONA to recruit to their dissertations in their final year. Participants are assigned a random anonymous code and it is not possible for researchers to match participants' personal details with their survey responses.

HOW SONA COMPLIES WITH ETHICAL REQUIREMENTS

How participants will be identified without breach of the Data Protection Act and to guard against invasion of privacy (e.g. if you plan to access personal information to identify potential participants)?

SONA is populated with individuals who have expressed an interest in participating in University of Brighton psychology research projects. SONA contains personal information from all participants, to enable researchers to recruit and manage participation in experiments. However, the personal identification data is itself held securely (off-site) on SONA Systems' own servers. This obviates the risk of experimenters mixing study and personal data. All data and personal information in SONA will be securely held in the SONA Systems' servers and will be treated confidentially and appropriately in carrying out the ongoing business of the University. Data is stored online by SONA Systems, under the terms of the 1998 Data Protection Act. SONA credits for participation are awarded to participants anonymously by the system.

What steps will be taken to anonymise data (this may include removing identifying information in addition to names)?

At the beginning of the experiment, each participant is assigned a unique numerical identification number by SONA. The study data will include only the identification number for each participant. Any personal information collected by the researchers (names and/or other identifying information) will be kept separate from the study

data and never shared with third parties. Personal information will not be linked to performance in an experiment.

Researchers must take all reasonable steps to ensure any personally identifiable information that is collected, is stored separately from study data. All study data collected must be anonymised and all reasonable steps should be taken by researchers to ensure that participants are aware that the study data will not be linked to personally identifiable information.

How data (both physical and digital) will be collected, handled, transferred and stored?

Digital data will be collected by SONA software. SONA software complies with all major regulations governing human subject research and privacy of data stored online. It complies with various privacy and data protection rules and is governed by European Union regulations covering human subject research and data privacy. It complies with the OECD Guidelines on the Protection of Privacy and the European Union Directive on Data Protection. This site has implemented security policies, rules and technical measures to protect the personal data under its control from: unauthorised access, improper use or disclosure, unauthorised modification, and unlawful destruction or accidental loss.

Who will have access to the data other than the researcher (eg supervisors, transcribers etc)?

Only authorised researchers and administrators will have access to the data.

How long data will be retained, and how it will eventually be destroyed?

It is the responsibility of the researcher to delete the data from SONA, ensuring that the University's data retention policy is followed. All data held on SONA relating to participation in undergraduate psychology dissertations is deleted automatically at the start of the Academic Year following the dissertation due date for students without long term mitigating circumstances, or late submissions or resubmissions.

How do participants withdraw from studies?

Participants can withdraw from a survey at any time whilst they are participating by clicking the "withdraw" button which appears on every page of a SONA survey. If a participant decides to withdraw from a study *after* they have submitted their answers and finished the survey, they are able to do so up until the data is analysed. Any participant who wants to subsequently withdraw should contact the SONA administrator (Joe the psychology technician) with their anonymous code. Joe will remove their data from the study in question, and let the researcher know which line of data is to be removed if they have already downloaded their data but not performed the analysis.

How do researchers conduct follow-up interviews based on survey data?

All participants are given an anonymous code which can be used to identify participants and communicate with them. SONA has a "two part study" option which allows two appointments to be confirmed.

SONA'S PRIVACY POLICY - IN FULL

Every participant on SONA is required to read this before signing up on SONA. It is reproduced in full below for your information.

HUMAN SUBJECTS / PRIVACY POLICY

This website complies with various privacy and data protection rules and is governed by European Union regulations covering human subject research and data privacy. It complies with the OECD Guidelines on the Protection of Privacy and the European Union Directive on Data Protection.

Use and Disclosure of Information

Your name, email address, and phone number (if provided) may be used to identify you on this website. This information will not be disclosed to third parties, or outside of the organisation for which the information is being gathered.

Information about this Organisation and Web site

Modern information and communication technologies play a fundamental role in the activities of an organisation. The principal activity of this organisation is research. This document lays out the responsibilities of the organisation for which information is being gathered. The policy herein covers the website you are currently using.

The services and links of this Web site

This Web site does not enable research participants to communicate with other participants or to post information to be accessed by other participants. This Web site does not include links to third party Web service providers.

Automatic Collection of Information

This website automatically logs personal data by means such as programming or links information automatically logged by such means with personal data about specific individuals. This is done for the purposes of research.

This website uses cookies to store personal data or links information stored in cookies with personal data about specific individuals. This is done for the purposes of research.

Data Collection and Purpose Specification

This site collects the personal data that you volunteer while using its services. This site does not collect information about visitors from other sources, such as public records or bodies, or private organisations. Information about the personal data collected and purposes for which they are used is listed in this document. This site does not collect or use personal data for any purpose other than that indicated in this document. If the organisation wishes to use your personal data for a new purpose, you will be notified.

Children's Privacy

This site is not open to children. This site does not knowingly collect personal data from children.

Disclosure and Visitor Choice

This site does not disclose your personal data to other organisations, except when required by law, or when necessary for ethical reasons. If your personal data is wanted for purposes which are different from those indicated in this policy, you will be offered the opportunity to refuse this disclosure.

Confidentiality / Security

This site has implemented security policies, rules and technical measures to protect the personal data under its control from: unauthorised access, improper use or disclosure, unauthorised modification, and unlawful destruction or accidental loss.

All employees and data processors, who have access to, and are associated with the processing of personal data, are obliged to respect the confidentiality of visitors' personal data.

This site ensures that your personal data will not be disclosed to State institutions and authorities except if required by law, or when necessary for ethical reasons.

Access to the personal data this site may hold about you

You can ask, by sending an email to j.a.taylor@brighton.ac.uk, whether the site is keeping personal data about you.

The organisation will provide you with a readable copy of data which is kept about you within 21 days of a written request with proof of identity. There are some exceptions to this when disclosure of this data is prevented by laws governing the appropriate countries. This information will be provided without any charge. Contact j.a.taylor@brighton.ac.uk for detailed instructions on how to submit a request and prove that you are the person who the data concerns.

You may challenge the data that is held about you and, where appropriate, you may have the data erased, rectified or amended, or completed.

Personal Data Collected

All data is collected solely for research purposes. Data collected about you, primarily by your volunteering the data, may include: name, gender, email address, phone, personal details, physical description, family characteristics, education and skills, lifestyle and personal tastes, financial resources, racial or ethnic origin, religious or philosophical beliefs, health/medical data, and other information. Data may be held on a secure system running outside the jurisdiction of the Data Protection Act but will always be held in accordance with the European Union Directive on Data Protection.

If you have any further questions about these rules, or your rights and responsibilities, please contact: Dr Nichola Khan, N.Khan@brighton.ac.uk