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1 HONOURS ADMINISTRATION

1.1 SCHOOL CONTACTS

Honours Co-ordinator and Co-ordinator of Theoretical Thesis
Dr. Fiona Hibberd
Room 451 Brennan MacCallum (BM)
Phone 9351 2867
Email fionah@psych.usyd.edu.au

Deputy Honours Co-ordinator and Co-ordinator of Empirical Thesis
A/Prof. David Alais
Room 506 Griffith Taylor (GT)
Phone 9351 2873
Email davida@psych.usyd.edu.au

Honours Administrative Assistant
Ms. Erin Simpson
Room 325 BM
Phone 9351 7327
Email erins@psych.usyd.edu.au

Please direct all administration inquiries to Erin Simpson, all academic inquiries concerning the Empirical Thesis to A/Prof. Alais, and all other academic inquiries to Dr. Hibberd.

You must check your university email address on a regular basis (or have it redirected to an address you do check). Email is a primary way we communicate with students. Important reminders and messages are often sent to your university email. Information about email forwarding can be found at: http://www.usyd.edu.au/ict/switch/email/forwardemail.shtml

Contact details for all School of Psychology staff can be found at the following URL:
http://www.psych.usyd.edu.au/phoneDB/dir_all.msql

1.2 PSYCHOLOGY COUNTER

For administrative queries and the submission of forms and assignments, the Administration Office - Psychology counter is located on the ground floor of the Brennan MacCallum building. Opening hours may change depending on staffing and time of year, but the counter is usually open between 12:30 pm and 5pm, Monday to Friday.

The Honours Administrative Assistant (Erin Simpson) is your contact for all administrative matters related to Honours. However, before sending an email or making a phone call to Erin, please check to see whether the information you need is either in this Handbook or on the web. The School of Psychology web page is at:

WebCT will be online from March 2, 2009.
2 PSYCHOLOGY HONOURS PROGRAMME

2.1 COURSE OBJECTIVES

The distinctive feature of the Psychology Honours programme at the University of Sydney is its critical approach to research and scholarship. Since its inception early last century, the School has valued and nurtured conceptual inquiry as well as empirical inquiry. The Honours programme is designed to develop and evaluate students’ ability to demonstrate conceptual clarity in theorizing and methodological clarity in the conduct of empirical research.

To achieve these broad objectives and to satisfy the Australian Psychological Society's requirements for an accredited fourth year programme that completes “an integrated and comprehensive education in the discipline of psychology... [by providing] advanced level study in a range of areas and...advanced research training” (APS Accreditation Guidelines, October 2000, updated September 2002 p. 23), the Honours programme involves:

(i) the planning, conduct, and reporting of a substantial Empirical Research project;
(ii) the development and writing of either a Theoretical Thesis OR essays related to two Special Field seminars and other assessments;
(iii) the rounding out of scholarship, methodological understanding and critical analysis through lectures, seminars, and reading on a range of topics in Ethics and Research Methods.

2.2 COURSE STRUCTURE AND ASSESSMENT

The course is one academic year in duration and includes the following components:

a. Empirical Thesis (50%)

Planning and implementation of a research project, under the supervision of a member of the university's academic staff in Psychology, and presentation of this research project as a dissertation (9,000-12,000 words), due on Wednesday, 14 October, 2009.

b. Theoretical Thesis OR Special Fields coursework (30%)

(i) The Theoretical Thesis option involves the development and writing of a Theoretical Thesis (max. 8,000 words), due by Monday, 10 August, 2009 at the latest.

OR

(ii) The Special Fields coursework option involves weekly attendance at two Special Fields seminars throughout semester 1 only and completion of the specified assessments for each seminar. These assessments are due on Monday, 15 June, 2009. SF assessment details are provided in Section 3.3.2.

c. Compulsory coursework (20%)

(i) Research Methods (15%)

This course is held in Semester 1 only, and involves two components, each worth 7.5%.

The Statistics & Research Design (SRD) component involves 13 one hr. lectures and 12 one hr. tutorials, and is assessed by a 2 hour formal examination (held in the June examination period).

The Psychometrics component involves 12 one hr. lectures (wks 1-12) and one tutorial per fortnight (wks. 7-12 only) and is assessed by a 1.5 hour formal examination (held in the June examination period).

(ii) Ethics (5%)

This involves one lecture per week for the first 7 weeks of Semester 2 and is assessed by a 1.5 hour formal examination on Monday, 21 September, 2009 (week 9 of Semester 2).


d. **Supplementary coursework (not assessed)**

You are encouraged to attend:

(i) the School Research Colloquium (Friday 4pm, every week during semesters 1 and 2).
(ii) the Theory & Systems Special Field, if you are completing the Theoretical Thesis option.

The general assessment requirements and weighting of each of these components in the calculation of each student's final Honours grade is summarised in the following table. The assessment procedures used to standardise and combine the component marks, and the processes used to assign Honours grades on the basis of the weighted scores, are described in Section 8.

<table>
<thead>
<tr>
<th>Component</th>
<th>Assessment</th>
<th>Weighting</th>
<th>Due Date</th>
</tr>
</thead>
<tbody>
<tr>
<td>Empirical Thesis</td>
<td>9000 - 12,000 words Submitted for assessment by 2 independent examiners</td>
<td>50%</td>
<td>14 October</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Theoretical Thesis OR</td>
<td>8,000 words Submitted for assessment by 2 independent examiners</td>
<td>30%</td>
<td>no later than 10 August</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Special Fields Seminars</td>
<td>Approx. 4,000 words for each Seminar; major assignment submitted for assessment by 2 examiners</td>
<td>30% (15% each Special Field Seminar)</td>
<td>15 June</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Ethics</td>
<td>Formal 1.5 hr Examination in Week 9 of Semester 2</td>
<td>5%</td>
<td>21 September</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Research Methods</td>
<td>Two formal examinations (2 hrs and 1.5 hrs) in Semester 1 exam period</td>
<td>15%</td>
<td>Exam period: 15 - 27 June</td>
</tr>
</tbody>
</table>

2.3 **CHOICE OF THEORETICAL THESIS OR SPECIAL FIELDS COURSEWORK**

Students should note that the two options - Theoretical Thesis/Special Fields - differ in many respects. The thesis is best thought of as a large (8000 word) History & Philosophy of Psychology essay undertaken with the guidance of a supervisor and without the structure/constraints of weekly classes, presentation, etc. Special Fields students are required to attend these weekly classes and complete multiple, separate pieces of assessment, while Theoretical Thesis students are required to consult regularly with their supervisor and submit a single dissertation. Students should carefully read the sections relevant to the Theoretical Thesis and the Special Fields seminars, and reflect on their own interests, capabilities and preferred form of work when deciding which option is best suited to them. Contact Dr. Hibberd if you’re unsure and would like to discuss the two alternatives (fionah@psych.usyd.edu.au). Note that you are not less likely to receive a good mark if you complete a Theoretical Thesis rather than the Special Fields option.

Students intending to do the Theoretical Thesis option should contact Dr. Hibberd as soon as possible. All students must submit the Special Field/Theoretical Thesis preference form by 12 February, 2009. Students electing to complete the Special Field option will be notified of their Special Fields allocations in late February.
2.4 WORKLOAD AND SCHEDULE FOR 2009

The Psychology 4 course is very different in structure from your earlier undergraduate years. Although your studies are now concentrated in one School only and you have fewer class contact hours than in earlier years, the demands of the course are heavily concentrated into **8-9 months only**. Completing the course effectively will require you to carefully plan a schedule that allows you to carry out the reading, scholarship and writing required for your coursework and Theoretical Thesis (if you take that option), while continuously working on your Empirical Thesis. Thus, more than any of your previous undergraduate years, the Honours programme will test your ability to organise efficiently and pace your workload to meet the various deadlines.

It is **strongly recommended** that you begin data collection for the Empirical Thesis in May-June.

The schedule below summarises the important dates for the year.

<table>
<thead>
<tr>
<th>Dates</th>
<th>Details</th>
</tr>
</thead>
<tbody>
<tr>
<td>Thursday, 19 February</td>
<td>Attend software information session: 10am – 1pm, Education Lecture Room 424</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td></td>
<td>Attend Honours meeting: 2-3pm, Education Lecture Room 424</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Thursday, 19 March (Week 3)</td>
<td>Special Fields Major Assignments available on web.</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Friday, 17 April (AVCC common week)</td>
<td>Last day to submit Empirical Thesis proposal and Ethics Declaration form.</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Monday, 15 June</td>
<td>Submit two Special Fields Major Assignments (use cover sheets provided on website).</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Exams 15 – 27 June</td>
<td>Research Methods examinations.</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Monday, July 20</td>
<td>Last day to submit Theoretical thesis draft.</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Monday, 10 August (Week 3)</td>
<td>Last day to submit Theoretical Thesis.</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Monday, 21 September (Week 9)</td>
<td>Ethics examination.</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Wednesday, 30 September (non-teaching week)</td>
<td>Submit Empirical Thesis Progress Report confirming that Drafts of introduction, method, and results have been submitted to Supervisor (Appendix E).</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Wednesday, 14 October (Week 11)</td>
<td>Submit Empirical Thesis.</td>
</tr>
</tbody>
</table>

All required forms and assessable work must be submitted to the Psychology counter **no later than 5pm** on the specified due date.
## 2.5 TIMELINE FOR EMPIRICAL RESEARCH THESIS

The empirical research project requires you to work consistently throughout the year. To help you plan this major component of your workload, the flowchart below specifies the various activities associated with conducting your empirical research project and suggests a general time frame. You should discuss this timeline with your supervisor in the light of the specific demands of your project. Plan a schedule that you endeavour to keep.

### From Early February
- Arrange to meet with your supervisor to discuss your project
- Begin reading the material relevant to your proposed topic

### February - early April
**Meet regularly with supervisor to:**
- Develop research questions and hypotheses
- Discuss the literature you have read on the topic
- Develop and refine research design
- Write a draft of the Introduction to your thesis
- Design research tools (e.g. questionnaires, experimental protocols etc)
- Write a draft of the Method section to your thesis
- Prepare Draft Research Proposal and submit to supervisor for feedback
- Revise proposal on the basis of supervisor feedback and complete Ethics Declaration
- Submit Ethics application to University Ethics Committee

### April - May
- Submit Research Proposal and Ethics Declaration (17 April)
- Finalise research instruments and methods
- Discuss any issues raised by Research Panel with supervisor and revise design/procedures if appropriate
- Pilot procedures
- Start conducting research study

### June-August
- Continue conducting research
- Collate data and begin analyses
- Continue to review relevant literature
- Fine-tune Introduction and Method sections of thesis
- Begin draft of Results section

**Note:** the exact order in which you conduct these tasks will depend on the participants you are testing and their availability during the semester break.

### September
- Finalise analysis
- Update literature review
- Prepare final draft of Introduction, Method and Results to submit to supervisor for feedback
- Begin to draft Discussion
- Prepare raw data and other materials for appendices
- Submit Empirical Research Progress Report confirming that Introduction, Method, Results have been submitted to Supervisor for feedback (**30 September**)

### October
- Revise early thesis sections on the basis of supervisor’s feedback
- Finalise Discussion section (not to be read by supervisor)
- Write abstract
- Finalise appendices
- **PROOF-READ THESIS**
- Submit thesis before 5pm, 14 October
- 5.01pm, 14 October – CELEBRATE!
3 COURSEWORK DETAILS

3.1 COURSEWORK TIMETABLE


3.2 COMPULSORY COURSEWORK

3.2.1 RESEARCH METHODS

This course consists of two components.

A. Statistics & Research Design (SRD)

Thirteen one-hour lectures and 12 one hour tutorials in Semester 1. See Honours notice board for tutorial allocations.

Co-ordinator: Dr. Margaret Charles
Room: BM 452
Phone: 9351 3354
E-mail: margreetc@psych.usyd.edu.au

General Description

The aim of this course is to expand the menu of statistical tools available to students for their research, whether survey based, observational or experimental, and to develop their understanding of the conceptual bases of these tools. Tutorials will involve computer work using SPSS, while at the same time reinforcing the concepts discussed in lectures. It is assumed that students are familiar with material covered in PSYC2012 and PSYC3010 (including analysis of variance, contrasts and multiple regression).

It is recommended that students purchase a copy of SPSS Graduate Pack (NOT the Student version) from the Co-Op bookshop. The Graduate pack is a fully-functioning version with a 4 year licence. Note that version 17 for Mac and PC is the latest version (only recently available), but earlier versions are also adequate. (If buying earlier versions, check version/operating system compatibility.) Times will also be available in the School’s computer labs for student use of SPSS.

Teaching outcomes

- an understanding of the empirical meaning of parameters in statistical models
- an understanding of experimental design issues: control of unwanted variability, confounding and bias, increasing power with covariate control
- understanding of indices of effect size, power analysis and meta-analysis
- ability to use dummy coding and contrast coding to test statistical hypotheses within the General Linear Model
- an understanding of the limitations and shortcomings of statistical models and statistical packages
- an ability to apply design/statistical concepts in students’ individual research projects
- an ability to analyse data and interpret output in a scientifically meaningful way

Syllabus

Conceptual topics covered include: research methods in Psychology, the empirical meaning of parameters in statistical models, scientific control, the meaning of ‘interaction’ and ‘effect size statistics’.

Statistical models discussed include: Multiple Linear Regression (MLR), ANOVA and ANCOVA for between-subjects, within-subjects, and mixed designs, Logistic Regression, Scale design and factor analysis.

The course will have a “critical” slant, aimed at communicating what the statistical tools offer, and what they do not offer, as research tools.

Assessment
Two-hour examination in the Semester 1 exam period, part multiple choice, part short answer written questions.

Lecture/tutorial outline
An outline of the course will be available on WebCT, once semester starts.
Most tutorials will have associated pre-tutorial work that will be available on WebCT. Completion of the pre-tutorial exercises will assist in developing your understanding of the relevant material.

Recommended reading (items marked with an asterisk are regarded as essential reading)

* Aiken, LS, West, SG & Pitts, SC. *Multiple Linear Regression* (Vol 2; Ch. 19) in *Handbook of Psychology* (Available electronically)


Further references will be provided in lectures and on WebCT.

B. Psychometric Principles and Applications

12 one-hour lectures and 3 one-hour tutorials in Semester 1.

Tutorials start in week 7 and you are required to attend one per fortnight. You will be allocated to either odd weeks (Weeks 7, 9, & 11) or even weeks (Weeks 8, 10 & 12).

Co-ordinator
Dr. Damian Birney
BM 449; Tel: 9351 4236
damianb@psych.usyd.edu.au

Other Teaching Staff
Dr. Fiona Hibberd
BM 451; Tel: 9351 2867
fionah@psych.usyd.edu.au

Overview
The lectures and tutorials consider two core issues surrounding psychological measurement. First, we examine a number of concepts which underpin the use of statistics and measurement in Psychology. Second, we consider the theoretical underpinnings and applications of selected psychometric theories.
The aims are for students to:

(i) understand the origins of, and problems with, null-hypothesis testing and the use of confidence intervals;
(ii) appreciate the conceptual flaws that ground the ‘quantitative imperative’ in Psychology;
(iii) develop an awareness of the requirements of fundamental measurement;
(iv) develop an appreciation for the limitations of ALL measurement approaches in Psychology;
(v) develop a basic understanding of “modern test theory” and in particular the Rasch Measurement Model, which attempts to address some of the measurement concerns.

Part (i). Dr. Fiona Hibberd

Lectures weeks 1 – 5; no tutorials

Overview: statistical practice prior to WWII; statistical practice post WWII; the inference revolution (1940-1955); null-hypothesis testing (NHST) and the concept of probability deployed in psychological research. // The informal concept of probability; frequency theories; subjective theories; the concept of objective chance. // Some of the differences between Fisher’s NHST and that of Neyman & Pearson; Psychology’s illusions about NHST; the use of confidence intervals. // The relationship between measurement and scientific method; S. S. Stevens’ representational theory of measurement; Stevens’ scales of measurement; problems with Stevens’ theory. // The classical concept of measurement; when is an attribute quantitative?; testing for quantitative structure; does psychological measurement ever occur?

Part (ii). Dr. Damian Birney

Lectures 6 – 12; 3 tutorials.

Overview: Introduction to Item Response Theory, with an emphasis on the conceptualisation of fundamental measurement using the Rasch Measurement Model and typical applications

Assessment: 1.5 hour examination in the Semester 1 exam period, part multiple choice, part short answer written questions.

Lecture/tutorial outline

<table>
<thead>
<tr>
<th>Week</th>
<th>Lecture</th>
<th>Lecturer</th>
<th>Tutorial</th>
</tr>
</thead>
<tbody>
<tr>
<td>1</td>
<td>The application of statistical techniques to psychological testing; inference revolution; the logic of null-hypothesis significance testing (NHST)</td>
<td>FJH</td>
<td>No tutorials</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>2</td>
<td>Concepts of probability</td>
<td>FJH</td>
<td>No tutorials</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>3</td>
<td>NHST orthodoxy – Fisher vs. Neyman &amp; Pearson</td>
<td>FJH</td>
<td>No tutorials</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>4</td>
<td>Measurement in Psychology</td>
<td>FJH</td>
<td></td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>5</td>
<td>The classical concept of measurement and testing for quantitative structure</td>
<td>FJH</td>
<td>No tutorials</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>6</td>
<td>Alternative conceptualisation of validity</td>
<td>DB</td>
<td></td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td></td>
<td><strong>EASTER BREAK</strong></td>
<td></td>
<td></td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>7</td>
<td>Item Analyses: Traditional Approaches and introduction to IRT approaches</td>
<td>DB</td>
<td>True scores, latent variables, and constructs.</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>8</td>
<td>Item Response Theory: 1 and 2 parameter models</td>
<td>DB</td>
<td></td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>9</td>
<td>The Rasch Measurement Model – Dichotomous Models</td>
<td>DB</td>
<td>Why psychometrics is not pathological?!</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>10</td>
<td>The Rasch Measurement Model – Testing model fit</td>
<td>DB</td>
<td></td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>11</td>
<td>The Rasch Measurement Model – Polytomous Models: Rating Scales &amp; Partial Credit</td>
<td>DB</td>
<td>The attack of the psychometricians</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>12</td>
<td>The Rasch Measurement Model – Applications: Multi-faceted models</td>
<td>DB</td>
<td></td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>13</td>
<td>No lectures</td>
<td>DB</td>
<td>No tutorials</td>
</tr>
</tbody>
</table>
Required Readings
As specified in lectures

Recommended Text

3.2.2 ETHICS AND CURRENT ISSUES (semester 2, wks. 1-7)

Co-ordinator: Prof. Alex Blaszczynski
Room: GT 308
Phone: 9036 7227
E-mail: alexb@psych.usyd.edu.au

Other teaching staff: Dr. Barbara Mullan
Room: BM 446
Phone: 9351 6811
E-mail: barbara@psych.usyd.edu.au

Prof. Stephen Touyz
Room: CPU 167
Phone: 9351 2646
Email: stephent@psych.usyd.edu.au

Assoc/Prof. Louise Sharpe
Room: BM 450
Phone: 9351 4558
Email: louises@psych.usyd.edu.au

Format of Unit: 1 x 2 hour lecture per wk. x 7 wks.

Assessment: Examination (1.5 hours) on Monday, 21 September 2009 at 4.30pm (subject to change)

Unit of Study General Description

This unit covers current ethical and professional issues in Psychology: Underlying principles & concepts. The relevance of ethics in research, clinical, educational and other settings will be covered. The Professional Codes of Conduct published by both the New South Wales Psychologists Registration Board and Australian Psychological Society will be discussed. Ethical aspects related to topics such as the use of Internet in counselling, child protection, theoretical and empirical foundations for evidence-based treatments and personality and cognitive assessment will be covered.

Teaching Outcomes

(i) Ability to describe, explain, evaluate and apply principles of ethical conduct that apply to psychologists working in the areas of professional practice and research covered in the lecture series.

Text

APS Code of Conduct for Psychologists:


Other references vary with topics covered each year.
Lecture outline:

<table>
<thead>
<tr>
<th>Week</th>
<th>Hrs</th>
<th>Topic</th>
<th>Lecturer</th>
</tr>
</thead>
<tbody>
<tr>
<td>Week 1</td>
<td>2</td>
<td>The Professional Code of Conduct &amp; Ethics in Health Psychology</td>
<td>Dr. Barbara Mullan</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Week 2</td>
<td>2</td>
<td>Confidentiality &amp; Privacy Cyber-counselling as an Ethical Issue</td>
<td>Prof. Stephen Touyz</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Week 3</td>
<td>2</td>
<td>Boundary Violations, Sexual Misconduct</td>
<td>Prof. Stephen Touyz</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Week 4</td>
<td>2</td>
<td>Ethics and False Memory Syndrome Child Protection</td>
<td>Assoc/Prof. Louise Sharpe</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Week 5</td>
<td>2</td>
<td>Theoretical and empirical foundations for evidence based interventions</td>
<td>Prof. Alex Blaszczynski</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Week 6</td>
<td>2</td>
<td>Research Ethics</td>
<td>Prof. Alex Blaszczynski</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Week 7</td>
<td>2</td>
<td>Personality and Cognitive Assessment: Approaches &amp; Issues</td>
<td>Prof. Alex Blaszczynski</td>
</tr>
</tbody>
</table>

3.3 SPECIAL FIELDS SEMINAR ELECTIVES

All seminars will run during weeks 1-13 inclusive and will be of 1-2 hours duration.

Special Fields teaching objectives

These objectives apply to each of the Special Field areas, but specific areas may have additional objectives unique to that field.

(i) To develop in-depth knowledge of current developments in research and/or theory in the area covered by the Special Field seminars.

(ii) To take a critical stance in evaluating empirical evidence and/or psychological theories in the Special Field area.

(iii) To develop an appreciation of methodological issues in the Special Field area.

(iv) To develop an appreciation of ethical issues in the Special Field area.

(v) To be able to give an oral presentation of theoretical or empirical material relevant to the Special Field area.

General assessment guidelines for Special Fields seminars

The assessment for each Special Fields seminar will require the equivalent of approximately 4,000 words of written work. This total will be made up of various specific assessment tasks. Details of the assessment requirements for each Special Field seminar are given in section 3.3.2. However, all Special Fields seminars require the completion of a Major Assignment consisting of a substantial essay or critical review of at least 2,500 words. These will be independently marked by two staff members or associates. Topics for this major assignment will be available to download from webct on Thursday, 19 March.

Each of the Special Fields major assignments must be written on distinctly different topics: there should be minimal or no overlap in the literatures and reference lists. Similarly, if the potential reference list for a student’s major assignment question were to overlap substantially with the references for the Empirical Thesis, then that topic is not appropriate as a major assignment for that student.

Note that if you do not take the Theoretical Thesis option, you MUST attend the weekly meetings for your two Special Fields seminars over the entire semester and contribute to the required seminar presentations or other nominated assessments. Students missing more than 20% of seminars during semester (because of illness or misadventure) must apply for special consideration through the School of Psychology.
3.3.1 SUBMISSION OF SPECIAL FIELDS MAJOR ASSIGNMENTS

The due date for Special Fields major assignments is **no later than 5pm, Monday 15 June.**

Although both major Special Fields assignments are due on the same day, you are strongly advised to set personal deadlines and pace your Special Fields seminar work, preparation and writing throughout the time available.

Two copies of each Special Fields major assignment must be submitted to the Psychology counter. Special Fields assignments do not need to be bound, but each copy must have the appropriate cover sheet, as well as a second page that contains only the title of the essay and an accurate word count (excluding abstract and references, but including in-text citations). To ensure anonymity during the examination process, the student's name must not appear on the second cover sheet of the Special Field Assignment, nor anywhere else apart from the first cover sheet. Cover sheets will be available to download from the Honours website.

**Format:** Each major essay must contain an abstract (maximum 200 words), and a reference list, and **must not exceed the word length** specified for that Special Field assignment (excluding abstract and references, but including in-text citations). The student will be penalised if they fail to provide an abstract and/or if the word length is exceeded by more than 5%. For further details regarding format and word limits, see Section 7.

3.3.2 SPECIAL FIELD SEMINARS

**GROUP A**

**Current Approaches in Advanced Social Psychology**
Convenors: Dr. Fiona White & Dr. Lisa Zadro
Time: Monday, 12-2pm

These seminars aim to introduce students to current theories and methodologies of Advanced Social Psychology, promote analytical reasoning and effective communication skills. Following a detailed introduction by the convenors, the unit will primarily consist of student-led seminars. The first section will predominantly focus on issues relating to prejudice such as affirmative action, impression formation, social cognitive neuroscience, intergroup contact, family influences and developmental aspects. The second section will focus on issues related to social influence and the power of the situation such as determinants of attraction, violence in the media, and mood. Each student seminar presentation will be evaluated on the: (i) style of presentation, (ii) ability to critically evaluate research methods and theories, (iii) structure of presentation, and (iv) ability to stimulate discussion and answer questions.

**Assessment:**
Major (70%) A 2,500 word essay on a topic specified by the co-ordinators
Minor (30%) A seminar presentation evaluated by the co-ordinators

**Current Issues In Developmental Psychology**
Convenors: A/Prof. Pauline Howie & A/Prof. David Livesey
Time: Monday, 10am-12pm

This seminar will address current issues in human development, with particular emphasis on the ways in which different research methodologies are used to address different research questions. Where applicable, we will consider the implications of developmental research findings as a basis for social policy. Each student will present at least one seminar, in which they will be expected to outline the key issues in a recent research paper, and lead discussion on the paper. The areas covered will be determined by the interests of the participants, and could include a wide range of developmental areas across the entire life span.

**Assessment:**
Major (70%) 2,500 word essay on a topic to be specified by co-ordinators
Minor (30%) Seminar presentation and contributions to discussion throughout semester
Learning: Current Issues  
Convenors: A/Prof Justin Harris & Dr Evan Livesey  
Time: Monday 4-6pm  

The aims of this seminar are: to introduce and develop students’ understanding of selected issues in the study of human and animal learning; to develop students’ ability to evaluate a piece of research in terms of its theoretical and methodological contributions; and to develop students’ skills in presenting and discussing empirical research and theories in this area of psychology. Topics in both animal and human learning are likely to include some of the following: food preferences, social learning, perceptual learning, human causal judgements, implicit learning, conditioning models of drug tolerance.

Assessment:  
Major (70%) 2,500 word essay in which students are required to evaluate a recent research paper.  
Minor (20%) Seminar presentation  
(10%) Contributions to discussion throughout semester

Language and Decision Making  
Convenors: Professor Sally Andrews & Dr. Bruce Burns  
Time: TBA  

This seminar series will focus on the cognitive processes involved in language processing and decision making. Language processing can be seen as a set of decisions about how the sensory input maps onto conceptual representations and how these concepts combine to determine the meaning of the spoken or written discourse. Theories of language processing therefore depend critically on assumptions about how knowledge is represented. Decision making also depends critically on how information is represented and much of that information is provided to us in the form of written or spoken language. Thus understanding how language is represented and processed contributes to understanding the processes and outcomes of decision making and to a range of applied issues. The particular topics to be discussed will be determined in consultation with students in the first class.

The seminars will be organised around research articles published on these topics. The initial seminars will be led by the lecturers who will discuss major theories and evidence in the domains of language and decision making and consider the relationships between them. In later classes, students will be responsible for leading discussions on papers related to language and decision making.

Assessment:  
Major (50%) 2,500 word essay on a question specified by convenors  
Minor (40%) Depending on class numbers, 2-3 students will work as a team to lead the discussion of each topic and select relevant paper(s) to present to the class. Each student will be part of two pairs, for seminars on different topics. Assessment will be based on the presentation in class.  
(10%) Students will be expected to read the articles for each week and to contribute to their discussion. Assessment will be based on the quality of each student’s contribution.

Neuroscience  
Convenor: Dr Ian Johnston  and  Professor Iain McGregor  
Time: TBA  

This seminar discusses recent important developments in the fields of behavioural neuroscience and psychopharmacology. The scope of the seminar is wide and involves consideration of studies involving both humans and laboratory animals. Each week, individual students or pairs of students do a presentation on a relevant topic. There is one “key paper” to read each week and every student is expected to read it – not just those presenting. The talk should not be all about the paper but should draw on the wider area of science surrounding it. Every Honours student attending the seminar must participate in at least one presentation.

Assessment:  
Major (70%) 2,500 word essay in which students are required to evaluate one of a number of recent research studies.  
Minor (25%) Seminar presentation (including a one page written summary of presented topic)  
(5%) Contributions to discussion throughout semester
At the Interface of Perception and Cognition  
Convenors: Dr. Alex Holcombe and Dr. Irina Harris  
Time: Thursday, 4-6pm

This seminar will introduce a few fundamental concepts and several salient phenomena important for understanding the connection between perception and cognition and the neural underpinnings of this connection. Our perceptual systems present an enormous amount of information to more central mental processes at every instant. How can cognition, which seems of such limited capacity to be actually single-minded at times, cope? Phenomena such as the attentional blink, change blindness, visual neglect and extinction, indicate that the bridge between perception and cognition is often shaky and that "what you see" is not always "what you get". Our experience of space and time as continuous is also difficult to explain, as the readings in the class will illustrate. Finally, what role does consciousness play in all this, if any? A major aim of the readings, presentations, and discussion in this seminar is to cultivate a critical attitude toward recent behavioural and neuro-scientific research addressing these issues and to give students a deeper understanding of the functioning of our perceptual and cognitive systems.

Assessment:
Major (70%) 2500 word essay on a topic to be specified by the co-ordinators
Minor (20%) Seminar presentation
(10%) Contributions to discussion throughout the semester

Perception: From Unconscious Processing to Multi-modal Awareness  
Convenors: A/Prof. Colin Clifford and A/Prof. David Alais  
Time: TBA

The aims of this seminar are to develop critical understanding of current issues and developments in perception and sensory neuroscience, and to develop skills in critical evaluation of the scientific worth of research reports. The seminar will cover a broad range of topics, chosen from journal articles and book chapters, organized along two main themes: unconscious processing and multi-modal integration. The seminars on unconscious processing will address general issues on what it means for a processing to be unconscious and how unconscious processing can be measured, as well as focussing on specific paradigms such as blind-sight and binocular rivalry. The seminars on multi-modal integration will include discussion of binding within and between modalities, the cross-modal construction of space, and the role of attention in sensory integration.

Assessment:
Major (70%) 2,500 word essay on a topic to be specified by co-ordinators
Minor (20%) Seminar presentation (content and structure)
(10%) Contribution to discussion throughout the semester

The Psychology of Religion & Spirituality  
Convenor: Dr. Niko Tiliopoulos  
Time: TBA

These seminars aim to introduce students to the vast, yet neglected, field - the psychology of religion/spirituality/occult. We will examine its history and theoretical-empirical foundations. After an introduction by the co-ordinator, the unit will consist of student-led teaching sessions. The first section (co-ordinator led) will focus on the presentation and discussion of a historical review of the psychology of religion, the main psychological theories in the field, the empirical evidence, and the methodological issues relating to the study. The second section (student-led) will focus on specific applications of religion/spirituality in the fields of health psychology, psychopathology, development, individual differences, etc. Each student-led seminar presentation will be evaluated on (1) presentation style and structure, and (2) critical appraisal of research and theories.

Assessment:
Major (70%) A 2,500 word essay on a topic specified by the co-ordinators
Minor (30%) A student-led teaching session evaluated by the co-ordinators
Theory & Systems  
Convenors: Dr. Fiona Hibberd & Dr. Hans Pols  
Time: Tuesday 4-5.30pm

Scientific progress requires a balance between three types of activity – empirical research, theory development and conceptual analysis. Yet Psychology is without this balance. Much of its activity is disproportionately stretched in the direction of empirical investigation. The first half of this seminar series will focus on conceptual analysis, what it is, and how it can be used in Psychology to benefit the empirical research process. This will involve examining recently published papers in areas such as developmental psychology, cognitive psychology, social psychology, personality, and neuroscience.

The second half of the seminar series will consider Psychology in its broader socio-cultural context. Topics for discussion will include non-Western contributions, the boundary between scientific and popular psychology, and moral issues raised by experimental social psychology.

NB: the satisfactory completion of HPSC 3023, or its equivalent, is a pre-requisite for entry into this seminar.

Assessment:  
Major (70%) 2500 word essay on a topic worked out by the convenor and student.
Minor (25%) Seminar presentation that relates to essay topic.
(5%) Contribution to weekly seminar.

GROUP B

Students are limited to participate in 1 of these seminars only

Eating and Weight Disorders  
Conveners: Dr. Elizabeth Rieger & Prof. Stephen Touyz  
Time: Friday, 2-4pm

This course will encourage students to critically evaluate theoretical, methodological, and clinical issues relevant to the aetiology, diagnosis, and treatment of eating disorders and obesity. Set readings which address current themes or have been highly influential in the field of eating disorders and obesity will form the basis of each class. The classes will be structured as student-led seminars. Each student will be required to provide an oral presentation on one of the set-readings, to lead a class discussion on issues relevant to the paper, and to read the weekly set-readings in preparation for the class.

Assessment:  
Major (70%) 2,500 essay on topic specified by co-ordinators and related to a different topic than the seminar presentation.
Minor (30%) Each student will present a topic (20%) and will contribute to class discussions (10%).

Abnormal Psychology: Exploring problem gambling as a behavioural addiction  
Convenor: Prof. Alex Blaszczynski  
Time: Friday, 1-3pm

In this course, students will critically analyse the concept, measurement, psycho-social impact and treatment of behavioural addictions using problem gambling as the exemplar. A range of explanatory models will be discussed including the addiction, learning/conditioning, neurobiological, cognitive and critical pathways frameworks, as will the role of these models in influencing the clinical assessment and management of the condition. The classes will be structured as student-led seminars and group discussion. Students will be required to give an oral presentation of a journal article and to lead the class in a critical discussion of the relevant topic/theme being studied. The class will be expected to have read that article in preparation for the class.

Assessment:  
Major (70%) 2,500 essay on a topic specified by the co-ordinator and related to a different topic than the seminar presentation.
Minor (30%) Each student will give an oral presentation (20%) and will actively contribute to class discussions (10%). Set readings will form the basis of the presentation and discussion.
Child Clinical Psychology  
Convenors: A/Prof. Caroline Hunt & Dr. David Hawes  
Time: TBA

This course will expose students to theoretical, methodological and clinical issues relevant to the aetiology, diagnosis and treatment of childhood psychological disorders. The classes will be structured as student-led seminars. The introductory classes will overview current theoretical and empirical approaches to the conceptualisation and measurement of childhood disorders. The remainder of the course will focus on new developments in understanding internalising and externalising disorders of childhood.

**Assessment:**

- Major (70%) 2,500 word essay on topic specified by co-ordinators.
- Minor (30%) Presentation and class discussion

Health Psychology  
Convenors: Prof. Phyllis Butow, Dr. Barbara Mullan & Dr. Ilona Juraskova  
Time: TBA

The aim of this course is to advance students’ knowledge regarding the theoretical, methodological and clinical issues relevant to Health Psychology. The introductory class will orient the students to Health Psychology and the planned course. The remaining sessions will be student-led seminars focusing on: Advanced issues in survivorship; Advanced models of health behaviour; Managing pain; Carers’ burden and challenges; Alternative and complementary therapies; Informed consent to medical research; Sexual adjustment in chronic illness; Health interventions: making them work; HPV vaccination; Organ donation; and Designer babies. Throughout the course, we will discuss measurement and design issues in conducting research in this field. A range of illness and conditions will be used as case examples, including cancer, heart disease, rheumatoid arthritis and chronic pain.

**Assessment:**

- Major (70%) 2,500 essay on topic specified by co-ordinators (choice of three)
- Minor (30%) Assessment of presentation to class.

Neuropsychological Rehabilitation  
Convenors: Dr. Karen Croot & Dr. Sunny Lah  
Time: Thursday 1-2pm

These seminars will introduce students to theory and practice in the rehabilitation of a range of cognitive impairments. Impairments discussed will include disorders of memory, language, attention, visual perception, executive function, and social or emotional functioning following neurological insult. The seminars will survey how research into effective rehabilitation is formulated in each of these areas. We will consider the brain bases and cognitive bases for restoration of function during rehabilitation, and discuss whether it is more appropriate to seek to restore cognitive function or to develop compensatory strategies. Students will learn about the design of rehabilitation studies and consider the advantages and disadvantages of double-blind randomised control studies compared with single case methodologies. Students will be expected to read from the recommended text (see below) in preparation for weekly discussion and from the published scientific literature on neuropsychological rehabilitation to prepare for their major essay and for seminars. Students will also be in charge of leading one of the seminars on a topic of their choice within the areas covered. By the end of the seminar series, students will have a broad overview of current progress in rehabilitation across cognitive domains, as well as in-depth knowledge about one or two topics of their choice.

**Assessment:**

- Major (70%) 2,500 word essay on a topic to be specified by co-ordinators
- Minor (20%) Seminar presentation. Please hand in two copies of power-point slides or overhead transparencies used in presentation (one for each convenor) before presentation.
- Minor (10%) Contributions to discussion throughout semester
3.4 SUPPLEMENTARY COURSEWORK

You are encouraged to attend the School of Psychology Research Colloquium

These are held on Fridays during semester time between 4 and 5pm in Education Lecture Room 424. Papers are presented dealing with current research in a range of areas in Psychology, some by researchers in other Australian and overseas universities, and some by members of our own staff. Presentations are followed by a question session. Attendance at the Colloquium will provide you with a valuable opportunity to hear psychologists – often internationally renowned – present their ideas and research. As well as expanding your awareness of research and providing you with insights into effective presentation techniques, attending these seminars will expose you to a range of ideas, which may be of direct help in your Honours work, and will allow you to make contact with people in the field. The Colloquium programme will be posted on the School’s web page.
4 THEORETICAL THESIS

4.1 NATURE OF THE THEORETICAL THESIS

Most commonly a Theoretical Thesis is concerned with some well-known theoretical concept that is influencing lines of research in an area of Psychology. The aim of the thesis should be to disentangle the theoretical presuppositions from the factual material that is supposed to support or exemplify them, and then to examine the theoretical component to see whether it is logically coherent, whether it can be expressed without necessarily leading to self-contradiction, whether it can be put to any conceivable empirical test, whether it can possibly increase our understanding of the phenomena under study or only give a spurious appearance of doing so, and so on. Most of the topics suggested in Section 4.4 below refer to theoretical concepts of that kind. Some other topics deal with aspects of theory-building as such: eg. the nature of explanation, of confirmation and disconfirmation, the types and uses of theoretical constructs. These should always be worked out taking actual psychological theories as examples. A thesis which surveys some field of research and contends that the researcher has neglected to control for some empirical variable which may have been affecting the dependent variable, and so in effect suggests a new experiment, is not suitable for this part of the year’s work. That kind of analysis and criticism would be relevant when working up the experimental design for the Empirical Thesis.

Generally, then, the Theoretical Thesis should be conceived as an exercise in purifying existing theories.

The thesis is assessed on the extent to which a student can carry out the sort of problem outlined above by the exercise of their own critical judgement. Students should guard against:

(i) adopting a particular theoretical position on some contentious issue without recognising that it is a subject of dispute;
(ii) accepting theory-loaded definitions as if they were statements of fact;
(iii) drawing conclusions which in fact simply do not follow from the material cited;
(iv) treating theories which contradict each other as if they were talking about different parts of the subject-matter, and so could peacefully co-exist;
(v) not being aware of relevant classic studies, where ‘classic’ means widely influential studies which established a new trend of thought;
(vi) taking one statement as definitive of an author’s position when it has been modified in a later work, as sometimes happens;
(vii) padding, irrelevancies, obscurities of language.

In the final assessment of the year’s work, the Theoretical Thesis can earn a good mark only if it has some real depth and substance. Serious intellectual work of this kind takes time. Students are advised to make their decision about a topic and begin their reading early in the year, thus allowing their ideas an adequate period of gestation.

Examiner’s report form

The report form, which each examiner completes as part of the examination of the final thesis (Appendix I), gives a clear indication of the assessment criteria used.

4.2 PREPARATION OF THE THEORETICAL THESIS

Dr. Hibberd (Rm 451 Brennan Building; phone 9351 2867; email fionah) is the co-ordinator of the Theoretical Thesis option. Please consult with her regarding a topic. You will be allocated a supervisor, after which changes of supervisor will be permitted only under exceptional circumstances, and must be approved by Dr. Hibberd. Changes of topic under the same supervisor are permissible if the supervisor is agreeable. Please inform Dr. Hibberd as soon as possible of any such changes.

Topic selection

A Theoretical Thesis may deal with any topic in Psychology, with the restriction that it may not be in the same specific area as that in which you are carrying out empirical research. The purpose of this requirement is to ensure that students’ work is not too narrowly specialised. Topics in the same general area of Psychology (e.g., Learning, Social, Neuroscience) are not specifically excluded, but permission must be obtained from Dr. Hibberd. Permission will only be granted where it is clear that the student will be undertaking work in substantially different topic areas and there is minimal or no overlap in the literatures.
Frequency of supervision consultation

The supervisor should be consulted at least once a fortnight with more frequent consultations likely in the early stages and toward the end. In general, the frequency of consultation is a matter for the supervisor and the student to determine, but it is the student’s responsibility to ensure that s/he makes proper use of the supervision facilities and informs Dr. Hibberd if problems arise.

Supervisor’s report

After the thesis submission date, as part of the thesis examination process, your supervisor will be asked to provide a report of your work, including ratings of the amount of consultation, the extent of the supervisor’s involvement in choice and definition of the topic, the extent of editorial assistance, the extent to which Draft(s) were read, the extent of any outside help, and any special circumstances which may be relevant (See a copy of the supervisor’s report form in Appendix H). The supervisor’s report will, however, not affect the examiner’s final assessment unless any of these aspects fall outside the normal range.

4.3 WRITING THE THEORETICAL THESIS

Submission of Draft

The Theoretical Thesis Draft must be submitted directly to your thesis supervisor no later than Monday, July 20, 2009. Supervisors will provide comments on Drafts submitted by this date only if they are written in consecutive prose style. Drafts should not be in note form.

Submission of Final Theoretical Thesis

The due date for submission of the Theoretical Thesis is no later than 5 pm on Monday, 10 August, 2009. Note: Please refer to Section 7 for detailed instructions on how to submit the final copies of your Theoretical Thesis.

Word limit

The Theoretical Thesis MUST NOT EXCEED 8,000 WORDS IN LENGTH (including in-text citations, but excluding abstract, tables, captions, references and appendices). Where the word length is exceeded by more than 5%, the student will be penalised. There is no penalty for word counts which are less than 8,000 words.

4.4 POSSIBLE THEORETICAL THESIS TOPICS

You are advised to consult recent issues (say 2006-2009) of the journals below. This will give you a sense of current theoretical research in Psychology.

American Journal of Psychoanalysis
American Journal of Psychology
American Psychologist
Behavior and Philosophy
History of the Human Sciences
History of Psychology
International Journal of Psychoanalysis
Journal for the Theory of Social Behaviour
Journal of the History of the Behavioural Sciences
Journal of Mind & Behavior

Journal of Theoretical and Philosophical Psychology
Mind
Mind & Language
New Ideas in Psychology
Philosophy of the Social Sciences
Philosophy, Psychiatry & Psychology
Philosophical Psychology
Psychological Science
Psychologist
Social Studies of Science
Theory and Psychology

Other possible topics are listed below. If you wish to write on a subject not listed below, then you’re free to specify your own topic in consultation with Dr. Hibberd, bearing in mind the restriction that your Theoretical Thesis may not be in the same specific area as that of your empirical research.
Note: some topics could be classed under more than one of the headings below.

Abnormal Psychology
(i) Multiple personality and personal identity
(ii) The “rationality” of depression
(iii) Conceptual issues in defining personality disorders
(iv) Conceptual issues in psychiatric classification
(v) The “scientist/practitioner model” in clinical psychology.
(vi) What is “health psychology”?

Cognitive Processes
(i) The concept of error
(ii) The concept of “information”
(iii) The metaphorical status of “information-processing”
(iv) The distinction between implicit and explicit memory
(v) The concept of meta-cognition

Conceptual Foundations of Quantitative Methods
(i) The concept of measurement
(ii) Operationalism in psychology: Empiricism or rationalism?
(iii) The quantitative/qualitative distinction in psychology

Developmental Psychology
(i) Piaget’s ‘constructivist’ approach to language acquisition
(ii) Innatism vs constructivism: A barren confrontation?
(iii) The concept of a language acquisition device
(iv) Piaget’s concept of egocentrism
(v) The concept of “attachment”
(vi) The development of the concept of an object

Individual Differences and Personality
(i) The concept of ‘intelligence’ in contemporary psychology
(ii) Ability, capacity, potential and the like - unnecessary constructs?
(iii) The contribution of factor analysis to the study of individual differences in abilities or personality
(iv) Heredity vs environment in intelligence - an irresolvable issue?
(v) The concept of ‘task-difficulty’
(vi) The status of the notion of sexual difference in psychological theorising
(vii) The concept of personality “trait” in contemporary and recent psychology
(viii) The concept of mental energy in psychoanalytic theory
(ix) Biological bases of intelligence - reductionism in its crudest form?

Learning
(i) The claim that animals acquire propositional knowledge
(ii) The claim that all forms of learning are associative in nature
(iii) The concept of awareness as a correlate of learning
(iv) The distinction between explicit and implicit learning
(v) Memory in non-human animals

Motivation / Human Performance
(i) Emotion as a motivational concept in contemporary and recent psychology
(ii) The distinction between energy and direction in behaviour
(iii) The concept of mental effort
(iv) The value of the concept of “arousal” to psychology
(v) Relating electrophysiological recordings to psychological phenomena

Perception
(i) The concept of perceptual structure
(ii) In what sense can psychological and neuro-physiological experiments provide an explanation of perceptual events?
(iii) Parallel Distributed Processing network models: Do they provide explanations of behaviour?
(iv) Do neural networks explain perception or behaviour?
(v) The logical status of emergent properties in perception and/or cognition
(vi) The logical status of Gibson’s concept of “affordance”
Physiological Psychology
(i) Is there any difference between reward and reinforcement?
(ii) The concept of emergence.

Psycholinguistics
(i) Thought and language
(ii) The concept of a "mental lexicon"

Social Psychology
(i) The logic of socio-biological explanations
(ii) What is Evolutionary Psychology?
(iii) The concept of attitude
(iv) Is Western social psychology really social?

Theory and Systems
(i) The value of 'model-building' in psychology
(ii) Phenomenology vs direct realism
(iii) The explanatory power of social constructionism
(iv) The logical status of "representations" in psychological theory
(v) The contribution of psychological research to theories in the philosophy of science
(vi) In what sense (if any) is behaviour creative?
(vii) The social construction of 'psychological' phenomena
(viii) The motivational component of error
(ix) The relationship between psychoanalysis and neuroscience
5 EMPIRICAL THESIS

5.1 GENERAL REQUIREMENTS OF PROJECT

Students conduct a research project under the supervision of a staff member and report this project in a thesis of between 9,000 and 12,000 words (main text only: excluding abstract, tables, captions, references, and appendices, but including in-text citations). Students are evaluated on their ability to:

(i) identify a research problem to be investigated;
(ii) demonstrate understanding of relevant background literature and appreciation of theoretical and methodological issues;
(iii) design a study that takes account of these issues and has the potential to answer the question(s) posed;
(iv) conduct an investigation with due regard to adequate procedure and controls;
(v) appropriately analyse the data;
(vi) correctly interpret the data, taking account of any inadequacies and ambiguities, and adequately relate the findings to the issues raised in the literature review, and
(vii) report the results of the research project concisely and clearly using the publication conventions of the American Psychological Association.

The criteria listed above are reflected in the Examiner’s Report form that each examiner completes as part of the assessment of the final thesis (Appendix G).

5.2 SUPERVISION OF EMPIRICAL RESEARCH PROJECTS

Allocation of supervisors

Supervision of empirical research projects is usually carried out individually. On very rare occasions, students may work in pairs or collaborate with other students on aspects of a research project. In such cases, students are still required to develop and investigate individual research questions. Once allocated to a supervisor, the student and supervisor discuss and refine the topic and decide on the most appropriate supervision arrangements.

Note that while students entering Honours are asked to submit their empirical research area preferences, and may even indicate a preferred supervisor, it is never possible to accommodate all requests. A variety of factors constrain the allocation of supervisors and research areas although the School makes every effort to satisfy as many student preferences as possible.

Independence and originality of research

It is a requirement that students investigate and report on independent research questions. The Australian Psychological Society guidelines for fourth year programs specify that each student must “participate in all of the steps involved in research including formulation of research questions, the design of the study including selection of appropriate methodology, the collection and analysis of data to test the research question, the interpretation of findings and the writing up of the report”. Each student’s research question must be independent in the sense that it is neither a direct replication of an existing study, nor a project already designed by the supervisor. The supervisor may, however, point students in a particular direction or suggest a broad issue that needs investigation.

These independence requirements do not prevent students working on related projects and sharing aspects of the work involved in data collection. For example, students might use different aspects of the data they have obtained from a single survey or questionnaire, or investigate the effect of different variables on a phenomenon under study, or conduct different experiments on the same or closely related topic (possibly even using the same apparatus, techniques, participants). However, each student would still select a specific research question for their project and would develop an appropriate design and methodology to investigate it. Such cases might involve joint supervision sessions because of the overlapping areas of relevance in the two projects, but the projects have to remain distinct and separable. Students working within such arrangements may collaborate in the collection of data where appropriate (e.g., large surveys), but their empirical reports would have to treat different subsets of data, and be written up completely independently. Note that any deviation from these requirements would be immediately obvious during assessment since the same examiner would normally mark both theses under such circumstances.
Identifying a research question

In consultation with your supervisor, you will read carefully in your topic area and identify a research question that is broadly within your supervisor’s interests and expertise. In discussion with your supervisor, you must refine the topic into one that can be practically addressed within the available time. You should not expect your supervisor to answer the question “What should I do?”. Rather, you should develop specific questions and possible hypotheses, designs, procedures, etc., for your supervisor to comment on. The reading process is about acquiring important background knowledge in your area and narrowing the scope of your project’s central question to something manageable within the brief period available.

Although the emphasis is on your generating your own research ideas and methodologies, most students will not do this entirely independently. You are an apprentice in the research process and your supervisors have the expertise to guide you and experience of the practical constraints that limit the scope of fourth year research projects. Thus, while supervisors expect students to generate their own ideas about possible research projects, students have the right to guidance from supervisors and advice regarding potential conceptual, methodological or analytical shortcomings.

Supervisory sessions

Meetings with the supervisor normally occur weekly, especially early in the year, and may last up to 1 hour, preferably at the same time each week. Students who are working on related topics will normally meet the supervisor at the same time. During certain periods of the year, meetings may be more frequent while at other times, for example during testing, they may be less so, but the average frequency will tend to be once a week. Both students and supervisors have the responsibility of organising and attending regular supervision meetings and of notifying the Honours Empirical Thesis co-ordinator of any problems that are impeding the supervision process.

Reading the Draft thesis

 Supervisors have a responsibility to read and provide detailed feedback on one Draft of the Introduction, Method and Results sections of your thesis. Supervisors may be willing to provide more limited feedback on a revision of these sections. Supervisors are not permitted to read or provide comments on the written version of your Discussion, although you can discuss the ideas for your Discussion with your supervisor. The Discussion is a crucial section where students can show their ability to interpret data and theorise about their findings. Keeping it free of the supervisor’s direct input provides an opportunity for examiners to evaluate your ability independently of the supervisor’s influence.

Note that research staff or students within the School (e.g., your supervisor’s PhD students or post-doctoral researchers) are also not permitted to provide commentary on Discussion sections. Breaches of this rule will be penalised.

Supervisor’s report (see Appendix F)

After the thesis submission date, as part of the examination process, the supervisor will report on the independence of each student’s contribution to the various components of the research process. The report covers the extent of the supervisor’s involvement in choice of topic and experimental design, the amount of consultation, the extent of statistical assistance, amount of editing assistance on Drafts, and the extent of any outside help. The report is an important part of the assessment process as it takes account of differences between students in the degree of help received. Remember, though, that all students need advice from their supervisor at various times so you should not over-emphasise the importance of demonstrating independence. Your final mark will not be adversely affected unless the level of assistance was outside the normal range. Conversely, very high ratings for independence will not guarantee you a high mark if your failure to seek advice resulted in major flaws in your research.

5.3 EMPIRICAL RESEARCH PROPOSAL

Once you and your supervisor have finalised your research topic and experimental design, you are required to prepare a 1,250 word Research Proposal that includes:

- a brief summary of the relevant background literature
- a clear statement of the research hypotheses to be tested
- a research design and the methods and procedures to be used
- outline of how the data will be analysed
- a completed copy of the Ethics Declaration (see section 5.4 and Appendix B)
It is recommended that your proposal consider different potential outcomes. What results will you find if your hypothesis is confirmed? Which alternative outcomes may arise? Carefully considering hypothetical outcomes and their implications helps you think clearly about your hypotheses and whether your planned experiments really do address them. You may include hypothetical data plots to summarise your predictions.

Your supervisor will read a Draft of your proposal and provide you with feedback on content and clarity. Discussion of the proposal with your supervisor may reveal unforeseen problems and scope for further improvement.

The final version of your Research Proposal and Ethics Declaration (Appendix B) must be submitted to the Psychology Administration Office by Friday April 17th. You may submit it earlier, from Friday April 3rd. A relevant staff member will read the proposal and provide feedback (early submission may expedite this).

A School staff member (not your supervisor) from your general research domain will read your proposal and provide feedback, commenting on the clarity of the research question and hypotheses, appropriateness of the design and methods, and proposed statistical analyses, and any potential issues that the student and supervisor should consider. The reviewer will also confirm that the project is compatible with ethics guidelines. A Research Proposal Review (Appendix D) will be returned to the student and supervisor as quickly as possible.

The Research Proposal is not assessable. Its main purpose is to provide you with independent input from another expert who may be able to observe shortcomings and/or suggest improvements. Very often there is no single “right answer” regarding design and methodology, so the review will not necessarily “approve” or “disapprove” of the project but may instead offer alternative approaches. The review also gives students a preliminary experience of the peer review processes that they are likely to encounter in their professional lives as psychologists.

5.4 ETHICS REQUIREMENTS AND SUBJECT RECRUITMENT PROCEDURES

5.4.1 APPLYING FOR ETHICS APPROVAL

All research conducted at the University of Sydney requires formal approval from the University’s Ethics Office. Applications for approval are made to either to the Animal Ethics Committee or to the Human Research Ethics Committee. Students should consult with their supervisor to determine what action is needed with regard to ethics approval. Information about the ethics approval processes is available from the Ethics Office:


There are two cases where ethical approval for your project might already exist:

Case 1) In many cases, research projects by Honours students using Psychology 1 students as participants are covered by a general approval issued to the School of Psychology by the University’s Human Research Ethics Committee. This approval covers many standard psychological procedures, but is limited to those specifically outlined in the School’s application, as listed in Appendix A. The full application can be found on the School’s Honours web page:


Case 2) In some cases, a student’s research project may be closely related to the supervisor’s ongoing research activity for which ethical approval will already have been given. In such cases the supervisor can fill out a “modification” form and request that the student’s name be added to the list of researchers approved to work on that project (the form is available for download from the Ethics Office web page: see link above). Discuss with your supervisor whether your proposed project falls into this category.

Case 1: Research covered by group application for research with Psychology 1 students

If your research falls into this category, indicate it in the Ethics Declaration Form (Appendix B) submitted with your research proposal. In addition, you must submit the following to the Psychology Administration Office to be forwarded to the Human Ethics Office:

1. Your name, SID, and supervisor’s name;
2. Contact email and/or phone numbers;
3. The protocol number and title of the original group application to the University Human Research Ethics Committee. This will be posted on the School’s Psychology web page once this information is available;
4. A brief description of the research, stating explicitly what type of experiment your project falls into, using the labels listed in the group application (see Appendix A). Give sufficient detail to make it clear
why your research fits that type. You can use your research proposal or give a shorter version (approx 250 words);

5. A copy of Experiment Description and Debriefing Information that you intend to submit to the Experimetrix program to recruit participants for the study;

6. A copy of the Subject Information Sheet to be posted on the web.

Note that the purpose of this information is simply to keep the Ethics Committee informed. You do not require approval from the committee before proceeding with your research.

Case 2: Research covered by supervisor’s ethics approval

If your research is covered under your supervisor’s approval, indicate this in the Ethics Declaration (Appendix B) submitted with your research proposal. You also need to submit the information in points 1-6 listed above for case 1. Your supervisor will submit a ‘modification’ request to the Ethics Office adding your name as a student investigator on the project.

Research not covered by case 1 or case 2: Individual submissions to the University Ethics Committee

If your research is not covered by case 1 or case 2, you will need to submit an individual ethics application to the relevant University Ethics Committee (as well as the Ethics Declaration: see Appendix B). The following research falls into this category:

1) Any research activity using Psychology 1 students that employ procedures not covered in the School’s general approval (see Appendix A).
2) All human research that involves participants other than Psychology 1 students.
3) All animal research projects.

Be warned that the process for separate ethics approval can be long and time-consuming so plan your ethics submission early. You cannot start your experiments until approval is granted. Application forms are available at the following web pages:


Individual applications must be read and signed first by your supervisor, and second by a Psychology ethics advisor (see below) before submission to the relevant University Ethics Committee. Ethics committee meetings occur monthly and submission deadlines are strictly enforced, so make an appointment with the relevant School advisor at least 7 days prior to the Ethics submission deadline. The dates of Ethics Committee meetings and deadlines for submissions are available here:


Ethics advisors in the School of Psychology

**Human Ethics Advisors:**

**Semester 1:** Dr. Sunny Lah
McCallum 422, phone 9351 2648. Email: sunnyl@psych.usyd.edu.au

**Semesters 1 & 2:** Prof. Alex Blaszczynski
Griffith Taylor 308, phone 9036 7227. Email: alexb@psych.usyd.edu.au

**Semester 2:** Dr. Maree Abbott
Transient 160, phone 9351 2644. Email: mareea@psych.usyd.edu.au
Animal Ethics Advisor:

Dr. Ian Johnston
Brennan 454, phone 9351 4353. Email: ianj@psych.usyd.edu.au

Obtaining participants from outside the School of Psychology

Where a research project requires the use of participants outside the School of Psychology, supervisors should monitor student experimenters as closely as they would normally. They will also ensure that formal arrangements are in place if an organization outside the School is involved (e.g., a school, clinic, office, theatre, etc).

Even though a project may be conducted entirely outside the University, the University Human Research Ethics Committee must still approve the project. The Supervisor and the School’s ethics advisor will guide the student. The ethics advisor should review and sign the application before submission no later than 5pm Thursday before the closing date. The University Ethics Committee usually takes three to four weeks to approve submissions, but can take longer if modifications are required.

NOTE: some external organizations will require a separate ethics application to be submitted, in addition to the University’s application. Additional time should be allowed for this process.

Use of school children as participants

Applications to conduct research in schools need to be made to the State Office of the Department of School Education, through the State Education Research Approval Process (SERAP). Proposals must have the approval of the University Ethics Committee before final approval can be granted by the Department of School Education. You will need to make a case that your research will “add to the store of knowledge and understanding”, will not adversely affect students, and will involve an “acceptable level of disruption to the teaching and learning programs of the schools”. Approval must also be obtained from the principals of participating schools. SERAP applications can be made online at the Department of Education and Training’s web site:


Applications to the Department of School Education should be submitted at least six weeks before the time at which the research is to commence, as proposals may need to be revised and re-submitted.

The Guidelines for Approving Applications from External Agencies to Conduct Research in NSW Government Schools, incorporating further details and application forms, can be accessed at the following URL:


Requests to use school children in the Catholic school system may need to be made formally to the Catholic Education Office for the relevant diocese. Enquiries should be made in the first instance to the school principals. The use of non-Catholic independent school children has usually been by personal arrangement by the Honours student with the school.

Note that the new guidelines require all researchers who will be testing children to complete a Prohibited Employment form (“Form B”) which declares that: (a) they are aware of the special responsibilities associated with undertaking research with children, particularly in relation to child protection; (b) they do not have a criminal record, and (c) that there are no other circumstances which might preclude their undertaking research with children and young people. This form should be submitted to Ms Sandra Cheng, Manager of Finance and Administration, School of Psychology. Schools may also require a copy of this form. The form is available from the Ethics Office:


5.4.2 COURSE ON ANIMAL EXPERIMENTATION

Students undertaking research using animals and animal tissue are required to attend a course on Animal Experimentation before they initiate their research. Make sure that you discuss this requirement with your supervisor if you are conducting research with animals. Laboratory Animal Services will be running its next ‘Introduction to Animal Research’ course on February 25th and 27th (note the split dates). The course will be repeated on July 21st-22nd. The course focuses on the ethical and legal aspects of animal use in research and teaching. For course registration and further information, contact Malcolm France, 9351 3603, mfrance@las.usyd.edu.au.
5.4.3 RECRUITING PARTICIPANTS FROM PSYCHOLOGY 1

General ethical considerations for research using Psychology 1 students (see Appendix B)

Psychology 1 students are encouraged to participate in research being conducted by School staff and students. Experimenter must follow the agreed procedures laid down by the University’s Human Ethics Committee. Carefully read the Research Participation information provided to Psychology 1 students so that you are familiar with the procedures. Particularly note the following important issues:

**Clear description:** information provided to students about the experiment should make it clear - from the title and a brief description - what the study will entail for participants. It must not be misleading. A Subject Information Sheet must be provided when requesting participants. In some cases there are good reasons why the description cannot reveal the main aim of the study, although this should be explained in debriefing information.

**Debriefing:** all participants should be informed about the aims and design of any study in which they participate. Although many students will be content with a brief description, opportunity should always be provided for further discussion with those who are interested. Research participation provides Psychology 1 students with direct experience of psychological research and they receive a small amount of course credit for participating. It is important that researchers take care to make this opportunity educational for them.

**Strict confidentiality:** extreme care should be taken to ensure that all personal information, including phone numbers, and any means of identifying individual participants, is confidential to the researcher only. Any record of such information should be destroyed as soon as the study is completed.

**Right to withdraw at any time:** it should be made clear to students that they have the right to withdraw, without consequence, from a study at any time, particularly if it involves stress or personal data. Researchers should not exert any pressure on students to remain in an experiment if they indicate they wish to leave.

Procedures for recruiting Psychology 1 participants (see Appendix C)

The research participation of Psychology 1 students is managed on-line using a system called Experimetrix. Training in the use of this system will be provided in the Honours software information session.

Each researcher is permitted to use no more than 120 hours per year (60 hours per semester) from the Psychology 1 subject pool. Towards the end of semester, if demand exceeds supply, these constraints will be relaxed.

5.5 CONSULTATIONS FOR RESEARCH DESIGN AND STATISTICS

The School’s statistical advisers are:

Semester 1 only: Dr. Margaret Charles (Room 452 Brennan McCallum, phone 9351 3354, email: margretc)
Semester 2 only: Dr. Sabina Kleitman (Room 441 Brennan McCallum, 9351 7703, email: sabinak)
Semesters 1 and 2: Dr. Niko Tiliopoulos (Room 448 Brennan McCallum, 9036 9223; email: nikot)

To ensure that these staff are not overburdened, Honours students and staff are asked to observe the following procedures:

(i) Your supervisor should be your initial and primary source of consultation on matters of designing an empirical study and possibilities for statistical analyses.

(ii) If necessary, the school’s statistical advisors should be consulted on more technical matters of design and analysis or where student and supervisor may disagree on the appropriate statistical analysis. If you or your supervisor decide that such a consultation is needed, the supervisor should arrange for a meeting and would normally attend with the student.
5.6 WRITING THE EMPIRICAL THESIS

Submission of thesis Drafts

Arrange with your supervisor a timetable for writing Drafts of the various thesis sections so that you pace yourself appropriately and receive feedback on the non-Discussion sections in time to incorporate it into your final submission. Some supervisors prefer to read a complete Draft of the Introduction, Method and Results while others prefer to read each section separately as you complete it. Regardless, it is important to work out a writing schedule and keep to it (see Empirical Project Timeline in Section 2.5). Thesis Drafts should be in legible form, written in consecutive prose style, not note form. Supervisors may, legitimately, refuse to read Drafts that do not satisfy these criteria.

To monitor your writing progress and to identify any factors that have impeded your progress, you are required to submit an Empirical Progress Report (Appendix E) to the Administration Office by Wednesday 30th September. This provides you with the opportunity to inform the Honours co-ordinator of any factors that have impeded the progress of your research project. These factors must be noted if they are to provide the basis for Special Consideration or for an extension request. The report must be signed by your supervisor.

5.7 FORMAT OF THE EMPIRICAL THESIS

The body of the Empirical Thesis should contain:

(i) an abstract (a single paragraph with a maximum of 300 words);
(ii) a clear statement of the study’s aim and a critical review of the relevant literature, providing a rationale for the study to be conducted;
(iii) a statement of the dependent and independent variables, and the hypotheses being tested;
(iv) descriptions of participants, stimulus materials, apparatus, procedure, instructions and method of data collection;
(v) a description and justification of statistical methods, demonstrating an understanding of the scientific appropriateness of those methods;
(vi) an appropriate summary of statistical results, with tables and/or graphs;
(vii) a discussion of your findings in relation to the problem addressed and the findings of others;
(viii) a discussion of your project’s shortcomings and the implications/suggestions for future research;
(ix) a high level of presentation, as well as clarity and conciseness of exposition;
(x) originality and an indication of ability to conduct and report research work.

Appendices

Appendices should be comprehensive and include all back-up documentation, including:

(i) ethics approval, subject information sheets and consent forms (taking care to remove references to your name, in the interests of anonymity during the marking process);
(ii) questionnaires, tests and other materials;
(iii) full details of instructions, equipment used etc.;
(iv) details of statistical analyses not included in the main body of the thesis. Be intelligently selective in the statistical output you select from statistical packages. You should make clear in the body of your thesis what has been done; relevant but incidental detail should be placed in an appendix;
(v) raw data in disc form (see guidelines below).

There is no specific word limit for appendices, and they are not included in the thesis word count. However, note that an appendix is not an appropriate way of adding extra text to your thesis. Examiners are not impressed by the sheer bulk of an appendix and your appendix will not be examined as part of your thesis, but rather used by the examiner to clarify aspects of your procedures or analysis. Note that it is unlikely that both of your markers will be specialists in your research area; be sure to include sufficient details of experimental procedure so that a psychologist who is not a specialist in your specialised area can understand what you have done. If you have a large number of appendices, a contents page at the beginning of the appendices section is strongly advised.

Guidelines for submitting raw data

You must include the raw data from your experiments in your thesis, attached inside the back cover on a CD. The “raw data” are the data you used for your analyses. For example, if your research required you to assess a given subject several times to calculate a stable average response for your analysis, your raw data in such a case would be the mean response measures (for each subject and condition). Alternatively, you may have created a difference
score between two variables on which you did your analysis. Then you should include the difference score as a variable along with the original variables from which the difference scores were derived. In short, the data you analysed are the raw data and they must be submitted on a CD. Three CDs are required - one for each copy of the thesis.

Ensure that anyone who opens the file will be readily able to access and analyse your data. The data must be in either an Excel file or an SPSS file (portable format). SPSS files can be transformed into Excel files by selecting the appropriate option in the program’s ‘Save’ menu.

**Identifying the variables in your raw data**

You need to include an appendix within the printed thesis describing the nature and structure of the raw data file. That is: (a) identify all the variables and the order in which they appear (b) if necessary, make clear what each variable name signifies, and (c) indicate the coding used for each variable (e.g., "Variable ‘gender’: biological sex of each participant: 1= male; 2=female").

**Journal format**

Aim for publication. Think of your research project as something that could be submitted for publication, given necessary changes and edits following the examination process. The headings you use should follow those recommended in the American Psychological Association Guidelines for Publication, i.e., sections, rather than chapters.

Your empirical thesis, however, will deviate from typical journal articles in several ways. The Introduction will usually be longer, as you demonstrate your scholarship through a thorough literature review, followed by clear statements of rationale, research questions, and specific hypotheses. Other sections are also likely to be longer than the typical journal paper (including statistics and methods). In journal papers, there is a less stringent requirement to demonstrate in detail the author’s understanding of the concepts underlying the research reported. In a thesis, you need to give clear evidence that you understand the scientific appropriateness of the analyses you are performing. Therefore, use journal articles as models only, but be aware that more detail is required in a thesis.

Remember, too, that the word limit is not a goal. The 12,000-word limit is an absolute upper limit, and the quality of an empirical thesis does not depend on its length. Concise reporting is part of the marking criteria, and is a hallmark of all good theses. The Australian Psychological Society’s minimum length requirement is 9,000 words of main text.

### 5.8 INTELLECTUAL PROPERTY ISSUES

The work you complete under the supervision of a staff member is your intellectual property. The University of Sydney recognises that students own any intellectual property that they create unless there is a law that says otherwise or the student agrees otherwise. Also, the Copyright Amendment (Moral Rights) Act (2000) recognises the right of authors to be identified as the author of a work, to take action against false attribution of authorship, and to object to derogatory treatment of his/her work that prejudicially affects his/her honour or reputation. It is important to clarify with your supervisor issues of authorship if you are planning to publish any of your Honours work. If you plan to publish your Honours work as a self-contained article, or if it will form part of a larger publication with your supervisor or other collaborators, be sure to discuss the issue of authorship and the order of authors, if there’s to be more than one.
6 SCHOOL FACILITIES, RESOURCES AND SERVICES

Full details of these facilities and services are available on the School of Psychology web (http://www.psych.usyd.edu.au/resources.html). This contains important information about how to access services, and about regulations governing their use. A summary of the issues of particular relevance to Honours students is provided below. The contact person for matters concerned with the technical and computing resources of the school is Dr. Alex Holcombe (Room 504 Griffith Taylor, ph. 9351 2883, email alexh).

6.1 ACCESS TO SPACE AND BUILDINGS

Research Laboratories

Students requiring laboratory space for projects should approach their supervisor who may be able to arrange laboratory facilities. The use of all School research laboratory space is supervised in semester 1 by A/Prof. Justin Harris (Room 478 Griffith Taylor, ph. 9351 2864, email justinh) and in semester 2 by Prof. Alex Blaszczynski. Semester 1 requests for research laboratory space must be directed to A/Prof. Harris who should be informed of the commencing and anticipated final dates for usage.

Keys and access to School facilities

Honours students may only be issued with a key to the laboratory in which they are conducting their project. Grace Gong (GT 492; phone 9351 2865, email graceg) is responsible for issuing keys. If you need a key you should take a supporting letter from your supervisor to Grace, along with a completed key request form available on the web (http://www.psych.usyd.edu.au/Local/Forms/). Please note that it may take up to 4 days to arrange the issue of a key.

After-hours access to the Griffith Taylor Building can be obtained from the Security Office, Services Building. Further details will be emailed to students in Semester 1. Staff are NOT permitted to lend keys to students.

6.2 TECHNICAL AND FINANCIAL SUPPORT

Technical assistance

There are many students in Psychology Honours and the School’s technical staff have a heavy workload. The School has licenses for many experimental and statistical computer applications and most supervisors have apparatus appropriate for their research area. In general, Honours students should use these existing programs and apparatus to conduct their research. Because minor modifications may be necessary for a particular project, Psychology 4 students are entitled to a maximum of 6 hours technical support time. This includes time for modifying programs, setting up laboratories, editing videotapes, consulting about statistics packages etc. The computing and technical staffs have been instructed not to write new programs for Psychology 4 students but they will modify existing programs, within the 6 hour time limit. If there are truly exceptional circumstances, this time limit will be extended, but a case for such extension would have to be made in writing with a supporting statement from the supervisor to Dr. Alex Holcombe. Requests for assistance from technical support staff must be submitted by supervisors through the online Technical Services Request System.

http://www.psych.usyd.edu.au/Local/techRequest/

Students may not directly contact the support staff except for urgent matters (such as printer paper jams).

Fourth year maintenance allowances

Each Psychology 4 student is entitled to a maximum of $100 of School funds to support the costs of research material or thesis production. Application for this allowance must be made on forms available from the Head of School Administrative Assistant, Ms. Grace Gong (GT 492; 9351 2865; email graceg), and signed by the supervisor. Receipts must be provided. Because of the limited School resources, Psychology students are not permitted to use the School’s photocopiers. Students can present receipts for the costs of photocopying in other locations for reimbursement from their $100 allowance. To expedite payment, claims should be made as early as possible, and no later than the end of October.
6.3 COMPUTING RESOURCES

School of Psychology Home Page


Information for Psychology 4 students will be displayed on the web, WebCT or sent to students via email. It is in your own interests to log on regularly and check the web and your email to ensure you have not missed an announcement.

Computer Room

Non-teaching computer room: Room 200 Griffith Taylor is a non-teaching computer room available for the use of Honours students for word processing, data entry and analysis etc. This room is not to be used for testing or teaching purposes. Macintosh and PC computers are available through your UniKey account, with Microsoft Office (Word, Excel, PowerPoint) and SPSS.

Resources on PCs and Macintosh Computers

The personal computers throughout the School offer word processing (Microsoft Word), spreadsheet (Microsoft Excel), presentation (Microsoft Powerpoint), statistical analysis (SPSS), web access (IE, FireFox, Safari) e-mail software. In addition, there is software for data collection and experimental control, to which the student may be directed by the supervisor as they are needed. Further information about these resources will be provided in the computing information session held on February 19, 2009.

Data collection and experimental control software:

<table>
<thead>
<tr>
<th>Software</th>
<th>Description</th>
</tr>
</thead>
<tbody>
<tr>
<td>Inquisit</td>
<td>Inquisit is a psychological experiment generator that allows the researcher to create custom questionnaires, reaction time tasks, signal detection tests, attitude measures, and experiments in cognition and perception.</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>LimeSurvey</td>
<td>LimeSurvey is an open source questionnaires software that allows easy construction of on-line questionnaires for staff or research students who wish to run questionnaires in an electronic format through the Internet. The program is highly flexible, allowing a range of types of answer styles (multiple-choice, Lickert scale, short-answer, etc.) and more complex elements such as graphics and conditional branching. Once constructed, the questionnaires are run from the School’s server and results can be downloaded through a web browser. LimeSurvey tutorial session will be offered in late March 2009.</td>
</tr>
</tbody>
</table>

Knowledge of software

Knowing how to operate standard software, such as Microsoft Word, Excel and SPSS, is assumed, and you will need these skills for your data analysis and written work. You are encouraged to obtain manuals from the University Information Services and to use the on-line help accompanying the software. Your supervisor is the primary source for help about relevant software and fellow students will be another excellent resource. Some expert help may be available from Dr. Margaret Charles, Dr. Sabina Kleitman or Dr. Niko Tiliopoulos (see table below for contact details). For more specialised software, assistance may be available from the computer support staff.

Back-ups

It is important not to leave your files on the School’s computers: all such files on hard disks on these computers are deleted each night. Always keep good backups of your files in at least two places. Form a habit of copying your file from your floppy, CD, DVD or memory stick onto the hard disk of the computer you are working on, and work on only the hard disk copy. After you finish working on the file, copy it back to two separate places under a new name, so that you do not overwrite the older version. Then, delete the file from the hard disk.

Graphics Laboratory

Room 472 Griffith Taylor contains the School’s graphics suite, with scanner and colour printing. Students must book a time with the computer staff to use this facility.
Colour printing

The school's graphics lab has an A3 Epson stylus colour ink-jet printer and an A4 colour laser printer. Colour printing is, however, very expensive. Please consult with your supervisor as to the necessity of colour printing if you wish to use this facility for your research. The cost must be negotiated with the computing staff beforehand.

Teaching computer labs

The facilities in the School's teaching computer laboratories may be used for data collection or general use when not required for teaching. You must book the teaching computer labs in advance at the Psychology Administration Office (BM 325).

Laser-printing facilities

Psychology 4 students may use the School's laser printing facilities. Each student's usage is automatically recorded against his/her account. The cost of laser-writer output is 10 cents per page, and students may use their $100 allowance to meet this charge. Printing costs which exceed this allowance will be charged to the student. It should be noted that the School's system does not support all the type fonts available on Macintosh computers, and students should verify that the type font they wish to use is available. Students preparing material at home and intending to use the laser-printers in the School should select "Postscript" on the word processor for the correct page layout. If you plan to use the School's facilities for producing your theses you are very strongly encouraged to do test runs well in advance of the deadline to ensure that the document is properly produced.

Computing Contact Numbers

| Computer Account and UNIX system inquiries | Mr. John Holden  
Phone 9351 3024; email johnh  
Mr. Nenad Petkovski  
Phone 9351.5695; email nenadp |
| General enquiries | Computer Systems Officers  
Psychology Helpdesk  
Phone 9351 2905; email helpdesk |
| Statistical analysis and software inquiries | Dr. Margaret Charles (semester 1 only)  
Rm 452 BM; ph. 9351 3354; email margretc  
Dr. Sabina Kleitman (semester 2 only)  
Rm 441 BM; ph. 9351 7703; email sabinak  
Dr. Niko Tiliopoulos (semesters 1 and 2)  
Rm 448 BM; ph. 9036 9223; email nikot |
| Teaching computer lab, dedicated rooms and general room bookings | Psychology Counter, Psychology Administration Office  
325 Brennan MacCallum (BM)  
NB Bookings are not accepted by email, fax or phone. |
| Access to research facilities | A/Prof. Justin Harris  
Rm 478 GT; ph. 9351 2864; email justinh |
| Requests for technical assistance | Dr. Alex Holcombe  
Rm 504 GT; ph. 9351 2883; email alexh  
http://www.psych.usyd.edu.au/Local/techRequest/ |

Your responsibilities regarding use of computer resources

Do not abuse your privileges! Students using the School's computing facilities must produce their SID card if requested to do so by a member of the Psychology staff or a Security Officer. No food or drink is permitted in the computer rooms. Please close windows and turn off lights if you are the last person to leave the room.

The e-mail, web and printer accesses provided by the School of Psychology are separate from the similar services provided by the University. Students do not need to pay for the web access provided by our School, whereas students have to pay for services (other than e-mail) provided by the University (for more information, see http://helpdesk.usyd.edu.au/services.html).
Use of the internet is monitored, and is strictly for purposes related to your Honours work. As we can trace users, students with unjustified usage (e.g., in the nature of usage, or with extremely high network traffic) may be denied access to the system or asked to pay actual charges.

When using School or University computing facilities, you must observe the University "Conditions of Use" and also its "Code of Conduct". See [http://www.usyd.edu.au/ICTRPolicy/](http://www.usyd.edu.au/ICTRPolicy/)

It is a criminal offence to:

1. Obtain access to data without authority (Penalty 2 years imprisonment)
2. Damage, delete, alter or insert data without authority (Penalty 10 years imprisonment)
3. Illegally copy copyrighted software ("software piracy"). There are substantial fines and you may be sued for even larger damage claims, see: [http://www.bsaa.com.au/bsaaweb/main/](http://www.bsaa.com.au/bsaaweb/main/)

Improper usage of a machine will result in the individual being barred access to the system and more serious steps will be taken if individuals are found to be deliberately attempting to damage or disable ("hack") the system or other people's files.

Other University computing resources

Students can also buy access to computing resources at Fisher, Carslaw, Education, and PNR Computer Access Centres (more info: [http://itassist.usyd.edu.au/](http://itassist.usyd.edu.au/)).

6.4 LIBRARY RESOURCES AND SERVICES

6.4.1 SCHOOL LIBRARIES

(i) Thesis Library

The School's Thesis Library contains empirical and theoretical theses submitted over the last 5 years and is located in the Meeting Room, 337 Brennan MacCallum Building. Provided that a class or meeting is not booked into this room, students may borrow theses between 12:30pm and 5pm Mondays to Fridays. Students must obtain access to the room by approaching staff at the Psychology Administration Office (BM 325) and leave their student card at the counter while using the Thesis Library. Two theses can be borrowed at any one time for a period of one week. Students must take the selected thesis to the Psychology Counter to sign the Borrowing Book, and return the thesis back to the Psychology Counter on or before the due date.

(ii) Test Library

The Clinical Psychology Unit (CPU) maintains a library of test materials for use by staff and students from the School of Psychology. The library is located in room 123, Transient Building F12. All enquiries should be directed to the test librarian (9036 9236; testlib@psych.usyd.edu.au). Hours of opening are posted on the door of the Test Library and on the test library website ([http://www.psych.usyd.edu.au/clinicalpsychology/testlib/](http://www.psych.usyd.edu.au/clinicalpsychology/testlib/)). Borrowers can check if a particular item is held by the Test Library by consulting the inventory, available online at [www.psych.usyd.edu.au/TestLibrary/](http://www.psych.usyd.edu.au/TestLibrary/).

The Research Collection is comprised of equipment funded by the School of Psychology and from the clinic income and has been set aside for the purpose of research. Borrowing from the Research Collection is limited to academics from the School of Psychology, all Psychology research and Honours students, and their supervisors. The loan period for the Research Collection is up to two weeks, renewable in person and dependent upon other requests for the materials. Library resources are such that consumable test materials (e.g., response forms) will not be supplied for research. Students are liable for the cost of the test if it is incomplete on its return. As with other libraries, graduation will not proceed until these matters are resolved.
6.4.2  THE UNIVERSITY OF SYDNEY LIBRARY

http://www.library.usyd.edu.au/

The University of Sydney Library is a distributed system of 14 libraries with a collection of over 5 million items. Fisher Library is located on Eastern Avenue, Camperdown Campus. Fisher Library has the most resources relevant to Psychology.

Poppy Prezios is your Psychology Faculty Liaison Librarian. You can find her at Badham Library Ground Floor, Badham Building Science Rd, Camperdown Campus. You can phone her on 0434 606 913 or email at p.prezios@library.usyd.edu.au.

Psychology books in high demand

Reserve (located on Level 2 of Fisher Library) is a 2 hour loan collection. Most of the required and recommended items will be here. Details of items required can be located in the catalogue.

http://opac.library.usyd.edu.au/search/r

Psychology Guide

includes links to Psychology databases, internet resources, information on tests and more.

http://libguides.library.usyd.edu.au/psychology

Finding items on your reading lists

Your reading lists will contain different styles of citations, depending on the type of publication. The link below will take you to help on finding items on your reading list.

7 GENERAL INSTRUCTIONS FOR SUBMITTING WRITTEN WORK

7.1 FORMAT FOR MAJOR ASSIGNMENTS AND THESES

All Theses and Special Fields Major Assignments are independently marked by two examiners. In preparing these items for marking, students must adopt the following format:

(i) Type on A4 paper;
(ii) Minimum font size 10;
(iii) Double or one-and-a-half spacing between lines;
(iv) 2.5 cm margin on all sides;
(v) Provide an abstract;
(vi) Word count (excluding abstract, tables, captions, references and appendices) to appear on the title page;
(vii) References conform to the American Psychological Association Guidelines for Publication;
(viii) Any material taken from other sources to be properly acknowledged and referenced (author’s name and date given for all references; page number given for direct quotations). Failure to observe this basic convention will be regarded as plagiarism.

7.1.1 Word length requirements

The ability to write concisely is an important consideration in assessing the work. Where the required word length is exceeded by more than 5%, the student will be penalised. The title page of each piece of work submitted must include an accurate word count (excluding abstract, tables, captions, references and appendices but including in-text citations). When submitting a thesis, the student must also submit a copy of the thesis in disc form (see below) to enable word count checks.

7.1.2 Receipts for submitted work

When submitting any major piece of written work, except drafts or outlines, students will be given a receipt. No responsibility will be taken by the School for pieces of work when the student is unable to provide the receipt.

7.2 INSTRUCTIONS FOR BINDING AND SUBMITTING THESES

For both the empirical and theoretical theses, three hard copies of the thesis must be submitted to the Administration Office (BM 325). Each copy must include an abstract (maximum 300 words). One copy of the thesis will be the School thesis library copy.

The library copy must:

- Be bound in a spring back folder
- Have a title page with the student’s name and SID
- Contain the following words on the title page: "Theoretical (or Empirical) Thesis submitted in partial fulfilment of the requirements for Psychology 4, 2009", and an accurate word count.
- Have an acknowledgements page
- Have a label on the spine. The label should contain, in upper case letters running top to bottom, the student’s last name, and the words ‘EMPIRICAL 2009’ or ‘THEORETICAL 2009’
- Contain a disc copy of the thesis (used to check word count). This MUST be securely attached to the thesis. The best way to do this is to put the CD in a soft envelope cover stuck to the inside cover of the folder. The CD should be identified by an abbreviation of the thesis title.

The other two copies will be used for the examination process. Each copy must:

- Be bound either using the plastic spiral binding or in a spring back folder
- Must not contain the student’s name or SID anywhere
- Must contain the following words on the title page: "Empirical (or Theoretical) Thesis submitted in partial fulfilment of the requirements for Psychology 4, 2009", and an accurate word count.
- Contain a raw data disc.

After examination, one of the examination copies will be forwarded to the supervisor, and the other is to be collected by the student from the Administration Office. Please present your SID card upon collection.
A note on spring-back folders

These folders are a neat and easy (though expensive) way to bind your thesis. They can be purchased at the University newsagencies (Holme and Wentworth Buildings), but do not seem to be available from many other stationery suppliers. It is in your interest to purchase folders early, as supplies do run out close to the thesis hand-in date.

7.3 PLAGIARISM

In writing theses, essays or reports to meet coursework requirements, you must use your own words. In some contexts (theoretical research, for example) it is appropriate to use quotations. If you do, this should be indicated in the conventional way - by enclosing the passage within quotation marks and providing citation for the source of the quote, including the page number. In many contexts, especially reports of empirical work, quotations are typically avoided.

Using your own words

“Using your own words” means NOT borrowing from the writing of others – whether from fellow students or published authors. Thus, it is not acceptable to base an essay, for example, on text from various sources, even if you have edited it to some degree, and even if you cite these sources. First of all, there is the ethical issue arising from the dishonesty of presenting as your own work something that is essentially the work of others. In addition, there are good educational reasons for avoiding this, even where you feel that someone else has expressed an idea far more clearly than you could. One reason is the need to learn to express yourself clearly in writing and, like most other skills, this only comes with practice. Another is the failure to demonstrate that you thoroughly understand information or ideas if all you have done is to reproduce, with some editing, what someone else has written about the topic.

As a 4th year student, it is no defence to claim that you didn’t realize doing the above constituted plagiarism.

Citing your sources

When you express in your own words what you have learned from various sources, you must cite each source. The standard convention for most written work in psychology is to list references at the end rather than, for example, use footnotes. Expressing an idea without giving a citation implies that it is your own idea. Therefore, if it is in fact an idea from someone else, this must be acknowledged after you have expressed their idea in your own words.

Again, as a 4th year student, it is no defence to claim that you didn’t realize not citing the source, even though it is expressed in your words, constituted plagiarism.

Listing a set of sources implies that you have read them all. Therefore, you should list as references only those you have actually read. If you are depending on a secondary source, then make this clear; e.g. ‘... salivary conditioning (Pavlov, 1927; cited in Mazur, 1998).

The points made here also apply to non-textual material. For example, graphs or tables of data included in a report should be your own work and not copied from others. Very occasionally you may need to ‘quote’ a figure from some other source; if you do so, you should make its origin quite clear and include the page number.

In general, avoid letting other students use your work for any kind of assessment. On the rare occasion where this could be appropriate, make sure that the other student acknowledges your contribution as the original author. Otherwise what may perhaps have been intended as an act of generosity could have harmful consequences.

The School of Psychology’s policy with regard to coursework based very closely on the work of others is that:

(i) Criteria for marking any piece of submitted coursework include meeting the requirement that the student has used his or her own words in writing it. Similarly, any non-textual content should clearly be the student’s own work. In the rare case (non-theoretical work) that a direct quotation is appropriate, it should be indicated as such by being placed within inverted commas and followed by a reference to the original source, including the page number. If a piece of coursework submitted for assessment is very closely based on the work of others, it will receive a fail and the student will be cautioned, even if the sources are properly cited.
Where the student has intentionally obscured the fact that some of the content of an essay or report is closely derived from the work of others, it will be treated as a case of misconduct and referred to the Registrar in accordance with the student disciplinary provisions of Chapter 8 of the University of Sydney By-law 1999.

7.4 PENALTIES FOR LATE SUBMISSION

You must allow adequate time to complete the final versions of your work and proof-read it before submitting by the relevant deadline. The amount of time this takes is easily underestimated. If a piece of work is submitted for assessment up to 4 weeks after its deadline, it will be marked but will incur an automatic penalty.

For submissions up to **2 days late**, **5 marks** (out of 100) will be deducted from the final mark.
For submissions from **3 days to one week late**, **10 marks** will be deducted.
An additional 10 marks will then be deducted for each week after the first week up to the end of the 4th week.

So, if a piece of work is submitted 8 days late, 20 marks will be deducted. **Beyond the 4th week, the work will not be accepted for marking.**

In the case of Special Fields Major Assignments, penalties will apply only to the mark for the particular piece of work that is late. Thus, if only one of the two essays is submitted late, only the mark for the late essay will incur a penalty, but if both are submitted late, both will incur a penalty.

7.5 APPLYING FOR EXTENSIONS OF TIME

Extensions of time will be granted only in cases of serious illness, misadventure or, in the case of Empirical Thesis submission, where there has been an on-going, substantial impediment to progress that is beyond the student’s control. Students requiring an extension must apply in writing to the Honours Co-ordinator no later than 7 days after the due date. Letters of applications must include:

(i) the reason for requesting the extension with supporting documentary evidence
(ii) the student’s SID, email address and phone number.

If an extension is sought because of an on-going, substantial impediment to progress on the Empirical Thesis, consideration will only be given if the impediment has been formally documented in the Empirical Research Progress Report submitted in early October.

The following will **not be accepted** as grounds for an extension:

(i) work commitments either in other areas of the Honours programme or in employment
(ii) minor illness (colds, sore throats, headaches, etc.)
(iii) problems associated with getting the document into its final version
(iv) malfunctioning of word-processors, computers, printers; lost data, lost thesis Drafts, etc.
(v) power cuts.

7.6 APPLYING FOR A SUPPLEMENTARY EXAM

Students may apply to sit a supplementary exam if illness or misadventure prevented them from taking the original exam. Applications must be made in writing to the Honours Co-ordinator no later than 7 days after the exam missed. Letters of application must include:

(i) the reason for requesting the extension with supporting documentary evidence
(ii) the student’s SID, email address and phone number.

7.7 APPLYING FOR SPECIAL CONSIDERATION

For Honours students in the School of Psychology, all requests for special consideration are dealt with within the School, not by the Faculty of Science.

Students may apply for special consideration in cases where illness or misadventure is judged to have affected their performance either across the year in general or in a particular component of the Honours programme. Requests for special consideration will not be accepted if an application for an extension has been granted for the same assignment/thesis/exam.
Students requiring special consideration must apply in writing to the Honours Co-ordinator, no later than Friday, 23 October, 2009. Letters of applications must include:

(i) the reason for requesting the extension with supporting documentary evidence
(ii) the student’s SID, email address and phone number,

It should be noted that only well-attested serious illness or misadventure will warrant special consideration. Occasional brief or trivial illness will not be regarded as sufficient. Upon receipt of the application, the Honours co-ordinator will meet with the student and will subsequently decide whether the application should be presented at the Honours Examiners’ Meeting in November for the examiners to consider. Typically, the application will only be considered if the student’s rank is such that they have just missed the cut-off for a higher class of Honours degree or just missed being awarded a medal or a prize.
8 SCHOOL ASSESSMENT & EXAMINATION PROCEDURES

Overall assessment is normally based on a weighted sum of each of the four components (see section 2.2), but very poor performance in any one of these components may alone be sufficient to render a candidate ineligible for the award of an Honours degree.

8.1 COURSEWORK MARKING PROCEDURES

8.1.1 DOUBLE MARKING SPECIAL FIELD MAJOR ASSIGNMENTS

Major assignments for Special Fields courses are each marked by two examiners, appointed by the co-ordinator(s) of the relevant Special Field after consultation with the Honours Co-ordinator. The final mark is determined by consultation between the two examiners. If major discrepancies are identified between the examiners that cannot be resolved by consultation, an additional examiner is appointed. Feedback on major assignments will be provided to students when marking is completed.

The re-scaling of Special Fields marks is not usually necessary.

8.1.2 EXAM MARKING

Exams are not double marked. Marks awarded may subsequently be scaled.

8.2 THESIS MARKING

Empirical and theoretical theses are examined by two members of staff, not including the supervisor. Supervisors submit a report for each student they supervise which is forwarded to relevant examiners (see Appendices F and H). Before reading the Supervisor’s Report Form the examiner assigns a mark out of 100 which s/he subsequently reviews in the light of the supervisor’s report. Marking is based on consideration of those aspects listed on the Examiner’s Report Form (see Appendices G and I). This form is also used in discussions between markers and as a basis for anonymous feedback to students, after results have been posted.

(i) If both examiners independently award the same mark, this mark is conveyed to the supervisor. If the supervisor agrees, that mark is taken as the final mark. If the supervisor disagrees with the mark, (s)he may formally apply for a third examiner to be appointed. Then the procedure is as in (iii) below.

(ii) When the discrepancy between the two examiners is minor, the examiners attempt to resolve their disagreement. If they can reach a resolution (as is usually the case), the procedure is as in (i) above. If not, then it is as in (iii) below.

(iii) Theses with substantial discrepancies are allocated a third examiner. This examiner assesses the thesis independently, with no knowledge of previous examiners’ judgements. The three examiners then meet to decide a mark to be recommended to the November Examiners’ Meeting. The supervisor attends the meeting of the three examiners: the role of the supervisor at this meeting is only to answer specific questions put by the examiners or to clarify any confusions. The Examiners’ Meeting is informed that a third examiner has been appointed and of the marks awarded by each examiner. If, after discussion, the three examiners fail to agree on a single mark, this is conveyed to the Examiners’ Meeting and a final mark is determined at that meeting.

Examination of theses is very thorough. Requests for re-marking by students, in general, will not be considered.
8.3 CALCULATION OF FINAL HONOURS MARK

8.3.1 PROCEDURE AT EXAMINERS’ MEETING

The class of Honours degree awarded is based upon the following principles:

(i) All pieces of work must be submitted by the final deadline before any grade can be awarded.
(ii) The marks for the Empirical Thesis, the Theoretical Thesis/Special Fields, Research Methods, and Ethics are weighted 50%, 30%, 15% and 5% respectively, and the resulting sum out of 100 for each candidate is used to establish an initial rank order of the candidates.
(iii) On the basis of University and School guidelines and other relevant factors, the Honours Examiners’ Meeting determines the minimum raw mark criterion for each Honours band.
(iv) Note that the raw-scaling criterion for Hons 1 in the School of Psychology is 85. If necessary, the marks are then rescaled to conform with the University-wide Honours scale (Hons 1: 80-100; Hons 2.1: 75-79; Hons 2.2: 70-74; Hons 3: 65-69).

If any changes to the above occur during 2009, students will be notified.

8.3.2 FACULTY REQUIREMENTS AND TRANSCRIPTS OF RESULTS

The School Examiners’ meeting makes a recommendation to the relevant Faculty regarding the mark and award for each candidate. This recommendation is usually accepted, provided that the Faculty’s requirements are also met. In the Faculty of Arts, it was stipulated by the 1998 Board of Examiners that there should generally be no more than 10 marks difference between the student’s final recommended Honours mark and that student’s performance in the third year of their Honours subject. In the Faculty of Science, the undergraduate WAM must be at least 80 for the University Medal and questions will be asked of the School if there is a substantial difference between the student’s WAM and their final Honours mark. Faculty requirements apply unless it can be demonstrated that the WAM was affected by sickness, misadventure, an unusually high academic work load, and/or that performance in the Honours unit of study was exceptional. Students who consider their WAM to have been affected by exceptional circumstances and who are concerned that their final Honours grade may be unfairly prejudiced because of this, should write to the Dean explaining the circumstances and provide documentation where appropriate. A copy of any correspondence should be forwarded to the Honours Co-ordinator. This will allow the school to be informed about your case when it is considered by the Faculty Board of Examiners at the end of the year.

School vs. University marks

Students should also note that the marks received on their official transcript will not correspond exactly to the marks considered at the School’s Honours Examiners’ meeting. This is because the marks are usually re-scaled to conform to the University’s nominated range for each grade of Honours (iv above) and may also be adjusted because of WAM considerations.

8.4 HONOURS PRIZES AND AWARDS

The University Medal

A bronze medal awarded by the Faculties of Science and Arts to the top candidates in the 4th year Honours programme with First Class Honours where the candidate’s work across the entire course of their undergraduate degree is of outstanding merit.

The Australian Psychological Society Prize in Psychology

This annual prize is donated by the Australian Psychological Society (APS). It’s a free one-year associate membership to the APS and an invitation to present at the annual APS conference. It’s awarded to the student who achieved the highest overall mark in Fourth Year Psychology.

The O’Neil Prize

The Dick Thomson Prize


The Dick Champion Prize

Established in 1999 by the School of Psychology to perpetuate the memory of Professor Dick Champion, a former Head of the School of Psychology. This prize is awarded annually on the recommendation of the Head of the School of Psychology to the Honours student who presents the best Empirical Thesis in the areas of learning or motivation, providing the thesis is of sufficient merit. Value $200.
9  POSTGRADUATE STUDY AT THE UNIVERSITY OF SYDNEY
You are strongly encouraged to consider postgraduate research and training, either in a research-only (PhD or MSc) or clinical degree (DCP/MSc). The information provided below applies to Sydney University, but you should consider a range of options, with a view to optimising the match with your research and professional interests.

9.1  RESEARCH-ONLY POSTGRADUATE DEGREES
PhD and MSc degree applications should be lodged by the end of October. Offers of places are based on your honours performance and the availability of supervision. A First Class Honours degree is necessary to be eligible for PhD candidature, but if you have applied for a PhD and obtain Second Class Honours, you can be offered MSc candidature, which you can apply to upgrade to a PhD at the end of your first year of candidature.
As part of your application for a postgraduate research degree you need to provide a brief research proposal and indicate that you have contacted a potential supervisor. Note that you do not have to continue with the same supervisor or research area as your honours project.

For information about how to apply, including application forms, go to http://www.usyd.edu.au/fstudent/postgrad/research/index.shtml

For research degree enquiries, contact A/Prof. Pauline Howie (BM 424, phone 9351 2001, email paulineh).

9.2  DOCTOR OF CLINICAL PSYCHOLOGY/MASTER OF SCIENCE (DCP/MSC)
At Sydney University the clinical training is provided via a combined Doctor of Clinical Psychology/Master of Science (DCP/MSc) degree. Applications close at the end of October. There is no mid-year entry. For information about application, go to: http://www.psych.usyd.edu.au/clinicalpsychology/future_stud/applying/index.shtml
For enquiries, contact Ms Belinda Ingram Ph. 9351 2629 Email belindai

Procedures and criteria for selecting DCP/MSc applicants
Universities differ in their criteria for selection for professional courses and will not necessarily use the same procedures. At Sydney University, selection is based on submitted application materials, followed by an interview of selected applicants conducted by a committee comprising at least two members, with at least one being internal (academic or clinical staff from the Clinical Psychology Unit). Additional committee members may include academics from the School of Psychology and practising clinical psychologists or neuropsychologists. Only those applicants with Honours 2.1 or above will be considered for the course. From this pool, applicants are selected for interviews on the basis of:

(i) Academic records: undergraduate academic performance and postgraduate (i.e. MSc, PhD) qualifications in Psychology (where applicable)
(ii) Publications and conference presentations
(iii) Relevant work experience (including voluntary work or relevant research assistance)
(iv) Two satisfactory referees’ reports.

Note that only a limited number of interviews are conducted. The interview process assesses relevant academic, research and work experience performance, aptitude for clinical psychology and awareness of ethical issues relevant to clinical practice.

NOTE: It is NOT a requirement for acceptance into the DCP that a student must have completed an empirical or theoretical thesis in the area of Abnormal, Clinical or Health Psychology. The selection process aims to identify students with a demonstrated interest in abnormal or clinical psychology, an awareness of clinical issues, and experience related to the area, but this can be demonstrated in a number of ways. Furthermore, projects in many areas of psychology (e.g., Cognitive, Developmental, Individual Differences, Human Learning, Neuroscience, Perception, Social Psychology) may have clinical relevance or implications.

For more information on the content of and selection process for the DCP, visit the Clinical Psychology Unit website: http://www.psych.usyd.edu.au/clinicalpsychology.
9.3 COURSEWORK POSTGRADUATE DEGREES AND DIPLOMAS

Master of Applied Science (Health Psychology)
Graduate Certificate and Graduate Diploma programs in Health Psychology are also offered. For further information, go to http://www.psych.usyd.edu.au/info/health/
For enquiries, contact Dr Barbara Mullan Ph. 9351 6811 Email barbara etc

Master of Applied Science (Psychology of Coaching)
Graduate Certificate and Graduate Diploma programs in Psychology of Coaching are also offered. For further information, go to http://www.psych.usyd.edu.au/info/coach/
For enquiries, contact Dr Tony Grant Ph. 9351 6792 Email anthonyg

9.4 POSTGRADUATE SCHOLARSHIPS

Australian Postgraduate Research Awards (APAs) are available for local research students only. There is a very strict application deadline (usually the end of October), so if there is any possibility that you may want to undertake postgraduate studies next year, you must apply for a scholarship before this date. Application forms are available on the postgraduate website (see above). University Postgraduate Awards (UPAs) are also available for students who narrowly miss out on APAs, or continuing students (who are already enrolled in a postgraduate degree).

You need to have First Class Honours in order to be considered for an APA or UPA. In some situations a case can be made for Hons 1 equivalence, but essentially this is for graduates of 5 years’ standing with a high level of research output and experience.

These awards are based on a weighted combination of honours mark, undergraduate performance, and a Research Potential Indicator (RPI) based on publications and conference presentations. Most students with Hons 1 and a good undergraduate record will be successful in being awarded an APA or UPA, but students who miss out can work on increasing their RPI and re-apply in subsequent years. For mid year entry (commencing Semester 2), some UPAs are offered to continuing students, but there may also be Science Faculty UPAs for commencing students only, so students who believe they can increase their RPI may be advised to delay commencement until Semester 2.

As coursework degree students are not eligible for APAs or UPAs, DCP/MSc students should apply at the end of their second year, when they are about to begin the full time research degree component of the program. Note however that the requirement for Honours 1 or equivalent still holds.

International postgraduate research students can apply for Endeavour International Postgraduate Research (EIPRS) or University International Scholarships (USydIS). These are highly competitive and First Class Honours or equivalent is a minimum requirement. These scholarships are awarded to commencing students only (unless a currently enrolled student could not be considered at commencement because of the timing of their application: see website for special USydIS application form).

There is no separate application form for international scholarships. Applicants simply indicate that they wish to be considered for the scholarships in the relevant section of their Postgraduate Research Application form. To be considered for a scholarship, applicants must submit their postgraduate application by 31 July (for Semester 1 commencement) or 31 December (for Semester 2 commencement), and receive a firm offer of postgraduate candidature (without English Language conditions) by mid September (for Semester 1 commencement) or late February (for Semester 2 commencement).

For information about international fees and other scholarships go to http://www.usyd.edu.au/fstudent/international/postgrad/costs/index_res.shtml

The Scholarships Office can also be contacted on 9351 3877.
APPENDIX A

OBTAINING ETHICS APPROVAL

EXTRACT FROM 2001 ETHICS APPLICATION FOR RESEARCH USING PSYCH 1 STUDENTS AS SUBJECTS

For the protocol number: go to http://www.psych.usyd.edu.au/teach/psyc4/

A central part of students' fourth year in Psychology is the completion of a research project. These projects are designed and carried out in close consultation with a supervisor who is a member of the academic staff of the School of Psychology. In some cases there is also an external supervisor who is an appropriately qualified academic or researcher in a related institution. The general purpose of these projects is to provide training in research methods in Psychology. This is required for eligibility for graduate membership of the Australian Psychological Society. It is also a prerequisite for registration as a professional psychologist, and for entry into most postgraduate courses in Psychology.

In addition, the aim of each fourth year project is to further knowledge in a particular area of Psychology. It is a course requirement that these projects do not simply replicate previous research, but rather make an independent contribution to knowledge in that area. Consequently, some of these projects are published in professional journals or presented at professional conferences.

The procedures used in these projects are of two main types:

TYPE 1 EXPERIMENTS

These consist of experiments which investigate aspects of various psychological processes such as memory, learning, skilled performance, problem solving, pattern recognition, attention, perception. Typically, they employ the presentation of some kind of stimulus material (for example, words or visual patterns presented on a computer screen, on cards or projected; words or other auditory stimuli presented via headphones or a loudspeaker) and participants are required to respond in some manner, either immediately or at a later time, as in memory experiments. Such responses may involve pressing an appropriate key, tracking a moving target, selecting from an array of items in a recognition test, or psychophysiological measures such as changes in skin conductance or heart rate.

Type 1 experiments use one or more of the following procedures:

1. reaction times measured by keyboard press, mouse button or voice key
2. presentation of visual stimuli (including faces, alpha-numeric characters, geometric forms) on computer monitors, cards, or projected onto a screen
3. presentation of auditory stimuli, including words, melodies, single tones or complex sounds via headphones or loudspeakers
4. assessment of body shape of photographic images
5. recording of eye position using infra red sensing device or video-photography
6. reasoning tasks, including arithmetic, anagram and concept formation tasks
7. memory tasks, involving words, faces, video typed events, or other visual or auditory patterns
8. presentation of computer-simulated driving tasks, and measurements of steering, accelerator and brake responses
9. tracking tasks involving continuous responding to changing visual or auditory patterns
10. motor tasks involving grip strength, throwing or motor discrimination tasks
11. non-invasive electrophysiological measures: cardiovascular, heart rate monitors using an ear lobe clip, electroencephalographic (EEG), skin conductance, electromyographic and electro-oculographic measures
12. evaluation of transfer of training on a variety of computer tasks - e.g. library database searches
13. judgement of food or drive flavours and sniffed odours, and consumption of commonly available food and drinks
14. perceptual tasks involving judgement of visual and auditory stimuli
TYPE 2 EXPERIMENTS

These are usually employed in Health and Social Psychology projects or cognate areas. They involve the administration of a self-report questionnaire or test, which is either a standard instrument (for example, kinds of personality, mood or ability tests) or an instrument which has been specifically developed for a specific study. Such projects cover diverse topics, for example, rating perceptions of health risks, rating the importance of various aspects of friendship.

Type 2 experiments use one or more of the following procedures:

1. various standard intelligence tests
2. various standard personality tests
3. various standard tests assessing mood and emotional state
4. standard format tests of associations between words and concepts
5. widely available questionnaires on attitudes, including measures of prejudice and stereotypes
6. questionnaires covering various aspects of behaviour, for example, social interactions, eating behaviour, recreational behaviours
7. questionnaires requiring estimates of the likelihood of future events, for example, health related, accidents, academic performance

UNIVERSITY ETHICS COMMITTEE MEETING DATES AND APPLICATION DEADLINES 2009

For dates, refer to the following URLs:


APPENDIX B

ETHICS DECLARATION FORM

Attach this to your Empirical Thesis Proposal and submit to the Psychology Admin. Office no later than Friday, 18th April 2009

Name of Student________________________________________ SID_______________________

Email_________________________________________________ Supervisor ______________________

Working title of empirical project ________________________________________________

Nature of research (circle one) Human Animal

Indicate below what kind of ethics cover you will have (tick one):

☐ Submitting an individual ethics application

☐ Covered by group application for projects using Psychology 1 students *

Type of experiment to be conducted (see Appendix A; list more than one where applicable):

_______________________________________________________________________________

_______________________________________________________________________________

☐ Covered by an existing application

Chief investigator: __________________________ Protocol Number of application ______________

Please note that the University Ethics Committee needs to be informed that your name is to be added to the existing application

* IMPORTANT: IF YOUR PROJECT IS COVERED BY THE GROUP APPLICATION FOR RESEARCH USING PSYCH 1 STUDENTS YOU MUST:

A. Submit the following information to the Psychology Administration Office to be forwarded to the Ethics Office before you begin data collection (see section 5.4 for further details)

1. A brief description of the research. 250 words would be sufficient. You can use your research proposal for this if you wish, but make sure that you include an explicit statement of the type your project falls into, and why.

2. A copy of the sign up sheet you intend to post on the Psych 1 notice board, with detail of the study, contact details, etc., filled in.

3. A copy of the Subject Information Sheet to be posted on the web.

B. Complete the Ethics Declaration on the back of this page.
ETHICS DECLARATION: RESEARCH ON PSYCHOLOGY 1 STUDENTS

The following covers the key questions in the standard Human Ethics application form relevant to research of the type covered in the group application. It is important that you indicate below that you have thought carefully about the ethical implications of your study and have anticipated any problems which might arise.

DEBRIEFING

The debriefing is a 100-word description of the aims of your study to be provided to participants after they have been tested. To be submitted with your request for subjects.

Will you debrief each participant immediately after testing?  

YES  NO

If no, indicate explain why it is necessary to delay debriefing.

___________________________________________________________________________________________________

___________________________________________________________________________________________________

CONCEALMENT/DECEPTION

Clearly participants must be naïve to your hypotheses: circle “YES” only if concealment goes beyond this. IF “YES”, provide details of the concealment and how and when participants will be debriefed.

Will the true purpose of the research be concealed from participants?  

YES  NO

___________________________________________________________________________________________________

___________________________________________________________________________________________________

___________________________________________________________________________________________________

___________________________________________________________________________________________________

STRESS/ADVERSE EFFECTS

If YES, your project is NOT covered by the group application and you will need to submit an individual application to the Human Ethics Committee.

Will the research induce any psychological or physical stress or otherwise adversely affect the participant?  

YES  NO

I understand that:

1. I must ensure the confidentiality of data collected, including the identity of the participants, by:
   • not revealing to any person not directly connected with the project information of a personal nature provided by participants
   • keeping data stored securely, both during and after the study
   • ensuring that the data is stored in a way that does not identify individual participants by name

2. There is a legal requirement that data be retained for at least 5 years after completion of research, and that when data is disposed of, this must be done in a secure manner.

3. I must submit to the human ethics committee a brief description of my project, and a copy of the consent form (sign-up sheet) and subject information sheet (see over).

Signed ____________________________________________  Date _________________________
APPENDIX C (draft version)

(prepared by Dr. Caleb Owens)

Subject Pool Procedures 2009

The subject pool administrator is: Dr Caleb Owens, Brennan 453, caleb@psych.usyd.edu.au. This section describes how honours students who require human subjects may recruit 1st year students to participate in studies.

Important: NEW SYSTEM FOR 2009

Your supervisor may not be as helpful as they might want to be, nor will your own experience with the process from a student’s perspective be as useful, because in 2009, we are using SONA experiment software for arranging appointments with students. The key changes from the EXPERIMETRIX system are:

• Experimenters will be registered in the system from the start and will post information online first, and will then ask for approval. Only after approval will experiment information become visible.
• An online screening system will provide a convenient way for all researchers to better manage sign-ups.
• Participants’ slots which are unaccounted for are automatically credited after 48 hours of inaction by the researcher. Researchers need to make prompt decisions about whether to credit or penalize participants.
• Studies are automatically rendered invisible and re-approval is needed if their descriptions are changed while they are being run.

Importantly, because the SONA software and procedures surrounding it are new for 2009, the information included in the honours manual may not be up to date and reflect current policy. For the latest version of these procedures visit www.psych.usyd.edu.au, then staff resources, internal resources, subject pool forms.

Subject pool policy for honours students

Each honours student is permitted to use no more than 60 hours per semester, and these hours may not be carried over. Projects should be planned with this key restriction in mind. If your supervisor is pressuring you for several hundred subjects for a factor analysis, or if an obscure computer program tells you that you need 116 subjects for a certain degree of power, then you are just going to have to be practical and work within your limits. Subject hours may be added together if you collaborate with colleagues on an experiment. However supervisors cannot allocate their own research hours to you even if they do not plan to use this time themselves. Hours cannot be traded among researchers. Towards the end of each semester, these restrictions are usually relaxed. However, at the end of semester 1, there are generally so many studies online the benefit is minimal, and for semester 2, honours theses are due before the restrictions are changed.

Who uses the subject pool?

The subject pool is a finite asset of the School of Psychology. Because it consists of 1st Year Psychology students, only experiments concerning this population are appropriate. However many researchers also use the pool as a source of control subjects in their developmental or abnormal psychology studies. Because of limitations in subject pool usage, studies which require large numbers of subjects are usually not possible without extensive collaborations. And some researchers may not feel comfortable explaining the full nature of their studies to students, even after all participants have been run. A consideration of the educational requirements of the psychology students involved however should be uppermost in researcher’s minds so if a full debrief is not possible within the semester a study is conducted then this subject pool should not be used.

Getting the most out of your research hours

• Consider the nature of your research and the statistical power required. More is not always better, and if a crude approach to research is not possible within the constraints of the subject pool a more elegant design (e.g. a within-subjects design if possible) may be the solution.
• If your experiment runs a fraction of an hour, consider collaborating with other researchers to create a slot advertised as a single experiment which consists of several small studies.
• Consider the demand for and supply of studies throughout both semesters when planning when to conduct research (supply refers to the number of experiments available, demand refers to the likelihood students will sign-up):
  o Early Semester 1 - Low supply, moderate demand (Honours projects not yet running)
  o Mid Semester 1 – Moderate supply, high demand (Some Honours projects but students increasingly keen to ‘finish’ their hours)
Overview of the online sign-up system

The Psychology 1 students making up the entire subject pool are registered in the online SONA system at the beginning of each semester as participants. Also at the beginning of each semester, all Honours students will be registered in the SONA system as researchers. When this happens, all potential researchers will be emailed a login and password. Logins will be your unikey, passwords will be randomly generated. If at any time any user is unaware of their password, then they can simply use the “Lost your password” feature on the bottom left of the front page of SONA. You will need to have access to your university email address.

As everyone is registered to begin with, this means that you will be able to enter experiment information online and prepare for testing from a very early date. Before participants are able to sign up for experiments however, you must lodge your ethics approvals and debriefs and request approval.

Studies are advertised online with a brief description, location, and timeslots. Students can then register for the times which they wish to attend the study. After each student has participated in the experiment, the experimenter uses the on-line system to award credit to the students – or to penalise students who failed to turn up for registered times (students can withdraw up to 24 hrs before a registered time without penalty). The system keeps track of how much credit students have accumulated, and how much credit experimenters have used up.

Placing your experiment online

Go to the SONA website, login, and create an experiment for yourself. The url is: http://sydneypsych.sona-systems.com/
For researchers your login is your unikey, and if you did not receive your password by email (or have lost the email) use the “lost your password” feature on the front page.

Step 1. Entering information online

Once logged in as a researcher, start by selecting “Add new study”. There are four options, choose the one that is appropriate. Note that if your study requires multiple appointments, the easiest approach is to use SONA to arrange the first appointment, and then make further appointments yourself directly with the participants.

Next, enter the basic information about your study: name, a brief abstract which contains a few sentences summarizing what you study involves, and a more detailed description which allows you to clearly specify the nature of the study and what participants will be required to do.

These descriptions also function as advertisements for participants, however please restrain yourself from going beyond a basic description of your study. The use of more than one exclamation mark in a row is forbidden. Phrases like “easy” and “fun” are forbidden (these words are often misleading and also disadvantage researchers who conduct research which is not fun). Most importantly phrases which imply that more credit is being given out than is being earned are strictly forbidden. There is no need to mention time or credit at all (put this information in the duration and credit boxes below). The only situation where you might want to discuss time or credit in this section, might be if there are multiple sessions; in such a case phrases like “You must complete all sessions of the study to receive any credit” are useful. Casual statements such as “lots of slots available” and “last days” are inappropriate, and are no longer practical anyway as these descriptions cannot be casually changed.

Note importantly: After approval, changes to the study name, abstract, description or eligibility requirements will result in the study being automatically removed from visibility, and re-approval must be sought. The system does not warn you before it does this, but it certainly tells you once the changes are made that it has hidden your

---

1 In late Semester 1 and Early Semester 2, demand for experiments reaches it high points of the year, yet paradoxically this is when researchers are most likely to claim that students ‘are not signing up’. This perception arises because the sheer number of experiments available (up to 80) means that even record high demand is spread very thin.
experiment! Importantly, participants who have already signed up are retained, SONA has simply prevented you from recruiting any more for the time being. You can change many other details without fear of your experiment being hidden: for example location (you might not have booked rooms yet), or sign-up deadline, are things you may need to change frequently. However if participants have already signed up, there are other key details you cannot change, such as credits awarded. It would be unethical to advertise a study as offering 2 credit points, then reduce this to 1 credit point once participants had given their consent.

Before you enter any information into eligibility requirements consider making use of the pre-screening responses. Many basic demographic features do not require ethics approval to use. You can simply type “males only” into this box, or you could tell SONA that you only want people who said they were male to be able to see your experiment (see Pre-screening section below).

When calculating the duration of the experiment, include travel time, time between subjects, extra time for questions or slower subjects and so on. Most experiments offer credit for half an hour or an hour. If you have an experiment running in a lab which takes only 50min, then advertise it as 60min, which includes 5 min for subjects to arrive and leave and be debriefed. Most importantly make sure the duration matches the credits, where 1 hour equals 1 credit. Also, if your study has between subject conditions which run for different times (i.e. Condition 1 is 30min but Condition 2 is 50min) then separate them into two different studies at sign-up. In such a situation you cannot randomly allocate participants because they have already signed an agreement based on a particular study duration.

Preparation might include information like “please do not eat or drink less than 6 hours before the study”, but most researchers will leave it blank.

You will see that you can select more than one researcher to have access to the study. Ensure you include all the researchers who are contributing hours, however decide beforehand with your collaborators who will be in charge of administering the online sign-ups or things could get very confusing.

If you are ready to begin testing make your study active. Once approved it will appear to students. If you are still preparing, then select no.

Consider prerequisite and disqualifier experiments, respectively studies which participants have to have done or must not have done to sign up for yours. If other researchers are performing similar experiments or if you yourself are running several versions of the same experiment, these are important. By default, no participant can sign up for the same study more than once – if you wish them to be able to, select yes to this question at the option further down.

Using an invitation code is useful for studies in which participants are directly contacted via email after a selection or screening process or during the mid-year holidays. Ethics approval is required for direct contact, and ensure your potential subjects have given their consent to be contacted.

If your study is web based then there is a place for you to include the url. You will need to develop a system which insures the anonymity of your participants, but also allows you to return to SONA and credit them. Do not collect data from an online study if you have no way of recording which participants have completed it.

The participant sign-up deadline is equivalent to lead time in the old system. It is the minimum time before an experiment runs that participants can sign up. If your experiment takes an hour to set up then set it to one hour, however if you want to be able to see your subjects for the next day (so you know when you have to wake up and be in the lab), set the lead time to 24 hours so there are no surprises. It is common for researchers to increase lead time at the end of each week to prevent participants signing up over the weekend and surprising them on Monday.

Finally if you wish to have more than 60 hours allocated to the experiment or less because you wish to split your hours across experiments, explain this in the “private comments” section of the study information (the very last box). Please also include in this box the more specific contact details of the researcher in charge of managing the online system (i.e. their mobile number). Students will not be able to see this.

Once your information is entered online, emailed the subject pool coordinator the required documents.

Lodge Documents with subject pool administrator via email

The following documents must be lodged with the subject pool coordinator via email (electronically). Send emails to calebo@psych.usyd.edu.au, with the required documents in either PDF or WORD format as attachments to the email (not in the body). If you only have hardcopies, a scanner is available in the graphics lab (Brennan level 4).
1. Ethics approval OR Ethics declaration

If you are an honours student whose research is covered by blanket approval\(^2\), please submit an exact copy of your ethics declaration that you would have also submitted as part of your research proposal. All other researchers need to submit a copy of their approval letter from the HREC committee. Note that using the pre-screening survey raises ethical issues. If you do not include information about how you intend to use the pre-screening responses (and approval for this) but are found to be using it, then your study will be removed.

2. Subject debrief

All subjects must be fully debriefed at the end of each study. Verbally debriefing subjects is always the best way, and often gives researchers the best insights into whether subjects were completing the experiment as expected. However this is not always possible, and does not allow for students to reflect on their experience later, so all researchers must create a written debrief for their study which can be either handed to participants or emailed to them once the study is completed.

The debriefing information must include:

- the title of the experiment
- the researchers involved and the email of the researcher in charge of running the study
- when the experiment was run / will be run (e.g. Semester 1: Weeks 6-8)
  a description of the experiment and what was actually done
  a background to the experiment, involving a theoretical and practical justification for what was done
- expected results and their meaning in straightforward terms
- at least 2 references to previous research relating to the current research (in APA format so they can be found)
- It should be approximately 500-1000 words, and may include diagrams, graphs or pictures. For honours students, a reasonable debrief is often made by editing your research proposal and making it more readable for a 1\(^{st}\) year audience.

Note: Students must be fully debriefed for every study they have completed at the end of each semester. Studies which require a year long deception or studies which can never be explained fully cannot be run.

Once you have lodged your documents via email and entered the information online, you study may be approved and can be made visible. Ensure you return to SONA to the study information section and where it says Approved there should be a hyperlink called Send an approval request.

Managing your experiment

- **Creating slots**: Log in to SONA and go to my studies > the study you want > view / administer time slots > add a timeslot. You can see that for each timeslot you can have a different location, and there are several ways to add multiple time slots. Note importantly that when you enter the time for each timeslot, use the 24 hour time system or specify AM or PM. For example if you want to run a study at 145pm, then enter 13:45 or enter 14:55. If you just enter “1:45” then you will create a timeslot at 145am in the morning!
- **Crediting participants**: Once the study appointment time has come and gone, return to the view / administer timeslots page and your will see under the ‘recent timeslots’ list that participants are listed as awaiting action. Click on ‘modify’ for the timeslot, go to the sign-ups section of the next screen and select the appropriate option:
  - **Participated**: is what you select if the participant did complete the study (or make a serious attempt before discontinuing). Note that you can change the amount of credit awarded just in case the study goes over time.
  - **No-show (Penalty Assessed)**: is what you should select if the participant has not arrived within 15 minutes of their appointment time (or sooner for shorter studies). Once this action is taken, students often immediately email with an excuse. It is up to the individual researcher to negotiate a new appointment time (outside SONA, then the same slot can be returned to and credited later), or to change the judgement to ‘no-show (no-penalty)’ if the student provides documentation demonstrating why they could not attend. Note that while students might consider it polite to contact researchers less than 24 hours before the experiment is due to begin to say they cannot make it, they should still be penalized if their excuse is not valid since they have still disrupted the research by preventing others from signing up.
  - **No-show (No Penalty)**: Is for situations where you cannot be there for the study. If you are giving this notice >24 hours before the study is due to commence, use the comments to apologize to

\(^2\) Refer to the Ethics section of the honours handbook to determine if your study will be covered by blanket approval (i.e. Type 1 and 2 studies). If your study involves mood or self-esteem manipulation or serious deception then it most certainly is not covered. Discuss with your supervisor whether it is worth applying for external ethics or simply changing the design. If supervisors conduct similar research, they may be able to add you to their protocol with a simple amendment.
students, and perhaps ask them to sign up again. If you have to cancel the study <24 hours before it is due to begin, do not select this option, select “Participated” instead because students given <24 hours notice deserve credit and you deserve to be penalized. Also, this no-show option means the same subject can sign up for your study again. Therefore it should not be considered an option for researchers reluctant to penalize – if that’s the reason you are selecting this option, then the same unreliable student will be able to disrupt your study again and again until you do penalize them.

- **No Action Taken**: This is the setting the timeslot begins with. Note that if you are not continually checking and accounting for slots by either crediting or penalizing students, then “No Action Taken” timeslots will automatically become “Participated” timeslots after 48 hours, and the credit will be taken from your quota.

**Use of Pre-screening tool for recruiting participants**

Before the beginning of each semester, the Pre-screen Coordinator (Lisa Zadro, lisaz@psych.usyd.edu.au) will ask for submissions regarding the pre-screening survey. All students are given the option the complete the survey the first time they log on to SONA. The survey begins with a general section asking about basic demographics and common study requirements. Further sections consist of questions contributed by individual researchers who have ethics approval to pre-screen for various variables. Feel free to use the ‘basic demographics’ responses to the pre-screen if you think it would be more effective for recruiting subjects. For example, regardless of what you type in ‘eligibility requirements’, men will inevitably sign up for ‘female only’ experiments and vice versa. If however you go to the ‘study information screen’, you can select **Prescreen restrictions – View/Modify Restrictions**. Select the sections you wish to use then click on set restrictions. For each question, select the responses which correspond to the participants you require for the study. If you return to the **study pre-screen restrictions** screen you will see just how many students actually meet your requirements. If the number is too low, then consider changing your criteria. Remember that number just represents how many students are able to see your advertisements and sign up for your study – the number who actually sign up may be significantly lower. Also consider that many students may not have completed the pre-screen. You are missing out on them altogether by setting any restrictions at all.

The kinds of basic demographic question which all researchers have access to include: age, sex, language abilities, religion, smokers and non-smokers. If you or your research group would like to contribute more demographic questions to the pre-screen, contact the pre-screen coordinator (Lisa Zadro) before each semester. Note that these basic questions only exist to make the appointment system run more smoothly. The data for each of them is never released to any researcher nor ab

Researchers with ethics approval to use screening data will have contributed many more questionnaires following the basic demographic section. All researchers can set limits based on those further questionnaires, but keep the following in mind:

- Unless you have specific ethics approval to access the answers to those questionnaires, you will never be able to access them. If you work on an elaborate set of screening options to identify particular categories of students, you will have no way of knowing when they do sign up for your experiment how they answered, and will have to ask them the same questions again.
- All that the screening is doing is preventing categories of student from seeing your study advertisement and preventing them from signing up. Craftily setting restrictions will more often than result in not a single student signing up for your study because too few are even able to see it.
- If you choose to make use of questionnaires which you have not contributed, and have no expertise in then you do not necessarily have skills in using them, nor any guarantee they will be used in the next semester.
- **For honours students**: If you intend to use a form of screening for your research, ensure you mention this in both your research proposal and ethics declaration. You cannot simply start playing with the screening tool at a later date because you notice an interesting questionnaire or question.
- One practical way to make use of the extra questionnaires of the pre-screening instrument is to be in contact with the original contributor (or contributors, as more than one researcher may be sharing the questionnaire). The contributor will not be able to give you access to their data, but they may be able to better explain what the questionnaire achieved and whether it would be worth your while using it to pre-screen.

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3 The worst case scenario for any researcher is to be absent on a day when huge numbers of subjects are booked in to be run. If you are running 60 hours of subject hours in one day, make sure there is someone who can take your place, or if you suffer misadventure you will be forced to forgo your entire quota by having to credit a large number of angry students.
IMPORTANT REGULATIONS

1. NEVER RUN A SUBJECT WHO HAS NOT SIGNED UP FOR YOUR EXPERIMENT.

Students can get the room numbers wrong, bully researchers into letting them be tested, or are just so convinced that they pressed the sign-up button they won’t take no for an answer. The best rebuttal is a print-out of your sign-ups taken directly off Experimetrix after your lead time has expired. **Know who is coming to your experiment.** And stick your list to the door also if you don’t want your session interrupted by wanderers. ‘I think I signed up for this experiment but I’m not sure’ is simply not an excuse anymore with online record keeping. The administration time needed to track down subjects who have been run but never signed up is exorbitant, the ethical risk of running subjects who have not signed their consent is unacceptable, and students can get very angry when they are not credited and even penalized for experiments they should have been at in different locations.

2. DO NOT WASTE SUBJECT POOL HOURS

Many researchers are shocked to learn that it would take just 40 of them, using 100 hours each, to exhaust the entire subject pool for a whole semester, but with only around 1000 1st Year students or fewer who actually complete their 4 hours, that is the reality. Don’t get caught wasting this precious resource. Here’s how to do this:

- Award the amount of credit for an experiment which corresponds as closely as possible to the time it takes to run (1 hour = 1 credit point). If you have an experiment which takes between 45min and 55min to complete, then awarding 1 credit point is reasonable. If your experiment always runs around 40min, then consider trimming it to run for 30min, or collaborating with a researcher with a 15min experiment. If you are awarding 1 credit point for 40min constantly, you are wasting a vast amount of research time for yourself and others.
- It does not matter if you have ‘time to spare’. Use only what you need to. In 2006 an honour’s student was heard to say: “I only needed 20 more subjects, but I had 40 hours left, so even though the experiment ran for only 20min I offered them 2 credits points each and got sign-ups immediately!” This person effectively prevented two or more other honours students from completing their experiments since the first years she over-credited would not need to participate in any more studies!
- The time taken to complete an experiment must be similar for all subjects. Some variation in the time subjects take to complete an experiment is acceptable, and even if you are running a between subjects design and “Condition 2” is a little trickier and takes an extra 5 minutes, that is okay. However if the difference is much greater and some students might be randomly allocated to a 5 minute or a 40 minute condition, it is a waste of resources to credit both students by the same amount. It also raises an ethical concern, because it means students are not able to give their consent to an approximate length because they don’t know in advance. Between-subjects experiments with vastly different conditions in terms of times or requirements should have their conditions advertised as separate studies.

3. TAKE RESPONSIBILITY FOR FILLED SLOTS.

When a student signs up for an experiment, the slot created is the responsibility of the researcher. If the student arrived at the study and made a serious attempt, credit them. If they had to cancel but supplied documentation to justify their absence, select no-show (no-penalty). If they cancelled past the 24 hour point or simply did not turn up, penalize them. Take this action as soon as possible. With the new SONA system slack researchers are effectively penalized because ‘No Action Taken’ slots automatically become ‘Participated’ slots after 48 hours. You can later turn those credits into penalties, but never forget that **experiment credits give students course marks** so being unreliable or inconsistent or unfair will lead to significant student anxiety.

Also, taking account of slots does not mean selecting “no-show (no penalty)” for any students researchers ‘aren’t sure about’. If students participate, credit them, and if they do not, then penalize them. Only students with a valid excuse or medical certificate should be offered the no-penalty option.

4. TAKE RESPONSIBILITY FOR SLOTS WITH INTERNET BASED STUDIES

Since appointment slots for internet based studies experiments do not refer to specific times, be aware that students may sign-up and never feel compelled to complete the study, because without a set time to come and go, they don’t feel they can ever be penalized. All you can set is a “participation deadline”. However it is irresponsible to simply launch a study, place the deadline at the end of semester, and ignore students who sign up in Week 2 yet never seem to make it to the website. For best results, set the participation deadline monthly or even weekly, and at the end of each period penalize those students who have simply done nothing. Students should receive a reminder email 24 hours before the deadline, which might be the only thing which motivates them, so keep the deadlines coming and keep watching the slots.
Reviewer’s Report - Empirical Thesis Proposal

Please comment on strengths and weaknesses. Alert students to potential problems or ambiguities and help them to refine their study, even if you find the research proposal highly satisfactory.

1. The research question appears to be well justified in the light of existing literature.
   Yes  No
   Comment (related issues; alternatives to the views presented, etc.):

2. Goals and major hypotheses of the study have been clearly stated.
   Yes  No
   Comment:

3. The following are clearly described and appear to be appropriately selected/defined:
   Independent and dependent variables  Yes  No
   Stimulus materials  Yes  No
   Procedures  Yes  No
   Characteristics and availability of subject pool  Yes  No
   Proposed analyses  Yes  No
   Ethics requirements have been observed  Yes  No
   Comment:
**APPENDIX E**

**Empirical Thesis - Progress Report**

This form must be signed by your supervisor and submitted to the Administration Office no later than 1st October 2009.

Student name: ___________________________ Student number: ___________________________

Draft thesis title: ___________________________

I have submitted the following Draft sections to my supervisor:

- [ ] Introduction
- [ ] Method
- [ ] Results

Please summarise below any circumstances that have significantly impeded your progress and that you may use as grounds for requesting an extension or special consideration:

________________________________________________________________________

________________________________________________________________________

________________________________________________________________________

________________________________________________________________________

________________________________________________________________________

**For completion by supervisor:**

I have received this student’s Draft thesis sections as indicated above.

Supervisor name __________________ Supervisor signature __________________ Date __________
APPENDIX F

EMPIRICAL THESIS SUPERVISOR'S REPORT

1. Amount of consultation with this student based on the scale below:

<table>
<thead>
<tr>
<th>Rating</th>
<th>Description</th>
</tr>
</thead>
<tbody>
<tr>
<td>1</td>
<td>Infrequent Meetings</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>2</td>
<td>Regular Meetings (once per week for most of year)</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>3</td>
<td>Frequent/Prolonged meetings - more than once/week over year</td>
</tr>
</tbody>
</table>

RATING (1-5):

Comment:

2. Extent of supervisor's role in choice and definition of problem (according to scale below):

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<th>Rating</th>
<th>Description</th>
</tr>
</thead>
<tbody>
<tr>
<td>1</td>
<td>Little/No direction in topic selection</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>2</td>
<td>Directed reading &amp; discussed student's ideas</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>3</td>
<td>Directed student to specific topic</td>
</tr>
</tbody>
</table>

RATING (1-5):

Comment:

3. The degree of independence in student's contribution (according to scale below):

<table>
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<tr>
<th>Rating</th>
<th>Description</th>
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<tbody>
<tr>
<td>1</td>
<td>Little originality</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>2</td>
<td></td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>3</td>
<td></td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>4</td>
<td>High level of originality</td>
</tr>
</tbody>
</table>

RATING (1-5):

Comment:

4. Extent of help with design of project (according to scale below):

<table>
<thead>
<tr>
<th>Rating</th>
<th>Description</th>
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<td>1</td>
<td>Little/No input in design</td>
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<tr>
<td>2</td>
<td>Discussed student's ideas- suggested modifications</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>3</td>
<td>Specified design for student</td>
</tr>
</tbody>
</table>

RATING (1-5):

Comment:

5. Extent of help with planning procedures (according to scale below):

<table>
<thead>
<tr>
<th>Rating</th>
<th>Description</th>
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<td>Little/No input</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>2</td>
<td>Discussed student's ideas- suggested modifications</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>3</td>
<td>Planned procedures suggested modifications for student</td>
</tr>
</tbody>
</table>

RATING (1-5):

Comment:
6. **Extent of help with data analysis (according to scale below):**

<table>
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<tbody>
<tr>
<td>Little/No input</td>
<td>Discussed student's analysis &amp; interpretation. Student carried out analysis</td>
<td>Specified analysis/Interpreted data</td>
<td></td>
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**RATING (1-5):**

Comment:

7. **Extent of editorial assistance (according to scale below):**

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<tr>
<td>Did not read Draft</td>
<td>Read/Commented on 1 full Draft</td>
<td>Read/Commented on more than 2 Drafts</td>
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**RATING (1-5):**

Comment:

8. Did student collect all of his/her own data?  

   YES  
   NO

If the student did NOT collect all of his/her own data, what percentage did he/she collect  

   ………………%  

Please describe below the source and nature of the data, and the nature of the student’s involvement in data collection:

9. Any special circumstances that you consider relevant? (Do not include here any circumstances for which an extension or special consideration has been requested)

10. Was significant assistance received from anyone else?

11. Any other comments?

12. What effect do you think your report should have on the examiner’s assessment of this thesis?
APPENDIX G

EMPIRICAL THESIS EXAMINER’S REPORT

Please comment on each of the aspects listed below.

Word length
(within 5% - less than 12,600).

Originality of contribution
(Evidence of independent work; significance of contribution to knowledge)

Literature review
(Comprehensive; shows grasp of issues; shows critical ability)

Rationale for and aims of research

Design and method
(Choice of variables; appropriateness of design to test hypotheses; adequacy of controls; sampling; originality and appropriateness of materials and procedures)

Data analysis and presentation of results
(Appropriate and clearly labelled tables and graphs; appropriate statistical analysis with justification of choice if necessary; consideration of power; raw data included)

Discussion
(Findings related to stated aims and hypotheses and to previous literature; projection to future research; theoretical implications; awareness of shortcomings)

Overall presentation
(Conciseness; clarity; sufficiency of detail; referencing)

Overall grade (out of 100)

(a) Pre-supervisor’s report:

(b) Post-supervisor’s report:
APPENDIX H

THEORETICAL THESIS SUPERVISOR'S REPORT

Please answer the following queries about the supervision received by this student and add comments where you feel this could be helpful. Indicate your answers by marking the scale at the appropriate point.

1. Amount of consultation

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<tbody>
<tr>
<td>Infrequent Meetings</td>
<td>Regular Meetings (once per week for most of year)</td>
<td>Frequent/Prolonged meetings - more than once/week over semester</td>
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RATING (1-5):
Comment:

2. Extent of supervisor's role in choice and definition of problem

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<tbody>
<tr>
<td>Little/No direction in topic selection</td>
<td>Directed reading &amp; discussed student's ideas</td>
<td>Directed student to specific topic</td>
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RATING (1-5):
Comment:

3. Extent of originality of student's contribution

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<tbody>
<tr>
<td>Little originality</td>
<td>High level of originality</td>
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RATING (1-5):
Comment:

4. Extent of editorial assistance

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RATING (1-5):
Comment:

5. Any special circumstances that you consider relevant? (Do not include here any circumstances for which an extension or special consideration has been requested)
6. Was significant assistance received from anyone else?

7. Any other comments?

8. What effect do you think your report should have on the examiner's assessment of this thesis?
APPENDIX I

THEORETICAL THESIS EXAMINER’S REPORT

Please indicate the selected option by underlining or circling the text.

1. The student has exceeded the 8000 word limit (excluding abstracts, tables, captions, references and appendices) by more than 5%:
   Yes  No

2. The student’s statement of the issue or question to be addressed is:
   Very poor  Poor  Adequate  Good  Very Good

3. The student’s statement of the thesis to be argued is:
   Not stated  Stated, but not clearly  Clearly stated

4. The student’s acquaintance with the relevant literature is:
   Very poor  Poor  Adequate  Good  Very Good

5. The student’s account of the conceptual errors which have been made, and/or the misunderstandings which have arisen, concerning this particular problem is:
   Very poor  Poor  Adequate  Good  Very Good

6. In developing her/his thesis the student’s demonstrated concern for the requirements of logical validity of argument is:
   Very poor  Poor  Adequate  Good  Very Good

7. The logical arrangement of the thesis (ie., the degree to which its parts cohere to form a cumulative argument) is:
   Very poor  Poor  Adequate  Good  Very Good

8. Suggestions which the student makes as to how errors or misunderstandings may be avoided, or problems overcome, are:
   Very poor  Poor  Adequate  Good  Very Good

9. The originality displayed in the thesis is:
   Very poor  Poor  Adequate  Good  Very Good

10. With respect to clarity, the thesis is generally:
    Very poor  Poor  Adequate  Good  Very Good

11. In matters of English usage, succinct expression, spelling, punctuation etc, the thesis is:
    Very poor  Poor  Adequate  Good  Very Good

12. In the care taken with technical detail (such as citation of references, presentation of the Bibliography in the approved form, and so on) the thesis is:
    Very poor  Poor  Adequate  Good  Very Good
Overall grade

(a) Pre-supervisor's report:

/100

(b) Post-supervisor's report:

/100

Please provide reasons for awarding grade X rather than Y or Z. (Your comments will be passed on to the student.)