

Psychology Research Participants Panel: Information

1. What is the Psychology Research Participants Panel?

The panel is a group of people who have agreed to be contacted about future psychology studies at Liverpool John Moores University (LJMU). LJMU will keep a list of these volunteers on a secure database. When a researcher at LJMU needs participants for a study, he or she will search the database for people who match the eligibility criteria for the study (e.g., women over the age of 60). Then, the researcher will contact those people, inform them about the study and ask them whether or not they would like to participate.

2. Who can join the panel?

LJMU is looking for a wide range of people to be part of the participation panel, so anybody can join as long as they are over the age of 18. However, not all people on the panel will be eligible for all of the studies. For example, one study might only be looking for male participants; another might only need smokers over the age of 50.

3. What will happen if I decide to join the panel?

You will be asked to sign a consent form to allow us to keep your details on a database. You also will be asked to fill in a form with contact details and general information about yourself (e.g., age, education, eyesight). You are free to leave some parts of this form blank. In the future, you may be contacted by a researcher either by telephone, post or e-mail (if applicable). You may choose the method we use to contact you.

4. If I join the panel, do I have to take part when I am contacted about a study?

No. When you are contacted, the researcher will explain what the study is about and what it will involve. If you do not wish to participate in that study, or you are simply too busy at the time, you are completely free to decline to participate without giving any reason. If you do agree to take part, you are also free to change your mind at any time.

5. What kind of studies might I be asked to take part in?

It is difficult to predict what studies will be running in the future. Psychological studies are very different except for the fact that they all involve human participants. Some studies are survey-based and so you would participate by coming in to the University simply to fill out a questionnaire, or a questionnaire might be posted out to you. Other studies may involve collecting opinions by structured interviews. On the other hand, laboratory-based psychology experiments involve testing some aspect of human memory or attention. If you participate in this type of experiment, you'll be asked to work on a computerised task designed to test your mental abilities. Some of our experiments involve combining laboratory-based tasks with physiological measurement (for example, measuring heart rate) or asking you to eat or drink prior to performing a task. The University runs a wide variety of psychological studies but you will be completely informed about what the study involves before agreeing to take part.

6. If I have to come to the University, will my out-of-pocket expenses be covered?

LJMU policy is to use shopping vouchers to reimburse research participants for their time and expense. All participants in a particular study will receive the same amount. The amount will vary from study to study, and the researcher will be able to inform you about this.

7. How often might I expect to be contacted about studies?

Again, this is difficult to predict as it will depend how often you happen to match the eligibility criteria for the studies that are running. You might be contacted twice within one month, but then hear nothing for a year.

8. Will these studies be approved by a research ethics committee?

Yes. All studies will be approved by an appropriate research ethics committee, usually Liverpool John Moores University Research Ethics Committee or its psychology sub-committee.

9. For how long will I remain a member of the panel?

We intend this panel to assist us in building our research activity over future years. Therefore you will remain a member of the panel indefinitely, until you ask us to remove your details. Your details would also be removed if we were unable to contact you (e.g., because you had moved away without letting us know).

10. What if I decide to leave the panel?

You are free to leave the panel at any time. Simply contact the panel administrator at the address at the bottom of this page and ask to be removed from the database. You do not have to give a reason.

11. Who can I contact with questions about the panel?

Please feel free to contact the panel administrator at the address, telephone or e-mail below.

12. What if my contact details change?

Please let us know if your contact details change, for example if you move house, via the address, telephone or e-mail below.

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