

CRC Research Process & Resource Overview

[You may download all the documents below using this [Google Drive link.](#)]

This document outlines the key resources for researchers who will be utilizing the Communication Research Center's (CRC) facilities and/or the SONA Participant Pool. Each section below explains what the tool or form does, when it's used, and how it connects to the others.


DETERMINE WHICH REVIEW BOARD

For a visual guide of which review board you will need approval from to conduct your research, see the Review of Human Subject Research Flowchart:

 <https://sites.bu.edu/crc/research-resources/review-of-human-subject-research/>

IF RRB APPROVAL IS NEEDED

1. COM Research Review Board (RRB) Application

Link:  RRB Application.pdf

Purpose:

The RRB Application is required for projects that meet the College of Communication's Master Protocol and do not require approval through Boston University's IRB. It streamlines approval for low-risk, anonymous self-report survey studies that **do not** involve psychological manipulation or identifiable data.

Used for:

- Anonymous surveys of adults (18+) using Qualtrics or paper forms
- Projects conducted under COM's internal review rather than BU's central IRB


Not used for:

- Experiments involving deception, physiological measurement, or sensitive topics (those must go through BU IRB)

 Key requirement: Attach Human Subjects Research certificates for all team members and your full survey instrument for review.

FOR ALL STUDIES

2. SONA Study Proposal Form

Link:  SP26 - SONA Study Proposal.docx

Purpose:

This form gathers the information needed to list your study on COM's SONA system, where participants can sign up for research credit.


Used for:

- Any study recruiting participants via SONA
- Submission to comsona@bu.edu before posting a study

Key details required:

- Study type and duration
- Credits offered (0.25 per 15 minutes)
- Short and long descriptions for SONA listing
- Restrictions (e.g., age, language, gender)
- IRB or RRB approval code
- Data collection deadline and Qualtrics link

3. Sample Consent Form

Link:  Sample Consent Form

Purpose:

The Consent Form is a participant-facing document that explains what the study involves, how data will be used, and participants' rights. This *must* be included on the first page of your survey, if conducting online surveys; if in-person, it must be printed and signed by the participant.

Used for:

- Any study that collects new human data (in-person or online)
- Studies involving sensors, biometric data, or eye-tracking

Your consent form must meet the criteria listed [here](#) (listed here as well):

- the purpose of the research study and how the results will be used
- a statement that participation is completely voluntary and that participation can be discontinued at any time without penalty
- approximately how much time will be needed to complete the survey
- a statement that all responses are anonymous and confidential
- contact information, should the participant have any questions
- **the participant must give explicit consent.**

Information on the *COM SONA Review Board* and its policies and protocols can visit this link:

<https://sites.bu.edu/crc/csrbs-standards-for-informed-consent-debriefing/>

4. Researcher Expectations

Link:  Researcher Expectations SP2026.docx

Purpose:

The Researcher Expectations document outlines the behavioral, procedural, and technical standards for all CRC users. It protects shared resources and ensures ethical, consistent use of facilities.

Covers:

- Equipment handling and lab etiquette
- QReserve reservation rules (48-hour notice, 5-hour limit)


- SONA participation and credit-granting procedures
- Data integrity and participant treatment standards

Important: All researchers must sign this document and submit it to comsona@bu.edu. If conducting an in-person study with CRC hardware, you will receive a cabinet key for storage upon arrival.

ONCE STUDY IS APPROVED

5. QReserve Instructions & CRC Resource Guide

[ONLY IF CONDUCTING IN-PERSON STUDIES / FOCUS GROUPS]

Link:  QReserve & CRC Resource Guide.pdf

Purpose:

The CRC Resource Guide includes detailed instructions on how to create an account and make a reservation on QReserve. It also details all facilities, hardware, and software available for research.



Includes:

- Room descriptions and available technology
- Equipment check-out and reservation process via QReserve
- Software installed on CRC computers and laptops
- Guidelines for SONA, Slack, and SnapStream use

Links:

- SONA Research Resources: <https://sites.bu.edu/crc/research-resources/SONA/>
- QReserve Reservations: <https://sites.bu.edu/crc/research-resources/reservations/>

6. Granting SONA Credit

 **Link:**  Grant Credit SONA.pdf

Purpose:

The Grant Credit Guide provides instructions for crediting participants after study completion. It also includes how to verify if a participant has completed your study.

Used for:


- Managing participant records in SONA
- Tracking attendance and issuing or removing credits

How it works:

- Match participant ID codes to your session list
- Verify completion via the “link click date” or attendance records
- Mark participants as “Credit Granted,” “Excused No-Show,” or “Unexcused No-Show”
- Select “Process Changes” to finalize updates

Timing: Credits should always be processed within 48 hours of the session.

7. Cancelling SONA Participation

 **Link:**  Cancel SONA Participation.pdf

Purpose:

The How to Cancel Participation Guide provides instructions on how to cancel a participant's timeslot.

Used for:

- A participant requests removal from the study.
- A participant has not completed the study within 48 hours of registering.

How it works:

- Locate the participant on your study's "Timeslot" Information page.
- Navigate to "Uncredited Sign-ups".
- Underneath their name next to "Contact" is a "Cancel" button.
- Please include information about why their participation is being cancelled.