

# ERIM Research Participation System (ERPS)

## User Manual for Researchers

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For questions, please contact the ERPS administrator:

([erps@rsm.nl](mailto:erps@rsm.nl))

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This document details the functioning of the ERIM Research Participation System (ERPS), the subject pool at Erasmus University. The document contains general information concerning ERPS, describes the procedures required by users, and additional relevant information on conducting experimental research at Erasmus University. Below is a summary of the key features of ERPS:

- ERPS is hosted by Sona Systems, at: <http://erps.sona-systems.com/>  
Students can use the friendly link <http://www.rsm.nl/lab>
- Researchers need an individual account to be able to access the ERPS system. The account could be requested from the administrator.
- Students who participate in ERPS-studies are granted course credits, which are then converted into bonus points for their grade for ERPS-participating courses (for a complete list for the current term, please check Section 5 below). Per course, students can gain a maximum of 2 credits (i.e., 0.4 points).
- Before putting up a study, researchers must go through the following steps:
  - Read the Sona [system documentation and manual](#)
  - Pass the [ERIM Internal Review Board's screening procedure](#)
  - Secure lab space through the [EBL room booking system](#), following the guidelines listed on the [EBL lab manual](#)
- ERPS is designed exclusively for research purposes, more specifically for studies that are conducted at the Erasmus Behavioral Lab (EBL). All studies require approval from the administrator before they become visible to participants, and they should adhere to the following rules:
  - Researchers must maximize the use of their time in the session: 1-credit studies should last 30 minutes, and 2-credit studies should last 1 hour.
  - 2-credit studies can only be conducted upon further discussion with the administrator. Requests must be accompanied by documentation detailing the design and procedure of the study. The duration of the experimental session has to be justified by the study design.
  - Researchers cannot strategically advertise attractive features of their study in the study description (e.g., offering prizes, food).
  - As of January 2020, the ERPS pool can be used for studies offering monetary (or other) rewards in addition to the

credit(s) if the research design requires such. This feature however cannot be advertised in the study description.

- When conducting a study, the researcher is responsible for:
  - Recording participation and no-shows appropriately
  - Granting credits in a timely manner
  - Debriefing participants

## 1. General Information

ERPS is designed to enable ERIM's behavioral researchers to benefit from student participation in research studies held at the Erasmus Behavioral Lab (EBL) in return for the granting of course credits. ERPS was established by ERIM in 2007 and represents a stepping stone for the research environment at Erasmus University. Students benefit from the implementation of the system as it provides important learning opportunities. Through participation in research studies and the accompanying debriefing sessions students become aware of the nature and benefits of behavioral research and learn about a variety of research areas in an engaging manner. Moreover, ERPS substantially increases ERIM researchers' ability to collect experimental data. Finally, from a broader perspective, ERPS is a most visible expression of ERIM's commitment to excellence in research, with likely positive consequences for a wide range of activities such as faculty recruitment, school ranking, and fund raising.

ERPS is designed exclusively for research purposes. No teaching-related activity can be performed using the subject pool. Students will participate in research studies strictly on a voluntary basis. ERPS relies on the involvement of teachers from selected courses willing to give students the possibility to acquire a small part of their course grade via research participation. Students will be offered this opportunity for courses in each of the three terms of the academic year.

More specifically, every term students interested in earning course credits for target courses will be offered the possibility to participate in studies held at EBL and to earn a maximum of 0.4 bonus points contributing towards their final grade for that course. During one term, for a specific course, students can participate for course credits in a maximum of two sessions of approximately 30 minutes. Each will contribute 0.2 towards the final grade. In case of experiments lasting 1 hour, participating students will be awarded two course credits (i.e., they will earn 0.4 bonus points from participating in a single experimental session).

ERPS operates between specific research periods because it is dependent on the structure of educational programs. During each year, the periods of operation of the subject pool will follow a three-term structure and the exact dates will depend on the academic calendar and teachers' preferences. At the beginning of each term, the dates of operation of ERPS will be communicated to all ERPS users by the administrator.

## 2. Infrastructure

### 2.1. Access

ERPS is managed and hosted by software from Sona Systems. The URL is <http://erps.sona-systems.com>. Students can get to the website using the friendly link <http://www.rsm.nl/lab>.

### 2.2. Administrator

ERPS requires an administrator, a person with a broad set of responsibilities concerning the subject pool's day-to-day operation. Any questions concerning the subject pool should be directed to the administrator ([erps@rsm.nl](mailto:erps@rsm.nl)).

### 2.3. ERPS accounts and eligible users

Each user of the subject pool needs an individual account to be able to log into the system. The individual accounts are created by the administrator upon request from ERIM members. **To request an account, please contact the administrator ([erps@rsm.nl](mailto:erps@rsm.nl)) with your name, email address, and ERNA ID. Please note that researcher accounts can only be created for faculty members and PhD students from ERIM.** In exceptional cases, accounts may be created for research assistants (RA), or visiting researchers. Accounts may be admissible if the RA has a long-term employment contract (i.e., it is not possible to create an account for an RA or visiting researcher for the duration of one study only). However, in this case the faculty member in charge has to contact the ERPS administrator and explain the details of the RA's employment situation and responsibilities. If an account for the RA is not granted by the ERPS administrator, faculty members are advised to share their account login information with their RA. **Additionally, it is not possible for students enrolled in the MSc programs to collect data for their thesis using ERPS.**

### 2.4. Communication with students

The administrator will send notifications (i.e., including relevant dates and links) to all students enrolled in ERPS-participating courses at three time points: (1) at the start of the term, (2) halfway through the term, and (3) one week before closing. In these mails, students will be reminded about the opportunity to gain credits through ERPS. Furthermore, the administrator may also ask course instructors to give students reminders throughout the course if deemed necessary. Generally speaking, **researchers are responsible for communication with their students for matters related to their specific studies only (e.g., rescheduling, granting credits).**

### 3. Instructions for Users

The steps required from users during the planning and administration of studies are listed below.

#### 3.1. Sona Systems instruction manual

Users' interaction with Sona Systems will be minimal but it is important that users are aware of the system's functioning to ensure correct usage of ERPS. Users are required to read the [system documentation and manual](#) before using the system, and consult this manual whenever necessary.

#### 3.2. ERIM Internal Review Board

Before booking lab space, and creating a study in the Sona System, researchers have to pass the [ERIM Internal Review Board's screening procedure](#) to safeguard the quality and integrity of the experiments conducted within ERIM. **Please enter your IRB approval code when requesting to put up a study on ERPS, and when booking lab space.**

#### 3.3. Room availability

To use ERPS, researchers must first ensure the availability of lab space. The first step is therefore to log on the existing [EBL room booking system](#) with your ERNA-account and book lab space for the required days and times. **Please note that VPN or Remote Desktop Connection is required to access this webpage from outside EUR. Also, please be courteous when booking for lab space—users are required to follow the guidelines for booking lab space as specified in the [EBL lab manual](#).** We highlight some key rules (taken from p. 12 of the manual, with emphasis added):

- *“If you find out, before or during your study, that you have booked too much time or space, you are obliged to free up the unused resources in the booking system immediately. Your colleague-researchers will be grateful for that.*
- *It is not allowed to “speculatively” book space and then remove your claim just before, or after you have (not) used the lab.*
- *There are 2 sections of 6-cubicles and 2 sections of 8-cubicles and 4 supervisor workstations to support this setup. It is not allowed to book several sections at once. The maximum booking period is one week for one section at a time.”*

For specific questions about the room booking procedure, users are advised to contact the lab coordinators.

#### 3.4. Study Setup within Sona Systems

Once lab space has been secured, the user will proceed with the creation of a new study in the Sona Systems website. This step entails the creation of a new study (name, abstract, eligibility criteria, etc.) and the selection of time slots that participants can select (see Sona Systems instruction manual for details about this procedure).

#### 3.4.1. Eligibility criteria

It is possible to set certain eligibility criteria on the ERPS platform when creating a new study. For example, sometimes experiments can only rely on participants who have not participated in a previous experiment using the same experimental treatments. Setting eligibility criteria implies that only students meeting the criteria will be able to book a time slot for the new study.

#### 3.4.2. Language requirements

The ERPS subject pool consists of students from both Dutch and International undergraduate programs. **When setting up a new study, please specify language requirements if there are any** (i.e., “Dutch only”), to avoid scheduling students who do not fulfill such requirements and cannot complete the experiment.

### **4. ERPS Rules for study set-up**

**All studies uploaded on the ERPS system require administrator approval before they become visible to participants. Upon adding a new study, please make sure that you click on the blue “Send Request” button on the Study Information page.** This would ensure that a notification is sent to the administrator and that the study can be approved promptly. The administrator will check if the study’s description and characteristics are in accordance with the rules of ERPS.

The rules that studies in the ERPS system need to follow are discussed below. They are intended to guarantee that all uploaded studies have equal chances to attract participants. **Note that a study is only visible to participants after it has been granted approval by the administrator.**

#### 4.1. Online studies

Researchers are allowed to conduct online studies using ERPS subject pool. You can find detailed instructions about the set up for [online studies here](#). Note however that the primary purpose of the ERPS is to facilitate usage of the EBL facilities. Hence, offline studies will be prioritized over online studies.

#### 4.2. Credit allocations

All researchers are required to follow the following credit allocation rules. One research session is 30 minutes long and compensated with 1 credit (equal to 0.2 bonus points). **If the researcher’s study design does not completely fill a 30-minute timeslot, we strongly encourage the researcher to ask other colleagues to add brief tasks or questionnaires so that the participant’s lab time can be efficiently used.** In exceptional cases, researchers may be allowed to create studies that grant 2 credits for a lab session of 60 minutes. We discuss this in the next section.

#### 4.3. Two-credit studies

As they pose significantly higher demand on the subject pool, requests for two-credit studies would require further clarification with the administrator. **Approval could only be granted for studies with procedures that will take roughly 1 hour.** Researchers requesting two-credit studies are required to justify the need for a 1-hour session by providing the administrator with the following information, which should be sent to the administrator when making the request:

- Target sample size
- Study design and procedure (e.g., time required for each task)

We strongly encourage researchers to test out their procedures before submitting the study request and ensure that the duration would be indeed 1 hour. Should there be any remaining time, we advise researchers to include additional, shorter tasks or questionnaires to fully use up the allotted 1 hour. **Also, please note that it is not possible to change credit allocations (i.e., from 2 credits to 1 credit, or vice versa) once data collection has begun.**

#### 4.4. Study (re)activation

On the Sona platform, it is possible to re-activate a study at a later time (i.e., create new timeslots and recruit more participants), upon completion of the initial data collection period. If researchers are planning to resume data collection with existing design, procedures, and study descriptions (as previously approved by the administrator), they could re-activate the study and add new timeslots. **However, if the procedures change (i.e., what is being run is a different study), then a new, separate study request must be submitted.**

#### 4.5. Writing study descriptions

When writing the study description, researchers are **not allowed to strategically portray the study as more attractive** by advertising a shorter length or disclosing the presence of any kind of compensation for participation in the study (e.g., money, food, prizes, participation in lotteries).

#### 4.6. Monetary incentives

**As of January 2020, it is possible to conduct incentive-compatible studies using ERPS.** It is therefore possible to give participants monetary (or other) rewards within the study if required for effective study completion, in addition to the regular credit(s). The incentive compatible nature of the study needs to be substantiated when sending the study approval request. In line with guideline 4.5, however, **researchers are not allowed to mention monetary (or other) incentives in the study description.** Any incentive compatible study should take into account that the primary mode of rewarding is granting credits and this should be reflected in the size of the incentives.

#### 4.7. Study approval request

After submitting a study request, please send an e-mail to [erps@rsm.nl](mailto:erps@rsm.nl), including brief study information, research method, number of participants, and the debriefing sheet (see section 4.10).

### Researcher responsibilities

#### 4.8. Recording participation and awarding credits

The day before the experiment researchers should download the list of scheduled participants and bring this list to the lab so that they (or the research assistant in charge of administering the study) can take note of which students participated. It is very important that great care is placed in ensuring perfect record of the course credits awarded. **At the end of the study researchers must award course credits to participants by updating the course credit record in Sona Systems immediately.**

#### 4.9. No-shows

When participants fail to attend the research session they have registered for, **it is also the responsibility of the researcher to record no-shows accordingly on the ERPS system. If possible, the researcher could try to reschedule the participant to a later timeslot.** A participant can be recorded as an **excused no-show** if they have contacted the researcher regarding their absence. **Unexcused no-shows** are cases where participants not only fail to show up, but also fail to inform the researcher about their absence. It is important that researchers record this appropriately, as participants who have a record of three unexcused no-shows in one academic year will be blocked from the system for the rest of the academic year.

#### 4.10. Debriefing

Finally, researchers must debrief participants on two aspects: (1) the nature of the study they participated in, (2) educational feedback. The educational feedback should briefly explain what a student can learn about research from their participation in your research (e.g., learn about various methods of data collection; learn about different paradigms; learn about measurement). As ERPS is a student-based resource, educational feedback is **mandatory**.

For ethical reasons—for studies involving some sort of deception— and for guaranteeing the educational benefits of research participation, **it is vital that participants of all experiments are debriefed shortly after the completion of the study.** Ideally this should be done in person immediately after the completion of the study. Alternatively, debriefing can be done via email. It is very important that the debriefing provides educational feedback but the decision on the exact nature of the feedback is left to the researcher. ERPS users are referred to the [APA Ethical Guidelines for Research with Human Subjects](#).

### [5. List of ERPS-participating courses for the current academic year](#)

# Researcher Checklist for Running Studies on ERPS

## 1. Lab Studies

- On the ERPS website, 'Create a New Study' -> select 'Standard Study'
- Enter study name, abstract, description and IRB approval code
- Enter eligibility requirements: Specify language requirements and any other criteria students should be aware of
- Specify prerequisite or disqualifier studies, and course restrictions if there is any
- Save the new study
- Secure a lab space through EBL room booking system
- Set up timeslots for your study
- Submit a study approval request
- Send an email to erps@rsm.nl including brief study information, research method, number of participants sample size, and the debriefing sheet (should include nature of the study and educational feedback)

After data collection

- Record participation and award credits
- Record no-shows (excused no-show vs. unexcused no-show)
- Debrief participants

## 2. Online Studies

- In Survey Flow' at the top, add embedded data "id" (lower case) to your survey on Qualtrics
- On the ERPS website, 'Create a New Study' -> select 'Online External Study'
- Enter study name, brief abstract, and IRB approval code
- Enter eligibility requirements: You need to specify language requirements and any other criteria students should be aware of
- Specify prerequisite or disqualifier studies, and course restrictions if there is any
- Paste your Qualtrics study URL, adding query string ?id=%SURVEY\_CODE% at the end
- Save the new study
- Copy "Qualtrics Redirect to a URL link" and paste it as the redirect link in the end of your survey
- Set up a time slot for your study
- Submit a study approval request
- Send an email to erps@rsm.nl including brief study information, research method, number of participants sample size, and the debriefing sheet (should include nature of the study and educational feedback)
- Make sure to run a pilot with 10-15 participants to check whether credits are automatically granted

After data collection

- Record no-shows (excused no-show vs. unexcused no-show)
- Debrief participants