

## Ethical Guidelines on the Use of Incentives in Research

Many researchers use incentives – monetary or otherwise – to encourage people to take part in their research. This is appropriate and, in many cases, necessary to recruit sufficient numbers of participants, especially if taking part in the research has no other benefit to the participant. However, we would note four points of guidance:

1. **The incentive should be appropriate**, in the sense that it is proportionate to the commitment expected of the participant. Incentives should not be so large so to lead participants to feel coerced to take part, or to do something that they would not otherwise do. Coercion by incentive violates the principle of voluntary consent. On the other hand, incentives should not be so small that participants are taken advantage of. Compensating participants for their time and covering any expenses incurred through participation is acceptable, as is the use of modest prize draws. If using money as an incentive, then it might be appropriate to consult guidelines on minimum wages.
2. **Researchers can choose only to provide an incentive to those who complete all parts of a study, but this policy must be made clear to participants in the Information Sheet before they consent to take part in the study.** Participants should not be penalized (e.g., have an incentive that they have already earned withdrawn) if they decide to withdraw from a study, or if they choose not to complete certain parts of a study.
3. **If researchers are compensating Level 1 students via the credit system in the Psychology Department, then participants should be given 1 credit for every 15 minutes (or part thereof) that they take part in the study, even if they do not complete it.** Therefore, for example, even if participants only complete one part of a multi-part study and then withdraw, they should receive credits for the time that they have participated up to that point.
4. **When Level 1 Psychology students take part in a research study, they can only be given one type of compensation for their participation: either credits or other incentives.** That is, participants should not receive multiple types of incentive.

### Procedure for incentivising participants - e.g., with vouchers, cash, or entry into a prize draw.

Each participant that receives an incentive must sign a document to confirm that they have received it. Once the study has finished the confirmations of receipt must be sent to the Finance Officer in the Psychology Department (currently Brittany Green), where they will be stored in a private finance folder on the shared drive.

This information needs to be kept by the department for 6 years + the current financial year and be available in the event of an audit. Therefore, please consider the ethical implications of the need to retain this information, especially in light of the new data protection guidelines (GDPR). Specifically, participants should be informed (e.g., in the information provided at the start of the study) that this information will be kept securely. For example, you might say:

*'If you win the prize draw for this study, then you will be asked to sign a form confirming that you have received this prize when you collect it. This form will be kept securely in a locked cabinet or as a digital copy for at 7 years after the end of the project, accessible by University finance and administrative staff for reference in the event of a financial audit'*