

PSYC 490x: Directed Research in Psychology

Description of PSYC 490x Directed Research:

PSYC 490x allows students to conduct research under faculty direction. The prerequisites are PSYC 100, PSYC 274, and one additional psychology course. A minimum GPA of 3.0 is also required. Students may enroll in 2 - 4 credits in one semester, continuing over multiple semesters, up to a maximum of 8 credits. Note that credits earned through completion of PSYC 490x may not be applied toward the 400-level course requirement for the psychology major. However, PSYC 490x may be applied toward the required, elective psychology course for majors or minors, either upper or lower division, of at least 2.67 units (max 4 units).

How does PSYC 490x differ from PSYC 290x?

PSYC 290x requires only PSYC 100 and is intended for students with little to no experience in a research lab, whereas PSYC 490x is intended for students who have some research experience, usually, juniors or seniors. In addition, 490x students should have experience reading journal articles and writing in APA style as a formal research paper is required. During the semester in which they are enrolled, 490x students may design and conduct a study or work fairly independently on an ongoing research project in the lab of their faculty advisors. Generally, a student will already have experience in that lab, either voluntarily or through PSYC 290x. While the Psychology Department encourages students to engage in data collection and analysis for PSYC 490x, a significant literature review may also be approved.

How to register for PSYC 490x

1. Identify a faculty advisor in the Department of Psychology and discuss a plan for the directed research experience. Note that an average of 2-3 hours of involvement per week for each credit enrolled must be justified in the proposal and explained in the end-of-term submission.
2. Complete this proposal form (see pages 2-3) with the faculty advisor, and submit it to the Psychology Department advising staff (SGM 501), subject to approval by the Department Chair, **by the end of the second week of the semester.**

Updated 10/30/19

PSYC 490x: Directed Research In Psychology Proposal

Student Name _____ Student ID # _____
Phone # _____ Year in School _____
Major _____ Email Address _____
Semester & year of 490x _____
Number of credits of 490x you are registering for this semester (2 - 4) _____

Name of faculty advisor _____

If you will also be supervised by a graduate student or member of research staff, print name(s):

In less than 1.5 double-spaced pages, describe the nature and goals of your supervised research experience, addressing the following:

- What is the topic under investigation? Include APA formatted citations from relevant studies.
- What will be the nature of your directed research project? Specify your planned involvement in any of the following research activities: Writing a literature review, designing a study, collecting data, analyzing data, and writing or presenting the results of a study.
- What previous experience do you have in conducting research that has prepared you to work on the proposed project(s) as you have described? Examples are previous work in this lab, another lab, or coursework that developed relevant research skills.
- What are you hoping to gain from this experience?

Updated 10/30/19

Research Agreement to be submitted with PSYC 490x Proposal

Please consult the current semester's academic calendar at <https://academics.usc.edu/calendar/> to identify the date on which classes end.

Deadline to submit a research paper to faculty advisor (two weeks before the last day of classes):
_____, 20 _____

Deadline to submit final research paper to Department Chair (last day of classes):
_____, 20 _____

I have read the requirements for PSYC 490x and have discussed them with my Faculty Advisor. I am aware that in order to receive a grade, I must meet my scheduled responsibilities in the research lab and also submit an acceptable research paper by the dates indicated above. Failure to meet these requirements will result in a grade penalty, possibly including a grade of unexcused withdrawal or F, depending on the circumstances.

x _____ Date: _____

Student's Signature

I agree to sponsor this student's PSYC-490x course and to provide a beneficial learning experience throughout the semester. I will provide guidance to the student on the end-of-term research paper and provide a recommended grade to the Department Chair by the last day of classes.

x _____ Date: _____

Faculty Advisor's Signature

This proposal must be submitted by the end of the second week of classes to a Psychology Undergraduate Advisor in SGM 501, 9am-5pm, who will check your eligibility to take PSYC 490x and seek approval of the Department Chair before granting D-clearance.

x _____
Department Chair signature & date

For advisor use only: _____ D-clearance granted

**PSYC 490x: Directed Research in Psychology
End of Term Submission Instructions**

Students will submit this cover sheet, responding to A and B below, and include an APA formatted research paper as described in section C below. This completed form and the paper should be submitted to the faculty advisor two weeks before the last day of classes to allow time for feedback. The final version must be submitted to the Psychology Department Chair (deliver to SGM 501) by 5pm on the last day of classes.

A. What kind of research-related work did you perform as part of your 490x experience?

Indicate with checkmark(s) all that apply:

- Entering data into a computer (e.g., Excel, Google Docs, SPSS)
- Scoring written or online study materials (e.g., tallying answers to a personality test based on a key)
- Coding behavior (e.g., evaluating, assigning a rating to, timing, or counting how often behaviors occurred)
- Interacting with study participants in-person (e.g., obtaining consent, giving instructions, running the data collection sessions, debriefing)
- Managing study recruitment and awarding of credit for participation via usc.sona-systems.com or another means
- Contributing to the design of a study by suggesting variables, measures, control techniques, etc.
- Reading articles provided by your mentor related to the research
- Searching databases for journal articles related to the research
- Contributing to an application for ethics approval from the Institutional Review Board (IRB)
- Writing a literature review in APA format
- Writing other components of an APA paper (e.g., method, results, discussion)
- Attending meetings related to the research in your faculty mentor's lab (e.g., with other undergraduate or graduate students)
- Presenting your research at a poster or paper session on or off campus (e.g., Undergraduate Research Symposium or a psychology conference)
- Other. Please describe:

B. Time involvement

Describe briefly how many hours, on average, you worked on your directed research project this semester. In addition, indicate, in a relative sense, on which of the activities that you checked above you spent the most time and which were more rarely performed.

C. Research Paper

In addition to A and B, students must submit an empirical or review paper in APA format, **the body of which is at least three pages for each credit of 490x enrolled (e.g., a 12-page paper if enrolled in 4 credits).** The paper must include an appropriate number citations and references for its length, as deemed by the faculty advisor.