

Conducting a Study at ESSEXLab

0.1 Obtaining Approval for Lab Use

It is the stated goal of ESSEXLab to fully accommodate a variety of research designs as developed by the individual researchers conducting the study in the lab. However, the ESSEXLab staff asks that users of the lab respect all of the stated guidelines, timetables, and lab policies unless otherwise indicated by the ESSEXLab director or lab manager. ESSEXLab is a facility that is used by researchers of a variety of disciplines and is run through the reliance on a number of resources that must be curated, such as the participant database. Following the stated guidelines is necessary to ensure the continued future success of studies run in ESSEXLab and as well as in maintaining the reputation of the lab itself.

Approval of Experimental Studies

All experiments run at ESSEXLab, or using either ESSEXLab Mobile or the participant database to conduct an online study, must be approved by the Lab Manager. Copies of the following documents must be made available to the manager before schedules are booked:

- Ethical approval
- Consent forms
- Participant instructions
- Any planned changes to the standard recruiting email
- Contract or institutional agreement [external users]

The Lab Manager will check that the project has ethical approval, fulfills the lab's criteria as set out below and has been paid for according to our charging scheme if required. Please review further details on obtaining these documents below.

Using ESSEXLab for Non-Experimental Purposes

Non-experimental Studies: While ESSEXLab prioritizes experimental research, the lab may be used for non-experimental research as well. This is subject to availability demands and the approval of the Lab Manager.

Booking for Other Events: Subject to availability, the lab facility may also be booked to host other events including but not limited to workshops, training sessions, user testing, etc. These events must be booked three months in advance and the Lab Manager must be advised at this time of any special arrangements that may be needed. For example, the dividers between workstations can be removed upon request.

Ethical Approval and Deception

Ethical Approval by Institutions: All experiments must have ethical approval according to the standard Essex criteria. Please follow the guidelines as laid out by your department or section's research director. External users must obtain ethical approval from their home institution. The ESSEXLab leadership team reserves the right to impose stricter ethical limitations than those that have been approved by institutional review.

All studies must have informed written consent unless express permission to waive written consent is granted by *both* a university ethical committee and the ESSEXLab Manager. ESSEXLab leadership takes the protection of subjects' rights and anonymity very seriously. Any suspected breaches of subjects' rights must be reported to the Lab Manager immediately.

Use of Deception: Experiments conducted at ESSEXLab, or using the ESSEXLab participant database, may not use deception. Deception in this case is defined as participants being lied to or deliberately misled by the study's instructions or by the experimenters themselves. Regardless of whether an experiment has received ethical approval, the non-deception rule must be followed. Examples include making false claims about the way payment is calculated, or how partners are matched; or deliberately framing an experiment so as to mislead participants about how it works. Deception followed by debriefing is also not acceptable. Deception does not include leaving some workings of the experiment unspecified, so long as these workings would be within a participant's reasonable

expectations. Researchers need not reveal their working hypotheses as long as the study otherwise falls inside the above guidelines pertaining to deception.

Brown-bag Seminar

All researchers at the University of Essex are required to present their research design at a brown-bag seminar and prior to receiving approval from the ESSEXLab leadership team. External researchers are highly encouraged to present at a brown-bag seminar and may give the talk by teleconference if necessary. Brown-bags must be scheduled at least two months prior to the beginning of the study (note: this may be much earlier if programming is needed through the lab).

Programme Testing and Study Piloting

All research studies must be tested and piloted before fully commencing in ESSEXLab. A full programming check of the final study instrument must be conducted on-site at least one month prior to the scheduled beginning of the study. Following the programming check, researchers must schedule participants for a pilot session that includes the typical number of participants that will be used in the live study. This pilot session must be carried out at least two weeks prior to the scheduled beginning of the study.

0.2 Logistics of an ESSEXLab Study

The policies outlined in the below section are in place to aid the smooth running of sessions in the lab, protect the rights of subjects, and preserve the lab facility itself. Please respect these policies at all times. If there is a specific reason that you require a waiver of a particular policy, you must discuss it with the Lab Manager *before* proceeding.

Participant Compensation

Participant Payments

ESSEXLab and ESSEXLab Mobile Experiments: ESSEXLab policy requires that research participants receive paid compensation for their time when taking part in research studies. A show up fee of £4 is guaranteed

to all participants who sign up for a study and show up to the lab on time, regardless of whether there is enough space in the lab to accommodate all participants who show up for that session. Compensation for the study itself should maintain ESSEXLab's average hourly rate of £12 per hour spent on research study activities and may include the show-up fee for the first hour of research activities. This rate is £16 per hour for non-student studies. This is to ensure that the level of expected payments is consistent with the compensation rates of other social science laboratories.

The time of participants must be respected. If you use more time than you planned in a session, you must pay participants for that time and notify the Lab Manager to adjust the session length in hroot if necessary. Participants must have a reasonable expectation of completing the study in the amount of time indicated at recruitment.

If more than the necessary number of participants are present before the start of a session than the session requires, a fair random process is to be used to select participants to be sent away (e.g. a random number generator). Participants who are sent away in this fashion must still receive their £4 show-up fee and also be offered the chance to sign up for future sessions of the research study.

If a session must be canceled because not enough participants present themselves at the start of the study, the participants who are present will receive their £4 show-up fee and be offered the option to sign up for the research session again. If the session must be canceled due to technical or software failure, participants must still receive their £4 show-up fee plus £12 per hour rounded to the nearest quarter hour for time already spent participating in the session.

Online Experiments: Research that is conducted through the internet using the ESSEXLab participant database does not require a show-up fee to be paid. Participant compensation in this case is required only if the participant completes the requested research activities in good faith, the definition of which will be determined by the researcher in consultation with the Lab Manager. The amount and exact procedure of online payments are to be approved at the discretion of the Lab Manager. Lotteries and similar forms of "probabilistic payments" are acceptable as long as

participants are not deceived and received amounts are reasonably high relative to chances of winning.

Receipts

Experimenters must keep signed receipts for all payments made (including show-up fees for non-participants). Unless other arrangements are made, experimenters are responsible for printing their own receipt forms. If requested, the lab staff can make receipt forms available at 5p per page (half-sheets are also an option). Please consult the Lab Manager for the most recent version of the receipt form; please do not use your own form.

Scheduling, Over-bookings, and Cancellations

Scheduling Lab Time

All bookings at ESSEXLab must be made through the Lab Manager. Blocks of time will be allocated by the Lab Manager and added to the ESSEXLab calendar which can be found on the website (<http://www.essex.ac.uk/essexlab/researchers.aspx>). Individual sessions to which participants will be invited must be booked via the online administration system (hroot). Trained experimenters at the University of Essex may apply for hroot experimenter accounts and book their own sessions and invite participants themselves. Other users of the laboratory must schedule sessions via the lab manager.

Sessions should only be booked when there is a genuine intention to use the lab – mass pre-booking of sessions to reserve time is not allowed. Under ordinary circumstances, experimenters should not book sessions until they have a clear plan of execution for their study, including a realistic time-line, and have discussed it with the Lab Manager.

In general, sessions may not be scheduled after 8pm or on the weekends as the SSRC building is locked at these times. The lab may be used at these times only with express purpose and by special arrangement with the Lab Manager.

Cancellation

Cancellation by Experimenter: If sessions are canceled then participants must be informed immediately. If participants are not given at least 24 hours' notice of cancellation, then participants who show up must be paid their show-up fee of £4. A member of the research team must be present at the start of any scheduled sessions to ensure these show-up fees are received. See the Participant Payments section above for further details on cancellation payments.

No-shows, uninvited participants, late arrivals, and discipline: Participants who arrive late should generally not be paid a show-up fee or admitted to the experiment unless they are necessary for the experiment to run. Participants who arrive only a minute or two late may be paid their show-up fee at the experimenter's discretion. No-shows and non-participants (i.e. those who were surplus to requirements) must be marked as such on the online recruitment database after each session, either by the experimenter or by notifying the Lab Manager.

Participant names and ID should be checked at the door against data from the online recruitment database: for Essex students or staff, number from the student or staff card; for others, name and date of birth from a form of photographic ID such as passport or driving license. Participants who have not been invited to the experiment session should not be allowed to participate and should not receive a show-up fee. An exception can be made at experimenter discretion if there is space left after all invited persons have been accounted for.

Disruptive participants who break the laboratory rules may be asked to leave the laboratory. Their names should be reported to the lab manager for exclusion from the recruitment database.

Designing, Programming, and Implementing Studies

In addition to the ESSEXLab facility itself, ESSEXLab also provides a number of services aimed at helping researchers to design and implement their experiments, even if they have no prior experience. The Lab Manager is an experienced experimentalist and is able to provide guidance during the process of designing an experiment study, but this must

take place well before planning booking the lab facility to allow the appropriate time to obtain all necessary approvals. The Lab Manager will also provide necessary logistical support to prepare to run the study in the lab.

Programming Support

ESSEXLab provides programming support for zTree and Qualtrics billed at the rate of £30/hr. This includes time needed to test the programming, but not any costs associated with piloting the study in the lab, which are billed at the lab charge-out rate of £147/hr. Internal researchers exempted from lab fees are not exempt from programming fees. If researchers using the lab facilities desire programming support, arrangements must be made four months in advance to allow enough time to complete the programming and test it appropriately in the lab two months in advance. Studies based in programs other than zTree and Qualtrics may be considered on a case by case basis depending on whether a programmer with the necessary skills can be secured.

If researchers provide their own programming, they are required to run a programming check in-lab two months prior to the beginning of the study.

Lab Assistants

ESSEXLab provides undergraduate lab assistants that support studies being run in the lab. Arrangements for lab assistance must be made at least one month prior to the beginning of the study. Researchers must discuss the expected role of the lab assistant in the study with the Lab Manager and notify the Lab Manager before making any major changes to this role. Under no circumstances should lab assistants be expected to execute a study unsupervised. If more than one lab assistant is required per session, additional charges will apply. In line with labor restrictions, lab assistants must be given a break of at least 30 minutes after 6 hours of work.

Data Storage

For any research session that is conducted at ESSEXLab, the following information will be kept on file for a minimum of 10 years and maintained by the Lab Manager:

- The computer programs used in the research
- All raw data files produced with accurate timestamps
- All additional instructions issued to participants
- The experimental protocol followed for the sessions
- Full recruitment records for the session (stored in hroot)

All of the submitted information and data will be kept private and secure. Retention of this information ensures the highest standards of scientific research conduct are maintained by all users of ESSEXLab.

Civility

The laboratory is a shared resource at the University of Essex. It is fully expected that all users will respect the facility and must leave the lab in good order after the completion of research sessions. The lab must be left in a well-ordered fashion, including a general straightening of the room and removal of debris. ESSEXLab staff will regularly empty rubbish and recycling bins, but the Lab Manager must be notified if it becomes necessary to dispose of a large amount of rubbish (e.g. stacks of boxes). If the lab is left in a state of disarray, the responsible researchers may be barred from lab use in the future and/or required to pay for cleaning.

If any equipment is damaged during research sessions, it must be reported to the Lab Manager immediately. Researchers are expected to compensate ESSEXLab in full for the repair or replacement of any damaged articles or equipment.

If any computers malfunction during research sessions, the Lab Manager should be notified promptly so that IT can fix or replace the work station in question. Researchers will not be penalized for software problems or naturally occurring computer hardware failures.

0.3 ESSEXLab Mobile

The mobile laboratory consists of 32 iPads, plus locks, contained in 2 carry cases; a laptop server; a wireless router; and a mobile printer. The

mobile lab can be used for social science research at Essex and elsewhere or classroom instruction at the University of Essex. Use of the mobile lab outside the Colchester area requires special approval by both the Lab Manager and Lab Director.

The mobile lab can be booked by agreement with the Lab Manager on a first-come, first-served basis. After use the mobile lab should be immediately returned to ESSEXLab. Any damage should be accounted for.

General ESSEXLab Mobile Policy

Connectivity

If on campus, the lab can be connected to the main Essex wireless network. The router should not be used unless the campus network is unavailable in a particular location. Off campus, the router can be used to connect iPads either to the laptop server, or to the internet, or both. After usage the router and laptop should be restored to their default networking configuration. Researchers who wish to connect iPads via 3/4G networks must purchase SIM cards themselves.

Software installation

Any apps or software to be installed on the iPads or laptop should be agreed with the Lab Manager. Apps should be installed centrally by the Lab Manager, rather than on a per-iPad basis. The Lab Manager can help with choosing software to run web-based experiments. If commercial software is required, in general the researcher should pay for it, although software that is likely to be useful across different projects may be paid for by ESSEXLab, subject to discussion and agreement by the Lab Director.

Damage and insurance

Any damage to any lab component should be reported immediately to the Lab Manager. Failure to do this will render the researcher liable to pay for the damage. If the equipment is used under unusual circumstances, researchers may be required to pay for insurance.

Mobile Lab Use for Research

Researchers should provide a written Security Plan to be approved by the Lab Manager, covering:

- How and where the lab will be used
- Where the lab will be stored while not in use
- Which members of the research project will use the laboratory
- Who will be responsible for the lab while it is on loan

If the iPads will be set up in a static location, they should wherever possible be attached using the security cords. In any case the lab equipment should NEVER be left alone in a publicly accessible location.

Researchers submitting bids for external funding using the lab should, wherever possible, include the chargeout rate for the laboratory (to be agreed with REO). Usage costs such as 3G network connectivity or electricity must be paid for by the researchers.

Mobile Lab Use for Teaching

Instructors may wish to hand out iPads to students, e.g. for experimental games. If so, instructors must sign iPads out to students individual individually, and sign them in again when they are returned. This record must be kept in writing. If iPads will be used outside an individual classroom where a teacher is present, this must be agreed on a case-by-case basis with the Lab Manager.

0.4 General Time-line of a Study

This time-line presents the necessary steps for running a study in the ESSEXLab. If your study must proceed more quickly, this may only done so with the approval of that Lab Manager. The lab leadership reserves the right to delay studies that have not met the necessary requirements.

- 3 months prior to start: discuss study with Lab Manager, receive provisional approval

0.4. GENERAL TIME-LINE OF A STUDY

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- 2 months prior: present documentation to Lab Manager, schedule dates, obtain lab access permissions
- 1 month prior: Programming check in lab, schedule sessions, begin recruitment, request necessary lab assistants
- 15 days prior: Pilot study, discuss study protocols with lab assistants