



UNIVERSITY  
*of* ST. THOMAS  
MINNESOTA

Opus College of Business

## **Behavioral Research Center (BRC) User Guide**

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**Important Contacts**

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## **Introduction to the BRC**

The Behavioral Research Center (BRC) is a dedicated research facility designed to provide Opus College of Business (OCB) faculty with a space to conduct behavioral research with human participants. The BRC features flexible and accessible laboratory resources to meet a wide variety of methodological needs.

The BRC was designed and created in 2010 with a primary goal of supporting the OCB's growing number of behavioral researchers. The BRC provides research space and equipment, but recruitment and scheduling of research participants is the responsibility of each individual researcher. Some departments (such as Marketing) have their own participant pool drawn from undergraduate classes. Faculty using the BRC may run participants from their department's participant pool (usually these participants are compensated in the form of credit or points in a course) or participants recruited specifically for the study they wish to run (these participants are usually paid for compensation). Most studies are conducted by appointment during scheduled research hours. This includes both participant pool studies and studies using volunteer or paid participants recruited from the general population. Faculty may use their own research assistants (RAs) or other approved staff to conduct research in the BRC or, if available, they may use the BRC research assistants (RAs). For simplicity, all such assistants will be referred to as research assistants throughout this guide. Faculty who wish to use the BRC to conduct research must receive approval from the BRC Manager for use of the space in advance and adhere to all BRC policies, including having approval for their research from the UST institutional review board (IRB).

In the sections that follow, you will find detailed information about the BRC resources, policies, and procedures for conducting research. If you have any additional questions or need more information please contact the BRC

Manager, Omesh Johar, by email ([omesh.johar@stthomas.edu](mailto:omesh.johar@stthomas.edu)) or phone (651-962-4257).

### **BRC's Facilities and Resources**

The Behavioral Research Center (BRC) is located in Terrence Murphy Hall (TMH) room LL13 on the University of St. Thomas' Minneapolis campus. The BRC facilities include a participant waiting room, a large lab room with 19 desktop PC computers in private stations for running computer-based research, and a multi-purpose lab room that can be arranged to suit a variety of research paradigms including media presentations, group sessions, or individual workstations. Both lab rooms have optional overhead video cameras for monitoring and/or recording participant behavior.

The BRC also has 8 PC laptops and 2 Apple laptops that can be checked out for field research, provided the BRC guidelines for acceptable use are met.

All the PC computers in the BRC are equipped with MediaLab and DirectRT software for executing experimental stimuli (for more information on these software programs visit <http://www.empirisoft.com>). The BRC computers are also connected to the internet, meaning research can be run from web-based programs such as Qualtrics (to obtain a free Qualtrics account from UST visit <http://stthomasbusiness.qualtrics.com>) or SurveyMonkey.

### **Using the BRC's Research Assistants (RAs)**

The BRC has a small staff of RAs available to run studies for researchers, but researchers are also free to run their own studies or use their own RAs if they wish (see below). BRC RAs are trained and reliable, but they are generally best used for simpler studies, since they often have multiple responsibilities during their shifts in the lab. For more sophisticated studies, we recommend running your own study or hiring and training your own RA. If you do choose to use a BRC RA, there is no charge, but the demand for the BRC staffed RAs can sometimes be

high. In such circumstances, BRC RAs' time must be split evenly among studies. Contact the BRC Manager if you have questions about RA availability and usage. At least a week before running your study running, please meet with the BRC Manager to review the study procedures, as well as provide a written copy of the procedure and any other study materials to the BRC Manager. NOTE: even if you are using your own RA, it is advised that you brief the BRC Manager since s/he is the first line of contact for many issues that RAs face.

### **Running Your Study Yourself or Using Your Own Research Assistants**

You are, of course, free to run your study yourself if you wish. If you choose to use an RA and the complexity of a study procedure dictates the use of a specially trained RA, it is your responsibility to hire and train this RA. Researchers with simpler study designs are also welcome to use their own RAs rather than the BRC RAs if they prefer to do so. All RAs must be trained in BRC policies, so please make sure to notify your RA that he or she must schedule an appointment with the BRC Manager prior to beginning data collection. Please be aware that it is a strict BRC policy that no RA will be allowed to run participants in the BRC before completing the orientation. To avoid any problems, please make sure that your RA completes this orientation well in advance of the first scheduled session with participants.

If you need help finding a qualified, dedicated RA for your study, the BRC Manager can most likely help.

### **How to Schedule a Study in the BRC**

To request use of the BRC space (with or without a BRC RA), you must first complete the web form here: <http://tinyurl.com/brcrequest>. This form provides the BRC manager all the information necessary to schedule your study appropriately. When you complete the form, you will need to enter your IRB approval number and indicate whether you will use a BRC RA or your own, as

well as indicate from what source you will recruit your participants. Note that you must have IRB approval prior to scheduling use of the BRC. If your IRB approval is pending you may request provisional scheduling in the BRC, but please be aware that studies with IRB approval will take priority in the schedule. If you request use of the BRC before your study is IRB approved, this request cannot be finalized (and the study cannot be conducted in the BRC) until approval is granted. For IRB information, visit [www.stthomas.edu/irb/](http://www.stthomas.edu/irb/). Your web request for BRC use will be processed within 48 hours of submission. If you request specific days/times, please request only the days and times in which your study will actually be running in the lab.

If you need to modify or cancel an existing BRC reservation, please contact the BRC Manager with at least 24 hours' notice. Cancellations made by researchers with less than 24 hours' notice of an existing reservation are considered no-shows. Failure to give adequate notice on a reservation cancellation will result in your study receiving lower priority for future scheduling requests, and repeated violation of this policy may result in restrictions of your future BRC use.

### **Viewing the BRC Calendar and Verifying Reservations**

The BRC Calendar can be viewed online at <http://tinyurl.com/OCB-BRC>. This is the official and most up-to-date schedule for the BRC. If you note an error in your reservation or need to make a change, please contact the BRC Manager immediately.

## General BRC Policies

- All research conducted at the BRC, or using BRC equipment, must have approval from the University of St. Thomas Institutional Review Board (IRB). For IRB information and forms, visit [www.stthomas.edu/irb/](http://www.stthomas.edu/irb/). A copy of the IRB approval letter for your research must be submitted to the BRC Manager before you will be allowed to begin collecting data through the BRC.
- Any research personnel who will be working in the BRC facilities must complete the BRC orientation. For most research, this will mean any RA who is running participants and/or entering data in the BRC. If a faculty member will be running his or her own study then s/he is required to complete the orientation. Faculty who are using RAs are encouraged, but not required, to complete the orientation in order to further familiarize themselves with BRC policies and procedures.
- All requests for use of the BRC facilities or equipment must be made via the online request form found here: <http://tinyurl.com/brcrequest>. Feel free to contact the BRC Manager by phone, e-mail, or in person to discuss your BRC needs, but you still must submit the online request form in order to schedule use of the BRC facilities and/or equipment.
- The BRC Manager is available to consult with faculty on the use of BRC resources such as MediaLab, DirectRT, our eye-tracking device and software, and/or other research methodologies that can be implemented in the BRC. The role of the BRC Manager is to maintain and facilitate productive research in the BRC, but researchers are expected to prepare their own materials and procedures and conduct their own research, or to have RAs do so. BRC RA's first priority is running studies, but they may or may not be available to assist with other tasks. Please contact the BRC



Manager if you wish to request other work from BRC RAs. Please do not request this work of the RAs directly.

- The BRC is a shared resource, and every effort will be made to fully accommodate all requests to use it. During periods of high demand, studies using the MKTG 300 participant pool will be given priority in order to ensure that students have ample opportunity to fulfill the course's research requirement. Should a scheduling conflict arise between studies using other types of participants, lab time will be divided equally among those requesting access.

## Quick Guide to Conducting Research in the BRC

- Obtain IRB approval for any research you wish to conduct through the BRC. To get more information about the IRB process at UST, please follow this link: <http://www.stthomas.edu/irb/>
- Determine how long your study will take for an average participant, whether you will use a BRC RA or your own RA, and what your source for participants will be (i.e., participant pool, paid participants, etc).
- Complete a BRC Request Form (<http://tinyurl.com/brcrequest>).
- If you are using your own RA, follow up with your RA to be sure s/he completes the required BRC orientation prior to scheduling participants.
- Prepare a research procedure document and all research materials and go over all these materials with your RA or the BRC RA who will be running your study. Make sure to include instructions and contact information for the RA to use during the study if something should go wrong that requires immediate attention.
- If you are not using the general MKTG 300 research pool, check the BRC Calendar (<http://tinyurl.com/OCB-BRC>) to confirm that your reservation is accurate.
- Prior to the first sessions of your study, make sure that all the materials for the study, including consent forms and computer files, are on file at the BRC.

### **Rules for Using MKTG 300 Pool to Conduct Research in the BRC**

- Researchers wishing to use the MKTG300 pool must provide a BRC Request providing as much detail as possible by the end of week 2 of the semester. This date will be set each semester by the BRC Lab Manager. For this semester, Fall 2014, the last day to submit a request is Friday, September 12 by 9PM.
- If unable to start at the opening of the MKTG300 pool, a firm commitment to a start date must be made no longer than 2 weeks after the opening of the MKTG300 pool studies or else the researchers credits may be re-allocated to existing studies. This semester, FA14, the BRC will begin running pool studies during the week of September 29, 2014.
- If unable to start at the opening of the pool, full details about the study(ies) must be provided to the BRC Manager no later than 2 weeks prior to the agreed upon start date of data collection.
- Start dates for any research session must be no later than 4 weeks prior to the final day that studies are available to students (FA14: November 10, 2014).
- If a researcher cannot comply with any of the above or does not communicate with (or respond to communication from) the BRC manager by the announced deadlines, the assumption and result is automatic relinquishment of pool allotments and non-participation in the MKTG300 pool for the current semester.
- Researchers must demonstrate current UST IRB approval before any sessions for the study are posted for sign-up by the BRC Manager.