

McCombs Behavioral Research Laboratory



Purpose and Resources

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Purpose and Usage

The McCombs School Behavioral Research Laboratory is designed to facilitate leading edge research on issues that affect individual or organizational performance. This research facility may be used by all McCombs faculty members and PhD students for academic research purposes. The Behavioral Research Lab Coordinator, 1 Computer User Services Specialist, and a team of Undergraduate Research Assistants (URAs) work together to schedule and facilitate data collection sessions in the lab. The lab team's main objective is to increase research productivity by minimizing the time needed to conduct experiments and maximizing the use of space in the lab. Additionally, the lab team helps researchers adhere to the recommended scientific standard of data collection via individuals blind to the hypotheses to avoid experimenter bias effects (Rosenthal 1966; Rosenthal & Rosnow 2009).

Researchers who use the Behavioral Lab must obtain Institutional Review Board (IRB) approval prior to running their research studies. The IRB is responsible for reviewing research projects across the university and ensuring that all projects adhere to the following principles:

1. Minimize the risk to participants
2. Ensure all participants consent and are fully informed about a research study and any risks associated
3. Promote equity in research

Please see: <https://research.utexas.edu/ors/human-subjects/> for more information relating to the IRB approval process.

Location and Spaces

The Behavioral Research Lab is located on the 6th floor of the CBA building in the McCombs School of Business. The lab is accessible via stairs, escalators, and elevators. The easiest way to find the lab is to use the elevator across from the Business Honors Program Office on the second floor or the elevator across from the Atrium on the third floor. Once you exit the elevator on the 6th floor, make a left and you will see green benches and the sign to the Behavioral Lab.

There are three rooms that can be reserved for data collection in the Behavioral Research Laboratory. Below are their descriptions and locations. For more information about specific equipment, please refer to the facilities description online at <https://www.mcombs.utexas.edu/Tech/Labs/Behavioral-Lab/Facilities-Description>, as it is subject to change with any updates to technology or software. Any questions can be directed to larissa.garcia@mcombs.utexas.edu.

Workstation Room "WS" (Computer Lab Room- CBA 6.499)

The workstation room contains 12 networked PC workstations with headsets, cameras, and microphones.



Large Conference Room "LR"(CBA 6.402)



This room was designed for maximal flexibility. It currently is set up as another computer lab, with 20 computers in individual carrels. Upon request, it can be configured to meet the needs of your research project. This room contains several tables and numerous chairs that can be configured for work groups, classroom settings, or focus group interviews. There are large, securable closets for storing research materials *during data collection*. Tables and chairs can be

freely arranged in the room, and the closets contain moveable shelving that can be arranged to be used during studies as well.

This room also has an adjacent viewing/equipment room that contains a one-way mirror and equipment for recording or projecting.

Small Conference Room "CR" (CBA 6.497)



This smaller room has no projection or observation facilities, but can be used for smaller focus-group, individual, or similar experiments. Upon request, this room can also be set up with a laptop for one-to-one data collection. *Because this room is not in demand, use of this room will not count towards a researcher’s weekly or monthly allotment of hours (see more in “Instructions” manual).* Please consider reserving this room in lieu of the other rooms for focus groups so that the Large Conference Room and the Workstation Room may be saved for larger projects and/or studies that require projection or observation.

Staff and Contact List

The lab staff is comprised of 1 lab coordinator, 1 Computer User Services Specialist, and Undergraduate Research Assistants. The professionalism of the team will be conveyed via the use of lab coats for all staff members who are interacting with participants.

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|-----------------------|--|---|---------------------|
| Larissa Garcia | Behavioral Research Lab Coordinator | larissa.garcia@mcombs.utexas.edu | 512-232-6744 |
| Mark Wimby | Computer User Services Specialist | mark.wimby@mcombs.utexas.edu | 512-232-6697 |

Undergraduate Research Assistants and Data Collection

To use the lab, researchers must fill out an application form well in advance of their study (more in Instructions Manual). Under the supervision of the lab coordinator, a team of trained URAs will collect the data for many of the studies that run in the lab. There are many benefits to this including the following:

- 1) Researchers are able to conduct studies free from the constraints of their schedules.
- 2) Lab staff can better maximize lab space and time if they no longer have to consider a researcher's availability to schedule a study.
- 3) URAs help researchers adhere to the recommended scientific standard of data collection via individuals blind to the hypotheses to avoid experimenter bias effects.
- 4) Participants' lab experiences across various studies remains consistent.
- 5) Participation and compensation can be more easily and reliably processed if handled in-house.

In line with other top behavioral labs across the country, the URAs will be the default system for data collection, in order for the previously mentioned benefits to be realized. When utilizing URAs, researchers are welcomed to supervise their first or all sessions of a study to provide support, if they choose to do so. The trained lab team expects to be able to run most studies to facilitate data collection blind to the hypotheses. In the instances where a researcher needs to run their own sessions (e.g., use of complicated software, confederates, complex study design, etc.) or wants to include their own research team, the researcher is also highly encouraged to work with the existing URAs and lab coordinator to facilitate these session(s). Exemption available if researcher elects to be entirely responsible for participant recruitment, data collection, and participant compensation.

Participant Pools

Presently, researchers who are interested in running their study in the Behavioral Lab must recruit their own participants, with the exception of marketing researchers, who have access to a departmental, course participant pool. Currently, we are building upon a list of potential paid participants. This list was created for the use across all departments within McCombs. The standard compensation amount for paid participants has been \$8 with the added opportunity to win a random drawing of \$50 within each study. Participants who are employed by the university will receive compensation via paycheck. Otherwise, participants will receive cash immediately following their participation. In addition, any department is welcomed to create their own course participant pool using. This can also be managed by the Behavioral Lab Coordinator.