

Rules and Procedures for the NYUAD Social Science Experimental Laboratory (SSEL)

I. Membership

Membership in SSEL is broken down into four categories: full members, affiliate members, student members, and non-members

- a. **Full Members:** Those faculty and staff hired/assigned by the university to comprise the core of the SSEL group.
- b. **Affiliate Members:** Those NYUAD faculty and staff, as well as visiting faculty, who conduct social science experimental research and meet the requirements set by SSEL for laboratory use.
- c. **Student Members:** Advanced undergraduate (capstone) students and visiting graduate students who conduct social science experimental research and meet the requirements set by SSEL for student use of the laboratories.
- d. **Non-members:** Faculty and graduate students from other universities who wish to conduct research in SSEL facilities.

II. Facilities

a. Laboratories

- i. SSEL has two experimental laboratories, each with 24 machines. Lab A has a combination of desktops and laptops, and Lab B, the main lab, has desktop machines. The laboratories are divided by a movable “soundproof” wall and they can be combined into one large laboratory.
- ii. When using Lab A, subjects should be told that the experiment is being conducted in A6-013A; when using Lab B, subjects should be told that the experiment is being conducted in A6-013B.
- iii. We also have tablets which can be used for lab-in-the-field experiments. Some of the laptop machines can also be checked-out and used off-campus for field experiments. See Section XIV below for details.

b. Offices

- i. SSEL has shared office space in the Social Science Building (A5) for SSEL staff. Please contact the Director if you wish to use SSEL desk space.
- ii. SSEL also has a limited number of workstations in A5 for Undergraduate Researchers working on capstone experimental projects.

III. Requirements for Laboratory Use by SSEL Members and Affiliates

- a. **Human Subjects Certification:** all experimenters who use the SSEL labs, use SSEL laptops or tablets in other locations, or use the SSEL subject pool must complete the CITI certification program for human subjects research (the modules for social and behavioral research). See <https://www.citiprogram.org/>. Once certified, a PDF of the certificate must be emailed to the SSEL Technical and Operational Manager so that you can be added to the SSEL IRB protocol before conducting research at the lab. For non-NYU researchers and those at universities not affiliated with CITI, alternative certification may be acceptable. The researcher should contact the SSEL Technical and Operational Manager for advice and consultation on an appropriate substitute.
- b. **Human Subjects Approval:**
 - i. The NYUAD IRB has granted blanket approval for lab experiments carried out in the SSEL

- laboratory using the SSEL Human Subjects Protocol in part c below. Furthermore, each researcher must complete a SSEL experimental request form and receive approval from the SSEL Director. There are two SSEL request forms, one for faculty and one for students, which can be found online at the SSEL web page.
- ii. Any experiments conducted outside the SSEL labs, even with SSEL equipment and SSEL personnel, are not covered by the approved SSEL IRB protocol. As such, researchers must submit their own proposals to the NYUAD Human Subjects Committee and receive approval.
- c. **SSEL Human Subjects Protocol:** Experiments conducted in the SSEL Labs, using SSEL laptops or tablets in other locations, or using the SSEL subject pool for other experiments must satisfy the following protocol:
- i. Subjects must make one or more decisions. If more than one decision is made, the exact number of decisions must be known, or if it is not known, then the stopping rule/end condition must be known.
 - ii. Subjects are told if their payments are dependent on their own decisions or if the outcome also depends on the decisions of others. If it depends on the decisions of others, then the way in which subjects are grouped is also explained to them.
 - iii. Subjects are told what information is commonly known and what is private. That is, if a subject receives a piece of experimental information in private, all subjects know that others may have such private information.
 - iv. If subjects make decisions in a practice round, those decisions do not affect their final payoffs, and all subjects know this.
- d. **License(s) for Experimental Software:** Researchers are responsible for obtaining their own licenses for experimental software, where needed. ZTree, for example, is free, but requires researchers to sign a contract. Due to international mail times, the licensing process can take a month or longer and the license is needed, before the researcher can download the program. Details can be found here: <http://www.iew.uzh.ch/ztree/howtoget.php>. SSEL has all ZTree versions above version 4.3. The last two versions are currently installed on the machines, but older versions can be added on request. The SSEL public server also has oTree and there is a PHP server for online experiments.
- e. **Assistance:** Researchers are responsible for securing their own assistance in conducting experiments at the labs. Researchers may contact the undergraduate Student Research Assistants affiliated with SSEL and ask for their assistance (see Section VIII), but undergraduate students are not allowed to conduct experiments unsupervised. SSEL staff members may be able to assist in running experiments. The researcher(s) must ask the SSEL Director in advance. If a Researcher cannot be at the labs during an experiment he or she has scheduled, he or she must find a suitable non-undergraduate substitute (approved by the SSEL Director in advance) who has also satisfied the Human Subjects' Certification (see part a above).
- f. **Subject recruitment:** Researchers must obtain assistance from the SSEL Technical and Operational Manager and/or the SSEL Human Subject Enrollment Specialist in order to recruit subjects for their experiments. See Section VI below for information on subject recruitment.
- g. **Financial Support:** Researchers are expected to secure their own financial support for subject payments. See Section XII for information on securing financial support.

- h. **Citation:** Any research and/or teaching conducted using laboratory facilities in any way must be acknowledged and cited as such. A suggested citation format is: "This research was conducted at the Social Science Experimental Laboratory (SSEL) at New York University in Abu Dhabi in Month(s)/Year."

IV. Requirements for Laboratory Use by Students and Non-SSEL Members

- a. **Experimental Methods Training:** The student has taken a course in experimental methods in the social sciences taught at NYUAD, NYUNYC, or NYU Shanghai and has earned at least an (A-) in such a course
OR
The student has served as an undergraduate researcher in SSEL for at least one semester prior to conducting their own experiments.
- b. **Supervision:**
An NYUAD, NYUNYC, or NYU Shanghai faculty sponsor must agree to supervise the experimental research project.
All experimental sessions conducted by undergraduates must be supervised by departmental administration staff. Therefore, the timings of these sessions must be coordinated with administration personnel. On rare occasions, with the SSEL director's permission, the faculty sponsor may substitute for administrative personnel
- c. **Human Subjects Certification:** Both the student and the faculty sponsor must have received NYUAD human subjects training and have such certification on file with SSEL. To obtain this, each must complete the CITI certification program for human subjects' research (the module for social and behavioral research). See <https://www.citiprogram.org/>. Once certified, a PDF of the certificate must be emailed to SSEL Technical and Operational Manager. For non-NYU researchers and those at universities not affiliated with CITI, alternative certification may be acceptable. The researcher should contact the SSEL Technical and Operational Manager for advice and consultation on an appropriate substitute.
- d. **Human Subjects Approval:** The NYUAD IRB has granted blanket approval for economics lab experiments carried out in the SSEL laboratories, under the above protocol. Furthermore, each researcher must complete a SSEL experimental request form and receive approval from the SSEL Director. The request form can be found online on the SSEL web page. Any experiments conducted outside the SSEL labs, even with SSEL equipment and SSEL personnel, are not covered by the approved SSEL IRB protocol. As such, researchers must submit their own proposals to the NYUAD Human Subjects Committee and receive approval.
- e. **SSEL Human Subjects Protocol:** Experiments conducted in the SSEL labs, using SSEL laptops or tablets in other locations, or using the SSEL subject pool for other experiments must satisfy the SSEL Human Subjects Protocol, as described in part III b above.
- f. **License(s) for Experimental Software:** Students are responsible for obtaining their own licenses for experimental software, where needed. Z-Tree, for example, is free, but requires researchers to sign a contract. Due to international mail times, the licensing process can take a month or longer and the license is needed, before the researcher can download the program. Details can be found here: <http://www.iew.uzh.ch/ztree/howtoget.php>

- g. **Programming:** Students must do their own programming, with the guidance of SSEL personnel. Instruction is provided in the form of workshops organized by SSEL. **Before experimental sessions may be scheduled**, the student must conduct a pilot session (trial run) in the SSEL laboratory with SSEL personnel demonstrating that the program works as the student has promised. Sessions will not be scheduled until SSEL personnel are convinced that the program is error free. Ad hoc changes to programs after approval will not be permitted without recertification.
- h. **Subject Recruitment:** Students must obtain assistance from the SSEL Technical and Operational Manager and/or the SSEL Human Subject Enrollment Specialist in order to recruit subjects for their experiments. See Section VI below for information on subject recruitment.
- i. **Subject payments:** All subject payments made by undergraduates must be supervised by departmental administrative personnel. On rare occasions, with the SSEL Director's permission, the faculty sponsor may substitute for administrative personnel.
- j. **Financial Support:** Students are expected to secure their own financial support for subject payments. See Section XII below for information on securing financial support.
- k. **Citation:** Any research and/or teaching conducted using SSEL facilities in any way must be acknowledged and cited as such. A suggested citation format is: "This research was conducted at the Social Science Experimental Laboratory (SSEL) at New York University in Abu Dhabi in Month(s)/Year."

V. Reserving the laboratories

- a. SSEL members and affiliates may book the labs up to one month in advance by emailing the SSEL Technical and Operational Manager. The experiment must already be approved under Sections III or IV above, before any sessions may be scheduled.
- b. Student members and non-members may book the labs up to one month in advance by emailing the SSEL Technical and Operational Manager. The researcher must already have met the requirements listed under Sections III or IV above AND have secured the availability of their faculty sponsor and/or SSEL personnel. In particular, students must demonstrate that the software works before any sessions with subjects are scheduled.
- c. Times researchers reserve in the labs include setup, the session(s), subject payment, and cleanup. Researchers cannot be guaranteed access to the labs before their reserved slot and must vacate by its end.
- d. No individual session may be booked to last more than two hours, without special permission. Even with permission, subjects must be made specifically aware of the length of the experiment.
- e. As of 9:00 am Friday, any lab times unreserved for the following week may be booked on a first come, first served basis. Researchers who have reached their maximum number of hours listed above may reserve additional time in this case.

- f. The SSEL labs may be booked for software testing. This may be booked no more than four days in advance.
- g. SSEL affiliates, student members, and non-members may only book the labs between 9:00 am and 5:00 pm, Sunday-Thursday. Bookings outside of these times and days that require SSEL personnel presence must be accompanied by an email from the appropriate SSEL member agreeing to be present.
- h. SSEL members may book the labs for any time of day, any day of the week (with the exception of university/public holidays) without special permission from the SSEL Director.

VI. Subject Recruitment

a. Standard Subject Pool (NYUAD students)

- i. Before recruiting, the laboratories must be booked. To do this, researchers must contact the SSEL Technical and Operational Manager, who will ensure that bookings are in accordance with the rules listed in Section V.
Note: reserving the labs does not mean that subjects will be recruited and recruiting subjects via the Hroot calendar does not mean that the labs have been booked. The two (recruiting and laboratory bookings) are on separate calendars. Researchers can only reserve the labs by contacting the SSEL Technical and Operational Manager.
- ii. After receiving approval and booking the labs, researchers are responsible for seeking assistance from the SSEL Technical and Operational Manager and/or the SSEL Human Subject Enrollment Specialist in order to recruit subjects for their experiments via HRoot. Recruitment invitations must be sent out **at least** 24 hours prior to the scheduled experiment.
- iii. Only the SSEL Technical and Operational Manager or the Human Subject Enrollment Specialist may send out invitations to potential subjects using Hroot. Researchers may only contact subjects using recruitment emails that have been approved by the IRB. They must check with the SSEL Technical and Operational Manager and/or the SSEL Human Subject Enrollment Specialist to ensure that the versions being sent out are up to date, and adhere to the rules set therein.
- iv. For basic instructions on how to use Hroot, see the slides posted on the SSEL webpage. For a more complete description of its features, see the authors' working paper at: <https://www.wiso.uni-hamburg.de/en/forschung/forschungslabor.html>
- v. The SSEL Human Subject Enrollment Specialist works to find non-standard subjects to add to the subject pool, not to manage Hroot for experimenters.
- vi. All SSEL members and affiliates are requested to advertise the SSEL subject pool to their students at the beginning of the semester using the following flyer: <https://nyuad.nyu.edu/en/research/about/participate-in-research-studies.html> . Students should be reminded that registration and participation are in no way connected with class performance. Participation will not affect their grades and vice versa. Faculty will also not necessarily know whether or not a particular student has participated.

- vii. Researchers are only allowed to use Consent Forms approved by the IRB. The only customizations permitted without seeking separate IRB approval are names and the time/date/location of the experiment. The consent form can be obtained from the SSEL Technical and Operational Manager or the SSEL Human Subject Enrollment Specialist.

b. Non-standard Subject Pools

SSEL has a database of non-standard subjects, including students from other universities in the UAE, contract workers on campus, and members of the local Abu Dhabi community. If you would like to recruit subjects from one or more of these subject pools, please contact the Human Subject Enrollment Specialist. Their details can be found in section XV. SSEL Contacts. They can advise you on the following:

- i. Types of non-standard subjects that can be recruited
- ii. Timeline for recruiting non-standard subjects
- iii. Costs of recruiting non-standard subjects
- iv. Logistical considerations in recruiting non-standard subjects
- v. Additional resources needed for each type of subject pool
- vi. Approved content for communicating with subjects

If you are interested in recruiting non-standard subjects, please ensure that you contact the Human Subject Enrollment Specialist well in advance of your planned experiment(s) as it takes considerably longer to recruit from such groups.

VII. Programming

- a. Researchers are responsible for programming their own experiments or obtaining their own research assistants. SSEL provides Z-Tree training in the form of workshops. Both students and faculty members are invited to these sessions and are expected to take advantage of them. Outside of these workshops, SSEL personnel are available to provide assistance to SSEL members and faculty affiliates, where possible. Those interested in Z-Tree training should contact the SSEL Director for more information.
- b. Z-Tree is the official programming environment of the SSEL laboratory. Installation of other software on lab computers must be approved by the SSEL Director and coordinated with the SSEL Technical and Operational manager. Support and assistance with other programming environments is not guaranteed.
- c. SSEL provides a public server for online experiments written in PHP or oTree. In order to upload the project on the server, the researcher must send it to the SSEL Technical and Operational Manager.

VIII. Student Research Assistants

- a. SSEL undergraduate researchers are expected to assist SSEL members and affiliates with running their experiments. Depending on the experience and skillset of the student, this can include programming, assisting with sessions, recruiting subjects to join the SSEL pool, and other related tasks, as deemed fit by SSEL personnel.
- b. As SSEL undergraduate researchers are students first, care must be taken to not place excessive demands on any particular researcher. No SSEL undergraduate researcher is to be requested for more than ten hours per week. SSEL members and affiliates must not require that a researcher assist with a session during that researcher's class time. Tasks should be spread as evenly as possible among the SSEL undergraduate researchers.
- c. The procedure for hiring student assistants, and relevant forms, can be found on the NYUAD Intranet, under Human Resources > Internal Hiring > Student Assistantship Program. Alternatively, you can contact HR for the same on onboarding.studentassistantship@nyu.edu or 02-6287002.

IX. Laboratory Fees

- a. SSEL members, SSEL affiliates, and NYUAD student members may use the labs free of charge, provided they meet all of the earlier conditions.
- b. NYU alumni may use the labs, subject to the following fees:
 - i. Recruiting: AED 3 per subject
 - ii. Use of lab: AED 30 per hour
 - iii. Two assistants to run a session: AED 100 per hour
 - iv. Programming assistance: negotiable
- c. Other non-members may use the labs, subject to the following fees:
 - i. Recruiting: AED 6 per subject
 - ii. Use of lab: AED 60 per hour
 - iii. Two assistants to run a session: AED 200 per hour
- d. Programming assistance: negotiable
- e. Cancellation
 - i. Lab bookings may be cancelled free of charge, provided that no subjects have yet been invited to the session.
 - ii. For lab bookings cancelled after subjects have been invited, a cancellation notice must be sent to all recruited subjects. No penalty will be assessed to the researcher, but any subject who shows up is still entitled to the AED 30 show up payment. For sessions involving those outside the NYUAD community as subjects, there must still be compensation for travel.

X. Subject Payments

- a. All recruited subjects who arrive on time are entitled to a show up payment of AED 30, whether they are used in the session or not.

- b. Subjects who arrive more than five minutes late are not entitled to a show up payment.
- c. Subjects should earn at least (an average) AED 100 per hour of participation, inclusive of the show up payment.
- d. In the event that a session fails due to a software failure or mistake by the experimenter, all subjects are entitled to the show up payment and additional compensation. This additional compensation is the expected amount subjects would have earned in the experiment, pro-rated by how long the session ran, before it crashed.
- e. On a voluntary basis, subjects may provide contact information. If possible, the experimenter should examine whatever data the session did produce to see if subjects were owed more than the pro-rated amount. If more is owed, then the subject should be contacted and paid the remainder.
- f. In the event that a session has to be cancelled before it begins, on account of a system failure, power outage, or other problem outside the control of the experimenter, subjects must be notified as soon as possible. Any who still show up for the experiment are entitled to a reduced show up payment of AED 15 and are permitted to sign up for future sessions via Hroot.
- g. If a session is cancelled after subjects have been invited because the experiment cannot or does not need to be run for other reasons, a cancellation notice must be sent to all recruited subjects. Any subject who shows up is still entitled to the AED 30 show up payment. For sessions involving those outside the NYUAD community as subjects, there must still be compensation for travel.

XI. Laboratory Use

- a. The researcher must arrive in a lab no later than 30 minutes before the session is scheduled to begin.
- b. SSEL personnel are not responsible for providing/distributing consent forms, receipts, or instructions.
- c. The researcher must be ready to seat subjects 5 minutes before the session is scheduled to begin. S/he must have a list of recruited subjects and check in subjects as they arrive. The experimental session may not begin early, unless ALL recruited subjects have arrived.
- d. Signed and dated consent forms must be collected from all subjects before the start of the experiment.
- e. At the end of the experiment, subjects must be paid privately. The subject paid first must exit the room, before the second subject can be called for payment, and so forth.
- f. After payment, the researcher is responsible for shutting down the computers and making sure the labs are in a clean and orderly condition. If used, the white board should also be cleaned.
- g. Data should be immediately copied from the server to a USB drive or other removable/cloud storage.

- h. The supervising researcher is responsible for making sure that the room is secure, before leaving the labs.

XII. Finance: Getting Cash for Experiments

- a. Subjects in SSEL experiments are to be paid in cash.
- b. Experimenters are responsible for acquiring, monitoring, and distributing this cash. To obtain cash for experimental sessions:
 - i. Request a cash advance from your grant or other funding source from the Finance Department
OR
 - ii. Withdraw cash from a bank in the desired denominations and request reimbursement after sessions are complete.
- c. For instructions on how to request cash under part b., see the SSEL Technical and Operational Manager.
- d. **Researchers must begin the process of requesting a cash advance at least three weeks before the anticipated start of experimental sessions, if not longer.**

XIII. Reporting and Disputes

- a. Any disputes about laboratory scheduling or potential overuse should be brought to the attention of the SSEL Technical and Operational Manager.
- b. Any complaints about human subjects violations should be brought to the attention of the SSEL director.
- c. SSEL reserves the right to ban any researcher who systematically violates the guidelines set here from use of SSEL facilities.

XIV. Use of SSEL laptops and tablets outside of the laboratories

- a. Studies outside of the SSEL labs are not covered by the approved IRB protocol. Researchers must apply for and obtain their own IRB approval, before SSEL laptops or tablets can be checked out.
- b. Subject to approval, SSEL members and affiliates may check out the SSEL laptops or tablets to conduct lab-in-the-field experiments. Students and non-members may not directly check out SSEL laptops or tablets. A SSEL member or affiliate may check out SSEL laptops or tablets to direct experiments carried out by students or non-members, but the SSEL member or affiliate who checks out the laptops or tablets is personally responsible for their safe return.
- c. Researchers wishing to use SSEL laptops or tablets outside of the laboratories must make a request in writing to the SSEL Director. The request must include the nature of the study, the length for which the laptops or tablets are needed, where they will be taken, how the laptops or tablets will be

transported, and all measures the researchers will take to maintain the laptops' or tablets' security. Final approval will not be granted until the researcher has obtained IRB approval for their study.

- d. Requests to use SSEL laptops or tablets outside of the laboratories must be submitted at least 45 days before their intended use. Requests made less than 45 days in advance may only be approved if no SSEL experiments have been booked in the labs that require the use of the laptops or tablets.
- e. During the Fall or Spring terms, laptops or tablets may not be checked out for periods longer than 10 days. This will ensure that the labs are at full strength for as much of the high demand period as possible.
- f. During the January term, laptops or tablets may be checked out for no more than 21 days.
- g. Between the end of the Spring term and two weeks before the start of the Fall term, laptops or tablets may be checked out for no more than 30 days.
- h. In the event of multiple, overlapping requests to check out laptops or tablets, the SSEL director will collaborate with the researchers to fairly allocate a number of machines to each project.
- i. Outside of the laboratories, the researcher who signed out the laptops or tablets must maintain custody over them at all times. When not in the physical presence of the researcher, the laptops or tablets must be kept under lock and key in a permanent structure, insofar as local conditions allow. Researchers must adhere to the security plan in their request, as approved by the SSEL Director.
- j. Before releasing laptops or tablets from the SSEL labs, the SSEL Technical and Operational Manager will verify, in the presence of the researcher, that all machines are working properly. Any existing damage will be noted.
- k. Upon return of laptops or tablets to the SSEL labs, the SSEL Technical and Operational Manager will inspect the laptops or tablets for damage, in the presence of the researcher. If damage is discovered, the researcher who checked out the laptops or tablets will be responsible for covering any needed repairs.

XV. SSEL Contacts:

General Enquiries:
ssel [at] nyu.edu

Director: Rebecca Morton
E-mail: [rbm5 \[at\] nyu.edu](mailto:rbm5@nyu.edu)

Technical and Operational Manager: Arusyak Hakhnazaryan
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