

A Guide to Participating in Fieldwork

Thanks for joining our research team in the field. Your participation in this part of the process will benefit the overall results of our collaboration.

Planning for the Interview

- *[Information about how to sign up for the interviews.]*
- Make note of the details (interview location, parking suggestion, pre-meeting time and location, participant details, etc.). If something changes with the participant's availability, we will let you know.
- Share your mobile phone info *[in the sign-up form]*; this is essential if someone is late, lost, or some other last-minute issue arises.
- Bring a digital camera or a non-digital way to take notes (no laptops or phones please)
- Use the pre-meeting location as a last-minute chance to eat/drink/bathroom
- Casual dress; no logos that suggest an employer
- No phone calls, texting, etc. during interview. Step outside if you have an emergency!

The Interview Itself

While fieldwork may appear on the surface to be a straightforward conversation, you will soon see that a lot more is going on. We don't expect you to be an expert interviewer, although you'll find that you get better with practice. Here are a few tips to help you get the most out of your experience, and help us work together better:

- We'll introduce ourselves as the research team. One of us will be the **lead interviewer**. You will be **second interviewer**.

The lead interviewer runs the interview. They also coordinate the participation of the second interviewer.

Stay engaged! Even if you are not asking questions, listen actively. That means thinking about what you are hearing, making eye contact, nodding affirmatively, and taking notes. You aren't just a "fly on the wall"—you are participating.

- Interviews are different from conversation. We'll use a relaxed tone, but we are purposefully guiding the interaction, often thinking several questions ahead. Although you may not see the path the lead interviewer is on, as the second interviewer **it's important not to interject** in a way that can interrupt the flow.

- Stay engaged! Even if you are not asking questions, listen actively. That means thinking about what you are hearing, making eye contact, nodding affirmatively, and taking notes. You aren't just a "fly on the wall"—you are participating.
- Write down and hold your questions for the appropriate time. **Interviews unfold like the chapters of a book.** Your questions need to stay within those chapters. It's the job of the lead interviewer to move the interview from one chapter to the next. The lead interviewer will make opportunities—usually at the ends of these chapters—for you to ask questions.
- **We aren't the experts.** The people we are interviewing are the experts. We want to gather their stories and opinions, and to hear what they have to say without influencing them.

Use their language and terminology. If they refer to a product, brand, or feature inaccurately, don't correct them explicitly or implicitly.

- **Use open-ended questions.** Don't presume what you think the answer should be.

Less Good: *"What are three things you liked about using the bus?"*

Good: *"Can you tell me about your experience using the bus?"*

Better: *"Do you use public transportation?"*

After the Interview

Leave some time afterward to debrief, probably around food nearby. We'll talk about our thoughts, what surprised us, and other observations. While one interview doesn't reveal a theme or a pattern, as the study proceeds, we may start to discuss what is coming up.

We can get any images or other files from you during this debrief, as well.

At the end of each day or thereabouts, we'll send out highlights for each of the interviews so everyone can hear a little bit about what's been happening. If you want to add your own thoughts to the thread, we'd love that!