Pre-registration Guide for Social Psychology

In principle, all social psychology RP1 and RP2/3 projects should be pre-registered on the Open Science Framework before data collection begins. Pre-registration has many benefits (see, e.g., Frankenhuis and Nettle, 2018; Simmons et al., 2011; Van ‘t Veer & Giner-Sorolla, 2016). It is especially useful practice for RP1 and thesis projects, both as training for the ever-increasing open science practices demanded in academic research institutes, and as a manner to organize study goals and materials from the beginning to the end of your project. Before pre-registering your project, you should get feedback concerning the hypotheses, sample size (and likely power analysis), measurement, and analytic approach you’ll use. Of course, one can also preregister exploratory research that does not have clear hypotheses.

This brief document provides instructions for pre-registering projects. **Before pre-registering your project, make sure to draft a pre-registration form and share it with your supervisor(s) for feedback.** This form can be a Word document that includes answers to all the questions that will later be entered into a pre-registration template. You and your supervisor should agree upon the information in the pre-registration, including the hypotheses, measures, sample size, and analytic strategy.

As of now, social psychologists mostly use the Open Science Framework (OSF) to pre-register their studies and share study materials. To access OSF, go to [osf.io](osf.io). Create an account if you don’t already have one.

When you’re there, click on “Create new Project.” Give your project a name and description and select Frankfurt as the storage location. **Note** – you can change the project’s name and description later. For example, you might change it to your thesis title. At any point in the lifecycle of your project, the names should be clear, understandable to others, and professional (e.g., capitalized words, no spelling errors), as should the name of all files on your OSF page.
When you create your project, you’ll see the following:

To start your pre-registration, click on the “Registrations” link, and then click on “New registration”:

You’ll see multiple possible registration templates.
The material below will use the AsPredicted.org template, which is relatively simple and general. Naturally, other options might better fit your goals. Feel free to look at these different templates to decide which one to use.

You will be asked to select a license option, which affects how your work might later be used and modified by others. OSF’s help page provides information about licenses. Feel free to discuss this issue with your advisor. For most purposes, CC-By Attribution 4.0 International is appropriate. This license means that material on your OSF page can be shared by others, as long as it is appropriately credited.

After you select a license option, you’ll be asked to provide information in multiple fields, which differ across templates. AsPredicted.org’s template includes the following:

1) Hypothesis: What's the main question being asked or hypothesis being tested in this study?

2) Dependent variable: Describe the key dependent variable(s) specifying how they will be measured.

3) Conditions: How many and which conditions will participants be assigned to?

4) Analyses: Specify exactly which analyses you will conduct to examine the main question/hypothesis.

5) Outliers and Exclusions: Describe exactly how outliers will be defined and handled, and your precise rule(s) for excluding observations.

6) Sample Size: How many observations will be collected or what will determine sample size? No need to justify decision, but be precise about exactly how the number will be determined.

7) Other: Anything else you would like to pre-register? (e.g., secondary analyses, variables collected for exploratory purposes, unusual analyses planned?)

8) Name: Give a title for this AsPredicted pre-registration. Suggestion: use the name of the project, followed by study description.

9) Finally for record keeping purposes, please tell us the type of study you are pre-registering.

Specific answers are better than general ones. For example, in the analyses section, don’t write, “we will conduct an ANOVA” or “we will analyze our data using regression.” Instead, write “We will conduct a 2 (participant sex – between-subjects) X 2 (experimental versus control condition – between-subjects) ANOVA with social trust as the dependent variable. If the interaction is significant, we will conduct tests of the simple effect of experimental condition within each level of participant sex.” Some researchers even prepare analysis script before collecting the data. This approach is not required, but it is useful for encouraging you to think carefully about your analyses and to prevent analytic choices from being guided by the outcomes of tests.
After you’ve entered all relevant information, you’ll be asked if you want your registration to be public immediately, or if you’d rather it be private for a specified amount of time. Some researchers prefer to make registrations immediately available (to maximally facilitate information exchange) and others prefer to keep their registrations private until they’ve finished their project. You should discuss this issue with your supervisor.

At this point, you’ll have a time-stamped registration for your project:

You will also have the option to add files to your OSF page:
Examples can include pdfs of any instruments you use, the Qualtrics (.qsf) file you use, supporting documentation for your power analysis, etc. Generally, organized and exhaustive material is preferable to disorganized and limited material.

Researchers also often post **data** to their OSF page after data collection is complete. In principle, data should be open and shared. However, data with personal identifiers (i.e., information that reveals the identity of a specific respondent) should not be shared. Discuss this issue with your supervisor.

You can also add your supervisor as a **contributor** to your page. Check with your supervisor to see if they want to be added to the OSF page:

Finally, note that **you can create a view-only link** to your page. This link will allow reviewers to view your materials without seeing your name, hence preserving double-blind review. The view-only link works even if your project isn’t public yet. Of course, your project will not be anonymous if your name is included in any supporting documents (e.g., a Qualtrics file, a document detailing your instruments).

If you’re curious to see existing pre-registrations, you can consult the following:

This OSF page corresponds with a paper in which three studies were pre-registered and all data and materials were shared.

This OSF page corresponds with a registered report, where all methods and hypotheses were peer reviewed before data were collected.