##### Thank you for your interest in the Center for Applied Behavior Systems (CABS). In the following pages, you will find everything you need to know about CABS to decide if being involved in CABS is a commitment you are willing and able to make. This Handbook provides information regarding what we do at CABS, the projects we are currently working on, what is expected of you if you join CABS as a research student, and what you can gain from involvement in CABS. *Please review the information provided thoroughly*, as it will answer many of the questions you may have concerning CABS. Furthermore, some important aspects of CABS are explained here that, should you join, you will be responsible for knowing.

Following the information section of this application is a brief section where we ask for some general information about you and your expectations as a research student in CABS. This section will enable us to ensure you are a good match for CABS, and vice versa. **All new students should fill out an application.**

##### Mission Statement

The Center for Applied Behavior Systems (CABS) was developed to:

1. Help students–undergraduate and graduate–learn how to conduct research that combines the principles of applied behavioral science with theories from experimental, social, and applied psychology,
2. Give students real-world, hands-on research experience–from designing methodology and data-analysis strategies, to documenting findings in professional publications, to presenting research at professional conferences,
3. Teach community-based research and intervention techniques and approaches,
4. Give students opportunities to participate in leading-edge professional activities,
5. Improve quality of life in the community, and
6. Teach and demonstrate the principles and applications of the Actively Caring for People (AC4P) Movement.

##### Project Descriptions

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| --- | --- |
| ***Projects*** | ***Description*** |
| * **Pedestrian Gratuity** | The aim of this project is to increase communication and safety between pedestrians and drivers. |
| * **Gratitude in the Community** | The aim of this project is to take the Pedestrian Gratuity project one step further, looking at gratitude expressions across the Virginia Tech community. Examples include holding the door for others and saying thank you to the bus driver when getting off the bus. |
| * **Thank You Professor** | We are also conducting research on the ability of Thank You cards to increase intrapersonal gratuity within the Virginia Tech community. This study assesses the impact of expressing gratitude on mood by assessing the mood states of students before and after giving their professors a custom thank you card (TYC). |
| * **Bagless Blacksburg** | The aim of this project is to reduce the number of plastic  bags used in grocery stores in Blacksburg. We plan on implementing an innovative intervention approach targeting members of Greek organizations on campus. |
| * **Misogyny Online** | This research examines gender differences in the perceptions of online misogyny, particularly on the online platform “TikTok”. |
| * **Emotion Perception** | This research study focuses on evaluating the effects of stressors on people’s accuracy at perceiving emotions. |
| * **Psychological Safety** | This research study examines differences in perceived levels of psychological safety across courses at Virginia Tech, focusing on the factors which lead to students feeling less comfortable in certain classes than in others. |
| * **PERMA and Academic Performance** | This study focuses on discerning the relationship between subjective well-being and performance. To operationalize subjective well-being, this study uses Martin Seligman’s “PERMA” model. |

**Training and Orientation**

For each research project, appropriate training is provided for data collection, data entry, and data analysis as needed. Training sessions (for data collection and entry) are scheduled near the beginning of each semester by project leaders and periodically throughout the semester as needed. All new and returning students must attend these special training meetings.

In addition to regular training sessions provided for research teams, CABS hosts several “orientation” style meetings **at the request of students**. Orientation includes more in-depth instruction regarding the operating procedures and facilities of CABS. Additional topics may be covered at the request of the undergraduate students.

##### Educational Core

The Educational Core of CABS is designed to provide undergraduates with opportunities to learn more about the theories, models, and research methods commonly used in applied psychological science. It is also designed to ensure students become involved in all aspects of the research process. Completion of the Educational Core involves several components:

* Attend a weekly CABS meeting: Tuesday, 5:30- 7:00 pm, Williams Hall (room TBD).
* A minimum of 39 hours (for 1 credit hour), 78 hours (for 2 credit hours) or 117 hours (for 3 credit hours) completed over the course of the semester.
* Creation of a Curriculum Vita.
* Attend training or brainstorming meetings for particular research projects.
* IRB Research with Human Subjects Certification

##### Grading Criteria

You will be required to work **three hours per week** **for every one credit hour** for which you are signed up. Students registered for **one credit hour must work an average of three hours a week, totaling 78 hours per semester.** Students registered for **two credit hours must work an average of six hours a week, totaling 78 hours per semester.** Students registered for **three credit hours must work an average of nine hours a week, totaling 117 hours.**  Forms are provided to keep track of your hours, and we strongly suggest that you keep track of your own hours. Hour forms must be filled out through the online form and submitted *before* the Tuesday evening meeting. Hours not returned by Tuesday at 11:59 P.M. **will not be counted.** There are many ways to earn hours in CABS, and in order for things to run smoothly, hours must be submitted at a reasonable time. Hours can be earned by:

* Collecting data and completing required summary and reliability sheets.
* Entering, verifying, and updating computer databases.
* Attending meetings.
* Reading articles and completing literature searches for independent study projects.
* Completing special assignments.
* Attending conference workshops, symposia, and presentations.
* Doing administrative activities to help the CABS Coordinator(s) and/or Project Leaders.

CABS also requires that each undergraduate student enrolled for university credit complete a **Curriculum Vita** (an academic résumé listing research experience for graduate school applications). Training and/or behavioral coaching for this will be provided at one of the weekly meetings.

All students working for academic credit will be expected to complete their required hours before Reading Day at the end of the semester. Failure to do so will result in a grade of “**F”**, or if extenuating circumstances permit it, an **“I”** (incomplete). CABS is not a “walk-in-the-park,” we are a major research Center producing quality research and require the participation of diligent research students.

The fact that a student has completed the requirements listed here does not ensure the student will be invited to reapply to CABS the next semester. The decision of whether a student will be invited to reapply is based on several criteria, including:

* Feedback from CABS leaders.
* Meeting attendance.
* Complete of your total 39 hours (1 credit) or 78 hours (for 2 credits) or 117 hours (for 3 credits).
* Creation and submission of a Curriculum Vita.

**General Expectations of CABS**

Every Tuesday night we have a general CABS meeting. This is where we review and discuss the current status and activities of our projects, debrief students on how to improve data collection procedures, and give formal presentations on a wide range of issues, including, but not limited to:

* Presentations about ongoing projects
* Basic research design
* Graduate School Panel discussion
* How to design a Curriculum Vitae
* The Actively Caring for People (AC4P movement)

Following each presentation, an **interactive** discussion will take place where you may ask questions or make comments. These sessions often result in improvements to CABS as well as offer a way to facilitate a better understanding of CABS and the issues discussed.

**Tuesday evening meetings *are* *mandatory***; they are a key educational component to CABS and by not attending, you are depriving yourself of a valuable educational experience. In addition, your first opportunity to sign up for data collection will be at the Tuesday night meetings.

All students are expected to abide by the rules outlined in the “University Honor Code.” All persons working in CABS are expected to perform their assigned tasks to the best of their ability. CABS is a research center and will not “hold your hand” throughout the research projects. You are expected to understand the protocol and complete all data sheets in a timely fashion.

The primary mission of CABS is to conduct research. Therefore, the accurate and reliable collection of data is our highest priority. *Protocols related to the collection and handling of data are to be followed at all times, without exception.* Without permission of the project supervisor, raw data sheets shall not leave the Center once the data have been collected and the data sheets have been filed in the Center. In addition, persons working in the Center are expected to return the data sheets and complete the appropriate data logs **within 24 hours** from the time the data are collected.

In order to ensure accurate data collection procedures, the project leader of the respective project can review your data sheet and go over any questions or problems you may have had. Common or egregious mistakes will be discussed at the Tuesday night meeting to ensure proper data collection techniques.

Persons scheduled to collect data are responsible for their specific data collection session. If someone cannot collect data during their scheduled times they (not the Center) are responsible for finding a substitute, and notifying the project supervisor or the Center Coordinator(s) of the change (phone and email lists will be provided).

**Strengths and Weaknesses of CABS**

**Strengths:** Most students in the past have felt that CABS is an excellent way to get hands-on experience in applied psychological research. CABS is often a valuable addition to a student’s Vita and looks great on application forms for graduate school and employment opportunities. Depending on the level of your involvement in CABS, you will have several opportunities to be an co-author on a paper or poster presentation given at one of the many professional conferences CABS attends throughout the semester. In addition to being a co-author, you may be the presenter at these conferences as well. Being a co-author on a presentation at a professional conference is an excellent way to bolster one’s Vita and gain valuable presentation experience.

In addition to the more obvious advantages mentioned above, engagement in CABS enables you to gain invaluable knowledge and expertise about theories and procedures used in applied psychological research that have broad applications across many domains and disciplines. Students often use the experiences gained in CABS to develop and implement their own project ideas in other fields and academic arenas.

**Weaknesses:** It is easy to get lost in the crowd in CABS. We are a large research center with many projects and many students (sometimes 40 or more). Students in the past have expressed concern over the lack of individual attention. Our primary goal is to produce and disseminate quality research. Because of this, there is little time for everyone to develop a personal relationship with all members of CABS.

That is not to say it is not possible to develop such a relationship, but YOU must make the effort to form these connections. This is possible by: 1) Coming into CABS often to discuss/work on projects, 2) being intimately involved in one or more of our ongoing projects, and 3) being “research assertive”, which involves going above and beyond what is asked of you (i.e., volunteering for data collection spots that need to be filled, even if you have all your hours, etc.). The Center Coordinator(s) will always make time to address any concerns or issues you may have, so do not hesitate to speak with them.

Another consideration that students have brought to our attention in the past is that CABS may appear disorganized at times. Often this is a result of the dynamic nature of our ongoing projects and procedures. Data collection opportunities may be canceled because of reasons beyond our control. We ask you to bear with us as we “roll with the punches”. We do our best to provide you with the opportunities necessary to achieve the research experience, such as an impressive curriculum vitae for graduate-school, strong letters of recommendation, and the grade you want.

**Please note that Dr. Geller will no longer write letters of recommendation for Cabbies until they have been a research student in CABS for AT LEAST one semester.**

**CABS office hours:**

Monday - Friday 12:00 a.m. - 5:00 p.m.

Williams 202

540-231-8145

Please contact the center coordinators Tyler Parker-Rollins ([tylerpr20@vt.edu](mailto:tylerpr20@vt.edu)), Evan Alvarez ([evana11@vt.edu](mailto:evana11@vt.edu)), or Anastasia Semenova ([ana21@vt.edu](mailto:ana21@vt.edu)) with any further questions.

**Application**

**Name: \_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_**

**Email: \_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_**

Please explain how you found out about CABS:

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Please explain what you hope to gain from experiencing research in CABS:

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What skills and/or abilities could you contribute to CABS?

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What does the phrase “Actively Caring For People” mean to you?

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What are your plans after graduating from VT?

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**Major: \_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_**

**VT ID #: \_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_**

**Class Standing:** Freshman Sophomore Junior Senior

**GPA:** Overall \_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_ In-Major: \_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_

**What grades did you receive in: Introductory Psychology:\_\_\_\_\_\_\_**

**Research Methods:\_\_\_\_\_\_\_**

**How many total credit hours are you taking (not including CABS): \_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_**

**Do you plan to attend graduate school?** Yes □ No □ Maybe □

* **If yes, what area: \_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_ Undecided: □**

**Please list the faculty members, if any, in which you have previous research experience and the research accomplished with them:**

**I agree to commit the necessary time and energy required of me to participate in CABS and to fulfill all the obligations and requirements listed below**:

* Provide CABS with my best quality work for all tasks including:
  + Data collection
  + Data entry/verification
  + And all other assigned tasks
* Attend the weekly meetings
* Completion of 39 hours (for one credit), 78 hours (for two credits), or 119 hours (for three credits) of research

SIGNATURE \_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_DATE\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_

***PLEASE ATTACH YOUR CLASS SCHEDULE FROM HOKIE SPA!***

DEADLINE TO HAND IN APPLICATIONS IS  **FRIDAY, JANUARY 19th BY 5:00 PM**. WE WILL REVIEW APPLICATIONS THAT DAY AND NOTIFY YOU BEFORE THE FOLLOWING MONDAY.