##### 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 in order to decide if being involved in CABS is a commitment you are willing and able to make. This Handbook provides information regarding what CABS does, the research projects on which we are currently working, what is expected of you if you join CABS, and what you can gain from your involvement in CABS. *Please review thoroughly the information provided*, 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, a brief section asks for some general information about you and your expectations for CABS. This section will allow us to ensure that you are a good match for CABS and vice versa. **All** **new and returning students should fill out an application form**.

##### Mission Statement

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

1. Help undergraduate and graduate students learn how to conduct research that combines the technology of applied behavioral science with theories from positive, social, and humanistic psychology,
2. Give students real-world, hands-on research experience—from designing methodology and data-analysis techniques to documenting findings for professional dissemination,
3. Teach community-based and organizational research and intervention techniques,
4. Give students the opportunity to participate in leading-edge professional activities,
5. Improve human welfare and quality of life on a large scale, and
6. Teach, demonstrate, and disseminate the Actively Caring for People (AC4P) principles.

##### Descriptions of Current Research Projects

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| --- | --- |
| ***Projects*** | ***Description*** |
| * **Pedestrian Gratuity** | The aim of this project is to determine behavioral and environmental factors that influence communication and safety between pedestrians and drivers and to increase the frequency of gratitude expressions from pedestrians. |
| * **Bagless Blacksburg** * **Gratitude in the Community** * **Relationships and**   **Gratitude**   * **Headphone Use in the Dining Halls** * **Trans. Students Psychological Safety in the Community** * **Psychological Safety in Higher Education** * **Misogyny Online** | The aim of this project is to reduce the number of plastic bags used in grocery stores in Blacksburg. This project is exploring positive interventions to increase the occurrence of environment responsible behavior (ERB).  This project is assessing and attempting to increase the frequency of gratitude expressions throughout the Virginia Tech community. Examples include holding a door open for others and saying thank you to the bus driver when getting off a campus bus.  This study is using a questionnaire to examine the connection between romantic relationship satisfaction and gratitude expression in order to improve beneficial outcomes.  This project includes the naturalistic observations and recording of human dynamics during interactions between dining-hall cashiers and students eating at campus dining halls. Currently, the study is examining the relationship between headphone use and interpersonal expressions of gratitude.  This study designed and applied a 60-question self-report survey to assess the perceived psychological and physical safety of 26 transgender people currently enrolled at VT or who have recently graduated from VT.  Psychological Safety (PS)—the degree of personal inclusion, contribution, and engagement one experiences in given situations. This project is examining students’ perceptions of PS in various college courses with an innovative 51-question survey.  This study presents TikTok videos within an innovative survey that reveals discrepancies in individuals’ perception of misogyny in online spaces as a function of their gender, and other personal and sociocultural factors. |
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**Training and Orientation**

For each research project, students receive relevant training for appropriate data collection, data entry, and data analysis. Training sessions (for data collection and entry) occur 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 weekly group meetings for more in-depth instruction regarding the operating procedures and facilities of CABS. Additional research-related topics are covered at these sessions, often with guest discussion leaders.

##### Educational Core

The Educational Core of CABS provides undergraduates with opportunities to learn more about the theories, models, and research methods commonly used in applied psychological science. It also ensures that the research students become experientially involved in all aspects of an effective research process. Completion of the Educational Core involves several components:

* Attend weekly CABS meetings: Tuesday, 5:30 - 7:00 pm, Williams Hall Room 220 (room might change).
* A minimum of 39 hours (for 1 credits), 78 hours (for 2 credits), or 117 hours (for 3 credits) of data collection or computer entry, and attendance of research-planning sessions per semester.
* Creation of a Curriculum Vita.
* May include several academic assignments including reading a scientific article authored by Dr. Geller and writing answers to related short-answer questions.
* Attend training or brainstorming meetings for particular research projects.
* Contributing to IRB certification of a particular research project.

##### Grading Criteria

You will be required to contribute **three hours per week** **for every one credit hour** for which you are signed up. Students registered for two credit hours contribute **6 hours a week for 14 weeks, totaling 78 hours per semester, or 9 hours per week, totaling 117 hours per semester.** Forms are provided to keep track of your hours, and it is strongly suggested that you keep track of your own hours. Hour forms must be filled out, initialed by the proper project leader, and returned to the CABS Coordinator at the Tuesday night meeting. Hours not returned by Wednesday at 12:00 P.M. **will not be counted.**

Although this seems like a lot of work, there are many ways to earn hours in CABS, and in order for CABS to run smoothly, you need to submit your hours 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 research 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 Coordinator 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). You will receive training for this at one of the weekly meetings.

Attendance: CABS meetings are mandatory, and any student who misses four or more meetings without an excuse and notice to a project leader will receive a grade of “Incomplete” or “Fail,” depending on circumstances. Students who miss three meetings without an excuse will be subject to a deduction of 5 hours.

All students working for academic credit are 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”**. CABS is not a “walk-in-the-park,” it is a reputable Research Center producing quality publishable research with your effective participation.

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

* Feedback from CABS leaders.
* Meeting attendance.
* A minimum of 39 hours (for 1 credits), 78 hours (for 2 credits), or 117 hours (for 3 credits) of research participation per semester.
* 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 status and activities of our projects, debrief students on how to improve the data-collection procedures, and give formal presentations on a wide range of issues, including:

* Presentations about ongoing projects
* Basic research design
* Applications and expectations in graduate school
* How to create a curriculum vita
* Research presentations from professors and academics

Following each presentation, an interactive discussion occurs when you may ask questions or make comments. These sessions often result in improvements to CABS as well as suggestions for facilitating a better understanding of CABS and the issues discussed.

**Tuesday night meetings *are* *mandatory***; they are a key educational component of CABS and by not attending, you are depriving yourself of a valuable educational/training experience. In addition, your first opportunity to sign up for data collection will be at the Tuesday night meetings. You will also be able to turn in your weekly hourly log sheet for the previous week.

All students are expected to abide by the rules outlined in the “University Honor Code.”

All persons contributing to CABS are expected to perform their assigned tasks to the best of their ability. Falsification of data will be treated as an honor code infraction and will lead to an asterisk being placed on your official transcript, as well as the failure of CABS.

CABS is a College of Science Research Center and will not “hold your hand” through our 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 quality applied psychology research for professional dissemination. Therefore, 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, completed data sheets cannot 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 will review your data sheet when you hand it in and go over any errors or problems you may have had. Common and/or critical mistakes will be discussed at the Tuesday night meeting to ensure proper data-collection techniques by everyone.

Those who are 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 of the change (phone and email lists will be provided). **Missed data collection sessions will result in a deduction of the equivalent hours that would have been earned. Some data-collection hours will only be available on nights/weekends.** Please circle your student ID Number on your application to confirm that you have read this entire document.

**Feedback**

The leaders in CABS are firm believers that improvement is impossible without feedback. Thus, leaders may periodically provide research students with feedback via a “coaching form for corrective feedback.” These forms are not intended to degrade or criticize, only to provide direction for improvement. You will also have the opportunity to respond to the feedback on the coaching form.

Similarly, if you have suggestions or feedback for CABS or its leaders, we ask that you please let us know. You can provide us with feedback verbally, via email, or anonymously in the feedback box located in the CABS office (Williams 206).

**Strengths and Limitations of CABS**

**Strengths:** Many students in the past have indicated that CABS is the best way to obtain experiential learning in applied psychological science. CABS is an invaluable addition to a student’s vitae and looks impressive on application forms for graduate school. Depending on the level of your involvement in CABS, there will be several opportunities to author or coauthor a paper or poster presentation given at one of the many professional conferences. In addition to being a co-author, you may be the presenter at these conferences as well. Being a co-author of a presentation at a professional conference is the best way to bolster one’s vita and gain valuable presentation experience. For many students, their experience in CABS was critical for their acceptance into a competitive PhD program.

In addition to the more obvious advantages mentioned above, being actively involved in CABS allows you to gain invaluable knowledge and expertise about theories and procedures used in applied psychological science research that have broad applications across many disciplines. Students often use their experiential learning in CABS to develop and implement their own project ideas in other fields and academic domains.

**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 50 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 benefit from such relationships, but you need to make the effort to cultivate these productive relationships. This is possible by: 1) coming into the CABS office often to discuss/work on projects; 2) being intimately involved in one or more of the ongoing research 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 these research leaders.

Another consideration that students have brought to our attention in the past is that CABS may appear disorganized at times. This is usually due to the dynamic nature of the projects in which we are involved. 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 an optimal research experience, your vita listings for graduate-school applications, a strong letter of recommendation, and the grade you deserve.

**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 p.m. - 5:00 p.m.

Williams 206

540-231-8145

Please contact Ivan Savelyev ([ivansavelyev@vt.edu](mailto:ivansavelyev@vt.edu)) or Ellie Townsend ([elliect04@vt.edu](mailto:elliect04@vt.edu))

with any further questions.

**CABS Application**

**Name:**

**Email:**

Please explain how you found out about CABS:

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

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

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

What are your plans after graduating from VT?

**Major:**

**VT ID #:**

**Class Standing:** Freshman Sophomore Junior Senior

**GPA:** Overall: In-Major:

**What grades did you receive in:** **Intro to Psychology:**

**Research Methods:**

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

**Is this your first semester in CABS? Yes/ No**

**If not, please specify how long you’ve been in 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 done 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 mandatory weekly meetings (*students who miss three or more meetings without an excuse may be subject to grade deduction, students who miss five or more unexcused meetings will automatically fail.)*
* *(****Some data collection hours will only be available on evenings/weekends! Please think twice about applying if you are unwilling to make this commitment****)*
* A minimum of 39 hours (for 1 credits), 78 hours (for 2 credits), or 117 hours (for 3 credits) of work per semester.
* Completion of 6 hours (for 2 credits) or 9 hours (for 3 credits) of data entry/verification/ collection
* Submitting a Curriculum Vita

SIGNATURE DATE

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

DEADLINE TO HAND IN APPLICATIONS IS **MONDAY JANUARY 21st BY 5:00 PM**. WE WILL REVIEW APPLICATIONS THAT DAY AND NOTIFY YOU BEFORE MONDAY.

