Appendix: Scheduling Checklist

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The following is based on advice that I give to new experimenters. Based on deadlines, lab space, and available time, it may not be possible to follow all of this advice, but these are things that the experimenter needs to consider when scheduling a session.

All Subjects

1. Are there major university events that would make accessing the lab difficult?
   1. Graduation?
   2. Alumni weekends?
   3. Sporting events?
   4. Concerts/shows/festivals?
2. Is there a significant storm predicted in the weather forecast?
3. Is there a public holiday?
4. Is there a religious holiday or observance that would make members of that group less likely to attend?
5. Does availability of parking/transportation differ by the day of the week?
6. Are there day/time restrictions on access to campus or your building? If so, you will need to get permission from the appropriate authority if you intend to run your experiment outside of that range.
7. If subjects are coming from off campus, where are subjects likely to park, be dropped off by a ride, or arrive via public transit? Do subjects have access to all doors/paths/buildings needed?
8. Related to 7, are any alternative routes/entrances needed for subjects with disabilities?
9. If needed, are lab personnel available that day/time?

Student Subjects

1. Is there a day of the week when fewer students tend to have classes?
2. Is there a time of day when more students would be likely to register for an event?
3. Is there a midday break in classes?
4. Consider how show-up rates differ for classes without an attendance requirement, depending on the time of day. Assume that the same pattern will apply to your experiment.
5. Avoid final exam week. If students tend to all have midterms at the same time, avoid that week too.
6. Avoid university breaks/holidays
7. Are there major campus events that are likely to be more interesting/important to students than your experiment?

Non-student Subjects (may vary depending on your intended subject pool)

1. When is the typical end of the local workday?
2. When is the end of the local school day?
3. If running experiments on the weekend, consider the schedule of religious gatherings and any observances that may preclude a group from participation.
4. Is there an event (anything from a major concert in a small town to the finale of a popular television program) that would meaningfully reduce your number of potential subjects?
5. It tends to be inconvenient for non-students to come to a university campus. Is your budget large enough to provide sufficient incentive to draw your intended subjects to campus? If not, do you have a means by which to set up a temporary lab in an off-campus location?
6. If you decide to run your experiment off campus, who has the authority to grant permission for you to run your experiment at that location?[[1]](#footnote-1)

1. Note: If you change the location where you are running your experiment after you have obtained IRB approval, you will generally need to inform the IRB and request an amendment. [↑](#footnote-ref-1)