

# Frequently Asked Questions on Participant Compensation Policy for FSBS Research

A.M. Meij, 01-06-2024

## Introduction

Much of the research conducted by the Faculty of Social and Behavioural Sciences (FSBS) involves human subjects. Participants in these studies typically receive a volunteer compensation for their participation. There are rules associated with these compensations from the Tax Authority. The document "Deelnemersvergoeding Onderzoek FSW" (Participant Compensation in FSBS Research) outlines the criteria for determining the amount of compensation. This Frequently Asked Questions (FAQ) is prepared for researchers.

## F.A.Q.

### What changes for me as a researcher?

Practically, not much changes for you. The set of compensations align with current research practices. Next to set fees, there is also the option for a custom compensation (for instance research involving a hard-to-recruit target group). At the start of a new research project, as a researcher, you provide information to the FETC via the PRIDE tool.

### What options do I have to compensate participants?

There are several options:

- Standard recruitment
- Complex recruitment
- Lottery
- Gift

**Standard recruitment:** We have established set fees for this category, typically applicable to research involving large populations, such as students. Set fees help to prevent mutual competition among researchers using the same population and ensure compliance with Tax Department regulations.

*See question: What are the set compensations for research participants?*

**Complex recruitment:** In research projects that involve complex recruitment, the researcher can set a custom fee tailored to the specific situation. This option is intended for research targeting small, specific populations that are challenging to recruit. In such cases, the researcher determines the necessary compensation, and the FETC assesses whether the proposed fee is acceptable. Fees always need to be within the limits of the volunteer compensation regulations set by the Tax Department.

*See question: When can I use a custom fee?*

*See question: How can I use a custom fee?*

**Lottery:** You can also opt to conduct a lottery.

**Gift:** Additionally, you can offer a gift to an individual participant or a group (such as a class or team).

### When can I use a custom fee?

In case of complex recruitment. Complex recruitment is necessary when the researcher needs a very specific research group that is hard to reach. For example: participants with (complex) psychological issues and/or disabilities, delinquents, people with minimal income,

refugees, participants in multi-year research projects that are required to participate multiple times throughout a longer period etc.

A custom fee can also be used in case of an experimental design that makes recruitment complex (e.g., very high intensity for the participant).

Please note that a custom fee never exceeds the maximum monthly and yearly volunteer compensation as stated by the Tax Department.

*Also see question: What does intensive research mean?*

### **How do I use a custom fee?**

In the same way that you apply a standard compensation: via PRIDE. As is already customary. In PRIDE, under "Participants", question 14 asks the researcher if there is a compensation for the participant and the amount of the compensation.

There are two answer options:

1. Standard fee: please state the amount in accordance with the standard fees.
2. Custom fee: please state the amount and a brief explanation why you chose this amount.

### **When does the new policy take effect?**

From September 1, 2024, for new research projects.

### **I will conduct measurements after September 1 on an ongoing research project, what now?**

Ongoing research projects or research projects for which the budget has already been set can still use their current compensation rates.

### **Why has this policy been introduced?**

The direct reason is the so-called "reporting obligation" (in Dutch *resembleringsverplichting*) which states that the UU must report any compensation to a third party (such as a participant in research) for income tax. This is not necessary if the compensation falls under the "volunteer compensation". Therefore, policy has been established to be able to demonstrate to the Tax Authority that our compensations are in line with the standards set out for the "volunteer compensation".

### **My participants come from far, so I want to give them a travel allowance in addition to a compensation.**

That is possible. A travel allowance can be offered if the research has sufficient budget available and the participant has to travel more than 5 km. The exception here are students as they are assumed to be already present at the Science Park when they participate in studies.

### **My research budget for participant compensations funded by an institution other than the UU.**

If the compensation to research participants is funded from a budget managed by FSBS, then the rules set out in this document apply. Is the budget managed by another institution? Then the rules set by that institution apply.

## What are the set compensations for research participants?

| Type of research       | Intensive research | Duration of measurement | Compensation of measurement | Participant's time investment |
|------------------------|--------------------|-------------------------|-----------------------------|-------------------------------|
| Online                 | No                 | 1 uur                   | € 8                         | 1 uur 45 min.                 |
| On site                | No                 | 1 uur                   | € 10                        | 2,5 uur                       |
| On site                | No                 | 2 uur                   | € 20                        | 4 uur                         |
| On site                | No                 | 2,5 uur                 | € 25                        | 5 uur                         |
| On site                | Yes                | 1 uur                   | € 12                        | 3 uur                         |
| On site                | Yes                | 2 uur                   | € 24                        | 4,5 uur                       |
| On site                | Yes                | 2,5 uur                 | € 30                        | 5,5 uur                       |
| Variable compensation  | Yes or no          | 1 - 2 uur               | € 8 - € 25*)                | 3 - 4,5 uur                   |
| Teachers/professionals | No                 | 1 uur                   | € 25                        | 5 uur                         |

\*) *Range of average compensation*

### What does on site research mean?

This is research on location either on campus, or another location such as a school, workplace etc.

### What does intensive research mean?

In addition to the duration of the research, consideration must be given to the burden on the participant. After participating in a measurement, the participant needs recovery time.

Intensive research requires additional recovery time. Examples of intensive research include: emotionally taxing research, EEG, TMS/TDCS, the administration of pharmaceuticals, or uncomfortable stimuli (heat/cold, shocks, noise).

Specific target groups may also require additional recovery time in some cases, for example, patients with a neurological condition.

### Why is the participant's time investment included?

These details are provided to inform the Tax Authority why certain compensations are justified for specific measurements. This ensures that the compensation complies with the Tax Authority's regulations regarding volunteer fees.

### What does variable compensation mean?

This is a specific type of research that for instance Experimental Sociology uses. Experiments are conducted where participants receive a variable compensation. In this type of experiment, an essential part of the research design is that there is a compensation to be 'earned' which serves as a serious financial incentive for the participant. Participants can earn points during the experiment which are converted into compensation at the end. These points are not proportional to the time investment by the participant. In these experiments, compensations can be slightly higher than in other types of research. The range of compensation is €8 to €25 per session, with the average compensation per participant being between €12 and €15 per session.

### Which fee do I use with multiple measurements?

If your research involves multiple measurements, you can apply the same compensation for each measurement. For instance, if your research includes three online questionnaires, each taking one hour and conducted at different times, the participant could receive €8 for each session. This totals €24 for all three sessions.

**How do I compensate children and/or young adults?**

There are several options available. Children and young people, just like adults, can receive a compensation, for example, in the form of a bank payment or a gift voucher. Additionally, it is also possible to give the children a small gift. Sometimes, the parents are also paid a volunteer compensation. If the research takes place in the classroom, a gift can also be given to the class.

**I want to give a gift to a classroom, do I need to inform the FETC?**

Please inform the FETC about any type of compensation you want to provide from your research project. You can inform them by using PRIDE and answering the question about compensation for research participants.

**My participant wants to donate their compensation to a charity. How does this work?**

The faculty does not provide the option to transfer participant compensation to charitable organizations. This is related to the (financial) accountability of the research funds. If the participant wishes to donate their compensation, they can arrange this themselves after receiving the payment.

**What is the maximum monthly and yearly amount for volunteer compensation?**

This amount is set annually by the Tax Department. For 2024 it is a maximum of €210 per month per individual and €2.100 per year. Additionally, the compensation should be so low that it does not correspond to the scope, time commitment, and workload of the work.

**My participant has social assistance benefits (bijstandsuitkering). Does their compensation have financial consequences for them?**

If your participant is above 27 years old it does not have any consequences for their benefits. However, if they are younger than 27 and are on social assistance benefits ("Bijstand"), their benefits may be reduced by the compensation. Please inform your participants about this possibility, before recruitment.

**Where can I ask questions about compensating research participants?**

Please contact the secretary of the FETC. [Fetc-fsw@uu.nl](mailto:Fetc-fsw@uu.nl)