

Use of Amazon Mechanical Turk (MTurk)

As described through Amazon Mechanical Turk, (MTurk) is a crowdsourcing marketplace that makes it easier for individuals and businesses to outsource their processes and jobs to a distributed workforce who can perform these tasks virtually. This could include anything from conducting simple data validation and research to more subjective tasks like survey participation, content moderation, and more. MTurk enables companies to harness the collective intelligence, skills, and insights from a global workforce to streamline business processes, augment data collection and analysis, and accelerate machine learning development.

How to Start Using MTurk

1. The requester must have an approved IRB protocol for the study that describes how MTurk will be used. To get IRB approval for your study please send an email to (irb.research@umassd.edu)
2. Fill out a [Business Expense Form*](#) for the MTurk expense and get it signed by all the required departments.
3. Send the IRB approval letter and the Business Expense form to Bianca de Barcelos (bdebarcelos@umassd.edu) in Research Development.
4. Research Development will contact the requester and assist in completing the transaction for the MTurk purchase.
5. The requester is required to download reports from MTurk into an excel spreadsheet as backup for the expense report; the reports need to be then sent to Research Development every month. Please follow the checklist below to complete the process.

Checklist for Completion of Process:

The PI & Department/College Responsibilities are as follows:

- IRB Approval Letter*** – Required for human participant research. Follow the IRB guidelines:
 1. Payment must be reasonable and appropriate to the research task(s).
 2. MTurk data collection tool resides on the Amazon servers and no assurance can be made as to its use for purposes other than the research. Researchers are advised to collect data using Qualtrics, with known policies for data security and anonymity.

[Business Expense Form*](#) – Completed & signed by all required department levels. Indicate whether or not the compensation is contingent upon certain conditions.

The IRB Approval letter and completed/signed Business Expense form must be sent to Research Development for approval, before MTurk services are initiated.

- PI Responsibilities** – The PI is responsible to review the MTurk Requester Account(s)/reports for all completed MTurk services. The PI is responsible to download the Amazon reports into an Excel spreadsheet and forward to Research Development for ProCard backup.

ORD Responsibilities are as follows:

- An email will be sent to the PI & Department Chair if financial reports from Amazon MTurk have not been turned in within 30 business days after the transaction has been completed.
- Responsible for the retention of Amazon MTurk reports and processing expense reports for reimbursement.

Guidelines Compliance:

- Use of MTurk services is conditioned upon compliance with the above procedures. Failure to follow these procedures may result in termination or revocation of such services.
- Please note, depending on the paperwork required, additional time may be needed in order to process a request. All questions and documents should be directed to Bianca de Barcelos, Research Development bdebarcelos@umassd.edu