

Face and Voice Recognition Lab, University of Greenwich

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Volunteer Research Pool Information

We regularly send out invites for volunteers to contribute to scientific research projects by Professor Josh P Davis, his students, and members of staff at the University of Greenwich. This sometimes involve collaborations with other universities in the UK, but we also have a series of projects planned with international collaborators. Just occasionally, we send employment opportunity invites.

Published research projects: Published papers can be found here, although research takes time to travel from start to publication, and multiple projects are in the process of being written up. Watch this space. <https://www.superrecognisers.com/publications>

Location: Most research is conducted online so you can take part in any place and at any time you like, but we hope to use the University of Greenwich laboratories more often in future (mostly for London-based participants); as well as the labs of our collaborators.

Is it essential to be a super-recogniser? No. The opposite is true. We are very happy when super-recognisers volunteer. We are equally happy when non-super-recognisers volunteer.

To understand the skills of super-recognisers, we need to compare those skills with people who do not possess super-recogniser ability (sometimes described as controls). Without controls, the research would not be possible.

A large proportion of the research conducted by the lab investigates topics that are nothing to do with face recognition.

Who volunteers? At the time of writing, members of the Face and Voice Recognition Lab volunteer pool hail from 179 different countries. Of those who regularly respond to research invites, about 200 volunteers are aged 18-20-years, while approximately 20 are over the age of 80-years. The oldest is 94-years-of-age.

We are always searching for new volunteers so that we can demonstrate that our research has been contributed to by a wide diversity of participants. It allows us to reliably claim that the results of our research will likely generalize across the whole of the population.

Current languages? If English is not your first language, our current tests are translated into the following languages: Dutch, French, German, Italian, Norwegian, Portuguese, Romanian, Russian, Spanish

More will follow.

How often? We send about 6-8 invites per year dependent on eligibility to online research projects (we never send spam). You can ignore every e-mail invite until you see one that interests you. There is no pressure to participate in any project (you may pick and choose) we normally send one invite and one gentle reminder about 2 weeks later per project).

We also organise one or two projects a year at the University of Greenwich, mainly for London-based participants.

Stop the e-mails? It is very easy to tell us to stop sending e-mails and to withdraw consent. There are instructions on each e-mail invite.

Time commitment? Most projects take 10-30 minutes (we try to keep them brief), although sometimes a project requires far more commitment. The invite e-mail will always provide that information.

Compensation? Most of the research is NOT compensated (students rarely have funds), but we regularly arrange research in which we offer prize draws (anything from a £5-£50 Amazon Voucher is common). We do occasionally offer individual small financial compensation to all participants for projects that require more effort or time, or a visit to Greenwich or the lab of one of our collaborators around the world. However, funding for psychology research is traditionally far less than that for medical research.

Research projects in face and voice recognition: Most research is designed to better understand the underlying neuropsychological and cognitive mechanisms driving individual differences in face and voice recognition and in particular super-recognition. We also try to better understand how super-recognisers could best be deployed in different work environments. To do this, we need to be sure that the tests we use to identify super-recognisers are appropriate, and we often pilot test new measures with our volunteer pool, before transferring them for use in identifying super-recognisers for workplaces (e.g., identity verification, policing, security). Some of this work is also designed to help us develop training programmes.

Research projects on other topics: Professor Davis also conducts and supervises PhD, MSc and BSc students carrying out research in other areas outside face recognition and invites sometimes refer to these projects. Recent student studies have examined juror decision making in cases of sexual assault and rape; public and juror acceptance of hate crime definitions including Islamophobia; problematic drinking in women over 30-years; misogyny, and disability; impact of Covid-19 on health; stigma directed towards victims of crime; stigma directed towards sex worker victims of crime; what psychological factors might encourage participants to intervene if a bystander and witnessing anti-social activity; body-worn camera; police taser training.

Research by other University of Greenwich staff: Once or twice per year we send invites to important research conducted by other university staff, if we think volunteers might be interested, and large numbers of participants are required to make the research viable. Again, all participation is entirely voluntary.

Ethics and data protection: All projects are approved or noted by the University of Greenwich Research Ethics Committee in advance; and follow University of Greenwich Data Protection policy. <https://www.superrecognisers.com/post/ethics-information>

Will contributing to research help me get a job? Possibly. Very occasionally, we receive requests from organisations who wish to recruit super-recognisers and we will forward information to eligible members of the volunteer pool.

We mostly refer these to Super-Recognisers International, an organisation based in the UK, but who have contacts around the world, and who have placed super-recognisers in various roles and/or have provided training to police and others. To be eligible for these roles, you will need to be a Licensee of the Association of Super-Recognisers (LSRA). This will involve taking a series of 10-12 online and normally remotely monitored examination tests arranged by the University of Greenwich Face and Voice Recognition Lab. The exams are conducted during training courses.

Will I get a super-recogniser job in policing? This is unlikely. We have now helped find super-recognisers within the current workforces of more than 30 international police forces and government agencies. These projects have almost all involved asking existing employees to take the same test battery we used for Super-Recognisers International.

Police forces need super-recognisers to be skilled in policing and have knowledge of criminal law. This can only be obtained by working in the role first. We suggest you apply for a role if this interests you.

What tests do we use for police and businesses (e.g., Super-Recognisers international)? We are preparing a paper for publication in a peer-reviewed journal describing the tests. They measure four key generic elements that most closely map onto the skills super-recognisers require in different workplaces.

Short-term face memory
Long-term face memory
Simultaneous face matching
Spotting faces in a crowd

Critically, the tests which use photographs and videos and depict people of different ages, gender, and ethnicities measure accuracy at making correct identifications, and accuracy to recognise that faces have not been seen before. These abilities draw on different psychological processes. Response time information and confidence data are collected, key information for employers, and indirectly other skills such as vigilance, concentration, attention on the task in hand, and possibly most importantly – motivation.

If you are already part of the volunteer database and want to take more tests, this is the link for you:

<http://tinyurl.com/DBCAuthDistributionLink>

If you are not part of the volunteer database here and want to get the code to be part of it, then this is the link for you:

<http://tinyurl.com/TheThreeTestsDistributionLink>

Davis, J. P. (2019). The worldwide impact of identifying super-recognisers in police and business. *The Cognitive Psychology Bulletin; Journal of the British Psychological Society: Cognitive Section*, 4, 17-22. ISSN: 2397-2653. (Free pre-print to download: <https://doi.org/10.31234/osf.io/2ybaw>)

Davis, J. P. (2020). CCTV and the super-recognisers. In C. Stott, B. Bradford, M. Radburn, and L. Savigar-Shaw (Eds.), *Making an Impact on Policing and Crime: Psychological Research, Policy and Practice* (pp 34-67). London: Routledge. ISBN: 9780815353577. <https://doi.org/10.4324/9780429326592> (Download free to access pre-print here: <https://bit.ly/34Phwjm>)

Taking the tests for Super-Recognisers International

If you wish to take the Super-Recogniser International tests (in English only), they are free for everyone to attempt. However, Super-Recognisers International will charge a fee to receive your results. We receive no other direct funding to maintain the tests for members of the public on the internet. Laboratory staff work an average of about 30-hours per week on the test system for members of the public and volunteers and the tests for Super-Recognisers International.

More information about these tests for individuals can be found [here](#).

Organisations who would like their staff to take these tests should contact Super-Recognisers International directly. <https://superrecognisersinternational.com/>