RWS IP Services

AOP Connect

Researcher Manual

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Welcome

The Researcher Manual walks you through our research crowdsourcing process and the AOP Connect Platform. Familiarize yourself with the rules and guidelines that apply to your participation in our Studies. This includes basic tutorials, tips, knowledge and skills related to patent research.

Check our FAQ portal if you have any further questions. Interact with your fellow Researchers on our Forum to discuss topics about patent research. Finally, contact us if you need further information.

Studies

In essence, an RWS Study is a request for information. Researchers submit the requested information to a Study for a chance to earn the stated Reward.

The information you will submit varies depending on the type of research the Study requires. Whether it is prior art related to a particular patent or patent claims mapping to a technology standard, the required information is described fully in the Study page. Researchers should read the full Research Requirements and submit their responses through the Study page.

Getting Started

Welcome to AOP Connect, the online, proprietary platform of RWS. Your participation in our Studies is an affirmation of your agreement to these policies and to our terms and conditions as set forth in the following:

- Researcher Agreement
- Terms of Use
- Privacy Policy

Kindly review the Researcher Agreement and Terms of Use to familiarize yourself with our policies and platform.

When you register as a Researcher with RWS, we welcome you to our global community of Researchers through an online registration process. The registration process walks you through the creation of an account and provides valuable information to get you started. Now that you've created an account, we invite you to take these next steps before participating in our Studies:

Complete your Researcher Profile. The profile allows you to provide more information about your education background, work experience, and areas of expertise. We will use the information to let you know about Studies that match your skills. We will also use the profile information to invite Researchers to participate in Invitation Only Studies as Study Experts. It's a good idea to review your profile every few months and make updates as necessary.

Complete the Payment Info tab in your account to select your payment method. Make sure that your Payment Info is complete and accurate before you start working on a Study.

How It Works

Though the types of available Studies and research may vary, the following process applies to every Study:

Select a Study

Once you are registered, you are free to choose a Study that suits your interests and availability. You may select any active Public Study on our Study List Page . If you wish to work on multiple Studies at a time, you are welcome to do so. Participation in our public Studies is open to all Researchers.

Conduct Research

Read the description of your chosen Study to know its requirements. Pay close attention to the Research Requirements that apply to the information being requested. You will be required to upload and highlight relevant references that meet the Research Requirements. Click on the "Qualify" button to be directed to the Eligibility Questionnaire for the Study. Once you have qualified and are ready to make a submission, click on the Respond button on the Study page to launch the response form. For each Study, you are only expected to submit information that matches the Research Requirements. For example, in a prior art search, you may only submit a copy of the prior art and basic information as prompted by the response form. No additional report or analysis will be accepted.

Monitor Your Responses

Check your Activity Dashboard to view the feedback regarding your responses. The Review Team may contact you through our Message Center to request more information about your response(s). You may also receive additional information in the form of leads. Use the feedback and information you receive to make additional responses, if needed.

Check the Study Results

The results of the Study are typically announced within a few ~~of~~ weeks after the Study's Expiration Date. You will receive a notification if you have been selected to receive a Reward for your participation in the Study. You may monitor the status of your Reward payments through the Payment History tab. To get to this tab, go to your First Name dropdown at the top right of the page and Click Payment History or the tab available on My Account, Profile or Payment Info.

The following sections of the Researcher Manual will provide more details about the process above.

Research Types

As a Researcher, it is important to understand the purpose and goal of the research. The nature of the information we are seeking in a given Study dictates the type of research that is required. As such, each Study type and subject matter demands a different approach. These variables will impact how you read the Study and prepare your search. Some general types of research are described below but remember to always read the study description for what is needed in an individual Study.

Prior Art Search

Most of the Studies posted require a researcher to conduct a prior art search. This type of research aims to find prior art or evidence that may suggest that a given invention or technology was already known and publicly available by a given date.

Prior art refers to the entire body of public information that can potentially affect a patent's validity. It is documented evidence that may show that an invention or technology already existed before a certain date of interest. Prior art searches require researchers to find literature such as patents, journal articles, and other publications that disclose specific technical elements by a set date.

Prior art searches appearing on our site most commonly include Invalidity or Patentability-type Studies but may include others as well.

Invalidity

An Invalidity search is a prior art search involving a patent that has already been issued. Its goal is to determine whether the patent is valid. It aims to uncover any prior art that may prove that the patented technology already existed before the patent was filed. Since patents are meant to grant rights to the first inventor of an idea, a patent is valid only if it covers a technology that was not previously known or available. Understanding the claims of the patent is crucial in an Invalidity search. The claims describe the individual elements of the technology disclosed in the patent. For Studies on AOP Connect, these elements are included in the Research Requirements. A researcher needs to find these elements in literature publicly available on or before the given Latest Date for Responses (LDR). Your submitted responses should describe these elements in as much detail and as clearly as possible.

Take the time to educate yourself about the Study before submitting responses to it and be sure that the response is relevant. For example, if the response contains key words that appear to meet the Study Requirements but are in the wrong context, the document should not be submitted.

Where do you find context for the Study Requirements? The easiest place to start is to read and understand the description provided on the Study Page. If you want additional information, the background of the Study Patent itself can be used to provide an understanding of the focus point of the Study Patent. A background search on the subject technology area in Wikipedia or Google Scholar may also be helpful.

Patentability

A patentability search is a prior art search involving technical disclosures instead of an issued patent. Its goal is to determine whether the technical disclosures may be included in a patent application. Patentability searches are generally performed either during or before the patent application stage to determine whether or not a given technology may be patented.

Understanding the key elements of the technical disclosures is important in a patentability search. These elements describe the main novel idea that may be patented. A researcher seeks to find these elements in literature that may demonstrate how the idea is already applied to a variety of industries and/or technologies.

State of the Art

A State of the Art search aims to ascertain what is already known in a given field. Given a broad description of a technology, a State of the Art search gathers literature that provides specific details about the latest developments in that field.

The general description of the field or technology is the researcher's starting point in a State of the Art search. The description will help you come up with a list of keywords, synonyms, adjacent technologies, inventors, companies, institutes, and other industry leaders that will help facilitate your search.

Evidence of Use (EoU)

An Evidence of Use Study helps patent owners identify potentially infringing products. It is not a prior art search. Instead, the goal of the search is to find products that are already on the market, being advertised, or being prepared for distribution or sale.

Thus, the relevant references for an EoU Study include product brochures, user guides, manuals, datasheets, etc. that describe actual products. Academic papers and issued patents that merely discuss prototypes or models are not of interest in this type of Study.

An EoU Study will require mapping each and every one of the claim elements, which will be set out in the Study Requirements, to an element of the product or method described in the response you submit. Infringement is determined by a court of law based on legal arguments presented by attorneys. RWS does not practice law. We provide Evidence of Use research to inform the legal process in making a final determination on infringement.

Trademark

Unlike patents, a trademark may still be recognized even if it is not registered. Trademark rights may be established by the use of the mark for a specific product in a given geographic area. Since the trademark is not registered, searching government databases or registers for trademarks will not always yield results. As such, a common law trademark search requires a Researcher to find publicly available information (e.g. actual product, advertisements, product information or collateral, newspaper or magazine articles, etc.) that demonstrates that the mark was used for a specific product in a given geographic area at a particular time. It's important to note that RWS does not perform trademark clearance searches.

Study Types

RWS offers a wide variety of Studies. While the types of these Studies are designed to address the different needs of our Clients, they are also structured to suit the diverse preferences of researchers regarding the Research Type, level of participation, and Reward amount. The Duration of the Studies as described below are guidelines, so the expiration date should always be verified from the Study Page.

CrowdSearch Plus (CS+) Studies are open to all researchers. These studies often are difficult and require a high level of expertise. The studies offer the largest Rewards to participants.

- **Type of Research**: Prior Art, State of the Art, or Trademark (More Info).
- **Community Participation**: Public – open to all researchers.
- **Study Duration**: Typically, five weeks, but can vary from as short as three to as long as eight weeks.
- **Reward**: **A total of $7,000 in rewards is available.** The Winner is guaranteed a minimum amount of $4,000. The Winner receives a $500 bonus if the winning response is NPL or a Chinese/Japanese/Korean patent.

An additional guaranteed reward pool of $2,500 will be distributed among the researchers who have contributed significantly to the study based on the following:

- The first $500 of this pool will be rewarded to the response that best fulfills a lead (this may be any one of the leads presented during the study, at the study manager's discretion).
- The remaining $2,000 will be divided among responses that further support or provide details to supplement winning responses. Please remember that accuracy of highlighting is more likely to bring these responses to our attention for rewards.

The determination of the reward winners and amounts is at the absolute discretion of RWS. Always check the Study's Reward Structure.

CrowdSearch (CS) Studies are open to all researchers and typically have large Rewards.

- **Type of Research**: Prior Art, State of the Art, or Trademark (More Info).
- **Community Participation**: Public – open to all Researchers.
- **Study Duration**: Typically, five weeks, but can vary from as short as three to as long as eight weeks.
- **Reward**: **A total of $5,000 in rewards is available. The** Winner is guaranteed a minimum amount of **$2,500**. The Winner receives a $**500** bonus if the winning response is NPL or a Chinese/Japanese/Korean patent. An additional guaranteed reward pool of $**2,000** will be distributed among the researchers who have contributed significantly to the study based on the following:
    - The first $500 of this pool will be rewarded to the response that best fulfills one of the leads presented during the study.
    - The remaining $1,500 will be divided among responses that further support or provide details to supplement winning responses. Please remember that accuracy of highlighting is more likely to bring these responses to our attention for rewards.

The determination of the reward winners and amounts is at the absolute discretion of RWS. Always check the Study's Reward Structure.

CrowdSearch Mini (CS Mini) Studies are invitation only search contests where ten Study Expert researchers are selected to compete for the stated Reward.

- **Type of Research**: Prior Art, State of the Art, or Trademark (More Info).
- **Community Participation**: Private – Selected Study Expert researchers are invited, and the first ten to accept the invite will compete. (Same selection criteria as Study Experts. Learn more about the Study Expert Program.)
- **Study Duration**: Typically, three weeks.
- **Reward**: A single "winner" will receive the majority of the reward pool as a lump sum. There will also be a "discretionary" pool of rewards granted for other helpful, but non-winning, research.

ExpertSearch Plus (ES+) and ExpertSearch (ES) Studies are searches where selected Study Expert researchers earn guaranteed Rewards for their high-quality research. Study Experts are selected and invited to participate based on their performance in previous Studies and/or their qualifications as Study Experts. Learn more about the Study Expert Program.

ExpertSearch Plus (ES+)

- **Type of Research**: Prior Art, State of the Art, or Trademark (More Info).
- **Community Participation**: Private – three to four selected researchers
- **Study Duration**: Ten business days
- **Reward**: For this Study, all Study Expert researchers are guaranteed to receive a reward. The two researchers who provide the best submissions will each receive an additional reward.

ExpertSearch (ES)

- **Type of Research**: Prior Art, State of the Art, or Trademark (More Info).
- **Community Participation**: Private – two selected researchers
- **Study Duration**: Ten business days
- **Reward**: For this Study, both Expert researchers are guaranteed to receive a reward. The researcher who provides the best submission will receive an additional reward.

Evidence of Use (EoU) Studies are directed toward matching patent claim elements to either a technology standard or product literature.

- **Type of Research**: Evidence of Use (More Info)
- **Community Participation**: Public – open to all researchers.
- **Study Duration**: Typically, four weeks
- **Reward**: Rewards are given to the researcher(s) that provides the best Patent-to-Product Claims Mapping (can be multiple winners) and/or $1,000 for the Winner of a Patent-to-Standards Claims Mapping.

Parts of a Study

Study Page

The Study page provides the details of the research request. It includes information about the subject of the Study (e.g. patent or technology area), the description of the information we are requesting (e.g. prior art), and other guidelines specific to the Study. Keep these details in mind at all stages of your research.

Study Details

The following details are provided at the top of each Study page:

- **Study Title** – The Study Title identifies the subject of the Study.
- **Study ID** – The Study ID is a unique number used to identify the Study on the site. Aside from the top of the Study page, you may also see the Study ID in the URL.
- **Category** – The Category is the general technology area of the Study.
- **Research Type** – The Research Type is the general form of research the Study requires. Use this to understand the general goal of the Study. (More Info)
- **Expiration Date** – The Expiration Date is the deadline for responses. The Study will accept responses until 12 noon ET (United States) on the indicated Expiration Date.
- **Rewards Available** – Click on the Reward amount to see how the Reward will be distributed.
- **Qualify** – Click on the Qualify button to be directed to the Eligibility Questionnaire. Answer all questions for the Study to complete the For some Studies, the full Study description is available only to qualified researchers.
- **Respond** – Click on the Respond button to submit a response. (The Respond button is inactive until you have qualified for the Study.)

Research Requirements

The Research Requirements are presented in outline form to establish the relationship of the elements to each other. An icon next to each element indicates if it is a priority, conditional, or optional element. To facilitate the review of your response, you will be asked to highlight the specific sections of the text that correspond to the elements of the Research Requirements.

- A priority element has a ★ green star next to it. Ideally, all priority elements are present in your response. While a response may still be In-Scope even if it does not cover all the Priority elements, it will have a higher chance of winning a Reward if it covers most, if not all the Priority elements.
- An optional element has an ❋ gray asterisk next to it. Optional elements are not required to be present in your response. The Client, however, prefers to see these elements if they are present.
- A conditional element has a ☆ white star next to it. Refer to the parent requirement of the conditional element to understand when this element is required. For example, a parent requirement may ask for two out of six listed elements. In this case, all six elements under the parent are marked with a white star ☆, and you should meet at least two to fulfill the requirement.

Special Instructions

A Study may have special instructions based on the type of research required. Special instructions will be provided in the Study page as needed.

Study Status

Active

A Study is Active and appears on the Active Studies tab until 12 noon (ET United States) of the indicated Expiration Date. When a Study is active, responses can be submitted. Once you've qualified for a study by completing the Eligibility Questionnaire, the Respond button becomes enabled to allow for responses to be submitted.

Final Review

When a Study is under Final Review, responses are no longer accepted. A Study is moved from the Active tab to the Final Review tab at 12 noon (ET United States) of the Expiration Date. The Study Management Team evaluates the responses of a Study under Final Review to determine the Winners. The Study results are announced shortly thereafter, typically within a couple of weeks after the Expiration Date.

Completed

Approximately two weeks after the study expiration date, the results of the Study are announced and the Study is moved to Completed status. The Study Page is updated to display the user names of the winning researchers.

Participating in a Study

Once you find information that matches the Research Requirements, you are ready to submit a response. Responding to a Study is straightforward, but there are some important points to remember to improve your chances of earning a Reward.

Click on the Qualify button to be directed to the Eligibility Questionnaire for the Study. Once you have qualified, click the Respond button to submit a response. The response form will guide you in providing the required information and highlights related to your response.

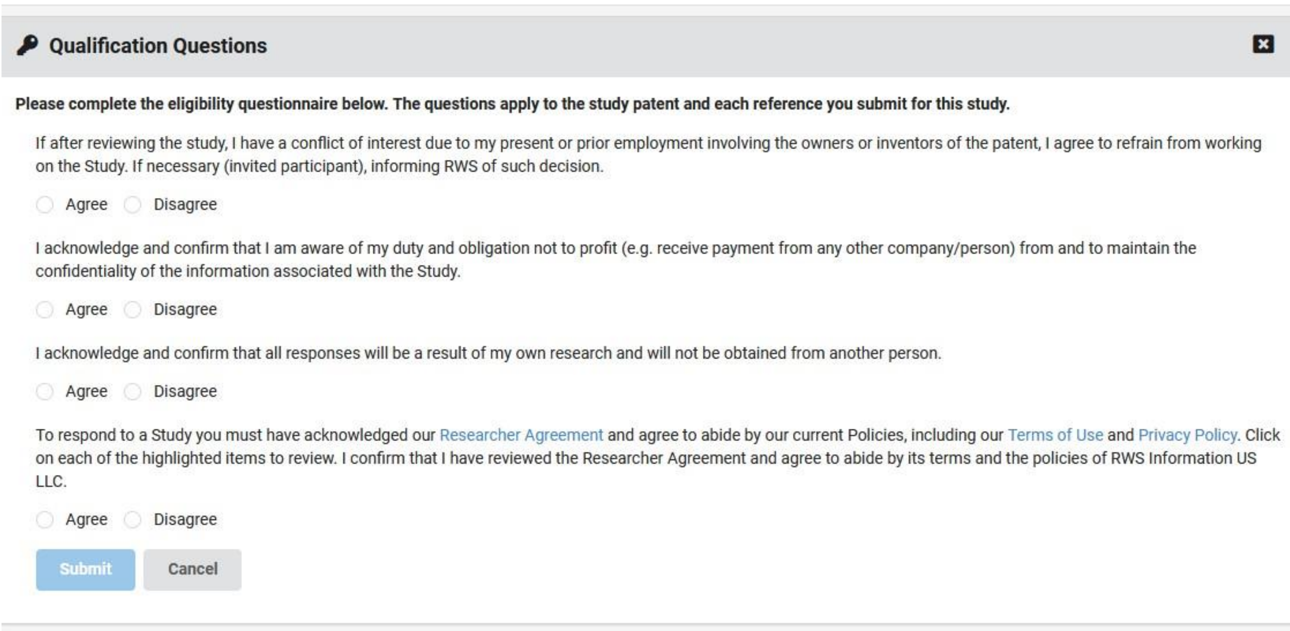
The Study Management Team evaluates and ranks a response based on how well it matches the Research Requirements. Use the ranking as feedback from the Study Mangement Team to assist you in locating other relevant documents. See the Ranking section for further details.

Response Process

Eligibility Questionnaire

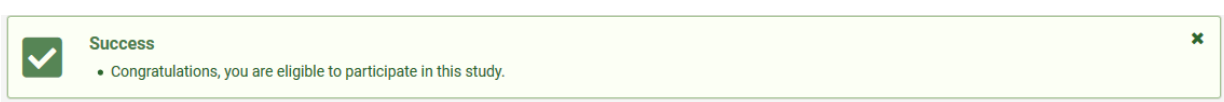
Prior to submitting your first response to a Study, you will be asked to complete a questionnaire to determine your eligibility to participate. This questionnaire helps to ensure that there are no conflicts of interest that may prevent you from participating in the Study. You need to complete this questionnaire only once for each Study. To complete the questionnaire, please click on the Qualify button.

Click Qualify and complete the questionnaire immediately if you are interested in participating in the Study. Only qualified researchers can see the full Study Page.



Be sure to click on the Researcher Agreement, Terms of Use and Privacy Policy of the last question to confirm that you have reviewed each. Many of our researchers have been disqualified from participating by skipping this valuable step.

Once you have successfully completed the eligibility questionnaire, a message noting your success will appear.



You may now click on the Respond button to submit a response. Clicking the Respond button on the Study page activates the form that will guide you as you complete each response.

Bibliographic Information

The initial step for each response is to enter the related bibliographic information. You will be asked to specify the document type of your response. The succeeding fields will depend on the document type you have selected.

- **Patent Lookups for all Authorities:** The researcher respond screen has been updated with patent lookups for all patent authorities, allowing you to search for any patent. Kind codes are now allowed for the newly searchable countries.
- **Non-Patent Literature (NPL)** – For certain types of NPL, you will be asked to search by ISBN, DOI (Digital Object Identifier, a unique code that identifies an electronic document), or by title and author. If the search returns a match, the system will automatically enter the related information in the proper fields. Otherwise, you will be asked to provide the relevant information. When applicable, the response must meet the requirement for the Latest Date for Responses (LDR). Please refer to the section on Response Dates for more information.

Document Upload

For most submissions, you will be asked to upload a primary document after providing the bibliographic information. Make sure that the file you upload includes the full text of the document, rather than just the abstract. The file must not have any identifying information (e.g. your name) or other marks or highlights not part of the actual text of the document. The copy of the document must clearly indicate the relevant date, as described in the section on Response Dates.

If your original document is in a language other than English, you will also be asked to upload a translation in the Translation PDF tab.

Please keep in mind that for the majority of studies, you are being asked to search for and submit copies of previously published documents for which the date can be verified (such as shown on the face of the document, verified from web archive, available as part of the metadata).

We do not want to see any content created after the latest date for responses, such as self-published content, AI generated content, or analysis performed by you in response to the research requirements. Any submission other than a previously published document will be rejected. An analysis from an AI engine explaining why a patent should be invalidated **IS NOT** useful evidence for our clients and should be avoided. Only past publications are of interest.

Clicking the Proceed button will save the bibliographic information and upload the file(s) you entered in the fields provided. The timestamp for your response will be based on when you click the Proceed button.

Submitting a Response

To submit a response, a researcher follows these steps:

- Upon qualifying for the Study, click Respond and follow the prompts to enter the details in the Response form.
- Response Type - the fields available on the submission page will change depending on which type of document you submit. Regardless, you will be required to highlight the sections of your response that are the most relevant to the Study technology, which allows you to identify where you believe this response matches the Study.
- Review the Response Details and proceed to Step 2 to Highlight. Associate the highlights
- with the relevant study requirements.
- Click Submit when you've completed the Response.

Response Dates

Earliest Accepted Date

For a response to be accepted, the response you submit must be published/available on or after the Earliest Date for Responses (EDR). This date is important in Evidence of Use Studies when a client is looking for products that infringe an issued patent, in which case, the published/ available date of the infringing product must be after the patent was issued.

Latest Date for Responses

For a response to be accepted, the document must be dated on or before the Latest Date for Responses (LDR). The relevant date depends on the type of response.

For non-patent literature, the relevant date is the publication date. Please note that we also need verifiable dates on all submissions. The date must be either intrinsic to the document (on the face of the document) or it must come from a reliable source, such as Wayback Machine: https://archive.org/web/ Google dates are not reliable.

For patents, the relevant date may vary depending on the requirements of the search and the needs of the client. The relevant date for each patent type may be one of these three dates:

- **Filing Date** – This is the date when the application for the patent was filed.
- **Publication Date** – This is the date when the patent document was first made available to the public.
- **Priority Date** – This is the earliest date to which a patent can claim priority. For example, this may be the filing date of a provisional application on which the patent is based or the filing date of a parent application for a patent that is a continuation.

Please refer to the Study page to see the relevant date corresponding to each type of patent.

Preferred Latest Date

In a few Studies, there is a Preferred Latest Date for Responses (PLDR) that is earlier than the LDR. We will accept responses dated after this PLDR, as long as they are still dated on or before the LDR. You have a higher chance of winning the Reward, however, if you submit an In-Scope document that is dated on or before the PLDR.

Response Dates for NPL

Documenting the publication date of NPL can be challenging, but evidence of the date is required for submission. The document itself may contain a copyright date for the year only. In this case, you may submit the document with the year specified and the month and day marked as “unknown”. Monthly journals/publications may specify the month and year of the issue in the header or footer of the document. In this case, you may mark the day as “unknown”. Some technical papers may indicate the date of publication on the document. Please do not alter or insert this information yourself. Some papers may indicate the date range of a conference. You may use the earliest of these dates for your submission. The Study Management Team reserves the right to validate this date on a case-by-case basis.

The date of the NPL may also be established by sources extrinsic to the document. Please do not alter or modify the document by typing this information onto the document. Rather, append this information to your submission, for instance, by merging the evidence with the pdf in a way that clearly indicates that it is additional material submitted to establish the date.

Sources to verify the publication date:

- Unaltered indications in the document of the date (e.g.,copyright date, issue date, conference date, publication date.
- DOI of the document.
- Bibliographic information from a publication database (e.g., IEEE, ScienceDirect, Elsevier
- Wayback Machine (archive.org) capture page of the document, including the URL to that Wayback capture page.
- Metadata intrinsic to a submitted pdf, e.g., pdf properties indicating creation and modification dates.
- Dates from search engine results will NOT be accepted (e.g., Google dates).
- The publication date is always required even if the Study has no LDR requirement.

Sources that are NOT acceptable to verify the publication date:

- Dates indicated in search engine hyperlinks or that only are implied from search parameters used in the search (e.g., Google dates).
- A URL of the document that does not have some indication of date within it.
- The publication date is always required even if the Study has no LDR requirement.

Response Highlights

Unless otherwise stated in the Study, you will be asked to highlight the sections of the document that best match the Research Requirements. This is your opportunity to indicate why you think the response is relevant to the Study. Matching each Research Requirement to the most closely related text or section of the document gives you the opportunity to call attention to the most relevant parts of the document and draw attention to its quality and importance to the study. The highlights are also instrumental in **determining whether the document is in-scope.**

When highlights are reviewed, the Study Management Team looks at the following:

Accuracy: Accurately highlighting your submission is critical. Each highlight should clearly relate to the research requirement with which it is associated. Simply highlighting keywords is insufficient. The keywords must be considered in context. It is far better to leave a Research Requirement blank rather than highlight erroneous passages.

Specificity: Highlighting large sections of text is nearly as useless as providing no highlighting whatsoever. Complete paragraphs or entire figures are not helpful to the review team. The particular sentence of interest or specific part in a figure should be separately highlighted and associated with the specific requirement to which it relates. Optimally, you'll highlight no more than 1 or 2 key sentences for each Research Requirement. Precision is key. While the full document may be relevant, please focus only on the sections that directly relate to each element of the Research Requirements. Be as specific as possible. Avoid highlighting entire paragraphs; instead, pick out the most crucial parts.

Number of highlights: Each requirement typically needs no more than 1-3 highlights. Every instance of the requirement in the submitted text does not need to be highlighted, only the best instance; be selective. The full document may have several sections that are related to the same Research Requirement, but you do not need to highlight all if one or two will be enough to demonstrate that the Research Requirement is indeed present in the document. Over highlighting makes the document look cluttered and reduces the overall effectiveness of the highlights. Highlight sparingly to ensure the most important information stands out to the reviewer.

How to Highlight Responses

The AOP Connect highlighting tool allows a researcher to match the relevant section of the response to the corresponding Research Requirements. Upon clicking the Proceed button in the response form (as described in the Response Process), you have 120 minutes (two hours) to complete your response highlights. If you send your response less than two hours before the Study expires, you will only have until 12 noon ET US of the Expiration Date to complete the highlights. Edits to the highlights are not allowed after the allotted time.

To view your responses to a Study, please follow the My Responses link for each Study through the My Studies page, listed under Actions. For each response, the Highlights column in the table will provide a link to view your highlights. You may edit your highlights through the link within the allotted time.

Adding a Highlight:

- Click and drag to create an area highlight. Choose the element(s) corresponding to the highlight. Click Save.

Once you have added the highlight, the corresponding element of the Research Requirements in the right panel will also be highlighted. This will allow you to see which elements are not yet covered by your highlights. Please provide highlights for as many Priority elements as possible. While a response may still be In-Scope even if it does not cover all the Priority elements, it will have a higher chance of winning the Reward if it covers most, if not all, the Priority elements. In addition to highlights for the research requirements, you may also want to highlight any text or figures that are responsive to a lead (associated with the most appropriate study requirement).

For more information about Priority, Conditional, and Optional elements, please refer to the Research Requirements section of the Parts of a Study page.

Reviewing and Editing Highlights:

- Click the icon corresponding to the element in the right panel to see the highlight(s) for that requirement. Hover above a highlight and click on the pencil icon to edit or the X to delete.

Highlighting tips:

- A 1:1 match is ideal. You may relate a highlight to multiple Research Requirements, but we prefer that you relate one highlight to only one element. If a section or block of text is related to multiple elements, we suggest that you break down the highlights, so that each is matched to the most closely related element. If you are associating a single highlight with all of the Research Requirements or highlighting an entire paragraph, you are likely not being specific enough.
- If you are highlighting multiple components in a chemical composition, try to highlight them each within the same embodiment or example. Simply having all the correct words in the document, but each in a different example is less useful.
- For mechanical devices and computer systems, if you are highlighting an individual part in a figure, the corresponding text to describe that element should also be highlighted.

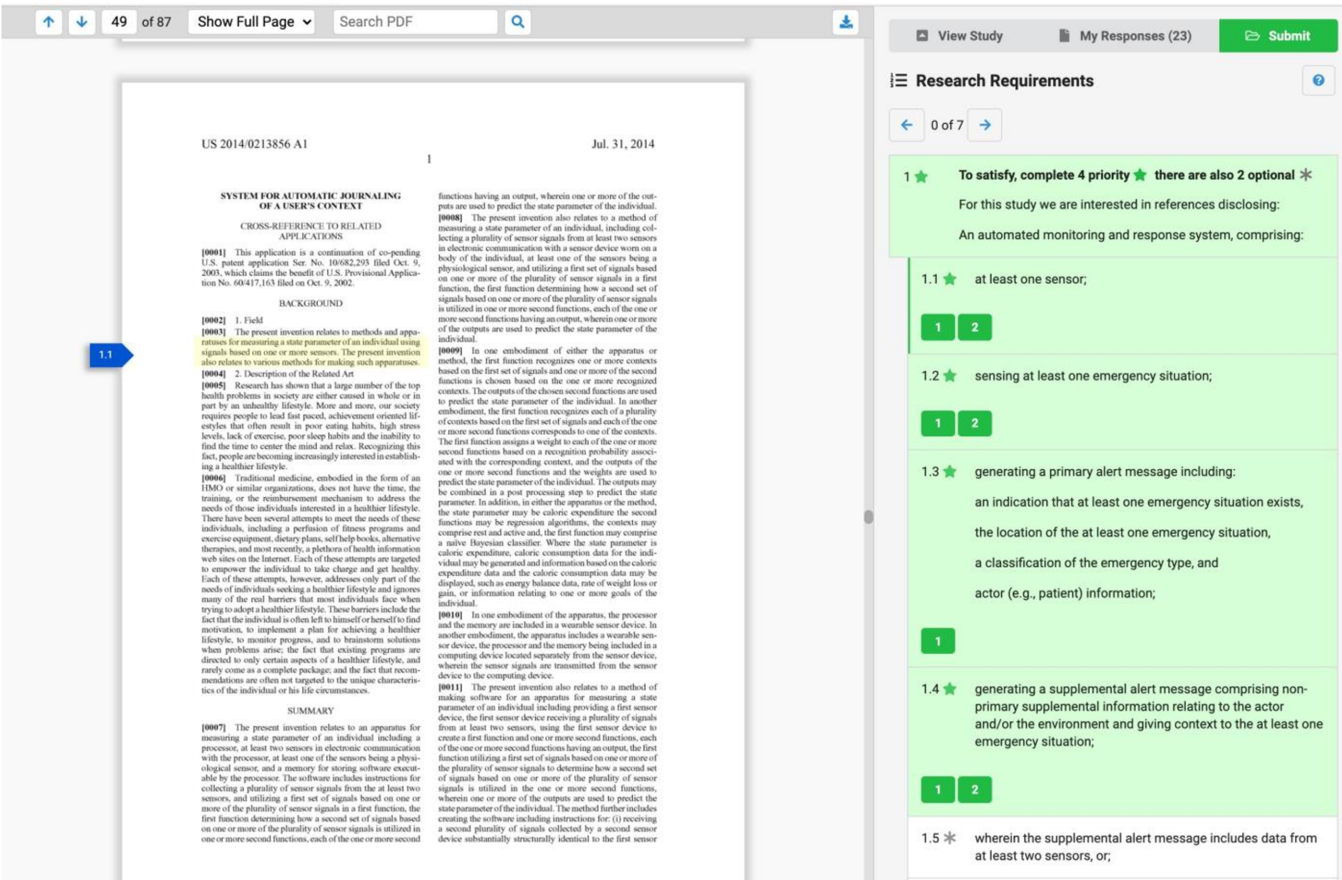
Your goal is to assist the Study Management Team to quickly determine whether the reference is of interest. Proper highlights allow the team to evaluate responses quickly and accurately and will draw attention to key elements, thus increasing the chance that the submission receives a reward. Excellent highlighting is most likely to bring the best reference to the attention of the study reviewers.

Get Help:

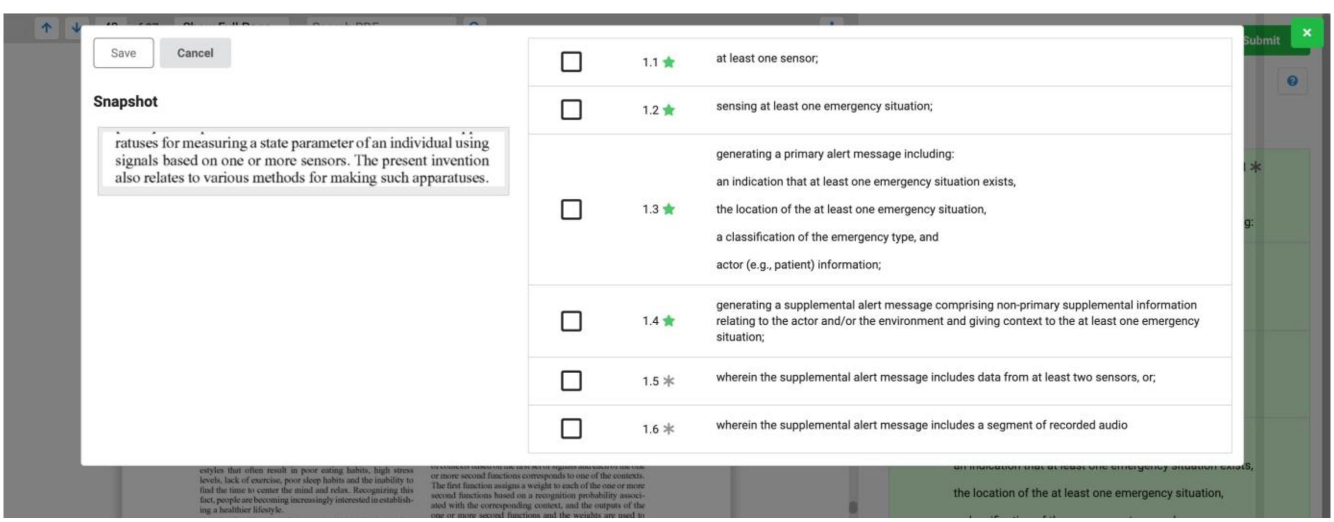
Ask RWS Support. Do not resubmit the same document if you encounter a technical issue with the highlighting tool. Instead, send us an email to notify us about the issue. Include as many details as possible (for example, the Study number, the Response ID of the submission, any error message that is displayed, and the web browser you are using). Please note that we may not open the response for highlights once it has already been reviewed.

- The following is an example of excellent highlighting. Note how the corresponding elements of the Research Requirements match the highlighting:

- **Research Requirements**



Requirements Snapshot



Evaluation of Response Highlights

The highlights for Accepted responses will be evaluated as follows:

- **Excellent** – Every highlight is relevant, accurate and specific and easily directs the Review Team to the relevant passages (highlights are complete but not excessive). The response is eligible for a Reward.
- **Acceptable** – The highlights are accurate and specific. The response is eligible for a Reward.
- **Unacceptable** – The highlights are inaccurate, misleading or not specific. The response is not eligible fora Reward.

The following are some examples of highlights that may be considered as “Unacceptable”:

- The first page of a patent or the title page of NPL
- A section header with no relevant information
- Highlights that cover all the pages of a document

Response Limits

Response limits are in place to help you focus on the most relevant information. With these limits, we encourage you to send only the responses that best match the Research Requirements. We're interested in your BEST responses not necessarily the first ones you find. By being selective about your responses, you improve your chances of earning a Reward. In turn, we make our best effort to offer you timely feedback while providing our clients the highest quality information submitted by the Community.

Limit Details

Each researcher starts with a default limit stated in Your Scorecard. You may be allowed additional responses based on the quality of your work in the Study or the availability of leads. Your response limit for a Study is shown in the response form when you click on the Respond button.

New Researcher Response Limits

Each new researcher has a default limit of three (3) responses per Study. This is the default limit for a researcher whose total number of responses to all Studies is less than 25.

Response Limits

In-Scope %	Default Limit	In-Scope Bonus	Lead Bonus
Above 40%	5	3	3
15-40%	3	2	3
Below 15%	1	1	3
New Researcher	3	2	3

If you are a researcher whose total number of responses to all Studies is at least 25, your default limit will be based on the quality of your most recent 50 responses. As shown on the table, your In-Scope Percentage (i.e. the percentage of rank 3 or 4 responses among your most recent 50) corresponds to a given default limit. A researcher who consistently performs well in our Studies is therefore rewarded with a higher default limit. By making more In-Scope responses, you will have the opportunity to increase your default limit.

In-Scope and Lead Bonuses

Additional responses may be allowed if one of your responses is In-Scope or if a lead is available. Every In-Scope response earns a certain number of additional responses to the same Study, as shown on the table. Every lead we provide earns three additional responses for all researchers who have already participated in the Study. Note, all public studies have a limit of 25 responses per researcher participating in that study.

In-Scope Percentage

The In-Scope percentage is a researcher's most important performance indicator. It determines a researcher's eligibility for Rewards and response limit. To meet the in-scope criteria, the following rules apply:

- Responses with Ranks 3 and 4
- Responses must be reviewed (i.e. "Accepted" or "Declined" status)
- Excludes any Expert responses (i.e. any Study where the researcher is assigned as a Study Expert)
- Excludes any responses on Evidence of Use (product) Studies (separate calculation)

In calculating your In-Scope percentage, we consider the most recent 50 reviewed responses (i.e. "Accepted" or "Declined" status).

To calculate your In-Scope percentage, divide the number of In-Scope responses by 50. (If you have fewer than 50 responses, use the number of responses that meet the criteria described above.)

Response Cap

Each researcher is allowed up to a maximum of 25 responses per public Study, including any In-Scope or lead bonuses earned beyond the default response limit. Once this response cap is reached, an In-Scope and/or lead response will no longer earn additional response slots. Duplicates are not counted against your response limit or the response cap.

The Study Management Team, at their own discretion, may increase a researcher's response limit above the response cap.

Review & Feedback

The goal of the Study Management Team is to identify the responses that best match the Research Requirements. To achieve this goal, the Review Team evaluates each response and provides feedback in the form of the response status and rank. In some instances, the Review Team may contact the researcher for more information about a particular response.

The Study Management Team works closely with our clients to determine the progress of each Study. Additional information may be provided based on the responses received thus far, usually in the form of a "Lead." The Lead will be posted on the Study page to help you narrow the focus of your research.

We encourage you to incorporate the response feedback and leads in your research. Use the response ranks to determine if your earlier responses are on the right track. Consider this information and the leads in deciding the direction your research will take.

Response Ranks

Reviewed Responses

Your Activity Dashboard provides updated information about your submission activity. Each response is identified by its title followed by a numerical Response ID. The Study Management Team uses this Response ID to identify a submission in any message sent to a researcher. Include this Response ID in any message you will send to our Team regarding a specific response. The details provided in the Activity Dashboard are updated once a response is reviewed.

Stages of Response Submission

- The response has not been reviewed yet. This is the initial status of all responses.
- The Study Management Team needs more information to review the document and provide a rank. When this happens, the researcher will receive a message from the Study Management Team indicating what is needed, and the submission may be re- opened for the researcher to make the change. The response will then be:
    - **Accepted** – The response is relevant to the Study and is given a corresponding rank; or
    - **Declined** – The response does not meet the requirements of the Study.

Response Details

Additional details may be provided based on the status of the response.

For Accepted responses:

- **New** – The researcher is the first to submit the particular document.
- **Duplicate** – Another researcher was the first to submit the same document. A duplicate response is unlikely to be the Study winner but is still eligible for discretionary Rewards.

For Declined responses:

- **Known** – The document is cited in the patent, is a family member of the patent or the Citations or included in the Known Art list which is available for your review.
- **Past Date Range** – The document does not meet the date requirement.
- **Not Relevant** – The document does not match any of the Research Requirements or is not in a relevant technical field.
- **Before Earliest Date** – The document does not meet the date requirement.

Response Rank

In an effort to provide clarity to our ranking system, the ranking descriptions are as follows: Also, please note that ranking is not final until the Study is completed.

- **Rank 1** – Background: does not satisfy a research requirement
- **Rank 2** –Marginal: only maps to research requirements already well known in the art
- **Rank 3** –Relevant: maps to most research requirements, including at least one key element
- **Rank 4** – The document is highly relevant because it accurately maps to all of the research requirements and/or fulfills a specific need provided in a lead.
- **Duplicate** – A response is marked “Duplicate” if another researcher was first to submit the same response.

Winning a Study

The Study Management Team selects the winning response(s) typically within a few days to a couple of weeks after the Study is closed to responses. The following criteria will be used in selecting Winners:

- Highest quality response.
- Best collection of responses.
- Accuracy of the mapping of the response to the research requirements.
- Response to Lead(s).

Please refer to the Reward structure provided in the Study page for more information about how the Reward will be paid for each study in which you participate. The Study Page reward structure will override any information in this Manual as such information can change from time to time.

Study Winner

The Study Winner is guaranteed a minimum Reward. In recognition of the challenges of finding high-quality Non-Patent Literature (NPL) and Non-English documents, the Study Winner may earn a $500 bonus based on the type of winning document.

Study Rewards

The Study Type determines the distribution of the Reward. Private Studies, have set Reward structures as described in the Study Types section. However, the Rewards for all Study Types may vary depending on agreements between RWS and the client. Always check the Study Page reward structure.

Reward Payment

- You will be notified via email when you win a Study. The notification will clearly indicate the Study and the amount of the Reward you will receive. You can track the status of each payment through the Payment History page in your account.
- Payments for ExpertSearch Studies are initiated seven (7) days after the Expiration Date. All other payments including those for CrowdSearch and other types of Studies are initiated thirty (30) days after the Winners are announced.
- As Rewards are paid on a weekly basis, payments are processed on the last business day of the week of the due date. If the due date falls on a Saturday to Thursday, the payment will be on processed on the following Friday. This is shown as the Payment Initiation Date on your Payment History.

Reward Distribution Example

Most CS Studies follow the same basic structure as described in the succeeding sections of this page. The Winner in a CS Study is the researcher who provides either the "highest quality response" or the "best collection of responses."

- Highest Quality Response – For all public Studies, the Winner is the researcher who provides the most accurately highlighted response that best matches the Research Requirements. The winning response is chosen among all responses that are marked In-Scope, as described in the Response Rank section.
- Best Collection of Responses – For some CS Studies such as State of the Art searches, the Winner is the researcher who submits the best collection of responses. The best collection of responses is determined by the total number of In-Scope responses and the overall quality of the collection.

The Reward for all public studies is split among the Study Winner and the other researchers who have submitted other very helpful references. We will reward these otherwise quite deserving responses with Discretionary Rewards. These Discretionary Rewards will be distributed among the researchers who have contributed significantly to the study based on, for example, the quality of the in-scope art submitted, responsiveness to leads and the accuracy of highlighting. Five hundred dollars of these discretionary rewards is reserved for the best response to a lead.

To illustrate, the following is the breakdown of the total Study Reward for a $7,000 CS+ Study:
Reward: **A total of $7,000 in rewards is available.** The Winner is guaranteed a minimum amount of $4,000. The Winner receives a $500 bonus if the winning response is NPL or a Chinese/Japanese/Korean patent.

An additional guaranteed reward pool of $2,500 will be distributed among the researchers who have contributed significantly to the study based on the following:

- The first $500 of this pool will be rewarded to the response that best fulfills a lead (this may be any one of the leads presented during the study, at the study manager's discretion).
- The remaining $2,000 will be divided among responses that further support or provide details to supplement winning responses. Please remember that accuracy of highlighting is more likely to bring these responses to our attention for rewards.
- The determination of the reward winners and amounts is at the absolute discretion of RWS. Always check the Study's Reward Structure.

The following is the breakdown of the total Study Reward for a $5,000 CS Study:
Reward: **A total of $5,000 in rewards is available. The** Winner is guaranteed a minimum amount of **$2,500**. The Winner receives a $**500** bonus if the winning response is NPL or a Chinese/Japanese/Korean patent.

An additional guaranteed reward pool of $**2,000** will be distributed among the researchers who have contributed significantly to the study based on the following:

- The first $500 of this pool will be rewarded to the response that best fulfills one of the leads presented during the study.
- The remaining $1,500 will be divided among responses that further support or provide details to supplement winning responses. Please remember that accuracy of highlighting is more likely to bring these responses to our attention for rewards.
- The determination of the reward winners and amounts is at the absolute discretion of RWS. Always check the Study's Reward Structure.

Payments

Researcher Payments

If you win a Study, your payment will be processed via the payment method you indicated in your account. The payment will be processed in accordance with our Payment Terms (More Info). Your account allows you to track the status of each of your payments.

Payment History

You can track the status of each payment through the Payment History page in your account.

New – The payment will be processed by the indicated Payment Initiation Date.
Payment Initiated – Payment processing has already been initiated but not yet completed.
Paid – The payment has been processed.

Payment Reminders

Your account information must match your payment information. Your payments will not be processed if the name in your account does not match the name provided in your payment information ("Address" and "Payment Method" tabs).

Payments are processed on a weekly basis. Payments are processed on the last business day of the week of the due date. If the due date falls on a Saturday to Thursday, the payment will be processed on the following Friday. Your payments will be processed only after you reach your payment threshold, if any. The total amount will be processed the week after the threshold is met. Last-minute changes to your payment information may delay your payment. Any changes to your payment information within a week prior to the Payment Initiation Date may lead to a one-week delay in the processing of your payment. Your payment method may determine when you will receive your payment. While your payment may have already been initiated, it may take up to a few days for your payment to be received, depending on the payment method you have selected. As such, please allow some time for your payment to be received after it has been processed.

Expired Rewards

Your Reward may be forfeited if your payment information is incomplete. Please make sure that you have properly and completely filled out and updated the Payment Info page of your account to ensure that payments will be processed successfully. It's a good idea to check this information on a regular basis and most certainly when you are notified that you've won a Reward.

Please be advised that if you receive an email indicating that you have a "Deferred Payment" status for a payment, this is your first sign that this Reward may be forfeited. A "Deferred" status may also be associated with a payment threshold not being met.

Both a Reward that can't be paid due to inaccurate payment information or a threshold not being met will be forfeited 180 days from the first initiation of payment.

Study Expert Program

Researchers who demonstrate their research expertise may be invited to participate in Invitation Only Studies. To be eligible to receive invitations to these Studies, a researcher must have met the requirements noted below.

Researcher Profile

An important step to becoming a Study Expert is to complete your profile. The following fields must be filled out:

- About Me
- Language
- Technical Knowledge Areas
- Expertise
- Education
- Work History
- Resume (as an attachment)

Selection of Study Experts

To be designated a Study Expert and become eligible to receive an invitation to an Invitation Only Study, a Researcher must meet the following requirements:

- Completed profile; and
- At least 25 reviewed responses to date; and
- An in-scope percentage of at least 40%; and
- An NPL percentage of at least 30%.

We use the information in the profiles to determine which researchers are invited to specific Studies. As such, we encourage you to be as detailed as possible in completing your profile. We will inform you if further updates are needed or if supporting documents will be required.

AOP Connect will automatically designate you as a Study Expert once you've met the above criteria and a blue shield with a check mark will appear next to your User Name.

Once selected for a specific Study, the researcher receives an invitation. The researcher may accept or decline the invitation as instructed in the message. If the researcher fails to respond within the allotted time, the invitation expires. Another researcher will be invited if an invitation is declined or expires.

Study Expert Opportunities

Study Experts may be invited to participate in the following opportunities:

- CrowdSearch Mini
- ExpertSearch
- ExpertSearch+

The Reward structure for each opportunity varies per Study type. Refer to Study Types for more information on each kind of Invitation Only Study. Please be aware that of the Expert Study opportunities noted above, the ExpertSearch and ExpertSearch+ studies are the ONLY studies with guaranteed compensation.

Study Expert opportunities are subject to availability.

Study Expert Participation Policy

A Study Expert commits to participating in the Study upon accepting the invitation. Please only accept invitations to studies in which you are qualified to perform in terms of knowledge, time, and effort. Alternatively, if you accept a study where you are unable to invest your best efforts, please let us know as quickly as possible. These ***invitation only*** studies are presented to a small group of researchers, based on their good performance, and a lack of performance on your part inhibits other researchers from participating, and ultimately erodes your reputation with RWS. Additionally, due to client review of the art in AOP Connect early in the study, we encourage our researchers to submit responses within the first week of the study. Delaying your participation until the end of the study will ultimately erode your reputation and cause us to not extend future invitations.

Guaranteed Compensation Policy

Each Study Expert is expected to submit at least the three best references you can find. Guaranteed compensation of Expert and Expert + Studies is based on the submission of at least three in-scope responses.

We understand that in some cases, you may find few or no references that are relevant to the Study Requirements. If you don't find any references that meet all the requirements, submit at least the best responses to show us the types of documents you encountered in your search. If you are notified that your response(s) is/are a duplicate, we still ask that you submit at least three references beyond those found to be duplicates. This is useful feedback we can provide to our client. Consistent failure to meet expectations will result in fewer invitations to these Guaranteed Compensation studies in the future.

The Reward to be paid to the Expert is subject to our Payment Terms.

ROTM/HOTM/ROTY

To acknowledge the outstanding contributions of our Community, we will continue to recognize our top Researchers through the Researcher of the Month and the Researcher of the Year. We also recognize our top Highlighters each month and Year.

Researchers of the Month

- Every month, we will honor the ***Top Researcher of the Month*** with a $500.00 USD Reward.
- Three runners-up will each receive a $50 Reward.

Highlighter of the Month

- Each month, we will honor the ***Top Highlighter of the Month*** with a $100.00 USD Reward.

Researcher of the Year

- At the end of each year, we will select the ***Researcher of the Year*** from among the Researchers recognized each month.
- The ***Researcher of the Year*** will receive a $1,000.00 USD Reward.

Highlighter of the Year

- At the end of each year, we will select the ***Highlighter of the Year*** from among the researchers recognized each month.
- The ***Highlighter of the Year*** will receive a $500 Reward.

The Researchers of the Month and the Researcher of the Year will be selected based on their Study wins, In-Scope percentage, the types and quality of their responses, and other factors that demonstrate the consistency and quality of their participation in our Studies.

The Highlighter of the Month and the Highlighter of the Year is selected based on their consistent excellent quality highlighting while participating in the studies in the time frame of our review.

The Researcher of the Month and Finalists and Highlighter of the Month are announced shortly after the 15th of the month and the Researcher and Highlighter of the Year is named in late January.

Researcher Policies

General Policies

The following policies apply to all Studies:

- **Reward Eligibility** – A researcher needs to maintain an In-Scope percentage of at least 10% to be eligible for any Reward.
- **Response Limit** – A researcher is allowed a certain number of responses per Study, as determined by his or her response limit. This response limit is based on the researcher's In- Scope percentage for his or her most recent 50 responses.
- **Response Cap** – Each researcher is allowed up to a maximum of 25 responses per Study, including any In-Scope or lead bonuses earned beyond the default response limit.
- **Duplicate Response** – A response is marked a "Duplicate" if another researcher was first to submit the same response. Duplicates do not count against the response limit and the response cap. Similarly, a researcher's In-Scope percentage excludes duplicates. To determine a researcher's response limit, duplicates are not included in the past 50 responses used to calculate the In-Scope percentage. Having been excluded from the response limit and the In-Scope percentage, a duplicate may not earn an In-Scope Bonus for additional responses to a Study.
- **Unacceptable Highlight** – A researcher needs to cite the specific section of the response that is most relevant to a Study. The highlight for a response may be marked as "Unacceptable" if the Review Team determines that a researcher provided inaccurate or misleading citations. Responses with "Unacceptable" highlights are not eligible for any Reward.
- **Expiration Date** – A researcher can make responses until 12pm ET US on the indicated Expiration Date.
- **Payment Terms** – Payments for ExpertSearch Studies are made approximately seven (7) days after the Expiration Date. All other payments including those for CrowdSearch and other types of Studies are made thirty (30) days after the Winners are announced. As Rewards are paid on a weekly basis, payments are processed on the last business day of the week of the due date. If the due date falls on a Saturday to Thursday, the payment will be processed on the following Friday. This is shown as the Payment Initiation Date on your Payment History.
- **Expired Rewards** - Your Reward may be forfeited if your payment information is incomplete. Both a Reward that can't be paid due to inaccurate payment information or a threshold not being met will be forfeited 180 days from the first initiation of payment.

Confidentiality

For the purposes of your relationship with RWS, “Confidential Information” means all confidential or proprietary information, documents, and materials, whether printed or in machine-readable form or otherwise belonging to the Company or its clients, including but not limited to, processes, hardware, software, inventions, trade secrets, ideas, designs, research, and know- how; business methods, production plans, marketing and branding plans, and merger plans; identity of shareholders, directors, or employees; materials relating to business operations; all inventions (whether patentable or unpatentable and whether or not reduced to practice), all improvements to any such inventions, including but not limited to, all products created, designed, and marketed by the Company or its clients; all patents, including patent applications and patent disclosures, both domestic and foreign, together with all reissuances, continuations, continuations-in-part, revisions, extensions, and reexaminations thereof; all trademarks, service marks, trade dress, logos, slogans, trade names, and corporate names, together with all translations, adaptations, derivations, and combinations thereof and including all goodwill associated with any such marks, and all applications, registrations and renewals in connection therewith; all writings and other works subject to copyright protection under any federal, state, provincial or local, or international copyright act or other law or international treaty, including, without limitation, the U.S. Copyright Act, including all copyrighted works, copyrightable works, all copyrights, and all applications, registrations, and renewals in connection therewith; all mask works and all applications, registrations, and renewals in connection therewith; all trade secrets and confidential business information (including, without limitation, ideas, research and development, know-how, formulas, compositions, manufacturing and production processes and techniques, technical data, designs, drawings, specifications, and business information); all computer software (including data, disks, licenses, source code, and related documentation); and all web sites and domain names.

Confidential Information shall include all information that should reasonably have been understood by the researcher to be Confidential, because of legends or other markings, the circumstances of disclosure, or the nature of the information itself, to be proprietary and confidential to the Company or its clients, regardless of whether such information is marked “Confidential” or “Proprietary.” “Confidential Information” also includes the fact that you are providing services to the Company or its clients as a Researcher, any information or other materials provided to you by the Company or its clients in connection with any Studies and any information or work product generated by you in connection with any Studies (collectively, “Study Materials”), independent of whether that information has been made available on AOP Connect.

The researcher’s Confidential Information shall include all information provided by the researcher designated as personal data, including but not limited to, any information relating to an identified or identifiable natural person; an identifiable natural person is one who can be identified, directly or indirectly, in particular by reference to an identifier such as a name, an identification number, location data, an online identifier or to one or more factors specific to the physical, physiological, genetic, mental, economic, cultural or social identity of that natural person.

For the purposes of your relationship with the Company, Confidential Information does not include information which: (i) was or is obtained by the researcher from a third party which third party, to your actual knowledge as a researcher, was or is lawfully in possession of such information and was or is not in violation of any contractual or legal obligation to the Company or other party with respect to such information; (ii) is or becomes part of the public domain through no fault of the researcher; (iii) was or is independently ascertained or developed by the researcher; or (iv) is approved for disclosure and release by written authorization of the Company.

As a researcher, you agree that you will take all reasonable precautions and steps to prevent the disclosure of Confidential Information, including but not limited to the following:

- You will not use Confidential Information other than for the benefit of the Company and its clients and for the purposes described directly or indirectly in this Agreement or specific Studies.
- You agree that all Confidential Information is the sole property of the Company or its clients at all times, regardless of whether such information is situated on our premises or elsewhere, and that it is subject to inspection with or without notice.
- You will not use the Confidential Information to compete, either directly or indirectly, with the Company or its clients.
- Upon the Company's request by email or by other means deemed appropriate, you will promptly return or destroy all such Confidential Information and will confirm such destruction to the Company in writing. You agree to use the same degree of care in protecting and using the Company's Confidential Information and that of its clients as you would use in protecting your own Confidential Information. In no case will you use less than a reasonable degree of care to maintain the confidentiality of the information you receive from the Company.
- If you receive notice of any legal proceedings that request or require you to disclose any Confidential Information or Study Material, you agree to notify and coordinate with the Company, before making any disclosure.

For the purposes of your relationship with the Company, the Company agrees to take all reasonable precautions and steps to prevent the disclosure of the researcher's Confidential Information, otherwise known as personal data, in accordance with the normal course of the Company's business.

Duplicate Accounts

You may open and maintain only a single account as a researcher on AOP Connect, the Company's online, proprietary platform, with the Company. You agree that you will provide accurate contact and personal information and that you will promptly update the Company with any changes to such information. The Company may share your personal data with clients, but only when we have your explicit consent to do so. The Company will seek your consent before disclosing any personal data internally and/or to any clients, as needed, and in accordance with our privacy policy.

Suspension & Termination

If we determine that you have failed to comply with any part of this Agreement or RWS's Policies, we may in our sole discretion suspend or terminate your researcher account with the Company. The Company may further exercise any and all other rights or remedies available under our Policies and applicable law.

If you have performed work which is selected for compensation, we may determine that such compensation is forfeited for any time period during which you are not in compliance with this Agreement or the Company's Policies. You agree that if the Company determines that you have made false, inaccurate or incomplete statements to the Company or in response to a Study that you will immediately, upon demand by the Company return the value of any compensation that has been or may be paid to you. You further agree that we may use any available legal and/or equitable remedies to suspend or terminate your account with the Company, prevent payment of compensation while in noncompliance with this Agreement or the Company's Policies, or seek remuneration of amount paid to you while you were in noncompliance with this Agreement or the Company's Policies.

You may request a temporary suspension or pause of access to your account. Please contact RWS at aopconnect-support@rws.com to affect such suspension or pause.

Account Closure & Deletion

As a researcher for RWS, you can close your account without the need of a formal request to the Company. There is a "close account link" on the My Account page. When you close your account, the Company tracks the date of such closure and all your associated personal data is deleted.

As a researcher for the Company, you can request the deletion of your account and its associated personal data. Please contact the Company at aopconnect-support@rws.com to affect such deletion.