**Prolific 101**

Prolific is an excellent platform for finding participants for research studies. Here's a beginner's guide to signing up as a researcher.

**Step 1: Go to the Prolific Website:** https://www.prolific.co/

**Step 2: Sign Up**

At the top right of the page, click the "Sign up" button. You will be asked if you want to sign up as a participant or as a researcher. Choose "Researcher".

**Step 3: Input your Details**

You'll need to input some information for your new account:

* Input your first and last name in the respective boxes.
* Enter your email address in the "Email" box. Use your academic or organization email if possible. For example, "john.doe@university.edu".
* Choose a strong, unique password and input it into the "Password" box.
* Click the box to agree to Prolific’s terms of service and privacy policy. Ensure that you read these before ticking the box.
* Click "Continue".

**Step 4: Verify Your Email Address**

Prolific will send an email to the address you provided to verify it. Go to your email inbox and open the email from Prolific. Click on the verification link in the email. This will open a new tab in your browser and confirm that your email address has been verified.

**Step 5: Complete Your Profile**

After verifying your email, log in to Prolific with your new account. Go to your "Account" settings by clicking your name at the top right corner of the screen and selecting "Account" from the dropdown menu. Fill in the requested details, such as your phone number and institutional affiliation. For example, if you're a professor at the University of California, Berkeley, you would input "University of California, Berkeley" in the institution field.

**Step 6: Add Funds to Your Account**

Before you can run studies, you'll need to add funds to your Prolific account. Click on "Top Up" in the top right corner of your dashboard. Choose the amount you want to add to your account and select your payment method. Follow the prompts to complete the payment process.

**Step 7: Create Your First Study**

Once you've topped up your account, click on "New Study" to create your first study. Input your study details, such as the name, estimated completion time, and reward per participant. Then you can add screening questions to select your desired demographic, if needed. When you're ready, you can publish your study and start collecting responses.

**Create Your First Study**

Remember to always provide clear and concise instructions for your studies, and to treat your participants ethically and fairly. Prolific offers a great resource for researchers, so be sure to explore their website and FAQs for more information on how to get the most out of their platform.

To create a new study, from your Prolific dashboard, click on the "New Study" button to start setting up your study.

**Input Basic Study Details:**

Study Name: Enter the title of your study. For example, it could be 'Zero Carbon Commuting in High Density Cities'.

Estimated Completion Time: This is how long you expect the average participant to take to complete the survey. For example, if you have 10 questions, you may estimate it at 5 minutes.

Reward Per Participant: This is the amount each participant will be paid for completing your study.

**Provide Study URL:**

You should have a URL link to your survey from Qualtrics. Copy this link and paste it into the 'Study URL' field on Prolific. Make sure to check the box for "Open study in a new tab".

**Set the Number of Participants:**

You'll need to decide how many total participants you want for your study. You've mentioned you want equal gender distribution, so if you want 100 total participants, for example, you would aim for 50 male and 50 female participants.

**Set Up Prescreening:**

For example, you only want residents of London to participate. You'll use the prescreening tool. Click on "Add a new prescreener". In the "Demographic" category, find "Current Country of Residence" and select "United Kingdom". Then find "Current City of Residence" and input "London".

Suppose that you want to have equal gender distribution among the participants. Go back to the "Demographic" category, find the "Gender" option, and select both "Male" and "Female". In order to ensure equal gender distribution, you will need to create two versions of your study: one targeting male participants and the other targeting female participants. Set the maximum number of participants for both studies to half of your total desired sample size.

**Publish Your Study:**

After everything is set, you can preview your study. Once you're satisfied, click "Publish" to make the study live. Note that you will need to have enough funds in your account to cover the total participant compensation before you can publish the study.

**Monitor Your Study:**

After the study is live, you can monitor its progress from your dashboard. You'll see how many participants have completed the study, and you can view their submissions.

Remember that creating a good study takes careful planning. Take the time to carefully consider your research question, the type of data you need to collect, and the demographic of participants you want to involve. Keep in mind ethical considerations and ensure that participants are compensated fairly for their time.

**Monitor Study and Collect Data**

Once your study has been published and participants are taking part, you can monitor its progress from your dashboard.

**1. Accessing Your Study Dashboard:**

From your main Prolific dashboard, locate your study 'Zero Carbon Commuting in High Density Cities'.

Click on the study title. This will take you to the study's specific dashboard.

**2. Monitoring Participation:**

Here you can see how many people are currently taking your study, how many have completed it, and how many have returned it. If the study is active, you can click the 'Stop Study' button at any time if you have gathered enough data or need to make changes.

**3. Checking Preliminary Results:**

Click on 'Submissions' to see a detailed breakdown of all participants who have taken part in your study. You can see each participant's ID, start time, completion time, and their approval status.

**4. Ensuring Data Quality:**

It's important to review submissions for data quality. If there are consistently incorrect or nonsensical answers, it may indicate that the participant was not taking the study seriously.

However, be cautious not to reject submissions too easily. Every rejection lowers the participant's approval rate and can affect their ability to participate in future studies. As a good practice, only reject a submission if you have a justified reason (e.g., participant failed an attention check question, gibberish or contradictory responses).

**5. Resolving Issues:**

If you find issues with a submission, consider reaching out to the participant through the platform to discuss the problem before rejecting their work. This allows participants to provide clarifications or corrections, ensuring they are treated fairly.

Prolific has a "Raise Issue" feature, where you can contact participants directly. Use this judiciously and respectfully.

**6. Approving Submissions:**

Once you are satisfied with a submission, you can approve it by clicking the 'Approve' button. Approved participants are automatically paid from your Prolific account.

**7. Downloading Collected Data:**

After you have finished collecting data and approved all the submissions, you can download the data.

Go to the 'Submissions' tab and click on 'Download All' button.

This will download an Excel sheet with all the information about your participants and their responses.

Remember, treating participants ethically and fairly is crucial not only for the reputation of your research but also for the quality of your data. Pay participants promptly, communicate clearly and respectfully, and keep rejections to a minimum to ensure the best results for your study.