

ETHICS REVIEW REQUIREMENTS FOR COURSE-RELATED RESEARCH¹

WHEN IS ETHICS REVIEW REQUIRED?

For research that is subject to review, **ethics approval must be obtained prior to the starting any research activities involving human participants**. Failure to obtain ethics approval *prior* to the commencement of research activities is considered both a breach of Senate Policy as well as research misconduct. All such instances of non-compliance will be addressed by the appropriate institutional office.

All research involving human participants is considered **research subject to review**. The Principal Investigator (Course Director or Student) of any research project involving human participants:

- MUST have a protocol that describes how the researcher(s) will interact with the human participants; and
- MUST have that protocol reviewed and approved by the appropriate Research Ethics Committee before the research commences; and
- MUST obtain informed consent from ALL research participants. For minor age participants (Those under the age of 16 for minimal risk research), both parental consent and participant assent is required.

DEFINITIONS

Minimal risk: For the purposes of Research Ethics Review, ‘minimal risk’ research is defined by the TCPS as research in which the probability and magnitude of possible harms implied by participation in the research is no greater than those encountered by participants in those aspects of their everyday life that relate to the research”

Human Participants Review Committee (HPRC): York University’s Research Ethics Board, see the Senate Policy, [Research Involving Human Participants](#) for the Ethical Review of Research Involving Human Participants for further information on the formation and composition of REBs.

Delegated Ethics Review Committee: this is the ethics review committee (Departmental or Faculty/College/School level) that reviews all undergraduate and graduate course related research (including MRPS) within its purview

Principal Investigator: The person conducting the research and who submits the ethics protocol for review.

“Research” – Research activities that are subject to review includes, but is not limited to surveys, questionnaires, interviews and participant observation. It also includes secondary data analysis, or the review and analysis of data collected originally for another purpose. Please contact the Office of Research Ethics for clarification as to whether your research is subject to review.

¹ Note this speaks to student research only, faculty members are directed to [YULINK](#) for information on the ethics review process for faculty led research

WHICH RESEARCH ETHICS REVIEW COMMITTEE IS APPROPRIATE FOR YOUR RESEARCH?

Research involving human participants conducted by students in a graduate or undergraduate course, for an undergraduate thesis or project or for a graduate Major Research Paper (MRP) should be reviewed by the relevant unit level Delegated Ethics Review Committee. Please see the attached link to find the contact for the Delegated Ethics Review Committee for your program.

NOTE: Only minimal risk research may be reviewed by the Delegated Ethics Review Committee. If the proposed research is more than minimal risk, involves Aboriginal/Indigenous peoples and/or clinical trial research it must be reviewed by the HPRC. Please contact the Office of Research Ethics (ore@yorku.ca) for more information.

WHAT ETHICS PROTOCOL IS APPROPRIATE FOR YOUR RESEARCH?

For student research that is subject to review by a Delegated Ethics Review Committee, there are different protocol forms depending on the nature of the research and/or status of the researcher. Please review the following descriptions to determine which is the appropriate research ethics protocol for your research

1. Generic Protocol: Course Related Research Involving Human Participants

In those cases where students (graduate or undergraduate) in a given course are undertaking research that is subject to review, the Course Director must determine if all the students could follow the same protocol for interacting with human participants (with, if necessary, minor modifications to the informed consent form). If so, the Course Director should submit a single “generic protocol” for a “generic review”, the “[Generic Protocol: Course Related Research Involving Human Participants](#)”. Most all course-related research can be reviewed using a generic protocol. NOTE: While students will be conducting research as per the approved protocol, **only Course Directors should complete this form.**

2. Individualized Protocol: Course Related Research Involving Human Participants

For course-related research that does not meet the above conditions, i.e., students who are conducting individual projects or research with different methodologies, participant groups, etc., students must fill out [Individualized Research Ethics Protocol – Course Related Research](#), and submit the protocol for review and approval by the relevant unit level Delegated Ethics Review Committee.

3. MRP Protocol; Research Involving Human Participants ?

Graduate students undertaking research involving human participants for the purpose of research for a Major Research Paper, and said research is minimal risk and does not involve either Aboriginal/Indigenous peoples or Clinical Trials, should complete the [MRP Research Ethics Protocol form](#).

WHAT ARE THE RESPONSIBILITIES OF COURSE DIRECTORS?

Course Directors have certain responsibilities when students are conducting research involving human participants as part of their course requirements. These responsibilities are outlined in the [Course Director Responsibilities: Course Related Research Involving Human Participants](#)

WHAT ARE THE RESPONSIBILITIES OF STUDENT RESEARCHERS?

Students, conducting research involving human participants must be aware that they are assuming several responsibilities and are required to ensure that they are compliant with relevant ethics guidelines. All student researchers are required to review their responsibilities as outlined in the [Student Researcher Responsibilities: Course Related Research Involving Human Participants \(including MRPs\)](#) document prior to commencing any research activities involving human participants.