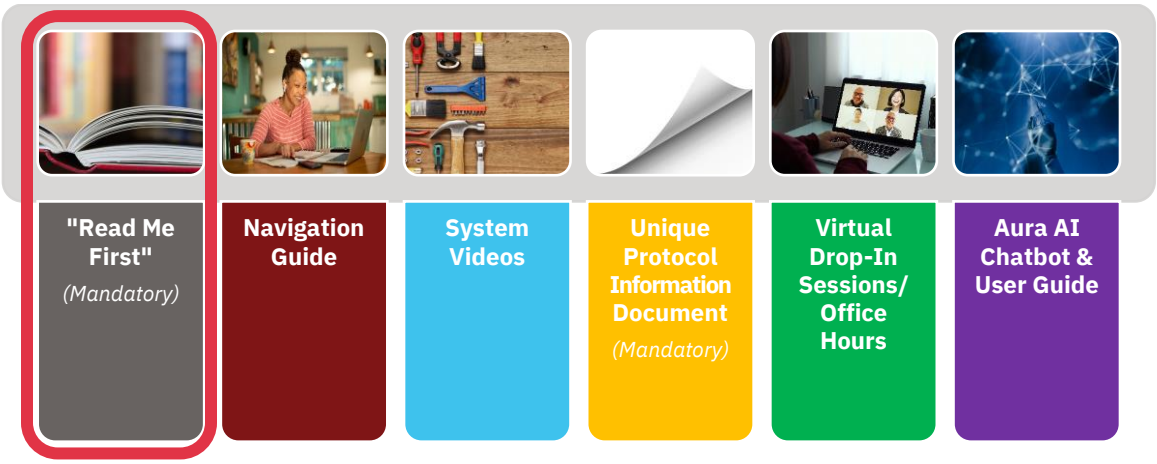
YU Ethics Review Learning

Welcome to the first segment of your YU Ethics Review learning!

This document is the first element of your YU Ethics Review Learning program that is designed to help give you context for the YU Ethics Review System and help you understand the YU Ethics Review system and show you how to effectively navigate and use it.



The six learning components in the diagram above work together to help reinforce your learning and ensure you are successful in your ethics application. They also provide flexibility; you can choose the component(s) that work best for you, however, this document – "Read Me First" and the Unique Protocol Information Document, are necessary for you to learn how to effectively use the YU Ethics Review System.

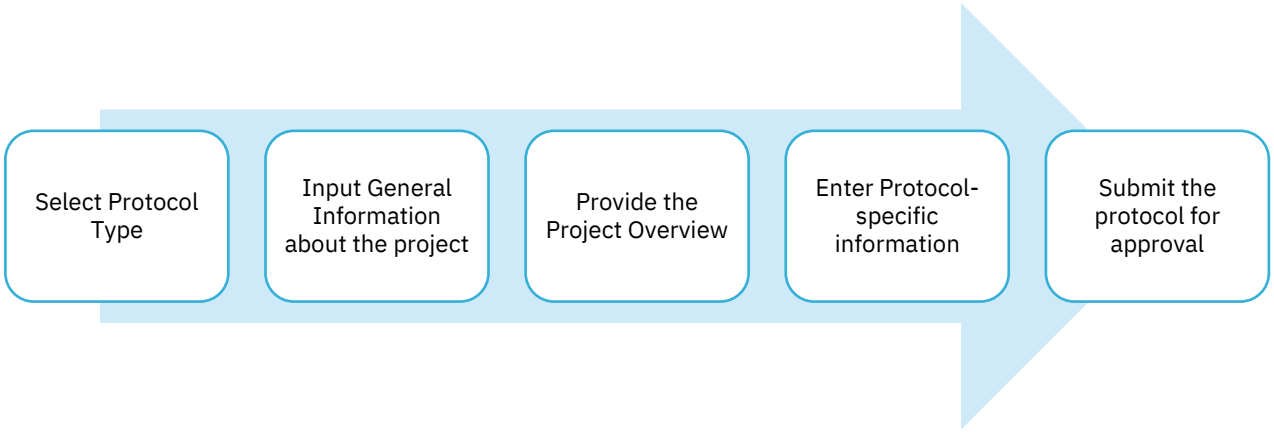
Let's start you on your way.

What is the YU Ethics Review System

The YU Ethics Review system is a cornerstone of York University's commitment to research ethics and regulatory compliance. The system is designed to uphold the highest standards of honesty, accountability, transparency, and fairness in the creation and dissemination of knowledge. By fostering a culture of integrity, the system enhances both the quality and impact of research across the university. It ensures that faculty, staff, and students adhere to established ethical standards and current regulatory policies, reinforcing a shared responsibility for ethical scholarship.

In addition, the YU Ethics Review system streamlines the management of ethics applications and workflows, enabling timely and accurate responses, while strengthening collaboration and trust within the York research community.

Here is a high-level overview of the steps you will follow as you work through the YU Ethics Review system:



How does the YU Ethics Review System Work?

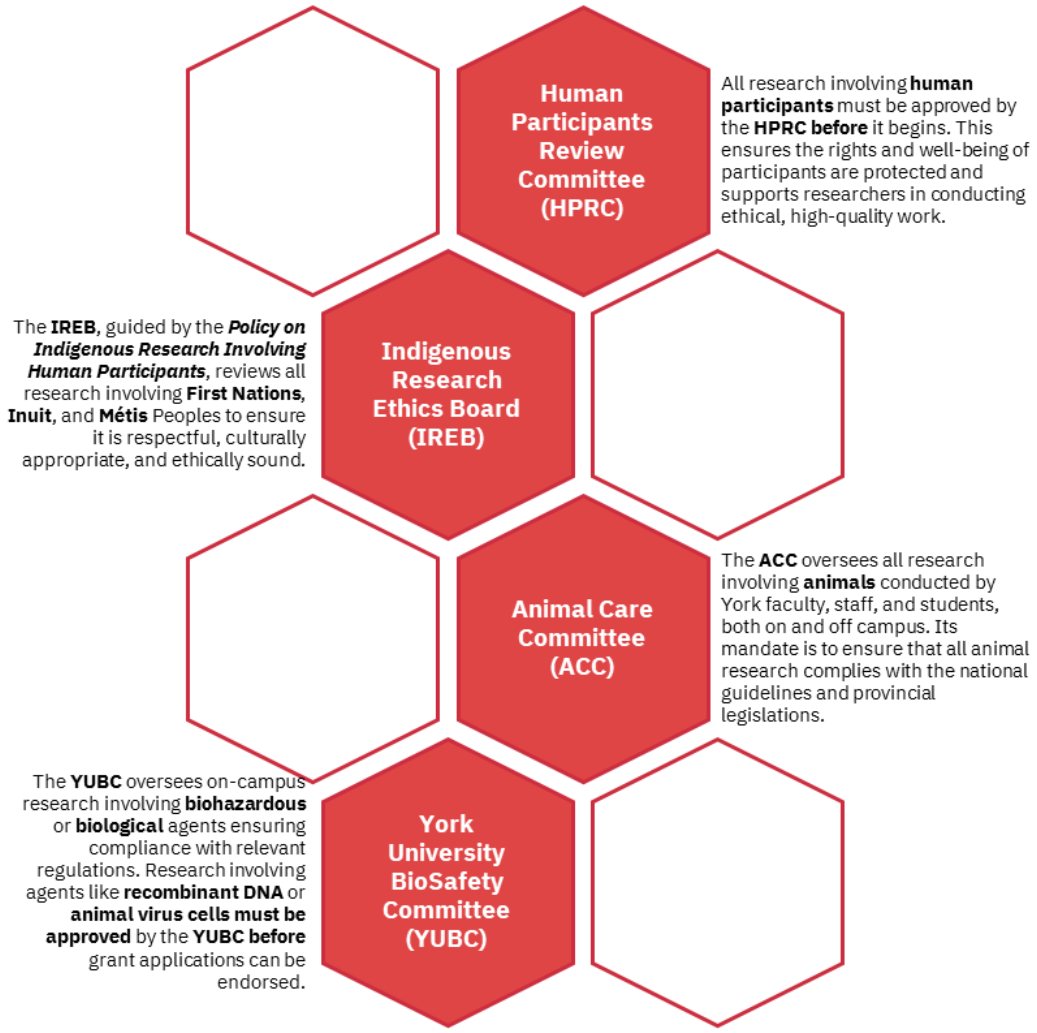
York University requires that all research involving human participants, animals, biological agents or biohazardous materials receive ethics approval from the appropriate ethics and/or compliance committee **before** any research activities begin.

The YU Ethics Review System is a cloud-based platform that supports the submission, review, and approval of research protocols—including renewals and amendments. It is designed to cover all human, animal, and biosafety protocols. The system automates the review process by generating ethics forms via web interfaces that include several template types, including: Protocol submissions, Amendments, Renewals and Close Requests.

The system also eliminates excessive review-related emails, generates ethics forms through web interfaces and ensures records are maintained within one system, thus improving records management and shortening the time required for the whole ethics review process.

The Ethics Review Structure

The University maintains four ethics review committees with institution-wide mandates that support the completion of the review process:



These committees are responsible for the independent, multidisciplinary review and approval of all research involving humans, animals, and biological agents/biohazardous materials. Each committee operates as a subcommittee of the Senate's Academic Policy, Planning and Research Committee (APPRC), and reports to Senate through APPRC for information purposes.

The image, below, illustrates how these committees interact with the other individuals included in the review process.

Ethics and/or compliance approval is **mandatory** for all research involving human participants, animals, or biohazardous materials/agents regardless of whether the research is funded or unfunded. This requirement also applies to pilot studies and preliminary investigations.

Access to research funds will **not be granted** until the necessary approvals are in place.

What types of activities require an ethics review?

As a Researcher, there are two sets of questions you need to ask yourself to determine if your research requires an ethics review at York.

General Questions	York-Specific Questions
Does your project involve collecting input and/or information from people for research purposes? Examples: interviews, focus groups, surveys (in person, online, by phone, video conferencing)	Is your work conducted by university faculty, staff or students?
Does your project involve the use of biological materials?	Is your research performed on the premises of the University?
Did the sample you are using come from a human participant?	Is your work performed with or involving the use of facilities or equipment belonging to the University
Does your project involve using data about people previously collected by someone else (e.g., student or commercial records)?	Does your research involve University students, staff or faculty?
Does your project involve the collection or use of health information?	Does your work satisfy a requirement imposed by the University for a degree program or for completion of a course of study?
Does your project involve animals?	Is your research conducted by or under the direction of any employee or agent of the University in connection with their institutional responsibilities?
Are you collaborating with someone who is doing any of the above?	

- If you answered ‘yes’ to any of the questions above your research requires ethics review and approval.
- If you're unsure whether your research requires ethics review or which ethics body is responsible for the review and approval, please contact the Office of Research Ethics (ORE) at ore@yorku.ca for further assistance.

Next Steps

Now that you're familiar with the overall YU Ethics Review system, here are the next steps to complete your learning journey:

1. Access the Navigation Guide, System Videos and Unique Protocol Information documents available on the Research Ethics Portal Website.
2. Join one of the scheduled **Virtual Drop-In Sessions/ORE Office hours** sessions to ask any questions not directly answered by the training resources provided. For dates, times, and links to join, please visit the ORE website.
3. **COMING SOON:** Access the **Aura Chatbot Link** as your learning companion as you complete your first protocol submission in the YU Ethics Review System.