

Date: Wednesday, October 1, 2025 at 10:08 AM

Subject: Growing Hostility and Threats Against Research Institutions and Researchers / Hostilité croissante et menaces envers les institutions de recherche et les chercheurs Ref:020100174393

Dear Colleagues,

We have been notified by the Public Health Agency of Canada of growing hostility and threats directed toward researchers, particularly those working in public health, vaccine-related fields, and science communication.

We recognize how unsettling and discouraging it can be to face online harassment, misinformation, or even direct threats. The University strenuously objects to any such forms of scholarship harassment, which not only have the intent of impeding the exercise of academic freedom in research but can also have an impact on researcher well being. York University is resolute in its commitment to uphold academic freedom, and to support our research community.

If you or a member of your team ever experience a threat, any form of scholarship harassment, or believe you are likely to be targeted here are some steps you can take and available supports:

- Reach out right away to Campus Security at 416-736-5333 so they can assess and respond appropriately. If there is any immediate risk to people or property, please call 911.
- Let your Faculty, UIT, Employee Well-Being, or other internal supports know so we can work together on the best path forward. You'll also find resources on the [[Scholarship Harassment website](#)].
- Contact York [Information Security](#) regarding any online cyberbullying or harassment, or proactively protecting your online profile. Keep a record of any concerning communication (screenshots, emails, recordings), documenting it helps ensure it can be addressed.
- If your work involves biosafety/biosecurity, you may also reach out to Jay Majithia ([jaymajithi@yorku.ca](mailto:jaymajithi@yorku.ca)), Biosafety Officer or Alison Collins-Mrakas, Director, Office of Research ethics ([acollins@yorku.ca](mailto:acollins@yorku.ca)) for assistance or clarity with respect to potential notification requirements to the Public Health Agency of Canada (PHAC).

Please review your team's biosecurity risk assessments and plans to make sure they include clear steps for reporting threats and supporting one another. It may be helpful to establish a central place to log and track any incidents.

Please circulate this email accordingly.

Thank you for the vital work you do, and for the strength and resilience you bring to our community.

Best

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