

# HR Research Methods

4420, 3.0 and Section M  
2026/Winter

## Course Information

Course Instructor: Ikram Muhammad  
E-mail: ikramm@yorku.ca  
Phone: N/A  
Office Hours & Location: By Appointment

Course Time & Days: Asynchronous  
Class Location: Online  
Course eClass site: N/A

## Land Acknowledgment

York University recognizes that many Indigenous Nations have longstanding relationships with the territories upon which York University campuses are located that precede the establishment of York University. York University acknowledges its presence on the traditional territory of many Indigenous Nations. The area known as Tkaronto has been care taken by the Anishinabek Nation, the Haudenosaunee Confederacy, and the Huron-Wendat. It is now home to many First Nation, Inuit, and Métis communities. We acknowledge the current treaty holders, the Mississaugas of the Credit First Nation. This territory is subject of the Dish with One Spoon Wampum Belt Covenant, an agreement to peaceably share and care for the Great Lakes region ([LA&PS Land Acknowledgement](#)).

## Course Overview

## Course Description

This course is set to prepare students to conduct business research, particularly within the context of the Human Resources Management (HRM) function in the workplace. The emphasis is placed on how to design research to develop, measure and evaluate HRM programs. The design and implementation of HRM policies, practices and systems should be based on sound evidence and research. This course will provide students with the knowledge and tools they will need to not only assess and critique research but also evaluate human resource systems effectiveness. Three major elements of research methods are covered: (1) research designs (such as survey, experimental and qualitative), (2) the development and measurement of variables, and (3) the various approaches for evaluating research and HRM effectiveness. These elements of research are presented within the context of seminal and current research topics.

## Pre-Requisites:

Students are personally responsible to ensure that they have the prerequisites as stated in the course outline or in the course calendar. Students who do not have the prerequisites are at risk of being dropped from the course at any time during the course. The department will not be responsible for refunds resulting from students being dropped from a course due to a lack of appropriate prerequisites.

## Course Learning Objectives

By the end of this course, students will be able to:

- Understand the essence and value of research-based human resource management approach.
- Visualize the steps involved in the research process.
- Develop testable research hypotheses.
- Describe and discuss the major research designs used in human resource research.
- Understand the ethical issues involved in conducting human resource research.
- Understand and articulate the importance of reliability and validity in conducting human resource research.
- Describe the different options for measuring individual, group and organizational-level variables in human resource research.
- Design research to develop, measure and evaluate HRM programs.
- Understand and explain how to write a research proposal

## Course Organization

Mid-Term Exam:	<b>30%</b>	(Week of Feb 23 <sup>rd</sup> , 2026)
Individual Research Proposal:	<b>Draft 20%</b>	(Due Feb 23 <sup>rd</sup> , 2026, by 11:59pm)
	<b>Final 20%</b>	(Due April 6 <sup>th</sup> , 2026, by 11:59pm)
Final Exam:	<b>30%</b>	(During the Final Examination Period)

## Instructor Office Hours and Communication Guidelines

The office hours are by appointment only.

It is always challenging to maintain efficient and effective communication between the instructor and students. Please take a note of the following important communication policies for the course.

- If you have any questions on course policies, requirements, contents, etc., you could send an **email** directly to [ikramm@yorku.ca](mailto:ikramm@yorku.ca). I will try to respond to your questions within 24-48 hours.
- If you have questions that may be of interest to the rest of the class, you could post them using **Open Forum** on the eClass course site so that other students can benefit from the questions and answers.

## Required Course Materials

Wilson, J. (2022). Understanding Research for Business Students: A Complete Student's Guide. SAGE: London

## Technical Requirements

Several platforms will be used in this course (e.g., eClass, Zoom, etc.) where students will interact with course materials, the course director/TA, as well as with each other.

Need technical help? Check out the following helpful links for information resources and support:

- [Student Guide to eClass](#)
- [Zoom@YorkU Best Practices](#)
- [Zoom@YorkU User Reference Guide](#)
- [eLearning Getting Started](#) (LA&PS eServices)
- [Student Guide to Remote and Online Learning](#)

To determine Internet connection and speed, there are online tests, such as [Speedtest](#), that can be run. If you need technical assistance, please consult the [University Information Technology \(UIT\) Student Services](#) webpage or write to [askit@yorku.ca](mailto:askit@yorku.ca).

## Course Evaluations

### Course Evaluation Chart

Assessment	Due Date	Weight %
Midterm	Week of Feb 23 <sup>rd</sup> , 2026	30%
Individual Research Proposal	Draft Proposal (20%): Feb 23 <sup>rd</sup> , 2026, by 11:59pm Final Proposal (20%): April 6 <sup>th</sup> , 2026, by 11:59pm	40%
Final Exam	Final Examination Period	30%
		<b>100%</b>

## Assessment Descriptions

### Midterm: 30%

A mid-term exam will be held during the eight week of the course. The format is still to be determined and will be posted on the class site. There is no alternative date/time to write the midterm exam.

### **Individual Research Proposal: Draft (20%) and Final (20%) – Total 40%**

The objective of this assignment is to develop a research proposal based on an area of human resource management that you find of interest. Two outputs will need to be submitted: a draft research proposal due mid-way through the course, and the final research proposal due on the last day of class. It is recommended that students start working on the proposal well ahead of the deadline and seek input from the Course Director early in the process.

In summary, the research proposal will identify a research question; include a literature search to support the development of hypotheses and a theoretical framework; identify the research design that will be used to address the research question(s) and hypotheses (e.g. survey, experiment, qualitative methods, and/or meta-analysis); describe the methods, measures and analyses that could be used to test the hypotheses; briefly discuss some of the possible results that could be expected if the research were to be conducted (e.g. examples from the literature of similar studies could be referred to in this section) and how you would know if they hypotheses were supported; and the final section will be a discussion and conclusion that discuss the implications of the study for Human Resource practitioners.

The writing in the research proposals should be professional and formal. The style should be clear and concise, with minimum use of quoted material. Your draft research proposal paper should be two pages double-spaced, in 12-point font with 1-inch margins, while the final research proposal paper should be between 1800 and 2000 words, double-spaced, in 12-point font with 1-inch margins (producing a paper between 7 and 8 pages in length). Please include a title page and list of references (not included in the word count).

American Psychological Association (APA) formatting should be used for the paper, and references should be cited in APA style. All content that is not your own idea or information should be referenced appropriately. You must cite at least eight (8) references and include them in your list of references in your final proposal. All written work will be marked on style, grammar, clarity, and organization, as well as content and analysis (i.e. the extent and quality of your research, analysis, and evaluation). Remember to review your paper before submission to check for clarity and any technical mistakes.

The following is a rough outline that may be used as a guide for the project:

Brief literature review: 2-4 pages

Description of research idea and its importance: 2-4 pages

Description of research methods and data analysis proposed: 2-4 pages

Description of conclusions which may be drawn from proposed study: 1-2 pages

## **Final Exam: 30%**

The final exam covers topics studied during the course, such as the lectures, assigned readings, and any other material as indicated by the Course Director. The final exam will be cumulative and could consist of a variety of questions including multiple-choice, true/false, short-answer, essay questions and case studies designed to test the student's ability to apply the course concepts to resolve research problems. The date, time, and format will be announced closer to the exam date. More details will follow as the semester progresses. In preparation for the exam, it is important that you review the required content to stay on top of the course material. It is your responsibility to keep up with the pace of this course and seek guidance from the Course Director on issues that are not clear.

## **How to Submit Assessments**

All assessments must be submitted in the submission folder of the course on e-class.

## **Late Work Policy**

It is the responsibility of the student to submit academic grade work on time, apart from extenuating circumstances, the policy on Academic Standards, Grades, and Conduct of Examination will be followed.

## **Missed Assessments, Tests and Exams**

Exams results will determine students' grades. It is expected that all students will write the mid-term and final exam on the scheduled day, time, and location.

Students who choose to enroll in this course are personally responsible for ensuring that they can write the examination during the date/time specified by York University, and for ensuring that discretionary activities such as vacations do not conflict with examination dates and the academic requirements of this course. If the final examination is missed, a deferred exam can be written only when supporting medical documentation (accompanied by a signed physician's note) is provided to the School of HRM. Deferred final exams are common across all sections of HRM 4420, i.e., not just for the internet version of the course, and are cumulative in nature. If a student does not write the final exam and is not able to provide acceptable medical documentation for the missed exam, she/he will need to petition for a deferral to the faculty council.

## **How to Use Citations in this Course**

Resources to help with citations:

- [I need to cite and reference](#), Learning Commons
- [Drop-in Research Support](#), York U Libraries
- [Writing Centre](#)
- [Student Papers & Academic Research Kit \(SPARK\)](#)

## Grading

The grading scheme for this course confirms to the 9-point system used in undergraduate programs at York University. For a full description of the York grading system, visit the York University [Academic Calendar](#).

Grade	Grade Point	Percent Range	Description
A+	9	90–100	Exceptional
A	8	80–89	Excellent
B+	7	75–79	Very Good
B	6	70–74	Good
C+	5	65–69	Competent
C	4	60–64	Fairly Competent
D+	3	55–59	Passing
D	2	50–54	Marginally Passing
E	1	40–49	Marginally Failing
F	0	0–39	Failing

## Course Schedule

### Important Dates

Explore York University's [Registrar's Office](#) to find a list of important dates, such as class start/end dates, drop deadlines, holidays and more.

### Weekly Course Schedule

Week	Topic	Readings and Activities	Assessment Due Dates	Textbook Chapters
Week 1 Jan 5	Course overview. Introduction to research methods in the HRM context.	Chapter 1 (Intro) Chapter 7 (Ethics)		Chapter 1/7

Week	Topic	Readings and Activities	Assessment Due Dates	Textbook Chapters
	Ethics in Business Research.			
<b>Week 2</b> <b>Jan 12</b>	Choosing your research direction. Developing your research proposal.	Chapter 2 (Research Direction) Chapter 3 (Research Proposal)		Chapter 2/3
<b>Week 3</b> <b>Jan 19</b>	Research methods and design. Validity and reliability in qualitative and quantitative research.	Chapter 5 (Research Methods) Chapter 6 (Research Types, pp. 135-142 & 158-163)		Chapter 5/6
<b>Week 4</b> <b>Jan 26</b>	Qualitative research designs. Case study and action research.	Chapter 6 (Case study and Action research, pp. 143-151)		Chapter 6
<b>Week 5</b> <b>Feb 2</b>	Observations, interviews and focus groups.	Chapter 12 (Interviews and Focus Groups) Chapter 13 (Observations)		Chapter 12/13
<b>Week 6</b> <b>Feb 9</b>	Quantitative research designs. Survey, experimental and quasi-experimental research.	Chapter 14 (Questionnaires) Chapter 6 (Experimental Design, pp. 152-158)		Chapter 14/6
<b>Week 7</b> <b>Feb 16</b>	<b>WINTER READING WEEK (Feb 14 – Feb 20)</b>			
<b>Week 8</b> <b>Feb 23</b>	<b>MIDTERM WEEK (Date/Time/Format TBD)</b> <b>DRAFT Research Proposal Due on Feb 23<sup>rd</sup></b>			

Week	Topic	Readings and Activities	Assessment Due Dates	Textbook Chapters
Week 9 March 2	Secondary data research and meta-analysis.	Chapter 10 (Secondary Data) Chapter 11 (Social Media)		Chapter 10/11
Week 10 March 9	Writing-up your research proposal.	Chapter 18 (Dissemination)		Chapter 18
Week 11 March 16	Qualitative analysis	Chapter 15 (Qual Analysis)		Chapter 15
Week 12 March 23	Quantitative analysis	Chapter 9 (Sampling) Chapter 16 (Quant Analysis)		Chapter 9/16
Week 13 March 30	Review. Q&A Session			
Week 14 April 6	<b>Individual Research Proposal due by 11:59PM</b>			

## Potential Modifications to the Course

The Course Director and the University reserve the right to modify elements of the course during the term. The University may change the dates and deadlines for any or all courses in extreme circumstances. If either type of modification becomes necessary, reasonable notice and communication with the students will be given with explanation and the opportunity to comment on changes. It is the responsibility of the student to check their York email and course websites weekly during the term and to note any changes.

## Course Policies

Please review the course policies in this section. All students are expected to familiarize themselves with the following information:

- [Student Rights & Responsibilities](#)
- [Academic Accommodation for Students with Disabilities](#)



## Academic Integrity and Conduct

Academic integrity is a fundamental and important value of York University. To maintain a fair and honest learning environment, you are responsible for understanding and upholding academic integrity in all courses and academic activities. You are encouraged to connect with reliable [on-campus resources](#) that support your coursework and academic honesty. To better understand the serious consequences of breaching academic honesty policies, familiarize yourself with the [Senate Policy on Academic Conduct](#). You can learn more about upholding academic integrity in your courses by exploring [SPARK: Academic Integrity Module](#), [LA&PS Academic Honesty](#) and [Academic Integrity for Students](#).

## Generative Artificial Intelligence (GenAI)

Students are not permitted to use generative artificial intelligence (AI) in this course. Submitting any work created (in whole or part) through the use of generative AI tools will be considered a violation of York University's [Senate Policy on Academic Conduct](#). Using AI apps such as Microsoft Copilot, ChatGPT, DALL-E, translation software among others to complete academic work **without your instructor's knowledge or permission**, is considered a breach under York's Academic Conduct Policy. For more information, please review [AI Technology & Academic Integrity: Information for Students](#).

If you're not sure whether using an AI app for your academic work is acceptable, it is recommended that you:

- Carefully review the guidelines for your assessments
- Check for any messages from your instructor on eClass
- Ask your instructor or TA if they are permitting the use of these tools

## Turnitin

To promote academic integrity in this course, you will normally be required to submit your written assignments to Turnitin (on the course's eClass site) for a review of textual similarities and the detection of possible plagiarism. In doing so, you are allowing your material to be included as source documents in the Turnitin.com reference database, where they will be used only for the purpose of detecting plagiarism. The terms that apply to the University's use of the Turnitin service are described on the [Turnitin.com website](#). York students may opt out of using Turnitin. If you wish to opt out, you should contact your instructor as soon as possible.

## Accessibility

York University is committed to creating a learning environment which provides equal opportunity to all members of its community. If you anticipate or experience any barriers to learning in this course, please discuss your concerns with your instructor as early as possible. For students with disabilities, contact [Student Accessibility Services](#) to coordinate academic accommodations and services. Accommodations will be communicated to Course Directors through a Letter of Accommodation (LOA). Accommodations for tests/exams normally require

three (3) weeks (or 21 days) before the scheduled test/exam to arrange. To learn more, please visit [Accommodated Exam/Test Scheduling](#).

### **Religious Observance Accommodation**

York University is committed to respecting the religious beliefs and practices of all members of the community and making reasonable and appropriate [accommodations to adherents for observances of days of religious significance](#). Should any of the dates specified in this syllabus for course assignments, tests, or deadlines conflict with a date of religious significance, please contact the instructor not less than two (2) weeks (or 14 days) prior to the date for which accommodation is sought. If the requested accommodation is for an exam or falls within the formal examination periods, you must complete and submit a [Religious Accommodation Agreement \(PDF\)](#) at least three (3) weeks (or 21 days) before the start of the exam period.

### **Academic Consideration for Missed Course Work**

This policy applies to course assessments worth 20% or less of your overall course grade and does not apply to exams held during the final examination period. Students may self-declare two (2) 7-day consideration periods each 12-week term and one (1) 7-day consideration period per six-week term. An Attending Physician's Statement (APS) is not required for these self-declared absences. However, an instructor may request a signed APS for the final examination period, coursework worth more than 20% of the course grade and missed work outside of the self-declared academic consideration period(s).

Students can submit their self-declaration(s) for academic consideration [using eClass](#). Students are then responsible for contacting the instructor no later than two (2) business days after the end of the consideration period(s) to arrange details of any accommodation for missed coursework. If you do not do this, you may get a zero (0) on the missed work. Where courses have built-in accommodations already established, the instructor may decline providing additional accommodations under this policy. For further details, please review the [Policy on Academic Consideration for Missed Course Work](#).

### **Final Examination Identification Policy**

For final exams in this course, you must present a valid York University official photo identification card ([YU-card](#)) to verify your identity. Also, you will need to sign the exam's attendance roster. Learn more about preparing for your exams by reviewing York's Policies on [Conduct of Examinations](#) as well as the Registrar's Office [Examination Tip Sheet](#).

### **Intellectual Property**

Course materials are designed for use as part of this particular course at York University and are the intellectual property of the instructor unless otherwise stated. Third-party copyrighted materials (such as book chapters, journal articles, music, videos, etc.) have either been licensed for use in this course or fall under an exception or limitation in Canadian copyright law. Students may not publish, post on an Internet site, sell, or otherwise distribute any course

materials or work without the instructor's express permission. Course materials should only be used by students enrolled in this course.

Copying this material for distribution (e.g., uploading material to a commercial third-party website) may lead to a charge of misconduct according to York's [Code of Student Rights and Responsibilities](#), the [Senate Policy on Academic Conduct](#), and/or legal consequences for copyright violations.

## **Student Support and Resources**

York University offers a wide range of student supports resources and services, including everything from writing workshops and peer mentorship to wellness support and career guidance. Explore the links below to access these on-campus resources:

- [Academic Advising](#) is available to provide students support and guidance in making academic decisions and goals.
- [Student Accessibility Services](#) are available for support and accessibility accommodation when required.
- [Student Counselling, Health & Wellbeing](#) offers workshops, resources and counselling to support your personal wellness and academic success.
- [Peer-Assisted Study Sessions \(PASS\) Program](#) provides free study sessions where students collaborate and enhance their understanding of course content in select courses.
- [Student Numeracy Assistance Centre at Keele \(SNACK\)](#) supports students in courses involving math, statistics, coding and Excel.
- [The Writing Centre](#) provides multiple avenues of writing-based support including drop-in sessions, one-to-one appointments, a Multilingual Studio and an Accessibility Specialist.
- [Centre for Indigenous Student Services](#) offers a community space with academic, spiritual, cultural and physical support, including writing and learning skills programs.
- [ESL Open Learning Centre \(OLC\)](#) supports students with building proficiency in reading, writing and speaking English.
- [Learning Skills Services](#) offers workshops, resources and tips on learning-related topics like time management, note-taking, studying and exam prep.
- [Learning Commons](#) links to supports for writing, learning skills, career development, exam preparation and other learning-related resources.
- [Roadmap to Student Success](#) is a collection of timely and targeted resources to help students achieve academic, personal and professional success at different stages of their university journey.
- [Office of Student Community Relations \(OSCR\)](#) is responsible for administering the [Code of Student Rights & Responsibilities](#) and provides critical incident and conflict resolution support.

- [Peer Mentorship](#) helps students transition through their first year by connecting them with upper-year students. The mentors can help students find supports and resources. They also lead a community hub on campus.
- [goSAFE](#) is staffed by York students and can accompany York community members to and from any on-campus location, such as the Village Shuttle pick-up hub, parking lots, bus stops or residences.

For a full list of academic, wellness and campus resources visit [Student Support & Resources](#).