

Yorkshire
Universities

2022–23 Annual
Report Summary

2022

2023

Chair's Introduction



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At the end of my first year as Chair of Yorkshire Universities (YU), I am delighted to introduce the Executive Summary of the 2022-23 Annual Report. Over the past year, YU has continued to strengthen its role and its impact in the 'place' agenda driven by increased collaboration among our members and with external partners within the region.

This year, we began to deliver our 2022-25 Strategy, which we unveiled on August 1, 2022 – Yorkshire Day. At the centre of the Strategy are four strategic priorities: promoting the value of higher education to society, culture, and the economy; championing Yorkshire knowledge and skills; championing civic leadership in Yorkshire; and brokering and leading partnerships. If the country, including Yorkshire, is to become more productive, more prosperous, more inclusive, and more sustainable, universities and the higher education sector overall, have a critical role to play. Our approach is now being reflected in Universities UK's new policy priority to promote universities as drivers of economic growth.

Building on the Graduate Employment and Employability report published in May 2022, we've initiated a program to implement its recommendations. The Graduate Implementation Group, led by Professor Tim Thornton, Deputy Vice-Chancellor at the University of Huddersfield, has this year, collaborated with Central and Local Government, and sectors, such as Financial and Professional Business Services, to identify how we can better match students and graduates in the region to new and emergent job opportunities.

A unified approach amongst YU member institutions to nurturing talent, and consolidating diverse, but complementary, research, innovation and knowledge exchanges assets and capabilities, has attracted significant public and private investments in key industrial sectors. Our partnership with Space Hub Yorkshire (SHY), for instance, in part, led to increased funding from the UK Space Agency within the region and the existence of SHY has persuaded Mayoral Combined Authorities and Local Enterprise Partnerships to adopt a united approach to targeting inward investment and trade in the Space sector.

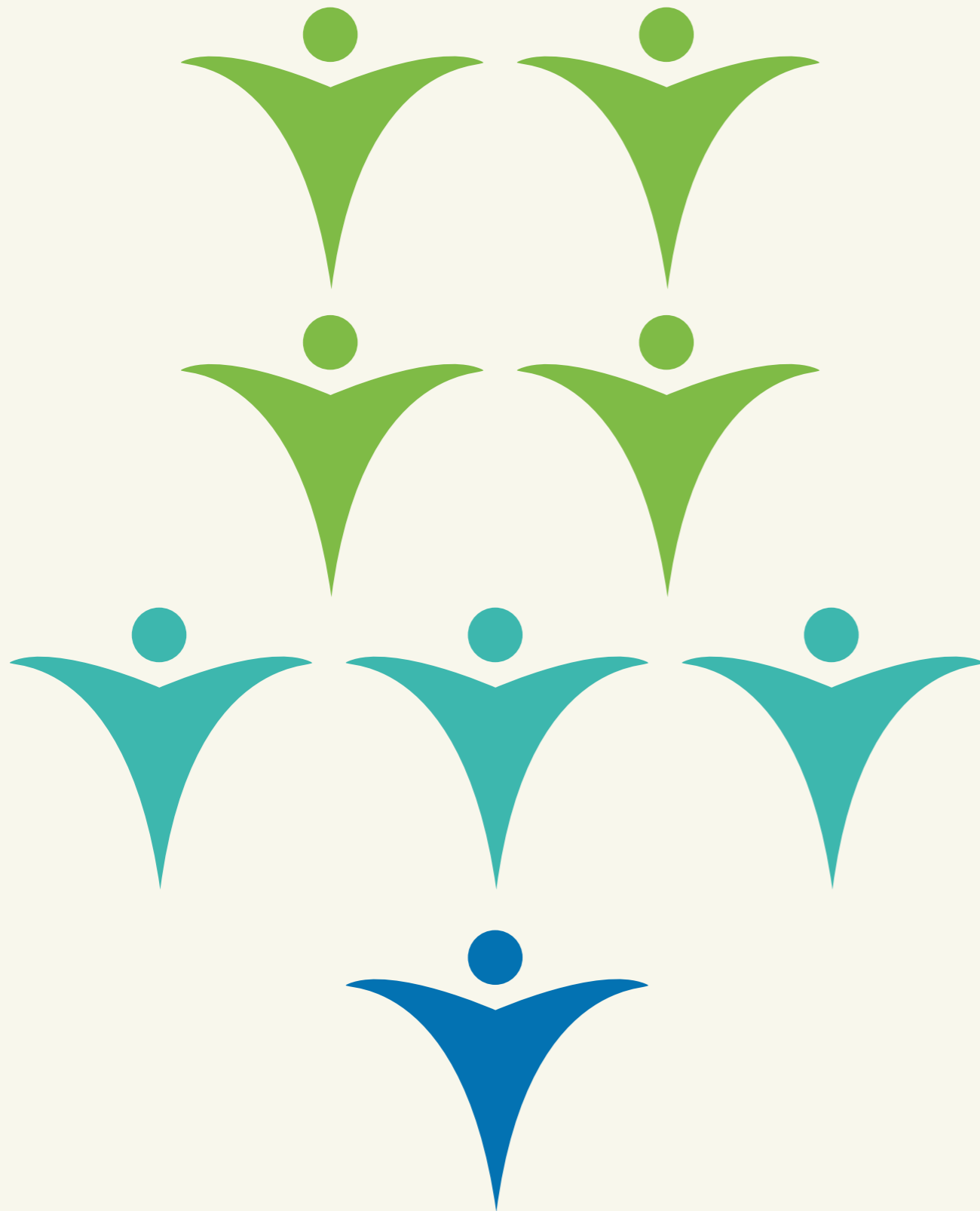
The Memorandum of Understanding (MOU) with Yorkshire & Humber Councils (YHC), signed in July 2021, serves as a framework to achieve our strategic objectives and amplify our voice in the region. A prime example of YU's joint work with YHC is the Research England-funded project, Yorkshire and Humber Policy Engagement (Y-PERN) which is creating a new region-wide research policy engagement infrastructure to make academic research more impactful for policymakers and communities. This will enable academic research, analysis and evidence undertaken by academics from YU member institutions to have real-time, practical value for policymakers and communities in Yorkshire.

The higher education sector, like others, faces financial challenges due to the increasing cost of living affecting students, staff, and institutions. Similarly, local communities, businesses, and partners in the region are encountering budget constraints, necessitating tough decisions. These circumstances worsen existing inequalities, underscoring the need for intensified collaboration to address immediate and long-term systemic issues.

This year, Professor Sir Chris Husbands, Vice-Chancellor of Sheffield Hallam University, announced his retirement, effective December 2023. Chris has been a highly influential leader in the sector, lending his voice to higher education on a national and regional level. On behalf of the Board, we extend our gratitude to Chris for his valuable contributions to YU, and we wish him all the best in his future endeavours.

I am also grateful to Dr Peter O'Brien, and his team, for their excellent work in leading the YU executive operation, and for their advice and support to me in my first year as Chair. This Executive Summary illustrates YU's resilience and commitment to strengthening the role of universities in regional development. I look forward to the partnership achieving even greater success in the coming year.

— Professor Karen Bryan OBE
Vice-Chancellor,
York St John University



Structure of the YU Executive Team

As of 31 July 2023, the YU core Executive Team comprised:

4
employees

- Dr Peter O'Brien, Executive Director (also Company Secretary and Data Officer).
- Marina Tapley, Policy and Research Officer
- Emma Norfolk, Communications and Projects Officer
- Monika Antal, Assistant Director.

3
contractors

- Executive Assistant: Jennifer Gibbard (JGVA)
- Accountant and payroll: Mark Hill (Living Lightly Ltd.)
- An Associate who supports policy development and implementing strategic and operational plans: Steph Morris (Steph Morris Consulting).

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secondment

- Dr Richard Whittle, Capabilities in Academic Policy Engagement (CAPE) Regional Development Fellow, was seconded to YU to work with YU and the Place-based Economic Recovery Network (PERN) and the development of its successor programme, the Yorkshire Policy Engagement and Research Network (Y-PERN) between 1 July 2021 and 1 November 2022.

Governance & Structure

Founded in 1987, Yorkshire Universities (YU) is a charity and a company limited by guarantee. Its governing documents are the Articles of Association, last amended on 2 July 2020, which can be accessed on the YU website under the Board and Governance page.

YU represents eleven universities and one specialist higher education institution: the universities of Bradford, Huddersfield, Hull, Leeds, Leeds Arts, Leeds Beckett, Leeds Trinity, Sheffield, Sheffield Hallam, York, and York St John, together with Leeds Conservatoire. The vice-chancellors and principals of these institutions are the members of the company, forming its board of directors. The Board meets three times a year, regularly monitoring the organisation's performance, and setting the strategic priorities for YU.

Board of Trustees



Professor Simone Wonnacott
Vice-Chancellor
Leeds Arts University



Professor Peter Slee
Vice-Chancellor
Leeds Beckett University



Professor Joe Wilson
Principal
Leeds Conservatoire



Professor Charles Egbu
Vice-Chancellor
Leeds Trinity University



Professor Sir Chris Husbands
Vice-Chancellor
Sheffield Hallam University



Professor Shirley Congdon
Vice-Chancellor
University of Bradford



Professor Bob Cryan CBE
Vice-Chancellor and Chief Executive
University of Huddersfield



Professor Dave Petley, Vice-Chancellor
replaced Professor Susan Lea
on 1 September 2022.



Professor Simone Buitendijk
Vice-Chancellor and President
University of Leeds



Professor Koen Lamberts
President and Vice-Chancellor
University of Sheffield



Professor Charlie Jeffery CBE
Vice-Chancellor and President
University of York



Professor Karen Bryan OBE
Vice-Chancellor York St John University
Chair of the YU Board between
1 August 2022–31 July 2024

Our Mission

We will Champion Yorkshire, and Champion Aspiration and Opportunity.

Our Vision

We are an action-oriented regional partnership of Higher Education Institutions. We are driven by a passion and belief in the power and potential of Yorkshire and its global connections and aspirations. We support and encourage our members to work together and with partners to provide civic leadership in the region.

1

2022-25 Strategic Priorities

Championing Civic Leadership in Yorkshire

2

Championing Yorkshire knowledge and skills

3

Brokering and leading partnerships

4

Promoting the Value of Higher Education to Society, Culture and the Economy



Objectives & Achievements

Please note the below list of activities is illustrative, refer to the complete 2022-23 Annual Report and Accounts for a comprehensive and detailed overview of YU activity in this period on the YU website: www.yorkshireuniversities.ac.uk

1. Championing Civic Leadership – in our communities, towns and cities

Outcome	Identifying a clear HE role in place-based leadership. Making an effective case for the devolved agenda within Yorkshire.
Impact	Contribute directly towards improved place-based and devolved systems governance within and across Yorkshire.
Objectives:	Examples of activities and achievements:
1. Embed HE more visibly within local and regional trade and investment strategies and plans.	YU actively participates in MCA/LEP meetings (such as the WYCA Business, Economy and Innovation and the Investment Zone Steering Committees) and Dr. Peter O'Brien, YU's Executive Director, has joined The Northern Creative Corridor Summit—an initiative uniting creative industries and Northern policy leaders. YU plays a key role in shaping the forthcoming plan, lined up for launch at the Convention of the North on 1 March 2024. YU organises routine meetings between the West Yorkshire Mayor and YU Board members based in the Leeds City Region, fostering collaboration through the West Yorkshire Economic Development Group (WYEDG). YU also maintains an updated HE asset mapping exercise that showcases universities' collective contributions to the West Yorkshire Mayor's initiatives. This year, a joint note on university support for SME leaders and entrepreneurs, as well as Investment Zones, took precedence among our priorities.



2. Support places in Yorkshire seeking new devolved powers and funding.	Leadership meetings between YU Board members and Y&H Council Chief Executives have spurred discussions on local government reorganisation, including the formation of a new unitary authority in North Yorkshire. This authority will consolidate existing council services and collaborate with the City of York Council to advance the new Devolution Deal for York and North Yorkshire. Additionally, discussions about creating a new MCA involving East Riding of Yorkshire Council and Hull City Council are a recurring topic at YU-YHC meetings.
3. Work with and support initiatives around the Civic University, Anchor Institutions agenda.	The Sheffield Hallam University-led national Civic University Impact Accelerator proposal was successful in being awarded funding by the Research England Development (RED) Fund. Y-PERN is a vehicle through which areas of common interest and benefit for the region can be explored. YU has been observer on the North East and Yorkshire (NEY) Good Work Community of Practice convened by the NEY Anchor Institutions Network through the Office for Health Improvement and Disparities (OHID).
4. Influence national policymaking for the benefit of Yorkshire.	The Regional Development Group responded to an urgent request from Research England seeking information from YU member institutions in relation to the end of the European Regional Development Fund (ERDF) in the UK, and its partial replacement with the UK Shared Prosperity Fund (UKSPF). This information was also used to inform a letter sent by the Universities UK Chief Executive to Michael Gove, in April, regarding the risks to university support for business growth and innovation, as well as informing UUK's ongoing engagement with DSIT and DLHUC on this issue.

2. Championing Yorkshire Knowledge and Skills

Outcome	Wider and deeper collaborations in R&I / KE. Increased innovation activity by business. More effective utilisation of Yorkshire's graduates.
Impact	Yorkshire is seen as the preferred region for R&I, KE and skills investment to improve productivity and realise opportunity and aspiration.

Objectives:	Examples of activities and achievements:
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1. Action recommendations from YU's Graduate Employment and Employability Report.	<p>In August 2022, YU formed the Graduate Employability Implementation Group (GIG) to translate the eight priorities outlined in the multi-stakeholder report into actionable initiatives aligned with the new YU Strategy. This report is the outcome of a 2021–22 Task & Finish Group led by Professor Karen Bryan. It united YU's twelve member institutions, local authorities, mayoral combined authorities, local enterprise partnerships, and Yorkshire employers.</p> <p>On 25 April we organised an action-oriented roundtable that brought together careers staff from the universities and recruitment and HR staff from local government to explore potential for further collaboration and coordination around local government organisations role as employers. Collaboration between the HE and local government sectors is an ongoing priority in Yorkshire following the establishment of a Memorandum of Understanding (MoU) between YU and Yorkshire & Humber Councils (YHC). Outcomes of this discussion informed the YU Vice-Chancellors and Yorkshire and Humber Councils Chief Executives on 26 June 2023.</p> <p>On 7 June 2023, YU held its 'One Year On: Graduate Employability' conference at the University of Huddersfield to mark the one year anniversary of the publication of the 'Supporting Graduate Employment and Employability in Yorkshire' report. With over 20 speakers (including the YU Chair) and nearly 100 participants, the conference was an opportunity to showcase progress made by the GIG so far and to discuss priorities for the work programme in the 2023–24 academic year. The event also saw the launch of a new YU Regional Inclusive Recruitment Guide.</p>
2. Support members to leverage new and additional Knowledge Exchange (KE) funding into the region.	<p>YU promoted options for employers to engage with universities through Knowledge Transfer Partnerships (KTP) during a dedicated session on KE and innovation during the West Yorkshire Innovation Festival in October 2022.</p> <p>In May 2023, YU undertook analysis of West Yorkshire Universities' portfolios of KTP projects, and shared evidence with WYCA in support of the West Yorkshire Investment Zone business case development.</p>

3. Brokering and Leading Partnerships

Outcome	Formulate new ideas for collective action
Impact	Stronger influence for YU/members within the region.

Objectives:	Examples of activities and achievements:
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1. Deliver agreed priorities and actions in the MoU signed with Yorkshire and Humber Councils.	<p>YU produced a joint statement on the 'Cost of Living in Yorkshire' at the Y-PERN inaugural conference in January 2023.</p> <p>Y-PERN connected into local authority research projects, including Health Determinants Research Collaborations (HDRCs) in Bradford, Doncaster & Wakefield</p> <p>Work has taken place on the Yorkshire Vitality Index (YVI), a joint initiative under the YU-YHC MoU. The project has moved into a development phase following extensive stakeholder consultation. The Index will monitor and measure the social, economic and environmental status and progress of Yorkshire and the Humber.</p>
2. Encourage YU members to work collaboratively in bidding for national R&I funding.	<p>Backed by YU, the twelve member institutions and YHC submitted a successful Phase 1 bid to the ESRC-led Local Policy Innovation Partnership (LPIP) funding call. The bid team have been invited to develop a full case to UKRI to fund the Yorkshire and Humber Policy Innovation Partnership (Y- PIP).</p>
3. Review and strengthen recommendations set out in the YHealth4Growth campaign.	<p>YU has co-commissioned work to publish a new 'White Paper on Health and the Economy in Yorkshire', together with the NHS Confederation and the Y&H Academic Health Science Network – YU's partners in the YHealth4Growth campaign.</p> <p>Plans are underway for a third YHealth4Growth regional conference with partners and regional leaders.</p>



4. Promoting the value of higher education to society, culture and the economy

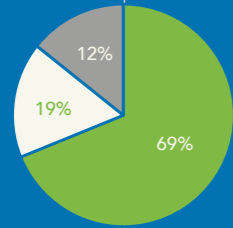
Outcome	Evidence of HE's contributions in the region. Recognition of the global as well as regional impact.
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Impact	Greater knowledge and understanding of the value of YU/members to Yorkshire.
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Objectives:	Examples of activities and achievements:
1. Raise the visibility and profile of YU regionally and nationally.	In 2022–23, members of the YU Executive Team spoke at several regional and national events. The Team also attended a broad range of meetings and conferences to help promote the visibility of YU's work. Amongst the events attended, included: the York and North Yorkshire Devolution Deal Public Consultation Launch (October 2022); Inside Government Graduate Employability Conference 2022; Northern Powerhouse Education, Employment and Skills Summit 2023; Student Sustainability Research Conference; Insights North East Inaugural Conference 2023; SHAPE and Place Event (British Academy & University of Sheffield); and the Yorkshire Post Climate Change Summit 2022. YU was also a partner to the Times Higher Education Digital Conference, hosted by the University of Leeds, that supported our visibility.
2. Illustrate the diverse contributions of the HE sector to the region.	The revamped YU website was launched on 16 June 2023. The new website aims to ensure that the work and profile of YU is more visible and accessible to the HE sector and partners in the region and beyond. There are dedicated spaces for case studies that demonstrate impact. So far, seventeen case studies have been collected demonstrating good practice relevant to EDI initiatives across the membership. An audience vote (during the 7 June Graduate Conference) selected the EDI Impact Award and the following two received the most votes: Transforming and Activating Places (TAP) from the University of Sheffield and Generation Research from the University of York.
3. Participate in Yorkshire-wide groups and events that promote the region.	YU has active membership and engagement with the Yorkshire and North Lincolnshire All Party Parliamentary Group (APPG). Digital Universities UK came to Yorkshire with over 140 speakers from organisations across the country. The event, organised by Times Higher Education, and with YU as an event partner, was themed around digital innovation in higher education across all activities, from student learning to research activity and ideas of global citizenship.

Financial Report

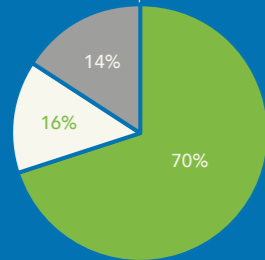
The Report and Accounts from which the information below has been sourced, have been examined by YU's Independent Examiner, Mark Heaton FCCA FCIE. He identified no concerns. More detail can be found in the 2022–23 Annual Report and Accounts on the YU website: yorkshireuniversities.ac.uk/category/annual-reports



In 2021–22, YU's expenditure was £271,000, comprising:

Staff related costs: £188,000
Contractor costs: £52,000
Non-staff costs: £31,000*

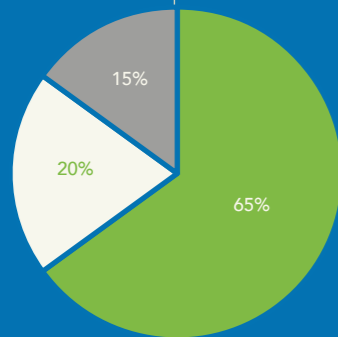
*£21,000 of this is the West Yorkshire CAPE fund



In 2022–23, YU's expenditure was £321,000, comprising:

Staff related costs: £225,000**
Contractor costs: £43,000
Non-staff costs: £53,000

**£7,000 of this is the West Yorkshire CAPE fund, £6,000 of this is the UPP and £87,000 is Y-PERN.



In 2023–24, YU's planned operational budget is £431,000, comprising:

Staff related costs: £279,000***
Contractor costs: £87,000
Non-staff costs: £66,000

***£13,000 of this is the West Yorkshire CAPE fund, £14,000 of this is the UPP and £95,000 is Y-PERN.



Yorkshire Universities
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Registered Charity no. 1109200.



