

Yorkshire Universities

2019–20 Annual
Report Summary



Since 1987, Yorkshire Universities (YU) has been the regional voice for higher education (HE) in Yorkshire. YU represents eleven universities and one specialist higher education institution (HEI). The vice-chancellors and principals of these institutions form YU's board of directors.

The twelve members are the universities of Bradford, Huddersfield, Hull, Leeds, Leeds Beckett, Leeds Trinity, Leeds Arts, Sheffield, Sheffield Hallam, York, and York St John, as well as the Leeds Conservatoire. YU thus convenes a diverse eco-system of universities and HEIs within and across Yorkshire.

Board of Directors



Professor Simone Wonnacott
Vice-Chancellor
Leeds Arts University



Mr Gerry Godley
Principal & Managing Director
Leeds Conservatoire



Professor Peter Slee
Vice-Chancellor
Leeds Beckett University



Professor Margaret House
Vice-Chancellor
Leeds Trinity University



Professor Sir Chris Husbands
Vice-Chancellor, Sheffield Hallam University
Chair of the YU Board



Professor Shirley Congdon
Vice-Chancellor
University of Bradford



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



Professor Susan Lea
Vice-Chancellor
University of Hull



Sir Alan Langlands
Vice-Chancellor
University of Leeds



Professor Koen Lamberts
President and Vice-Chancellor
University of Sheffield



Professor Charlie Jeffery
Vice-Chancellor and President
University of York



Professor Karen Bryan
Vice-Chancellor
York St John University

Welcome



Welcome

from the Chair of the Board

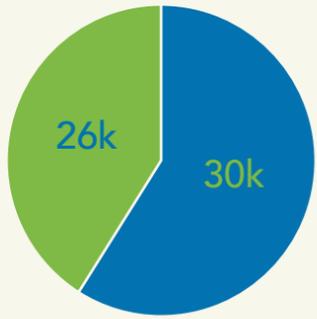
2020 has been an unprecedented year. COVID-19 has impacted upon the lives of so many people across the world, and the people, places, businesses and communities of Yorkshire have felt the impacts acutely.

This year, YU began to implement its 2019-22 Strategy, which focuses on the strategic priorities of 'Ideas', 'Talent' and 'Communities'. With a new government promising to 'level up' the regions, strengthening the role of universities in localities and regions, as civic anchor institutions, has never been more essential. Despite the headwinds, we have made impressive progress delivering against the objectives and priorities in the strategy. I am grateful to the members of the Board for their continued commitment to YU, and to the Executive Director (ED), Dr Peter O'Brien and his team for running an effective and efficient operation.

In 2019-20, we welcomed Professor Karen Bryan, the new Vice-Chancellor of York St John University, to the Board, taking over from Professor Karen Stanton, who moved to Solent University. This year also saw Sir Alan Langlands, Vice-Chancellor of the University of Leeds and Professor Margaret House, Vice-Chancellor of Leeds Trinity University, announce that they would be retiring. We thank them both for their leadership and long-standing support for YU, and we wish them well in retirement. We welcome and look forward to working with Professor Simone Buitendijk, the new Vice-Chancellor at Leeds, and Professor Charles Egbu, the new Vice-Chancellor at Leeds Trinity. I was also delighted that Professor Shirley Congdon, Vice-Chancellor of the University of Bradford, was appointed as my successor as YU Chair. As the first female Chair of the Board, this is both an historic and long-overdue moment, and Shirley's drive to expand social inclusion, and improve health and well-being, is needed more than ever.

As my two-year tenure as YU Chair comes to an end, YU has made real strides in making the case for what our members contribute towards the region's long-term prosperity. In these uncertain times, we need to maintain a coherent and inclusive approach to higher education, research, economic development and social cohesion within and across the region. If we continue to do this, then together we and our partners will achieve so much more for Yorkshire.

Professor Sir Chris Husbands,
Vice-Chancellor, Sheffield Hallam University;
Chair of the YU Board



56,400 (FTE) jobs

Support over 56,000 Full Time Equivalent (FTE) jobs in the region. Over 30,000 of these FTEs are staff within the universities themselves, with a further 26,000 based in the wider supply chain, underpinned by the expenditure of staff and students.

£2.9bn

Contribute £2.9bn each year to the region's economy and play a critical role in generating jobs, creating innovation, talent, and enterprise and driving productivity.

196,000+
Students

Annually have over 196,000 students studying in Yorkshire, a third of whom are originally from the region



120+
countries

Attract a large and diverse student population from more than 120 countries.



Collectively the twelve members of Yorkshire Universities:



Invest £400 million in capital assets annually, helping to support local regeneration and capacity building in our region.

Spend **£250m** in the local supply chain



...and a further **£340m** in the rest of the UK.



Generate over £32 million in research consultancy contracts. Obtain over £150 million in collaborative research.



Play a vital role in the region's civic, social and cultural life through community outreach and volunteering, creating accessible and vibrant public places through libraries, arts and sporting facilities.

68,500

Develop highly-skilled people by producing over 68,500 graduates each year and creating opportunities for the region's workforce.

Our Mission

Through our strategy, we will work collectively and collaboratively with partners to create more prosperous, inclusive and sustainable economies and communities in Yorkshire.

As a regional partnership of higher education institutions, we have a shared commitment to place and to supporting aspiration and opportunity.

Our Vision



A place-based approach

By adopting a place-based approach to the three priorities of: Ideas, Talent, Communities – the expected outcomes are:

- Strengthen HE contributions towards increased research and innovation activity in the region.
- Extend partnerships across sectors to improve higher level skills pathways into continuous development and learning.
- Ensure our members are recognised more as influential anchor institutions.

1. Ideas

2. Talent

3. Communities

We adopt a place-based approach to our activities, outcomes and priorities

What do we mean by a place-based approach?

Our definition of a place-based approach, which underpins our mission and strategy, is a person-centred, context-specific model designed to reflect the distinct needs of people, business and communities within and across Yorkshire and is driven by the principle of collaboration.

1. Ideas

Objectives:

- Promote HE research and innovation (R&I) assets and strengths within Yorkshire
- Persuade government, UK Research & Innovation (UKRI), Local Enterprise Partnerships (LEPs) and others to create more place-sensitive R&I systems
- Encourage members to connect R&I capabilities across institutions and disciplines
- Advocate stronger integration of R&I with economic development policies (including skills' policies), strategies and funding

Achievements:

- Mapped the R&I strengths of the Leeds City Region (LCR) YU members, which directly informed the priorities of the Local Industrial Strategy (LIS) prepared by the West Yorkshire Combined Authority (WYCA).
- Since the outbreak of COVID-19, YU has mapped and highlighted member activity and research to support the fight against the virus. This informed the UUK's national #WeAreTogether campaign and report (see other related communications listed below).
- Co-authored, with the N8 Research Partnership, two papers: one responding to Research England (RE) Executive Chair's questions about place and R&I, the other informing the Business, Energy & Industrial Strategy (BEIS) economic recovery taskforce. These publications directly informed the UKRI Place Working Group and the BEIS Place Strategy.

- Influenced Local Industrial Strategy and Strategic Economic Plan (SEP) priorities and supported the drive for more private sector investment in innovation via the West Yorkshire Innovation Network (WYIN) to which YU is a key stakeholder.
- Contributed written evidence towards the Yorkshire & North Lincolnshire All Party Parliamentary Group (APPG) submission to government ahead of the then planned Comprehensive Spending Review.
- Encouraged members to respond to the pilot UK Place and Engagement funding call. The universities of Bradford, Hull and York secured funding from this call.

Related consultation responses:

- HM Treasury Green Book Review
- York, North Yorkshire and East Riding (YNYER) LIS
- Humber LIS consultation
- UK Research & Development Roadmap
- West Yorkshire Devolution Deal
- Post-pandemic economic growth – BEIS Select Committee

Related think pieces and communications:

- 'Levelling up' the UK regions
- Budget 2020
- The COVID-19 crisis
- Place, the economy and COVID-19
- Innovation Deals

2. Talent

Objectives:

- Strengthen knowledge of the supply and demand for higher level skills in the region
- Work with members and partners to improve graduate retention and job accessibility
- Align technical and vocational training, skills and learning to key sector and industry needs
- Increase knowledge exchange and diffusion to support high growth, innovation and scaled-up firms

Achievements:

- Supported the development of a multi-university network: Place-Based Economic Recovery Network (PERN) of experts in local and regional economic recovery, to offer real-time support to WYCA and other public bodies, in the planning and implementation of COVID recovery efforts. This contributed towards a proposal to strengthen foresight, analytical and policy development capacity based on university, LEP/CA and other partner expertise in the region.
- Worked with the Association of Graduate Careers Advisory Services (AGCAS), the Regionalisation Working Group to which YU was invited as an external stakeholder, to produce a toolkit to better understand the demand for, and supply of, graduates in regional labour markets. This formed part of the effort to support graduate retention and employability in Yorkshire.
- Supported the Office for Students/Research England Student Knowledge Exchange funding call, as a result of which Huddersfield, Sheffield, York and York St John were funded.

- Produced a paper on 'Five higher level skills ideas'; this was presented to the WYCA and Massachusetts Institute of Technology (MIT) Regional Entrepreneurship Acceleration Programme (REAP) Team. Go Higher West Yorkshire is progressing one of the proposed ideas on improving access points of entry into HE.
- Agreed with the National Centre for Universities and Business (NCUB) to hold a joint-roundtable to discuss the Rees 'University-Investor' Review and investment into HE-supported projects.
- Mapped Knowledge Transfer Partnership (KTP) activity and investment in the region, working with Innovate UK to align this activity to economic development via the WYIN.
- ED invited to take part in a Leeds City Region (LCR) creative industries skills group and joined the LCR Employment and Skills Advisory Panel, forming part of the effort to strengthen YU's involvement in regional skills partnerships and co-ordinate input to the refreshed Employment and Skills Plan of West Yorkshire.
- Produced a discussion paper, held a roundtable and responded to the Future Ready Skills Commission review of devolved skills systems. These activities enabled YU to form stronger links with the Further Education (FE) sector and local councils.

Related consultation response:

- Future Ready Skills Commission Interim Report Feedback by YU

Think pieces and communications:

- Starting and scaling up business ... in a period of recovery
- COVID-19 and beyond: understanding student expectations
- Over to online learning

3. Communities

Objectives:

- Stimulate and share learning on civic universities and anchor institution strategies and activities
- Promote the public value of HE in and for the region
- Strengthen partnerships between HE, health and other sectors to drive more inclusive growth and well-being
- Support members to address the issues arising from climate change

Achievements:

- YU ED was a member of the Civic University Commission Working Group and YU is part of the ongoing dialogue on the civic university agenda with the Civic University Network (CUN) Hub hosted by Sheffield Hallam University.
- Held a roundtable to present the findings from the Urban Living Partnerships project. This formed part of the effort to provide a place for members to share learning on civic university / anchor institution activity and place strategies.
- Contributed a number of articles and publications on the value of HE and YU members in the region published by the Yorkshire Post and in the Policy Yorkshire essay collection. And took part in interviews with the regional media.
- Produced statements on the value of YU members to the region's economy and recovery in light of COVID-19, which were supported publicly by all the region's Mayors, CAs and LEPS: 'The Coronavirus Pandemic: Universities and the Economic Recovery of

Place' and 'Yorkshire's universities are crucial to the region's recovery'.

- Produced a five-year comparative analysis using the Higher Education – Business & Community Interaction (HE-BCI) dataset and updated the facts and figures on the website to illustrate (in a user-friendly format) the collective contributions YU members make in the region.
- Began to explore the concept of 'citizen science' and strengthened relationships with voluntary and community sector organisations to share knowledge and identify areas of common interest.
- Hosted a roundtable in association with ARUP on the climate emergency. The YU Policy & Communications Network (PCN) has also been closely following the developments of the Climate Commission for UK Higher and Further Education Students & Leaders and those of the UN Climate Change Conference (COP26) University Network, as YU was invited as an external stakeholder and has been able to feed back to the group regularly.
- [Fig. 1] Hosted a joint health, economy and well-being conference with the Yorkshire & Humber Academic Health Science Network (YHAHSN) and NHS Confederation in December 2019. In July 2020, YU, YHAHSN and the NHS Confederation published a report on health inequalities and recovery post COVID-19.
- YU has convened meetings of a broad steering group and two workstream groups comprising LCR Vice-Chancellors and lead officers in the West Yorkshire Health and Care Partnership. The workstream groups are looking at R&I, and skills, training and workforce planning. The aim is to agree a series of actions to inform the West Yorkshire Economic Recovery Plan and new West Yorkshire devolution deal.

Related consultation responses:

- HE-BCI major review
- Submission to the West Yorkshire Devolution Deal
- Ambitions for the North: People and Place

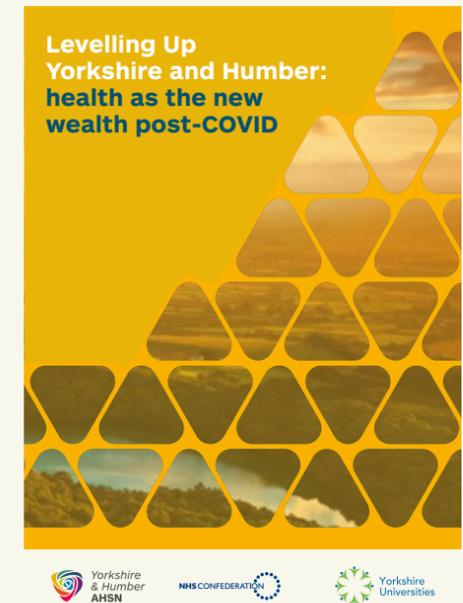
Think pieces and communications:

- Creative Industries in Yorkshire and the Humber
- When a local economy collapses, we can't just rely on the grit of communities
- Revisiting resilience
- Unpacking the role of universities as civic anchor institutions

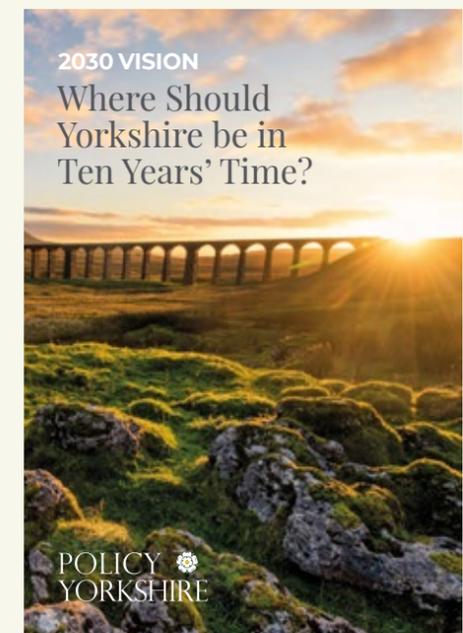
Speaking roles / presentations:

- YU was invited to speak at 'The University as a Social and Public 'Good': Creating an Anchor out of Community Engaged Research' conference.
- The YU Chair and Vice-Chancellor, University of Bradford, spoke at the #YHealth4Growth Conference in December 2019.
- [Fig 2.] Board member and Vice-Chancellor of the University of Bradford spoke at the launch of the Policy Yorkshire's first publication: '2030 Vision, Where should Yorkshire be in Ten Years' Time?'

[Fig. 1]



[Fig. 2]



4. Enabling mechanisms

Objectives:

- Operate as an outstanding membership-based organisation
- Embrace continuous learning and development
- Use innovative methods to communicate our messages to members and external audiences
- Strengthen our relationships with national, regional and local partners to influence policy and strategy
- Act as a 'knowledge hub' of information, intelligence and new ideas, drawing upon high-quality research and examples of successful practical action
- Monitor and evaluate performance to ensure key indicators and measures of success are met

Achievements:

- The YU team switched seamlessly to online working in March 2020.
- Published a comprehensive three-year strategy, designed for external communication and made widely available on all YU communication channels. This is underpinned by detailed delivery plans for internal use and evaluation.
- Updated YU's Articles of Association; changes made were first approved by the Charity Commission and then passed by special resolution by the Board on 2 July 2020.
- Completed the annual independent examination, produced the 2018-19 Annual Report and accompanying Executive Summary.
- Established a new Policy and Communications Network (PCN) to work alongside the YU

Industrial Strategy Group and the LCR Sub-group and continued to operate these groups virtually during lockdown.

- Published a 'Friday news digest' each week containing a synthesis of research, policy and news relating to YU's core priorities. Disseminated two newsletters to over 400 readers summarising YU activity in the first and second half of 2019-20.
- Published 20 blogs and think pieces, and trialled filming one of the YU events (the ULP roundtable) as an alternative method of communicating key messages.
- YU has continued to strengthen its engagement with government agencies, and has been proactively influencing policy and strategy in relation to the place, levelling-up, skills, R&D, recovery, and devolution agendas.

Next year we will...

continue to deliver the objectives set out in the 2019-22 YU Strategy, but are mindful of the context that members and the wider economy and society face as a result of COVID-19 and the economic crisis. Therefore, we will remain flexible and agile to anticipate and respond to opportunities and challenges as they arise:

1 Ideas:

YU will continue to promote university research and innovation capabilities in Yorkshire; support the development of 'place sensitive' innovation systems; and encourage greater connectivity between YU members' different capabilities to harness the potential of multi-institution and multi-disciplinary research and innovation.

2 Talent:

YU will continue to help to strengthen member and partner knowledge of the supply and demand for higher level skills within Yorkshire's labour markets; work with members and partners to improve graduate retention, employability and employment in the region; and work with partners, especially business and further education, to ensure technical and vocational training, skills and learning reflect the social and economic priorities of the region.

3 Communities:

YU will continue to promote and disseminate the social, economic and public value of HE within Yorkshire; provide a strategic framework for YU members to identify and share learning and good practice to encourage civic university and anchor institution activity within different places in the region; facilitate place-based leadership and public engagement actions between YU members and other anchor institutions (such as those operating in the health sector) and work with partners to address the challenges (and realise the opportunities) facing Yorkshire presented by climate change.

Financial Report

YU's income is derived exclusively from member subscriptions.

In 2018–19, the expenditure of YU was £226,000, comprising:

Staff related costs: £138,000*
Contractor costs: £59,000
Non-staff costs: £29,000

*£13,000 of this is the Pension liability provision

In 2019–20, the expenditure of YU was £226,000, comprising:

Staff related costs: £142,000*
Contractor costs: £63,000
Non-staff costs: £21,000

*£9,000 of this is the Pension liability provision

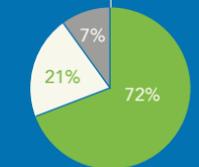
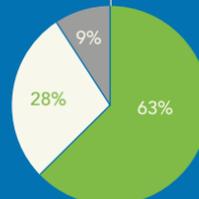
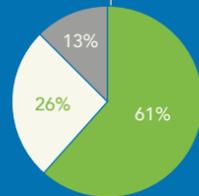
In 2020–21, YU's planned operational budget will be £199,000, comprising:

Staff related costs: £143,000*
Contractor costs: £42,000
Non-staff costs: £14,000

*£0 of this is the Pension liability provision

These financial statements, from which the information, left, has been extracted, have been examined by YU's Independent Examiner, Mark Heaton FCCA FCIE, who identified no concerns. Statements in more detail can be found in the 2019/20 Annual Report and Accounts on the YU website:

yorkshireuniversities.ac.uk/category/annual-reports



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