



Terms of Reference of the PERN Academic Steering Group

PERN is an **academic-led** and **multi-University** model of policy engagement and collaboration, facilitated by Yorkshire Universities. The independent academic steering group of PERN has been established as the prime vehicle through which this model is achieved. The academic steering group was initially informally arranged and developed to meet the urgency of economic recovery.

General purpose of the PERN academic steering group

The PERN academic steering group provides the **academic co-leadership of PERN**, where PERN is a partnership that seeks to facilitate bringing the research capacity of West Yorkshire academics (and their wider networks) into support of regional economic recovery policy.

The PERN academic steering group aims to **facilitate building closer, longer-term relations of academic research in West Yorkshire (and beyond) with regional and local bodies around economic recovery**, whilst **maintaining academic research independence and integrity**. It thereby aims to help broaden and deepen vital connections between academic research and regional and local policy needs for economic recovery, broadly conceived.

Reference to economic recovery 'broadly conceived' means that PERN considers **not just the economy (and economics) but its integral connections with civil society, business, natural and built environment, culture, health and wellbeing**. These connections are evident in key policy themes: levelling up, climate change, Brexit, improvement of health and its wider determinants.

Specific functions of the PERN academic steering group

- **To undertake or facilitate organisation or co-organisation of PERN events and activities** (such as roundtables, panels, webinars, hustings, conferences) with PERN partners (MCA, YU, others local and regional bodies)
- Thus, offer academic leadership in providing a **fair and open space for stakeholder discussion and debate**.
- **To provide regional and local policy makers with routes of initial access to existing academic research and researchers** relevant to regional economic recovery, broadly conceived.
- To help PERN regional activities to **be informed by and to complement existing and emergent local engagement partnerships** of Universities and local authorities
- To offer a role as '**critical friend**' to PERN partners, such as the MCA
- To offer light-touch suggestions to the West Yorkshire academic community as regards **strategic steer and coordination of existing and future academic**

research to meet regional and local policy needs for economic recovery, broadly conceived

- To **facilitate syntheses of research** and suitable **forms dissemination of research (policy briefs, podcasts etc.)** to inform regional and local policy for economic recovery, broadly conceived.
- To **facilitate funding bids** for collaborative research and impact that supports the region
- To facilitate **building capacity of PhD and early career researchers in local and regional engagement**

Membership and meetings

The academic steering **group should include at least one nominated senior academic from each West Yorkshire University** and professional support staff as appropriate. One of the academic members will chair the group (determined on a rolling basis, to be further elaborated). Each member should have a role within their University that enables them to **represent and access a wide range of academics with relevant expertise**. The CAPE Regional Development Fellow, and the Executive Director of YU, are also members of the group.

There will be regular academic steering group meetings and regular meetings of members of the steering group with WYCA officers involved in PERN. Close connections of the academic steering group are thereby maintained with regional and local policy bodies, especially MCA, via

- Connection via YU and Regional Development Fellow membership of the steering group.
- Connection via regular meeting of members academic steering group with MCA officers, both in general PERN meetings and specific meetings organising webinars, roundtables etc.

There is a **commitment to diversity and representation amongst the academic steering group and PERN activity**.

Intellectual position of PERN academic steering group

The key general strengths and features of academic research are built upon and regionally showcased or channelled by PERN, via the PERN academic steering group. Commitment to **place-based** and **systems-based academic rigour** facilitates **integration across scales and systems**. More specifically this means:

- **Respect for pluralism** in economics, social science and policy;
- The importance of considering – in PERN studies, webinars, and other activities – **the full range of policy and economic opportunities and challenges faced by the cities, towns, wards, and rural areas across West Yorkshire;**
- The need to consider the **differing socio-economic circumstances and diverse racial/ethnic and cultural backgrounds** of West Yorkshire's residents and communities;

- The imperative of seeking solutions and policy approaches that are **socially and economically inclusive**, as well as **ecologically sustainable**;
- The mandate of **learning from other regions' and nations' experience**, and of **sharing lessons learned in our region with those elsewhere**.