



Yorkshire
Universities
2022—2025
Strategy

2024

2025

Yorkshire Universities champions Yorkshire, and champions Aspiration and Opportunity.

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Introduction

We have involved a wide range of our stakeholders in creating this Strategy, including our member institutions. In doing so, we have asked consistent questions about what they want from Yorkshire Universities (YU), and how they might work with us. They have told us that they see real value in:

- YU as an umbrella organisation that can support and champion universities' collective aspirations on global questions, such as skills, infrastructure and innovation.
- YU undertaking a catalyst role to enable all member institutions to lead in the civic agenda through connecting public policy with practice informed by research and knowledge transfer.
- YU encouraging stronger partnerships between higher education institutions (HEIs) and key policymakers and social and economic actors across the diversity of Yorkshire's economies, places and communities.

Our Vision

We are an action-oriented regional partnership of Higher Education Institutions (HEIs). 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.

Our Approach

We will add distinct value to the places where our members are located, and the communities in which they work. We will use our combined voice as a HE powerhouse with the determination to change our region for the better. We will champion Yorkshire as diverse, resilient, inclusive and rich in collaborative learning and new ideas. Our theory of change model illustrates how we will deliver our Strategy, which is centred around four key priorities. Where there are overlaps between individual priorities, we will ensure there is a co-ordinated approach in our interventions.



Priority 1

Championing Civic Leadership in Yorkshire

– in our communities, towns and cities. Our work will support leadership by universities in building places where inequalities are challenged and eliminated. We will enable institutions to play their part in generating a greater sense of belonging in communities. YU will work with partners to strengthen the unique brand of Yorkshire on the national and global stage. We will be ambassadors for our members, enhancing the region’s profile and helping to attract Foreign Direct Investment, Trade and Jobs. We will represent and support the case for greater devolution in Yorkshire. We will encourage and enable creative solutions that address the key opportunities and challenges facing the region. We will support our members to strengthen resilience and belonging in our communities.



Case Study: Promoting Yorkshire as the Region for Trade and Investment

The contribution of business is vital if the UK is to meet its target of R&I investment reaching 2.4% of GDP by 2027. We need to consider how universities can best encourage and retain further private sector investment. One means is through foreign direct investment.

YU is working with regional leaders to maximise the contribution of its members to attracting and retaining trade and inward investment into Yorkshire. Through an illustrative case study of West Yorkshire, we identified

some practical ideas in a report we published in 2021. The actions we called for included: providing a feed of relevant university-focused news reports for local inward investment web portals; promoting the local higher-level skills base; and utilising international students and alumni more strategically. The findings from the report have informed a new West Yorkshire International Trade Strategy, and YU has participated in recent international trade visits in the region, including that of the Indian High Commissioner to the UK.

Priority 2

Championing Yorkshire Knowledge and Skills

– providing a platform for collaboration in research, innovation and knowledge exchange. Our aim of attracting more Research & Innovation (R&I) funding to Yorkshire will help generate greater productivity, prosperity and employment. We will prioritise six themes* of **Climate, Health, Technology, Social Justice, Infrastructure and Capability**. We will work towards Yorkshire being the most compelling and creative place in the UK for start-ups and scale-ups in key sectors. We will ensure that the region harnesses the full power and knowledge of our universities' graduates and post-graduates, through a proactive campaign. This will be the backbone of our employment and skills drive.

*We envisage each theme being led by one or more member institutions, with a focus on embedding each theme within the HE offer across the region: in education, research, innovation and Knowledge Exchange. Task and Finish Groups will work to priority areas of focus

and underpinning principles against which to measure impact in each theme. Our role will be to bring focus and clarity to the issues that Task and Finish Groups might consider, aligning ambitions with expectations.



Case Study: Graduate Employment and Employability in Yorkshire

In 2020/21, 212,000 students, from 120 countries, were studying at Yorkshire's universities, of which 68,000 graduated in 2021. Under the leadership of YU, a wide range of HE institutions, Local Authorities, Mayoral Combined Authorities, Local Enterprise Partnerships (LEPs) and employers in Yorkshire came together as a Task and Finish Group to consider how best to support students and graduates facing new challenges presented by the pandemic and recovery. The Group published a new report on graduate employment and employability in

Yorkshire, containing key priorities and recommended actions. The report was endorsed by the YU Board and regional leaders.

YU will champion the findings of this work within the region and continue to encourage further joint initiatives and actions. A plan to implement the findings and recommendations in the report will be a focal point of our new 2022-2025 Strategy.

Climate will encompass Sustainability, Climate Change and the Environment, with an emphasis on green jobs in Renewable Energy, Decarbonisation and Carbon Capture Usage and Storage.

Health is about Health, Care and Wellbeing, and how our region's knowledge base can improve outcomes for all the region's citizens and communities.

Technology will see YU support member institutions and partners to increase the region's R&I investment, jobs and market share in technology sectors, such as Space, MedTech, FinTech, Creative Know-How, Bio-Economy, Data, AI, all in a Net-Zero-committed environment.

Social Justice will prioritise how our education and research can challenge many prevailing norms and structures which govern people's lives in our region. Inclusive growth will be key.

Infrastructure concerns the economic, social and digital means to increasing prosperity. The role of universities as anchor institutions is crucial, especially within Foundational Sectors, such as Education, Health and Social Care. We will also focus on the infrastructure for the cultural sector, which is vital to our institutional capital.

Capability will cover the skills and employment capabilities needed to achieve growth in the Six Capitals identified in the Levelling Up White Paper. We will aim to develop a region-wide approach to portable, lifelong learning across our places and institutions.

Levelling Up Yorkshire and Humber: health as the new wealth post-COVID

Case Study: Health as the New Wealth

Yorkshire & Humber Academic Health Science Network, NHS Confederation and YU have formed a partnership to tackle socio-economic inequalities and boost health outcomes in Yorkshire by encouraging and supporting more cross-sector working. The YHealth4Growth campaign is designed to promote the role of health in driving economic and inclusive growth in Yorkshire. The three partner organisations behind the campaign all recognise the intrinsic and unbreakable link between health and economic prosperity.

As the region seeks to rebuild and reset in light of COVID-19, we published a report setting out a plan for how national government and regional partners can together tackle increasing socio-economic inequalities and boost health outcomes in Yorkshire by encouraging and supporting more cross-sector working. Our report, and wider campaign, have encouraged and influenced greater collaboration within the region, and it has influenced the strategic plans of health and care leaders, such as the new Integrated Care Systems.

Case Study: Space Hub Yorkshire

By 2030, the UK Space industry is forecast to be worth over £40 billion. Harnessing the huge potential of the Space sector in the region will drive Yorkshire's attractiveness to future investors, creating jobs and opportunities for local people. Space Hub Yorkshire (SHY) is the coordinator of Space activity across Yorkshire, providing a source of expertise, acting as a driver of new investments, and an advocate for Space research and industry opportunities.

YU is a key partner in SHY, helping to co-ordinate the specific contributions to the Space technology sector from all the region's universities. In 2021, a mapping exercise of R&I capabilities within YU member institutions informed the inaugural SHY Growth Strategy, submitted to the UK Space Agency (UKSA). Funding from the UKSA has enabled a Space Development Manager to support Yorkshire's Universities, with YU, to develop the Virtual Space Campus. The Virtual Space Campus aims to maximise the significant contributions that Yorkshire's schools, colleges and universities can make to the UK Space industry – imparting world-class knowledge through research, skills through teaching and professional development, and inspiration through educational outreach. The Campus is playing a vital role in coordinating regional space activities across industry, research, teaching and policies, securing commitment from the region's key stakeholders to tangible and practical mechanisms for ensuring a continued focus on Space-enabled activities.



Priority 3

Brokering and Leading Partnerships

– Yorkshire Universities will create the opportunities for strategic conversations that generate new ideas, fresh insights and innovation. We will have the confidence to challenge and disrupt thinking. We will also deliver on specific initiatives, which support our mission and priorities.



Case Study: Strategic Partnership with Yorkshire and Humber Councils

In 2021, YU and Yorkshire and Humber Councils (YHC) agreed a new Memorandum of Understanding (MoU), providing a framework for a long-term, strategic partnership between local government and HE in Yorkshire. The MoU sets out how YHC's 22 Local Authorities and 2 Mayoral Combined Authorities will work with YU's 12 members to identify and develop new opportunities for stronger collaboration between the sectors. For 2021/22, the priorities are: Levelling Up; Health and well-being; and Climate Change.

YU and YHC will develop a new Yorkshire Vitality Index to measure the general social, economic and environmental health of Yorkshire. The commitment to develop a Vitality Index features in a joint YU-YHC position statement on levelling up, which has generated interest from government.

Priority 4

Promoting the Value of HE to society, culture and the economy

– as an organisation, we will build a strong profile for the HE sector in Yorkshire through our use of data and intelligence. We will become expert in capturing and evaluating evidence on our performance as a sector. We will demonstrate how universities contribute to improved wellbeing and social mobility in cities, towns and communities.

Enabling Tools and Approaches

We will support and enable our member institutions to take the lead locally, regionally, nationally and internationally in championing Yorkshire. We will do this by creating and sharing a set of transferable tools and methods, which develop capabilities in:

- Building the strength of our members as Yorkshire Anchor Institutions.
- Generating innovation and insights through partnership dialogue.
- Demonstrating institutional impact on society, the economy and the environment.

YU's MoU with Yorkshire and Humber Councils will act as a platform for widening and deepening conversations between YU members and relevant local government and devolved authorities. It will act as a model for developing new and stronger forms of engagement with other sectors and partners. This will create and underpin local and sub-regional alliances to leverage new investment opportunities within and across Yorkshire. We will develop new delivery approaches as we seek to scale up capacity and impact through working more closely with national and regional partners.

Theory of change



Wider Context

Growing social and spatial inequalities; impact of Covid; cost of living crisis; devolution; post-18 education reforms; pivot towards FE; technological transformation; changing world of work; environment and climate emergency; energy security; labour market participation and demographics; post-Brexit transition...

Rationale for intervention

HE sector’s distinct role in ‘Levelling Up’; delivering inclusive and sustainable growth; strengthening resilience in Yorkshire; systems approach to tackling complex societal challenges; building on YU’s distinct partnership and collaborations; influencing new and emergent political institutions in Yorkshire; securing new forms of investment...



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