

Introducing XR Stories

XR Stories is a University of York initiative supporting researchers, companies and creatives working in extended reality technologies to unleash their full potential. Led by Damian Murphy, Professor of Sound and Music Computing at the University of York, the XR Stories team are based at The Guildhall in York's city centre.

Recipients of Creative Industries Cluster Programme funds to support the Yorkshire and Humber region, XR Stories started life as a £9 million investment from the Arts and Humanities Research Council (AHRC), the European Regional Development Fund (ERDF), and the University of York.

With the AHRC funding, XR Stories enabled 600+ businesses to generate additional revenue of more than £6.6m. The team carried

out research and development (R&D) across more than 200 companies and realised £25.7m of co-investment, connecting creative industry partners with advanced research in immersive and interactive technologies. XR Stories training schemes, internship programmes and bursaries enabled individuals to gain new skills and confidence to progress their careers.

XR Stories is now leading on XR Network+, an Engineering and Physical Sciences Research Council (EPSRC) funded project to establish a ten-year UK research agenda for digital content creation and consumption in virtual production (VP) and related technologies. The project provides R&D funding and support for researchers working in XR and VP at UK universities. From their immersive technology

lab in The Guildhall, XR Stories continues to provide expertise and infrastructure for businesses and researchers to experiment with state-of-the art equipment.

A new residency programme, launching in spring 2024, will offer yet more opportunities for researchers and creative businesses to work on projects, incubate ideas and carry out R&D from the XR Stories lab.

The work of XR Stories forms part of the wider XR research and development ecosystem at the University of York, including the new CoSTAR LiveLab facility, and strengthens our region's place at the forefront of the immersive sector.

Visit the [XR Stories website](#) to find out more.



In Here Out There, an immersive experience developed with R&D funding, support and expertise from XR Stories.

Opportunities to create new spin-out companies

In recent years the Commercialisation team has been providing support to create new spin-out companies. A spin-out company is a new company that aims to develop and commercialise Intellectual Property that has been created through research within the University. We are now seeing a steady stream of spin-out companies being created, with a healthy number of potential opportunities in the pipeline. Below are two recent examples.

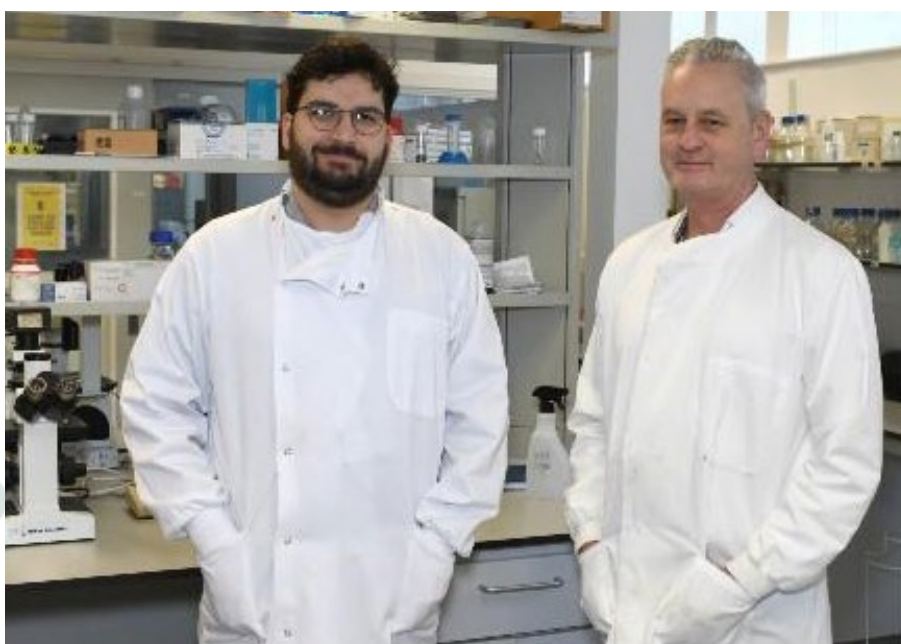
Mesenbio Ltd aims to produce a novel treatment created from engineered human stem cells in the fight against arthritic disease in both adults and children.

Rheumatoid arthritis impacts just under half a million adults and children in the UK, causing joint pain and inflammation of the hands, knees, elbows, ankles, and/or wrists. It is categorised as an autoimmune disease, which means that instead of fighting germs and viruses, the body's immune system attacks its own body cells.

Current therapies for the disease involve easing pain and inflammation, but they lack the combined actions of reducing inflammation and protecting the tissue from further damage.

Mesenbio will address this issue with a new treatment based on nano-sized 'messengers' created from engineered human stem cells that not only curb inflammation but can kick-start the process of regenerating damaged tissue. Mesenbio is supported by £1.4 million of funding from Innovate UK and investors including DSW Ventures and NG Bio.

Teacher Success Platform (TSP) Ltd started as a research project at the University of York funded by the Economic and Social Research Council (ESRC), intending to develop and test better methods to recruit, select, and develop teachers. The core technologies developed in the research programme included online classroom simulations used to evaluate the non-academic and behavioural attributes of



Dr David Kuntin (left) and Professor Paul Genever, co-founders of Mesenbio

potential and practising teachers. The research phase included engagement with more than 120,000 users of the simulations worldwide and validated the effectiveness of the tools.

In 2021, Prof Robert Klassen, Professor and Chair of the Psychology in Education Research Centre at the University of York took part in the second cohort of the Aspect Research Commercialisation (ARC) Accelerator programme, where he engaged with the idea to extend the impact of TSP research through commercialisation. After completion of the ARC Accelerator programme in 2021, York's commercialisation team worked with Klassen and his group to translate their research into software as a service-based solution for government and teacher training organisations, attracting both consulting and licence revenues

from what had previously been research partners.

TSP's web-based solutions have been implemented around the globe and the company has sold its products (and consultancy services) to governmental and non-governmental organisations in the UK, Australia, and South Africa. TSP is currently in the process of closing its seed funding round with investors whilst also negotiating agreements with external partners for exclusive rights in North America to distribute TSP technologies.

[Find out more about our companies](#)

[James Kitson, Head of Commercialisation gives an overview of the main types of commercialisation activity](#)

Knowledge Exchange Framework: Looking ahead to KEF4

The fourth iteration of the Knowledge Exchange Framework (KEF4) will be published in September 2024, continuing to showcase the rich diversity of knowledge exchange and provide an effective performance framework.



On an annual basis and predominantly based on The Higher Education Business and Community Interaction Survey (HEBCIS) metrics, the KEF aims to provide Higher Education Providers with a useful source of information and data on their knowledge exchange (KE) activities, to help them understand and improve their performance.

Looking ahead to KEF 4 and future iterations

In the short term, KEF will continue to be updated annually using stable

and consistent data methodology to allow year-on-year comparisons to be made. However, new metrics might be introduced, such as apprenticeship data. Universities will continue to update narrative statements roughly every three years and, at least in the next couple of years, KEF will not be linked to funding.

Longer term, proposals linking KEF to funding will not be brought forward until 2025/26, with any subsequent implementation likely to take several further years. Plans will

be developed to expand the range of metrics used to reflect the breadth of KE performance accurately. This will be supported by a two-year collaborative program with The University Commercialisation and Innovation (UCI) policy evidence unit at University of Cambridge and the Higher Education Statistics Agency, starting in 2025, to develop better metrics and evidence across the breadth of KE activities.

[Find out more](#)

Announcement

PraxisAuril is taking on the leadership of the KE Concordat

To sustain and further develop the success of the Knowledge Exchange Concordat (KEC), the KEC Strategy Group has agreed that from April 2024, PraxisAuril will lead the KEC across the UK. Universities UK, GuildHE, and other stakeholders will continue their support and involvement. This transition presents a significant opportunity to increase the KEC's impact by fostering deeper engagement with knowledge exchange practitioners and aligning more closely with PraxisAuril's professional standards. PraxisAuril will maintain its collaborative approach with existing partners and keep the KEC accessible to all UK universities.

[Read more about this](#)

Introduction to Intellectual Property (IP) and Research Commercialisation

45 min online training session

- **Have you considered how your research is applicable to industry?**
- **Ever wondered how IP protection can be used to help drive impact from your research?**
- **Interested to learn more about how spin-out companies are formed?**

This short online primer (delivered by the University's Commercialisation Team) is the perfect place to start.

Sessions run monthly. [Book your place.](#)

Next session: Wed, 24 Apr 2024, 1.00pm to 1.45pm

Register by Wed, 24 Apr 2024, 12.00pm, Online Session

