



# What are universities for? The academy and the public

ReCSS/ARRC Auditorium,  
Alcuin college, University of York

4-6pm, Thursday  
5th June 2014

(map at: <https://www.york.ac.uk/about/maps/campus/>)

## Presentations

John Holmwood on **The Uses of the University: Public Higher Education and Democracy**  
(Professor of Sociology, University of Nottingham and President of the British Sociological Association)

Daryl Martin on the **Thinkbelt: the university that never was, and the lessons it might still teach us**  
(Lecturer in Sociology, University of York)

Chris Renwick on **Being pulled in three directions: what academics want, what the public wants, and what universities actually do** (Lecturer in Modern History, University of York)

Rachel Cohen on **Against excellence: seeking the collective within and beyond the University**  
(Senior Lecturer in Sociology, City University)

What are universities for? This is no doubt an important question, but one that we often lose sight of. This symposium will provide an opportunity to hear presentations from academics reflecting on what a university means today and how its work connects to wider communities. At a time of financial challenges for students and universities and questions over the value of aspects of course curricula it is worth re-considering why we have

universities. Attempts at viewing them in narrow instrumental economic frameworks, the short-term contracts of what has been called the para-academy, league tables, the introduction of student fees and work-life balance are all part of this new landscape. In this kind of environment can universities be enhanced as spaces that integrate the lives and needs of those beyond the camps?

