Strategy 2030: Consultation

The University of York has a unique opportunity to frame a new strategic vision, based on strong principles of social justice, a collegiate community of people who wish to contribute to the major global challenges affecting humanity, and advancing the value, purpose and relevance of higher education to society. In shaping our vision for the future we want to consult with as many members of our community as possible, to collectively define what kind of university we want to be by 2030.

The time has come to be bold, ambitious and far-reaching by redefining the University’s contract with society and its own community. The intention is to develop a Vision for our Future by January 2020 and thereafter a Strategic Plan that will provide a roadmap to achieve that vision. **We want your help to shape our vision and define our future plan.**

**Principles**

It is important that any new strategy is informed by principles. One place to start is with the principles that underpinned the foundation of the University - they seem as relevant today as they did in 1963:

- Civic roots
- Public good
- Widening access
- Inclusive community
- Parity of research and teaching
- Working across disciplines
- Internationalism.

However, given the complexity of the world around us it is worth considering whether we also need to adopt additional principles like sustainability, curiosity and an ethos of collaboration and co-production with students and other stakeholder partners.

**Consultation questions:**

1. Are these the right principles?
2. How do we develop a shared understanding of the principles?
3. Are there other principles we should consider?
4. Are there some principles we should prioritise?
The key challenges

Over the next 10 years Higher Education faces great uncertainty. The research base and university-level education are central to economic growth and wider social and cultural development. But there is controversy about the value of Higher Education (HE), with universities increasingly challenged to justify what they do, why they should receive public funding, and what they spend that funding on.

Governments, students and taxpayers expect a return on investment in Higher Education. Universities are under increasing scrutiny (some of which has been negative) and exist in an environment that is both highly competitive and highly regulated. Within this context there are a number of challenges that set the context for our strategy:

- **Changing student and societal expectations**
  How do we meet the changing expectations of students and society about what HE should deliver and what it should be? How do we continually invest in our programmes to keep pace with technological change to ensure that our students can compete in a globally competitive labour market? How do we ensure that all students have an integrated educational experience, that includes the ability to develop and progress by accessing a wide range of skill development tools, as part of their educational experience? How do we adapt to and attract different types of students and diversify the student body? How do we deliver a blended student experience that combines academic rigour, life and technological skills development in a more holistic way?

- **Climate crisis and low carbon transition**
  Response to the climate crisis will bring far-reaching change in this University and in the wider economy and society by 2030. How do we meet the challenge of driving down carbon emissions? If we adopt sustainability as a core principle, how do we ensure it influences everything we do? How do we maintain and enhance our global networks for both staff and students with the minimum carbon impact? How do we manage the Estate and work together? How do we maximise the impact of our research across disciplines in tackling the challenges of climate change? How do we ensure our students have the fullest opportunity, while here and after graduation, to contribute to the development of a carbon neutral society?

- **The changing international context**
  How do we adapt to a world where the West is no longer dominant? How do we ensure that we refocus our activity to develop new markets and respond to demographic change and new investments in HE? How do we develop future research and teaching internationally? What forms of Transnational Education should we develop, and how? How do we ensure that our students have an international experience? How do we co-design and curate partnerships that are
truly global and also of reciprocal benefit? How do we adapt our curriculum to be truly international?

- **The impact of technology**
  How do we ensure that we use technology to its full potential? How much should we invest in technology? How do we reshape learning and research around technology? How do we use technology to change the way we teach and support students? How do we ensure that staff and students develop the skills to adapt to new technologies? How can technology improve the effectiveness of our administrative and academic practices and how do we deliver services? How can technology be used to facilitate a collegiate atmosphere? How do we manage the ethical challenges of new data technologies and keep our community and others safe?

- **Restoring the reputation of HE**
  How can York become a sectoral leader in redressing some of the negative perceptions currently affecting universities’ reputations and demonstrating the positive value and impact of HE to society? How do we ensure - working with others in the City and region - that York is valued for its contribution to society? How do we express the role of universities in bringing public good? How do we engage better with those sceptical of the value of higher education and restore the trust of our communities and wider society?

- **Where will our funding come from?**
  How do we ensure financial sustainability when there are continual challenges and policy shifts that affect our funding streams? How do we ensure a strong financial position whilst living by our principles? What should we stop doing in order to ensure a strong financial position? How do we develop and grow existing sources of funding? What new sources of funding should we look to attract?

**Consultation questions:**

5. Are there other challenges that you can identify?
6. Are there challenges specific to your discipline or department?
7. How might we overcome these challenges and what barriers do we need to eliminate?
8. Are there things that we should stop doing in order to develop new challenges?
Strategic drivers for the next 10 years

• **Curiosity**
  Fundamental to what we do is the search for, and transmission of, new knowledge at the highest levels of excellence. We must provide an environment where our research capacity is matched to ambitious projects. Our courses must nurture curiosity in our students, giving them the tools to question, investigate, challenge and explore. We must find the best ways to be and act as a university. It is crucial that curiosity is not driven out by the challenges that we face.

• **Sustainability**
  If we are to make effective progress towards carbon neutrality, sustainability must underpin and drive all our activities. This impacts particularly on the size and nature of the Campus: how we build and what we build. We must also emphasise sustainability through our research, teaching and partnerships. We must integrate a sustainable approach to community interactions and internationalisation.

• **Civic role**
  In order to fully demonstrate the value of our institution we need to become leaders in our locality and region. We need to play a key role in the economic, social and cultural development of our region and to co-curate solutions with our local and regional communities that can deliver inclusive and sustainable growth.

• **Partnerships**
  The University is not a set of buildings in a single place but the centre of a network of local, national and international relationships. We need to develop our mission through a range of institutions at local, regional and international level. We must think about how we build relationships through other education partners in the region to generate a more integrated sense of education and more variegated educational routes. We need to work with students and other stakeholders on co-design of teaching and research and think of the University as an open, not closed, community.

• **Interdisciplinarity**
  Whilst recognising the continued importance of disciplines we need to think about how we build on our reputation for interdisciplinary work in order to enhance our research and teaching. Interdisciplinarity should be at the core of what we do. Research and teaching needs both a disciplinary and interdisciplinary approach to tackle global problems and to prepare students for an increasingly complex world. How can we ensure our ability to work creatively across disciplinary boundaries?
• **Integrated Student Experience**  
  We will develop an integrated and holistic student experience that recognises that students wish to access higher education in a variety of ways. We need to expand the development of more innovative and flexible programmes that use technology to teach differently and also to allow students to access higher education through a range of routes and potentially over a lifetime. We should think about the degree as a broader set of outcomes that include elements of sustainability, internationalism, employability, and look at the ways that these can be integrated into the curriculum by developing elements that add value to everyone’s educational outcomes.

• **Developing People**  
  We must develop all staff and students, whatever their roles and backgrounds, to their full potential. We must revisit and renew our commitment to inclusion so that it is appropriate to today’s social challenges. We must ensure that the University creates new opportunities fulfilling ways of working and fair working conditions that enrich the lives of all those involved in our community.

• **Internationalism**  
  Staff and students from York should be citizens of the world. Research and teaching need to be integrated into mutually beneficial international partnerships. We need to ensure that students receive an international education and that we develop new ways of delivering international education that is compatible with our sustainability goals and is co-curated with international partners in a spirit of reciprocity and mutual respect.

• **Agility**  
  We need to ensure that the way we organise ourselves fosters and enhances innovation and new ways of thinking so that we can respond effectively and rapidly to new intellectual challenges, changing global market opportunities and challenges, and the demands and interests of students, funding bodies and wider society.

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**Consultation questions:**

9. Are these the right strategic themes and how do we need to prioritise?  
10. Are there others that need to be considered?  
11. What are the priorities for your department?  
12. What do we need to do around investment, organisation and Estates to achieve our strategic goals?