



UNIVERSITY
of York



APPOINTMENT OF VICE-CHANCELLOR AND PRESIDENT

Candidate brochure

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WELCOME FROM THE CHAIR OF COUNCIL

Thank you for your interest in the role of Vice-Chancellor and President at York. As Chair of the University's Governing Body, I am pleased to welcome you to our recruitment process, and share some thoughts to introduce both the opportunity and the University.

The University of York – a Russell Group Institution and a University for Public Good – is a life-changing and life-enhancing place. I know this from first-hand experience. York gave me the chance to benefit from higher education at a time when many other institutions would not. As an Alumna, I've felt the impact that studying at York had on me throughout my life. While much has transformed since I was here, important values have endured. York combines academic excellence, a community ethos, and an inclusive, global outlook. Together, these qualities make a positive difference to people, places and problem-solving around the world.

Joining us as Vice-Chancellor and President offers a unique opportunity to lead during a time of immense ambition and positive transformation. You'll have the chance to build on our refreshed 2035 strategy – which champions world-class education, research, and a deep commitment to our people and locality – with your own insight and experience, guiding the University through continuous evolution.

By balancing internal leadership with significant external presence and influence, and making best use of your time and your team, you'll achieve maximum impact: you'll lead the University in growing our student body, enhancing the student experience and sharpening our research impact. We are looking for an accomplished leader who can navigate complex challenges with clarity, compassion and confidence, fostering our strong community values while overseeing the renewal of our digital and physical infrastructure to secure a vibrant and sustainable future.

You'll have the chance to do this as part of one of the UK's favourite and most historic cities, in a region where the University has an integral role and standing. You'll benefit from strong, constructive and pragmatic support (and challenge) from an experienced Governing Body, and a Chair who is invested in your development and success.

If this sounds like the leadership role you are looking for, then we can't wait to meet you. We look forward to receiving your application.



Alice Maynard
Chair of Council

A UNIVERSITY FOR PUBLIC GOOD: OUR STRATEGY TO 2035

The University of York's Strategic Vision to 2030 was published in January 2020, immediately preceding one of the most turbulent periods for UK higher education in decades.

Against this backdrop, we have continued to align our academic excellence with bold economic and global ambitions: from the 2026 opening of University of York Mumbai to our pivotal role in shaping the York and North Yorkshire Combined Authority's Growth Plan.

Our commitment to the public good is unwavering, yet our strategy must adapt to an evolving landscape. In 2026, we worked with our community to refine our strategic aims, sharpening our focus and strengthening our resilience for the years ahead.

Our aims

- Curiosity-driven and action-oriented research
- Education that empowers
- Civic engagement and regional partnership
- Global partnership and impact
- What connects us: people, place and purpose
- Securing financial resilience

Our principles

Though we have refreshed our strategy aims, the principles at the heart of our mission remain unchanged:

- Interdisciplinarity
- Inclusion
- Internationalism
- Environmental sustainability

Read more about [our strategy refresh](#)

OUR INSTITUTION IN NUMBERS

Scale and financial strength

20,020

Total students (FTE)*

£555m

Total income*

£107m

Total research income*

*Source: University of York Annual Report and Financial Statements 2025

Academic and research excellence

10th

for research quality
in the *Times Higher
Education* ranking
of the latest
Research Excellence
Framework results
(2021)



Awarded TEF Gold
in Teaching
Excellence
Framework 2023



205

scientists in top 2%
worldwide
Stanford/Elsevier
Top 2% Scientist
Rankings

20th

in *The Times* and
The Sunday Times
Good University
Guide 2026 and
Complete University
Guide 2027

158th

in the QS World
University Rankings
2027



88%

**of York students were in work
or further study within 15
months of graduation.**

(HESA Graduate Outcomes
Survey 2023/24)



TOP 2%

in the world for sustainability

12th in the UK and
34th globally in the QS
Sustainability Rankings 2025



54,000

**attendees to
York Festival of Ideas
(2025)**



22

Athena Swan awards

4 gold
6 silver
12 bronze



THE FOUNDATIONS OF OUR MISSION

Since 1963, York has built a global reputation for academic excellence and tackling pressing global challenges. As a research-intensive Russell Group institution, we are one of only four UK universities – alongside Oxford, Cambridge, and Imperial College London – to achieve both a top-ten ranking for research quality and the highest TEF Gold rating for teaching excellence.

Curiosity-driven and action-oriented research

York's research connects fundamental discovery to practical, real-world solutions – from climate security and health innovation to safer autonomous technologies. In a milestone year, York raised a record £107m in research grants and contracts, backed by a top-ten national REF ranking and over 200 researchers in the global top 2%. Major national initiatives include leading the NIHR School for Social Care Research (£31m investment) and expanding industry-facing facilities like the Institute for Safe Autonomy. We lead key regional R&D partnerships, including the BioIndustrial Cluster North macro-cluster, and are shaping the innovation strategy for the £1.5bn York Central development.

Education that empowers

Climbing to 158th in the QS World University Rankings 2027 and maintaining top-20 national placements, York combines academic excellence with a commitment to widening access as the 'University of Opportunity'. Supported by our TEF Gold rating, we deliver curricula that inspire lifelong learning, achieving 90% student satisfaction for academic support and learning resources. Hands-on learning is embedded across disciplines, evidenced by student projects in our University Sustainability Clinic and our new School of Architecture, while global access is expanded through over 40 free online courses.

Civic engagement and regional partnership

Named Community University of the Year (The Mail University Guide 2026), York acts as a civic catalyst, partnering with regional government, industry and voluntary sectors. We helped shape the York and North Yorkshire devolution deal and drive regional Net Zero ambitions through BioYorkshire. Our twin delivery arms – Enterprise Works and the York Policy Engine – translate research into local businesses, jobs and evidence-based policy. Based at the historic Guildhall, Enterprise Works hosts the city's Barclays Eagle Lab and a Founder Advisory Board. Complementing this, York Ignite supports over 100 tech, biotech and creative businesses, using its Phase One incubator to turn early-stage ideas into scalable ventures. Through partnerships like IntoUniversity, we support community learning centres across the region, and our flagship York Festival of Ideas engages over 54,000 attendees annually across 263 free events.

Global partnerships and impact

York is extending its international reach through bold global initiatives, highlighted by the opening of the University of York Mumbai in 2026 – a research-led campus aligning with India's growth in health, biotech and digital technology. In Europe, our footprint includes CITY U.L.E. in Greece and our strategic alliance, the York-Maastricht Partnership. Supported by 20 global progression agreements, York ranks 7th in the world for international collaborations tackling the UN Sustainable Development Goals (QS Sustainability Rankings).

What connects us: people, place and purpose

At York, our greatest achievements come from a shared sense of purpose, belonging and togetherness. We are a collaborative, values-driven community where every individual is supported to achieve their full potential for the public good. Our annual Inclusive Impact Awards celebrate the teams and initiatives driving purposeful change across our University. We also operate our campus as a living lab, applying academic insight and professional expertise to real-world challenges in health, technology and sustainability. Looking ahead, we are engaging staff and students to shape a decade-long transformation of our physical campus. Across all of these plans, we prioritise community wellbeing to ensure everyone feels valued, supported and empowered to flourish.

Securing financial resilience

To protect against external volatility and enable strategic investment, we are actively strengthening our recurring operating surplus. International expansion – including projected returns from our Mumbai campus – plays a vital role in revenue growth. We are expanding non-public income streams through our Building Industry Engagement and Impact initiative, professional short courses, and a £35m deep geothermal project to cut campus emissions. Alongside commercial growth, our philanthropic support continues to build momentum: recognised in the 'Advanced' cluster of the annual CASE Insights on Philanthropy Survey, York outperformed peers in donor numbers and retention, securing £12.8m in cash and £10m in pledges in 2025/26 as we prepare for our next major comprehensive campaign.

**Read more about
[our institutional foundations](#)
[and university profile](#)**



LIVING, WORKING AND DRIVING IMPACT

Global York

York is part of a thriving international community of students, staff, alumni and partners. We offer transformative study opportunities, collaborate on groundbreaking research worldwide, and build partnerships that tackle the world's most pressing challenges. With research and teaching collaborations in over 50 countries - from the York-Maastricht Partnership in Europe to the University of York Mumbai - we aim to contribute to the public good on a truly global scale and improve lives through research and education.

Our city and region

The University of York powers regional transformation, leveraging academic excellence, graduate talent and its convening power to drive economic delivery across government, industry, education and community partners. As a proactive regional anchor, we maintain strategic connections across government hubs, including No. 10 of the North and the Darlington Economic Campus

Major urban regeneration and pan-regional growth

We connect this global capability directly into regional growth across the North of England. Through initiatives like the BioIndustrial Cluster North, aligning York's R&D leadership with Tees Valley's manufacturing scale, and the York-Teesside Skills Compact, we build technical skills pipelines for high-growth sectors and translate our research footprint into pan-regional economic delivery.

Living and working in York

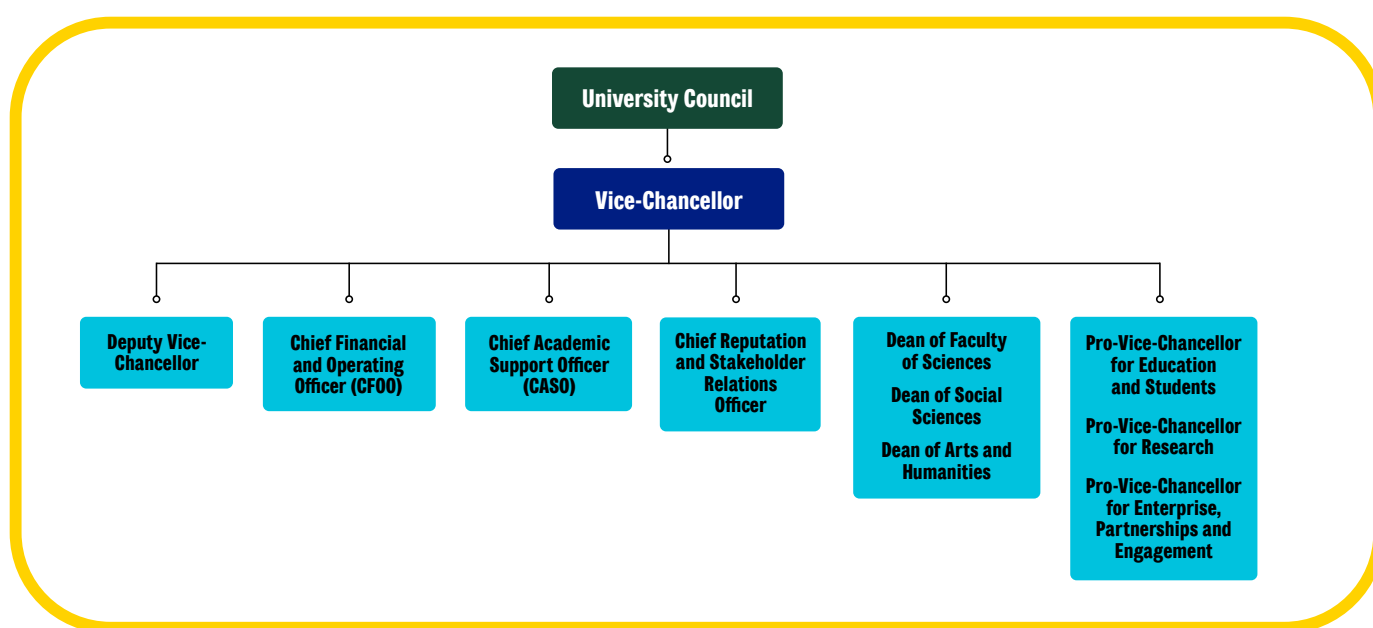
At the heart of this vision is York itself, a city consistently recognised for its exceptional quality of life, outstanding state education, safety and connectivity. Through the £1.5bn York Central brownfield development, we aim to establish a Science Policy Campus and Innovation Hub alongside major government departments (including Defra, Cabinet Office, and MHCLG). By aligning our academic capabilities with the Mayoral Combined Authority and regional leaders, we demonstrate how economic growth, Net Zero transitions and civic wellbeing flourish together across North Yorkshire.



**GLOBAL YORK:
MUMBAI - GREECE - ONLINE**

**Read more about
our global impact**

LEADERSHIP, GOVERNANCE AND FINANCIAL PROFILE



Executive leadership

The Vice-Chancellor and President provides overall institutional leadership, guiding strategy, values and performance. As chief academic and administrative officer, the Vice-Chancellor chairs the University Executive Board (UEB), supported by senior executive portfolios across academic, financial, operational and stakeholder domains.

Governance and accountability

Dr Heather Melville OBE serves as Chancellor, the ceremonial head of the University. Governance is structured around three key bodies:

- **Council:** The corporate governing body and trustee board holding ultimate accountability for institutional strategy, performance and financial sustainability. Council is led by Chair of Council Dr Alice Maynard.
- **Senate:** Works on behalf of Council to provide academic governance and assurance, directing academic policy, quality and standards.

- **University Executive Board (UEB):** The senior leadership body driving strategy execution, resourcing and risk management.

Financial profile and sustainability

York maintains a stable financial position through tight budgetary control and expanding non-public income. We are focused on securing long-term resilience through a strong recurring operating surplus, providing the platform to invest with confidence in digital transformation, estate modernisation and net-zero capital projects.

**Read more about
[our governance](#) and
[performance](#)**

OUR COMMITMENT TO EQUALITY, DIVERSITY AND INCLUSION

Founded on principles of excellence, equality and opportunity for all, our commitment to Equality, Diversity and Inclusion (EDI) is over sixty years old. Today, EDI sits at the heart of our vision as a University for Public Good, guiding how we create an environment where staff and students from around the world can flourish.

Embedding inclusive practice

We are embedding inclusive practice across our systems, culture and academic priorities. This includes enhancing digital and physical accessibility, eliminating student awarding gaps, diversifying our curriculum, and closing gender, ethnicity and disability pay gaps. Through our Research Culture Action Plan and refined promotion pathways, we support under-represented groups and foster belonging across our entire community.

Inviting diverse leadership

To deliver on these ambitions, we seek colleagues who bring a genuine commitment to inclusivity across research, education and partnerships. Because candidates from Black, Asian, and Minority Ethnic backgrounds are currently under-represented within senior leadership roles at the University, applications from these backgrounds are strongly encouraged as we build a more diverse leadership team.



**Read more about
our commitments
to equality, diversity
and inclusion**

THE ROLE DESCRIPTION AND PERSON SPECIFICATION

Executive context and introduction

Following a period of significant strategic, financial and cultural consolidation, the University is seeking a new Vice-Chancellor and President to guide the institution through its next phase of evolution and development.

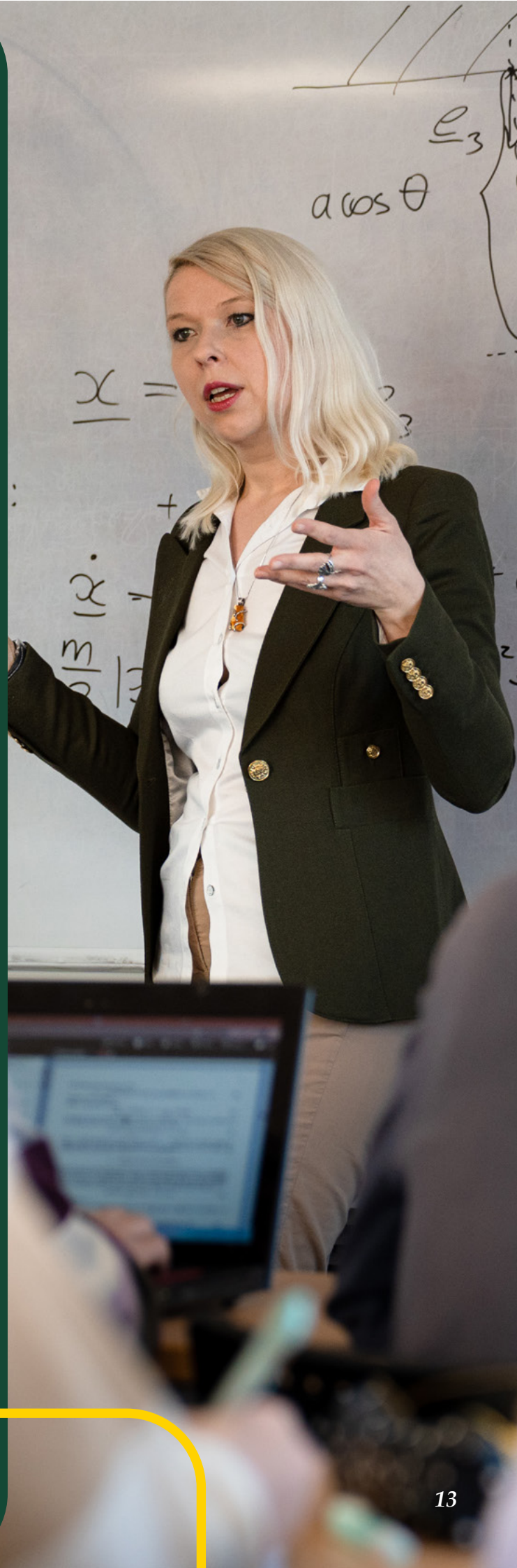
The incoming Vice-Chancellor will lead York at a pivotal moment in the higher education landscape. Operating in an environment marked by broader sector funding pressures, shifting international student dynamics and rapid technological disruption, the next VC will need to combine authentic, values-led leadership with commercial acumen and strategic decisiveness.

Rather than a wholesale overhaul, the University seeks a leader who functions as a conductor, not a composer, guiding and elevating our existing trajectory. We want someone who values our collaborative culture and builds on the recent Strategy Refresh, while exercising the strategic vision to adapt priorities in a changing context, drive fresh initiatives, and shape our long-term impact. The Vice-Chancellor will be tasked with consolidating strategic focus, sharpening operational priorities, driving financial sustainability through intelligent growth, and fostering a workplace culture of wellbeing, transparency and innovation.



Strategic context

- **Evolution, focus and delivery:** Respecting the collective effort invested in the 2035 strategy by prioritising consolidation, delivery, and a willingness to make hard choices rather than imposing structural overhauls.
- **Financial sustainability and income diversification:** Navigating sector-wide funding challenges as a structurally lean Russell Group institution. Requiring commercial confidence, tactical financial acumen, and the ambition to pursue growth across diverse streams while protecting academic quality and core values.
- **Culture, wellbeing and workplace trust:** Actively nurturing a people-centred, low-bureaucracy and collegial culture. Addressing staff workload, reducing over-engineered processes, enhancing operational support, and building trust through transparent communication.
- **Teaching quality and student experience:** Driving institutional consistency in teaching excellence to safeguard TEF Gold, improve NSS outcomes, modernise curricula for a diverse student body, and embed whole-university approaches to employability and work-related learning.
- **Research ambition and commercialisation:** Championing research at the highest levels. Driving larger collaborative research bids, elevating commercialisation and industry-funded research outcomes, and ensuring research remains central to strategic decision-making.
- **AI and estates transformation:** Treating AI as a strategic imperative reshaping teaching, research and operating models. Matched by a commitment to delivering on physical estate plans and modernising digital infrastructure.
- **Civic leadership and regional devolution:** Maximising York's role as an anchor institution by exploiting regional opportunities through the Combined Authority, York Central, the BioIndustrial Cluster North and national policy advocacy.
- **Equality, Diversity and Inclusion (EDI):** Providing bold, intentional leadership on EDI with explicit, proactive focus on increasing the diversity of representation at senior levels to ensure the institution becomes a true beacon of inclusion.



Role purpose and key accountabilities

The Vice-Chancellor and President is the chief executive and chief accountable officer of the University, responsible to Council for providing overall academic, operational, and financial leadership. The Vice-Chancellor will ensure that the University remains guided by its Public Good ethos, achieves operational resilience, and sustains its standing as a research and teaching powerhouse.

1. Strategic leadership and institutional purpose

- Champion the operational definition of 'University for Public Good', using it as a practical framework for institutional decision-making and strategic choices.
- Lead the consolidation and delivery of the University's strategic plans, translating high-level vision into clear, prioritised and measurable deliverables, without creating change fatigue.
- Exercise strategic courage and decisiveness: demonstrate the willingness to prioritise, streamline activities, say "no" where necessary, and lead difficult conversations directly and humanely.
- Create the conditions for considered risk-taking, cutting through over-engineered administrative processes and excessive approvals to empower staff to innovate.

2. Financial sustainability and commercial growth

- Work closely with Council, the Treasurer and the University Executive Board to secure the long-term financial resilience of the University amid sector funding pressures.
- Drive a proactive growth agenda by expanding and diversifying income streams.
- Strengthen industrial and corporate partnerships, capitalising on major civic initiatives to maximise external research and innovation funding.

- Ensure financial strategies support and protect the core academic mission, staff welfare and academic quality.

3. Culture, people and workplace wellbeing

- Model an authentic, approachable, highly visible and consultative leadership style that builds trust and upholds York's collegiate heritage.
- Address staff workload and wellbeing by simplifying processes, streamlining bureaucracy, and strengthening professional services and academic support structures.
- Drive ambitious, measurable progress in Equality, Diversity and Inclusion (EDI), taking direct accountability for advancing racial equity, gender representation and inclusive institutional practices.
- Maintain open, constructive and transparent dialogue with campus trade unions, Senate, student bodies and staff networks.

4. Academic mission: research, teaching and AI integration

- Actively champion research at the highest levels of governance, fostering ambitious collaborative bids and elevating commercialisation and industry income.
- Lead a culture of continuous improvement in teaching quality and student experience, ensuring consistency across departments to protect TEF Gold status, improve NSS outcomes, and modernise graduate employability pathways.
- Position the University at the forefront of AI integration, treating technological change as a strategic priority that impacts pedagogy, research methodology, operating models and digital estate planning.
- Champion the holistic student experience – fostering strong, collaborative relationships with the Students' Union and student representatives to ensure student needs remain at the heart of governance.

5. Civic, regional and global external engagement

- Act as an influential advocate and sector voice for York, engaging actively with local government, the Combined Authority, regional devolution opportunities, and national HE policy conversations.
- Leverage major regional and civic developments, such as York Central and the BioIndustrial Cluster North to position the University as an indispensable anchor institution.
- Build and sustain strategic international partnerships that enhance the University's global reputation, research reach and student diversity.

6. Governance and compliance

- Maintain an open and effective working relationship with the Chair of Council, recognising the Chair's role in holding the Vice-Chancellor to account on behalf of Council, while fostering constructive engagement with all Council members.
- Chair the Senate effectively, promoting robust academic governance, high standards and meaningful consultation.
- Fulfill all responsibilities as Chief Accountable Officer under Office for Students (OfS) regulations and other relevant statutory frameworks.



Person specification

Leadership and values

- Deep commitment to the ethos of 'University for Public Good' and the ability to apply it as a clear decision-making framework.
- Authentic and collegial leadership style – someone who listens, respects existing progress, and leads with empathy and trust.
- High personal visibility, approachability and presence within the campus community and the city of York.
- Courage and resilience to make hard choices, drive necessary operational changes, and personally navigate difficult conversations with skill and humanity.
- Significant experience in a senior leadership or board-level capacity within a complex, research-intensive higher education institution.
- A commitment to student-centred leadership, ensuring student voices and wellbeing remain central to all institutional decision-making.

Academic credibility

- Proven academic credibility with a personal track record as an academic, demonstrating deep understanding of the culture, complexity and intrinsic value of a research-intensive university.
- Proven ability to champion both research excellence and high-quality, inclusive teaching/ student experience with equal vigour.

Financial and commercial acumen

- Outstanding financial literacy and strategic budget management experience within a complex, multi-faceted organisation.
- Commercial confidence and a proven track record of driving income growth and diversification (eg CPD, TNE, industry partnerships, commercialisation and philanthropy) rather than relying solely on cost management.

Operational and strategic capability

- Proven ability to translate broad strategic plans into prioritised, deliverable outcomes without causing change fatigue or over-bureaucratisation.

- Capacity to foster considered risk-taking, streamline over-engineered approval processes, and modernise operational and digital estates.
- Strategic understanding of AI as a transformative operational, pedagogical and research driver.
- Proven track record of strategic decision-making and navigating institutional governance.

Equality, diversity and inclusion

- Explicit commitment to advancing EDI, with a demonstrable track record of taking bold, practical action on racial equity, gender diversity and widening participation.
- Experience leading inclusive institutional cultures where diverse communities feel heard, valued and supported.

People management and culture

- Proven ability to build, inspire and empower high-performing senior teams and a diverse staff body.
- Deep commitment to staff wellbeing, workload management, professional services support, and open union engagement.

External relations and advocacy

- Exceptional ambassadorial, communication and political skills with the ability to influence government, sector bodies and commercial partners.
- Track record of leveraging regional opportunities, civic initiatives and global networks to enhance institutional standing and impact.



HOW TO APPLY AND TIMELINE

The University of York has retained the services of Perrett Laver to help identify the widest possible field of suitable candidates and to assist in the assessment of candidates against the requirements for the role.

Applications should consist of a CV and supporting statement which includes a brief overview of your experience with relevance to the personal specification as well as an indication of the reasons for your interest in this opportunity.

Completed applications should be uploaded to www.PLusPortal.PerrettLaver.com quoting **reference number 8551**.

For a confidential informal conversation about the role, please contact Thomas.Cameron@perrettlaver.com.

The deadline for the receipt of applications is 9am BST on Wednesday 7 October 2026.

Longlisted candidates will be invited to meet with Perrett Laver during the weeks commencing 12, 19 and 26 October 2026. Shortlisted candidates will be invited to visit the University during the week commencing 16 November 2026.

Final interviews will take place on Thursday 26 and Friday 27 November 2026.

If you require any reasonable adjustments to assist you in the selection process, please advise us of these so that we can make appropriate arrangements.

The University of York encourages applications from people who identify as Black, Asian or from a Minority Ethnic background, who are underrepresented at the University.

As a Disability Confident employer, the University of York will ensure that a fair and proportionate number of disabled applicants that meet the minimum (essential) criteria for each position will be offered an interview. Read more about the University of York's commitments under the **Disability Confident scheme**.

Protecting your personal data is of the utmost importance to Perrett Laver and we take this responsibility very seriously. Any information obtained by our trading divisions is held and processed in accordance with the relevant data protection legislation. The data you provide us with is securely stored on our computerised database and transferred to our clients for the purposes of presenting you as a candidate and/or considering your suitability for a role you have registered interest in.

Perrett Laver is a Data Controller and a Data Processor, and our legal basis for processing your personal data is 'Legitimate Interests'. You have the right to object to us processing your data in this way. For more information about this, your rights, and our approach to Data Protection and Privacy, please visit our website www.perrettlaver.com/privacy-statement

