

# University of York

## Senate

### Executive summary of the meeting held 8 July 2025

#### Vice-Chancellor and President's report

1. Senate **considered** an overview report from the Vice-Chancellor, and **noted** the University's success in the most recent round of European Research Council funding awards; and the anticipated award by the Greek government in the near future of university status to City College, which would open up additional areas for collaboration and development
2. The Vice-Chancellor also updated Senate that although the recent Spending Review and Industrial Strategy announcements by the government created important opportunities for universities, overall the external environment for universities remained very challenging due to the negative financial impact of a succession of government decisions and the current lack of a clear overarching government strategy for higher education (which suggested that the sector was not viewed by the government as a priority). The University's current cost saving measures had been developed in response to these and other challenges. The University was now very close to meeting the target savings for the current round, which it hoped to do through voluntary means although there remained the possibility of a small number of redundancies.
3. Senate **noted** the concern identified by some members about implications for students of the recently announced decision to close the Centre for Lifelong Learning, in response to which it was **reported** that a range of steps were being put in place to allow these students to complete their studies. A question was also raised about the University's involvement as a partner in a bid for an AI Growth Zone, as another partner in this bid was Drax. Concern was expressed given environmental impact of Drax's activities and some of the steps it had taken in response to protests about its activities; and in response it was **noted** that the University's role in this partnership would relate to research and innovation, and that the issues identified by Senate would be kept under review and consideration by University Research Committee should the bid progress.

#### University of York Mumbai

4. Senate **considered** papers on the development of this initiative, and University of York Mumbai's Academic Mission, along with a presentation by Professor Atul Khosla (representing the University's partners in this development). Senate **noted**: the significant opportunity presented by this development, including to raise the University's profile in India in a way that was likely to support efforts to reverse recent declines in the recruitment of students from India to study at the York campus; the University's responsibilities in this partnership (including ensuring that Office for Students (OfS) requirements were met), and the provisions that were being made to allow and ensure that these responsibilities were met and which would be set out in the contract for the joint venture that would be established for the University of York Mumbai; and that University of York Mumbai would both deliver education and undertake research, making it distinctive compared to campuses in India currently being established by other UK universities.

#### Quality Framework for University of York Collaborative Provision Educational Partnerships

5. Senate **considered** a proposed Framework that would govern all such partnership activity, and **noted**: the proposed Framework built on existing University approaches to assuring academic quality and standards, while also drawing on practice at comparator universities and ensuring that the regulatory requirements of OfS would be met; if the Framework was approved a detailed Quality Manual would be developed, to ensure effective implementation of the Framework; and that by putting in place the proposed framework the University would be able to assure consistency across

multiple partnerships, as it sought to increase its partnership provision. Senate **approved** the Framework.

### **Financial Sustainable Strategy**

6. Senate **considered** the paper. The Chair **reported** that this paper set out the approach the University intended to take to ensure institutional sustainability in response to the external challenges outlined in his earlier report, drawing on perspectives and inputs from across the University. Senate **agreed** that to support this, its next meeting should be extended so that following a shorter formal meeting a workshop-style informal session considering the issues set out in the paper could be held.

### **Research Excellence Framework**

7. Senate **considered** a report on recent and forthcoming developments in relation to the next REF (due in 2029). Senate **noted** the work that was being, and would be, taken forward to prepare for REF2029; the significant change since the last REF to decouple staff and outputs, the implications of which would need to be carefully considered; the University's overall strategic aim for REF2029 to maximise its grade point average; and the importance of ensuring that sufficient and appropriate resource was in place, at the right organisational levels, to support REF preparations.

### **Personal Relationships Policy**

8. Senate **considered** a proposed revised Personal Relationships Policy, prohibiting (with clearly defined exceptions) intimate personal relationships between students and staff where a member of staff has or is likely to have direct academic or professional responsibilities for the student; and requirements for staff-staff relationships where there is a potential conflict of interest or abuse of power. The revised policy would address the requirements of the new OfS condition of registration on harassment and sexual misconduct, and the requirements of the 2024 Worker Protection Act. Senate **agreed** to approve the revised Personal Relationships Policy.

### **Proposed Revisions to the Code of Practice on Academic Freedom and Freedom of Speech**

9. Senate **noted** the work to address the academic freedom, freedom of speech and governance issues arising from the OfS judgment against the University of Sussex, and the recent OfS Regulatory Advice on academic freedom and freedom of speech; the constructive and useful listening exercise that had recently concluded to hear views from across the University on the implications of the Supreme Court judgment on aspects of the 2010 Equality Act; and that work was continuing to consider and take forward those implications. Senate **agreed** to recommend to Constitutions and Nominations Committee and Council approval of the revisions to the Code of Practice.

### **Planning Committee**

10. Senate **agreed** to approve the abolition of Planning Committee as a joint committee of Senate and UEB, noting that its responsibilities were now being carried out in other ways.

### **Sub-committee Minutes, Summaries and Other Reports**

11. Senate **noted** reports from the following sub-committee meetings:
  - a. University Teaching Committee, 27 Mar., 15 May and June 2025.
  - b. University Research Committee, 30 Apr. and 18 June 2025.
  - c. Student Life Committee, 19 June 2025.
  - d. HYMS Joint Senate Committee, 1 May 2025.
12. Senate approved revisions to Regulations 2, 5, 6 and 7; the abolition of Regulation 1; and the creation of the new award title Master of Public Policy.