

KNOWLEDGE EXCHANGE NEWS 26

'BEST AAKTP' AWARD AND THE 'CHANGING THE WORLD' AWARD FOR UNIVERSITY OF YORK KTP TEAM

The University of York's Knowledge Transfer Partnerships (KTP) Team (Rukmal Abeysekera, Fiona Bond and Katie Ritchie) and three project partners recently applied for six awards in four categories at the prestigious 2024 KTP Awards. Three of these applications were nominated as finalists in three categories.

Their African Agriculture Knowledge Transfer Partnership (AAKTP), a collaboration with the University of York School for Business and Society, the University for Development Studies, Ghana, and Savannah & Sahel Commodities Ltd, Ghana, was nominated finalist for both the 'Best AAKTP' Award and the 'Changing the World' award for work on the development of a product to fight malnutrition in Northern Ghana. The University of York's KTP with Tozer Seeds and the Department of Biology was also nominated finalist for the 'KTP Technical Excellence' award for work on plant breeding methods.

On the awards night in November 2024, the AAKTP team won in both of the categories for which they were nominated as finalists and were absolutely thrilled with the outcome.

A **recently published case study** provides more information about the project. The project has recently featured in the United Nations (UN) magazine 'Envoy'.

For further details or inquiries, please email ktp@york.ac.uk



FIRST 100 DAYS...

Hannah Gray, Head of Public Involvement and Participatory Research (PIPR)

I was one of the key architects of **Involvement@York (I@Y)**, the University's public involvement network, along with Louisa Shilton, Rowena Jacobs and a supportive steering group of senior academics, external partners and members of the public. When the opportunity came up to work with I@Y again, along with the wider University community, it was one I was keen to take.

I@Y makes it easier for researchers and members of the public to work together. By connecting researchers and people with lived experience, patients, carers and the public, we facilitate their working together, to improve the reach, relevance, quality and impact of research at York. I@Y is also striving to make research, the research process and our research culture more open and accessible to all members of the public.

My first 100 days have been about familiarising myself with the day-to-day expert service the team provides to guide, advise and support researchers and the public. I've also been understanding our capacity building activities to strengthen public involvement at York and getting to grips with our bigger remit, which now includes participatory research approaches and all research disciplines at York.

My focus since returning to I@Y has been to ensure we have the right foundations in place for working with the public more frequently and in greater numbers. This has included working with the **Policy Integrity and Performance team** to revise the **Payment Policy**, gaining University Research Council approval, and organising upcoming communications so staff know the information is available. We're now looking at what support and guidance researchers need to ensure good ethical practice when collaborating with the public.

If you would like I@Y to help you with involving the public in your research please get in touch by emailing the team at involvement@york.ac.uk.



Boost the impact of your research: upcoming training opportunity on connecting with business and external organisations

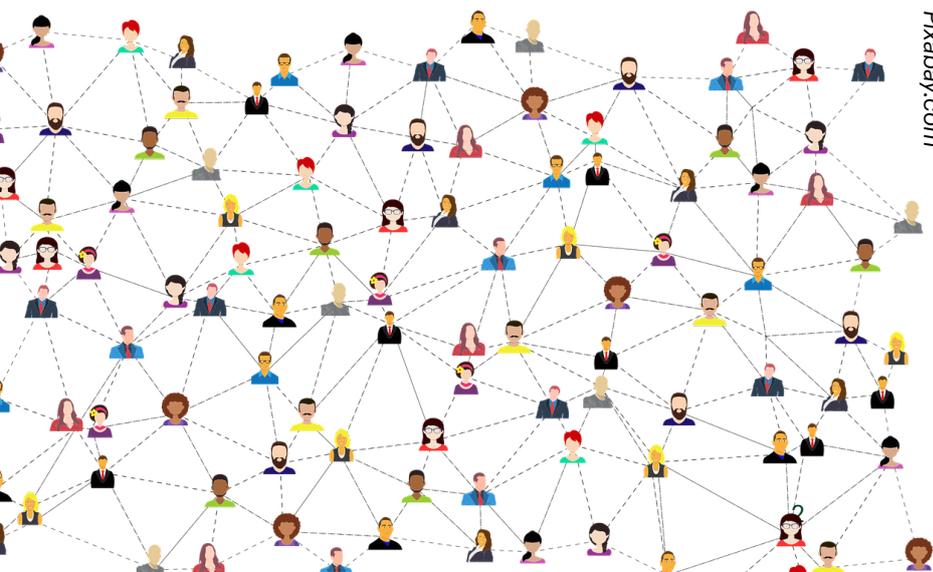
Collaborating with non-academic partners such as businesses, NGOs and charities can increase the impact of your research.

Connecting with Business and External Organisations is a 2-day course that equips researchers with the skills, tools and confidence to work more effectively with external partners.

This course is being delivered by skills development trainers **Skillfluence**, and is designed for York researchers interested in collaborating with non-academic organisations or who want to expand and deepen their existing external relationships. Topics we will explore include communicating the value of your work, identifying and pursuing opportunities, and strengthening your professional presence.

Register for the taster webinar or express your interest in the full course.

Places on the full course are limited and the deadline to apply for a place is 5.00pm on Wednesday 5 February. For further information please see the course [webpage](#) or contact impact-and-ke-training@york.ac.uk.



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IMPROVING OUR INDUSTRIAL ENGAGEMENT

The Building Industrial Engagement and Impact (BIEI) Senior research fellows at the University of York are providing opportunities for pioneering research and impactful collaboration with industry. In this news edition we continue to showcase their work driving innovation and addressing complex challenges in their respective fields.

Forensic Speech Services – Bridging the gap between research and practice

Building Industrial Engagement and Impact (BIEI) Research Fellow Dr Jessica Wormald



Forensic speech science (FSS) is the analysis of speech and audio in legal contexts with a principal task being forensic speaker comparison. This involves comparing an unknown voice in a recording with a suspect's voice to assess how likely it is that they came from the same speaker. Experts in linguistics and phonetics employ various techniques to examine speech and audio recordings in support of legal cases globally.

In recent years there have been significant methodological and regulatory developments. These changes have taken place outside of the everyday domain of practitioners, who are focussed on addressing the steady increase in the amount of work. Thus, many are unable to take advantage of new methodologies or fulfil the growing regulatory requirements.

Dr Jessica Wormald, with her extensive experience in research and forensic practice, is spearheading the Partnership acceleration and commercial engagement **(PACE) funded Forensic Speech Services (FoSS) project** at York. FoSS aims to bridge the gap between research and practice in forensic speech science by offering a range of services, including Continuing Professional Development (CPD) courses to enhance knowledge and awareness. The project will also host collaborative workshops with practitioners to address regulatory challenges and provide state-of-the-art forensic casework and consultancy services. In her BIEI role, Dr Wormald will foster collaboration between industry, practitioners, and researchers to develop innovative solutions and support the future of forensic speech science.



Climate Solutions and Social Value: A Just Transition for All

Building Industrial Engagement and Impact (BIEI) Research Fellow Dr Stephen Hall



I joined the University of York from the philanthropy and climate innovation sector. Before this I was Associate Professor of Sustainable Cities at the University of Leeds.

I have three things I want to do.

Firstly, I want to research the political economy of climate change innovation, focussing on the impact of climate policy on different stakeholders. As an energy geek, I'm particularly interested in the details of energy economics and policy, and I have ambitious plans for the future of the energy sector. At York, I'm also keen to expand my research into other sectors, as the questions of responsible innovation, social value and a just transition to net zero greenhouse gas emissions are relevant across various sectors including health, food, water and waste, driven by the demand for climate solutions that create social value.

The second priority for me is to build a platform for colleagues to join me working with industry and business on consultancy and collaborative research. The first few times I worked directly with industry I was worried it would take me away from developing my theoretical interests. I was wrong; if anything it challenged me to reverse my thinking and ask, 'can what works in practice work in theory?'

Working with industry has led to some of my most interesting theoretical outputs and is currently driving new industrial collaborations my way. I have worked with household name energy and engineering companies, all of whom are tackling their own big questions about how to respond to the climate emergency. In 2025 I will be launching a platform at York so that researchers can use simple innovation tools to forge collaborations with businesses and find new partners for their next intellectual challenge. If that sounds like something you want to join in with **don't wait for me to find you, get in touch!**

Finally, I have some gnarly theoretical work I want to do. My research on climate action consistently shows that we need to radically rethink the economic principles governing our essential infrastructure systems. I believe now is the perfect time to develop transformative approaches to energy and other large commercial sectors. I've found that commercial partners, especially newcomers to established markets, are surprisingly open to disruptive ideas. Allies can emerge from unexpected places!

Reach out to me: steve.hall@york.ac.uk

REF ESSENTIALS: ASSESSING RESEARCH EXCELLENCE

REF 2029

Research Excellence Framework

What is the REF?

The Research Excellence Framework (REF) is an exercise run by Research England every 7 to 8 years that evaluates the quality of funded research activities in UK higher education institutions. The framework is used to **allocate block-grant research funding to HEIs** and to provide accountability for public investment in research.

What is the REF process?

Each time the REF is run, the framework is amended to reflect feedback from the sector on the last exercise. New guidance is provided one or two years before submission, and on a specified date, Higher Education Institutions (HEIs) submit research outputs,

data on the research environment such as research income and PGR student completions, and impact case studies. Expert panels evaluate these submissions within their respective disciplines. The four UK funding bodies appoint the members of the REF panels.

In anticipation of the final submission of REF, UoY will run internal processes (eg “REF checks”) periodically to support the preparation of our submissions.

What is REF Impact?

One of the elements of the REF is for HEIs to demonstrate the impact of their research on wider society. The framework defines impact “as an effect on, change or benefit to the economy, society, culture,

public policy or services, health, the environment or quality of life, beyond academia.”

Case studies of impact submitted to previous REFs are published online in a searchable **Impact case study database**. In REF 2029, impact case studies will be submitted as part of the “Engagement and Impact” element, which will have a 25% weighting of the overall scoring. An increased focus on engagement is meant to encourage HEIs to include a wider range of impact-enabling activities in the element.

For further information, please contact **Sanna Melin Schyllert**, our Research Excellence Manager.

Northern Accelerator awarded Place-based Knowledge Exchange Initiative of the Year

Northern Accelerator, a collaboration of universities in the North East of England, has won the Place-Based Knowledge Exchange Initiative of the Year award at the Knowledge Exchange UK (previously PraxisAuril) KE Awards 2024. The awards showcase the remarkable accomplishments and contributions of professionals, teams and initiatives within the knowledge exchange sector.

The award recognised Northern Accelerator’s success in promoting economic growth, innovation and social value in the region by helping academics commercialise their research by creating spinout businesses.

The program, which provides training, funding, networking and executive leadership support has created over 50 businesses. Feedback from the panel recognised that Northern Accelerator’s approach is collaborative, involving knowledge exchange professionals from all partner universities, and was successful in fostering a thriving innovation ecosystem in the North East. Sharing success stories about KE innovation and its positive outcomes and the case studies provide valuable insights that can be adapted and applied to various new areas within the knowledge exchange sector.

Northern Accelerator has been awarded the prestigious Place-Based Knowledge Exchange (KE) Initiative of the Year at the **PraxisAuril Knowledge Exchange Awards 2024**.

