UNIVERSITY of York

KNOWLEDGE EXCHANGE NEWS 35

New NatWest Accelerator Hub to support staff and student entrepreneurial ambitions

The University of York has entered a new strategic partnership with NatWest aimed at boosting regional enterprise, innovation and economic growth.

The NatWest Accelerator Hub is open now and can be found on campus next to the **Innovation Centre**. It offers a range of tailored business growth programmes and a physical space for founders, students, staff and regional entrepreneurs to develop essential business skills.

NatWest CEO Paul Thwaite and Professor Charlie Jeffery, Vice-Chancellor and President at the University of York during the NatWest visit to the University earlier this year.

Programmes include:

- **Sales Accelerator:** a 12-week series of expert-led events, coaching and unique opportunities to boost sales success for businesses.
- **Funding Accelerator:** a 12-week series of expert-led events, coaching and unique experiences to help businesses secure funding.
- **Leadership Development:** Self-led modules, masterclasses and mentoring designed to support business leaders in their growth.
- **Group Coaching:** explore challenges, gain clarity, practise pitching and build confidence with peer support in a structured, safe space.

The partnership comes as new data from NatWest reveals that businesses completing their Accelerator programme grow their turnover by an average of 104% per year.

Entrepreneurs also benefit from a suite of digital tools via a dedicated app. This provides access to an online business community to refine ideas, connect with peers and scale ventures.

Departments and teams involved in enterprise activity are encouraged to engage with the NatWest Accelerator team to explore how they can support and enhance existing initiatives, provide valuable connections and networks, and help enable more students to participate in enterprise activity. Please contact **philippa.rymill@natwest.com**.

Professor Kiran Trehan, Pro-Vice-Chancellor for Enterprise, Partnerships and Engagement at the University of York, said:

"York and North Yorkshire is a region powered by brilliant ideas and entrepreneurial talent, and this accelerator is a decisive step in strengthening the support that drives our economy. NatWest's in-person programmes will deepen the ambition, leadership and entrepreneurial capability that sustain a competitive regional economy, while the University's expanding international partnerships ensure that the ideas developed here can create impact on a global stage."

Find out more and join the Accelerator Hub.

From academic research to helping at the pub: translating evidence into practice for no and low alcohol

The rapid growth of the no and low alcohol (NoLo) market presents significant opportunities for public health, hospitality businesses and local economies. A collaborative research project led by academics at the University of York, Anglia Ruskin University and University College Cork demonstrates how evidence-based insights can be translated into practical action through effective knowledge exchange.

Drawing on research into NoLo consumer behaviour, the team identified a consistent barrier in hospitality venues: poor availability and low visibility of NoLo options. While public health bodies see NoLo products as a route to reducing alcohol-related harms, many publicans expressed concern about the potential impact on revenue and whether there was enough consumer demand. The research directly addressed these tensions, showing that increasing NoLo offerings is revenue-neutral and can even have positive financial effects on hospitality venues as more consumers are moderating and including NoLo options in their visits.

Working closely with the Public Health team at City of York Council, the researchers co-produced a practical publicans' guide that translates academic findings into clear, actionable strategies for licensed premises. This collaboration ensured alignment with local licensing priorities and contributed to NoLo provision being recognised as good practice in the City of York Statement of Licensing Policy (2025 to 2030).

The project also partnered with York St John University and local industry, commissioning a design student to develop high-impact point-of-sale materials that improve product visibility in real-world settings. These resources were launched at the York CAMRA Beer Festival and distributed to over 66 venues, with strong positive feedback from publicans. This was followed by the launch of a **No Lo venue map for York** in December 2025.

By connecting academia, local government, industry and creative talent, this project demonstrates how research-led knowledge exchange can support healthier choices, support local businesses and contribute to a more inclusive and sustainable hospitality economy.

Find out more. Take a look at the **project's micro page** or follow on **Instagram** and **LinkedIn**.

Testing the 'Sober Cycle' route on the NoLo venue map of York

No and Low Venue Map of York

Industry engagement updates: SCI, techUK and MAKEUK memberships

The University of York joined membership with the **Society of Chemical Industry (SCI)** to accelerate science from the lab into industry. This collaboration grants **free SCI membership** to York staff and students, providing a major boost to career development and networking.

Complimentary Membership Benefits:

- Global professional network connecting academia, industry and innovation-focused organisations
- Discounted access to **SCI events** including conferences and webinars
- The opportunity to be involved in **SCI interest groups** and join SCI committees
- Individual subscription to **Chemistry and Industry (C&I) Magazine**
- The opportunity to register for **SCI's mentoring programme** with the added benefit of immediate eligibility onto the programme through academic partner membership

Upcoming SCI Events:

- **24 March** **Highway network resilience and impact of low carbon technologies**
- **8 April** **Rideal Lecture and Symposium: Polymer Colloids: From Engineering to Biology**
- **15 to 17 April** **42nd SCI Process Development Symposium**

The SCI College of Scholars (CoS) has launched its 2026 event programme to support and nurture emerging leaders in science, technology and innovation. The purpose of the College of Scholars is to develop a supportive community of current and former Scholars, aid them in their research and career development, and build a foundation for future active membership and leadership within the SCI network.

2026 Event Highlights:

- **1 July** Scholars Showcase and Summer Reception: Networking, career presentations and a poster competition
- **October** Day of Science and Careers: Career guidance and employer networking for STEM graduates and young professionals
- **25 to 26 November** Early Career Business Training Workshops: Sessions on building entrepreneurial skills

Year-round support:

Mentoring programme, **Ambassador Scheme**, **Entrepreneurship Awards**, **Bright SCIdea Challenge**, **Travel Bursaries**, **Prizes, Scholarships**, **Careers Support**

techUK has **27 events** scheduled. Flagship events are now live and available to book.

- **22 April** **National Security Reception**
- **30 April** **Leeds Health and Social Care Industry Dinner**
- **6 May** **Justice and Emergency Services Conference**
- **13 May** **Building the Smarter State Conference**
- **21 May** **Defence Spring Dinner**
- **21 October** **Tech and Net Zero Conference**

Sector Events: Central Government; Education and EdTech; Defence and National Security; Health and Social Care; Justice and Emergency Services Events; Local public services.

Ongoing techUK programmes and resources

- **Climate Action Hub:** TechUK supports members and those in the broader tech sector who are committed to net zero and climate resilience and advocate for investment in digital transformation in other sectors to help meet net zero ambitions and future resilience
- **AI Hub:** Promotes responsible AI adoption by working with stakeholders to demonstrate its significant benefits and help organisations embed AI into their core strategies
- **Transforming Public Services Hub:** techUK drives public sector digital transformation by uniting the public sector and tech industry
- **5G communications:** Focuses on the efficient deployment of secure networks and positions the UK as a leader in 5G services across sectors like mobility and healthcare
- **Cyber resilience:** Connects industry with government and commercial partners to promote cyber technology adoption, shape policy and securely grow the digital economy
- **Quantum:** Prepares the UK for a transformative future by uniting the tech sector to plan for quantum innovations in smart cities, healthcare and other key industries

MAKEUK Membership focuses on key areas like Skills & Economic Growth, Energy & Policy and Innovation & R&D, offering vital industry data.

- **Skills and Economic Growth:** A recent report, highlighting research co-authored by the University of York, placed **skilled graduates as essential for UK growth**. MakeUK strongly aligns with this workforce focus, having recently campaigned for a "Skills Investment Pledge" to boost apprenticeship numbers
- **Energy and Policy:** Make UK's "Electrify Industry" initiative can contribute expertise and shape national electrification policy
- **Innovation and R&D:** Make UK offers newly published 2026 industry reports, such as the Executive Survey and International Trade Trends, providing vital data to support the University's business collaborations and research
- The new "State of Wellbeing in 2026" report is aimed at building healthier workplaces

To register as a staff or student member for SCI, or staff member to techUK or MAKEUK, please email clare.murgatroyd@york.ac.uk.