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YORK
ST JOHN
UNIVERSITY

Board of Governors
Appointment
Governor





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Introduction from the Chair of the Board of Governors

Hello, welcome, and thank you for your interest in becoming a member of the Board of Governors at York St John University.

Across this institution's 182 years of history and impact, there has rarely been such a significant time to be joining us. Amidst so much change and turbulence in the Higher Education Sector and society generally, universities need Governors with the experience, wisdom and foresight to guide, shape and support them, helping them navigate new challenges and realise their full potential.

By applying for this role you are stepping up to the opportunity to help thousands of people change their lives through education and contributing positively to the wellbeing, prosperity and progress of our city and region.

I have been Chair of the Board of Governors since August 2020. I was delighted to take on the role because I share the University's values and sense of purpose: putting human relationships at the heart of education; making informed, evidence-based decisions; contributing to the emergence of a strong and resilient Yorkshire; striving for social justice; and ensuring that more people of all ages and backgrounds have access to higher education. These themes have been evident to me in abundance during our time together so far.

The University faces a multitude of choices about its future strategic direction, its priorities and its positioning in a competitive and complex Higher Education market. You will join as we oversee progress of the institution's long-term strategy, and you will help to guide and inform the way the Board of Governors and especially the sub-committees that support it, monitor and support that strategy. You will help us adapt to an evolving regulatory framework and an emerging policy agenda that blurs conventional boundaries of institutional autonomy. You will provide the critical-friend challenge to underpin robust financial reporting, monitoring, and management.

Our Board of Governors committees have strong foundations on which these roles can build. Thanks to several years of strong student recruitment, measured investment and financial rigour, the University is in a healthy financial position, but of course, it is still affected, as is every institution, by the financial challenges and volatility we all face. You can find out more by reading the latest financial report, which is available on the University's [website](#).

All the University's Governors are supported by an experienced, friendly and highly professional team of officers and senior leaders. The University has a deep commitment to inclusion and diversity and to listening to different voices, opinions, expertise and evidence to guide direction. As such, we encourage and welcome applications from people of diverse backgrounds and different walks of life.

In my role of Chair, I have been inspired by how much the University has achieved, and by the talent and commitment of its community. York St John has all the potential to achieve incredible things in the coming years. You could play an important role in making that possible. We look forward to hearing from you.

Dame Julia Unwin

Dame Julia Unwin
Chair of the Board of Governors

Welcome from the Students' Union

Our students know York St John University as a supportive and friendly institution where they can actively engage in academic disciplines, be partners in learning and embrace new opportunities.

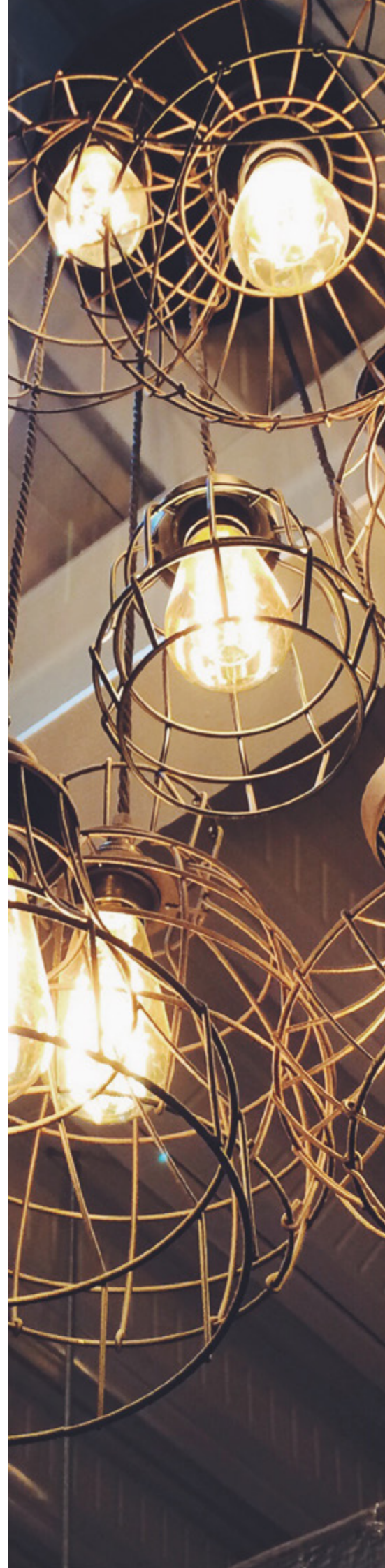
Whether studying in York or London, the feeling that you are a part of a community makes our University a special place to study.

York St John Students' Union is the hub of student life. Everything we do is centred around a 'student first' approach and our mission is to empower students at York St John to challenge and change the world around us. Our vision is that 'by 2024, YSJSU will play a major part in the life and transformation of students by being the central hub of social activity, representation, and opportunity.'

We look forward to meeting you and sharing ideas about how our Student Partnership Plus can continue to re- imagine and develop the academic and student experience.



Matt Blackstock
President of the Students' Union





1,000
staff members

Over 10,000 students
studying on our campuses in York and London

72%

of students secure a graduate level job or progress on to further study¹

19th 

in the UK for students' overall positivity²

7th
for University
of the Year³

77th

in the *Sunday Times*
Good University
Guide 2024

>77%

of students from backgrounds underrepresented in higher education

25th in England for Postgraduate Research Experience⁴

2,196

YSJ students graduated in York Minster

Bronze
Race Equality
Charter status

Overall TEF Silver – TEF Gold for student experience and TEF Silver for student outcomes⁵

58%

of our research is internationally excellent or world-leading⁶

¹ Graduate Outcomes Survey 2023

² National Student Survey 2023

³ What Uni Awards 2023

⁴ Postgraduate Research Experience Survey

⁵ Teaching Excellence Framework 2023

⁶ Research Excellence Framework 2021



About York St John University

A proud history

When York St John University (originally a Diocesan teacher training college) opened its doors to its first student, Edward Cordukes, back in 1841, nobody could have foreseen just how much the world would change in the years that followed. Yet even then, our founders were determined that York St John should be a place that improved access to education and advocated greater social mobility.

1846 saw the foundation of a female training School, which soon relocated to Ripon to be run by the pioneering Cruse sisters, now honoured by a Civic Trust blue plaque.

In 1974, the York and Ripon Colleges, with their shared historical origins and close associations within the Leeds University Institute of Education, merged to form the College of Ripon and York St John.

In 1999, all taught courses were relocated to the York campus and by the end of 2001, all students and staff belonged to a campus called York St John.

The college was granted Taught Degree Awarding Powers, in September 2005 and became York St John University in 2006.

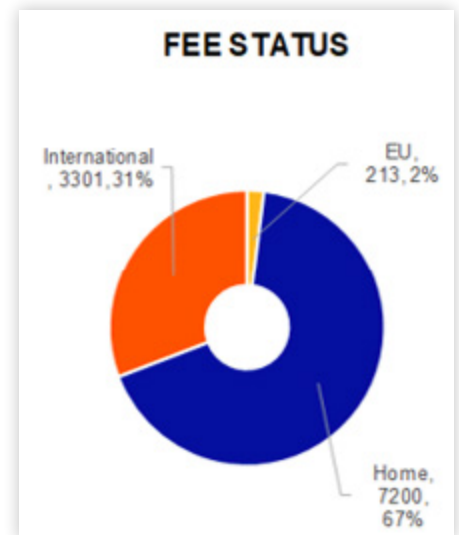
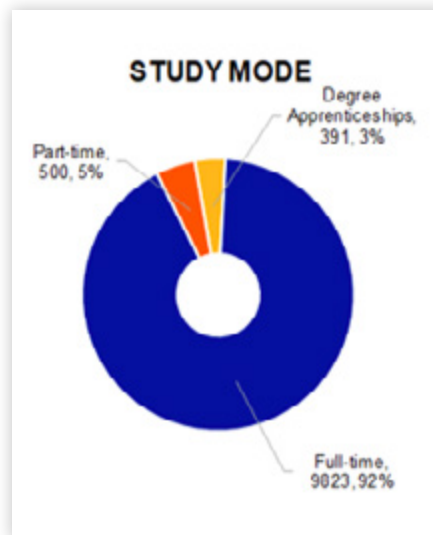
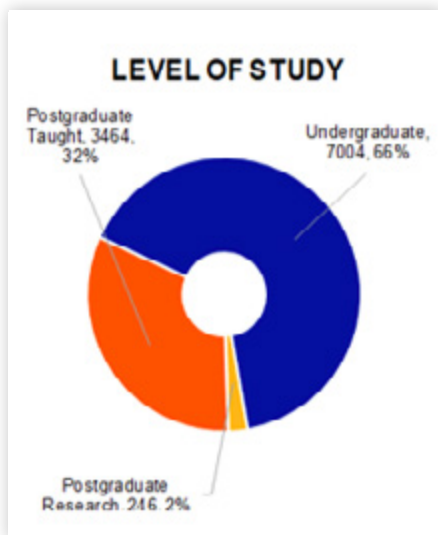
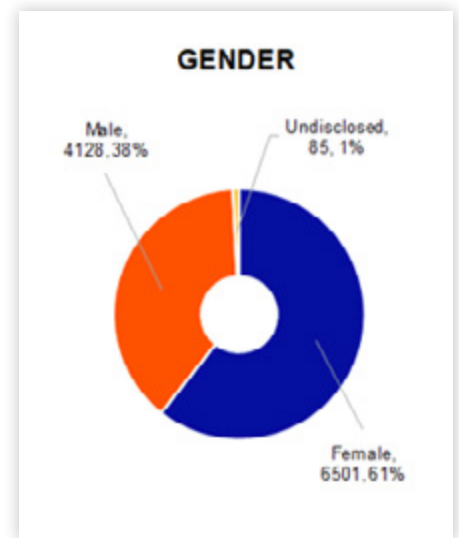
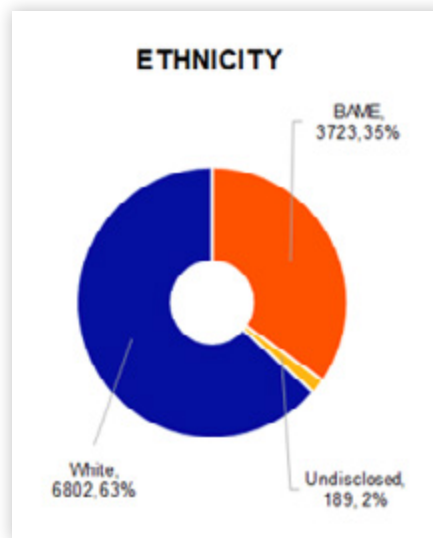
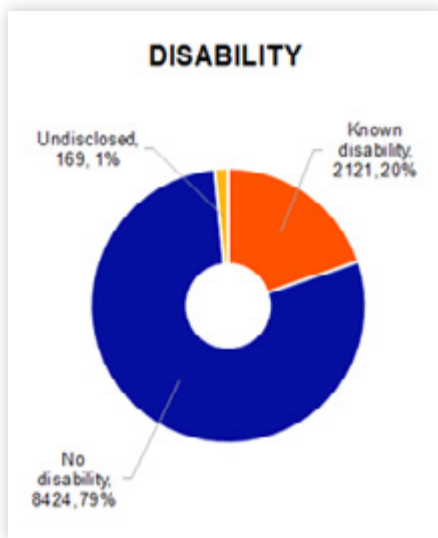
In 2018, the University opened its London campus, originally offering seven postgraduate programmes. Due to several years of successful student recruitment and course development, the London campus moved to a larger premises in 2022.

Today, over 10,000 students from more than 100 countries, alongside 1000 staff, make up our thriving learning and research community in the historic city of York and at our campus in London.



Our Students

Student enrolments for the academic year 2023-24 (as of October 2023)



Average age on entry
23.1

Care Experience
158

First in family to enter higher education
158

From most deprived areas using the IMD
2352

From areas where university participation is low
2352

Fall into one or more under represented group
>70%



Leadership and Governance

The University's work is governed by our Board of Governors who provide strategic leadership and direction to ensure our work aligns with the University's vision, mission, and values.

Our Board of Governors and its committees play a vital role in monitoring and supporting the delivery of our strategy. At a time when the University faces a multitude of choices about its future direction and its priorities, their guidance as a critical friend helps us to navigate new challenges and realise our potential. The Board of Governors is comprised of experienced individuals from a diverse range of backgrounds who share their knowledge, insights and constructively hold the University to account. Through their work, they oversee our overall progress, public impact and financial sustainability.

Management of the University is led by the Vice Chancellor who is closely supported by the Executive Board. Collectively, the Executive Board's members have corporate responsibility for managing the business of the institution, by steering the implementation of University strategy and policies. Through their strategic and inspirational leadership, the Board ensure a continued focus on people, student outcomes; cost control; equality, diversity, inclusion and wellbeing.

Executive Board members manage the Senior Leadership Team whose membership is made up of our Heads of School and Directors of Service. Their teams teach and support students, carry out research, contribute to the wider community, and enable the University to run effectively.

Education for All

At York St John we believe that education is for everyone. Much of our work focuses on advancing social mobility and addressing barriers to education. We are proud of our diverse learning community and many of our students join us from backgrounds that are underrepresented in higher education.

The driving force behind this is our contextual offer scheme. In addition to academic potential, the Opportunities and Excellence Scheme considers background factors that prove to be barriers preventing students from applying to university. This includes age, disability, time in care, the area in which applicants live and the relative performance of their school.

Our data shows us that students are no less likely to achieve great learning outcomes based on their background. By harnessing the skills gained through university study, they go on to represent their communities, challenge inequalities and add diversity to the workforce.

Our commitment to address these barriers starts much earlier than University. Through collaborative partnerships with local schools, we deliver targeted outreach activities to young people which are designed to improve awareness of higher education and its benefits. We engage young people in a range of events from subject showcase days to residential visits, nurturing opportunities for them to be inspired and helping to raise aspirations. In support of our social justice mission, our staff and students facilitate learning opportunities for a wide range of members across our community.

Our Converge partnership with the NHS has seen us provide over 1000 mental health service users from the local area access to free arts courses over the past decade, to aid their recovery. An independent evaluation of the social-economic impact of Converge in 2022-23 found that for every £1 spent, £11.80 of value was added to society.

Our Military Human: Military Culture and Transition programme, a nationally leading initiative, supports military personnel who are making the transition back to civilian life, by expertly training and advising the services that work with them.





Equality of Opportunity

As part of the Strategy 2026 refresh, we set a target to achieve a zero gender pay gap and we made great progress towards this on International Women's Day 2022, when the University received the Athena Swan Bronze Award, following a four year application process. In adopting the Athena Swan Charter, we are implementing an action plan to embed gender equality actions within our policies, practices and culture. The Charter process is an important framework for change, including overt actions such as supporting women leadership programmes, as well as addressing hidden inequalities.

We joined the Race Equality Charter in August 2020 and achieved a Bronze Award in 2022. The Charter gives universities a framework to remove institutional and cultural barriers standing in the way of Black, Asian and minority ethnic staff and students.

York St John has also been accredited as a Living Wage Employer for paying a 'real' living wage to all staff and casual workers. The accreditation forms part of the University's wider commitment to practising responsible business, as evidenced by our membership of the national Good Business Charter.

We are a key member of the Purpose Coalition, a group of leading UK universities, business and public sector organisations that aims to set a new and higher standard on boosting social mobility. We are committed to a levelling-up agenda and spreading opportunity in Higher Education. As one of the first universities to create an Impact Report based against the 14 Levelling Up Goals as identified by the Coalition, York St John continues to set an example of how to be a genuine values-led organisation.

The University was a joint winner of the award for 'Achieving equality through diversity and inclusion' at the Levelling Up Universities Awards 2022: the award recognised that more than 60% of our students come from underrepresented backgrounds, and highlighted the quality of our provision of personalised, one-to-one support from application to graduation.

We aim to make sure that all staff at York St John can work collaboratively and are equally valued and respected. Our staff networks support inclusive communities, voice and visibility throughout the University and meet regularly with the Executive Board.



Pride of Place

With campuses in two incredible cities; York and London, York St John University serves a global community of staff and students who have a strong sense of belonging to a supportive and intellectually rigorous academic community with social justice at its heart.

Our York campus is located next to a historic stretch of medieval city walls, overlooked by York Minster, where our students graduate. The estate is an impressive mix of historic Victorian and modern buildings set amongst award-winning landscaped gardens. Our newest campus building, designed to host performance space and creative courses, opened in November 2021.

A short distance away, our 57-acre Sports Park on Haxby Road features football and rugby pitches, tennis and netball courts and indoor facilities all used by a range of community groups as well as students.

The London Campus enables us to bring the full benefits of a truly global and cosmopolitan city to our offer at York St John. Our home in the Export building at East India Dock, is perfectly situated for access to East London's rich and diverse amenities. Close to Canary Wharf, the campus is part of a vibrant community of creative, technology and business creation ecosystems.

York St John University has a long-established and proud role as a civic university. As an anchor institution in the City of York we work closely with businesses and local organisations for the benefit of the region and its residents.

We are committed to working in partnership with our local business community to address regional skill gaps.

Our growing range of degree apprenticeships offer professionals from a variety of fields the opportunity to gain degree qualifications, customised to their employer's needs. Our industry-focused academics help regional and national businesses find practical and innovative solutions in sectors including policing, health and data science.

Our academic portfolio is continually reviewed as part of the University's Learning, Teaching and Student Experience Action Plan to refresh existing courses and introduce new subjects to extend student opportunities.

In 2022, we opened our Enterprise Centre, a dedicated city centre start-up facility to support business in York. Offering free, supportive, expert help for new businesses, the space provides professional corporate accommodation on our Lord Mayor's Walk campus. The Centre is already making a positive impact as local creative and tech companies achieve success and growth. Our London campus offers further opportunities for venture creation, enterprise and incubator space.

Our careers and employer engagement teams work with both current students and graduates to help them gain valuable work experience and enhance employability through targeted internships. Creating these direct talent pipelines with local businesses enables a high percentage of our students to remain in the region after they complete their studies.

A Strong Sense of Community

When we ask our students and staff alike to identify one word that encapsulates what it means to be part of York St John University, 'community' consistently features amongst the most popular. The particular characteristics of our institution - our longstanding close connections across the city and region; the diversity of backgrounds our students come from; the inclusive causes we choose to support; our compassion - these are things that people who choose us value and celebrate.

Our sense of community is illustrated by the way in which we come together, working with local groups and organisations, to improve the lives of others in the places we live and work.

Our impact can be seen in the services we provide to the public including our Communities Centre and Law Clinic. With a focus on public health and wellbeing, the Communities Centre offers a range of affordable counselling and mental health services to members of the local community. The team work in close partnership with local NHS trusts, helping to reduce pressure on services in the city and accepting referrals for individuals leaving NHS care who would benefit from additional support.

In 2023, the University launched its Institute for Health and Care Improvement, which brings together academics from across the University to find solutions for the pressing issues facing health and social care today, from disease detection and prevention, to physical activity, rehabilitation and health promotion. The Institute acts as innovation hub for health and care services with researchers working alongside patients, clinicians, and industry partners.

The Law Clinic, operated by our York Business School, aims to meet an acute community need for accessible legal advice and assistance amongst an ever-increasing number of people who cannot afford help and who otherwise would be unable to access justice. Our Final year Law students work alongside their lecturers to advise on range of legal matters including civil disputes, landlord and tenant matters and family proceedings. Students also offer support to the victims of hate crime, working in partnership with City of York Council, as well as offering confidential advice to prisoners who feel they are victims of a miscarriage of justice.

Our work within the region is complemented by a more global outlook. The impact we have gives us the grounding from which we go out into the world with confidence, resilience and purpose. This is increasingly visible in the research we focus on where a strong sense of social justice is our driver for action.

Our Institute of Social Justice, launched in 2020, is the main catalyst for research engagement across York St John. Through the Institute we are facilitating projects and partnerships that help us to pursue and promote a fairer society. By sharing our knowledge across the globe, we are helping to bring communities together with a common purpose to identify and address the key challenges facing the world today.



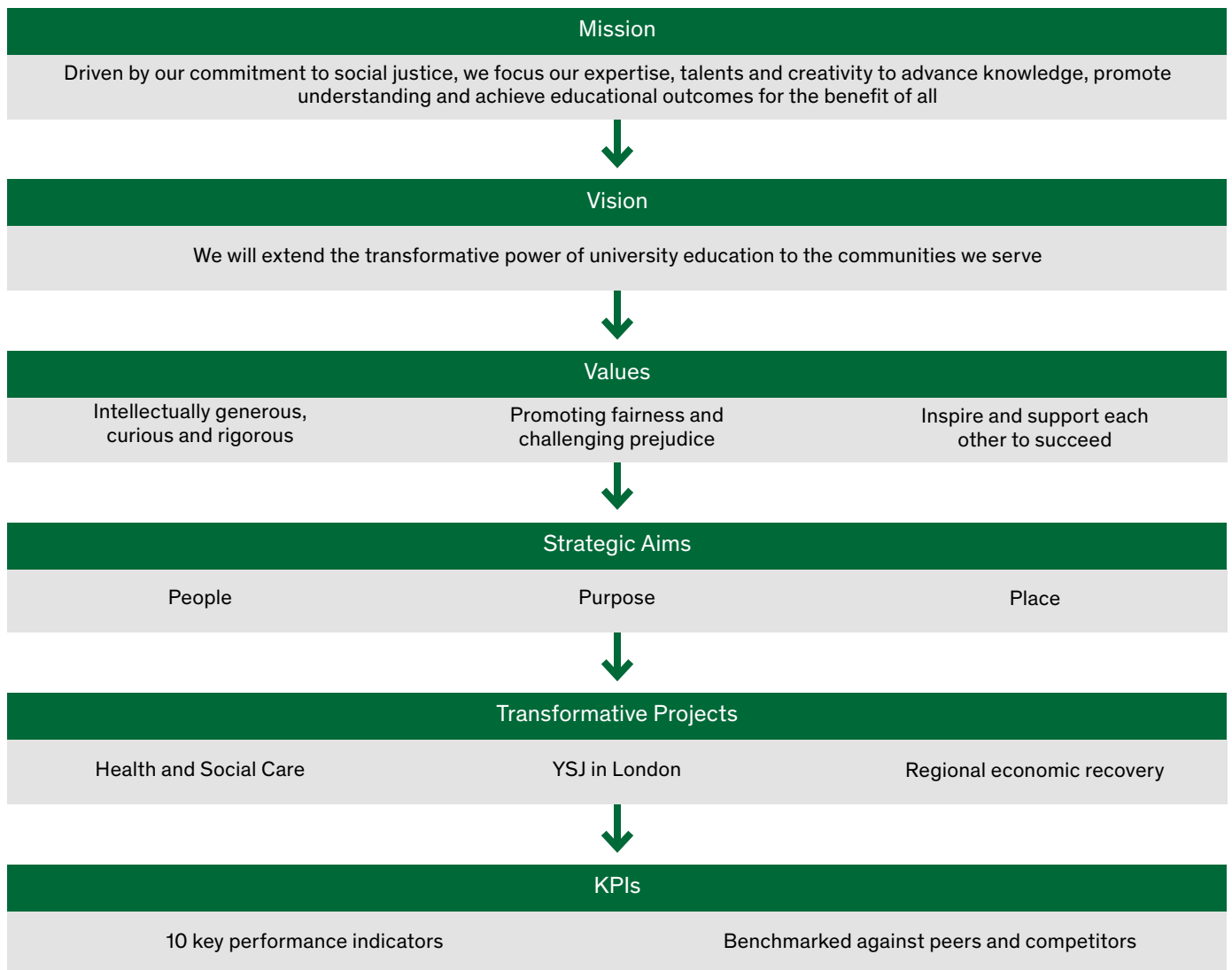


Strategy 2026 and Beyond

In 2021 the University refreshed its current Strategic Plan, setting out our ambitions and priorities up to 2026 - the year that marks our 185th anniversary and twenty years of full university status.

In July 2023, the Board of Governors agreed to begin developing a new strategy due to Strategy 2026 largely being delivered and in reflection of the considerable changes within the Higher Education sector over recent years.

A summary of the current Strategy, can be seen below.





Role Description

Governor

Overview

The Board of Governors steers, shapes and supports the direction of the University. It constructively holds the University to account for its decisions, and has statutory responsibilities to oversee various elements of its work, including its annual budget.

The Board is composed of 17 Governors from a vast array of different backgrounds, including student and staff members. As a Governor, you will bring your own unique experiences, perspectives, and skill set to contribute to Board's diversity of thought.

Previous experience in higher education is not essential, as all Governors undertake a comprehensive induction program and are supported by a dedicated team of University staff throughout their term of office.

The University is a company limited by guarantee (Company Number: 4498683) and an exempt charity (regulated by the Office for Students). Governors are consequently Directors and also Charitable Trustees.

Commitment

Governors serve for a three-year term before they require re-election. Subject to reappointment, Governors can serve a maximum of three terms (nine years).

Governors are expected to attend all meetings of the Board of Governors, Discussion Days, and any sub-Committee that they are a member, or give timely apologies if absence is unavoidable. This is usually a total of eight meetings a year that take place in-person at our York campus. There will also be a time commitment to reading papers associated with the above and meeting the Chair annually.

Governors are also encouraged to attend a range of other events, such as the openings of new University services and a Graduation ceremony.

On the basis of the above, the likely overall time commitment required of Governors is a minimum of 12 days per annum.

Role Description

1. General

- a.) Governors are expected to play an appropriate part in ensuring that the necessary business of the Board of Governors is carried out efficiently, effectively, and in a manner appropriate to the proper conduct of public business. Governors will make rational and constructive contributions to debate based on their knowledge and expertise.
- b.) Governors have a responsibility for ensuring that the Board acts in accordance with the instruments of governance of the University and with the University's internal rules and regulations, and should seek advice from the Secretary in any case of uncertainty.
- c.) Governors are required to accept collective responsibility for the decisions reached by the Board of Governors. Governors elected, nominated or appointed by particular constituencies may not act as if delegated by the group they represent, and may not be bound in any way by mandates given to them by others.
- d.) Governors are not remunerated, but are encouraged to reclaim all travelling and similar expenses incurred in the course of University business via the Secretary.
- e.) Directors and Officers Liability Insurance is in place.

2. Standards

- a.) Governors have a responsibility for ensuring that the Board of Governors conducts itself in accordance with accepted standards of behaviour in public life, embracing: selflessness, integrity, objectivity, accountability, openness, honesty, and leadership. They must at all times regulate their personal conduct as Governors in accordance with these standards.
- b.) Governors must make a full and timely disclosure of personal interests to the Secretary in accordance with the procedures approved by the Board of Governors.
- c.) Governors have particular legal responsibilities for the University as a company limited by guarantee and an exempt charity.

3. The Business of the University

- d.) Governors have a responsibility for ensuring that the Board of Governors exercises control over the strategic direction of the University, through an effective planning process, and that the performance of the University is adequately assessed against the objectives which the Board of Governors has approved.
- e.) Governors should endeavour to establish supportive relationships with key stakeholders.



Role Description

Personal Specifications

Knowledge and Experience

Governors will have experience in at least one of the following areas:

- previously been a Board member or Trustee for an organisation;
- operated at a strategic level in a professional role;
- worked in a relevant business area at senior level; or,
- networked on a national or international basis.

Skills and Abilities

- act fairly and impartially in the interests of the University;
- evaluate and monitor the work of the University in a constructively critical fashion, without breaching the boundaries
- between governance and operational management;
- be an ambassador and represent the University to the wider community;
- positively contribute to a collaborative team environment; and,
- be an excellent communicator.

Personal Characteristics

- supportive of the University's ethos, mission, values, and foundation;
- enthusiasm for, and commitment to, the role;
- passionate about the transformative power of education and the improvement of access and success for people from all walks of life; and,
- commitment to equality, diversity and inclusivity in practice.



JOB ADVERT

York St John University

Governor

For over 180 years, York St John University has been educating people from all backgrounds in the heart of the historic city of York. Originally established in 1841 as one of two Anglican teacher training colleges, the institution gradually expanded its course portfolio from the mid-20th century onwards, before achieving University status in 2006. Today, over 10,000 students from more than 100 nationalities, alongside 1000 staff, make up a thriving learning and research community across the University's York and London campuses.

In recent years, York St John has been able to build on a stable financial starting point based on growth in student numbers and the diversification of the University's portfolio. As a result, it sets an ambitious course ahead, recognising both the University's vital ongoing role as an anchor institution in the local and regional community and its place as a global contributor of knowledge, innovation and opportunity.

We are seeking to appoint a new member of our Board of Governors. The successful candidates will provide pivotal support to our Chair of the Board of Governors, Dame Julia Unwin, and work closely with our Vice Chancellor, Professor Karen Bryan, and her Executive team.

Previous experience gained in board level leadership roles in complex organisations is therefore desirable, but it is equally important that you share our values and can relate well to people at all levels. It is essential that you are able to work in a collegiate way, providing both constructive challenge and support through some difficult decisions.

We value and promote diversity, are committed to equality of opportunity for all and all appointments are made on merit. For further information and details of how to apply please visit our [website](#)

Formal interviews will be held on Wednesday 21st February 2024

Any queries or requests for an informal discussion should sent be to the University Secretary & Registrar, Kathryn Kendon via gov.compliance@yorks.ac.uk



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