



Capabilities in Academic Policy Engagement

Policy Fellowship

Yorkshire Universities – West Yorkshire Combined Authority

Context

Through the Capabilities in Academic-Policy Engagement (CAPE) project, we are pleased to announce a new Policy Fellowship opportunity with Yorkshire Universities (YU), working together with the West Yorkshire Combined Authority (WYCA).

WYCA covers the West Yorkshire local authorities of Bradford, Calderdale, Kirklees, Leeds and Wakefield. The City of York is a non-constituent member of WYCA. In March 2020, the five West Yorkshire local authorities signed a Devolution Deal with the Government, which will unlock new long-term funding and, critically, give West Yorkshire greater freedom to decide how best to meet local needs and create new opportunities. As part of the Devolution Deal, a new 'Metro Mayor' for West Yorkshire will be elected in May 2021. In 2019, WYCA also declared a 'climate emergency'.

With the new devolved responsibilities, it is vital that West Yorkshire continues to generate new ideas and propositions on how to create more and better jobs, improved health and infrastructure, and enhanced quality of life. Universities in Yorkshire have world-class research and innovation assets, and a breadth and depth of academic and analytical skills that can be brought together to support evidence-based policy development.

Since the arrival of COVID-19, and the ensuing social and economic crisis, academics from four universities in West Yorkshire (the Universities of Bradford, Huddersfield and Leeds, and Leeds Beckett University), working with YU and WYCA, have formed the Place-based Economic Recovery Network (PERN). The development of a new Strategic Economic Framework for West Yorkshire, coupled with the advent of devolution and the aim of supporting the region to recover and 'build back better' from the pandemic and crisis, means that there is a real opportunity to take PERN forward, and to widen and deepen academic research engagement of all universities in West Yorkshire with WYCA and other policymakers in the region.

Role description

This role will require the successful candidate to work closely with YU, WYCA, PERN and other partners in West Yorkshire, including local authorities, further education, health and care sector, communities and business. The main responsibilities will be to:

- Act as a conduit for academic expertise and research evidence to inform policy considerations and development in West Yorkshire, in order to:
 - expand the understanding and use of high-quality expertise and evidence in regional policy development; and
 - increase the ability of the academic community to apply knowledge and expertise to regional policy needs.

- Strengthen collaboration and networks between universities in West Yorkshire (and beyond) in order to enhance the contribution of academic research to policymaking in the region.
- Test specific mechanisms to identify and mobilise diverse academic expertise across policy domains co-identified with YU, WYCA and other stakeholders.
- Provide a connection between the West Yorkshire pilot and other similar initiatives within the CAPE programme in order to facilitate knowledge exchange and learning.

Priority tasks will include:

- Working with YU and PERN to provide expert contributions, on behalf of universities, towards the West Yorkshire Strategic Framework, West Yorkshire Economic Recovery Plan and Devolution Deal.
- Drawing upon the lessons of practical activities and engagement in West Yorkshire, and the Fellowship, lead on the development and delivery of a feasibility study, which will set out how academic-policy development engagement at the city- region scale could be strengthened and sustained on an ongoing basis.
- Developing a business case, with recommendations, for how best to enhance academic-policy engagement in West Yorkshire, including coordinating university research across different institutions for the purposes of informing evidence-based policy and strategy development in West Yorkshire.

Research activities may involve:

- Undertaking an initial mapping of academic and stakeholder policy engagement at the city-region scale in West Yorkshire to help universities and WYCA develop impactful connections.
- Contributing towards the evidence base informing the West Yorkshire Economic Recovery Plan and the West Yorkshire Strategic Economic Framework, including through the provision of targeted advice and evidence synthesis.
- Organising and facilitating collaborative knowledge exchange events and other activities on topics co-identified with WYCA, PERN and other stakeholders.
- Working with CAPE on the monitoring and evaluation of the pilot; leading on data collection through interviews, surveys and /or other methods; capturing and sharing widely lessons learned.

About you

Essential

- Excellent research and analytic skills, with demonstrated experience or transferable skills in designing and carrying out feasibility studies of this kind.
- Expertise and experience in using research as a means of informing and contributing towards policy development.
- Ability to operate effectively, openly and collaboratively within highly sensitive political contexts; ability to demonstrate neutrality and impartiality while negotiating competing stakeholder interests.

- Excellent communication skills and ability to effectively engage with people from different backgrounds and at different levels of seniority. Particularly important are writing skills and proven communications experience with both academic and non-academic audiences.
- Understanding of the academic policy-engagement environment, and an ability to grasp project priorities quickly.
- Ability to work proactively, managing and prioritising your own workload, while managing contingencies between multiple project stakeholders.
- Knowledge and understanding about the role of Local Enterprise Partnerships (LEPs), Combined Authorities, Metro Mayors and local authorities in devolved and local/regional development.

Desirable

- Policy development and implementation experience.
- Previous experience of working in local and regional development.
- Experience of working with Combined Authorities, LEPs, local authorities, etc.

Please note: specific terms and conditions will be stated in a fellowship agreement, which the successful candidate will be required to sign at the start of their fellowship.

About Yorkshire Universities

Yorkshire Universities (YU) is a regional partnership of 12 universities and higher education institutions in Yorkshire and the Humber with a shared commitment to strengthen the contribution of universities and higher education institutions to the economic, social and civic well-being of people and places in Yorkshire.

Members of YU are drawn from Russell Group, Post-92 universities and small and specialist institutions. Three-quarters (9 out of 12) of YU's membership is based within West Yorkshire and the wider Leeds City Region. YU's mission is to encourage and facilitate collaboration within the HE sector and beyond in order to strengthen the contribution of universities and HEIs towards sustainable and inclusive local and regional development in Yorkshire and the Humber

The members of YU (West Yorkshire members of YU appear in bold) are: **Leeds Arts University; Leeds Conservatoire; Leeds Beckett University; Leeds Trinity University;** Sheffield Hallam University; **University of Bradford; University of Huddersfield;** University of Hull; **University of Leeds;** University of Sheffield; University of York; and York St John University.

For more information, please see [here](#).

About the West Yorkshire Combined Authority

The West Yorkshire Combined Authority (WYCA) brings together local authorities and businesses to build a strong, successful economy where everyone can build great businesses, careers and lives. Partnership underpins the efforts to achieve this vision, so



that everyone in West Yorkshire can benefit from economic prosperity supported by a modern, accessible transport network, housing and digital connections.

The Combined Authority manages a number of programmes that are delivered over the wider the Leeds City Region, including Leeds City Region Growth Deal-funded projects and business support delivered through the Leeds City Region Local Enterprise Partnership (LEP). For more information, please see [here](#).

About PERN

The Place-based Economic Recovery Network (PERN) is an academic-led network, formed in 2019 in response to the COVID-19 crisis. In July, PERN was invited by WYCA to support the preparation of the West Yorkshire Economic Recovery Plan. This was delivered by PERN hosting a series of webinars for WYCA leaders and officers, which saw 25 presentations from academics across the region's universities. These webinars were designed to answer complex research and public policy questions on the following themes: the future of the region's towns and cities; supply chains; entrepreneurial-led growth; and climate change and the net-zero economy. Reports from each of the webinars were produced as evidence to inform the [Recovery Plan](#), which was submitted to government in November.

Regarding future plans, PERN intends to widen and deepen the existing academic network in order to embrace other YU members in the region, and to strengthen academic engagement with other institutions in Yorkshire and beyond. In particular, PERN will support policy and decision-makers in the region to respond to and make effective use of new and emergent policies and resources designed to encourage and support particular forms of investment. For example, drawing upon the recent Review of the HM Treasury Green Book, academics within PERN, with specific expertise and experience in infrastructure appraisal, plan to work with WYCA and other partners to develop project and programme business cases designed to attract new investment into the region. Academics in PERN also see the network as a valuable mechanism for developing new multi-institutional and inter-disciplinary research proposals.

About CAPE

CAPE is a partnership between UCL and the universities of Cambridge, Manchester, Northumbria and Nottingham, in collaboration with the Government Office for Science, the Parliamentary Office for Science & Technology, the Alliance for Useful Evidence, and the Transforming Evidence Hub, funded by Research England.

It is a 4-year project created to support effective and sustained engagement between academics and policy professionals across the higher education sector.

For more information, please see [here](#).

About Policy Fellowships

This fellowship is open to eligible academic and research staff at [CAPE partner universities](#). It is offered on a full- or part-time basis for 12 months in the first instance, with the



possibility of renewal. The fellowship award may be up to £100,000, depending on salary level, experience, and time commitment, funded through CAPE.

The fellowship will start as soon as possible. The successful candidate will be embedded within the YU Executive Team, but also connected to PERN and WYCA. It is expected that the successful candidate will be based remotely to begin with due to current Covid-19 working restrictions. For this role, we are open to discussing the possibility of flexible working.

Applications will close on April 12. Top ranked candidates will be invited to an informal interview on April 20 or 22 before a final decision on appointment is made.

For an informal discussion or for any queries, please contact us at hello@cape.ac.uk

[How to apply](#)

To apply please send:

- a short CV (max 2 pp)
- covering letter outlining your suitability for the role
- a writing sample produced for a non-academic audience (if available)

To Katherine Welch (k.welch@ucl.ac.uk) by the closing date of April 12