Strategic plan
2023 – 2028

About the UK Young Academy

The UK Young Academy is the first UK-wide organisation that brings together leading early career researchers, professionals, and innovators from a wide range of sectors, enabling them to collaborate to make a positive difference in the UK and globally. The UK Young Academy was founded in 2022 following the Guiding Principles of Young Academies, and under the auspices of seven senior partner academies across the UK and Ireland: the Academy of Medical Sciences, the British Academy, the Learned Society of Wales, the Royal Academy of Engineering, the Royal Irish Academy, the Royal Society, and the Royal Society of Edinburgh.

The UK Young Academy is an interdisciplinary network of early career researchers, innovators and professionals from all walks of life, established to help tackle societal issues and promote meaningful change. The UK Young Academy provides a forum for emerging leaders from across sectors to exchange ideas, share expertise and participate in local and global policy discussions.

This document outlines key strategic priorities for the UK Young Academy in a context of rapid global change. It does not present a comprehensive statement of all UK Young Academy activities. Rather, it sets out the UK Young Academy's Vision, Mission and Principles, as well as our strategic priorities for the next five years (2023 – 2028).

This strategic plan is intended to be a practical aid in prioritising the UK Young Academy's activity in the near future, in particular in its crucial first years, as we define our position in the UK and global landscape and establish our first work programmes and projects.

Mission

Vision

The mission of the UK Young Academy is to:

1. Enable visionary leadership by early career researchers, innovators, and professionals across the UK on issues that matter in the UK and globally.

2. Imagine new, inclusive, and sustainable futures of work and life in the UK and lead dialogue towards addressing societal challenges.

3. Break down boundaries between disciplines and professions by convening voices across the arts, business, industry, government, public sector research, academia, the third sector and beyond to share ideas and improve decision-making.

4. Develop, connect, and mobilise early career talent in an environment of inclusion and belonging.

To achieve these goals, we will:

- Support a suite of member-driven projects, addressing cross-cutting challenges in society and early career environments.

- Act as an independent source of expert advice in order to contribute to public discussion on matters affecting the policy, scholarship, economy, and public life of the four nations of the United Kingdom.

- Engage in active dialogue and collaboration with our seven senior partner academies to amplify the activities of our members and provide opportunities for growth and learning.

- Connect and collaborate with other Young Academies around the world to facilitate the contributions of UK talent in tackling shared global challenges.

The UK Young Academy seeks to be:

- A membership of emerging interdisciplinary change leaders across academic and professional sectors in the UK.

- A leading voice bringing together experts, policymakers, and the public in dialogues and action for real change.

- An active force translating disciplinary excellence into interdisciplinary action to build new futures, in the UK and globally.

Values and principles

The following principles detailed in the UK Young Academy Statutes inform all of our work.

We champion excellence and interdisciplinarity

Our membership represents excellence and advances evidence-based approaches across research and professional landscapes. By providing a forum for voices to convene and ideas to be shared, we shall bridge disciplinary boundaries, improve decision-making, support the development of early career individuals and inspire the next generation of young professionals.

We collaborate for social justice and impact

We have a responsibility, which extends from the four UK nations to the global landscape, to engage and generate social justice and impact for society.

We are equality, diversity, and inclusivity (EDI) advocates

By placing EDI principles at the core of all we do, we are committed to actively creating an environment where all feel welcome, included and able to reach their potential, both within our Academy and in the broader society. We do this by fostering and contributing to societal initiatives and policies.

We work with independence, transparency, and openness

We work in an open and transparent way in our recruitment, communication, programmes and partnerships. In line with our Code of Conduct, we support freedom of expression including academic freedom.

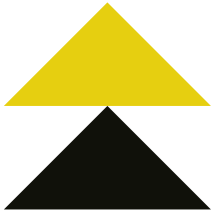## We uphold integrity and responsibility

We are committed to the highest standards of professional and social integrity and ethics, and place a high value on our reputation as an organisation.

We promote a culture of respect

We respect, recognise and support our individual and collective contributions and promote a positive culture.
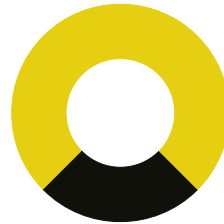
Strategic priorities

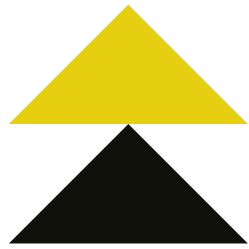**Amplifying unheard, marginalised and underrepresented voices.**

Technology as an enabler for better life and a sustainable planet.

Climate change and environmental sustainability.

Supporting early career professionals and empowering the younger generation.

Amplifying unheard, marginalised and underrepresented voices

The UK Young Academy was born out of a desire to provide a platform to amplify the voices of early career professionals from across society. Although societal awareness of the need to bring more diverse voices to build a more inclusive society is increasing, opportunities for early career voices to contribute to demystifying differences and increasing community cohesion are lacking. As part of the global initiative of Young Academies, the goal of the UK Young Academy is to give a voice to individuals with ideas, initiative and drive who wish to work together to contribute to national and global decision-making and who share a passion to improve our world. Therefore, amplifying unheard, marginalised and underrepresented voices is part of the very fabric of the UK Young Academy.

Key outcomes

The UK Young Academy will:

- be truly reflective of the rich lived experiences and expertise of the diverse society we live in.

- become an EDI leader through tackling under-representation, breaking down barriers for marginalised groups, and proactively fostering a positive culture.

We are committed to:

Diverse and inclusive membership
The UK Young Academy is the first UK-wide Young Academy open to all talented early career professionals from across industry, academia, public sector and third sectors. This intrinsic characteristic sets apart the UK Young Academy globally. Membership of the UK Young Academy will continue to be open to all talented, early career professionals from across different walks of life to ensure it is an interdisciplinary community representative of our society. We will uphold fairness, transparency and clear communication in our election of members.

Accessibility and engagement

The UK Young Academy will endeavour to create an even playing field for its members and engaged audiences by incorporating accessible audio-visual aids and other supporting materials. We will encourage regional engagement through the rotation of meeting locations, and cater to the needs of our diverse membership, our programmes and projects through thematic events.

Tackling systemic inequalities

The UK Young Academy will foster programmes that tackle systemic inequalities, first in the UK and globally through prioritising transdisciplinary projects and programmes that are diverse, inclusive and which highlight and amplify seldom heard, marginalised, and underrepresented voices. We will work to avoid duplication, which may override the work of marginalised groups in our efforts to tackle inequalities by fostering consultations and sustaining partnership with the communities we want to serve to build a more inclusive, equitable and cohesive society.

Enhance impact through collaboration

The UK Young Academy believes that the most robust solutions to societal challenges in the UK and globally will come through the combined efforts of its diverse membership and involvement of their connections. We will leverage our unique membership by fostering links with the senior partner academies in the UK and Ireland and forming alliances with external parties such as industry, charities, policymakers and other stakeholders for the advancement of issues important to the UK Young Academy. To maximise our impact, the UK Young Academy will continue to maintain and develop new partnerships with other Young Academies globally, social and public organisations, and existing communities.
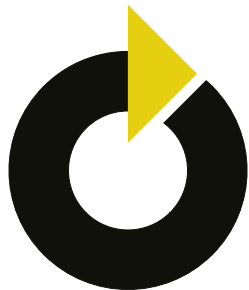
Technology as an enabler for better life and a sustainable planet

The importance of technology has never been greater in the history of human civilization. Our modern world is increasingly intertwined with and dependent on technological advancements which have the potential to provide solutions to society's current and future pressing needs. Through its rich expertise, the UK Young Academy is uniquely positioned to provide thought leadership in identifying and supporting the development and implementation of technologies for a better life and a sustainable planet. Our diverse expertise will also provide insights for identifying where non-technological solutions are best suited to the problem at hand and how to control development to minimise negative impact, hence enabling the UK to become a global leader.

Key outcomes

The UK Young Academy will:

- actively enable responsible research, innovation and, where beneficial to society, adoption of emerging technologies including artificial intelligence, bioengineering, and quantum technology while ensuring that ethics (including concerns about sustainability, access, justice, and privacy) along with relevant perspectives from the humanities are integrated at the foundation.

- actively enable creative and critical work aiming to develop a framework of shared social values and a robust ethical methodology for evaluating new and existing technologies, to make sure technological development is not done merely for its own sake but with a shared vision of a desirable future to influence policies and advancements for the betterment of society.

We are committed to:

Membership and work programmes
Proactively enriching our membership with talented individuals at the forefront of technological innovation in their careers.

Innovation and application
To address societal challenges such as affordable healthcare, climate change, and accessibility, the UK Young Academy will continue to develop and leverage innovation in the humanities and sciences to foster technological advancements, as well as promote and support the use of state-of-the-art and emerging technologies in our programmes and project activities.

Communicating evidence based research
The UK Young Academy will employ technology to communicate evidence-based research in a trustworthy, honest and digestible way to lay members of the public, and thus increase science and public health capital. We will endeavour to avoid misinformation and ensure effective crisis response and communication (e.g. future public health and other crises). The UK Young Academy will actively prioritise positive engagement and research-based evidence that contribute to local authority and UK government legislation for a better life and a sustainable planet. To advance technological innovation, the UK Young Academy will also support academic freedom and promote open research as far as it is possible.

Transdisciplinarity and expertise
Ensuring transdisciplinary working within our membership and with third party stakeholders which take advantage of the diverse technological advances at our disposal when implementing programmes and projects.

Climate change and environmental sustainability

The impact of climate change is being felt in the UK and around the world. The social, political, and scientific transformations and challenges that are a consequence of a warmer world shape the lives and careers of our members and thus the objectives of the UK Young Academy. We seek to inform, influence, and constructively challenge action taken in the UK and globally in response to the climate emergency. As a UK organisation, our primary focus will be at local and national level, where we aim to collaborate with other recognised bodies to take meaningful action towards greater environmental sustainability.

Key outcomes

The UK Young Academy will:

- Employ a tiered expansion approach to making changes in our local areas, at the UK national level, and globally in response to the climate emergency.

- Have an active programme of interdisciplinary, member-driven projects addressing key issues in public understanding and policy action on climate change and environmental sustainability.

- Actively engage in dialogues and debates related to climate action, centring people and their experiences across discussions.

- Employ the interconnectedness of technology, policy, and social action in driving interdisciplinary responses to the cross-sector problems of sustainability and climate equity.

We are committed to:

Social justice

Climate change affects everyone, but does not do so equally. The UK Young Academy is committed to keeping people at the heart of climate action, including the Global South and those around the world facing extraordinary injustices as a result of climate change. By employing our tiered expansion approach that promotes local action first, we will achieve change where it is most feasible to do so, whilst directing efficient use of our connections to push for broader-scale changes that are maximally impactful to the global society.

Interdisciplinarity

Responding to the climate crisis and developing more sustainable practices requires addressing challenges in how we live and work as well as what we do. The UK Young Academy will employ its inherent interdisciplinarity by combining perspectives from academia, industry, policy, and civil society, to bring together viewpoints from all disciplines and areas of practice.

Systemic action

Climate change action cannot be a problem for technology or policy alone. To achieve real change on issues such as greenwashing and global inequities, the UK Young Academy will adopt a holistic approach to bring together stakeholders throughout the complex networks that affect climate policy and industrial development. In addition to our outward engagement, we will ensure sustainability in the work of the UK Young Academy, through initiatives such as hybrid activities to reduce travel impacts.

Supporting early career professionals and empowering the younger generation

The UK Young Academy consists of early career researchers, innovators and professionals from diverse walks of life. Inherently, the UK Young Academy's goal is to spearhead an inclusive widening participation strategy across the humanities and sciences among the younger generation, focusing on communities who have historically been marginalised. Therefore, the UK Young Academy is committed to providing opportunities for continuous upskilling and reskilling of both its members and the younger generation to future-proof a sustainable society in today's fast-paced and ever-changing economy.

Key outcomes

The UK Young Academy will:

- Earnestly support the career advancement of its membership.

- Empower the younger generation with tangible and relevant skills for tackling societal problems, through its programmes and projects.

We are committed to:

Membership upskilling and reskilling

The UK Young Academy will promote upskilling and reskilling of its members to deliver on its goals and remain competitive in a quickly changing environment. We will achieve this by ensuring that working groups consist of members with mixed skills and experiences, to allow skill sharing, development and acquisition in new areas of interest. The UK Young Academy will communicate and facilitate relevant training opportunities, as well as support networking activities and collaborative partnerships among members through its projects and programmes. The UK Young Academy will also nurture a positive culture where individual and collective contributions of members are recognised and rewarded.

Mentoring and secondments

The UK Young Academy will establish a three-pronged mentorship programme:

(1) mentoring and secondment opportunities for our membership with senior partner academies and with other stakeholders including industry and third sector;

(2) peer mentoring scheme among members to promote skill acquisition and shadowing opportunities for members transitioning to new careers; and

(3) a dynamic and outward facing mentorship and secondment programme which allows members to mentor the younger generation of rising researchers, innovators and professionals at multiple professional or scholastic levels.

Bridging gaps for the next generation

To secure the UK's future as a leading global workforce, the UK Young Academy will support education and skill acquisition programmes for the younger generation through its programmes and projects. The UK Young Academy will engage with its local and global industry and third sector connections to identify market and societal needs and skills gaps required. We will facilitate conversational platforms between early career professionals and sectoral leaders, and thus inspire the younger generation to engage with diverse career paths to fulfil their potential and fill UK and global talent shortages.

Collaboration with educators and reputable partners

The UK Young Academy will work with educators who are experts in the challenges of engaging young people to encourage new and participative teaching methods. The UK Young Academy will harness widening participation across the humanities and sciences through partnerships with organisations that are well established in this area of work.

Schools engagement and community outreach

The UK Young Academy recognises that tomorrow's leaders are found in schools and the wider community. We will therefore promote outreach activities in schools and community centres, with the aim of inspiring young people to contribute to a better society, whether in their future careers or in other activities.

Acknowledgements

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To find out more about our members, visit **ukyoungacademy.org/members**

Our structure

The UK Young Academy comprises of early-career researchers and professionals from different backgrounds and areas of expertise.

It is governed by its members.

In partnership with

The **Academy** *of* **Medical Sciences**

The British Academy

THE LEARNED SOCIETY OF WALES
CYMDEITHAS DDYSGEDIG CYMRU
THE NATIONAL ACADEMY – CELEBRATING SCHOLARSHIP AND SERVING THE NATION
YR ACADEMI GENEDLAETHOL – YN DATHLU YSGOLHEICTOD A GWASANAETHU'R GENEDL

Royal Academy of Engineering

Acadamh Ríoga na hÉireann
Royal Irish Academy

THE ROYAL SOCIETY

RSE *The Royal Society of Edinburgh*
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