

Annual Report for the Concordat to Support the Career Development of Researchers

Universities and Research Institutes

Name of Institution	Leeds Beckett University
Reporting period	February 2026 – February 2027
Date approved by governing body	06 March 2026
Date published online	11 March 2026
Web address of annual report	https://www.leedsbeckett.ac.uk/research/hr-excellence-in-research-award-for-leeds-beckett/
Web address of institutional Researcher Development Concordat webpage	https://www.leedsbeckett.ac.uk/research/hr-excellence-in-research-award-for-leeds-beckett/
Contact for questions/concerns on researcher career development	Jaime Harrison j.n.harrison@leedsbeckett.ac.uk
Date statement sent to Researcher Development Concordat secretariat (refer to <u>Researcher Development Concordat Reporting Guidance</u>)	11 March 2026

Statement on how the organisation creates, maintains and embeds a research culture that upholds a positive and inclusive environment for researchers at all stages of their careers (max 500 words)

At Leeds Beckett University (LBU), our approach to research culture is grounded in our institutional values of ambition, inclusiveness, integrity, teamwork, pragmatism and purposefulness. We recognise that an inclusive and sustainable research environment is fundamental to delivering high-quality research and knowledge exchange. By creating the conditions in which researchers at all career stages are supported and valued, we strengthen both individual careers and our collective research endeavour.

Our commitment to research culture is embedded within the University's Strategic Plan 2021–2026¹ and is being carried forward into the emerging Strategic Plan for 2026–31, reinforcing our role as an anchor institution with a focus on inclusive impact, collaboration and community engagement. Within this context, research and knowledge exchange are positioned as drivers of positive change through interdisciplinary, applied and inclusive approaches. The launch of institutional research themes² provides a clear framework for collaboration across disciplines, engagement with partners and communities and alignment with individual career development and scholarly identity.

Leadership and responsibility for research culture are firmly embedded at institutional level. Strategic oversight is provided by the Pro Vice-Chancellor for Research and Innovation, supported by the Director of Research and Knowledge Exchange Services. The Research Culture & Environment Manager coordinates delivery of activity aligned to the Researcher Development Concordat and the HR Excellence in Research³ (HREiR) action plan, ensuring commitments are translated into consistent practice across the University.

Evidence from the Culture, Employment and Development in Academic Research Survey (CEDARS) 2025 indicates a strengthening research culture at Leeds Beckett, with notable improvements since 2023 in research standards, alongside positive trends in managerial support, wellbeing and recognition of research contributions. There has also been increased awareness of national frameworks underpinning responsible and inclusive research practice. At the same time, the findings highlight

¹ https://www.leedsbeckett.ac.uk/-/media/files/we-are-beckett/leeds_beckett_strategy.pdf

² <https://www.leedsbeckett.ac.uk/research/research-themes/>

³ <https://www.leedsbeckett.ac.uk/research/hr-excellence-in-research-award-for-leeds-beckett/>

areas requiring continued attention, including workload pressures, promotion clarity and longer-term security, particularly for colleagues at earlier and mid-career stages.

Over the past year, this evidence has informed the delivery of targeted activity to strengthen research culture in practice. Key achievements during the reporting period include:

- **Research integrity and responsible research practice**, including strengthened ethics policies and procedures, implementation of the Worktribe Ethics system and publication of principles-based guidance⁴ on the responsible use of artificial intelligence in research.
- **Equality, diversity and inclusion**, including the launch of the EDI Learning Series and delivery of mandatory training addressing harassment and sexual misconduct, completed by over 94% of colleagues, alongside updated policies and enhanced support mechanisms.
- **Mentoring and peer support**, contributing to researcher confidence, progression and connection across career stages through internal provision and cross-institutional mentoring for mid-career researchers.
- **Recognition and celebration of research contributions**, through the continued delivery of the Festival of Research & Knowledge Exchange, associated awards, and platforms such as LBU Research Voices⁵.
- **Targeted support for inclusive research careers**, including funded research retreats providing protected time and space for researchers who identify as women and women of colour.

Together, these activities demonstrate sustained progress in embedding a positive and inclusive research culture at Leeds Beckett University, strengthening an environment in which researchers are supported, valued and able to thrive at all stages of their careers.

Provide a short summary of the institution's strategic objectives and implementation plans for delivering each of the three pillars of the Concordat (environment and culture, employment, and professional development of

⁴ <https://www.leedsbeckett.ac.uk/-/media/files/policies/research-and-enterprise/responsible-use-of-ai-in-research-at-leeds-beckett-university.pdf>

⁵ [https://www.leedsbeckett.ac.uk/blogs/research-enterprise/?id=73f1c45c-cae4-426b-98be-c42411ba43cc&categories\[0\]=aa18bc55-efb8-4c72-828a-75c6f9ecf53a](https://www.leedsbeckett.ac.uk/blogs/research-enterprise/?id=73f1c45c-cae4-426b-98be-c42411ba43cc&categories[0]=aa18bc55-efb8-4c72-828a-75c6f9ecf53a)

researchers) for your key stakeholder groups together with your measures for evaluating progress and success (*max 600 words*)

Environment and culture

Embedding the Concordat Across Institutional Practices: Concordat principles are integrated into performance and development review (PDR) resources, researcher development programmes, induction activity and internal communications, supporting a shared understanding of research culture expectations, with awareness and understanding monitored through CEDARS.

Enhancing Research Culture through Strategic Audits: Findings from the research culture survey have informed an action plan aligned with the University's HREiR commitments, supporting ongoing improvement. Progress is monitored through completion of agreed actions and associated success measures focused on key aspects of researcher experience.

Increasing Researcher Representation in Decision-Making: The University continues to strengthen researcher involvement in research-related policy, processes and systems through the institutional ECR Network, targeted consultation and engagement through relevant committees. Progress is reflected in documented changes to research practice and processes shaped by researcher input.

Implementing Narrative CVs in Academic Progression: Support for both researchers being assessed and those undertaking assessment continues to be strengthened through the use of narrative CV principles within academic promotion processes. Resources, development activity and guidance support equitable research evaluation, with progress reflected through engagement and feedback on their impact.

Mental Health Training for All Colleagues: Linked to the University Mental Health Charter Award improvement plan⁶, an all-colleague mental health online training course has been designed and launched as part of staff induction. The module covers mental health, self-care and supporting others. Success is evidenced through increased knowledge and confidence in discussing mental health, improved wellbeing conversations and targeted support where required, with ongoing feedback used to assess sustained impact.

⁶ <https://www.leedsbeckett.ac.uk/our-community/mental-health-charter/>

Employment

Responsible Research Assessment and Open Research: LBU is a signatory of the San Francisco Declaration on Research Assessment (DORA) and a member of the UK Reproducibility Network (UKRN), reinforcing its commitment to responsible research assessment and open research practices. Work is underway to explore alignment with CoARA principles and to undertake policy gap analysis in relation to DORA, OR4 and open research, supported by the establishment of an Open Research Working Group to share practice across disciplines and identify priorities for future institutional development. Success is measured through policy development and the embedding of responsible research assessment within institutional practices, including its application within the University's REF Code of Practice.

Enhancing Researcher Mentoring and Development: A centralised mentoring programme supports researchers, particularly those on fixed-term contracts. The programme continues to expand, supported by training for mentors and tailored resources. Success is measured through engagement levels and researcher feedback.

Strengthening Researcher Induction and Leadership Development: Researcher induction continues to be enhanced and aligned with School-based activity to provide clear guidance on institutional policies, research practice and career development. In parallel, a structured research leadership development programme is in delivery, with distinct pathways for senior research leaders, emerging leaders (mid-career) and future leaders (ECRs and post-doctoral researchers). Success is tracked through participation data, participant feedback and evidence of leadership development progression.

Professional Development of Researchers

Academy for Research & Knowledge Exchange and Researcher Development: The Academy for Research & Knowledge Exchange is being established to support innovation, collaboration and researcher development across the University. A structured programme will offer a blend of asynchronous and synchronous provision through a centralised repository of resources, including workshops and seminars. Success is measured through engagement with the programme and researcher feedback on the extent to which it supports career progression.

Career Development for Researchers and Managers: Career development provision for researchers and managers continues to be enhanced to support

<p>effective performance reviews and access to internal and external development opportunities. Workshops and seminars focus on career management, skills transferability and progression pathways. Success is tracked through increased managerial confidence in career discussions and sustained engagement with development activity.</p>	
<p>Summary of actions taken, and evaluation of progress made, in the current reporting period to implement your plan to support the three pillars in respect of each of your key stakeholder groups [Institution; Academic Managers of Researchers (Deans, Heads of Schools/Departments/PIs); Researchers]</p>	
<p>Environment and Culture (max 600 words)</p>	<p>Institution</p> <p>Awareness Raising of the Concordat: Concordat principles continue to be promoted through induction activity, researcher development provision and targeted communications. CEDARS 2025 shows a clear increase in awareness of HR Excellence in Research (HREiR), with 59% of respondents reporting some level of awareness, representing an increase of 16 percentage points since 2023.</p> <p>Research Integrity, Ethics and Responsible Research Practice: Updated research ethics policies and procedures have strengthened institutional arrangements for research integrity and ethical review. CEDARS 2025 indicates high levels of confidence that ethical standards are upheld and that concerns about research practice can be raised appropriately. The introduction of the Worktribe Ethics system has further strengthened transparency, consistency and oversight of ethics processes.</p> <p>Responsible Use of AI in Research: Principles-based guidance on the responsible use of AI in research has been published, supporting transparency, accountability and research integrity. The guidance complements existing ethics and governance frameworks and provides a shared institutional position on emerging practice.</p> <p>EDI Training and Policy Development: In February 2025, the University launched the EDI Learning Series, open to all colleagues and designed to raise awareness and understanding of EDI through specialist knowledge and lived</p>

experience. Alongside this, a significant programme of work has been delivered in response to the OfS condition of registration relating to harassment and sexual misconduct, including mandatory training for colleagues and students (completed by over 94% of colleagues as of January 2026), updated policies, investigation skills training, enhanced online signposting and the recruitment of additional Dignity and Respect Advisers.

Academic Managers of Researchers

Leadership development through LBU Leaders: Leadership capability across the University is being strengthened through LBU Leaders, the institution's values-aligned leadership framework for all colleagues. The associated interventions support a shared understanding of leadership expectations and behaviours, enabling colleagues to lead teams, make decisions and shape positive working and research environments in line with institutional values.

Researchers

Early Career Researcher (ECR) Network: The LBU ECR Network was launched in July 2025 as a researcher-led initiative to strengthen research culture, community and voice at early career stage. Developed through a cross-institutional working group of ECRs, the network's focus and format have been shaped by researcher experience and priorities. A regular monthly programme has been established, with six sessions delivered to date and over 150 ECRs engaging across the programme. Feedback has been consistently positive, highlighting the value of peer-led activity, opportunities for connection and shared learning, and the visibility of early career perspectives within the institution.

Enhancing Researcher Visibility and Recognition: Between February 2025 and January 2026, LBU Research Voices

	<p>published 23 blog posts, attracting over 1,600 views. Contributions reflect a wide range of researcher and PGR experiences, including reflections on research sabbaticals, lived experiences of Black women in academia, policy and business engagement, promotion preparation, and balancing research with teaching and doctoral study. Alongside the launch of Symplectic Discovery, this activity improves the accessibility and visibility of research activity and supports recognition of diverse research contributions and career pathways.</p> <p>Policy Awareness and Ethical Practice: Regular communications and accessible online resources support awareness of key research policies. CEDARS 2025 indicates increased confidence among researchers in knowing where to access guidance and the majority of respondents report acting in accordance with institutional policies related to research integrity and ethics.</p>
<p>Employment (max 600 words)</p>	<p>Institution</p> <p>Engagement in policy development: A coordinated policy review schedule has been introduced to support clearer planning, structured review cycles and timely engagement around research policy development. Alongside this, research policy webpages are being redeveloped to provide a more accessible and clearly signposted resource, supporting awareness, transparency and opportunities for feedback.</p> <p>Mentoring as part of the University’s employment support offer: The LBU Researcher Mentoring Programme continues to embed within the University’s approach to supporting researchers’ employment experience and progression. Since its launch in September 2024, over 75 mentoring matches have been made across a range of career stages and disciplines. Evaluation is built into the programme design, with feedback collected at completion and again at three-month follow-up. Interim findings indicate high levels of satisfaction among mentees, with reported benefits including increased confidence and clearer understanding of progression routes. Follow-up data suggest these benefits are being sustained over time, with mentees describing</p>

greater confidence in decision-making and more strategic planning of research activity within their roles.

Cross-institutional mentoring: Alongside internal provision, LBU participates in a Cross-Institutional Mentoring Scheme focused on mid-career researchers (MCRs), through which senior researchers from partner institutions act as mentors. During the 2025 programme, 18 LBU colleagues participated as mentors supporting researchers from partner institutions, while 22 LBU MCRs were matched with external mentors. Applications for the 2026 programme have recently closed, with 23 mentors and 17 mentees registered. Evaluation feedback from 2025 indicates that participants particularly value the external perspective and dedicated space for career reflection.

Leadership and management development: Research leadership and management capability continues to be strengthened through structured development activity delivered across career stages. This includes dedicated pathways for Senior Research Leaders, Emerging Research Leaders (MCRs), and Postdoctoral and ECRs, with a focus on inclusive leadership, project and funding management and responsible research practice.

Academic Managers of Researchers

Review of Directors of Research and Knowledge Exchange

Roles: A review of job descriptions for Directors of Research and Knowledge Exchange has been completed to reflect a broader and more strategic approach to research leadership within Schools. The revised role profiles move away from a narrow focus on REF submission activity towards wider responsibility for school-based research and knowledge exchange strategy and for shaping positive research and KE culture and environment. This reframing supports clearer expectations for senior research leadership and strengthens alignment between institutional priorities and local research management.

	<p>Leadership development and responsibility: Leadership development activity aligned to the Senior Research Leaders and Emerging Research Leaders pathways supports effective leadership of research teams within the institutional context. The emphasis reflects expectations around shaping local research environments and employment experiences.</p> <p>Researchers</p> <p>Progression, confidence and employment experience: Structured support, including mentoring, contributes to researchers’ confidence in navigating progression and employment-related decision-making. Evaluation evidence from the LBU Researcher Mentoring Programme suggests sustained benefits beyond the immediate mentoring relationship, including increased confidence and clearer understanding of progression routes.</p> <p>Preparation for leadership responsibility: Leadership and management development activity supports researchers to build capability ahead of, or alongside, increased responsibility within research roles.</p> <p>Voice and engagement in institutional practice: Engagement with institutional policy and practice is supported through clearer communication of review cycles, improved access to policy information and structured opportunities for feedback. Evidence from CEDARS 2025 indicates increased confidence among researchers that their contributions to institutional decision-making are recognised, reflecting progress in researcher voice and engagement.</p>
<p>Professional development (max 600 words)</p>	<p>Institution</p> <p>Academy for Research & Knowledge Exchange: The structural foundations for the Academy for Research & Knowledge Exchange are now in place, supported by academic input and alignment with existing School-based provision. This work has enabled a more coherent and</p>

accessible institutional approach to researcher and knowledge exchange development.

Co-ordinated researcher development programme: A co-ordinated development programme has been established, bringing together leadership, career and skills development, mentoring and community-based activity across central and School-level provision. The programme is informed by evidence from CEDARS and wider researcher feedback, supporting a more coherent and responsive institutional offer.

Tailored development pathways by career stage:

Development pathways are now in place for researchers at different career stages, including Postdoctoral and Early Career Researchers, mid-career researchers and senior research leaders. These pathways combine online and in-person activity, workshops and seminars to support progression, leadership development and longer-term career sustainability.

Career development and employability support: Career development provision has been strengthened through a structured four-part webinar series focused on career planning, transferable skills, employability and long-term career sustainability. This is complemented by 1:1 career advice appointments with a career adviser, providing personalised support for researchers navigating progression, transitions and employment decisions within and beyond academia.

Festival of Research & Knowledge Exchange: The Festival continues to provide opportunities for researchers and PGRs at all career stages to present research, engage with senior colleagues and participate in open discussion about career progression and research identity. Research spotlight talks and career-focused panel discussions support visibility, confidence and insight into progression routes and leadership experiences.

Academic Managers of Researchers

Supporting development and progression: Support for professional and career development is embedded through the active involvement of managers in development activity, including contributing to mentoring, sharing experience through panels and LBU Research Voices, and engaging in training and development provision. These activities help to support more informed conversations around progression, research identity and longer-term development within teams.

Creating space for development: Schools continue to support researchers to access development activity, including protecting time for development alongside other responsibilities. Findings from CEDARS indicate improvement since 2023 in access to development opportunities, reflecting ongoing efforts to enable participation in professional and career development activity.

Recognition and valuing of development activity: Managers are encouraged to recognise engagement in development and leadership activity within local contexts as part of wider contribution to the research environment.

Researchers

Engagement with professional and career development: Researchers are supported to engage with a range of professional and career development activity, including structured development pathways, skills-focused provision, mentoring and personalised career advice, supporting confidence in career decision-making and progression.

Research identity, visibility and progression: Opportunities to present research, reflect on career narratives and engage with peers and senior colleagues support the development of research identity and visibility. Activity delivered through the ECR Network, Research Voices and the Festival of Research & Knowledge Exchange provides space to explore progression

	<p>routes, leadership experiences and diverse career trajectories.</p> <p>Targeted support and protected research time: In 2025, targeted Research Retreat funding was made available to support researchers who identify as women and women of colour. Eighty-six applications were received, with 75 researchers funded. The retreats provided protected time and space for focused research activity, addressing structural barriers to progression and supporting research sustainability. Evaluation evidence to date indicates positive impact, including increased confidence, renewed momentum and progress towards publications and funding-related outputs, with benefits sustained beyond the retreat period.</p>
<p>Comment on any lessons learned from the activities undertaken over this period and any modifications you propose to make to your action plan and measures of success as a result. (max 500 words)</p>	
<p>Over the past year, our approach to research culture, employment and development has continued to evolve, informed by evidence from CEDARS 2025, the 2024 Research Culture Survey and ongoing engagement with our research community. Together, this evidence has provided a clearer understanding of researcher experience at Leeds Beckett and has shaped how we refine priorities and measures of success.</p> <p>Findings from CEDARS indicate a broadly positive direction of travel since 2023. Researchers report greater confidence in raising concerns, stronger awareness of institutional frameworks, and more positive experiences of collaboration and support. These findings reinforce the value of recent activity focused on mentoring, leadership development and community-based provision, and provide confidence that key elements of the action plan are contributing positively to researcher experience.</p> <p>At the same time, the evidence highlights pressures that continue to shape how researchers engage with development opportunities. Researchers consistently recognise the value of training, mentoring and leadership development, but participation is often influenced by competing demands and the wider context in which research is undertaken. This reflects challenges experienced across the</p>	

<p>higher education sector, including increased workload intensity and uncertainty around funding and career pathways.</p> <p>A key lesson from the past year has therefore been the importance of designing support that is proportionate, accessible and flexible. Rather than relying solely on additional activity, we are increasingly focused on ensuring that development, mentoring and support are delivered in ways that are realistic and responsive to researchers' circumstances, and that make effective use of existing structures and touchpoints where possible.</p> <p>Another important learning has been the impact of peer-based and community-led approaches. Feedback highlights the value of mentoring, researcher networks and protected space for research in building confidence, sustaining motivation and supporting progression. These insights have informed decisions to prioritise activity that creates opportunities for connection, reflection and focused research, particularly for those facing structural barriers to progression.</p> <p>Looking ahead, we will continue to refine our action plan and measures of success in response to this evidence. Greater emphasis will be placed on participation, accessibility and sustainability, alongside delivery metrics, and on strengthening alignment between institutional priorities and researcher experience at local level. By remaining responsive to both internal evidence and the wider sector context, we aim to sustain progress while recognising the constraints within which researchers are currently working.</p> <p>This reflective, evidence-led approach will continue to underpin our implementation of the Concordat, ensuring that our actions remain relevant, proportionate and grounded in lived experience.</p>
<p>Outline your key objectives in delivering your plan in the coming reporting period <i>(max 500 words)</i></p>
<p>Over the coming reporting period, the University will focus on consolidating and extending progress made across research culture, employment and professional development, ensuring that activity is embedded, visible and sustainable. As we move towards completion of the current HREiR action plan and begin shaping priorities for the next phase, our objectives will centre on strengthening internal structures, improving accessibility and coherence of support, and continuing to respond to evidence and researcher feedback.</p>

Embedding the Academy for Research & Knowledge Exchange A key priority will be the further development and launch of the Academy for Research & Knowledge Exchange as a coherent framework for researcher and knowledge exchange development. Activity will focus on bringing together existing provision under a clear Academy identity, improving visibility and navigation, and supporting a more joined-up approach to career, leadership and skills development across career stages.

Developing a 'one-stop shop' for researcher development Aligned with the Academy, internal researcher development webpages will be redeveloped to provide a central, accessible point of reference for development opportunities, guidance and support. This will strengthen signposting, reduce duplication and support researchers and managers to more easily identify relevant provision at different career stages.

Expanding and strengthening mentoring provision The Researcher Mentoring Programme will continue to expand, building on evidence from evaluation. This will include the introduction of reverse mentoring to support two-way learning, leadership development and more inclusive perspectives, alongside continued internal and cross-institutional mentoring opportunities.

Embedding research culture within core institutional processes Further integration of research culture and development priorities into core processes will be a focus, including refreshed guidance for performance and development review (PDR) conversations, enhanced support for both reviewers and reviewees, and continued development of researcher induction to ensure consistent early engagement with institutional policy, opportunities and support.

Supporting managers of researchers and supervisory communities Targeted support for managers of researchers, including research supervisors, will continue through development activity, guidance and peer learning opportunities.

Sustaining visibility, community and engagement The University will continue to invest in activity that supports research identity, visibility and connection, including the Festival of Research & Knowledge Exchange, LBU Research Voices and researcher networks. These platforms will continue to provide space for sharing research, career narratives and diverse pathways, reinforcing inclusive research culture in practice.

Looking Ahead Alongside delivery of current commitments, the coming year will support transition planning towards the 2027 - 2030 HREiR action plan, ensuring

that learning from CEDARS, the Research Culture Survey and ongoing evaluation informs future priorities, measures of success and longer-term sustainability.

Please provide a brief statement describing your institution's approval process of this report prior to sign off by the governing body (max 200 words)

The Concordat annual report is submitted to the Research and Enterprise Committee for review and approval, followed by endorsement from the Academic Board. It is then recommended to the Board of Governors for final approval before publication on external webpages.

Signature on behalf of governing body:



Contact for queries: Jaime Harrison (j.n.harrison@leedsbeckett.ac.uk)

This annual report will be analysed by the secretariat for the Concordat to Support the Career Development of Researchers, to identify good practices, themes for development and information to improve national research culture policy and practice.

If you have any questions, or suggestions on how the reporting process could be improved, please contact the secretariat via the email address listed on the RDC website: www.researcherdevelopmentconcordat.ac.uk.