

HR Excellence in Research – 4 Year External Review June 2019

Introduction – This review was co-led by Human Resources and Research and Enterprise Services with strategic oversight from the Associate Director of HR and the Director of Research and Enterprise Services (R&ES). Contributions from key areas within HR were from HR Policy Advisor, Equality and Inclusion Manager, Organisational Development Partner, Head of Graduate School and our Academic Lead who supported the review of our professional development programmes for researchers. Please refer to the accompanying Context Statement for further detail on Leeds Beckett University staffing and governance overview. At the time of writing we employ 400 colleagues who have significant responsibility for Research (SRR) and 175 colleagues on research contracts of which 154 who we have identified to be research independent and 20 are employed on fixed term contracts (FTCRs). We currently have a community of approximately 100 ECRs. Whilst we are guided by the REF definition of ECR, we adopt an inclusive approach at institutional level to actively encourage a wider range of staff to participate in our ECR events and enhance our ECR community. We encourage and welcome FTCRs' participation in this community.

Internal Review – The internal evaluation of our implementation review and action plans (AP) has been jointly overseen by HR and R&ES, both areas share responsibility for compliance, management and implementation of the seven Concordat for Research Development principles that inform this review. The review considers progress to date against our 2015 submission and 2017 resubmission. Both plans and reports have been considered by the University Research Degree Sub Committee (meets monthly) and via School level meetings with Directors of Research, Postgraduate Research Tutors and research active staff at various levels.

Researcher Engagement and Dissemination – We have sought feedback on our Implementation Plan (IP) and Action Plan going forward with key groups/people: (i) Director of R&Es; DoR; R&E Committee; URDSC; (ii) feedback from DoR at R&E meetings held on several occasions (iii) participating at School R&E days and Research Centres; (iv) planning meetings with GS Academic Lead to identify future actions; (v) networking events with researchers and PGR students, discussing research activities at our R&E and PGR Conferences; (vi) disseminating findings from CROS&PIRLS and PRES survey in all Schools; (vii) researcher feedback from development workshops and (viii) feedback from the University annual R&E survey.

We continue to run CROS (Careers in Research Online) and PIRLS (Principal Investigators and Research Leaders) surveys and are pleased with an increase in returns to 25% and 17% respectively in May 2019. Analysis of survey results informs our ongoing strategic priorities and our AP 2019 – 2021. This plan has been endorsed by the University Research and Enterprise Committee, chaired by the Deputy VC for Research and Enterprise. This committee is comprised of the Professoriate, Directors of Research, Research Support staff and representation from the Research Student body. Regular reporting of HR Excellence actions forms part of the meeting agenda for the committee. The University remains committed to The Concordat and welcomes the final recommendations regarding the updated Concordat which launched in June 2019.

Key Achievements and Progress made against 2017-2019 Action Plan

The University has been restructured since our last review, moving from 5 Faculties to 13 schools in 2018 and then to 11 Schools + 1 in 2019. A newly formed Researcher Development Group (RDG) in the GS works to promote representation and support of ECRs, including FTCRs and more experienced researchers across Schools and R&ES, and our Research Student and Staff Development Unit. URDSC continues to co-opt staff members at SL/ECR level, enabling teaching colleagues' appropriate participation in decision making around research management and development. Our research environment has been strengthened by the appointment of a Staff Development Officer (SDO) in 2017. Located in the GS, SDO is a key point of communication for day-to-day support for our ECR researchers, research students and ECRs. Our Academic Lead (appointed in 2017) supports GS colleagues in our aim to offer effective and responsive researcher development programmes for all staff. Our R&Es Executive Team who operationalise HR Excellence in Research meets weekly to share good practice on the ongoing development available for our new academic and SSR staff and reports formally, as indicated, to the R and E Committee.

Key achievements and progress against the 7 Principles:

1. Recognition of the importance of recruiting, selecting and retaining researchers with the highest potential to achieve excellence in research.

Leeds Beckett is committed to principles of equality and diversity across all areas. This is encapsulated within colleague recruitment, pay policies and processes, and is supported by recruitment and selection training, including a session on unconscious bias in recruitment. Changes to recruitment processes introduced since 2017 include further support and extension of the use of positive action statements in recruitment advertising and the launch of a new recruitment online portal (in March 2019). This new portal has improved the candidate experience and will enable the monitoring of recruitment panel composition. Changes to recruitment procedure impacts all levels of appointment including FTCR staff. The range of selection methods for recruitment has broadened, incorporating candidate portfolios and published work and recruitment open evenings including for example, a recent 0.5FTE Lecturer/Senior Lecturer Biomedical Science vacancy that offered an opportunity for a practice-based researcher to develop their academic teaching. We have provided 25 Graduate Teaching Assistants posts, providing time and financial support for PhD registration whilst lecturing and providing an alternative entry point to an academic career.

2. Researchers are recognised and valued by their employing organisation as an essential part of their organisation's human resources and a key component of their overall strategy to develop and deliver world-class research.

Our institutional Strategic Planning Framework 2016-2021 includes 3 strategic objectives (and associated KPIs) in the areas of Leading Research and Academic Enterprise (see supporting context statement).

A new annual process for promotion to Professor and Reader launched in May 2017, and in total 12 colleagues have been promoted to Professor and 51 to Reader through the 2017, 2018 and 2019 promotion rounds. Female representation within the professoriate has risen to 30% (from 19.1% in 2014). All colleagues who are unsuccessful in the annual academic promotions round are given the opportunity for ongoing support during the subsequent two-year period before they can apply again for promotion under this [procedure](#).

A university wide communication campaign has been underway (since 2018) to create awareness and understanding of Research Excellence Framework (REF) 2021, highlighting key messages and milestones for all academic colleagues across the University – in addition to the ongoing promotion of research across our university. A 4-week colleague consultation on the REF 2021 draft Code of Practice (on the fair and transparent identification of colleagues with significant responsibility for research) was completed in April 2019. 222 academic colleagues attended Unit of Assessment Code of Practice meetings, and 133 colleagues completed the Code of Practice consultation survey.

3. Researchers are equipped and supported to be adaptable and flexible in an increasingly diverse, mobile, global research environment.

Our Head of Research post followed the restructure of Research and Enterprise Services in 2017. A primary role of HoR is to lead on the University's 2021 REF submission and to increase external research income in line with strategic objectives. DoR informs the development and delivery of workshops on 'research impact' and 'public engagement'. The GS work with our Impact Officers and Head of Communications to deliver 'Creating Research Impact in the Media'. At School level are workshops and development days on Impact and Engagement e.g. School of Sport has ongoing links with Mark Reed's nationally recognised Research Impact development days and the School has a 'Carnegie Research with Impact' unit that informs staff away days and staff research seminar series.

Our university wide Research and Enterprise Conference was launched in 2018; the conference is an important annual cross University event providing both showcasing and development opportunities for staff. The conference

enables academics to discover more about the development support available and to explore research in other areas to invigorate their ideas and provide new potential collaborators. The 2018 event was themed around best practice and provided academics with new and innovative ways to engage in research and enterprise. In 2019 the theme of Impact showcased academics who have, through their work, made a real difference to regional, national and global agendas. Leeds Beckett was shortlisted for a Universities Human Resources (UHR) Award in the Organisational Development and Culture Change category for our leadership of the Leeds citywide coaching network.

4. The importance of researchers' personal and career development, and lifelong learning, is clearly recognised and promoted at all stages of their career.

The GS circulates our dynamic Researcher Developer programme to Deans and Directors of Research to disseminate accordingly. Schools across the University have introduced 'Research and Enterprise Coordinator' roles within academic Subject Groups. These coordinators work with staff, from ECR to experienced, to identify research priorities and plans across respective groups. These plans can be used to inform PDR and deployment meetings with Subject Group Leads. The Researcher Development team, supported by our Academic Lead, offer and deliver School specific workshops as appropriate, e.g. School of Built Environment and Engineering and School of Education during academic year 2018/19. Schools have autonomy regarding the management and delivery of research and staff mentoring schemes. One example is the Carnegie Research Mentoring Scheme which provides collegiate support for staff to develop their research and scholarly activity. A further example is the formal mentoring scheme in our PysCen mentoring programme which allows academic colleagues to state their needs and identify potential mentors. We have identified 60 mentees from 3 Schools who have benefited in having experienced research mentors who are able to guide them in a supportive environment.

5. Individual researchers share the responsibility for and need to pro-actively engage in their own personal and career development, and lifelong learning.

The GS facilitated a short life working group to enhance our early career researcher network in 2017 and we targeted our research staff workshops through marketing campaigns to promote maximum take up by relevant staff, including ECRs. We delivered 47 workshops in 2018/2019 282 academic colleagues attended, 179 females and 103 males. The impact of colleagues attending these workshops have advanced their careers as researchers, particularly, supervision of research students and being appointed as independent chairs on examination teams.

12 STEM colleagues completed the Aurora programme in 2017 and 2018 and 6 female academic colleagues have taken part in the Regional Cross Institutional action learning for women programme. There have been over 150 attendees on various leadership development sessions targeted at Academic Leaders since September 2017 (approximately 65% of attendees were female). 32% of those who attended a leadership programme in 2016/17 have since been promoted.

6. Diversity and equality must be promoted in all aspects of the recruitment and career management of researchers.

The Equality, Diversity and Inclusion Framework (Strategy) has been agreed, following wide ranging consultation. We continue to provide a range of equality and diversity development sessions – for example, this academic year 90 colleagues attended Trans Awareness training and we have introduced a new 'Cultural Awareness' session (so far attended by 28 colleagues).

Our Equality Forums are actively engaged in delivering events and activities including annual race lectures, an inaugural Gender Research Conference (attended by 96 academic colleagues in 2018), participation in Leeds Pride and events in support of Disability, LGBT and Women's History Months. Our equality work was recognised in December 2018 with a Vercida award when we were named in the top 10 of the UK's most LGBT inclusive employers

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and we were singled out as one of only 11 HEIs with a consistently gender balanced Board in the Women Count, Leaders in Education Report 2018. We are now in the second year of Gender Pay Gap reporting and are pleased to report improvements in our mean, median and bonus pay gap. A new family friendly webpage signposts policies and support and a return to work mentoring scheme.

A Strategic Framework for the Wellbeing and Mental Health of all staff was agreed in 2019, focusing on Physical, Mental, Financial and Community with initiatives including financial wellbeing sessions, gym referral scheme to aid recovery from injury and/or to support mental health. Mental Health First Aid training has been delivered to over 320 colleagues (with further scheduling in place to encourage university wide attendance). Aiming to reduce the stigma of mental ill health and assisting colleagues in recognising key symptoms so effective support can be offered, a version of this training is provided to all new PG Research Students and staff involved in Research Supervision. In April/May 2019, we delivered a series of face to face Equality and Diversity training sessions including emphasis on unconscious bias. These were targeted at colleagues involved as REF panel members working to identify Independent Researchers within Leeds Beckett. All our Directors of Research attended one of these training sessions, along with a further 17 of our Professors.

7. The sector and all stakeholders will undertake regular and collective review of their progress in strengthening the attractiveness and sustainability of research careers in the UK.

We continue to review our Action Plan and stated priorities (see ‘how the evaluation was undertaken’ above). Those defined as active researchers, including FTCRs and those having SRR, are subsequently be able to access dedicated resources including internal funding for research start up and/or development, PhD fee support, specialist training and development, and time for research in deployment (e.g. Independent Researcher status as part of REF 2021 code). Performance is reviewed annually via their personal development review (PDR) and the plan and resource requirements are updated accordingly. We have seen further investment to advance researcher effectiveness and career development including, but not limited to:- subscriptions to resources for funding opportunities and key policy databases; institutional ORCID; Researcher Development Framework (RDF); research intelligence software; external presenters to develop and directly support researcher engagement with impact agendas.

Next steps: Priorities for 2019 – 2021 - The GS will continue to work in conjunction with HR to publicise, embed and implement the refreshed Concordat from September 2019. Our updated AP outlines how we will manage and monitor this process in the context of University wide strategic objectives. Our overall priorities are captured in the following:

Strategic Priority	Measure of Success
University governance and involvement of researchers (at all levels)	Representation – a champion for each area of research staff on all relevant committees at School, Unit and University levels.
Increased opportunities for all researchers to develop and gain skills in increasingly cross and interdisciplinary environments	Attendance at and progression and/or impacts from Researcher Development programme for all levels – ECR, FTCR mid and experienced.
Expansion of mentoring to include all research staff as appropriate	Increased numbers of Professors and Readers acting as mentors.
Promote and achieve Equality and Diversity and Wellbeing across our research community	Achieve Race Equality Charter Bronze Award, adherence (with reporting) to Public Sector Equality Duty regarding.
Attract, retain and enhance career progression for research staff as per HR and Research Strategies.	Increases in staff numbers gaining Independent Researcher status, engaging with promotion rounds, being PIs
Integrate Concordat Principles more explicitly at School and operational levels	Discussion at PDR and deployment meetings for all researchers