

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 2025 – February 2026
Date approved by governing body	21 March 2025
Date published online	24 March 2025
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	j.n.harrison@leedsbeckett.ac.uk
Date statement sent to Researcher Development Concordat secretariat via CDRsecretariat@universitiesuk.ac.uk	25 March 2025

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 commitment to research culture is firmly rooted in our institutional values of ambition, inclusiveness, integrity, teamwork, pragmatism, and purposefulness. We believe that fostering an inclusive and supportive research environment is essential to delivering excellent research and innovation. Providing researchers at all career stages with the resources, support, and opportunities they need ensures they can excel and contribute meaningfully to our research community.

Our Strategic Plan 2021-2026¹ reflects this commitment, setting out a vision to make a decisive and positive impact on people, organisations, and communities. With a focus on interdisciplinary collaboration, external partnerships, and impactful knowledge exchange, our strategy enables research to flourish while embedding a culture that values and supports diverse contributions.

Leadership for research culture is firmly embedded at the highest levels of the institution, with the appointment of a Pro Vice Chancellor for Research and Innovation (December 2022) and a Director of Research and Knowledge Exchange Services (November 2023) providing strategic direction. The Research Culture & Environment Manager (July 2024) leads initiatives enhancing researcher development and Concordat commitments.

In 2024, LBU was awarded the HR Excellence in Research (HREiR) eight-year accreditation², recognising our ongoing commitment to supporting researchers. This milestone reflects our dedication to embedding researcher career development and culture within our institutional strategy, underpinned by an ambitious action plan designed to drive sustainable and positive change.

Over the past year, we have developed, launched and delivered several initiatives that strengthen our research culture:

- **2024 Research Culture Survey:** Captured a holistic view of LBU's research culture, informing an action plan actively enhancing research culture.
- **LBU Researcher Mentoring Programme:** Providing structured peer support and career development. Nearly 60 mentors and mentees have engaged to date, with near 50 matched.

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

² <https://www.leedsbeckett.ac.uk/research/hr-excellence-in-research-award-for-leeds-beckett/>

- **DORA Signatory³**: Formal commitment to recognising the broad and diverse contributions of researchers beyond traditional metrics.
- **Enhancing Research Culture Initiatives**: Supported by Research England's Enhancing Research Culture fund, we have launched a range of impactful projects, including:
 - Leadership training for current and emerging research leaders.
 - Funded research retreats for women and women of colour.
 - ECR Network providing peer support, training, and collaboration.
 - Festival of Research and Knowledge Exchange Awards celebrating researcher contributions.
 - Research Cafés fostering collaboration, best practice sharing, and funding awareness.
 - Support for our supervisory community.
- **Updates to Academic Promotion Criteria⁴**: Updated criteria incorporating narrative CV principles to recognise diverse contributions.
- **Inclusive Self-Assessment Tool (ISAT)**: workshops launched to identify EDI strengths, challenges, and actions, integrating research staff priorities within Schools and Services' business plans.

Each of these initiatives aligns with the Researcher Development Concordat and national frameworks, including the Research Integrity Concordat, DORA, Athena Swan, and the Race Equality Charter. Together, these commitments foster an environment that champions excellence, equity, and inclusion.

These collective efforts sustain an outstanding research culture through engagement, reflection, and action. By embedding positive research practices, we foster an environment where innovation thrives, careers progress, and research makes a lasting impact.

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

³ <https://www.leedsbeckett.ac.uk/research/research-and-information-governance/responsible-use-of-research-metrics/>

⁴ https://www.leedsbeckett.ac.uk/UPacademic_promotions

Environment and Culture

Embedding the Concordat Across Institutional Practices: Concordat principles will be integrated into PDR resources, researcher development programmes, induction, and communications to ensure a shared understanding of research culture expectations. Awareness will be measured via the 2025 CEDARS survey, with initiatives such as research cafés, the ECR network, and mentoring activities supporting engagement.

Enhancing Research Culture through Strategic Audits: The research culture survey has informed an action plan aligned with our HREiR commitments, driving ongoing improvement. Success will be tracked through completion of outlined actions and associated success measures assessing key areas of research culture.

Increasing Researcher Representation in Decision-Making: Strengthening researcher involvement in institutional policy development through Research Café's, launch of an Institutional ECR network and committee representation. Success will be reflected in documented policy improvements shaped by researcher input.

Implementing Narrative CVs in Academic Progression: Enhancing support for both researchers being assessed and those assessing by embedding narrative CV principles into academic promotion frameworks and providing resources, development, and guidance on equitable research evaluation. Success will be measured by adoption of narrative CVs within progression frameworks, increased engagement with training resources, and evaluations of its impact on research recognition and assessment practices.

Mental Health Training for All Colleagues: Linked to our University Mental Health Charter Award improvement plan⁵, we will design and launch an all-colleague mental health online training course as part of staff induction. The module will cover mental health, self-care, and supporting others. Success will mean increased knowledge and confidence in discussing mental health. Regular assessments will show improved wellbeing conversations and targeted support for those needing additional training. Feedback will indicate a positive impact on the university's mental health culture, with sustained knowledge and confidence over time.

⁵ <https://www.leedsbeckett.ac.uk/our-community/mental-health-charter/>

Employment

Responsible Research Assessment and Open Research: LBU is a signatory of DORA and a member of the UK Reproducibility Network (UKRN), reinforcing our commitment to responsible research assessment. In 2025, we will explore CoARA membership and conduct a policy gap analysis to align with DORA, OR4, and open research principles. Success will be measured through policy updates and embedding responsible research assessment in institutional practices.

Enhancing Researcher Mentoring and Development: We have launched a centralised mentoring programme to support researchers, particularly those on fixed-term contracts. The programme will continue to expand, with additional training for mentors and tailored resources. Success will be measured by mentoring engagement levels and researcher feedback on its impact.

Strengthening Researcher Induction and Leadership Development: We will enhance our researcher induction programme, aligning it with school-specific initiatives to provide comprehensive guidance on university policies, research practices, and career development. A research leadership and project management training pathway is also in development to support research managers. Success will be tracked through participation levels, feedback from new staff, and leadership development progress.

Professional and Career Development

Academy for Research & Knowledge Exchange and Researcher Development: The Academy for Research & Knowledge Exchange (R&KE Academy) is being established to enhance researcher development, innovation, and collaboration. A structured development programme will provide asynchronous and synchronous training through a centralised repository of resources, including workshops, seminars, and mentorship opportunities. Success will be measured through engagement in development activities and researcher feedback on career progression support.

Career Development for Researchers and Managers: We are enhancing career development training for researchers and managers to improve performance reviews, interdisciplinary mentoring, and access to external opportunities. Workshops and seminars will focus on career management, skills transferability, and progression pathways. Success will be tracked through managerial capacity for career discussions, increased mentoring participation, and greater engagement with external career development opportunities.

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]

Environment and Culture (*max 600 words*)

Institution

Awareness Raising of the Concordat: The Concordat is embedded into LBU’s research culture through mentoring schemes, internal funding, development sessions, and social activities. Regular communication and events such as research cafés, the ECR network, and school events support awareness among researchers and managers. Progress is assessed via the 2025 CEDARS survey.

Culture Audit: The 2024 Research Culture Survey assessed institutional values and behaviours, informing the development of a Research Culture Action Plan. Progress is measured against key milestones outlined in the plan.

Code of Good Practice in Research: LBU has implemented a Code of Good Practice aligned with UKRIO standards and sector best practices, ensuring responsible research conduct. This code is reviewed annually to maintain its relevance in fostering a positive and inclusive research culture.

Wellbeing and Mental Health Support: The Wellbeing Assessment⁶, launched in 2023, provides a structured, team-led approach to wellbeing conversations, promoting shared responsibility and practical solutions. It has strengthened colleague voice and led to improved wellbeing interventions. In 2024, LBU was recognised as a runner-up in the UHR Wellbeing Awards, highlighting sector recognition of its approach.

Mental health awareness has been further embedded through the ‘Mental Health Awareness for Me and Our Community’ online module, launched in 2024. The course

⁶ <https://www.leedsbeckett.ac.uk/peopledevelopment/wellbeing-assessment/>

equips colleagues with the knowledge and confidence to support their own and others' wellbeing, including signposting to support services and suicide prevention guidance.

EDI Training and Policy Development: A new suite of online EDI courses, including Bullying & Harassment, Disability & Neurodiversity Inclusion, Racial Inequality, and Unconscious Bias, launched in March 2024. The 'Introduction to EDI' course has been refreshed, and staff who had not completed it in the last three years were automatically re-enrolled.

Additionally, EDI principles for how QR funding is allocated has been developed to ensure equitable decision-making in supporting academic careers, reinforcing LBU's commitment to inclusion in research culture.

Academic Managers of Researchers

Responsible Research Statement & Research Indicators: A Responsible Research (RR) Statement⁷, and Responsible Use of Research Indicators⁸ have been implemented, ensuring a structured approach to research integrity and governance. These policies replace the previous RR umbrella statement indicated in the 2024-27 HREiR action plan and are now integrated into institutional guidelines.

Wellbeing Support for Research Managers: The Wellbeing for Managers webpage provides practical guidance, self-help resources, and specialist support. In 2024, two 'Leaders Connect: Wellbeing and Your Role as a Leader' sessions engaged over 50 senior leaders, equipping them with strategies to support their teams effectively.

⁷ <https://www.leedsbeckett.ac.uk/-/media/files/policies/research-and-enterprise/responsible-research-statement-rec-21-march-2024.pdf>

⁸ <https://www.leedsbeckett.ac.uk/-/media/files/policies/research-and-enterprise/statement-on-the-responsible-use-of-research-indicators.pdf>

	<p>Additional resources on managing change have been introduced, incorporating a wellbeing lens within Delivering Change online resources, ensuring leaders are equipped to manage transitions while prioritising staff wellbeing.</p> <p><u>Researchers</u></p> <p>Development of Research Cafés and ECR Network: LBU is developing Research Cafés and an ECR Network as community-led initiatives, funded through Enhancing Research Culture funds. These platforms will facilitate peer support, interdisciplinary collaboration, and active engagement in shaping research culture. Success will be measured through participation rates, engagement metrics, and qualitative feedback from attendees.</p> <p>Supporting Researcher Assessment and Recognition: The Academic Promotion Policy has been updated to embed Narrative CV principles, ensuring researchers can demonstrate their contributions beyond traditional metrics. This change promotes a more inclusive evaluation of research activities, including leadership, collaboration, and research culture contributions. Progress is monitored through feedback from promotion applicants and assessment panels. Further resources and training are being developed to support both researchers undergoing assessment and those conducting evaluations.</p> <p>Enhancing Policy Awareness and Visibility: Regular communications increase awareness of key research policies, improving accessibility and engagement. Measurement: Engagement and awareness will be assessed via the 2025 CEDARS survey.</p>
<p>Employment (<i>max 600 words</i>)</p>	<p><u>Institution</u></p> <p>DORA Signatory and Responsible Research Assessment: LBU has formally committed to the San Francisco Declaration on Research Assessment (DORA), ensuring that researcher contributions are recognised beyond traditional metrics. The institution is actively engaged in OR4 (Open Research for Researchers) as a practice institution and is considering</p>

joining CoARA (Coalition for Advancing Research Assessment), with a decision expected by the end of 2025. Progress is monitored through the DORA implementation plan, ensuring alignment with institutional policies, with potential case studies from OR4 involvement showcasing best practices in responsible research assessment.

UKRN Membership and Promotion of Reproducibility

Practices: LBU has strengthened its commitment to research integrity and reproducibility through its membership in the UK Reproducibility Network (UKRN). The 2024 Festival of Research & Knowledge Exchange focused on research culture, openness, and collaboration, featuring Neil Jacobs (UKRN) as a keynote speaker.

Launch of the LBU Researcher Mentoring Programme: In September 2024, LBU launched its Researcher Mentoring Programme, providing structured, interdisciplinary peer support and career development. Nearly 60 mentors and mentees have engaged, with 40 matches made to date. The programme is supported by dedicated resources and a Teams channel to facilitate ongoing development and communication. Progress is measured through participation numbers and feedback from both mentees and mentors.

Cross-Institutional Mentoring for Mid-Career Researchers (MCRs): LBU has joined a cross-institutional mentoring scheme to support mid-career researchers (MCRs), fostering broader networking and leadership development opportunities. Progress is tracked through engagement metrics and participant feedback.

Academic Managers of Researchers

Engagement in Mentoring Programmes: Managers of researchers actively participate in both institutional and cross-institutional mentoring programmes, supporting the professional and career development of research staff. Their involvement as mentors enhances peer learning, leadership development, and knowledge-sharing across disciplines and institutions.

PDR Guidance: To support the 2024 Performance Development Review (PDR) cycle, LBU updated its PDR guidance, aligning academic resources with the Concordat commitments for the research community. Eight new PDR principles were introduced, including a requirement that all reviewers complete in-house reviewer training regularly to ensure a high-quality PDR experience. PDR conversations now focus on progress, achievements, and challenges from the previous 12 months, alongside future areas of work, development, and career aspirations.

From the 2024 Colleague Survey, 88% of respondents reported having had a PDR conversation in the last 12 months, reflecting a 14 percentage point increase since 2021.

Researchers

Engagement in Institutional Initiatives and Networks:

Researchers at LBU actively participate in key institutional initiatives designed to support career development, recognition, and research culture enhancement. These include the Festival of Research & Knowledge Exchange, the development of an institutional ECR network, and newly established mentoring schemes. Their engagement reflects a growing commitment to building professional networks, accessing peer support, and shaping an inclusive research culture.

Engagement in Mentoring Programmes: Researchers actively engage in both institutional and cross-institutional mentoring schemes, benefiting from structured peer support, career guidance, and leadership development opportunities. These schemes provide early, mid-career, and senior researchers with access to experienced mentors, supporting career transitions, funding applications, and leadership pathways.

<p><u>Professional development (max 600 words)</u></p>	<p><u>Institution</u></p> <p>Academy for Research & Knowledge Exchange: LBU will launch the Academy for Research & Knowledge Exchange in September 2025, providing a structured training programme for researchers and PGRs. The Academy will streamline professional development, enhance research leadership, and offer clear training pathways for all career stages. These pathways are currently in development and will evolve to align with institutional priorities and researcher needs.</p> <p>Institutional Induction & Researcher Development Resources: LBU is developing a new induction programme for research staff to ensure key policies, opportunities, and resources are accessible from the outset. This will be supported by a ‘one-stop shop’ of research policies, guidance, and development opportunities, available via dedicated webpages.</p> <p>Enhancing Performance & Development Review (PDR) Resources: PDR resources for researchers and their managers are reviewed and updated annually to ensure discussions remain meaningful, development-focused, and aligned with career progression.</p> <p><u>Academic Managers of Researchers</u></p> <p>LBU is developing two tailored programmes to support senior and emerging research leaders in strengthening leadership, strategic planning, and research culture transformation skills:</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Senior Research Leaders Programme: Designed for newly promoted Readers and Professors, this peer-led programme focuses on strategic leadership, policy influence, securing large-scale funding, and mentoring. It features case studies, panel discussions, and executive mentoring, preparing participants for institutional and sector-wide impact. • Emerging Research Leaders Programme: Targeting researchers progressing towards independence, this programme develops leadership skills, including
--	---

managing research teams, securing grants, and fostering inclusive environments. The multi-session format includes workshops, case studies, and mentoring, supporting career progression.

UKCGE Supervisor Accreditation: LBU continues to sponsor participation in the UK Council for Graduate Education (UKCGE) Supervisor Recognition Programme, enabling academic managers to gain formal recognition for supervisory expertise, strengthening research leadership across the institution.

Researchers

Engagement in the Annual Festival, Staff Awards, and Research Themes: LBU researchers actively participated in the 2024 Festival of Research & Knowledge Exchange, a two-day event celebrating and supporting research. The festival featured expert-led sessions, discussions on Open and Responsible Research, and opportunities for interdisciplinary collaboration.

The 2024 festival theme, *Evolving Research Culture: Embracing Openness and Collaboration*, reinforced LBU's commitment to fostering an inclusive research environment.

As part of the festival, the inaugural Research & Knowledge Exchange Awards recognised individuals and teams for their contributions to research, knowledge exchange, teaching, and community engagement. With over 40 nominations across six categories, the awards celebrated excellence, with ongoing blog features and case studies highlighting nominees' achievements.

Additionally, the launch of LBU's research themes - *Greener, Sustainable Communities; Sport and Healthy Communities; and Inclusive, Prosperous Communities* - has provided a strategic framework for interdisciplinary collaboration. These themes reflect LBU's commitment to impactful research addressing global challenges and sector-wide priorities.

	<p>Led by the professoriate, the themes drive engagement, external partnerships, and funding opportunities. Through presentations and showcases, staff are encouraged to align their work with institutional priorities, enhancing visibility and impact.</p> <p>Research Retreat Initiatives: LBU has introduced Research Retreats Funding to support academic colleagues who identify as women and women of colour. These retreats provide time, funding, and resources to advance research, enhance professional development, and foster interdisciplinary connections. The initiative aligns with findings from the Research Culture Survey and institutional commitments to HREiR, Athena Swan, and the Race Equality Charter.</p> <p>Retreat participants use the dedicated time to focus on key research activities, such as completing publications, preparing grant applications, and developing research skills. The programme supports LBU’s efforts to address structural barriers and promote an inclusive research culture.</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, we have continued to refine our approach to research culture and development, ensuring that our activities align with institutional priorities and sector-wide challenges. We have observed key trends and challenges that have informed our next steps.</p> <p>A persistent challenge remains engagement with training and development opportunities. While there is strong recognition of the value of these activities, participation is often constrained by increasing workload pressures. We are seeing the impact of these pressures in a variety of ways, with competing priorities making it difficult for research colleagues to dedicate time to training. To address this, we are exploring ways to further integrate development opportunities within existing structures and workloads, ensuring that engagement remains feasible.</p> <p>In response to broader sector challenges, we are committed to protecting research time for colleagues with significant responsibility for research. Our aim is to</p>	

safeguard at least 20% of time for research activity, ensuring that it remains a core institutional priority. To support this, a research time booking system is being trialled, initially within the Carnegie School of Education, to provide clearer structures for researchers to plan and protect their time. This system allows academic staff to formally request and schedule Research Leave, ensuring that time for research is safeguarded against competing demands. Additionally, ongoing discussions are focused on curriculum alignment and workload planning to help lessen pressures on colleagues and ensure they can effectively balance research and other responsibilities.

Some activities, including work related to the launch of the Academy for Research & Knowledge Exchange, policy feedback, policy communication, and related training, have been subject to minor delays. While these delays are in part due to resource changes, they also reflect a conscious decision to prioritise emerging initiatives that directly support research culture. Over the past year, significant efforts have been directed towards enhancing mentoring opportunities - both internally and through cross-institutional partnerships - strengthening our commitments to DORA, expanding our Festival of Research & Knowledge Exchange to include staff awards, and embedding new community support initiatives such as the ECR Network and Research Retreats. These activities align with feedback from our research culture survey, demonstrating our commitment to responding to researcher needs in meaningful and tangible ways.

Looking ahead, we will continue to refine our approach based on these lessons. We will prioritise flexibility in training delivery, recognising that accessibility and engagement must be balanced with the benefits of in-person interaction. We will also work to ensure that researcher development opportunities are embedded within institutional structures to support engagement despite sector-wide pressures. Additionally, we will review our resource allocation to maintain progress on key initiatives while continuing to support emerging opportunities that contribute to our broader research culture ambitions.

By remaining responsive to both internal and external challenges, we will continue to refine our action plan to best support our research community in an evolving landscape.

Outline your key objectives in delivering your plan in the coming reporting period
(max 500 words)

Over the next reporting period, we will focus on embedding and expanding the initiatives launched over the past year, ensuring they provide meaningful and sustained support for researchers at all career stages. Our priorities will centre on continuing to develop comprehensive professional development pathways, measuring and monitoring progress through data-driven evaluation, and expanding successful initiatives where appropriate. Alongside this, we will introduce new initiatives that strengthen our institutional research environment, ensuring that our commitments to researcher career development remain responsive and impactful.

Launch of the Academy for Research & Knowledge Exchange: A key milestone will be the launch of the Academy for Research & Knowledge Exchange. The Academy will provide a comprehensive professional development framework, ensuring that researchers and PGRs have access to structured pathways for skills development, career progression, and research leadership. The programme will be flexible and responsive, adapting to evolving institutional priorities and researcher needs.

Enhancing Researcher Induction & 'One-Stop Shop' for Researcher Development: Building on our existing work, we will enhance and integrate our researcher induction programme, ensuring that new colleagues have immediate access to essential information, policies, and resources. A dedicated 'one-stop shop' will be developed to streamline researcher development content, creating a central, easily navigable platform that provides clear signposting to training, policies, and opportunities for engagement.

Expanding Mentoring Programmes: Our mentoring programmes will be expanded to include targeted career development mentoring for researchers on fixed-term contracts, ensuring they receive tailored guidance and support. In addition, reverse mentoring will be introduced to facilitate two-way learning between senior and early-career researchers, supporting a more inclusive and dynamic research culture.

Embedding Responsible Research Practices & Strengthening External Collaborations: We will continue to build on our commitment to responsible research assessment, leveraging our involvement with DORA and OR4, while also exploring potential membership in CoARA. This will form part of a broader strategy to embed responsible research principles across our policies and practices, ensuring that our researchers are recognised and supported in a way that reflects the diversity of their contributions.

Redevelopment of Integrity & Ethics Training: Following the implementation of a new ethics system, we will redevelop our training on research integrity and ethics, ensuring that researchers receive up-to-date guidance aligned with sector-wide best practice. This will include the development of new learning materials and targeted workshops to support both researchers and managers of researchers.

Enhancing Narrative CV & Career Development Support: Building on recent updates to our academic promotion policy, we will introduce dedicated narrative CV training to ensure that researchers are equipped to articulate the breadth of their contributions effectively. This will sit alongside a wider programme of career development support, with a particular focus on researchers on fixed-term contracts, ensuring that they are supported in developing skills and securing future opportunities.

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: 21/03/2025

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

This annual report will be analysed by Universities UK, 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 at CDRsecretariat@universitiesuk.ac.uk

www.researcherdevelopmentconcordat.ac.uk