

# Research Integrity Statement 2021-2022

## 1. Introduction

This is Leeds Beckett University's (LBU) [5th statement](#) since signing up to the commitments of the 'Concordat to Support Research Integrity'.

All Universities in receipt of a Research England grant are required to comply with the 'Concordat to Support Research Integrity', hereafter referred to as the 'Concordat' published by Universities UK.

In compliance, Leeds Beckett University (LBU) produces an annual, public statement detailing the activities that enhance, develop, and strengthen research integrity and the monitoring of research misconduct at the University.

LBU's Statement is approved annually by the Academic Board and is received through the Research and Enterprise Committee. It is also shared with the University's Audit Committee for assurance purposes. The Governance structure of the University can be viewed here [Governance | Leeds Beckett University](#).

This Statement, along with all previously published Annual Statements, can be found at [Research integrity ethics misconduct | Research | Leeds Beckett University](#).

## 2. Supporting and strengthening research integrity, including research culture and leadership

Our policies and procedures in support of Research Integrity can be viewed at <https://www.leedsbeckett.ac.uk/research/research-and-information-governance/>.

Additionally, all the University's current and revised statutory and governance policies including those related to research, are accessible on one site [University policies | Leeds Beckett University](#)). They include our Whistleblowing Policy.

### 2.1 Key Contacts

Overarching responsibility for matters relating to research integrity are the responsibility of the following named senior contacts, who will receive research integrity concerns on behalf of the University.

Professor Silke Machold	Pro Vice Chancellor for Research and Innovation	Email: <a href="mailto:ResearchInfoandGovernance@leedsbeckett.ac.uk">ResearchInfoandGovernance@leedsbeckett.ac.uk</a>
Professor Cathy Barnes	Director of Research and Enterprise	Email: <a href="mailto:ResearchInfoandGovernance@leedsbeckett.ac.uk">ResearchInfoandGovernance@leedsbeckett.ac.uk</a>

## 2.2 Integrity in Practice

As part of the University's commitment to fostering a supportive research environment enabling staff to feel comfortable to report instances of misconduct, we have committed to making our research procedures and policies simpler, more transparent, and more easily signposted. Work began through the Research Information and Governance (RIG) team (formed March 2021) to refresh and redevelop all our research governance and integrity policies. The team identified that although the University is widely compliant there is more scope for improvement and transparency, this was echoed by an internal audit that was conducted by KPMG over summer 2022 which agreed with, and concluded in support of the RIG Management scoring of 'Significant assurance with minor improvement opportunities'.

The University's Code of Good Practice for Research was updated and re-approved during 2021/22 to ensure alignment with sector guidance published by the UK Research & Innovation (UKRI) and the UK Research Integrity Office (UKRIO).

The University's Research Ethics Policy & Procedures, and the Policy & Procedures for Investigating Allegations of Research Misconduct will undergo review in early 2022/23 to ensure alignment and compliance with sector guidance published by the UK Research Integrity Office (UKRIO).

The Research Information & Governance Team (RIG) are currently completing the UKRIO self-assessment to benchmark practice against the principles set out in the Concordat to Support Research Integrity to further improve how the University adheres to the requirements and recommendations set out in the Concordat and to address a recommendation from KPMG (the University's Internal Auditors) following a recent audit of how the University manages research Integrity.

EDI matters in relation to research integrity are important to the University and we were awarded Athena Swan Bronze status over this summer. More in support of EDI matters can be read in **section 2.5** overleaf.

## 2.3. University Research Ethics Sub-Committee (URESC) and School Ethics Committees

The University requires that all research projects undertaken under the patronage of the University observe a commitment to good research conduct. In the first instance, the Chair of the University's Sub Committee for Research Ethics (URESC) may also receive concerns over research integrity or misconduct. The sub-committee is accountable to the University

Research and Enterprise Committee which has delegated responsibility on behalf of the University on all research matters.

Each academic School has a designated School Research Ethics Coordinator [SREC] who has leadership roles for ethics and is responsible for carrying out regular auditing and reporting to the University Research Ethics Sub-Committee [URESC]. Each SREC is an Ex-officio member of the URESC. Additional to the SREC, each School has designated Local Research Ethics Coordinators [LREC]. LRECs are academics and researchers who have experience in applying for ethical approval. Responsibility for training as an LREC currently rests with each School. Depending on the size of the School, the number of LRECs will vary. Once a staff member or student has completed the online Research Ethics application, the proposal is categorised as Level 1, 2 or 3, and will be allocated within the system to an appropriate School LREC for review.

Following review, the LREC will either approve or reject the proposal, or can ask for a resubmission with additional information or changes. If a resubmission is requested, this is an interactive process until the LREC approves. Each School has their own Research Ethics Committee [REC] of which LRECs are members, which meets on a regular basis or can be convened as required. For large research active Schools this committee will meet once per month. LRECs can refer any proposal for additional scrutiny to their respective School REC.

## **2.4 Research Integrity - Students**

The importance of academic integrity and the consequences of misconduct are drawn to the attention of research students within the Academic Regulations [Academic Regulations](#), the Research Student handbook [Research Student Handbook](#) and during the induction process.

## **2.5 Training and Development in support of Research Integrity**

We have grown our development and training in support of enhancing our research culture including working with Vitae to launch a Researcher development programme focused on improving research skills which incorporates research integrity and governance. We have also linked up our academics at all stages of their career to Impact Case Study training and development through a programme called Impact Integrators which considers matters of research integrity and ethics in the management of impact case studies.

With the support of Research England funding, we have launched a Black and Global Majority Research Network. The new Black and Global Majority Researcher Network was launched on 11th May with 36 initial members and interest growing weekly. The network is a collaboration across university services and schools. The purpose of the network is to bring together emerging and established talent to span LBU and foster interaction, collaboration, profile-raising and career development. Also, with the support of Research England we have launched an Equity and Inclusion Fund supporting researchers and the careers of underrepresented groups at the University. A total of 16 projects have been funded.

We are also working with Advance HE who are providing an additional researcher development programme 'Enhancing Research Culture' that includes support and training for research integrity, ethics and governance. There will also be a primary research project on the barriers that underrepresented academics/researchers face in their careers at LBU.

## **2.6. Membership and external engagement in support of research integrity**

The University continues to be a member of the UK Research Integrity Office (UKRIO) and will explore further opportunities for research governance and integrity training with UKRIO including for direct support of the URESO and its members over the next academic year.

The University is a member of ARMA, and researchers can continue to benefit from the programmes of research training available through this.

As a member of Yorkshire Universities and the University Alliance respectively, we continue to work with sector to identify opportunities for collective improvements around research integrity.

## **3. Supporting and strengthening research integrity, including research culture and leadership**

The University has a process for dealing with research misconduct which can be viewed here [Research integrity ethics misconduct | Research | Leeds Beckett University](#). As part of the afore mentioned identified remedial work of RIG and the recommendations of the KPMG Internal Audit on the Concordat to Support Research Integrity, the following will be undertaken during this academic year.

- The Research Misconduct Policy and Procedures will be reviewed before the end of the 2022 calendar year to ensure that appropriate delegation of roles is fully documented.
- The University will adopt the UKRIO self-assessment tool for the 'Concordat to Support Research Integrity'

### **3.1 Formal investigations of research misconduct**

During the 2021/22 academic year, the University received two allegations of research misconduct. One allegation was deemed not appropriate for consideration under the Research Misconduct Policy and Procedures. The second allegation proceeded to preliminary adjudication where it was concluded that the allegation was unfounded. No allegations proceeded to investigation.

The allegations received this year highlighted a need for a more general procedure under which external parties could seek resolution of concerns or complaints. A Stakeholder Complaints Procedure has since been put in place and can be viewed here [Stakeholder complaints | Leeds Beckett University](#)

Dr Tina Conkar

**Head of Research Information and Governance**

Leeds Beckett University

October 2022

Date of Approval by Academic Board: <b>02 November 2022</b>
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