

Research Integrity Annual Statement 2020-2021

Background

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](#)).

Statement for 2020-2021

This is LBU’s 4th statement since it signed up to the commitments of the Concordat.

The University is committed to fulfilling the principles of the Concordat to Support Research Integrity and is compliant with the terms of the Concordat. 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.

The University is required to report progress under *four headings* which follow in this statement.

1. *Actions and activities to support and strengthen understanding and application of research integrity issues*

1.1 General Progress

A. New Strategic KPIs for research and public and community engagement

The University has begun its next strategic planning cycle with a view to finalising its strategic aims and KPIs for the academic year commencing 2021-2022. Three strategic KPIs particularly will be closely aligned to research and research integrity and how the University manages this. They are:

- The University will generate a minimum of £10 million on research income.
- 80% of our academics will be independent researchers producing work of national and international significance.
- The University will be in the top 20% in KEF Public and Community Engagement.

B. Recruitment

In recognition of the University's commitment to meeting the challenges of the sector around transparency, accountability and auditability set by national government and the University's latest aspirational KPIs around research and knowledge exchange, a new team was formed in March 2021. The Research Information Governance (RIG) team's objectives include the strengthening and understanding of research integrity and support mechanisms at the University. The full remit of the team is detailed at ([Research and information governance| Leeds Beckett University](#)).

In order to consolidate and strengthen the University's position around research and innovation, a new position of Associate Director for Research and Innovation was recruited to over summer. This post will bring together our business development and research development teams under one umbrella creating a more holistic approach to research and innovation and supporting the strategic KPIs on research income.

The University Research Ethics Sub Committee recruited an external member from the University of Bradford for the upcoming academic year 2021-2022 and added PhD student membership also to increase the knowledge and diversity of the current committee members.

C. Equality and Diversity

The University is committed to equality and diversity in research and is applying for the Athena Swan kite mark. The full application will be completed in the new academic year 2021-2022.

D. Research Systems

The University is reviewing all its data management processes and systems and in support of this, the University Library and Student Services Team in Partnership with the Research and Enterprise Team have created a cross institutional project team (University Research Ecosystem Group) to review and develop our current and future requirements around research systems. The remit also covers research ethics and research impact systems capture. This group will report its recommendations in the Summer of 2022.

The University has recently switched from the Research Connect specialist research funding database to Research Professional which is now live.

The University has also implemented a new system for the administration and reporting of Post Graduate Research Programmes (Haplo PhD Manager).

E. COVID-19 Pandemic

Research Support has been provided at the same level and quality as pre-pandemic for good research to continue. This has included training, which has been switched and adapted for online delivery, along with supporting academics to identify appropriate funding opportunities and continuing to scrutinise our academic research ideas to increase the likelihood of success through our funding review panels and peer review processes. Online platforms have enabled the team to maintain communication and plan work packages effectively with partners and collaborators.

1.2 External Engagement

The University continues to be a member of the UK Research Integrity Office (UKRIO) and is working closely with UKRIO in October of 2021 to provide refresher training to our Research Ethics Committee members and a wider audience on research ethics procedures and issues.

The University is engaged with Vitae (and is a member of Vitae) to develop a holistic research training programme that is synonymous with the University's profile of being a publicly engaged and anchor focused university with a view to the first training programmes running in the second term of the academic year 2021-2022

The University continues to work in partnership with Yorkshire Universities on research related matters that impact the Universities of this region, including through partnership lobbying and advocacy and campaigning on issues of national research interest and impact.

The University is an active member in the University Alliance and engaged with several groups including the research integrity and ethics group for research administrators which was recently formed.

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

1.3 Training and Development

Training in research integrity is supported and enhanced by an obligatory University training programme for staff members which is managed by Human Resources and overseen by our Schools. Relevant modules include:

- Unconscious Bias
- Data Protection (GDPR)
- Prevent Training
- Bribery and Anti-Fraud Training
- Information Security Training
- Prevent Duty Training

Dedicated Research Training including Ethics and Integrity is managed by teams in Research and Enterprise Services and the Graduate School who regularly meet with University stakeholders to identify training needs and appropriate training programmes. A link to our dedicated training provision can be found here ([Professional Development and Training \(leedsbeckett.ac.uk\)](https://leedsbeckett.ac.uk/professional-development-and-training))

Ethics training was delivered using Microsoft Teams by the Chair of University Research Ethics Sub Committee to staff and students on the 18th of May 2021. The session was recorded and is available on the intranet for viewing and reference by all research staff and students.

2. *Processes for dealing with research misconduct*

The University has a compliant process for dealing with research misconduct which can be viewed here ([Research integrity ethics misconduct | Research | Leeds Beckett University](#)). 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) is the person responsible for receiving allegations of research misconduct.

With the creation of the RIG team within Research and Enterprise Services, the scope for scrutinising, reviewing, and updating all our procedures for dealing with research integrity, ethics and misconduct has increased and will therefore be a priority. This includes the provision of clearer and more transparent guidance both for researchers on accepted behaviours and actions in research, and the consequences and procedures for managing misconduct; as well as the opportunity to develop an integrated Researcher's handbook bringing together our procedures in one holistic document. The RIG team working with University Governance teams are undertaking a full review of current policies in practice around research integrity and governance which will report to the Research and Enterprise Committee over the of the next academic year (2021-2022) providing recommendations and content for improvement and development.

3. *Formal investigations of research misconduct*

During 2020/21 no cases of research misconduct were noted or reported.

4. *Statement on the fostering of a supportive research environment in which all staff, researchers and students feel comfortable to report instances of misconduct*

URESC has provided guidance and University policy to staff and students regarding face-to-face research during the pandemic. Since October 2020 staff and PhD student research requiring face-to-face research have been allowed on a case-by-case basis following approval by the School and the Chair of URESC. All such cases must adhere to government guidance and have a comprehensive COVID-19 risk assessment in place. School reporting on research matters remains consistent and compliance is high. No major issues have been reported at School level.

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. To this end, the RIG team has been formed; and both our intranet and internet (external) research policy pages have been redeveloped and will continue to be updated over 2021-2022.

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Version reference	Version 1.1 (previous version 1.0)
Version History - summary of changes	<ul style="list-style-type: none">• Version control table added at the end of the statement.• Wording added in 3rd para to make it clear where previous statements are located.