

Leeds Beckett University

Ethics Framework

Purpose

- 1 This framework sets out the context, values and associated policy framework through which our University seeks to apply the highest standards of ethical conduct and behaviour in all aspects of our business.

Context and Values

- 2 At Leeds Beckett University, our mission is: *to ensure we use our knowledge and resources to make a positive and decisive difference to people, communities and organisations. With a vision to be an excellent, accessible, globally-engaged university which contributes positively to a thriving Northern economy.* We are a Higher Education Corporation, established under the Education Reform Act 1998, subject to the requirements of charity law. Our primary purpose is the advancement of knowledge through learning, teaching, research and enterprise. Our charitable status relies on ensuring our activities are in line with our charitable aims and thereby the integrity with which we undertake them. The following values are intrinsic to our vision and mission: *Student focus, excellence, inspiration, creativity, professionalism, enterprise, integrity*, all of which underpin our ethical approach to achieving our strategic objectives. This framework with appended list of related policies, procedures and statements demonstrates how and where ethical issues are addressed around the four themes of our Strategic Plan 2016-2021; an excellent education and experience; leading research and academic enterprise; a community of great people; and sustainable resources.

An Excellent Education and Experience

- 3 We are committed to supporting all our students, regardless of background, to achieve their full potential throughout the student lifecycle. From our open access and outreach activities with schools, colleges and community groups; authentic marketing messages concerning our academic and student life offer; to fair and accessible admissions policies and in the application of our academic standards and all associated support. Our ethical and inclusive approach to supporting and engaging with our students is reflected in our [Student Charter](#), our [Access Agreements](#) and our [Academic Regulations](#) (including our Admissions Policy). The integrity of our academic offer, standards and operations is maintained through our [Academic Integrity Policy](#) which outlines clear oversight procedures for the production and presentation of original academic work with guidelines on the avoidance of plagiarism and the consequences which could ensue. Our undergraduate curricula are informed by our [Graduate Attributes](#) which include reference to ensuring our students develop a clear understanding of responsible engagement in a multicultural and globalising world. Our [Student Regulations](#) provide a range of student-centred policies including clear guidelines for student complaints and a code of practice on freedom of speech. Our [Code of Practice on the Approval and Management of Events with External Speakers](#) ensures ethical and legal considerations are applied in the approval of any externally invited speakers who present to audiences on our campus. We are an apolitical organisation and respect the right of all individuals to hold diverse views in our society. We will not give a platform to those individuals or groups who wish to curtail the freedom of others through speech, violence or any other means that subjugates the ethical rights of others.

- 4 Where we work with other partners in the academic provision of our validated programmes in line with our Collaborations and Partnerships Strategy, our due diligence in assuring such partners operate within the same ethical framework as our University is critical to ensuring parity of our students' experience. Through our partnership work with our Students' Union, we ensure student representation is transparently embedded in the structures and processes that oversee the student lifecycle.

Leading Research and Academic Enterprise

- 5 Our Research Ethics Policy outlines the ethical principles through which staff, students and partners will pursue the creation and application of knowledge while applying the highest standards of academic integrity. The policy demonstrates how we ensure the ethical treatment of research subjects, individual participation and the appropriate generation, interpretation and application of research data through ensuring validity and originality of research outputs. The Research Ethics Procedures details how decisions on the ethics of every research project (undertaken by staff and by students) are made and recorded at local, Faculty and University level. Good practice protocols are agreed and implemented at Faculty and University level, including a draft Protocol on Commissioned Research. This is supported through our Open Access to Research database and supporting guidelines. We have signed up to and apply the Concordat and Vitae Researcher Development Framework (UK) to ensure our staff and research students are developed appropriately as both competent and ethical researchers in the pursuit of the creation of new knowledge and its application and publication.
- 6 Our Enterprise Services ensures our due diligence processes in establishing and maintaining employer partnerships are rigorous to ensure such relationships are founded upon shared values and ethical principles through our Research and Enterprise Monitoring System. We support start-up organisations where they share our ethical approach towards the customer groups they serve within the business market they are operating in.

A Community of Great People

- 7 We are committed to ensuring our University operates the highest standards of ethical conduct through being open and transparent with all our stakeholders and through our commitment to the wider public benefit our services provide across the communities in which we operate. Governors, senior leaders, managers and staff with budgetary responsibility annually commit to *the Nolan Principles* (Committee on Standards in Public Life 1995) of *selflessness, integrity, objectivity, accountability, openness, honesty and leadership* as part of our oversight of staff interests outside of our University. Furthermore our Governors work to uphold the values within the *Higher Education Code of Governance (2014)*, also based on the Nolan Principles.
- 8 Our University's Human Resources Policies and Procedures ensures all staff are recruited, inducted and supported fairly and equitably to support their individual requirements to operate effectively in their roles. Our Equality and Diversity Policy sets out the framework within which our equality and diversity activities are delivered and our commitment to providing a vibrant, ethical and sustainable working and learning environment that values equality and diversity. Our supporting codes of practice ensure a consistent ethical approach is taken when supporting individuals who declare any

of the following protected characteristics (under the Equality Act 2010): age, disability, gender reassignment, marriage and civil partnership, pregnancy and maternity, race, religion and belief, sex and sexual orientation including whether they are lesbian, gay, bisexual and/or transgender; as well as those who do not. We evidence specific compliance with the Equality Act 2010 through our statements of compliance concerning our Public Sector Equality Duty; working practices in line with the Modern Slavery Act 2015 and our Corporate Social Responsibility commitments; all of which demonstrate our policies and practices have due regard to both legal compliance and high ethical standards.

- 9 We continually seek to enhance our relationships with our graduates through the development of our alumni activities, creating opportunities to support our current students through subject focussed communications and to give back to our University. Through our Fundraising Policy we seek to ensure appropriate due diligence is undertaken of any philanthropic donations to our University to ensure the provenance of such donations is compliant with our ethical framework.
- 10 Through our Risk Management Policy we ensure our University takes a clear and measured approach to managing the many risks we face in conducting our business both strategically and at operational levels. This policy seeks to ensure our associated control measures operate within appropriate ethical standards in order to successfully manage risk. Where any member of staff, student, or Governor reasonably believes activity has taken place outside of legal, compliant or ethical standards and policies, our Whistleblowing (Public Interest Disclosure) complaints procedure allows for the fair and objective investigation and consideration of such complaints.

Sustainable Resources

Finance

- 11 Our effective and efficient management of resources ensures we are operating within a sustainable and ethical business model. This is evidenced through our Financial Regulations, our Treasury Management Policy and through our Sustainable Procurement Policy which ensures all our financial resources and the goods and services procured with such resources are done so through the highest standards of financial probity. Clarity on such probity can also be found in our Anti-bribery Policy and Gifts and Hospitality Policy.

Information Technology and Data

- 12 Our data concerning our community of people and the associated systems within which it is held is managed through our Data Protection Policy and Principal Information Technology Security Policy in order to safeguard personal information and ensure it is accessed and used appropriately and securely. These policies seek to ensure data integrity and security while ensuring the trust staff, students, and governors' place in our University to safeguard their personal data is not compromised.

Sustainability

- 13 In the deployment of our resources to further our business objectives we are committed to reducing the impact our University business has on the environment today by seeking to reduce our carbon

footprint through adopting the use of sustainable resources, where possible, for the future benefit of the next generation. Our policies concerning Carbon Management and Sustainability seek to ensure our resources are acquired and utilised to ensure the ethical management of the environment in which our University operates. Our Food and Safety Policy seeks to maintain our Fairtrade Campus status and provides protocols for sourcing and managing our food offer on campus, and through sustainable management of food waste.

Safeguarding Staff and Students

- 14 We apply ethical safeguarding measures for staff and students through our policies and procedures concerning Health and Safety (Policy and Procedures); Safeguarding policy concerning our PREVENT duty and when travelling on University business through our Insurance and Risk Procedures. We operate stringent protocols to ensure our staff and students remain safe and have continuous access to support from our University when travelling overseas representing our University through our Overseas Visit Proposal and Protocols. Student placements, whether in the UK or overseas, are subject to due diligence review before we agree to place a student with an employer in order to ensure fair, safe and ethical treatment of students when they spend periods of time engaged with work based learning through placement opportunities. Through our Student Well-being Urgent Support Procedures, we ensure staff can swiftly refer student well-being issues to our central support teams for urgent support at the time of need.

Implementation, Communication and Assurance

- 15 This framework will be accessible publically through our website. All associated policies and procedures referenced in this document are subject to review within our governance schedules. Our communications with students will be in line with guidance from the Competition and Markets Authority (CMA). Annual reporting on the implementation of this framework will be provided in our operating and finance review within the annual *Financial Statement* document.

References to Sector Guidance

Committee on Standards in Public Life (1995) *The 7 Principles of Public Life*. Available at:

<https://www.gov.uk/government/publications/the-7-principles-of-public-life/the-7-principles-of-public-life-2> (April 2016)

Committee of University Chairs (2014) *The Higher Education Code of Governance* <http://www.universitychairs.ac.uk/wp-content/uploads/2015/02/Code-Final.pdf> (April 2016)

Competition and Markets Authority (2015) *Higher Education: consumer law advice for providers* <https://www.gov.uk/government/publications/higher-education-consumer-law-advice-for-providers> (May 2017)

Institute of Business Ethics and The Council for Industry and Higher Education (2005) *Ethics Matters: Managing Ethical Issues in Higher Education*. Available at:

http://www.ibe.org.uk/userassets/publicationdownloads/ibe_cihe_report_ethics_matters.pdf (April 2016)

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Appendix

Ethics Framework: Leeds Beckett University Associated Policies and Statements

An Excellent Education and Experience

Academic Integrity (and oversight procedures)
Academic Regulations (including Admissions Policy)
Collaborations and Partnerships – strategy, procedures and taxonomy of provision
Leeds Beckett University Access Agreements (submitted annually)
Leeds Beckett University Graduate Attributes
Leeds Beckett University Student Charter (2015)
Safeguarding Policy
Student Regulations (including student complaints, health and safety of students, code of practice on freedom of speech)
Student Representation Procedures

Leading Research and Academic Enterprise

Concordat and Vitae Researcher Development Framework (RDF)
Open Access to Research (database and guidelines)
Research and Enterprise Monitoring System
Research Ethics Policy (including Misconduct in Academic Research Policy)
Research Ethics Procedures

A Community of Great People

Code of Practice on the Approval and Management of Events with External Speakers
Corporate Social Responsibility Statement
Equality and Diversity Policy (including codes of practice)
Fundraising Policy
Human Resources Policies and Procedures
Modern Slavery Act 2015; Statement of Compliance
Public Sector Equality Duty; Statement of Compliance
Risk Management Policy
Whistleblowing Policy (Public Interest Disclosure Policy)

Sustainable Resources

Anti-bribery Policy
Carbon Management Strategy
Data Protection Policy

Financial Regulations Policy
Food and Safety Policy 2015
Health and Safety Policy and Procedures

Insurance and Risk Procedures (safety of Staff and Students)
Overseas Visit Proposal and Protocols
Principal Information Technology Security Policy
Student Well-being Urgent Support Procedures
Sustainability Policy
Sustainable Procurement Policy
Treasury Management Policy