

# Leeds Beckett University

## Annual statement on research integrity

### Section 1: Key contact information

Question	Response
<b>1A. Name of organisation</b>	Leeds Beckett University
<b>1B. Type of organisation:</b>	Higher Education Institution
<b>1C. Date statement approved by governing body</b>	8 <sup>th</sup> November 2024 (Audit Committee)
<b>1D. Web address of organisation's research integrity page (if applicable)</b>	<a href="https://www.leedsbeckett.ac.uk/research/research-and-information-governance/research-integrity-ethics-misconduct/">https://www.leedsbeckett.ac.uk/research/research-and-information-governance/research-integrity-ethics-misconduct/</a>
<b>1E. Named senior member of staff to oversee research integrity</b>	Name: Professor Silke Machold (PVC Research & Innovation)
	Email address: S.Machold@leedsbeckett.ac.uk
<b>1F. Named member of staff who will act as a first point of contact for anyone wanting more information on matters of research integrity</b>	Name: Charlotte Pettitt (Research Integrity & Ethics Manager)
	Email address: c.c.pettitt@leedsbeckett.ac.uk

## Section 2: Promoting high standards of research integrity and positive research culture.

### Description of actions and activities undertaken

#### 2A. Description of current systems and culture

This report provides an overview of initiatives undertaken during academic year 2023/24 to support and enhance integrity in research, in accordance with the requirements of the Concordat to Support Research Integrity.

##### ➤ Policies and systems

Leeds Beckett University (LBU) has in place policies, procedures, and systems to ensure research is conducted to the highest standards. The LBU Code of Good Practice in Research provides the overarching guidance, with the Research Ethics Policy and Research Ethics Procedures setting out the approach to and process for conducting ethics reviews. The Research Ethics online approval system is used by staff and students for ethical approval. The Policy and Procedures for Investigating Allegations of Misconduct in Research ensure we fulfil commitment four of the Concordat.

All policies were benchmarked against sector guidance including UK Research and Innovation (UKRI), the UK Research Integrity Office's (UKRIOs) Code of Practice for Research, and the UKRIO/ Association of Research Managers & Administrators (ARMA) Research Ethics Support Review and are periodically revised and updated.

##### ➤ Communications and engagement

Policies and procedures related to research integrity are communicated through a range of mechanisms:

- Induction programmes for colleagues and research students introduce the University's Strategic Planning Framework, regulations and policies, and access to resources and training.
- Research governance webpages are updated with the latest information and resources (<https://www.leedsbeckett.ac.uk/research/research-and-information-governance/>), alongside a dedicated link to Research Integrity, Ethics and Misconduct
- The Research Handbook and the Research Student Handbook outline the University's expectations for good research practice and signpost resources and guidance.
- Training on subject-related ethics and use of the ethics systems is provided in Schools. In addition, a university-wide researcher development programme is offered which includes open and responsible research and research integrity.
- Monthly communications are sent to a list of nearly seven hundred members, highlighting policy updates, training opportunities, and events.

To facilitate two-way communication and engagement of researchers, a Research Community Teams group, with nearly four hundred members, is used to exchange key information, policy updates, events, and training within our research community.

We monitor uptake of these communications via usage data and through surveys such as

Culture, Employment and Development of Academic Researchers (CEDARS).

➤ **Culture, development, and leadership**

The University's **Strategic Planning Framework 2021-26** sets out the key themes of 'Excellent Educational Outcome' and 'Excellent Research & Innovation', along with our University values. The Research & Knowledge Exchange Plan has three key pillars: 1) excellent research and KE 2) people and research culture, and 3) sustainable research and KE. As part of the second pillar and under our commitments to the HR Excellence in Research Award, the University has in place actions to further support creating a research environment that nurtures good research practices and a culture of research integrity.

The University's **Code of Good Practice for Research** sets the responsibilities of the University, its senior colleagues and all researchers for creating a climate in which research is undertaken that safeguards good research practice. Researchers are encouraged and supported to undertake appropriate continuous professional development, and take up mentoring, across all aspects of research activity.

➤ **Monitoring and reporting**

Responsibility for research integrity at the University is via the following governance structure:

The **Academic Board (AB)** is the parent committee for academic activities and is responsible for overseeing and regulating general issues relating to research, scholarship, teaching and courses at our university. AB approves the Annual Statement on Research Integrity, and all policies and procedures related to ethics and research integrity.

The **University Research and Enterprise Committee (UREC)** is responsible to the Academic Board for overseeing our university's research; enterprise; other scholarly activity and the provision of research degrees. UREC receives and approves the Annual Research Report which includes our work on people and culture, open research, and research integrity. UREC also receives reports from its sub-committees.

The **University Research Ethics Sub-Committee (URESC)** is responsible to the Research and Enterprise Committee for overseeing the development and implementation of our University's policy and procedures relating to research ethics. It also maintains oversight of research ethics at school level.

The **Audit Committee** has delegated responsibilities from the Board of Governors to monitor the University's risk from misconduct in research, and to note the Annual Statement on Research Integrity.

## 2B. Changes and developments during the period under review

Please provide an update on any changes made during the period, such as new initiatives, training, developments, also ongoing changes that are still underway. Drawing on Commitment 3 of the Concordat, please note any new or revised policies, practices, and procedures to support researchers; training on research ethics and research integrity; training and mentoring opportunities to support the development of researchers' skills throughout their careers.

In 2023/24, work focused on three areas:

### 1. Policies and Guidance

We made extensive revisions to the **Code of Good Practice for Research**, and the **Statement on the Responsible Use of Research Indicators**. The **Due Diligence Policy for Research Partners** was revised following updates to UKRIO and ARMA guidance. We also developed a **Responsible Research Statement** to codify a set of principles for research at LBU. Following University guidance on the use of Artificial Intelligence (AI) in assessment,

a formal statement on Originality and Use of Generative Artificial Intelligence is now required to accompany all doctoral thesis submissions.

## **2. Researcher Development and Resources**

We mapped the LBU Researcher Development Programme against the Vitae Researcher Development Framework and conducted a Research Culture Survey to enable us to identify gaps in our provision and barriers to uptake. As a subscriber organisation to UKRIO, we participated in the UKRIO Introduction to Research Integrity training programme with 262 researchers subscribing. In November 2023, we held our first Festival of Research and Knowledge Exchange. Under the theme of 'Responsible and Responsive Research and Knowledge Exchange', the five-day event provided interactive sessions on open research, trusted research, knowledge exchange and impact (including our Equality and Inclusivity Research Programme), and a keynote address by Professor Marcus Munafo on reproducibility. The recruitment of a new Research Integrity & Ethics manager, along with the creation of a Research Culture and Environment team, ensures that we have appropriate professional support and resources for research integrity and researcher development.

## **3. External collaboration**

LBU became a signatory to the San Francisco Declaration on Research Assessment (DORA), and we are taking proactive steps to embed the principles of DORA in research assessment, training and support. We also formally joined the UK Reproducibility Network (UKRN), a national peer-led consortium that aims to ensure the UK retains its place as a centre for world-leading research. In becoming an institutional member of the UKRN, Leeds Beckett University has committed to supporting the UKRN's four common statements, which are intended to encourage the uptake of a responsible and reproducible research culture across the institution. LBU is participating in UKRN's Open and Responsible Researcher Reward and Recognition (OR4) project as a Community of Practice institution.

## **2C. Reflections on progress and plans for future developments**

This should include a reflection on the previous year's activity including a review of progress and impact of initiatives if known relating to activities referenced in the previous year's statement. Note any issues that have hindered progress, e.g. resourcing or other issues.

### **➤ Reflections on progress**

Planned actions and initiatives related to policies, procedures and researcher development are complete. Responses to the Research Culture survey showed that 80% of respondents agreed that research integrity is maintained at LBU. However, knowledge of and confidence in applying policies and procedures is an area that needs further work.

A proposal to procure and implement a new online Research Ethics Management System was delayed due to the need to extend the project scope and re-assess the resource requirements. An amendment has now been approved and the project will commence in January 2025.

Recruitment is still ongoing for a new external member of URESO to ensure it continues to have external perspective and input into its deliberations. Potential candidates who had expressed interest were unfortunately unable to provide the time commitment to the role.

### **➤ Plans for future development**

#### **Policies, procedures, and systems**

The University's Policy and Procedures for Investigating Allegations of Misconduct in

**Research** will be reviewed in 2025 to ensure that they continue to align with and are in compliance with sector guidance published by the UKRIO. The procurement and implementation of the new ethics system will create more efficient workflows, more effective collaboration between applicants and approvers, greater alignment with current sector norms for such systems, more accurate and reliable data for audit purposes, and an overall strengthening of our research ethics approval system. Alongside this, the University's research ethics procedures will be reviewed and re-approved to fully use the functionality of the new system and align with sector guidance.

**Information, training, and support**

During 2024/25, the University's webpages and online information concerning research integrity will be reviewed to improve the information, guidance and support available for researchers.

The Researcher Development Programme will be enhanced to include focused training on research integrity and ethics to better embed policies and procedures and respond to sector debates such as use of AI in research. We will launch a Researcher Mentoring Programme to support the individual needs and aspirations of LBU researchers. The programme builds on the principles of the University-wide mentoring programme and offers tailored mentorship for colleagues at all career stages who are engaged in research, as well as those aspiring to increase their involvement.

We will use our membership of UKRIO and UKRN to learn from and share sector best practice.

## Section 3: Addressing research misconduct.

### 3A. Statement on processes that the organisation has in place for dealing with allegations of misconduct.

Please provide:

- a brief summary of relevant organisation policies/ processes (e.g. research misconduct procedure, whistle-blowing policy, bullying/harassment policy; appointment of a third party to act as confidential liaison for persons wishing to raise concerns) and brief information on the periodic review of research misconduct processes (e.g. date of last review; any major changes during the period under review; date when processes will next be reviewed).
- information on how the organisation creates and embeds a research environment in which all staff, researchers and students feel comfortable to report instances of misconduct (e.g. code of practice for research, whistle-blowing, research misconduct procedure, informal liaison process, website signposting for reporting systems, training, mentoring, reflection and evaluation of policies, practices and procedures).
- anonymised key lessons learned from any investigations into allegations of misconduct which either identified opportunities for improvements in the organisation's investigation procedure and/or related policies / processes/ culture or which showed that they were working well.

#### ➤ Summary of relevant organisation policies/ processes

The University has in place a **Policy for Investigating Allegations of Misconduct in Research**. The Policy has been approved by the Academic Board of the University, and along with the **Procedures for Investigating Allegations of Misconduct in Research**, provides a framework for investigating allegations of misconduct in research conducted under the auspices of the University.

The University also has the following associated policies and processes in place.

- **LBU Whistleblowing (Public Interests Disclosure) Policy & Procedure**
- **Staff disciplinary procedures**
- **Code of Good Practice for Research**
- **Research Ethics Policy**
- **Research Ethics Procedures**
- **Academic Regulations - Section 10: Academic Integrity**
- **Fitness to Practise Policy**

All policies are normally reviewed on a two-year cycle unless external changes require otherwise. The Policy & Procedures for Investigating Allegations of Misconduct in Research were last revised in June 2023, following benchmarking against UKRIO's guidance.

#### ➤ Creating and embedding a research environment in which all staff, researchers and students feel comfortable to report instances of misconduct.

The University makes its policies and procedures available online, embeds these in training, and has designated contacts and roles centrally as well as at school level should colleagues or students raise queries or seek advice. We regularly review and implement any improvements to our practice, arising from any investigations as part of our culture of continuous improvement. The University recognises that raising concerns about misconduct in research can impact the emotional and mental health and wellbeing of all concerned. We signpost complainants and respondents to relevant sources of support within the University and guidance provided by UKRIO.

**3B. Information on investigations of research misconduct that have been undertaken.**

Please complete the table on the number of **formal investigations completed during the period under review** (including investigations which completed during this period but started in a previous academic year). Information from ongoing investigations should not be submitted.

Type of allegation	Number of allegations			
	Number of allegations reported to the organisation	Number of formal investigations	Number upheld in part after formal investigation	Number upheld in full after formal investigation
Fabrication				
Falsification				
Plagiarism				
Failure to meet legal, ethical, and professional obligations				
Misrepresentation (eg data; involvement; interests; qualification; and/or publication history)				
Improper dealing with allegations of misconduct				
Multiple areas of concern (when received in a single allegation)				
<i>Other*</i>				
<b>Total:</b>	<b>0</b>	<b>0</b>	<b>0</b>	<b>0</b>
<b>*If you listed any allegations under the 'Other' category, please give a brief, high-level summary of their type here. Do not give any identifying or confidential information when responding.</b>				
n/a				