

Institution:**1. Context and mission**

Leeds Beckett is an **ambitious university** with 26000 students and 2787 staff of whom 964 (by headcount) are academics based in schools with teaching and/or research responsibilities. The Vice Chancellor (VC) is supported by three Deputy Vice Chancellors (DVC) (Research and Enterprise, Education, and Resources) and two Pro Vice Chancellors (Global, and Business Engagement) who lead the delivery of the institution's strategy in consultation with the governing body and staff.

Deans lead our **10 schools**, delivering UG/PG programmes and pursuing research, focused in **15 Units of Assessment** (UoA). A Director of Research (DoR) leads each UoA and supports the University leadership to deliver agreed research objectives. The Graduate School coordinates recruitment, supervision, and training of PGRs.

We are an anchor institution for our city region (as stated in our 2016-21 strategy) with a clear mission to use our knowledge, skills and resources to make a **positive and decisive difference to people, communities and organisations**. The City of Leeds is home to around 3 million people, has over 140 ethnicities (2011 census) with BAME communities comprising 18% of the population. Across the city region there are wide differentials in levels of socio-economic security and BAME populations are over-represented in postcodes with low participation in HE and relative levels of poverty.

Our VC is chair of the Leeds City Anchor Institution's group, and through our multiple, longstanding and connections into the NHS, education and regional business we are partners in the city's inclusive growth strategy. We are active members of the University Alliance and the Yorkshire Universities network.

2. StrategyA Plan for Positive Change

"**Leading Research and Academic Enterprise**" is at the forefront of our 2016-21 strategic plan, of equal importance to "An Excellent Education and Experience". This has 3 strands to increase research activity and quality:

1. *Research Intensity: We will increase the number of staff engaged in high quality research.*

We intentionally focused activity in 15 UoAs. Each is led by a DoR (new role in this REF period) who is a senior Professor reporting directly to the DVC (Research) and operating entirely within a School/s. This deliberate independence has ensured that **research development is centrally embedded in the activity of each School**.

Growth in research intensity is demonstrated by annual REF audits. The proportion of staff with significant responsibility for research has **almost doubled** from 220 in REF2014 (23%) to 410 in REF2021 (43%). A "tipping point" has been passed: we now have more than **65% staff engaged in research activity** at different levels.

The REF2021 Code of Practice (CoP) was developed to drive our upwards research trajectory. Staff apply for one of the following statuses, subject to a rigorous peer-review process:

- a) **SRR (significant responsibility for research)** – all staff (0.8FTE+) who prove they are independent researchers get a minimum of **20% of their time to pursue research** (in addition to 150 hours of Research and Scholarly Activity). Every member of academic staff with SSR is included in our REF 2021 return, thus demonstrating independence is the only

research quality threshold.

- b) **WTI (working towards independence)**: staff who cannot yet demonstrate independence but are clearly working towards it, also access resources and time for research but at a lower level than those with SRR. **WTI is a development status** and staff are supported to achieve research independence. Staff with WTI are expected to gain SRR status during the next planning cycle.

The success of our development strategy is further demonstrated by the appointment of **four staff to REF2021 sub-panels** (UoA 4, 13 and 2 appointments to UoA 24). Two of these are long-standing staff members. We had no panel representation in 2014.

2. *Research Environment: We will direct resources and grow our PGR cohort to enable more staff to participate in research.*

Investment, the appointment of senior leadership and an integrated governance framework has combined to increase the research environment [substantially] over this REF period.

All **QR allocation is devolved to schools** to develop research activities; 70% is allocated in proportion to REF2014 performance, and the remaining 30% is allocated to support university strategic priorities.

A Graduate School administers all research student activity, overseen by the Research Degree Sub-Committee. We have used central research overheads to **match-funded PhD programme** which has contributed to a growth in PGR completions by 80% to 305 in this REF period.

We invested **~£700,000** to develop staff research capability through part time doctoral study, particularly in disciplines where entry is via practice; 56 staff have graduated and embarked on a research career this REF period.

Leadership was strengthened by appointing a Professorial **Director of Research and Enterprise** who leads the Research and Enterprise service (RES).

A range of policies require staff to research with integrity and further ethical scrutiny is provided by the Research Ethics Sub-Committee. The Open Research policy ensures research is openly available and requires researchers to be 'as open as possible, as early as possible'.

The revised **annual internal promotions process**, complemented by external peer review, supports promotion to Professor and Reader (74 in current REF cycle).

The **interdisciplinary school structure** creates opportunities for wider collaboration as evidenced by cross-school research centres for example, the Centre for Culture and the Arts linking our Arts and Humanities researchers and the Centre for Applied Obesity Research across sport and health disciplines.

3. *Research & Enterprise Prestige: We will increase our income to deliver research.*

Research Income for this REF period is £20.8m which is **more than double** the £9.94m we declared in REF 2014. It has not just grown in magnitude as we now can demonstrate income from **prestigious funders** such as EU, NIHR, AHRC and EPSRC. In line with a HEIF strategy that prioritises partnership working to support our research and knowledge exchange, £82m of collaborative/contract research and consultancy income has been generated.

Staff are encouraged and supported to bid for research grants. Improvement in our environment and providing dedicated time for staff to engage in research has supported the increase in our research income. Investment in RES has significantly **enhanced our success**

rate and the support available for staff to secure large prestigious research grants.

Research with Real World Impact

In keeping with our role in Leeds as a lead “anchor” institution, we encourage collaborations and partnerships to **address societal challenges**. Our approach has focused on:

1. **Embedding Impact across the Research Cycle:** Impactful research projects are promoted, particularly Knowledge Transfer Partnerships (15 in this REF period). We also support partnership working to offer staff the opportunity to address critical challenges (for example our partnership with Leeds Teaching Hospital Trust supports research across Allied Health professions)
2. **Growing Organisational Capacity to Engage in Impact:** We have invested £150k in cross-disciplinary research impact coaching, delivered by external consultants.
3. **Providing Resources to support Impact:** We implemented the Symplectic Impact Module and invested in 2 Impact Officers to work with individual researchers supporting and advising them in embedding impact in their research activities.

We have sought to intensify our impact across three domains:

1. **Health and wellbeing:** Working closely with our spin out company, Morelife Ltd, (£10m annual turnover - 2020) we have directly improved the health of 14,000 children/adults annually through research-led obesity treatment (LBU-Obesity UoA24). We have set the standard for dementia care (LBU-Dementia UoA3) and empowered women with cancer to make informed fertility decisions (LBU-Fertility UoA4).
2. **Culture:** We see culture as a lens through which to promote social justice, diversity, equity and inclusion and quality of life. Pride of Place research gave a new voice to LGBGT history (LBU-LGBGT History UoA28), Cinage/Live promoted active ageing through the arts (LBU-Cinage UoA 33) and we have improved the global culture of doping in sport (LBU-Antidoping UoA 24).
3. **Sustainability:** Our novel heat loss modelling of buildings has reduced wasted resource and carbon inefficiency (LBU-Energy Efficient Homes UoA13). Research into inclusive and sustainable economic growth defined the importance of anchor organisations to their locale (LBU-Anchors UoA17), we encouraged civilian peacekeeping to save lives in Myanmar (LBU-UCP UoA19) and developed sustainable water management systems in rural Malawi (LBU-Water Quality UoA13).

Building for Future Success

In July 2021 we will adopt a **new university strategic plan** which will consolidate research activity around areas of demonstrable strength and significance. We will prioritise, grow, and seek critical mass in high quality and high impact research that contribute to UN goals, specifically: Good Health and Wellbeing, Quality Education, Gender Equality, Reduced Inequalities, Clean Water and Sanitation, Decent Work and Economic Growth, Industry, Innovation and Infrastructure, Sustainable Cities and Communities. Schools will further **integrate their research and teaching** in all subjects, so research better informs teaching and vice versa.

Our new strategy has several aims:

- 1) **Research Intensity – 80% staff will have SRR**
Through **recruitment we will seek to employ new staff who have or will achieve SSR in areas of research to build critical mass and impact**. Our Professors will have a research leadership role and provide support for their colleagues through mentoring and research

planning. One example is the planned launch of an Obesity Institute, building upon our track record of excellence in research and knowledge transfer.

- 2) *Research Environment - More research must have international reach to achieve the highest levels of excellence in terms of originality, significance and rigour*

Though our global engagement strategy we will **enhance current international partnerships to build our research networks and collaborative research.**

- 3) *Research Prestige – More income is needed to grow our increasingly excellent research*

We intend to maintain our current trajectory of doubling research income every 5 years through focusing where we have proven and emerging success. Central resource will be enhanced to support staff through strategic bidding that enhances and develops the originality, significance and rigour of their research.

3. People

A Community of Great People

Our strategy of **staff development and selective recruitment** has increased and enhanced our research community.

Through this REF period 36 permanent and 5 fixed term professorial and 31 permanent and 26 fixed term research fellow appointments have been made. In addition, we have rewarded excellence through an **annual promotion route** to Professor and Reader. Since 2014, 24 Professorial and 51 Readers (68%/32% male/female split) were appointed through internal promotion. We also chose to strategically appoint 25 graduate teaching assistants, a developmental role combining research degree study with a teaching role.

We have placed great importance on **staff combining research and teaching**. As a result, we had 4 permanent “research only” staff on the census date. Since 2014, we have supported 56 academics to gain a doctoral qualification and a further 49 staff are currently studying. Formally, only 2% staff (by headcount) are recorded as **early career researchers (ECRs)**. However, many longstanding staff need similar support to an ECR, as although they have been an academic for many years, they are inexperienced researchers or have been recently awarded PhDs.

Staff Development to Build Capability

We have successfully retained the European Commission **HR Excellence in Research Award** (first awarded 2015). This recognises our continued commitment to the career development and management of research staff through the seven principles of the **Concordat to Support the Career Development of Researchers**.

The **Academic Development Programme** upskills staff in all aspects of research, for example: how to apply and manage grants; open access; open research; responsible metrics, and research data management. Our subscription to Vitae informs and underpins all our training. Many staff have taken advantage of these since 2014 with an average participation of 53% female and 47% male. A further 43 staff have completed the **AdvanceHE Aurora** programme.

Over 150 attendees have participated in **leadership, team building, and networking** sessions for senior staff with 65% of attendees being female. Follow-up shows that 32% of attendees have since been promoted. There is a well embedded internal network of coaches, linked to a city-wide network, including Leeds City Council and NHS Trusts. Available to all colleagues, many academics and senior academic leaders have successfully participated.

The **Annual Research Conference** is well attended and provides an opportunity to share best practice, develop new collaborations and celebrates excellent research across the university.

Following a consultation with our **ECR community**, their Development Programme was refreshed to better meet their needs. Direct links are now made to the four domains within Vitae's RDF which assists ECRs in making the right career choices.

We also operate a two-year cycle of appointing **senior lecturers to the Research Degree Sub-Committee (RDSC)**. This improves their understanding of process, policies and best practice. It also offers an invaluable opportunity to reflect on their approach to supervision.

A Fair Community for All

We are committed to creating a **positive working environment** where everyone is respected, valued and supported to achieve excellence.

Our **Equality, Diversity and Inclusion Framework** and our **Anti-Racism statement** makes clear our principles for inclusion, including our stand against all forms of racism and commitment to anyone who experiences racism. This ethos flows throughout the university; we are **Disability Positive** employers and hold **Bronze institutional Athena Swan** accreditation.

The **EDI Steering group** is led by DVC(Resources) and includes senior leaders from across the University. It supports the EDI Committee which ensures committed and effective governance of EDI matters. The steering group are overseeing institutional **Athena Swan** reaccreditation, ensuring active membership of the **Race Equality Charter**, and building our relationship with the **Stonewall Diversity Champion** Programme. Our active **Equality Forums** (Race and Equality, Disability Action Group, Gender, Faith and Belief, Rainbow Rose) comprise colleagues from across the university and each is represented on the EDI committee. Through that committee they are active in developing EDI policy and lead events including our Annual Race lecture, Gender Research Conference, participation in Leeds Pride and women's history month.

We **celebrate international days of difference**, including International Day of People with Disabilities (December) and International Women's Day (March) and recognise global issues such as the Black Lives Matter campaign. In 2018 our equality work was recognised with a Vercida award and a place in the Top 10 of the UK's most LGBT-inclusive employers.

We also offer **equality and diversity development sessions** such as 'Trans Awareness' and 'Cultural Awareness'. Furthermore, staff leading the REF submission underwent compulsory sessions addressing unconscious bias. We are launching a Diversity Mentoring programme in collaboration with other regional HEI's supporting equal career progression opportunities for all.

We included a comprehensive **Equality Impact Assessment** with our REF CoP and further reviewed the findings at each stage of our submission process and will review following submission.

We are one of 11 HEIs with a gender balanced Board (Leaders in Education Report 2018) and ensured that gender balances were observed on all REF panels, wherever possible. Our **mean gender pay gap** is significantly below the sector mean: 9.2% in 2019 (2020 figures not yet available) compared to 16.1%. Our BAME staff with SRR constitute 15% of our submission which is 1% higher than the percentage across the whole staff cohort. 4% of our staff (FTE) with SRR have a declared disability which is the same proportion as the whole academic population. Of the submitted staff 44% are female (FTE), which is slightly below the 47% total female staff.

We maximise the benefits of **flexible approaches to how we work**, including the location, pattern and hours of work. This has been particularly valued and effective particularly during the Covid-19 pandemic for those with caring responsibilities, on parental/maternity/adoption leave, and grandparents achieve a balance between their responsibilities and work. An Employee Assistance Programme; in-house Occupational Health service; partnerships with organisations such as Mind

and Macmillan; our wellbeing framework that offers resources and support and a Working Carers Network in partnership with Leeds Carers are all examples of the supportive environment that we provide.

A Vibrant Community of Research Students

At the census date we had **705 research students** and supported **305 completions during this REF cycle**.

The Graduate School has responsibility for quality of research degree programmes. The **Student Administration Management System (HAPLO)**, records student progress and provides the framework for the Research Degree Sub Committee. We are compliant with the *QAA Quality Code, Part B: Assuring and Enhancing Academic Quality, Chapter B11: Research Degrees, expectations and indicators* and have robust policies for management of research students. Our success is demonstrated by ranking of **23rd out of 103 universities** in the 2019 AdvanceHE Postgraduate Research Experience Survey and being 12th and 13th respectively for Supervision and Research Skills.

We have **458 PGR supervisors** who qualified through our qualification “Being a Research Degree Supervisor” (including PGR Mental Health and Wellbeing) and having their CV ratified by Research Degree Sub-Committee. Additionally, we recommend the completion of Epigeum’s “Supervising Doctoral Studies”. Supervisory teams comprise a Director of Studies supported by a supervisor (and occasionally an advisor) who meet PGR students at least monthly.

All students are supported to attend conferences, have access to university facilities, to Vitae and Epigeum courses. Full-time students also have a desk space and a laptop/datastick. On enrollment, they must attend an Induction with both central and school components. First year students must pass a **Confirmation of Registration** (4 months FT/ 6 months PT) and each year complete an **Annual Progression**. These milestones offer quality assurance and scrutiny as well as experience in discussing research with other academics. In addition, students are required to complete the **Research Training Programme (RTP)**, an individualised development plan building research and employability skills based on the UKCGE domains. Further enrichment of the student experience is provided by development days, research cafes and annual PGR Conference.

Research students are integrated within the university community through schools, subject groups and centres. The Research Student Society (which is part of the Student Union) works closely with the Graduate School to provide feedback opportunities. The voice of the PGR is heard through PGR representatives on Research and Enterprise Committee and Research Ethics Sub-Committee. Schools offer PGR students the opportunity to teach once they have the relevant training.

4. Income, infrastructure and facilities

Income to Support Excellent Research

Across the REF period, **£82m of research and consultancy income** has been generated which includes **£20.8m research income** and features major awards from funders such as NIHR, EU, AHRC and EPSRC. KTP applications have been particularly prioritised and we have had 15 awards including 2 management KTPs.

As an anchor university, we also engage **income from consultancy** to support our growing research ambitions. This income (as reported by HE-BCI) was £61.3m across the REF period with pleasing year on year increases. Our success in attracting consultancy income placed us 14th in the table of UK HEI by value in 18/19.

All **QR is allocated to schools** to support research development and biddable pots of HEIF to further encourage applied research. The GCRF allocation is used strategically as seedcorn funding to support academics develop research with ODA compliant partners, such as dementia research in Malaysia, alternative applications for waste in Ivory Coast and tourism in Tanzania.

We have actively sought to **increase the quality and ambition of our funding applications**. Significant and successful examples include REDWOLF (£2m European Commission), DEEP (£1.9m BEIS) and Whole Systems Obesity (£1.6m Public Health England). We have developed a symbiotic relationship with our spin-out company MoreLife Ltd, who have secured contracts to deliver Integrated Healthy Lifestyle Services (IHLS) to local authorities supported and evaluated by our research team.

To ensure quality and consistency, all external bids over £50k are approved by DVC (Research). Research Development Managers work closely with identified academics to encourage bidding activity. Our **internal peer review process** provides prospective PIs with support and feedback throughout the bidding process. Written comments are sought on all bids from relevant colleagues to improve rigour and quality. For larger bids, staff present their proposal to a **review panel** of senior academics and receive feedback to inform the development of the bid. Wherever possible, this panel is gender balanced.

For strategically important funding calls, the “best” bid is selected through an **open competition**. Shortlisted projects are presented at a “sandpit” event to a panel of senior staff, who select the bid with the best chance of success.

Business development managers work with schools and support income from knowledge transfer and commercialisation. The **IP policy** is designed to encourage academics by granting a share of any net benefit (60% of net benefit under £100k and 80% above £100k).

Professional Services Committed to Support Excellent Research

Our full range of professional services are aligned with the needs of our research community.

Research and Enterprise offers full-service support to all staff. The Research Team supports research grant bidding and oversees costings in Agresso Research and Enterprise Management System (REMS). To accelerate impact, Research and Impact Officers support staff and schools. The Post Award Team administer funded research projects, ensuring deadlines are met. They also project management large pan-university contracts. The Business Development Team seek opportunities for consultancy and contract research, generating income and activity to support research. RES provides administrative support to all research governance processes.

Library and Learning Innovation deliver 24/7 access to research collections physically and online (over 380k books and 150k journal titles). The institutional Open Access repository (<http://eprints.leedsbeckett.ac.uk>) emerged from a successful bid for JISC funding and Figshare is our institutional research data repository. Our CRIS, Symplectic Elements, collects metadata about research outputs, automatically links to staff web profiles, and feeds into CORE (<https://core.ac.uk/>). The repository is harvested by google and CORE to maximise international discoverability of research outputs. Fulltext repository items have been downloaded more than 1.6m times. Staff engage in national networks supporting Open Access and our first repository manager was technical officer for the UKCORR network 2010-18. Prior to the introduction of Transitional agreements funding for Gold OA has been mostly through QR allocation in schools.

Investment of over £138m in an Estate Masterplan has, to date, delivered “homes for all schools”; discrete, individualized locations for each school to meet the needs of their particular subject areas. In 2020 we unveiled a new building for the **Carnegie School of Sport** at Headingley

Campus. This is a hub for elite athletes, sports and industry partners and sports research. It includes a hypoxic laboratory, a health and wellbeing studio, a covered 60m sprint and walking track, strength/conditioning spaces, and changing/recovery facilities. The new **Leeds School of Arts** building integrates research and teaching in fashion, music and performing arts. It includes a performance theatre; a Dolby Atmos movie cinema; TV and film studios; multimedia studios (black box, green screen, stop motion, dubbing and music recording); acoustic labs and a host of post-production suites. A key aspect in the design of each building are networking spaces for students, staff, and partners to foster inter-disciplinary research, collaboration, and knowledge sharing. In keeping with our civic mission, we make all facilities available to our local community (Law School Clinics, Sport facilities, Covid training for NHS staff).

IT Services provides infrastructure to manage, store and share research data, working with internal and external collaborators. There is a robust governance and support process for new software and hardware. Staff have access to a wide range of software to support them from Grantfinder for funding opportunities, ZOHO for partnerships and opportunities and Agresso/REMS for finance. We also have analysis tools such as MATLAB, SPSS and NViVo.

Our **Communications team** support public engagement through initiatives such as the Transform programme which promotes inspirational and innovative academics, writing for “The Conversation”, regular blogs and podcasts, and a media centre which connects to academic experts.

The Importance of Good Governance

Research and Enterprise Committee, provides the governance for research, chaired by the DVC (Research and Enterprise). Directors of Research are ex-officio members, as is the Director of Research and Enterprise. It is a sub-committee of Academic Board and the following sub-committees have devolved responsibilities:

- Research Degrees Sub-Committee (RDSC) overseeing PGR matters
- Research Ethics Sub-Committee (RESC) leads ethics considerations and conducts annual audits to provide assurance of compliance by staff and students
- University Research Forum (URF) is an advisory body on areas of strategic importance.
- REF Strategy Panel provides oversight of our submission as stated in REF2021 CoP.

All research projects are subject to **ethical scrutiny**. Local Research Ethics Co-ordinators manage most cases and report to RESC annually. An online system provides auditable ethics assurance.

The highest standards of research integrity are assured by the **Code of Good Practice for Research**, defining the expected standards of research and enhanced by membership of UK Research Integrity Office (UKRIO).

The Policy for **Investigating Allegations of Misconduct in Research** provides guidance on the appropriate procedures where there are integrity concerns. (In this REF period, there were 2 misconduct investigations, one was unfounded and the other partially upheld due to non-declaration of a personal interest). Policies are benchmarked against, comparator universities, principles of Universities UK Concordat to support Research Integrity (2019), RCUK Policy and Guidelines on the Governance of Good Research Conduct (2013) and the UK Research Integrity Office’s Procedure for the Investigation of Misconduct in Research (2008).

Our **Statement on the Responsible Use of Research Metrics** demonstrates our commitment to the principles set out in the Declaration on Research Assessment, Metric Tide report (2015), Leiden Manifesto (2015), and UK Forum for Responsible Research Metrics.

External Networks to Enhance our Research

Membership of University Alliance provides peer support, lobbying and collaborative opportunities to work and benchmark with similar institutions. Networking within Association of Research Managers and Administrators, Research and Enterprise Network for Universities and UK Council of Graduate Education provide access to **best practice and peer support**. We actively participate in Yorkshire Universities and West Yorkshire Innovation Network to encourage regional collaborations. Recently, our expert advice informed the West Yorkshire Combined Authority Local Industrial Strategy.

Over 50 formal research partnerships have been established with organisations such as Leeds City Council, Public Health England, Ministry of Defence, Rugby Football Union, Yorkshire County Cricket Club, Royal British Legion, Institute of Contemporary Arts, London and Leeds Dance Partnership. We have senior level representation on the Leeds Business Improvement District, Leeds City Region LEP, Leeds and West Yorkshire Chamber of Commerce, Leeds Innovation District, Leeds Anchors network, and Leeds Academic Health Partnership.

Internationally, staff have links with many **prestigious universities** such as Academy of Sciences (China), Newcastle and Sydney (Australia), Leiden and Utrecht (Netherlands), University of the Free State (South Africa), Georgia and North Carolina (USA), Toronto (Canada), Leipzig (Germany), Zurich (Switzerland), Lund and Mid-Sweden (Sweden).

Looking Ahead

The University is proud of its recent achievements. We have almost **doubled the number of staff with SRR** and **doubled research income**. We have improved the originality, significance and rigour of our research and impact. This **upward trajectory** gives confidence that we can continue to improve and fully expect that the new strategy will build upon this success. Equality, diversity, and inclusion principles will continue to underpin everything we do.

Our **robust plans to further embed research** into our environment will be realised through strategic investment in areas of excellence, building our global outlook, and working hard to enhance our staff capabilities.