

Institution: Leeds Trinity University**1. Context and mission**

Leeds Trinity University (LTU) is a tight-knit academic community of 171 academic staff (headcount) and more than 3,500 students studying across undergraduate, postgraduate, foundation and apprenticeship programmes on campus, with a further ca. 1300 on franchised programmes in the UK and beyond. Its strategy since attaining University status in 2012 has been to develop capacity to sustainably deliver applied end-user focused research through internal and external collaborations.

As LTU's roots go back to the establishment of two Catholic Teacher Training Colleges in 1966, research and impact activity at LTU has mostly focused on societal beneficiaries, the education and care sectors. The University Strategic Plan is based on achieving a mission of making a difference to the people, professions and places that we serve, and supporting social and economic health and wellbeing through promoting the principles of dignity, respect, social justice, equality and inclusion.

To further this mission, LTU's academic activity has now expanded from education into the humanities, natural and social sciences. Most research at LTU is interdisciplinary, involving collaboration between scholars with backgrounds in different disciplines working together to create new knowledge in areas of mutual interest. In line with our mission, our research is highly applied, focusing on the needs of end-users in the professions, organisations and communities that we serve; mostly having a social justice theme.

While pockets of excellence existed, research had generally played a modest part in institutional culture before LTU achieved university status in 2012. The first two University Strategic Plans set out to embed a trajectory of growth in research impact culture across the University. Strategic actions completed in the timescale of the current Research Excellence Framework (REF) census period are described in Section 2 and include recruiting research-active staff across several Units of Assessment (UoA), establishing research and impact leadership and professional support at institutional level, establishing and maintaining relationships with partners as enablers for research impact, and establishing internal funding streams to support staff research and impact activities.

An important enabler to LTU's journey from newly chartered to modern university is achievement of Full Degree Awarding Powers (Full DAPs); strengthening our supporting role to our various communities through advanced education and knowledge creation. LTU's doctoral degrees are currently awarded by the University of Leeds (UoL), and LTU has worked closely with the UoL throughout the census period to develop research culture for Postgraduate Researchers (PGRs), and doctoral supervision expertise for staff.

LTU's submission to REF2021 includes entries into six UoAs: Psychology, Psychiatry and Neuroscience; Education; Sport and Exercise Science, Leisure and Tourism; English Language and Literature; Theology and Religious Studies; and Music, Drama, Dance, Performing Arts, Film and Screen Studies. Development is underway in both computer science and informatics, and business and management studies, to enable submission to the equivalent of UoAs 11 and 17 in future REF exercises. The research environment has developed during the census period at both institutional level and as described in each REF5b. A process to identify independent researchers with significant responsibility for research, as described in our approved REF2021 Code of Practice, was undertaken to identify Category A staff for submission. The University received exemptions for small submissions in UoAs 11, 17 and 28.

These actions have resulted in a net increase since REF2014 from 20.1 to 43.6 Category A staff, and from five to six UoAs, indicating a strong positive trajectory in sustainability and vitality through the census period:

Table 1: Comparison of LTU's entry to REF2014 and REF2021

Unit of Assessment	Category A submitted staff (REF2014)	Category A submitted staff (REF2021)
Sport and Exercise Sciences, Leisure and Tourism	3.0	8.0
English Language and Literature and History (Both UoAs submitted in 2014, just English in 2021)	English: 5.5 History: 4.0	English: 9.2
Theology and Religious Studies	3.5	3.0
Communication, Culture and Media Studies, Library and Information Management/ Music, Drama, Dance, Performing Arts, Film and Screen Studies	4.1	3.6
Education	0	9.8
Psychology	0	10.0
TOTAL	20.1	43.6

The University's educational portfolio includes professionally accredited and other highly applied education (for example in education, law, psychology, journalism, sport and fitness, media, photography, health, and social care). As such, many of our academics take an interdisciplinary and practice focused approach to research. Synergies between research, knowledge exchange (KE) and taught activities are promoted, and it is a requirement for validation that taught programmes explicitly mention how research is drawn upon in the curriculum and how students are taught research skills.

Accountability for research and research impact rests with the Deputy Vice-Chancellor and is managed by an Institutional Lead for Research and KE through designated Champions in each of the three Schools (Figure 1). The University currently has two formally constituted Research Centres with Management Groups (i.e., the Leeds Centre for Victorian Studies; LCVS, established in 1994; and the Interdisciplinary Research Centre for Interactive Storytelling; IRIS established in 2016). Research governance is through the Research and KE Committee, which reports into Academic Board (the University's most senior academic committee Chaired by the Vice-Chancellor):

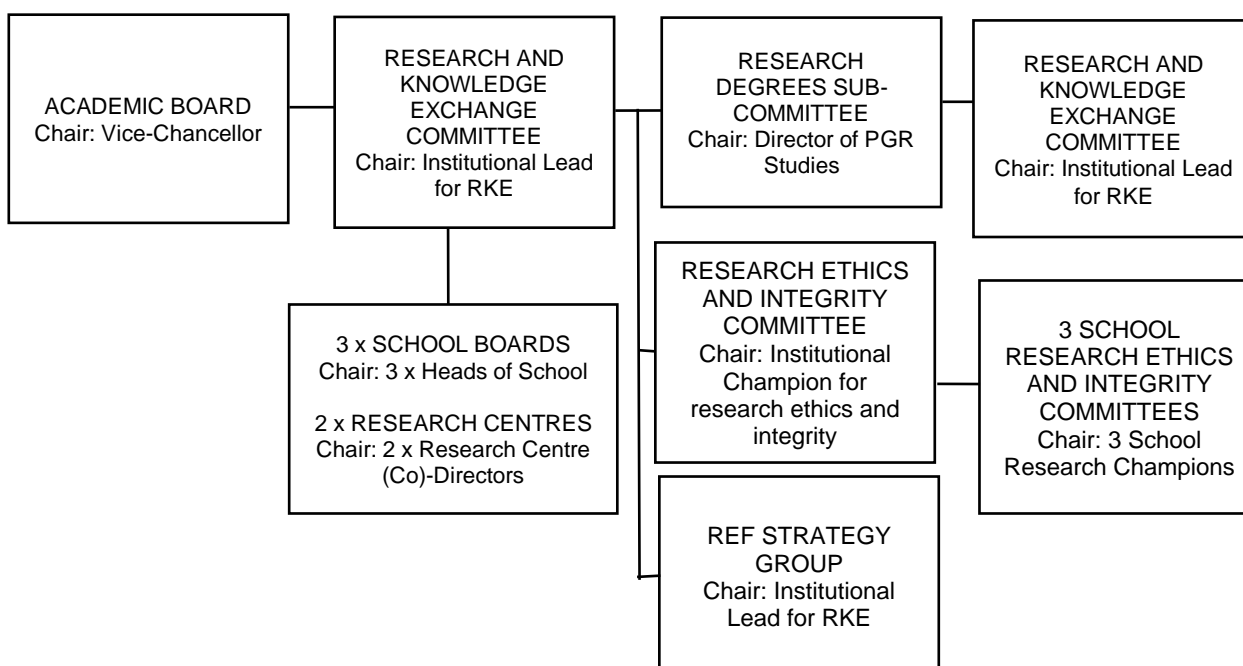


Figure 1: Structure of research and KE governance. PGR: Postgraduate research, RKE: Research and knowledge exchange.

The University is a member of GuildHE Research, the research consortium for smaller and specialist higher education institutions. This organisation is a collegiate peer-to-peer network of 30 comparable institutions that supports its members to embed a positive research culture, develop robust research and innovation strategies, and establish appropriate infrastructure through which they can drive forward their ambitions. It provides researchers of all stages with opportunities to network and collaborate with peers across the UK and from a broad range of disciplines, facilitating activities face-to-face and virtually, including an annual doctoral summer school, training events, and opportunities to forge new projects and communicate their research.

2. Strategy

Strategy during the census period 2014-2020

During the census period the University has strengthened its research environment across the institution and across disciplines through internal and external collaboration focused on the institution's mission. Impactful and interdisciplinary research has grown across the institution, aligned to its values as set out in Context and Mission, and the three institutional themes: ensuring sustainability; building community and inclusivity; delivering quality and impact.

The University's strategic approach since 2013/14 has focused on strengthening established areas of research, developing emergent fields of research in practice-based subjects, and supporting new fields of enquiry. To realise the theme of 'ensuring sustainability' in the LTU strategic plan, a portfolio review and associated recruitment of research-active staff was undertaken during the census period to grow the vibrancy and sustainability of the academic environment by bringing together subject teams within newly established Schools and Departments. This has resulted in:

- Two new UoAs being developed to the point of submission, namely Education and Psychology, with significant numbers of Category A staff in each.
- More than twice the number of Category A staff being submitted to the current REF compared to REF2014 as described in Section 1, with significantly more diverse characteristics, as described in Section 3.
- Two of the UoAs entered in REF2014 (English and History) being returned together in REF2021, under a unifying interdisciplinary focus on Victorian Studies.
- The establishment in 2016 of the International Centre for Interactive Storytelling (IRIS) in order to further facilitate internal and external interdisciplinary collaborations.
- Establishing socially engaged research themes, most notably Enhancing Human Performance and Improving Health and Wellbeing throughout the Lifespan, within the Sport and Exercise Sciences, Leisure and Tourism UoA.
- A step-change in interdisciplinary PGR completions and recruitment.
- Progress in winning external research funding, with successes including the award of Wellcome Trust funding via a National Collaborative Award, and various funder-led awards.

Strategic actions completed in the timescale of the current REF census period that have underpinned the achievements above, include:

- Establishing research and impact leadership, professional support and infrastructure at institutional level (e.g., revision of research ethics and integrity policies and procedures).
- Establishing new internal funding streams to support research and impact activities for all staff engaged in research (e.g., annual research support scheme calls).

- Promoting and recruiting research-active staff (e.g., revision of staff recruitment procedures).
- Establishing and maintaining relationships with partners as enablers for research impact.
- Investing to develop the PGR community (e.g., £3.28 million investment in PGR studentships and fee waivers).
- Investment in research infrastructure: a new Research and KE Office (RKEO) and associated staffing compliment (including a Research and KE manager, Research and KE Officer, and KE Co-ordinator).
- Significant capital (£5.3 million) and recurrent investment in Library facilities (average annual investment in Library information resources over the census period of £461,000); in particular investment in infrastructure to support Open Access (OA) publishing (PURE Repository, and Policies on OA and Data Management).

Strategy for the next five years

Professor Charles Egbu joined LTU as Vice-Chancellor in November 2020. Under his leadership the next institutional strategy will prioritise research, research impact and other KE activities as areas for development and investment. This will underpin both undergraduate and postgraduate programmes. New research centres will be established as their research, research impact and KE activities reach critical mass following investment. Although under development at the time of writing the new strategy will prioritise building a vital, sustainable research environment that will remain inclusive and supportive. This will enable LTU to attract, develop and retain talented research staff from diverse backgrounds, whose research impact skills are attractive to external organisations. Together with growing engagement with partners, this will enable LTU to build its base of external research funding. This will be underpinned by an outstanding supporting infrastructure for research and research impact activities. The practice of interdisciplinary, collaborative research that remains outward-looking, inclusive and welcoming, and of benefit to individual and community wellbeing, will remain at the heart of our research environment. The following actions will feature in the implementation plan for the strategy and will enhance the vitality and sustainability of LTU's research environment:

- Establishing two new interdisciplinary Research Centres for Research and KE Excellence.
- Enhancing synergies between research, KE and taught provision across existing research areas.
- Building a staffing plan to support the development of existing staff at all levels, as well as new appointments, to deliver the strategy.
- Achieving Full DAPs.

3. People

Staff

LTU's staffing strategy since 2013/14 has been to develop and strengthen the critical mass of research active staff across the institution by investing in staff development for new researchers (including those without significant responsibility for research) and making appointments that strengthen our links with professional organisations to further the University's mission.

During 2019/20 a new academic career planning tool was developed to assist staff in identifying their current career stage and planning to meet their aspirations. 'Pathways' are set out on research, KE, pedagogic practice and professional practice with suggested milestones from Grade 7 (Lecturer) to Professor. The Pathways tool is being used to support staff development and

applications for internal academic promotions. The research Pathway includes milestones around contributions to the research environment. All staff who identify on a research Pathway use the tool to undertake a self-audit and set development objectives during their annual review meetings.

The University operates a workload allocation model that is consistent with the academic contract used in most modern universities. All academic workloads include the contractual 165 hours' time for research, KE and scholarly activity (*pro rata*), with additional time awarded to academics for duties such as PGR supervision and completing funded research. Professors and Readers are allocated additional hours (660/375) and all staff can request additional time allocation according to their research plans (including working towards a doctoral degree, 135 hours) through their annual development reviews. Each PGR supervision is allocated 70 hours. 66 academic staff out of 164 (headcount) held a doctoral qualification on the REF census date. If staff undertake a doctorate at LTU, fees are waived. LTU has also supported a spend of ~£52,000 of conference-related funding allocated to its staff over the census period. To pump-prime research and impact activities, the research support scheme has also allocated ~£41,000 since 2013/14. Additionally, the University encourages consultancy, external work and approved civic roles and has a policy for the transparent distribution of income from the work.

LTU promotes research development opportunities for staff and PGRs through the Vitae network. Staff in the RKEO schedule a programme of development activities for staff (and PGRs) on a range of topics including writing for publication, applying for external research funding and OA publishing. The UoL provides training for staff on all aspects of PGR supervision and assessment. LTU requires all staff involved in research, and all PGRs, to complete an online training programme on research ethics and integrity developed by the UoL and run through FutureLearn. When taken together, there is normally at least one event per week that academic staff and/or PGRs can access during term time.

Postgraduate Researchers (PGRs)

LTU has been working towards a successful application for Research Degree Awarding Powers ('Full DAPs') throughout the census period and is on a trajectory to submit for Full DAPs within the next census period. Research degrees are currently awarded by the UoL. Governance is through the UoL procedures and is maintained by adherence to a signed accreditation agreement (reviewed and renewed in 2020). LTU is independently responsible for reviewing and granting ethical approval of PGR (and staff) research, monitoring finance and expenditure of PGR activities, reviewing PGR progress, dealing with complaints and unsatisfactory PGR performance. LTU has invested £3.28 million supporting PhD stipends and graduate teaching assistant research to underpin these PGR registrations and completions, accompanied by a further £132,000 of research support expenses.

Table 2: The cumulative trajectory of growth in PGR capacity as of the REF2014 and REF2021 census dates

	REF 2014 census date	REF 2021 census date
PhD (Masters by Research) Completions	2 (0)	30 (27)
PhD (Masters by Research) Registered on census date	5 (0)	48 (5)
Model 1 (lead) supervisors	7	13
Trained co-supervisors	5	38

TRAINING: PGRs have access to the full range of the institutional-level research training programme, research seminars from across the University, and the in-house Postgraduate Certificate programme that leads to Fellowship of the Higher Education Academy. Some training sessions at the UoL are also available to LTU PGRs. PGRs also have free access to online training courses and resources provided by the University of East Anglia through the institutional subscription to Vitae. A page on the University's virtual learning environment is dedicated to PGR training; this includes a guide to recommended and required training at each

stage of the programme and includes links to all these sources of training and support as well as training videos such as guides to using the library. PGRs may apply for funding to attend external conferences and training events through the PGR Support Fund. PGRs and their supervisors' benefit from regular supervisor forums which also include an annual research conference and a Research Café to encourage dissemination and growth of research ideas.

SUPPORT: PGRs have access to the full range of support services available to undergraduate students. These include the Learning Hub, which provides study-skills support through one-to-one advice sessions; mental health support including access to the counselling service and Mental Health First Aiders, and online guides and services such as 'Togetherall'; and financial and housing advice through the Student Services department and Student Union.

MONITORING: All PGR candidates' progress is monitored through regular supervision meetings, a training plan, the transfer process and annual reviews according to the UoL regulations. Procedures are in place for addressing unsatisfactory progress. Assessment outcomes are recommended by the LTU reviewing panel and formally approved by the Graduate Board of the UoL.

Regular engagement in the postgraduate research experience survey (PRES) since the last REF has enabled comparison with national satisfaction metrics for key indicators of PGR research culture and environment. The 2020 data attest to the supportive and growing environment for our PGRs. Satisfaction ratings for supervision, research skills, professional development, and formal training to teach either exceed or match the national average.

Equality, Diversity and Inclusion

LTU is committed to supporting Equality, Diversity, and Inclusion (EDI). LTU's EDI activities receive governance through the EDI Committee which reports into Academic Board. There are five Staff Equality Networks, one each for women, staff with disabilities, International staff, Black, Asian and Minority Ethnic (BAME) staff, and LGBT+ staff. The Chairs sit on the EDI Committee. LTU's EDI policy seeks to:

- Promote a genuinely inclusive environment based on upholding the dignity and respect of all members of our community.
- Ensure that all staff and students, both prospective and current, are treated equitably.
- Create a positive, inclusive atmosphere and culture where there is a shared commitment to respect diversity, and to challenge and prevent prejudice, discrimination and harassment.
- Prepare students to live and work in a diverse society.
- Establish and maintain a motivated and committed community of staff where everyone is valued.
- Target action to remove inequalities.

LTU joined the Race Equality Charter (REC) in 2018 and submitted for a Bronze charter mark in the census period; this was awarded in November 2020 making LTU the first university in Yorkshire and the Humber to be awarded a Race Equality Chartermark.

Staff are entitled to paid maternity, paternity or adoption leave with graduated return from such leave and the opportunity for career breaks for exceptional/unforeseen family/domestic responsibilities. University staff may request flexible working hours to fit in with care arrangements and a flexible working policy is available for all staff.

Following the successful use of internal Action Learning Sets, LTU has participated in the Aurora programme for the development of women leaders since 2019, as well as a programme between

universities in Yorkshire and the Humber for pairing women mentors and mentees between institutions.

The Category A staff submitted to this REF are diverse. The submission includes: 48.9% women, 13.3% declared from a BAME heritage, 15.6% with a declared disability, 4.4% declared LGBTQ+, 15.6% declared international.

4. Income, infrastructure and facilities

Since 2013/14 the following achievements, investments and innovations in infrastructure and facilities have been made to realise the strategy described in Section 2:

Income

Compared to REF2014 where institutional research income totalled ~£80,000 (averaging ~£16,000 per year) in the submitted units over the census period, REF2021 has seen more than four-fold growth (exceeding £250,000; averaging ~£39,000 per year between 2013/14 and 2019/20), with funding awards from charities (i.e., Wellcome Trust, £223,500), matched-funded research studentships (i.e., the Rugby Football League, £15,000; Castleford Tigers, £15,000), and the QR Strategic Priorities Fund (£52,200) which was invested internally to pump-prime promising research programmes. Although modest, this represents significant growth in sustainability from 2014.

Library infrastructure

A step-change in information to sustain vibrant research has been achieved through investment during the census period. A major extension to the Andrew Kean Learning Centre (£5.3 million with a further £400,000 AV/IT fit-out) which houses LTU's library was opened in July 2017, with ~1,000 study spaces in a range of environments. Researchers benefit from 24/7 opening of the building at peak times, and a 24-hour IT Room available all year round. Investment was made in library collections (now totalling over 55,000 electronic journals and 500,000 e-books including major packages from publishers such as Elsevier, Sage, Taylor & Francis and Wiley and multidisciplinary collections from JSTOR, EBSCO and Gale), and nearly 100,000 printed volumes. The University has made an annual average investment in Library information resources over the census period of £461,000. A new Discovery service facilitates integrated searching across most of our journal collections, with citation and impact analysis supported through SCOPUS and a growing range of generic and discipline-specific information databases. Dedicated Liaison Librarians support each of the University's Schools, delivering specialist workshops for researchers (as described in Staffing), supplemented by research support pages on the Library website. The PURE CRIS system, to enable integrated management of research workflows, was procured during the census period. This includes a rapidly expanding repository of research outputs (as of 12th February 2021, 3,517 outputs, of which 1,810 had an associated full-text document). PURE is managed by the Systems Librarian, who also provides advice and guidance to researchers on OA and research data management. Since 2019, PURE has been hosted as a cloud-based service by Elsevier, resulting in high levels of resilience and ensuring that the database is running on the most current version. Researchers are also able to gain rapid access to books and journal articles via our interlibrary loan service (electronic delivery of journal articles has been in place since 2019) and enjoy enhanced borrowing rights at the UoL Libraries through an access agreement.

OA publication is supported by a central budget that has funded ~£8,000 of article processing charges since 2017. Preferential outcomes are favoured for strategically important manuscripts that are submitted to journals where authors are required to make study protocols, datasets, and codes available on publication (e.g., PLoS One; supporting the underpinning research submitted in our impact case studies). Similarly, in agreement with discipline-specific practices, the University encourages the use of reporting checklists to improve the reporting of research methods, detailed and clear data management plans, and publicly pre-registering research by posting to a suitable repository (e.g., PROSPERO).

Facilities development

In Units of Assessment where physical resources are required (i.e., UoA4, UoA24, UoA33), use is shared across research, KE and learning and teaching, and across discipline boundaries. For instance, research facilities for UoA24 and UoA33 have been consolidated into bespoke buildings that incorporate specialist laboratories and equipment in environments designed for KE with external stakeholders (e.g., the Sports Centre is open to the general public). Collaboration agreements also exist to offset the cost for using such facilities when linked to research and KE activities, supporting the research submitted to REF2021. The £140,000 investment in specialist motion capture equipment in the forthcoming Sports Science and Sports Therapy Centre, ready in late 2021, will host flagship new multi-purpose laboratories that are aligned to the activities of both UoA24 and UoA33, thus contributing to the sustainability of the Units. Furthermore, office accommodation was designed and installed (~£16,000) during the census period to provide comprehensive facilities for up to 16 PGRs and postdoctoral researchers.

Concluding statement

LTU's interdisciplinary and practice focused approach to research, impact and KE activity is supported by a multitude of partnerships and national and international collaborations that enable us to deliver our distinctive offer. Reflecting on our achievements over the census period, LTU has:

- Invested significantly (~£5.94 million) in infrastructure (includes library capital) that facilitates research and impact generation as well as significant investment to support OA publishing and other information resources.
- Attracted, developed, and deployed a flexible staff team with outstanding capabilities in research and research impact.
- Enhanced the sustainability and vibrancy of our research environment through support for new and existing UoAs.
- Led and participated in successful research and impact partnerships to deliver positive social and economic benefit aligned to our mission and values.
- Supported the academic community by developing new opportunities for graduates to study postgraduate taught or PGR degrees at LTU.
- Shaped leading-edge professional practice through dialogue, debate, consultancy, and research with businesses, public and third sector organisations, professional bodies and other partners nationally and internationally.
- Worked with professional communities to support them in achieving their objectives and providing them with research and KE which addresses their challenges.
- Nurtured the physical and mental health, development and wellbeing of our PGRs and research-active staff, delivering standards of care commensurate with our values.
- Ensured an inclusive and diverse community of PGRs, staff and partners that is enriched by diversity, and in which everyone is valued.