

Leeds Beckett University

Ethics and Integrity Framework

Purpose

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

Definitions

- 2 By **ethics**, we mean the value-based rules which are embedded in the University's operations. By **integrity**, we mean the behaviours and actions of individuals that support or align with those rules.

Context and Values

- 3 Leeds Beckett University's 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.* The University is a Higher Education Corporation, established under the Education Reform Act 1998. It is regulated by the Office for Students (OfS) under the Higher Education & Research Act 2017 and it is an exempt charity, subject to the requirements of charity law. The University's primary purpose is the advancement of knowledge through learning, teaching, research and enterprise. Its charitable status relies on ensuring that its charitable purposes are for the public benefit. Operating with integrity is therefore vital. The following values are intrinsic to the University's vision and mission: *Student focus, excellence, inspiration, creativity, professionalism, enterprise, integrity*, all of which underpin its approach to achieving its strategic objectives. This framework with appended list of related policies, procedures and statements demonstrates how ethical considerations are reflected in the University's governance structures and it approaches achievement of its strategic goals.

An Excellent Education and Experience

- 4 The University is committed to supporting all its students, regardless of background, to achieve their full potential throughout the student lifecycle. From its 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 and Participation Plan, 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 where plagiarism is identified. 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.

- 5 Our Student Regulations provide a range of student-centred policies that support adherence to expectations of the Competitions and Markets Authority (CMA) and include clear policies and procedures for addressing student complaints. 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 partnership with our Students' Union, we ensure student representation is transparently embedded in the structures and processes that oversee the student lifecycle.
- 6 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.

Leading Research and Academic Enterprise

- 7 The University is committed to supporting the highest standards of rigour and integrity in all aspects of research. The University's Code of Good Practice for Research sets out the standards of good research practice and principles to be understood and observed by all University employees and students and these reflects the principles and commitments set out in the Universities UK Concordat to Support Research Integrity. In compliance with the Concordat, the University publishes an annual Statement on Research Integrity which is considered by the Audit Committee. The Statement provides a summary of actions and activities that have been undertaken to support and strengthen understanding and application of research integrity issues.
- 8 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 detail how decisions on the ethics of every research project (undertaken by staff and by students) are made and recorded at local, School and University level. Good practice protocols are agreed and implemented at School and University level, and include protocols on working with children, disclosure of research findings to GPs and guidelines on invasive procedures.
- 9 The Research Ethics Policy and Procedures is supported by our Open Research Policy and Open Access to Research database and the University is signed up to and applies the 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.

- 10 Our Leeds Beckett Research Due Diligence Policy establishes and maintains employer partnerships to ensure such relationships are founded upon shared values and ethical principles. 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

- 11 The 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. The University's Equality, Diversity and Inclusion Policy sets out the framework within which diversity is valued and equality and inclusion supported and advanced. Our supporting codes of practice ensure a consistent approach is taken when supporting individuals who declare any characteristics protected under the Equality Act 2010.

Sustainable Resources

- 12 The effective and efficient management of resources is particularly relevant to our charitable status. Our approach to financial sustainability is underpinned by 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.
- 13 The University's Counter Fraud Policy and its Anti-Bribery and Corruption Policy support the University's approach and expectations regarding the upholding of high standards of financial probity.

Governance

- 14 The University is committed to the highest standards of ethical conduct and to delivery of the wider public benefit our services provide across the communities in which we operate. Under the OfS ongoing conditions of registration, the University is committed to upholding the OfS' *Public Interest Governance Principles*. On joining the Board, our Governors are asked to declare that they are eligible to serve with reference to the OfS' 'Fit and Proper' persons indicators and guidelines from the Charity Commission, and to agree to abide by the Governors' Code of Conduct. 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. Further, our Governors work to uphold the principles within the *Higher Education Code of Governance* published by the Committee of University Chairs.
- 15 Our Code of Practice on Freedom of Speech, incorporating a Procedure on the Approval and Management of Events with External Speakers, ensures ethical and legal considerations are applied in the approval of invited external speakers for any events. We are an apolitical organisation and respect the right of all individuals to hold diverse views in our society. We will protect the rights of freedom of speech within the law but will not compromise our legal and ethical obligations regarding human rights and equality in so doing.

- 16 We evidence specific compliance with the Equality Act 2010 through our statements concerning the Public Sector Equality Duty. Working practices are in line with the Modern Slavery Act 2015 and our Corporate Social Responsibility commitments. These policies and practices demonstrate our regard for both legal compliance and high ethical standards.
- 17 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.
- 18 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.
- 19 Our Conflicts of Interest Policy sets out our ethical expectations of staff, Governors and University associates in situations where their personal interests could, or could be perceived to, conflict with impartial decision-making in the best interests of the University.
- 20 The Audit Committee has a particular role in providing independent assurance on the integrity of the University's operations.
- 21 The Whistleblowing Policy provides an additional safeguard for those with a legitimate interest in the University to report malpractice if this has not been addressed through routine protocols.

Information Technology and Data

- 22 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.

Environmental Sustainability

- 23 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

- 24 We apply ethical safeguarding measures for staff and students through our policies and procedures concerning Health and Safety (Policy and Procedures); our Safeguarding Policy, which also addresses our obligations under 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 Crisis Protocols, 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

- 25 This framework will be accessible publicly through our website. All associated policies and procedures referenced in this document are subject to review within our governance schedules. Annual reporting on the implementation of this framework through our risk management and internal controls will be provided in our operating and finance review within the annual *Financial Statement* document.
- 26 Our Ethics & Integrity Framework requires staff and Governors to act with integrity. Induction sessions and online training support understanding of University requirements. These include:
- Prevent Duty Awareness
 - Counter Fraud Training
 - Anti-Bribery and Corruption Training
- 30 Governors, senior staff and others with decision-making roles in particular procedures (e.g., procurement or recruitment) must declare potential conflicts of interest in order that these can be managed effectively and in line with the University's Conflicts of Interest Policy.

References to Sector Guidance

Office for Students *Initial and General Ongoing Conditions of Registration*

<https://www.officeforstudents.org.uk/advice-and-guidance/regulation/conditions-of-registration/initial-and-general-ongoing-conditions-of-registration/>

Office for Students *Public Interest Governance Principles*

<https://www.officeforstudents.org.uk/advice-and-guidance/regulation/conditions-of-registration/public-interest-governance-principles/>

Office for Students *Regulatory advice 5: Exempt charities*

https://www.officeforstudents.org.uk/media/1449/ofs2018_23.pdf

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>

Committee of University Chairs (September 2020) *The Higher Education Code of Governance*
<https://www.universitychairs.ac.uk/wp-content/uploads/2020/09/CUC-HE-Code-of-Governance-publication-final.pdf>

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>

Institute of Business Ethics and The Council for Industry and Higher Education (2005) *Ethics Matters: Managing Ethical Issues in Higher Education*. Available at: <https://www.ibe.org.uk/uploads/assets/02e41a5b-0172-4030-b0d2c9401efe5945/ibecihereportethicsmatters.pdf>

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<i>Version 3 approved by Governance & Nominations Committee</i>	<i>05 February 2021</i>

Appendix A

Ethics and Integrity 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 and Participation Plan](#)
- [Leeds Beckett University Graduate Attributes Leeds Beckett University Student Charter](#)
- [Policy on Safeguarding Vulnerable Groups](#)
- [Student Regulations](#) (including Student Contract, Student Protection Plan, Student Transfer Plan, Student Consultation Framework, complaints, health and safety of students, code of practice on freedom of speech, and the code of practice on the approval and management of events with external speakers)

Leading Research and Academic Enterprise

- [Concordat to Support Research Integrity](#)
- [Open Access to Research \(Leeds Beckett Repository\)](#)
- [Research Ethics Policy](#) (including Misconduct in Academic Research Policy)
- [Research Ethics Procedures](#)
- [Vitae Researcher Development Framework \(RDF\)](#)

A Community of Great People

- [Code of Practice on Freedom of Speech and Expression, including the procedure for the Approval and Management of Meetings and Events with External Speakers](#)
- [Corporate Social Responsibility Statement](#)
- [Equality and Diversity Policy](#)
- [Equality, Diversity and Inclusion Framework](#)

Sustainable Resources

- [Counter Fraud Policy](#)
- [Anti-Bribery & Corruption Policy](#)
- [Carbon Management Strategy](#)
- [Data Protection Policy](#)
- [Financial Regulations](#)
- [Food Sustainability Policy](#)
- [Safety, Health and Wellbeing Policy](#)
- [Insurance and Risk Procedures](#)
- [Overseas Visit Proposal and Protocols](#)
- [Information Technology Security Policies](#)
- [Student Services Urgent Support Procedures](#)
- [Sustainability Policy](#)
- [Sustainable Procurement Policy](#)

Governance

- Sponsorship Policy (*Internal use only, held within Financial Services*)
- [Human Resources Policies and Procedures](#)
- [Modern Slavery Act 2015; Slavery and Human Trafficking Statement of Compliance](#)
- [Public Sector Equality Duty; Statement of Compliance](#)
- [Risk Management Policy](#)
- [Whistleblowing \(Public Interest Disclosure\) Policy and Procedure](#)
- [Conflicts of interest policy](#)
- [OfS Public Interest Principles](#)
- [Governors Code of Conduct](#)

Appendix B – Ethics and Integrity Framework Diagram

