

LEEDS TRINITY UNIVERSITY POSTGRADUATE RESEARCH STRATEGY

SUB STRATEGY OF RESEARCH, KNOWLEDGE EXCHANGE & INNOVATION PILLAR

<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Approving body/Committee: Academic Board
<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Strategy author: Martin Barwood
<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Effective from: 2022 – 2026 • Version 6 (01.02.23)
<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • This strategy is amenable to production in alternative formats, such as large print, Braille, audio, languages other than English
<p>Scope: This strategy applies directly to all undergraduate students from the perspective of recruitment and to all postgraduate researchers (PGRs) including those wishing to study on a full and part-time basis. The strategy considers international, European and UK based cohorts and will potentially require physical space on the main and city campuses.</p>

Introduction –

Postgraduate Researchers (PGRs) will play a central and crucial role in sustaining our internationally excellent research activity into the future. The PGR strategy is central to the research, knowledge exchange and innovation (RKEI) pillar and is intimately linked to the goals (key performance indicators) set out in the RKEI strategy. We recognise the need to provide a high- quality PGR experience from recruitment to successful completion and want to establish a strong relationship with our PGR alumni who are ambassadors for the values central to our university. We recognise that in order to fulfil these ambitions we will need to invest consistently in the postgraduate research environment and that change to our current infrastructure is needed to enable us to grow and realise our ambitions as an institution.

We aim to equip all our PGRs with the necessary skills to use their research to address the significant problems faced by our society. Confident graduates with the skills needed to contribute to address meaningful regional and societal challenges are central to this vision. We aim to create a diverse and inclusive environment that stimulates creative thinking leading to effective and positive change. PGR research will inform public debate led by creative, independent thinking.

We will attract the most able students by communicating our research strengths, nurturing our own talent, investing in our staff as supervisors, providing excellent support and opportunities for skill development, and tailoring the experience to different PGR needs. We will work with Leeds Trinity Student Union to the create structures of student representation that will also enable greater unity with the undergraduate student body. This strategy sets out the infrastructure for the role PGRs will play in achieving the wider university objectives.

Context

Having gained University status in 2012, over the last 10 years Leeds Trinity has built a foundation on which to develop a research-rich culture focussed on impactful and evidence-based research that addresses the significant problems faced by our society. The PGR strategy will build substantially upon these beginnings to provide the bridge to apply for Research Degree Awarding Powers (RDAP, one of our primary strategic goals) and deliver a solid strategic platform for the years that follow.

The Research Excellence Framework (REF) 2021 confirmed Leeds Trinity University as a producing internationally excellent (3*) and world-leading (4*) research with areas of particular strength being Sport, Leisure and Tourism and English language and literature. Continued investment in PGR is needed in these areas of strength and strategic investment is needed to develop our targeted submissions for areas of growth. We will continue to focus on collaborative, interdisciplinary research that creates real-world impact linked to the social justice mission of the LTU. Whilst consolidating the areas of strength, we will aim to develop our research culture in areas of opportunity linked to the expanding expertise of new staff joining LTU.

The PGR strategy is focused on developing a vibrant, sustainable learning environment that is inclusive and enables the person-centred professional development of researchers. Central to this is the creation of a positive research culture that supports in-person learning whilst realising the potential of technological innovations that enable our post-graduates to contribute to our community from distance. This multi-faceted strategy will drive the development of more world-class research by developing the support, infrastructure and facilities available for PGR study.

This strategy is specifically crafted to support the Research, Knowledge Exchange and Innovation (RKEI) 2021 to 2026 strategy with key performance indicators structured to enable the KPIs described in RKEI 2021-2026 to be delivered. Thereafter, the additional steps that address the wider opportunities and challenges not described by RKEI 2021-2026 are described in the “impact” section of this document. The alignment of this strategy with the University wide strategy is described in itemized form and has primary links to strategic objective 5 – to *“grow our local and global influence through the real-world impact of our knowledge and innovation”* - and secondary links to strategic objectives 1,2,4 and 6.

Vision

“Inclusive - Professional – Person”

To provide the expertise and a vibrant, sustainable learning environment that is inclusive to enable the person-centred professional development of researchers. We will recruit high calibre individuals to undertake postgraduate research degrees and ensure they are supported to develop their potential to become ambitious, creative, independent, professional researchers able and willing to provide intellectual leadership within academia and beyond.

Impact

The PGR strategy will support the RKEI strategy in delivering a vibrant PGR environment and administrative support through the RKE infrastructure. The current PGR administrative unit, the Research and Knowledge Exchange Office (RKEO), manages aspects of the PGR journey which currently delivers the following support. The support to PGRs and supervisors will be expanded as part of the strategy with the infrastructure assessed at year 2 to 3 of the PGR strategy for prospective onward development:

1. Funding for PGR and PGR Supervisor Development
 - Overview: Providing high quality and timely advice, guidance and support to PGR supervisors relating to PGR funding and studentships to meet the need to increase the number of externally fully and part funded PGRs at LTU. PGR supervisor training will be centred around the UK Council for Graduate (UKCGE) good supervisory practice framework. Supervisors will be supported, with LTU paying the submission fee, towards applying for the UKCGE route to recognition pathway to recognise LTU supervisors as engaging in self-reflection and good supervisory practice. All current supervisors (i.e., ongoing supervision or last completed

supervision within 1 year) will have access to the route to recognition award by 2026. PGR supervisors will also be required to complete their supervisor refresher course every 5-years.

2. PGR Training and Experience

- Overview: to deliver effective and high-quality PGR development and training activities to equip PGRs with the necessary skillset to complete their research degree and transition into the workplace of their choice. The PGR training and experience section covers all aspects of the PGR journey from induction through to completion whilst also effectively engaging with our alumni. Placements will be offered, where possible, as part of the PGR journey to offer insight in to career options. All PGRs studying at PhD level have the opportunity to undertake the Postgraduate Certificate in Higher Education (PGCertHE). PRES metrics and data are collected as a core part of this section of the unit. The PGR training and student experience will work with Leeds Trinity Student Union to the create structures of student representation that will also enable greater unity with the undergraduate student body and improve recruitment from our undergraduates. Expanded role for LTSU in support of PGR is part of an ongoing structured project that has commenced in A/Y 2022-23.

3. PGR Operations

- Overview: covers aspects of PGR assessment and progression including PGR administration. Example activities relating to assessment and progression include oversight of supervisory arrangements and the coordination of milestone reviews (e.g., 6-month reviews, annual reviews) and the organisation of assessment milestones (e.g., transfer vivas and final vivas panels). PGR administration is housed within this section covering communication of/with admissions and enrolment, extensions and suspensions, presumed withdrawn and PGR learning support.

4. Curriculum Management

- Overview: to cover aspects of PGR quality assurance, regulation, codes of practice and guidance. Development of procedure and policy relating to PGR.

A graduate school may be created, following a detailed consultation exercise conducted in A/Y 2023-24 (i.e., later in the evolution of the PGR strategy once our projected PGR numbers are clear). A graduate school is an operational organisational unit that gives strategic administrative leadership to develop processes to support postgraduate research activities. A graduate school may plausibly include a PGR leadership team comprising a head of graduate school, a graduate school operations manager and faculty leads for PGR research degrees to develop the PGR environment and cohort at faculty level.

Alignment to University Strategy

Table 1. Alignment to the University Strategy – *diagram or text (Asim for 1 page maximum)*

<p>Primary link to pillar: Research, Impact and Innovation with specific contributions to strategic objective 5 (outlined below).</p> <p><i>“Grow our local and global influence through the real-world impact of our knowledge and innovation”</i></p> <p>Secondary Links to all other pillars in the University Strategic Plan 2021 to 2026 including contributions to strategic objectives 1, 2, 4 and 6 (outlined below).</p>
--

Links to Pillar: Research, Impact and Innovation	Links to Pillar: Education & Experience	Links to Pillar: People & Sustainability	Links to Pillar: Careers & Enterprise
<p>Strategic Objective 5</p> <p>Increased quality and income through knowledge exchange framework and continuing professional development</p> <p>Recognition of our economic and societal impact, including our work in community engagement</p> <p>Achievement of Research Degree Awarding Powers</p> <p>Increased number and quality of research outputs and impact case studies</p> <p>Increased number of research-active staff and PGRs</p> <p>Embed research/rich and research-informed teaching into the undergraduate and postgraduate curriculum.</p>	<p>Strategic Objective 1</p> <p>Outstanding learner feedback on the student (i.e., PGR) experience</p> <p>Increased diversity of our student population and staff base</p> <p>Excellence in widening participation and attainment</p>	<p>Strategic Objective 2</p> <p>An inclusive, open and collaborative experience that ensures our people are able to operate to the highest standards of performance</p> <p>The best suited people, and a developed and established infrastructure that enables our staff to thrive in the delivery of a first-class student experience</p> <p>Based on our distinctive Catholic foundation, openly demonstrated values and clarity over how we embrace diversity, inclusion and deliver personal growth of our staff and students (including PGRs).</p> <p>Strategic Objective 4</p> <p>Growth in total numbers of learners and annual income</p> <p>Diversified income sources</p>	<p>Strategic Objective 6</p> <p>Career and enterprise skills embedded throughout the learner journey in support of student employability and career prospects</p> <p>Recognition for graduate employment/progression to further study</p> <p>Increased numbers of students (PGRs) in graduate-level jobs</p>

Key Performance Measures Linked to RKEI Strategy

The following KPIs relate directly to the corporate and horizon KPIs outlined in the “Research, Knowledge Exchange and Innovation” 2021 to 2026. The KPIs set as part of the PGR strategy require stability of finance, environment, resource, infrastructure, process and demonstrable and tangible delivery of the wider strategy at university level to enable the PGR strategy to be delivered as planned.

The strategy also requires buy in and collective ownership of the strategy by all staff including administrative support staff allocated to PGR and on the basis that at least 50% (~94.5 staff assuming those depositing in PURE have a PhD) of academic staff who are eligible to contribute to PGR activities can do so by the end of the strategy cycle. These KPIs are focussed upon providing an upward trajectory in key metrics that will enable Leeds Trinity University to achieve its strategic ambitions, with a particular focus on Research Degree Awarding Powers (RDAP), with a planned submission for RDAP by Autumn 2025. Applications from candidates in STEM subject areas will be particularly encouraged and welcomed. They outline a portfolio of performance metrics that are indicative of this upward trajectory where no one KPI is indicative of overall success or failure.

Strategic Objective – Stabilise and then grow PGR numbers

Strategic ambition/goal	Intended Outcome	Baseline (Source: RDSC final meeting A/Y 2021-22)	Impact Short term (1 year)	Impact Medium Term (3 years)	Impact- long term (5 years)
PGR numbers stabilised	Build RDAP metrics	37 PhD candidates	+40 registered Candidates	+60 registered Candidates	80 to 120 ^b registered candidates
Year on year increase in PGR numbers	Sustainable PGR environment	3 MRes candidates			

Footnotes: ^aA total of 2 of our current PGR cohort of 37 will still be registered, according the standard study period duration, by the end of the 2021-2026 RKEI strategy. The majority of PGRs required to achieve this KPI will need to be new registrations.

^bThe current shortfall between the target for PGR registrations at the point of RDAP application and those PGRs expected to receive a studentship (~24 still registered at the point of RDAP submission census date) and those through self-funded routes (we receive ~45 applications P/Y and offer positions to ~20% of these; 9 P/Y ~27) is approximately 30 applications to reach the minimum target of 80. Secondly, to meet the need to offer standardised PGR supervisor training to ensure consistency in PGR experience of their supervisors.

Strategic Objective – Improve PRES results

Strategic ambition/goal	Intended Outcome	Baseline (Source: PRES 2021) ^a	Impact Short term (1 year)	Impact Medium Term (3 years)	Impact- long term (5 years)
Improved PRES results	Build RDAP metrics Showcase vibrant and satisfied PGR environment	Overall satisfaction was 68%	Overall satisfaction in second or top quartile Averages for sub-questions on an upward trajectory	Overall satisfaction sustained in top quartile Majority of sub-PRES categories in upper or second quartile	Overall satisfaction sustained in top quartile Averages for sub-questions within first or second quartile for all categories

Footnotes: ^aOverall satisfaction at National level was 79% in 2021. LTU must be in the second or top quartile for PRES scores for successful RDAP submission.

Strategic Objective – Grow and diversify supervisor numbers

Strategic ambition/goal	Intended Outcome	Baseline (Source: REF 2020)	Impact Short term (1 year)	Impact Medium Term (3 years)	Impact- long term (5 years)
Increasing number of PGR Supervisors	Build RDAP metrics	Model 1 supervisors: 13	Model 1 supervisors: 20+	Model 1 supervisors: 25+	Model 1 supervisors: 30+
Increased numbers of ECRs joining supervision teams	Showcase vibrant and content PGR environment	Co supervisors: 38	Co supervisors: 45	Co supervisors: 50	Co supervisors: 55 ^a
Increase numbers and diversity of PGR Model 1 supervisors with completions					

Footnotes: Final number of model 1 supervisors is based on between 2.5 and 3 lead supervisions each with a target of 80 to 120 registered PGRs.

^aBased on University level KPI for academic staff depositing published research outputs in the PURE repository by 2026. In academic year 2020/2021 a total of 59 researchers (of 189 academic staff; ~31%) deposited an output in PURE. For REF 2021 43.6 category A (i.e., Academic Staff with ≥ 0.2 FTE academic contract) submitted to REF2021 in 6 Units of Assessment); ~23% of category A staff. The target has been set based on the likelihood that not all staff depositing in PURE will be eligible or willing to contribute to PGR.

Strategic Objective – Select and implement an automated PGR management system

Strategic ambition/goal	Intended Outcome	Baseline (Source: PRES 2021) ^a	Impact Short term (1 year)	Impact Medium Term (3 years)	Impact- long term (5 years)
Develop new RKE infrastructure	<p>Make PGR administrative processes and infrastructure efficient and capable of handling ~80 to 120 registered PGRs.</p> <p>Track PGR supervisory meetings to enable quality assurance</p>	79% satisfaction with deadlines and monitoring	Register project brief for implementing PGR management system (July 2022)	Finalise full business case for implementing PGR management system (Summer 2024)	Finalise full business case for implementing PGR management system (Full implementation and “business as usual” use of PGR management system (Spring 2025) ^b

^aPRES 2021 responses to the question “I understand the requirements and deadlines for formal monitoring of my progress were 79% in 2021.” Most universities have an automated system for managing PGR which will help address this issue at LTU if implemented.

^bCorrespondence with the IT programmes board (ITPB) indicated this timeline as plausible whilst considering the already scheduled works for A/Y 2022-23 and 2023-24; these years are already full with agreed projects that have reached the deployment stage. Delivery of this component of the strategy is a group responsibility.

Appendix

Guide to consultation programme:

Key Dates:

- Draft PGR strategy was discussed at first Professors and Readers group September 28th 2022.
- Revised draft PGR strategy was discussed through Research Degree Sub-Committee (RDSC) meeting at RDSC on October 18th 2022; first meeting of A/Y 2022-23.
- Final draft PGR strategy submitted to Research and Knowledge Exchange Committee (RKEC) November 2nd 2022 to conclude consultation exercise.
- Approved, following revision, draft from RKEC to be considered at academic board November 30th 2022.