



LEEDS BECKETT UNIVERSITY
LEEDS SCHOOL OF ARTS



**DIRECTOR OF RESEARCH AND
KNOWLEDGE EXCHANGE**

APRIL 2026

WELCOME FROM THE DEAN



Dear Candidate,

Thank you for your interest in the Director of Research and Knowledge Exchange opportunity at Leeds School of Arts.

In recent years we have navigated significant change successfully, addressing recruitment challenges, reshaping our academic structure and responding to wider pressures across the sector. Consequently, we continue to grow, leveraging our stable financial and organisational foundations.

The School brings together over 3,000 students and 200 staff across disciplines including art, design, architecture, film, music, performing arts and creative technologies. At its centre sits the £90m Leeds School of Arts building — the largest capital investment ever made by Leeds Beckett University — providing exceptional facilities for creative education and practice-led research.

The appointment of a new Director of Research and Knowledge Exchange will enable us to reflect on how research and knowledge exchange can best support the School's next phase of development. REF 2029 will be an important milestone, but the School's ambitions extend beyond a single exercise. The opportunity now is to strengthen research culture more broadly — supporting practice-led enquiry, encouraging collaboration across disciplines and enhancing the visibility and impact of the School's research and knowledge exchange activity.

Leeds provides a powerful context for this work. The city has one of the UK's most vibrant creative ecosystems and a highly competitive landscape for creative education. Leeds School of Arts is deeply embedded within this environment, with strong links to cultural organisations and creative industries across the region.

If you have the appetite to contribute to an ambitious, outward-looking and collegiate creative environment, we would be delighted to hear from you.

Yours sincerely,

Dr Oliver Bray
Dean, Leeds School of Arts



THE OPPORTUNITY

Leeds School of Arts is a large and diverse creative community, with strengths across a wide range of disciplines and a significant body of practice-based work.

Research and knowledge exchange activity within the School is similarly broad. There are areas of recognised strength alongside activity that continues to develop, often closely connected to professional practice and the cultural life of Leeds.

At University level, there is a clear commitment to research and knowledge exchange as part of a broader mission to contribute to people, organisations and communities.

The University is financially stable and Leeds School of Arts is also operating sustainably, with a positive outlook despite wider sector pressures.

Within this context, the role combines continuity with development.

There is a substantial base of high-quality work. Alongside this, there is an opportunity to provide greater clarity and direction across a diverse research landscape; to support colleagues in translating their work into more visible and recognised outputs and impact; and to strengthen connections across disciplines and with external partners.

A central aspect of the role will be to ensure that the School's research and knowledge exchange activity is clearly articulated — internally and externally — in a way that reflects its contribution as part of a major civic institution within the Leeds City Region.

The role requires both respect for the nature of creative and practice-based disciplines and the ability to provide leadership, focus and momentum.

Leeds Beckett is a modern, professional university with ambition. Our vision is to be an excellent, accessible, globally engaged university contributing positively to a thriving northern economy. Our mission is to make a positive and decisive difference to people, communities and organisations through excellent education, research and service.

The University is home to around 23,000 students from over 140 countries and approximately 2,500 staff. It plays a significant role within the regional and national economy and is a major anchor institution within the city of Leeds.

Leeds Beckett is characterised by a strong civic identity. It is a university of Leeds — closely connected to the city's communities, employers and cultural organisations, and actively engaged in its economic and social development.

The University has also established a strong position in knowledge exchange, ranking within the top quintile nationally alongside research-intensive institutions.

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Leeds School of Arts is a central part of this landscape. It brings together disciplines including art, design, architecture, music, performance and digital practice, with strong links to industry and the cultural sector.

The School operates within a supportive environment and lean structure. Leadership roles are hands-on, and collaboration across disciplines is encouraged. Flexible working is supported, with a strong emphasis on maintaining an inclusive and sustainable academic environment.

The research and knowledge exchange agenda is an integral part of the School's ongoing development. The focus is on strengthening existing activity, supporting staff in developing their research, and ensuring that work is visible, connected and appropriately recognised.





THE CONTEXT

Research and knowledge exchange within Leeds School of Arts are well established and continuing to evolve.

There is a strong base of activity, with committed academic staff, a range of external partnerships, and evidence of progress in recent assessment exercises. The decision to submit within a single REF 2029 Unit of Assessment (Art and Design) provides an opportunity to further strengthen the coherence of the School's research profile.

At the same time, the scale and diversity of the School means that activity is not always as connected or visible as it could be, and there is significant potential to bring greater alignment and external clarity.

This reflects both internal priorities and the wider higher education context, where expectations around research performance, external income and knowledge exchange continue to increase.

The University's research and knowledge exchange activity is structured around three areas:

- Excellence across clearly defined interdisciplinary research themes (Greener, Sustainable Communities; Inclusive, Prosperous Communities; Sport and Healthy Communities)
- Research development through upskilling and organisational development
- Evolution of robust research systems and funding

Key aspects of this role will be to:

- Provide clear and credible leadership across a diverse research community
- Support colleagues in developing sustainable and recognised research profiles
- Strengthen interdisciplinary collaboration across the University
- Enhance the visibility and external articulation of the School's work

The focus will be on unlocking existing potential, whilst growing capability and ensuring that activity is clearly defined, well-supported and consistently delivered.

The role requires both respect for the nature of creative and practice-based disciplines and the ability to provide leadership, focus and momentum.

THE ROLE

This is a pivotal leadership role which will contribute to the University's research and knowledge exchange strategy, whilst providing strategic and operational leadership for research and knowledge exchange within Leeds School of Arts.

Reporting to the Dean, and working closely with the Pro Vice-Chancellor for Research and Knowledge Exchange, and Director of Research colleagues across the University, the postholder will play a central role in shaping the direction and development of research and knowledge exchange within the School.

A key aspect of the role is to provide clarity and leadership across a diverse practice-led environment. This includes supporting colleagues to develop research activity, strengthening the quality and visibility of outputs and impact, and ensuring that effort is aligned with agreed priorities.

The School has a wide range of research activity, with many colleagues working independently within their disciplines. The role therefore includes bringing greater connection across this activity where appropriate, supporting collaboration, and helping to articulate a clear and coherent narrative.

The Director will also lead external engagement, developing and maintaining relationships with partners across the creative industries, cultural organisations, public bodies and communities — including contributing to the School's role within the Leeds City Region.

Specifically, the Director of Research and Knowledge Exchange will:

- Devise a strategic approach to research and knowledge exchange within LSA (including opportunities for cross-school collaboration).
- Ensure that the environment for research and knowledge exchange within LSA is appropriate and provides opportunities for all academic staff to develop and enhance their research and knowledge exchange profiles.
- Develop and implement effective processes to meet the school's research and knowledge exchange income contributions to the University
- Provide strategic and operational leadership to the school's research and knowledge exchange activities
- Deliver against our University's objectives for the REF and other relevant external assessments and returns such as KEF, HEIF, and HE-BCI returns
- Lead the School's Research and Knowledge Exchange Committee, participate as an 'ex officio' member of the University Research & Enterprise Committee
- Actively engage with equality, diversity and inclusion activity

The role is both strategic and hands-on, reflecting the School's structure and approach to leadership.

THE PERSON

The successful candidate will be a credible academic leader with experience of research and knowledge exchange within a relevant setting.

They will bring a strong understanding of research in creative and practice-based disciplines, and the ability to work effectively with colleagues across a diverse academic environment.

All Directors of Research and Knowledge Exchange within the University are active researchers, and the successful candidate will be expected to maintain their own research profile.

You will bring:

- Professorial standing in a relevant area of research
- Experience of leading research strategy, development and delivery
- Understanding of the UK research landscape, including REF and KEF, and a successful track record of securing research funding
- Demonstrable experience of supporting colleagues in developing research activity, able to lead, motivate, manage and equip teams to achieve challenging goals
- Outstanding interpersonal skills, with an appetite to advocate for research and knowledge exchange internally and externally

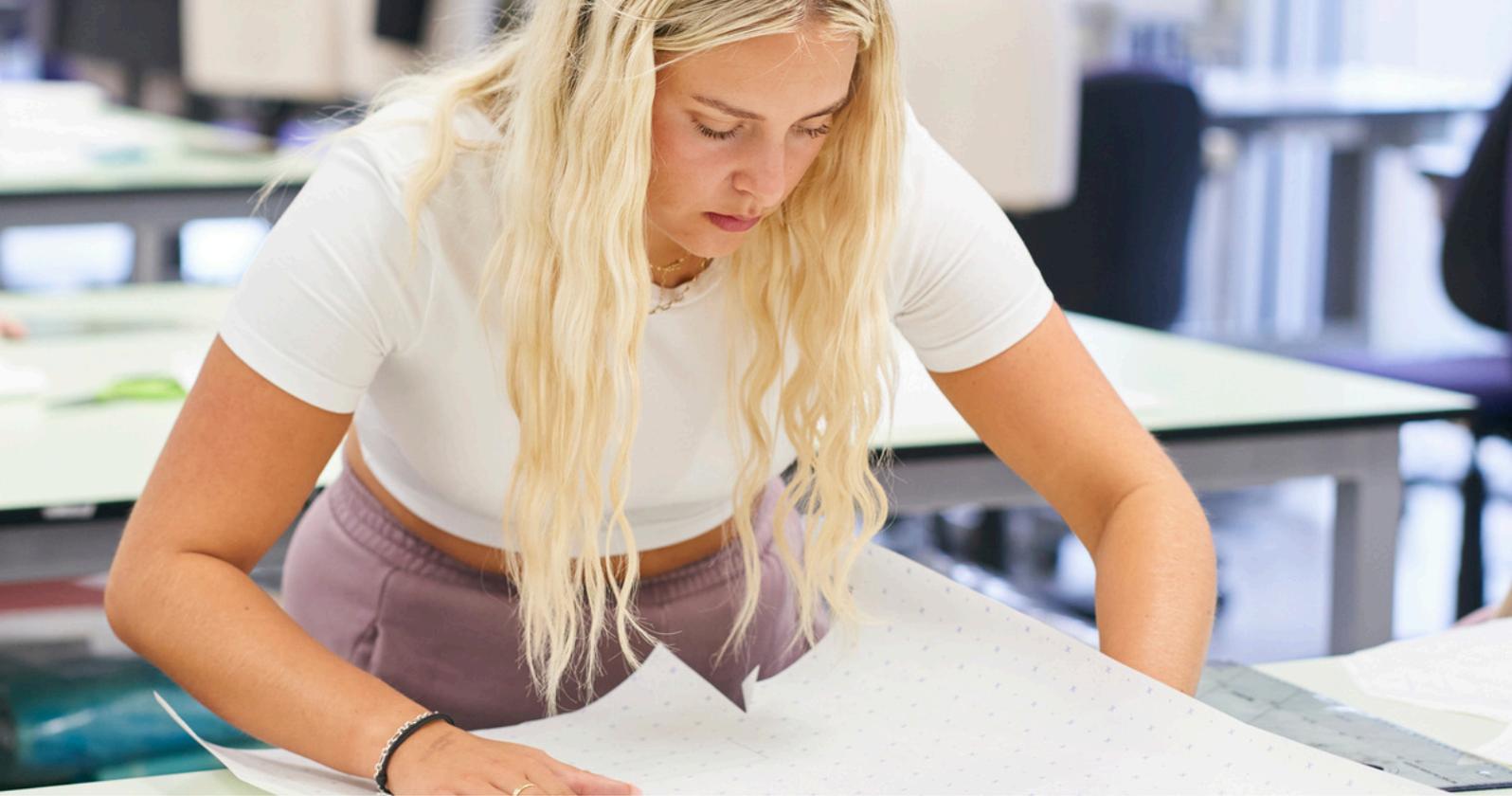
You will demonstrate:

- A successful track record in translating strategic priorities into practical outputs
- A proven ability to identify and implement new opportunities, new ways of working and creative solutions to complex problems
- The ability to articulate a clear and coherent narrative for research and knowledge exchange internally and externally
- Confidence in working across disciplines and engaging with colleagues beyond the School
- Sound judgement in prioritising activity and supporting delivery

Your approach will be:

- Collegiate and inclusive, aligned with the University's values
- Transparent and accessible
- Supportive of colleagues at different stages of their careers
- Pragmatic and focused on delivery

The role requires an individual who can contribute to a strong and cohesive leadership team while providing clear direction within the School and beyond.



TERMS AND CONDITIONS

Further information about Leeds School of Arts can be found [here](#).

Terms and Conditions for Senior Staff are as determined by the Vice-Chancellor within a framework set by the Board of Governors. In accordance with the Equality Act, questions relating to health are asked following an offer of appointment. All offers of appointment are subject to pre-employment health assessment.



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BA3 INTERIOR ARCHITECTURE

They have continued exploring the intersection of spaces, histories, uses, and the architectures of our world are not confined to the single room, space, or site. They are informed by context, proximities,

EQUALITY AND INCLUSION

Equality and inclusion are essential to our academic and business strengths. We ensure our University community is a place where everyone feels respected, valued and supported to achieve excellence.

We are committed to providing a vibrant, ethical and sustainable working and learning environment that values equality and inclusion and recognises the contribution everyone brings to our University community.

Our network of colleague and student groups help us to help others get the information and support they need. These groups provide a safe and supportive environment in which to discuss issues relating to equality and inclusion, as well as provide support and networking and share best practice.

The University is proud to have achieved the Athena Swan Bronze Award and Race Equality Charter for our work on gender and race equality. We are proud of the significant work that the University is undertaking to foster an outstanding and inclusive community.

You can read more about our approach to equality and inclusion [here](#).

SUSTAINABILITY

We work with colleagues, students and the community to embed sustainable thinking and build a socially responsible and greener future. We are committed to improving the balance between our social, economic and environmental impacts.

We aim to:

- Improve our overall environmental impact.
- Embed sustainability principles via our research and practice.
- Inspire a community of environmental leaders and advocates.

As part of our Strategic Planning Framework 2021-2026, we have committed to:

- Use the 17 United Nations Sustainable Development Goals (UN SDG's) to influence the stewardship of all our resources and our role within the regional community.
- Achieve annual progress in the Sustainability Leadership Scorecard.





HOW TO APPLY:

Candidates should apply for this role through our retained advisors Networked at - <https://www.networkedpeople.com/lisa-research-director/>

The deadline for receipt of applications is **midnight on Tuesday 5th May 2026**.

Please send applications to lisa@networkedpeople.com. Applications must include a full CV and a letter of application setting out your interest in the role and details of how your knowledge, skills and experience match the person specification (no more than two pages).

Questions regarding the post should be directed to **Hamish Laing at Networked** via - hamish.laing@networkedpeople.com or +44 (0)7861 329463.