London
South Bank
University

EST 1892

HR Excellence in Research Award: Six-Year Internal Review Report, 2020

London South Bank University (LSBU) received the HR Excellence in Research Award in May 2014; it was reviewed and reconfirmed in 2016 and 2018.

1. Internal evaluation process

Internal evaluation of the Implementation review and action plans was overseen by the Research Office (RO). The RO supports researchers in the following areas: tracking and identifying LSBU research impact; REF submission; researcher development events and opportunities, and the management and delivery of PGR programmes.

Internal review comprised three stages:

A. Review of the Implementation Plan by the Researcher Development Group (RDG). The RDG has responsibility for the university's compliance with the seven principles of the Concordat for Researcher Development, and manages the action and implementation plans. The review considered progress to date against the submission of the four-year implementation plan (2018), which was discussed at the meetings on 8 July 2019, 23 October 2019, and during online consultation (due to the impact of Covid-19) on 19 March 2020 involving participation from researchers, research leaders, OD and RO.

B. Researcher engagement and dissemination, involving access to all tiers of research management and activity in order to gain feedback on the **implementation plan** and the **future action plan**. This involved data input from: A, discussion of action and implementation plans at University Research Committee (URC), with engagement of researchers at all levels; B, feedback from the Directors of Research and Enterprise at DORE meetings; C, participation at School Research Days and Research Centres involving discussion and feedback from researchers at all grades; D, participation in Research Centre meetings to identify future actions; E, networking events with researchers and PGR students in the London Doctoral Academy, Summer School (2018, 2019 & online in 2020); F, researcher feedback from Annual University Research Audit (September 2018–20); G, feedback from staff engagement survey; H, Training Needs Analysis (TNA) data following appraisal cycles in 2018-19 & 2019-20.

C. Review and Update of the Implementation Plan and Action Plan was completed by RO in association with Research Leaders in REI.

2. Key Achievements and Progress Against Action Plans 2018-20

Developments to strengthen the research environment have seen, in 2018–20, the formation of a dedicated Research Office and establishment of a Head of Research with specific responsibility to: A, oversee Researcher Development; B, manage Researcher Integrity compliance; C, monitor and assess research quality in line with the principles of responsible metrics, as set out in DORA; D, manage and develop the Annual University Research Audit (AURA) and oversee the development of research impact; E, guide and support colleagues in REF, and manage REF submission; F, development and growth of the 12 Research Centres and 33 Groups; and, G, manage and deliver on the aims of the London Doctoral Academy.

Principle 1: Recruitment and Selection. *Human Resource policies*: Regular reviews of HR policies is carried out on an annual basis (January 2019, 2020), with a policy schedule inventory including the recruitment and selection policy, ensuring continuous review of new legislation and implementation of best practice. LSBU has an academic framework for academic appointments and which includes research, teaching and learning and administrative management, each with equal rating to each criteria. This has confirmed LSBU's commitment to research, and the recognition of the importance of retaining skilled research staff. We undertake an annual review of fixed term contracts over 2 years and discuss with line managers where permanent recruitment is appropriate. Since 2019, all posts 2 years and over are paid redundancy where necessary at contract end.

Principle 2: Recognition and Value. *Researcher development & training*: The Annual University Research Audit (AURA) was updated to harvest information on career development, training and mentoring needs from all researchers. In addition, Training Needs Analysis was conducted 2018-19, 2019-20. These data fed into the launch of the Researcher Development handbook, and a training calendar for all staff (https://www.lsbu.ac.uk/research/researcher-career-development). Training pathways were introduced in 2019: Introduction to Research; Research Outputs & Impact; Bids & Grants; Research Supervision. A fifth pathway, Personal Effectiveness is delivered through OD. The Leadership Academy offers a wide range of leadership and management development sessions for all staff including researchers. Appraisals for the 2018-19 period were carried out and a review the online appraisal system will be deployed in 2020. *Review of staff procedures*: Review of researcher entitlements was carried out in January 2020 showing entitlements were regularised and delivered as stated. Progress has been made in recognising that access to e-mail for a period post-contract would be beneficial to the contract holder and university. *Professoriate*: This was launched and Professoriate meetings have identified key areas for discussion and development, and particularly mentoring of research staff and development of interdisciplinarity. Inaugural Lectures were launched in 2019.

Principles 3 & 4: Support and Career Development. *Mentoring*: Development of mentoring and coaching is now focussed through the Research Centres (12) with peer-to-peer mentoring, coaching and review; 8 have bespoke schemes, the other 4 in development. *Extra-academic experience*: Participation in the Outside Insight programme has continued (2018, 2019 & 2020) gaining excellent feedback. *Training & support*: Academic Induction has been introduced for all new starters, including a module on Introduction to Research, and was launched in 2019. The Research Events Calendar was further extended as described above. *Engagement*: The Research Summer School runs each year in early July, and Staff engagement is encouraged, with 15 taking part in 2019 (Summer School for 2020 was affected by Covid-19). *PGR Supervision*: Involvement in the Epigeum programme is encouraged by the Directors of Postgraduate Research, monitored through the Research Board of Study. LSBU is directly engaged in the further development of the programme, under external review. A new, in house, Research Supervision training pathway was introduced in 2019. *Research Sabbaticals*: were introduced in 2018. The scheme has been successful, and the number of awardees has doubled in the period from 2018 to 2020.

Principle 5: Researchers' Responsibilities. *AURA*: Participation reflects different priorities in some Schools, though rate of participation by ECRs has increased. AURA is undergoing a larger scale reorganisation with an AURA working group, led by a senior research academic,

set up in August 2020, with engagement from across research development stages. ***Training pathways***: were introduced in 2019 as described above. Communications relating to the training is cascaded from the Research Office through the Directors of Research and Enterprise, Research Centre heads, research group meetings and through online platforms. ***Integrity***: LSBU is compliant with the UK RIO requirements for researcher integrity. Researcher Integrity training workshops are available for all research staff and PGR students, delivered twice annually, in both face-to-face and webinar formats.

Principle 6: Diversity and Equality. ***EDI Framework***: The EDI Action plan is updated regularly to maintain its effectiveness. ***Dignity at work (DAW)***: The DAW Network scheme examines a number of inter-dependant work streams, including incorporating responses to the EHRC report on bullying and harassment in HE (ethnicity). Training provided to DAW champions includes skilful conversations and managing sensitive conversations along with technical skills on specific diversity and inclusion topics. ***Athena SWAN***: LSBU successfully achieved Bronze status in 2020, and reviews its action plan regularly according to set targets.

Principle 7: Implementation & Review. ***Researcher Feedback***: Participation in CROS and PIRLS in 2019 was hampered by reorganisation of CRS that saw a restructuring which separated out the Research Office from the other research functions (Pre-and Post-Awards) and this was completed in late 2019 early 2020. However, other surveys were carried out including LSBU Employee Engagement Surveys and AURA. LSBU will participate in 2021.

3. Summary of actions and next steps to May 2022
Principles 1 & 2 Recruitment, Recognition and Value:
 Researcher Assessment: Establishment of appropriate metrics to evaluate research quality in line with DORA; alignment of AURA with appraisal cycle. ***Success measure***: establishment of an annual review to identify success; increased participation in appraisal. **Research leadership**: Engagement of researchers in the development of a Research Centres; further development of Professoriate. ***Success measure***: 10% increased participation in leadership academy and establishment of inaugural lecture series to promote interdisciplinarity.
Principles 3 & 4 Support and Career Development
 Training and induction: Development of training programmes and researcher induction to deliver on training needs identified in the appraisal outcomes and the annual AURA research audit. ***Success measure***: delivery of four improved training pathways at local level. **SRR Cohort**: increase in the SRR Cohort (to 20%) through phases research tranches. ***Success measure***: establishment of principle with URC. **Sabbaticals**: Deliver on Sabbaticals to increase development of research skills. ***Success measure***: increased participation by 20%.
Principle 5: Researchers' Responsibilities
 Impact: Development of impact planning and development for all researchers. ***Success measure***: increased participation and engagement by 10%. **Training:** local delivery of Integrity and other training. ***Success measure:*** increasing uptake by 20%.
Principle 6: Diversity and Equality
 Delivery on EDI and Athena Swann Action Plan ***Success measure***: meeting targets set.
Principle 7: Implementation and Review
 Participation in CROS, PIRLS and PRES 2021. Analysis of results and comparison with data from the 2017 surveys. ***Success measure***: increased participation rates in the surveys, by 20%.