



**LEEDS  
BECKETT  
UNIVERSITY**



## Director of Library and Learning Services Candidate Brief

### About Leeds Beckett University

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.

We are a community of around 23,000 students from over 140 countries and 2,650 staff, and our history dates back to the founding of Leeds Mechanics Institute in 1824

Leeds is a vibrant, modern city with a rich industrial past and on the doorstep of natural beauty. It is the cultural, financial and commercial heart of West Yorkshire and has one of the most diverse economies of all the UK's employment centres. Leeds is, and always will be, open for business and talent.

We place huge importance on our role as an anchor institution for Leeds and the wider region. Leeds Beckett makes a significant impact to the economy, through our teaching and learning, our research and the value of our spending. Every year, the University delivers a £1.43bn impact on the UK economy.

We aspire to create graduates who will become exceptional employees, dynamic citizens and enterprising leaders. We work closely with employers and partners to ensure that our graduates are ready for work, ready for life, and ready to seize all the opportunities that lie ahead

Leeds Beckett has:

- A bold, industrious spirit: We foster innovative thinking to create great graduates, exceptional employees, dynamic citizens and enterprising leaders.
- An environment enriched by research: Our world-leading and internationally excellent research informs our curriculum and our students' experience in all areas.
- A community dedicated to success: Our community is made up of people from a diverse mix of cultural and social backgrounds, brought together in a world-class learning environment.
- Excellent corporate services: Students and colleagues can access a range of professional services within our University, specifically designed to support the effective delivery of our academic provision.
- Safe and supportive networks: Our network of colleague and student groups provides safe and supportive environments in which to discuss issues relating to equality and inclusion.

**Our 2021-2026 Strategy** focusses on academic and research excellence, diversifying our student population and increasing the international student body as part of our global engagement plan, whilst engaging more closely with local communities and continuing to build a reputation both nationally and internationally.

We have a keen sense of momentum and are working proactively to achieve both cultural and financial resilience as we navigate the challenges facing the sector at this time

## Our Values

- **Ambition**
- **Inclusiveness**
- **Integrity**
- **Teamwork**
- **Pragmatism**
- **Purposefulness**

Our values have a direct impact on everybody in our community, from colleagues with decades of service, to students having their first thoughts about studying here. They shape our culture, they give us clarity, consistency, and a common purpose. They help others know what to expect from us and help us to welcome new colleagues. Whether we're experiencing a period of stability or living through uncertain times, our values are a touchstone which helps to guide our interactions and decisions

## Context for the vacancy

We are seeking an exceptional professional to lead our Library and Learning Services into the next few years of opportunity, innovation and challenge for higher education academic services.

This a newly configured role, created in light of the upcoming retirement of our current Director of Library and Student Services. Having reflected on the identities of both Library & Learning Services and Student Services, their remit, distinct areas of specialism, response to external factors and professional challenges as well as the evolving needs of our students and staff, we have decided to separate the leadership of each professional team. This will enable each Director to apply their specialist and professional knowledge and expertise to best effect for the benefit of our staff and student community.



## The Opportunity

This key role in our University senior management provides professional and strategic leadership of the service to support the teaching, learning and research success of our students and academic colleagues.

Critically, it is the key source of expert professional advice and advocacy to the University's senior management and decision-making bodies on matters relating to library, digital learning and academic skills, all of which are central to the achievement of our University's Strategic Plan.

This is a point of transition for the service as we drive change in reshaping our services, listening to our students and Schools, and responding to the financial challenges facing the HE sector.

## The Service

Library and Learning Services sits at the heart of the University, a cornerstone of academic, learning and research support for all students and colleagues. It is part of Academic Services, reporting to the DVC Academic, along with the Centre for Learning and Teaching, and Academic Quality Enhancement Office.

A trusted academic partner, with excellent relationships with our Schools and professional services, academic and research communities, and a strong track record in empowering students and academic colleagues to achieve their ambitions.

The service has a ready seat at the table of projects and initiatives with Schools and professional services, as well as in the committee structure of the University, including Academic Board. Characterised as collaborative, influential and relevant, with a deep understanding of the direction and culture of the University which is shared across all teams.

Our large service of around 112 colleagues brings together a broad range of integrated student- and School-facing services and resources to support learning, teaching, digital learning technologies, and research.

Teams are currently configured around:

- **Library Services and Operations:** 7 day a week frontline services in two campus libraries and online; library and student IT advice for students; learning spaces; lending and circulation; library communications and events
- **Library Academic Support:** academic, information and digital literacy skills; academic liaison with Schools; support for teaching and learning; research support
- **Technologies for Learning:** Blackboard VLE and portal, and other digital learning technologies; associated support and training for academics; library services platform and supporting technologies; research repository and current research systems & data; copyright advice
- **Information Resources:** acquisition and management of digital and print information resources; resource discovery; online reading lists; resource usage and data analytics; metadata and cataloguing

These teams of diverse professionals across library, learning technologies, academic skills and managers work together to deliver the synergies of these integrated services under a single leadership and strategic plan.

We are seeking someone with strong leadership skills, a demonstrable track record of implementing change, challenging current practice, and leading innovation and strategic planning with large teams, and a record of significant achievement at a senior management level in a higher education library or information service, or an equivalent environment.

## Future Opportunities and Challenges

Our University's 5-year Strategic Planning Framework 2021-2026 provides the structure for our service's strategic plan, in particular, our key responsibilities as enablers of the:

- Education Plan: <https://www.leedsbeckett.ac.uk/our-university/our-university-colleague-page/education-plan/> and
- Research and Innovation Plan: <https://www.leedsbeckett.ac.uk/our-university/our-university-colleague-page/research-and-innovation-plan/>

The University is working through a period of change, refocusing teaching and service delivery and refining priorities, to address the financial challenge across the higher education sector. Professional services and Schools have been reviewing their service models and resource bases and prioritising their strategic contributions. In Library and Learning Services, we have been focusing our energies and resources on where we know we make the most difference to the outcomes of our students and strategic objectives of our Schools. We have undertaken a rigorous exercise to redesign our service model and reshape our information resources into a leaner more dynamic collection but there is more to be done to ensure we deliver maximum value for money and efficiency. Over the next couple of years our priorities will focus on:

- Partnering with Schools in course design and content to develop students' academic skills and confidence, integrating skills development into every course, and engaging students with responsible use of AI
- Supporting transformative research, enabling researchers' readiness for the next REF, through our expertise in scholarly publishing and research technologies, and embedding our new Rights Retention Policy
- Developing our learning, research and library technologies, and support for academic teams, to deliver the benefits of digital innovation and empower blended learning, within our **cohesive institutional digital environment**
- Leveraging best value from the changing information resources marketplace and innovation in publishing and open access
- Developing our insight into the changing expectations and challenges of different student groups and demographics, recasting our services to address them, and enhancing tailored support for those who face barriers or challenges to engagement and success in HE
- Continuing to develop our tailored services for international students in the light of our research into their academic support needs
- Developing our library learning environments, within the context of the development of our University estate
- Establishing a strategy for the systematic creation and use of insights, data and metrics to provide an evidence base for service innovation and prioritisation



## The Role

### Role Purpose

To provide professional and strategic leadership of the service, driving service innovation and change, to support the teaching, learning and research success of our University, delivering an excellent, positive and sustainable impact on the University's Strategic Planning Framework through library, digital learning and academic skills developments. To take an active leading role in providing expert professional advice to the University's senior management and decision-making bodies on matters relating to library, digital learning and academic skills.

### Principal Accountabilities

- Lead on the development of a vision and strategic plan for the service that aligns with the University's strategy and ambition and empowers our students' and Schools' success.
- Bring about positive change in the delivery of services, develop and lead change initiatives, foster innovation, and challenge practice, to enhance the quality and efficiency of provision and to address challenging financial and service demands.
- Collaborate closely with Deans of School and Directors of Professional Services to develop cross-University strategic plans and projects in teaching, learning, research and service delivery, exploiting synergies and partnership working that have a positive impact for the University.
- Provide inspirational and effective leadership to the service, promoting a forward-looking, inclusive and collaborative culture, engaging and developing colleagues to deliver their best performance.
- Lead on the development of digital learning advice and technologies, collaborating closely with colleagues in the Centre for Learning and Teaching, and IT Services, ensuring that academic delivery can leverage the benefits of blended learning, within a cohesive institutional digital environment
- Develop technology-enabled, innovative, and user-focused Library advice, services, learning spaces and services that inspire and enable the success of the academic community and represent the visible ambition of the University
- Provide a cornerstone of the high-quality research environment and culture for the University, working collaboratively with Research and Enterprise Services to lead on open access publishing and research data management
- Plan and manage large and complex budgets, and financial and resource plans, to secure optimum value from resources, efficiencies and best value for money, to meet the current and future needs of the University

- Provide expert professional advice and insight in the areas of library, academic skills, digital learning and research support to inform the development of University strategy and planning, and to derive maximum benefit and relevance from the University's services and resources.
- Develop the provision of relevant quality information resources to support research, teaching, and learning needs, maximising the benefit of innovations in publishing and in open access, and driving value from supplier negotiations.
- Engage with students, and student feedback and engagement strategies, to understand different student groups and demographics, and their changing needs and challenges, to inform service priorities
- Develop strategies for systematic creation and use of insights, data and metrics, benchmarking against best practice, to provide an evidence base for service innovation and prioritisation, driving a culture of continuous improvement
- Act as a role model for collaborative, mutually respecting leadership.

## The Person

- A degree and professional qualification, or substantial professional experience, in library/information studies
- A record of significant achievement at a senior management level in a higher education library or information service, or equivalent higher education or research environment.
- Current professional knowledge of developments and strategies in the delivery of library services, academic skills and digital learning within higher education
- Experience of managing a large professional team and of supporting and developing others to achieve high performance.
- Successful track record of leading the development of strategy, of financial planning, and the management of significant budgets to targets.
- Strong team leadership skills, and a proven track record in building positive colleague engagement and team motivation to achieve high performance
- Change agent and innovator, with a demonstrable track record of implementing positive change, challenging current practice, and encouraging innovation in others.
- A proactive approach to developing service culture and continuous improvement, informed by data, evidence, user engagement, and evaluation
- Excellent advocacy and influencing skills, conveying credibility and authoritative expertise, and high level oral and written communication skills
- Ability to think creatively and flexibly, with a positive approach to the implementation of change and service development
- Proactive engagement with the career-long development of professional skills and knowledge, and active participation in sector collaboration and networks
- A commitment to the mission of the University, and to personally upholding and demonstrating the LBU Values: Inclusive, Teamwork, Integrity, Pragmatism, Ambition, Purposeful



## How to Apply



**Dixon Walter has been retained by Leeds Beckett University to provide executive search and advisory services. Should you wish to have an informal discussion about this role, please contact Emma Wilkins at E: [emma@dixonwalter.co.uk](mailto:emma@dixonwalter.co.uk) or T: 07741 875289**

**The closing date is 5pm on Monday 21 October.**

Your application should include on separate documents:

- a letter of application setting out your interest in the role and details of how you match the requirements in the person specification
- a comprehensive curriculum vitae
- details of three referees and your notice period (referees will not be contacted without your permission)
- a completed personal details form (available from the website below)

These document should be emailed to [emma@dixonwalter.co.uk](mailto:emma@dixonwalter.co.uk)

Further details about the recruitment process are available at:

<https://www.dixonwalter.co.uk/opportunities/lbu-director-library-learning-svcs/>

GDPR: In making an application for this role we ask you to view Dixon Walter's Privacy Notice at <https://www.dixonwalter.co.uk/privacy-policy/> which outlines the organisation's compliance with General Data Protection Regulations and the use and storage of your data.

Working at Leeds Beckett University means you'll have access to a wide range of benefits including our generous pension schemes, excellent holiday entitlements, flexible working, reduced study fees, subsidised fitness facilities and a lot more.

Leeds Beckett University is committed to ensuring that its senior leaders are representative of its diverse student body and wider region. We welcome applications from everyone regardless of age, gender, ethnicity, sexual orientation, faith or disability. All appointments are based on merit

