



Board of Governors' Recruitment Pack



Introduction



Thank you for your interest in joining the Board of Governors at Plymouth Marjon University.

We have a diverse and committed Board, inspired by the University's history and practice of social justice, and by the students whose lives are transformed by their university experience. This is an exciting time in the University's development. The Board plays a key role in holding the leadership to account as the University sets its course to 2030 and beyond.

The University is particularly keen to appoint Governors from a diversity of backgrounds and experience. Expertise in finance, accountancy or audit is particularly welcome, in line with the requirements of relevant codes of governance. With succession-planning in mind, there will be opportunities ahead for those who wish to take on Board leadership roles.

If you feel equipped and enthused to join our Board, to support and challenge the University's Vice-Chancellor and Executive Leadership Team through this exciting period ahead, then we look forward to hearing from you.

The University



Plymouth Marjon University sits on a green and spacious campus, with world-class facilities in a spectacular part of the world. But the thing that most makes us stand out is our people. Our students and our staff are the inspiration and motivation for all we do.

This is a community that welcomes and nurtures new talent: an exciting, ambitious, and incredibly supportive place to work. All of us here are passionate about helping people to be the best they can be, and that not only means our students, it means our people as well.

Our Values are at the heart of everything we do. We're firmly committed to supporting every single member of staff who works for us. As just one example, our Marjon Balance programme of health and wellbeing activities aims to help you to look after staff members' physical health, nutritional health, mental health and social health.

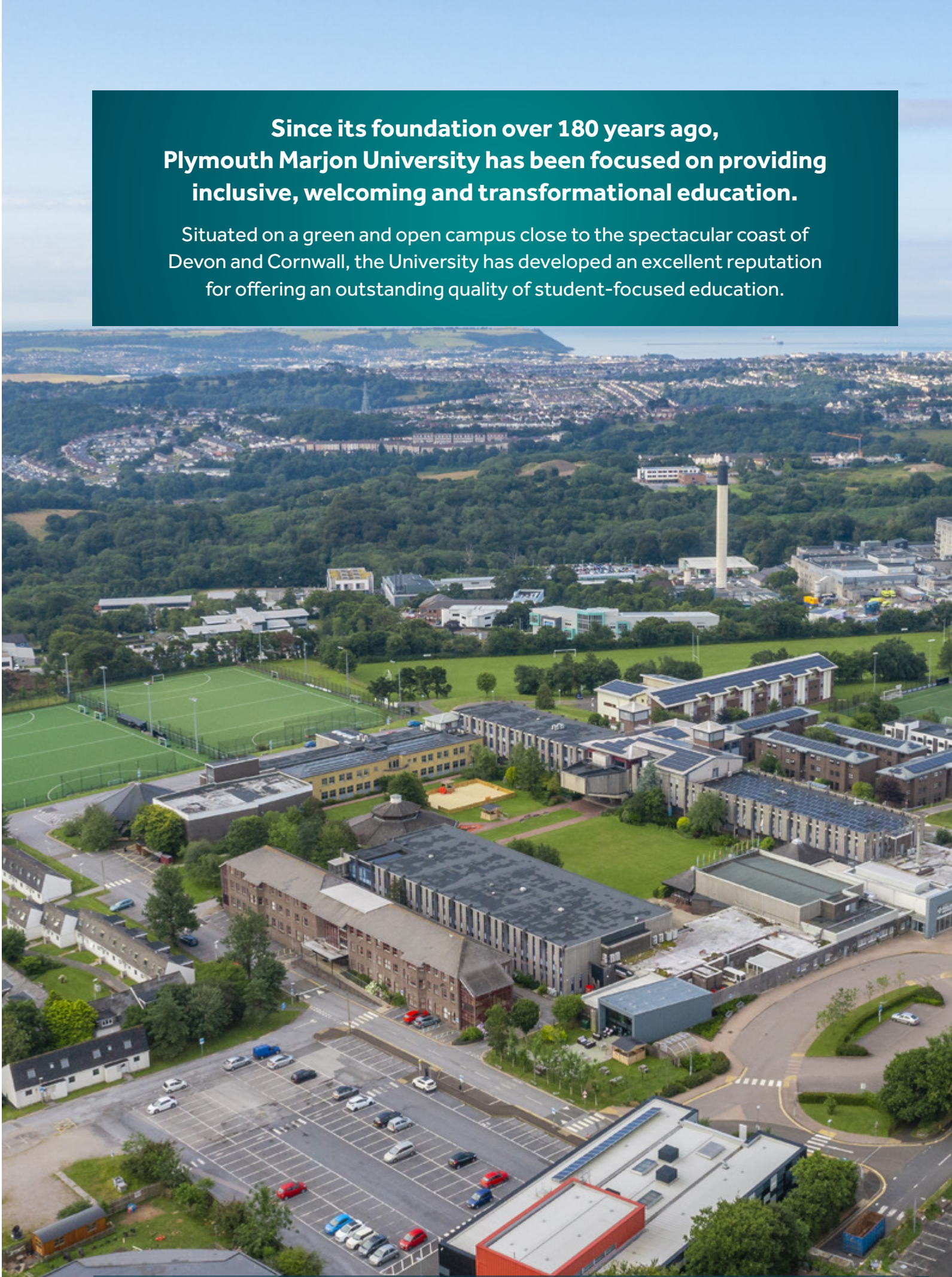
All members of the Marjon team recognise that they form part of a network of support for students, with everyone focused on enhancing student or staff experience. Students are able to build strong working relationships with a network of supporters, from their Personal Development Tutors to the Student Union. All our programmes involve work experience, and all students are trained in critical skills such as presenting with impact, managing interviews and influencing others. We work very closely with key employers on all programmes, linking our students to a network of contacts to help them in their future careers.

Our results speak for themselves: we were ranked in the top three universities in England for student satisfaction by The Complete University Guide from 2020-2024. In 2024, 92% of students found employment or move into further study within 15 months of graduating, above the national average of 90%. In the WhatUni Student Choice Awards, the University was ranked 4th university in the country for career prospects in 2024.

We need to continue to achieve these results through a combination of our inspirational and committed people, and equally excellent systems and processes.

Since its foundation over 180 years ago, Plymouth Marjon University has been focused on providing inclusive, welcoming and transformational education.

Situated on a green and open campus close to the spectacular coast of Devon and Cornwall, the University has developed an excellent reputation for offering an outstanding quality of student-focused education.



Our Values

The University's Values are an expression of beliefs and attitudes which are felt across the breadth of the Marjon community. They reflect why many staff choose to work at Marjon, why many students choose to study there, and even why many partners choose to work with the University.

They are inspired by its Anglican heritage and by its ambitions for the future, encouraging both the ability and the aspiration to improve lives for all.

Humanity

We are student-centred, making a difference to individuals and society.
We create human connections and community.

Ambition

We achieve more through working together and sharing our achievements.
We empower people to be the best they can be.

Curiosity

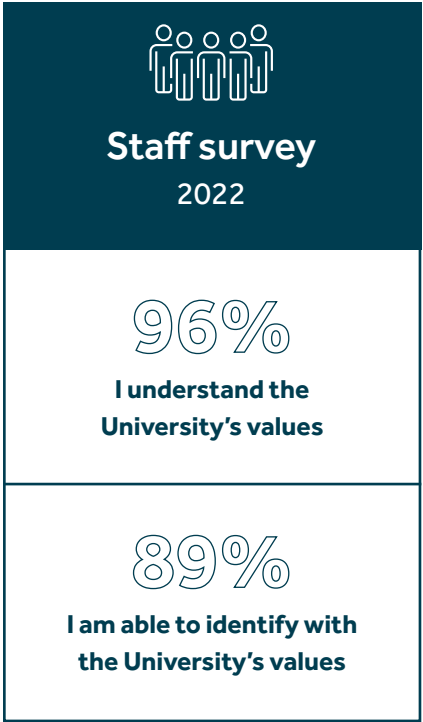
We push boundaries and enjoy searching for a better way.
We encourage potential and possibility.

Independence

We nurture self-belief, independence and wellbeing.
We encourage diverse views and independent thought.

“Marjon does care about each person, and you're not just a number. You're an individual that everyone gets to know.”

Cully, BA (Hons) Sports Development with Sports Management



What makes Marjon different?

Whilst the world is ever-changing, Marjon holds some long-standing strengths.

Marjon students: for 180 years the University has welcomed a wide variety of students, and has been pioneering in encouraging students who traditionally have been less likely to go to university. Compared to other universities, Marjon tends to have a larger proportion of students who are mature, who are disabled or who come from postal sectors in which fewer students go to university. The University is very proud of this diversity and its heritage of widening participation. Marjon was ranked Number 2 in England for social inclusion in the Times and Sunday Times Good University Guide 2025.

Warmth and humanity: Marjon cares about how things are achieved, not just what is achieved. The team aspires for all their actions and decisions to improve individual lives and they consider students in all they do. This is part of their way of working and as a result, when people interact with Marjon they feel warmly welcomed, listened to and recognised. Marjon appreciates each individual for what they bring and offers a genuinely safe space where confidence can grow and people feel at home.

Collaborative culture: Marjon believes that everyone in its community has valid experiences, good ideas and the ability to make a difference. It aims to reduce hierarchy, breaking down barriers to enable all staff and students not only to share their ideas but to help to deliver them. The goal is that everyone at Marjon feels empowered to make decisions and come to conclusions collaboratively. As a small university, a key strength is lack of bureaucracy and speed of decision-making.

Personalised teaching: Marjon represents an exceptional teaching experience. Staff get to know their students well, understanding their strengths and supporting them with development areas. Small class sizes enable dialogic, challenging teaching in which every student can achieve their best work. Professional Services staff also work closely with students, building their skills and confidence and helping them to thrive. Students are supported through well-tailored placements and work experiences, with academics able to consider the aspirations of each student and make personal recommendations. And the classroom environments, equipment and facilities are reflective of future professional working environments, meaning students can build their career confidence.

“What’s really nice about Marjon is that you know everybody, it’s a small community, that seeks to help each other and put you forward for opportunity. I love the interaction I have with my lecturers, I feel very supported.”

Ella, BSc (Hons) Sports and Exercise Science

Plymouth Marjon University works hard to put students first, to ask for feedback and to act on it. The University therefore enjoys a growing reputation around student satisfaction, support and community, and consistently scores in the top universities in England on satisfaction measures:

Gold in the
Teaching Excellence Framework 2023

Top 4 in England for lecturers and
teaching quality
(WhatUni Student Choice Awards 2024)

Top 3 in England for student satisfaction
(Complete University Guide 2025)

Top 4 in the UK for career prospects
(What Uni Student Choice Awards 2024)

Top 3 in England for social inclusion
(Good University Guide 2024)

Top 6 in England for student support
(Daily Mail University Guide 2024)

Top 5 in England for teaching quality
(Good University Guide 2024)

Top 8 in England for student experience
(Good University Guide 2024)

No 1 in UK for assessment
(Postgraduate Taught Experience Survey 2023)

A proud heritage

The University has a proud and respected heritage and is regularly ranked in the top universities in the country for student-focused measures such as student satisfaction, student life and teaching quality. With a burgeoning research reputation and fast-developing new programmes in health education, the University is at an exciting point in its development.



The University's distinguished history began in London with the foundation by the National Society of the constituent colleges of St John's, Battersea, in 1838 and St Mark's, Chelsea, in 1841.

The foundation of the colleges was both pioneering and revolutionary. The principals of each college, James Kay-Shuttleworth of St John's and Rev. Derwent Coleridge of St Mark's have been credited for developing the first national school system. At the time though, they caused some outrage amongst the political classes for acting on their firm belief that education should be available to all who could benefit from it. They insisted that teaching was a professional career which would benefit from thoughtful and thorough training, and they invited young men from the local workhouse to study amongst the first pupils.

At one point, upon hearing of complaints that the incredibly high standard of education was wasted on his pupils, Derwent Coleridge wrote a mock apology for the "inconvenient excellence" of his teaching.

Both founders were driven by their strong principles of social justice and their understanding of poverty and inequality, establishing a route for young people to access high quality education regardless of background or means. They saw education as key to providing a pathway out of poverty.

Today, widening participation and student opportunity remains a central mission of the University.

The two colleges, previously rivals, combined on the Chelsea site in 1923. By 1925 the term Marjohn was in active use, to refer to the students at the new college, as opposed to a 'Sinjun' or a 'Marksman'.

The College of St Mark and St John moved from London to Plymouth in 1973, driven by changes planned to the Chelsea site. Between 1991 and 2007 the College was accredited to run undergraduate and postgraduate programmes leading to degree awards from the University of Exeter. The institution became University College Plymouth St Mark & St John in 2007 with the award of Taught Degree Awarding Powers and in 2013 it was awarded full University title and became the University of St Mark & St John.

In 2017 the University was granted permission to use the name Plymouth Marjon University.

Whilst initially established with a focus on teacher training, and continuing to excel in this area, the University now offers a range of courses which includes broader education; sport, business and media and health and wellbeing, including nursing, physiotherapy and other allied health professions. It continues to be driven by a sense of social justice; determined to offer the benefits of higher education to all those who can benefit from it.



Our Provision



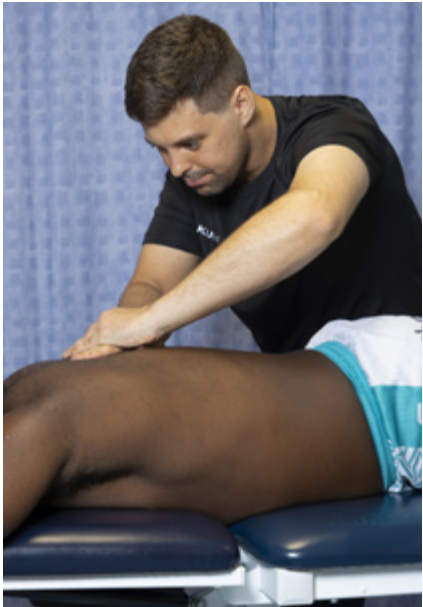
Health, Wellbeing and Social Sciences

Dean of the School of Health, Wellbeing and Social Sciences:
Professor Saul Bloxham

Health education is the fastest growing curriculum area. Marjon has been training Speech and Language Therapists for over 30 years, giving the University an excellent local reputation and contacts within the NHS. The course is ranked in the top three in England for Student Satisfaction in the Complete University Guide.

Building on this success, the University introduced degrees in Psychology in 2016; Osteopathic Medicine in 2017; Psychotherapy in 2018; and Physiotherapy in 2022. At the same time health postgraduate programmes have been developed, providing options for all undergraduate students to continue into further study with Marjon.

The development in the coming years is substantial. Full Nursing degrees start in 2024, with options ranging from Foundation to postgraduate level. There are a plethora of other professional development courses designed and delivered for specific NHS requirements, including a fully-funded course with the NHS to fast-track Learning Disability Nurses. Apprenticeship options are launching alongside almost all of these courses to support the NHS demand for current staff development. By 2026, it is expected that the Marjon campus will feel significantly transformed with large cohorts of health education students.



“ I really valued the small class sizes and the lecturers knew our names from week one.

Charley, MPsy (Integrated Master's)
Psychotherapy and Counselling



Education

Dean of Education – details to be confirmed

The University has been a pioneer in teaching ever since its foundations and continues to excel in this area. Across a range of three year undergraduate BEd degrees and PGCE and School Direct courses, the University has close working relationships with hundreds of schools across the South West and in London. The University also offers broader education courses including Special Educational Needs and Disability, Outdoor Adventure Education and a long-running Youth and Community Work programme.

Continuing Professional Development for teachers and educators is a growing area, with Master's programmes offered on campus and from a base in Truro, designed to support teachers within the further peninsula to access around school hours. Faculty members have strong relationships with regional MATs and are influential across the sector.

In REF 2021, Plymouth Marjon University submitted to two units of assessment, including Education. Across these two units of assessment, 59% of the outputs were 3* or 4* and the remaining majority the targeted 2*.

Students rate Education programmes highly: within Education, Marjon is ranked 1st for student satisfaction in the South West and 4th in England, in the Complete University Guide 2025. The University's education courses are also ranked 4th in the UK in the Guardian University Guide 2025.

Our Provision



Sport, Business and Media

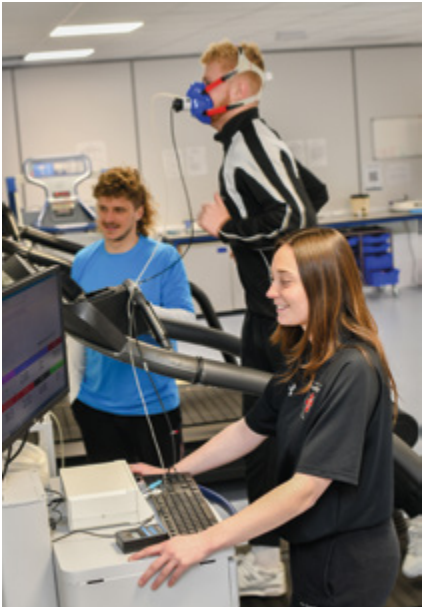
Dean of the School of Sport, Business and Media: Caroline Westwood

The University has a proud sporting culture with over 500 of our students enrolled with Marjon Sports Federation and playing for Marjon sports teams. Our Sport & Health Centre welcomes around 2,000 members of the local community each week for sports clubs, swimming lessons and gym classes.

This background enhances the environment in which the sport performance and development programmes run. Across courses such as Sport and Exercise Science, Physical Education, and Football Coaching and Development, students experience a broad range of both academic and industry expertise. The University has partnerships and works with many local and regional clubs, including partnering with the Football Association to host one of nine FA Women's High Performance Football Centres. Students frequently benefit from guest lectures and work experience through these links, preparing them for a career in sport after graduation. Within Sport Science, we achieved an 89% student satisfaction rating in the Good University Guide 2025.

To enhance one of the largest undergraduate subject areas, the team have also developed multiple postgraduate options to enable graduates to continue their studies with us and to encourage further study amongst our many alumni.

In REF 2021, 98% of the research outputs for Sport & Exercise Sciences submitted were recognised as being of international quality, with 11% recognised as the very highest 4* rating: world-leading.

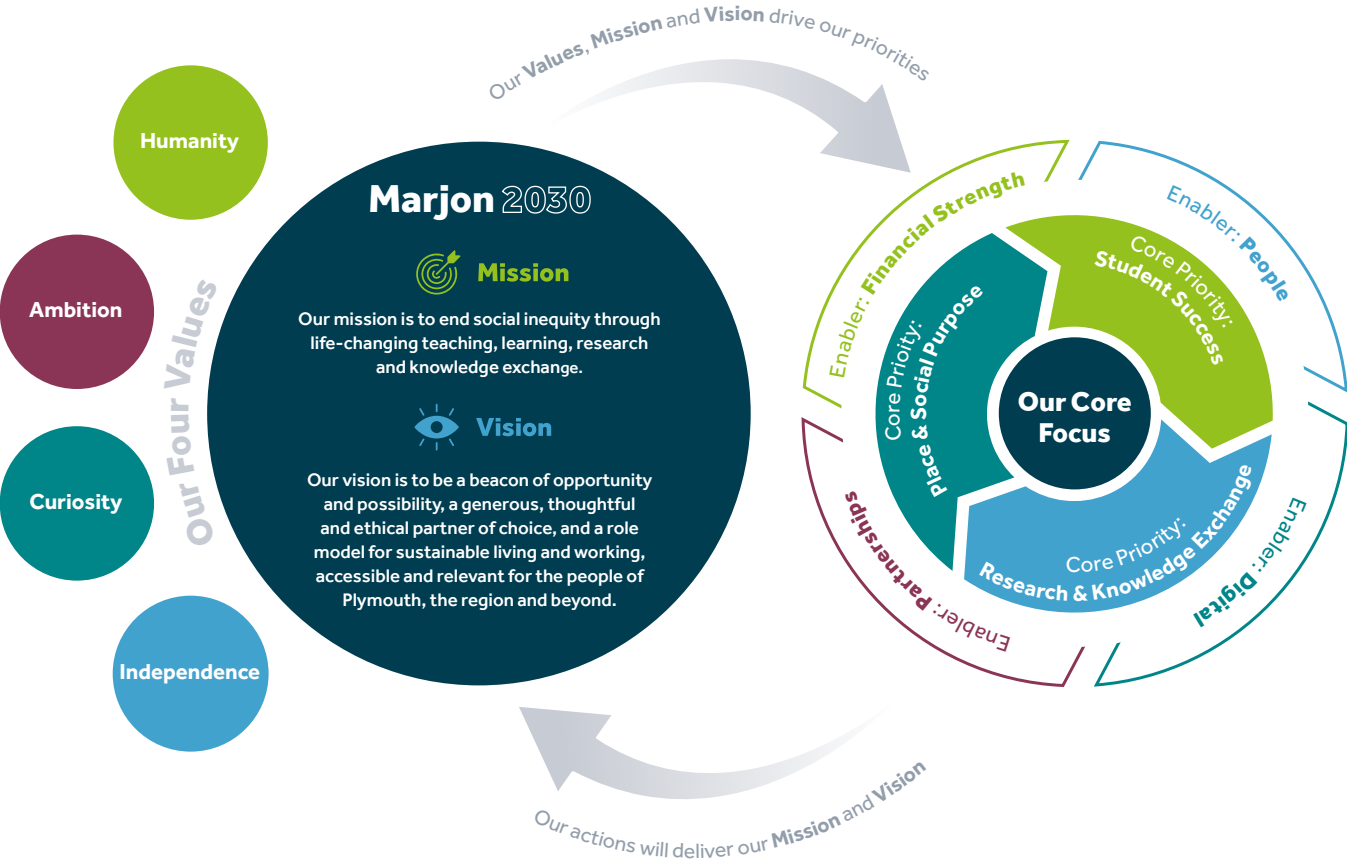


“ The lecturers are understanding, they’ll give you all the help and time you need, if you communicate with them. I always feel like there are people in my corner.

Ella, BSc (Hons) Sports and Exercise Science



Strategic Planning



Following wide consultation and Board approval, the Marjon 2030 strategy is now firmly embedded and is shaping and showcasing the University’s direction and ambition. Vice-Chancellor, Prof Claire Taylor and the Executive Leadership Team are moving the University forward with drive and agility. Reporting will reflect the core priorities of student success, research and knowledge exchange and place and social purpose, driven by its key enablers: people, digital, partnerships and financial strength.

You can read more here:
Inconvenient Excellence: the Case for Marjon 2030.

What did you find most rewarding about being on the Board?

“Interaction with other governors and the opportunity to learn about university governance. I think the Board operates really well.”

Staff Governor

Recent Developments



In November 2023, we launched the Marjon Doctoral College, marking a significant step forward in our commitment to research excellence. At the same time, we opened a new Postgraduate Research Hub, providing a dedicated space for study, collaboration, and community-building. Our research reputation was further recognised through our invitation to join the South West Doctoral Training Partnership (SWDTP). Our thriving PGR community spans Education, Sport, Health, and Business & Social Science.

Health and Wellbeing

In 2022 the University was successful in its bid for Office for Students’ (OfS) capital funding to create a new health and wellbeing hub to include community facing health and wellbeing clinic facilities, well-resourced specialist teaching spaces and a staff neighbourhood. This exciting project will be operational from November 2025.

The flagship Aspire programme, funded by Health Education England, offers funded places at Marjon for aspiring Learning Disability Nurses. The ‘Aspire’ programme is the first of its kind in England and is aimed at combating the decline in the number of registered professionals in this crucial field.

Sport and Physical Activity

Many of our Marjon students enjoy sport and physical activity whilst with us. Over 550 are members of our Marjon Sports Federation, playing for Marjon sports teams and overall 1,000 students are involved in playing, officiating or enjoying sport and physical activity at Marjon. We continue to welcome many members of the local community to campus each week with 2,200 members using our facilities.

“You become part of the community rather than just someone that nobody knows. So that was really special. I felt like I fitted in.”

Charley, MPsych (Integrated Master’s)
Psychotherapy and Counselling

Accolades and Surveys

Marjon has been recognised as delivering an exceptional student experience, building on the coveted Gold ranking in the Teaching Excellence Framework (TEF) 2023. Marjon was ranked in the top 10 in the 2025 Complete University Guide (CUG) and also in the top 6 in England for Complementary Medicine, following the recent introduction of a range of new health-related courses. The University was number 1 in the South West for Career Prospects at the 2024 WhatUni Student Choice Awards (WUSCAs). We are grateful to our students who consistently rate us so highly in a range of categories – and our colleagues who continue to offer such a thoughtful and positive experience.

Research

Marjon continues to demonstrate exceptional quality in its postgraduate provision. In the Postgraduate Research Experience Survey (PRES) 2024, the University achieved an excellent 87% overall satisfaction and 90% positive feedback on research skills development, placing Marjon in the top quarter of UK institutions.

Governance

The Board of Governors, comprising independent, staff and student governors and the Vice-Chancellor, plays a central role in the strategic development and overall performance of the University; primarily educational and financial.

It has ultimate responsibility for defining the institution’s mission, educational and research character, future direction, and for overseeing progress against the University’s strategic plan – raising aspirations, empowering people and transforming lives.

The Chair of the Board works closely with the University’s Vice-Chancellor. The Board operates through Board meetings and through a number of standing, and ad hoc, committees to ensure the necessary degree of support, challenge and oversight.

As the Chief Executive of the University, the Vice-Chancellor, reporting to the Chair of the Board, is a member of the Board of Governors and is responsible for the executive management of the institution, through the Executive Leadership Team, and for advising the Board on its strategic direction.

The Student Governor role is assigned to the President of the Marjon Student Union. There are three Staff Governor roles: two of these are for academic staff (one of whom is a member of Senate, the University’s academic board) and one for a member of the Professional Services staff.

The other members of the Board include individuals with a wide variety of backgrounds appointed on the basis of their understanding and commitment to the vision and values of the University, and enthusiasm about its development. Their insights and experiences and the independent and constructive advice that they can offer are invaluable.

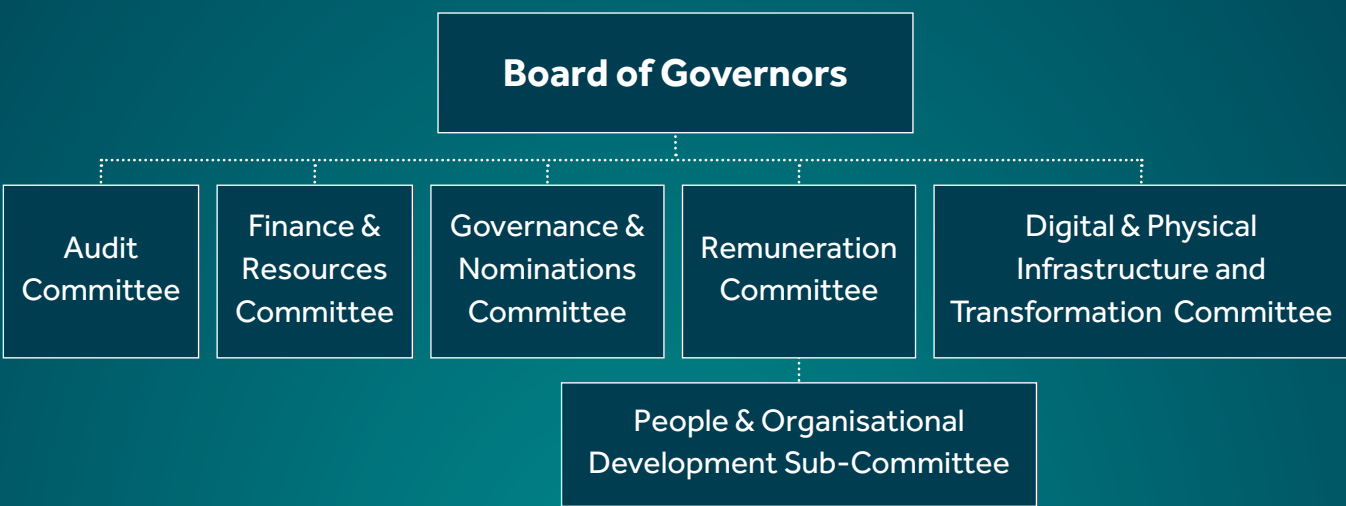
The University’s Chancellor is invited to attend Board meetings and receives Board paperwork. The University Chaplain and the Deputy President of the Marjon Student Union, are also invited to attend.

Further information on the Board is available via the University’s website [here](#) This includes the Board’s responsibilities, its constitutional document the Articles of Association, guidance set out in the Governors’ Handbook, key documents for information and profiles of current Board members. The University’s annual financial statements are also available via this link.

“ *I am always immensely proud seeing our students, and their friends and family, at graduation very much aware of the sometimes difficult journeys they have all been on and knowing that I have been a part of both the opportunity and their success.*

Governor, Member of the Board of Governors

Board Committee Structure



Executive Leadership Team

			
Professor Claire Taylor Vice-Chancellor and Chief Executive	Professor Michelle Jones Deputy Vice-Chancellor and Provost	Ann Holman Chief Operating Officer	Karl Smith Executive Director of Finance
<ul style="list-style-type: none">University strategy and leadershipCulture and ValuesGovernanceSector leadershipRegional and national external influence	<ul style="list-style-type: none">Academic Strategy, Planning and PartnershipsTeaching and LearningResearch and Knowledge ExchangeMarketing, Recruitment and AdmissionsStudent Success Services	<ul style="list-style-type: none">OperationsTransformationPeopleCampus and CommercialDigital, Data and TechnologyEnvironmental Sustainability	<ul style="list-style-type: none">FinanceProcurementStrategic Risk

The Role

Who we are looking for

We're looking for new Board members who would relish the challenge of steering Marjon's strategic ambitions. If you are keen to work collaboratively, to promote a positive and vibrant culture, we would love to hear from you. If you've participated in local community groups, panels, councils, unions, societies or committees, this is all valuable experience. You don't need to have been a Board member before to apply.

We value different experiences

The Board is committed to reflecting the communities and society we serve. We aspire to have a diverse group of Board Members who may have roots in the local community or may bring a perspective from further afield, and who share our commitment to equality, diversity and inclusion. We believe that true diversity makes us a stronger organisation, which is why we're interested in who you are. Your lived experiences and values are as important as your professional achievements.

To reflect our commitment to diversity and inclusion, we particularly welcome applications from people who:

- are aged 18-26
- identify as disabled or neurodivergent
- have a broad range of experiences of working life (you don't need a university degree to be a Board member)
- are ethnically diverse
- are from a working class background
- are LGBTQIA+

We are keen to work with you to make it easier for you to become a Board Member. We can make adjustments where needed, perhaps due to a disability or sensory impairment or with digital access.

About you and your expertise

We regularly review the areas of expertise we would ideally like to add to our Board, to reflect the University's direction of travel. The Board always includes people with financial expertise – this is because reviewing the financial position of the University and approving the annual accounts is one of the core responsibilities of the Board. However, it is not essential that you have experience in this area in order to apply. It's not essential to have experience of higher education either, although a number of our Board members do. On the contrary, we welcome applications from candidates from a wide range of sectors, with their own unique experience, who have the passion to make a difference to Marjon.

What the role entails

As a Board member, your discussions will focus on creating opportunities for our students, staff and the wider community. Most of the Board's work is carried out via meetings and discussion, normally with three full Board meetings and one Strategy Day on campus per year. As a new recruit, you would be supported via an induction programme, which could include being assigned a mentor.

Meetings tend to be held between 9am and 5pm. As a rough guide, taking into account Board meeting preparation (reading) and attendance and induction/ training, a new Board member would commit around 1 hour per week – with more hours needed if you joined a committee or took on a role with greater responsibility, such as being a Committee Chair.

Board members also make valuable contributions in other ways, through informal meetings with staff, by networking or by representing Marjon at events. We would ask you to be available by email, phone or video call at times if we needed to ask for your support.

Remuneration

Board members are not paid, this is a voluntary role – and we are grateful to Board members for their time and dedication. We realise that you may incur certain expenses, and we will reimburse your travel and accommodation costs (in line with the University's expenses policy), so that these are not a barrier to your application or to carrying out the role.

What's in it for you

Board members tell us that this is a really fulfilling role. Seeing the difference that Marjon makes to students, staff and the wider community is a true motivating factor. On a personal level, this role could help you to develop experience in collaborative working, expertise in governance and an understanding of the higher education sector. We try to ensure that Marjon's values – humanity, curiosity, ambition and independence – run through everything we do, to make this a rewarding and enjoyable place to volunteer.

Responsibilities of our Board

Everything done by Board members is done on behalf of the Board, with a collective responsibility for decisions. From time to time, matters are discussed in confidence, and Board members agree to respect this. The University's 'Articles of Association' set out the Board's duties – this document can be found on the governance pages of the [University website here](#). Although being a Board Member is an important responsibility, please rest assured that there is no personal legal liability (assuming you are acting in good faith).

Eligibility and Good Governance

The Board has a duty to make sure that its members are eligible, so we carry out some checks, in line with Company and Charity Law, for example around bankruptcy and criminal records and we will ask for a couple of references. We ask Board members to declare any potential conflicts of interest, and we provide advice and guidance around this – so that discussions and decisions are fair and transparent, to make the work of the Board as effective as possible.

Term of Office

External Board members are initially appointed for a three year term of office and may be invited to renew this – depending on the Board's priorities at that time. Staff Governors (who are elected) are also in post for three years and would be entitled to stand for re-election. The Student Governor position is for one year, tying in with the role of President of the Marjon Student Union.

Once on board

We look forward to meeting Board recruits and helping you to settle in. We will arrange an induction programme, introducing you to key people at the University, building up your knowledge of the sector and sharing a real sense of why Marjon is so special. We'll do our best to answer any queries you may have along the way, big or small and will be on hand to offer advice or support whenever you need it.

How to Apply

Please apply for a role on the Board of Governors by sending your full CV and a covering letter to the Chair of Governance & Nominations Committee: **governance@marjon.ac.uk**

The covering letter should set out your interest in joining the Board and how your knowledge, skills and experience match the role's requirements.

If you have any questions at all regarding the process or the role, please contact Governance Officer, Jessamie Thomas: **jthomas@marjon.ac.uk**

Thank you for your interest. We look forward to hearing from you.

“ My favourite thing about campus is the atmosphere. There's one great big family vibe, there's always someone around to talk to. You get to know people so quickly, just because you have something in common living on campus together, and I think that's fantastic.

Gee, BA (Hons) Special Educational Needs and Disability Studies

The South West is a spectacular place to study, live and work. Find out more about the area here:

