

Centred on Student Success

Marjon Growth Plan

2017-2021



Marjon Growth Plan

This growth plan addresses the critical developments for Marjon in the period from the implementation of the Higher Education and Research Act 2017 and the Teaching Excellence Framework (TEF) to the demographic upturn in 2021.

The plan addresses a wide range of issues in the life of the University, but does so under three key headings:

- 1. Proud to be Marjon**
- 2. Centred on Student Success**
- 3. Building a Vibrant Future**

This document is deliberately short, providing an ambitious direction of travel. Indicative rather than exhaustive, it will be supported where appropriate by a series of strategy and action documents, for example: personalised learning and retention; values in action; graduate careers; curriculum development; REF 2021 plan; estate redevelopment; estate utilisation; civic and business interface; collaborative provision and international.





**PROUD
TO BE
MARJON**

1. Proud to be Marjon

Our heritage

Our origins were 180 years ago in our foundation in London as an Anglican institution for training teachers. We have always been committed to the transformational power of education, ensuring that everyone with the ability to achieve through education can have the opportunity to succeed.

Our great heritage includes 180 years of values driven education, social mobility and social justice, a strong sense of an inclusive community and a personalised education for every student.

Our impact

We have a very proud tradition of personalised teaching excellence, which has been recognised in the award of TEF silver. We have a heritage of social transformation, and we are known as one of the leading universities for social mobility.

We are now working to increase our civic impact, our collaborations with business and the arts, and we are developing several centres of research excellence.

The 2017 research review demonstrated that we have an established research capacity on which we can build to strengthen our research environment, intensify our research outputs and deepen our research impact in preparation for a successful first submission in REF 2021.

Our student experience

We have been located in Plymouth since 1973, where our students and staff can thrive in the wonderful quality of life in the South West. With a stunning coastline, unspoilt countryside and the rugged beauty of Dartmoor on our doorstep, we also experience a city on the up, with a thriving arts scene, a rich variety of restaurants and pubs, and a business community that enjoys increasing growth and prosperity.

Our notable successes include outstanding sports facilities for elite athletes that can also be enjoyed by all students and staff, NHS-endorsed health and well-being clinics and programmes, highly praised actors and the top earning teachers in the South West and Wales five years after graduation.

The National Student Survey 2017 results reveal our students think the following about Marjon:

We provide an exceptional experience of a learning community, outstanding opportunities for teamwork in our degree programmes, with great encouragement to explore new ideas and concepts and stimulating opportunities to apply new learning in practice.

The Teaching Excellence Framework Panel 2017 emphasised in awarding silver to Marjon:

- ❖ the acquisition of knowledge, skills and understanding that are valued by local employers through extensive partnerships which provide access to professional settings and professional practitioners
- ❖ a personalised approach to delivery that promotes good engagement
- ❖ course design and assessment practices which provide scope for high levels of stretch
- ❖ significant investment in physical and digital resources used by students to further their learning

Given all that has already been achieved and all we are now working to achieve, we have every reason to be Proud to be Marjon.





CENTRED ON STUDENT SUCCESS

2. Centred on student success

For 180 years we have been bringing out the best in our students. We are absolutely committed to enabling every student to discover and fulfil their potential. For everyone who works at Marjon, student success will continue to be our number one priority. Renowned for being friendly and highly supportive, we do all we can to empower our students to succeed.

We will focus on three key areas:

- (i) Student success in their degree**
- (ii) Student success in their university experience**
- (iii) Student success in preparing for their future careers**



(i) Student success in their degree

We provide high quality learning and teaching opportunities, in well-equipped lecture rooms, with excellent IT equipment and software. Our lecturers deliver research-informed teaching and provide dedicated personalised learning and support for each student. Our lecturers peer observe one another's teaching to share best practice and encourage innovation. We listen carefully to student evaluations of our teaching and we are small enough to act quickly on students' suggestions. We make constant efforts to ensure the continuous enhancement of our learning and teaching.

For 2017-18 we have introduced a number of enhancements to support student success:

- ❖ We provide at the start of the academic year a personal development tutor for every student. Every academic and student is given a clear understanding of what is expected and available. We've long had personal tutors and academic advisors, but this redesigned approach is designed to enhance still further our academic and pastoral support, customised to each student's needs, interests and ambitions.
- ❖ We have undertaken a rigorous scrutiny of regulations and assessment schemes to ensure every student's success is fully rewarded and celebrated.
- ❖ Academics and professional service teams will work harder than ever to ensure that every student has the opportunity to develop digital confidence and global awareness in a world that is rapidly becoming ever more digital, automated and globalised.
- ❖ We will enhance the prompt return of informative and useful feedback on student assessments.
- ❖ We will ensure that all programmes are organised to the highest standards of professionalism, minimising in-year changes to the timetable and maximising excellent communication with students.
- ❖ Retention and good honours are critical metrics for academic quality monitoring and the TEF, and our performance is reported to the Academic Board and to the Governors' Academic Standards and the Student Experience Committee. We will continue to achieve annual enhancement in both these areas, working to exceed sector benchmarks.

We keep every aspect of teaching and assessment under review to ensure that 'centred on student success' is not just a strapline but an ethos that drives forward continuous enhancement in our academic provision. 'Centred on student success' is not just a priority for academics; every professional service is encouraged to consider how their work with students can reinforce this priority in action.

KPIs

1. Academic performance will be monitored throughout the year to ensure high expectations are fully met, through peer review and student evaluations.
2. NSS results will measure further enhancement of student satisfaction. We aim to enter the top 30 in NSS results by 2020.
3. Retention and good honours will continue to show improvement year on year. Retention will exceed sector benchmarks by 2020.

(ii) Student success in their university experience

A university education is much wider than a degree. We will provide a values-driven learning community in which we seek to support the holistic well-being of every student and staff member. We want our students to graduate as active and responsible citizens, with a commitment to social justice and an awareness of global responsibility for people and the environment.

We also seek to provide a rich variety of opportunities for students to explore new interests that can enrich their lives beyond graduation, through sport, the arts, volunteering in the community, developing business skills, working as student ambassadors, making fascinating international visits, enjoying great work placements and in as many other ways as students and staff can devise.



During 2017-18 we are introducing a number of new and enhanced opportunities:

- ❖ **A new student bar**
- ❖ **A state-of-the-art student hub for professional support services**
- ❖ **A 24-7 video games room**
- ❖ **An open-air cinema in the Quad**
- ❖ **New enhancements to volunteering, work placements and career coaching**
- ❖ **A refurbished music studio and photographic studio**
- ❖ **Upgrade to the Marjon Arts Centre**

We will use our newly launched initiatives around Marjon Values and Marjon Balance to promote an ethical, respectful and holistic approach to how we work with students and staff alike. At the same time, we will empower students to be innovative co-creators of the Marjon community.

KPIs

1. The new initiatives will run successfully in 2017-18.
2. Student social life on campus will become ever more vibrant, year by year.
3. Volunteering hours (student and staff) will continue to rise, year by year.
4. The Values and Balance initiatives will become established as integral parts of the Marjon community.



(iii) Student success in preparing for their future careers

A Marjon university education is designed to equip our graduates for successful careers: empowered for critical questioning, enterprising innovations and evidence-based solutions. Graduate employment will increasingly develop through a series of careers rather than a single lifelong pathway. Preparing for student success in the workplace therefore requires not just career readiness by graduation, but the strengthening of transferrable skills and an appetite for lifelong learning.

Employers increasingly look for soft skills:

Working in teams to achieve more together, respecting others, gender and equalities inclusivity, active listening, expressing empathy, demonstrating resilience and self-reinvention.

And employers also want evidence of power skills:

Critical thinking, openness to new ideas, complex problem solving, evidence-based reasoning, evaluating contradictory arguments, digital confidence and agility, operating without easy answers, writing and speaking in a clear and persuasive manner, decision-making grounded in carefully weighed options, coming up with unexpected questions and innovative solutions.



Our nation's future is in the hands of today's undergraduates

The Marjon Business School will offer enterprise and entrepreneurial training to all students, and the Enterprise and Employment Hub will empower students for successful graduate careers. Some students and recent graduates will start their own businesses and will receive hot desk and mentoring opportunities.

These soft and power skills are essential for a lifetime of effective and fulfilling employment and will be woven creatively into every Marjon programme. Forward-looking businesses look to young graduates to thrive in a rapidly changing world and bring into their workplace the transformative insights of the digital generation. Our country needs graduates who are not merely employed, but create new opportunities for work and wealth - for science and technology, culture and enterprise, health and well-being, sport and education. Our nation's future is in the hands of today's undergraduates; their task will be to deliver an up-skilled economy, world-leading innovations, strong productivity and prosperity in every UK region. And all of us need tomorrow's graduates to become the new guardians of liberal democracy, committed to social justice and resisting the insidious rhetoric of 'strong leaders' and fake news.

Students will be supported towards their future careers with an imaginative and engaging range of career resources, ranging from CV building to a positive online presence, from persuasive interview techniques to developing a compelling career plan.

Students also need to acquire the confidence and the ambition to operate effectively in a range of work settings; from a drinks reception to a formal meeting, we will provide the preparation to be confident, effective and successful. We will draw on the expertise of governors, business coaches, civic leaders and alumni to empower our students' future careers and provide role models of successful leaderships.

Preparing students to be confident, ambitious and successful

Marjon has a long history of working very closely with schools, and increasingly with multi-academy trusts, to enhance the future careers of our student teachers. We have also developed a far-reaching network of sport organisations and professional teams. Many schools across our region have head teachers and teachers who were trained at Marjon and many professional sports teams and local children and adults enjoy our renowned sporting facilities. In these ways we have made a major regional contribution for decades. But we are ambitious for more, working hard to add to these strengths the rapid growth of our health and well-being provision and also to generate equally influential networks with the business community, the professions and the arts.

KPIs

1. We will launch the Marjon Business School and the new Enterprise and Employability Hub in 2018.
2. Our networking of the business, sport and arts communities will generate new undergraduate degrees, work placements and career opportunities.
3. An imaginative range of events will be developed to enhance our students' career opportunities.
4. Our graduates' careers will continue to rise from strength to strength.
5. Students will be empowered with enterprise skills and some will be supported to start their own business.

The background is a solid maroon color. In the top-left corner, there are two parallel white diagonal lines. In the bottom-right corner, there are also two parallel white diagonal lines. A large, white-outlined rectangle is positioned in the upper-middle section. Below it, a white-outlined circle is partially visible, with its top edge cut off by the text. The text "BUILDING A VIBRANT FUTURE" is centered in a bold, white, sans-serif font. The word "BUILDING" is on the first line, "A VIBRANT" is on the second line, and "FUTURE" is on the third line. The text is partially overlaid by the white-outlined circle.

BUILDING A VIBRANT FUTURE

3. Building a vibrant future

New programmes to develop advanced skills for the region

Marjon will continue to build on our current strengths – Education, Sport, Health and Well-Being and the Arts – doing what we already do extremely well, but even better. And we will also diversify our strengths. Postgraduate numbers have begun to rise rapidly, and will continue to grow. Our programmes will be shaped by ambition, innovation and enterprise.

In 2017-18 we will launch a new Business School, emphasising the development of entrepreneurial skills and working with local businesses and in social enterprise. Marjon Business School will explore a summer school for pre-University students and Continuing Professional Development for Small and Medium-sized Enterprises.

We will build upon the national reputation of our acting programme with new programmes in musical theatre and commercial music. Marjon Arts will make full use of our two on-site theatres, our music studio and the quad as a superb open-air performance space. Marjon Arts will also seek to launch a range of children's performing arts clubs and summer schools, building on the longstanding success of our children's sports clubs. Marjon Journalism and Media will explore a dynamic new interface with Britain's world leaders in these professions.

Research

The 2017 research review has confirmed that Marjon is on-target to make a successful first REF submission in 2021. This is a major milestone in the rounded development of Marjon as a university. We will continue to invest in research active staff, to shape our research environment, to recruit PGR students, and to develop research impact. By 2021 we look to achieve not only success in the REF, but also to achieve RDAP.

Campus and community life

Marjon enjoys an extraordinary campus, with views of the sea and the moors. We are one of very few universities where a deer herd runs free. In 2018 we plan to upgrade the buildings around our Quad, and re-landscape the central green space. In 2019-20 we want to upgrade our halls of residence, in line with student expectations for contemporary living spaces. These building plans are ambitious but appropriate as Marjon builds a vibrant future.

Both the diversification of programmes and the redevelopment of our campus depend upon financial resilience. We will therefore ensure at all times rigorous financial planning and careful control of expenditure. We will pursue full utilisation of our assets through commercialisation of our buildings, on strict condition that there is never any compromise of our governing priority – centred on student success.

A strong future as a civic university



An innovative and enterprising civic university

We will continue to work to build a strong future as a civic university, recruiting students from across the region and the UK, and serving our city and region as a generator of future prosperity - economic, educational and cultural. We will strengthen regional partnerships in teaching, sport, health and well-being, business and the arts.

Growth in student numbers

This plan focuses upon building the quality of Marjon: the quality of teaching and research; the quality of our new programmes; the quality of our regional partnerships as a civic and enterprising university; the quality of our extra-curricular provision and career preparation; the quality of our campus and community life. As we build a vibrant future, centred on student success, we will increase our national and international reputation, increase our student numbers and increase our annual turnover.

We will work for growth in student numbers in six ways:

- ❖ **growth in existing programmes**
- ❖ **recruitment to new programmes**
- ❖ **increased retention**
- ❖ **growth in postgraduates**
- ❖ **growth in collaborative provision**
- ❖ **growth in international recruitment**

This strategic plan is grounded in the pursuit of excellence rather than growth as an end in itself. Consistent delivery of excellence across our provision will result in growth in student numbers and income, but every new initiative will be grounded in the same principle – the Marjon community - values driven, inclusive and enterprising - is centred on student success.



Marjon milestones 2018-21

Executive

- 2018 Appoint Chancellor
- 2018 Review possible appointment of Provost or DVC Academic

Finance

- 2018-21 Sustainable surplus

Estates

- 2018 Complete strategic review and implement the estates redevelopment plan, identifying preferred options

Metrics

- 2018-20 Achieve and sustain annual improvement in good honours and retention/completion
- 2019 Enter top 100 HEIs in league tables

Student numbers

- 2017-18 Publicity for launch of Marjon Business School, Marjon Arts
- 2017-18 Engage with degree apprenticeships
- 2018-19 Launch combined honours and new programmes, including professional doctorates
- 2018-19 Sustainable growth in student recruitment
- 2019-20 Launch further programmes
- 2020-21 Achieve 1000 students per cohort

Civic engagement

- 2017 Scope options with extensive networking
- 2018 Identify and launch initial business-facing degree programmes and business interface
- 2017-18 Develop Marjon as a strategic contributor in the civic arena and the industrial strategy, with local government, LEPs, DCBC, PABC, Chambers of Commerce etc

Marketing

- 2017-18 Sharpen Marjon's KPIs and develop enhanced open days
- 2018 Further enhancement of website
- 2018-20 Strengthen narrative of Marjon as a University that's always moving up

International

- 2018-19 Establish sustainable baseline for international recruitment

Research

- 2021 Make first REF submission and achieve RDAP

Student empowerment

- 2018 Students shape university policies as co-creators of Marjon community
- 2018-19 Students and staff redesign training for successful graduate employment



Marjon Values

Our Values are at the heart of everything we do.

They are inspired by our Anglican heritage and by our 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.



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Plymouth Marjon University is a trading name of the University of St Mark & St John