



Doctoral College

Postgraduate Research Handbook

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1. Introduction

This handbook is for postgraduate research (PGR) students registered for MPhil/PhD programmes at Plymouth Marjon University, accredited by the University of Chichester. Plymouth Marjon University supports research opportunities for postgraduates across four key research areas with significant staff expertise and resources: Business and Social Science, Sport and Exercise Science, Health and Wellbeing, and Education.

PhD students at Marjon are supported by the Doctoral College. Led by a senior member of academic staff, the Head of Marjon Doctoral College, it offers:

- Support and oversight of the PGR student journey, managing recruitment and key milestones for students in collaboration with the PGR coordinators and the Research Degree Scrutiny Panel
- A range of training and professional development opportunities for PhD students, including workshops, seminars, and funding for external training/ conferences
- Support and training for supervisors, examiners and independent chairs, as well as a supervisor forum to share ideas and experience
- Facilitation of collaboration and networking among PhD students and researchers across the university and beyond

The Doctoral College is available to provide further guidance and support for any other postgraduate research matters. You should also refer to [PhD Canvas](#) for all research degree forms mentioned in this handbook. Training opportunities and events can be found on the [PhD Zone](#) (My Marjon student portal). Other opportunities for researcher development are available through the Marjon Research and Knowledge Exchange Groups. Details of the groups are available here: <https://www.marjon.ac.uk/research/research-areas/> All students should be aligned with one of these groups – please contact the named convenor for further information.

Contact the Doctoral College: rke@marjon.ac.uk Tel. 01752 636700, Ext. 2069

See also: <https://www.marjon.ac.uk/research/postgraduate-research/>

Only appropriately qualified and prepared applicants will be admitted to study towards postgraduate research degrees. Applicants must demonstrate that they have the motivation and potential to complete a sustained piece of independent research and to produce a thesis that contributes to knowledge. For PhD programmes, applicants will normally be expected to have a relevant Master's qualification or equivalent – although it is possible to apply through the [South West Doctoral Training Partnership \(SWDTP\)](#) for Masters plus PhD funding. Marjon staff members who wish to apply for internal funding for doctoral study must contact the People Team for further information.

1.1 International Students

International students from countries where English is not the main language are required to demonstrate evidence of English language capability. Full details on postgraduate English language entry requirements can be found on our website. Previous study in an English-speaking institution (1 year +) may be sufficient to demonstrate English language capability. This is at the discretion of the relevant PGR coordinator.

See also: <https://www.marjon.ac.uk/courses/applying/english-language-requirements/>

International applicants requiring visa and immigration information should refer to our webpages. It is important that applicants obtain the correct visa for studying in the UK. It is the applicant's responsibility to apply for the correct visa prior to departing their home country.

International students who are sponsored through Tier 4 will have their attendance monitored through their scheduled meetings with their supervisors, which must be logged within the RD3b form (Section 3.1). Additionally, they will be required to re-register at Registry Services, when requested, where they will be asked to show their passport and visa and confirm UK contact details. Records of all meetings will need to be made available to Registry to be presented as evidence to UKVI if requested. The supervisor must also inform Registry if meetings are missed so that these occurrences can be recorded.

See: <https://www.marjon.ac.uk/courses/international/international-student-visas/>

1.2 Initial application process

Applicants should complete the **RD1a research degree enquiry form**. If there is scope to explore options for postgraduate research further, one of our PGR Coordinators will contact you.

Applicants will be requested to complete a **RD2a research degree application** and attend an interview.

Applications are assessed by Plymouth Marjon University Research Degrees Scrutiny Committee (RDSC) and the University of Chichester's Research Degrees Group (RDG). RDSC will take account of the field in which the applicant wishes to work, the availability of resources, the nature of current research strengths and the particular needs of the applicant.

Following successful approval by the RDSC & RDG (Research Degrees Group at University of Chichester), applicants will receive a formal offer letter to commence PhD studies.

Applications are accepted on a rolling basis throughout the year, but enrolment and induction take place on fixed dates in October and February (section 3.1). Applications should normally be submitted at least six months prior to the applicant's anticipated start date.

See also timeline here: <https://www.marjon.ac.uk/research/postgraduate-research/>

1.3. Duration of postgraduate degrees

Full-time PhD

Maximum period of study 4 years (48 months) Minimum period of study not less than 24 months

Part-time PhD

Maximum period of study 7 years (84 months) Minimum period of study not less than 36 months

Full-time MPhil

Maximum period of study 4 years (48 months) Minimum period of study not less than 12 months

Part-time Mphil

Maximum period of study 7 years (84 months) Minimum period of study not less than 24 months

Note: although the maximum period of study for a Mphil/PhD is 4 years (full-time), students

will only receive scholarships and/or doctoral loans (if applicable) for a maximum of 3 years which is the expected completion time. Students will need to complete a **RD6e Research degree extension to candidature application** and confirm financial arrangements if going beyond a 3-year period (full-time). Details on postgraduate research degree fees can be found via our website and will be confirmed within formal offer letters. Applicants can find information on the Government’s Doctoral Loan Scheme here: <https://www.gov.uk/doctoral-loan>.

2. Summary of a PGR life cycle

All forms and additional guidance documents listed below are available via [PhD Canvas](#).

| Form | Form code | Notes |
|---|-----------|--|
| Research degree enquiry | RD1a | Available via webpage . All applicants should complete an enquiry form. If there is scope to explore options for postgraduate research further, one of our PGR Coordinators will contact you. |
| Research degree application | RD2a | Applications are accepted on a rolling basis throughout the year, but enrolment and induction take place on fixed dates in October and February. RD2a to be completed by the applicant with a maximum of one supervision meeting with potential Director of Studies. |
| Research degree interview record | RD2b | Potential applicants will be invited to attend an interview. RD2d research degree interview guidance to be followed by interview panel. |
| Research degree supervision team approval | RD2c | If interview successful, supervisory team to complete in collaboration with Head of Doctoral College & Directors of School/line managers. RD2a,b,c to be reviewed by RDSC. |
| Research degree interview guidance | RD2d | Guidance to support the interview process. |
| Research degree academic needs analysis and induction checklist | RD3a | Student & supervisory team to complete at first student-supervisor meeting. Section 3.2. |
| Research degree supervision record | RD3b | To be completed during each supervisory meeting throughout candidature and stored on Teams. Record all training and events completed. Section 3.2 & Section 5. |

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| Research degree project approval | RD3c | First milestone during candidature. All students must complete this to continue their studies. This must be done within 3-6 months for full-time students and 6-12 months for part-time students. Section 3.3. |
| Research degree project approval scrutiny panel outcome | RD3d | Students will receive RD3d stating the outcome of their project approval. |
| Research degree annual review | RD4a | An annual review is completed once per year (unless undertaking major review). From January 2026 annual reviews will normally be scheduled between May and July. RD4c annual review guidance will be followed by supervisors, PGRCs and RDSC. Section 3.4. |
| Research degree major review | RD4b | Students must successfully undertake a major review normally within 2 years of a full-time PhD (usually within 4 years for part time students). RD4d major review panel guidance will be followed by supervisors, independent assessors and RDSC. Section 3.5. |
| Research degree annual review guidance | RD4c | Guidance to support the annual review process. Section 3.4 |
| Research degree major review guidance | RD4d | Guidance to support the major review process. Section 3.5 |
| Research degree intention to submit | RD5a | Students should complete and return this form approximately six months before submitting the final thesis for examination. Students not submitting within this timescale may experience delays in arrangement of the viva examination. Section 3.6. |
| Research degree examination arrangement | RD5b | To be completed by the Director of Studies ahead of submission of the thesis approximately six months prior to final submission. Section 3.6. |
| Research degree candidate declaration | RD5c | To be submitted along with the thesis. Section 3.6. |
| Research degree preliminary examination report | RD5d | The Doctoral College will receive a RD5d, completed by the approved examiners after having read the thesis submitted by the student. RD5f research degree examination guidance will be followed. Section 3.7 |

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| Research degree joint report and recommendations | RD5e | The Doctoral College will receive RD5e following the completion of the oral or alternative examination and the result of the examination as a whole. RD5f research degree examination guidance will be followed. Section 3.7 |
| Research degree examination guidance | RD5f | Guidance to support the examination process |
| Research degree change of supervision team | RD6a | Used to seek formal approval for changes to the supervisory team. Section 4.1. |
| Research degree suspension of studies application | RD6b | To apply for a temporary “time out” from studies (supported by personal or academic reasons). Section 4.2. |
| Research degree change of mode/award of study application | RD6c | Used to apply for a change of mode of study (i.e. full-time to part-time or vice versa) or change of award status from PhD to MPhil. Section 4.3. |
| Research degree nominal registration application | RD6d | In some circumstances students may be eligible to transfer to nominal registration (also known as ‘writing up’) towards the end of formal candidature. Nominal registration is free for up to six months (full time) or 12 months (part time). Section 4.4. |
| Research degree extension to candidature application | RD6e | Exceptionally used to apply for further time to formal candidature (supported by personal or academic reasons). Section 4.5. |
| Research degree probation status | RD6f | For instances where there are significant academic concerns and normal supervisory processes have failed to bring about improvements in progress. Section 4.6. |
| Research degree withdrawal | RD6g | To be completed in the event a student is withdrawing from studies. Section 4.7. |

Research degrees at Plymouth Marjon University are accredited by the University of Chichester and undertaken with adherence to their regulations and code of practice for such degrees. Further information can be found via the following links:

- [MyMarjon PhD Zone](#)
- [University of Chichester Higher Degree Regulations and Code of Practice for](#)

[Research Candidature and Supervision](#)

- [Plymouth Marion University Research Degree Scrutiny Panel Terms of Reference](#)

3. Milestones During PGR Student Life Cycle

3.1 Milestones timeframe

Important note: from January 2026 all annual reviews will take place between May-July. The annual review schedule in the below tables are valid through to the end of 2025.

Full-time – October entry

Year 1

| | | |
|------------------|----------|----------|
| Induction | October | 1 month |
| Project Approval | December | 3 months |
| Annual Review | June | 9 months |

Year 2

| | | |
|------------------------------|--|-----------|
| Preparation for Major Review | December (or 6 months before agreed Major Review date in Y2) | 15 months |
| Major Review | June (or agreed date in Y2) | 21 months |

Year 3

| | | |
|-----------------|-----------|-----------|
| Completion plan | March | 30 months |
| Annual Review | June | 33 months |
| Completion | September | 36 months |

Full-time – February entry

Year 1

| | | |
|------------------|----------|----------|
| Induction | February | 1 month |
| Project Approval | April | 3 months |
| Annual Review | October | 9 months |

Year 2

| | | |
|------------------------------|--|-----------|
| Preparation for Major Review | April (or 6 months before agreed Major Review dates in Y2) | 15 months |
| Major Review | October (or agreed date in Y2) | 21 months |

Year 3

| | | |
|-----------------|---------|-----------|
| Completion plan | July | 30 months |
| Annual Review | October | 33 months |
| Completion | January | 36 months |

Part-time - October entry

Year 1

| | | |
|-----------|---------|---------|
| Induction | October | 1 month |
|-----------|---------|---------|

| | | |
|------------------|-------|----------|
| Project Approval | March | 6 months |
| Annual Review | June | 9 months |

Year 2

| | | |
|------------------------------|---|-----------|
| Annual Review | June | 21 months |
| Preparation for Major Review | July (or 6-12 months before agreed Major Review date in Y4) | 22 months |

Year 3

| | | |
|--------------|-----------------------------|-----------|
| Major Review | June (or agreed date in Y4) | 33 months |
|--------------|-----------------------------|-----------|

Year 4 & 5

| | | |
|---------------|------|----------------|
| Annual Review | June | 45 & 57 months |
|---------------|------|----------------|

Year 6

| | | |
|-----------------|-----------|-----------|
| Completion plan | March | 66 months |
| Annual review | June | 69 months |
| Completion | September | 72 months |

Part-time - February entry

Year 1

| | | |
|------------------|----------|----------|
| Induction | February | 1 month |
| Project approval | July | 6 months |
| Annual Review | October | 9 months |

Year 2

| | | |
|------------------------------|---|-----------|
| Annual Review | October | 21 months |
| Preparation for Major Review | November (or 6-12 months before agreed Major Review date in Y4) | 22 months |

Year 3

| | | |
|--------------|-------------------------------------|-----------|
| Major Review | October or agreed date during Y4 | 33 months |
|--------------|-------------------------------------|-----------|

Year 4 & 5

| | | |
|---------------|---------|----------------|
| Annual Review | October | 45 & 57 months |
|---------------|---------|----------------|

Year 6

| | | |
|-----------------|---------|-----------|
| Completion plan | July | 66 months |
| Annual Review | October | 69 months |
| Completion | January | 72 months |

3.2 Induction

Enrolment and induction take place on fixed dates in October and February each year. You will be invited to attend a short induction meeting with the Doctoral College Administrator and participate in an induction on site led by one of the PGR coordinators.

You should arrange to attend an initial student-supervisor meeting with your full supervisory team as soon as possible. During this meeting you will complete **RD3a research degree academic needs analysis and induction checklist** and discuss your training needs and opportunities moving forward.

The following forms should be submitted to rke@marjon.ac.uk following the initial supervisory meeting (and within one month of enrolment):

- **RD3a research degree academic needs analysis and induction checklist**

You should complete **RD3b research degree supervision record** on an ongoing basis at all student-supervisor meetings and record any training you have completed. This should be saved in your PGR Microsoft Team which will be set up by the Doctoral College Administrator and shared with your supervision team. The Doctoral College reserves the right to monitor RD3b to ensure it is updated on an ongoing basis.

3.3 Project approval

All post-graduate research students must successfully complete **RD3c research degree project approval** to continue their studies.

The project approval should be completed within three months for full-time students and six months for part-time students and no later than six months for full-time students and 12 months for part-time students.

The project approval is normally 2500-3000 words and should include a background literature review, aims, an outline of your methodology and a plan of work. Ethical issues and Health and Safety should also be considered. Refer to the [Health and Safety policy](#) for details. RD3c should be completed by the student and signed by the full supervisory team prior to submission to the Doctoral College Administrator.

Note: Before submitting RD3c project approval, the PGR student and Director of Studies should check that the proposed plan of work is within the word-count of 2,500 to 3,000 (excluding any references).

The Doctoral College Administrator will then submit the project approval to the Research Degree Scrutiny Committee (RDSC) for consideration. Students will receive a copy of RD3d research degree project approval scrutiny panel outcome confirming the RDSC decision. Minor or major amendments may be requested by the RDSC.

It is expected that students will continue their studies, however, it is possible that the project approval is unsuccessful. Students will be given a second attempt to complete the project approval. If following the second attempt significant academic concerns are identified, the RDSC has the option to recommend a) a temporary probationary period (section 4.6) at the end of which the student would be required to successfully complete a project approval or b) the student is withdrawn from the postgraduate research programme (section 4.7).

Ethical issues

All research degree applications require review of ethical issues. Further details around the University Research Ethics Committee, forms and deadlines can be found via the [Research Ethics Canvas page](#). The supervisory team makes the first assessment of ethical issues relating to the proposed research, and the student completes an application for ethical approval which goes to the Research Ethics Committee. You should allow sufficient time for this process to take place.

The normal expectation is that the RD3c project approval form is approved, or approved subject to minor amendments, prior to an application for research ethics review being considered. However, we understand there will be cases where research ethics review is needed in advance of the project approval, e.g. for piloting or developmental purposes. In this case, supervisors are required to write to the ethics panel in support of the special circumstances, stating why the research ethics review is needed in advance of project approval and confirming that they have reviewed the ethics application prior to submission.

Complete the following form and submit to rke@marjon.ac.uk :

- **RD3c research degree project approval (2,500 to 3000 words)**

3.4 Annual review

All MPhil and PhD students (part & full-time) are required to complete an annual review of their progress.

For calendar year 2025, annual reviews will continue to take place in June for October starters and October for February starters, unless they have a Major Review scheduled for that year. Students returning from a suspension of studies should complete the annual review at the next available point (June or October), as long as they have returned to study for at least 3 months.

For calendar year 2026 and onwards, all annual reviews will take place between May and end of July. This includes students whose most recent annual review was in October 2025.

The aim of the annual review is to monitor the student's progress and experience so far that year and make plans for the year ahead. The student should complete the RD4a research degree annual review form and the RD3b Supervision Record as well as sending some supporting information about their recent research progress (e.g. brown bag/research seminar presentation slides/ chapter draft). The forms cover basic student and supervisor details (recording any changes) and other important information such as frequency of meetings, training received, and a concise plan of action for the coming year.

Before the Annual Review

It is the responsibility of the student and Director of Studies to organise the annual review meeting. The student is expected to submit the forms (RD3b & RD4a) and the supporting information to the full supervisory team and relevant PGR coordinator at least two weeks ahead of the annual review meeting.

During the Annual Review meeting

The annual review panel should consist of the student, full supervisory team and PGR Coordinator. The annual review meeting should be no longer than one hour in length.

The meeting will:

- Involve consideration of the research student's academic progress
- Provide an opportunity for the research student to present their work and achievements for the year
- Provide feedback to the research student on their research, personal development and performance
- Set clear goals for the coming year's study
- Support supervisors and students to maintain and develop a dynamic research community
- Consider the likelihood of the research student completing the thesis within the required time limit.
- Consider any particular problems encountered by the research student, (e.g., access to resources or facilities or other additional disability-related or language support requirements).

Following the Annual Review meeting

The Director of Studies should submit the completed RD3b & RD4a to the Doctoral College Administrator for submission to Research Degree Scrutiny Panel (RDSC).

It is expected that students will continue their studies. However, it is possible that significant academic concerns are identified as part of the annual review, invoking the policy for addressing such concerns. The RDSC also has the option to recommend the student transfer to the MPhil programme from a PhD programme.

The following forms should be submitted to rke@marjon.ac.uk following the annual review meeting:

- **RD3b research degree supervision record**
- **RD4a research degree annual review**

3.5 Preparation for Major Review

PGR Students and Directors of Studies should arrange a Preparation for Major Review meeting, well in advance of the Major Review milestone: 6 months in advance for full-time students and 6-12 months in advance for part-time students. The aim of the preparatory meeting is to check the student has an understanding of the major review requirements and is prepared for the assessment point.

The full supervision team should be in attendance, and the meeting should be recorded in the RD3b supervision team record, clearly labelled 'Preparation for Major Review meeting'.

During the Preparation for Major Review meeting the following points should be covered:

- **Major Review draft work** Students should send a draft of the written work they intend to submit for Major Review to their supervisors before the Preparation for Major Review meeting so they can be given formative feedback before the formal Major Review submission point. If work is not made available before this meeting, the student and supervision team should agree on the draft Major Review work to be produced, and a deadline which provides adequate time for feedback before the formal Major Review submission.
- **Independent Assessor (IA).** The student and supervision team should discuss a suitable IA, avoiding any conflicts of interest. The IA should be a member of academic staff who has had no direct involvement in the student's research. PGRCs should not act as the IA for students they coordinate. For a list of current assessors, contact rke@marjon.ac.uk. In exceptional circumstances, the Chair of the Research Degrees Scrutiny Group may approve an independent assessor external to the University e.g. when the relevant subject expertise is not available within the University. To request an external assessor, the Director of Studies should provide a brief rationale outlining why an external assessor is required rather than an internal member of staff. The rationale should be emailed to rke@marjon.ac.uk, with a link to the assessor's profile or CV, for approval by the Chair of RDSC. Please note, external independent assessors are not paid for this role – it is undertaken on a pro bono basis.

- **Major Review Date** A suitable date for the major review should be organised with all parties by the Director of Studies. For help with room bookings, contact rke@marjon.ac.uk. Once the date of the Major Review is set, the summative assessment deadline will be four weeks in advance of the Major Review. The PGR student and Director of Studies should inform the Doctoral College Administrator of the Major Review date and the summative assessment deadline. If this summative assessment deadline cannot be met, the student will need to apply for extenuating circumstances.

3.6 Major Review

All students enrolled for a PhD at Marjon, are required to successfully complete **RD4b research degree major review**. The major review is a formal assessment point which includes a substantive review of progress by a member of Marjon staff who has not been involved in supervision of the student, against the criteria outlined below. For full-time students the major review will normally take place in the 2nd year of candidature. For part-time students the major review will normally take place between the 3rd or 4th year of candidature

Before the Major Review

- It is the responsibility of the Student & Director of Studies to organise the major review meeting. They should inform the Doctoral College Administrator of the Major Review date and the summative assessment deadline.
- The student must submit RD3b & RD4b and a portfolio of academic work (see below) to the full supervisory team and independent assessor at least four weeks ahead of the major review meeting (cc rke@marjon.ac.uk). Once the Major Review meeting is set, this date (4 weeks in advance) becomes a summative assessment deadline and should be adhered to unless the student submits extenuating circumstances. Information about the extenuating circumstances policy can be obtained from the Doctoral College Administrator.

As part of the Major Review, the student should submit a portfolio of academic work/draft chapters (around 15,000-20,000 words) which would typically include:

- An overview of the research problem and rationale for the project;
- A substantial literature review;
- Well-developed plans for data collection and analysis and/or practice as research equivalents such as draft chapters and other significant pieces of work which contribute to the thesis objective.

During the Major Review meeting

The Major Review meeting includes the student, the full supervisory team and an independent assessor. The independent assessor (IA) should be a member of academic staff who has had no direct involvement in the research. Please note that PGR coordinators cannot be the IA, if they are the coordinator for the student.

The meeting will:

- Assess the portfolio of work in the context of the criteria for Major Review (led by independent assessor, discussion with all panel members)
- Provide an opportunity for the research student to present their work and achievements for the year
- Involve consideration of the research student's academic progress and gauge the feasibility of completion within the timescale allocated
- Provide an opportunity for the student to raise any issues about their research experience
- Provide feedback to the research student on their research, personal development and performance
- Support supervisors and students to maintain and develop a dynamic research community

The major review meeting should be no longer than two hours in length.

To pass the major review, the following criteria must be met (University of Chichester Higher Degree Regulations Code of Practice for Research Candidature and Supervision):

- a) the research student must have demonstrated the ability to manage the research project, to become proficient in the special field of research involved, and to achieve success at PhD level given adequate motivation and perseverance;
- b) the project being undertaken is of sufficient scope, originality and theoretical interest to constitute a genuine contribution to the subject in the form of the understanding of a problem, the advancement of knowledge or the generation of new ideas.

Following the Major Review meeting

A recommendation from the Major Review panel must be made to RDSC. The recommendation should be supported by all members of the Major Review panel. The Director of Studies should submit the completed RD3b & RD4a to the Doctoral College Administrator for submission to the Research Degree Scrutiny Committee (RDSC).

Research students who have been successful in passing their Major Review should receive written feedback on the review process highlighting, where appropriate, areas of particular strength as well as any potential areas of concern or development.

If the recommendation is not to pass the Major Review, the research student must be given a written report giving a statement of the reasons, guidance regarding any ways in which they might reach the required standard, and a date for a second Major Review meeting when the recommendation might be reviewed. If the student should fail the Major Review at the second attempt, they will either be transferred to the MPhil programme or have their registration terminated. The research student may appeal against the decision by using the procedure set out in the University Academic Regulations.

The following forms should be submitted to rke@marjon.ac.uk following the major review meeting:

- **RD3b research degree supervision record**
- **RD4b research degree major review**

3.7 Submission of thesis and viva examination arrangements

Thesis submission and viva examinations will be completed in line with the RD5f research degree examination guidance, Plymouth Marjon University Student Regulations Framework and University of Chichester Higher Degree Regulations. Students are strongly recommended to review the degree regulations mentioned well ahead of submission. It should be noted that supervisory team support to submit a thesis does not guarantee a successful PhD outcome.

A thesis may be submitted at any time of the year, but students must submit a **RD5a research degree intention to submit** approximately six months before submitting the final thesis. In the event a student goes on to submit their thesis later than originally intended, they must keep their supervisory team informed of this. A delay is acceptable subject to the formal time limits of the degree (section 1.3).

Alongside form RD5a, the Director of Studies must submit the **RD5b research degree examination arrangement form in order to nominate the examiners**. For each student, normally one internal and one external examiner shall be appointed to examine the thesis. For all Marjon staff examinations, two external examiners and an independent chair shall be appointed.

The DoS is responsible for the initial approach of possible examiners for the thesis examination and oral (viva-voce) examination. Nominations for examiners should meet the requirements of the University of Chichester Code of Practice for Research Candidature and Supervision, for example, in terms of the independence, expertise and experience of the examining team. The Examiners collectively are normally required to have already examined three theses: please refer to the University of Chichester Higher Degree Regulations. An examination cannot be arranged until approval has been given for the nominated examiners.

A student may submit an **RD5a**, and subsequently their thesis, without their supervisors' approval or support. However, it is strongly recommended that a student only submits with the full support of the supervisory team.

The thesis should be submitted as a single electronic file (PDF or word version).

When submitting the thesis, students should complete **RD5c research degree candidate declaration** and submit to rke@marjon.ac.uk

Word length

A PhD thesis may not exceed 80,000 words in length, or 50,000 words for an MPhil thesis. The word count excludes any appendices, bibliography or additional material. Where appropriate, the RDSC may approve a recommendation from the supervisor for a higher word count. Approval for a higher word count should be sought prior to submitting the RD5a.

Thesis specifications

Please refer to the [University of Chichester Higher Degree guidance, page 26](#) for information on how your thesis should be presented. A printed copy is not required.

Research integrity

As a PhD student, you are responsible for the content of your thesis, including ensuring that you have not plagiarised someone else's work or made inappropriate use of generative AI (e.g. asking ChatGPT to generate content). For more guidance on risks and benefits of using AI in your research, please see our 'Guidance on use of Generative AI in your PhD at Plymouth Marjon University' which is available on PhD Canvas.

Students must submit an electronic copy of their thesis via Turnitin, available through PhD Canvas. The Doctoral College Administrator will contact Digital Innovation upon receipt of RD5a research degree intention to submit to add the student to the relevant Turnitin assignment.

Following submission, the student should send the Turnitin report to their Director of Studies. The Doctoral College Administrator will only forward the electronic thesis to the external examiner on confirmation that the Director of Studies has reviewed the Turnitin report. Should the thesis require re-submission 12 months after the first Viva examination, the electronic copy of the thesis will need to be checked by submission to Turnitin again.

Students who have both a staff and a student University IT account should take great care that all work that they submit is through the same account as Turnitin discounts similarities between texts that the account holder has previously submitted.

Students can submit their work for plagiarism checking prior to final submission. You can find this service via CANVAS. Please note that this service has been set up for students to submit chunks of work rather than the full theses.

Embargo

Should the thesis be of a particularly sensitive nature, it will not be made publicly available in the University. Although it will be kept in store at the library, in this instance the author will have to provide permission if the thesis is to be made available to anyone else. Students must indicate if an embargo is required when submitting their thesis (RD5c research degree candidate declaration). Students may request either full or partial embargoes that would permit access to the abstract only, or the use of appendices to embargo only sensitive sections of a thesis. Titles of embargoed theses will be reported to the Research Degrees Scrutiny Committee for onward notification to the University of Chichester RDG.

The normal maximum embargo period is two years. After this period, the restriction may be extended in some circumstances, subject to approval by the RDSC. The Doctoral College Administrator will confirm any approved embargo periods with the University Library when submitting awarded PhD/MPhil thesis for publication.

Copyright

Under the terms of the agreement, the student is required to give assurances that the necessary authorisations have been sought and are evidenced should third party material be used. Students should ensure that they have considered the copyright status of any third-party material included in their thesis. The Intellectual Property Office (<http://www.ipo.gov.uk/>) provides up to date advice on copyright law. The University Library can also give guidance on copyright matters.

When submitting the thesis, students should complete the following form and submit to rke@marjon.ac.uk: **RD5c research degree candidature declaration**

3.8 Viva

A thesis may be submitted at any time of the year, but students must submit a **RD5a research degree intention to submit** approximately six months before submitting the final thesis. Alongside this, the Director of Studies must submit **RD5b research degree examination arrangement**. This is usually around the point at which a full first draft of the thesis is submitted to supervisors. In the event a student goes on to submit their thesis later than originally intended, they must keep their supervisory team informed of this. A delay is acceptable subject to the formal time limits of the degree (section 1.3).

The Doctoral College Administrator will arrange for your thesis to be forwarded to the examiners and will coordinate the submission of **RD5d research degree preliminary examination reports**. The Doctoral College Administrator will advise you when to attend your viva examination. This normally takes place approximately three months after you have submitted to allow sufficient time for the examiners to review the thesis.

For each student, normally one internal and one external examiner shall be appointed to examine the thesis. The viva will normally be chaired by an Independent Chair. However, when this is not possible either the internal or external examiner, by agreement between them, may chair the viva. For all staff examinations, two external examiners and an Independent Chair will be appointed. Students can request to have one supervisor attend their viva as an observer only. Supervisors in attendance cannot contribute to the discussion.

The viva examination is expected to take place in person. If there is a request to hold the viva online, from the student or examiner, the Director of Studies should provide a justification on the RD5b examinations arrangements form.

Students are encouraged to attend relevant training sessions in preparation for their viva, as part of the Researcher Developer Series (section 5.2) and also through these resources, produced as part of a QAA project in the UK - <https://gradschool.southwales.ac.uk/current-postgraduate-research-students/preparing-viva-materials/>

3.9 Post viva

Following the viva, the examination panel will submit a **RD5e research degree joint report and recommendation** to the Doctoral College. This will be completed in line with RD5f research degree examination guidance.

The examining body may recommend one of the following outcomes*:

- a) That the degree of MPhil / PhD (as applicable) be awarded
- b) That the degree of MPhil / PhD (as applicable) be awarded subject to certification of minor amendments (within three months of student receiving formal notification of the outcome)
- c) That the degree of MPhil / PhD (as applicable) be awarded subject to certification of major amendments (within six months of student receiving formal notification of the outcome)
- d) That the student be required to attend a further oral examination
- e) That the student be permitted to submit a revised thesis for re-examination (including re-viva) for the same degree on one subsequent occasion (within 12 months of student receiving formal notification of the outcome)
- f) That, in the case of PhD, the student be advised to submit thesis for re-examination for the degree of MPhil
- g) That the degree be not awarded and the re-submission of the thesis is not permitted

*resubmissions that require a reexamination will incur a resubmission fee to cover the costs of the reexamination. The fee will be advised by the Doctoral College.

If outcome a) is received, the Doctoral College Administrator will submit the RD5e to the Progression Awards Board and the University of Chichester's Examinations Award Board. Once the award is approved, the Doctoral College Administrator will liaise with registry, student finance, report to RDSC and inform the student of the outcome.

If outcome b – g listed above are advised, the Doctoral College Administrator will inform the student and provide feedback from the examination panel including the required amendments and timescale as appropriate.

3.10 Date of award and graduation

Graduation ceremonies take place in October. Your award is dated from the time of approval of the award by RDSC. Students will be invited to attend the next scheduled graduation ceremony to receive their award. Students can request for their certificate to be sent via post if they are unable to attend the graduation ceremony.

See also: <https://www.marjon.ac.uk/student-life/graduation/>

4. Changes during postgraduate research degrees

Refer to PhD Canvas for access to the research degree forms below. All changes during postgraduate research degrees should be discussed with your supervisory team in the first instance. Contact the Doctoral College Administrator for any queries on these processes.

4.1 Change of supervision team

Various reasons may lead to a need to change one or more members of the supervisory team. This process can be initiated from a student or supervisor's perspective and should be discussed within the student-supervisory team in the first instance.

The PGR Coordinator will liaise with the student and the Doctoral College Administrator to complete **RD6a research degree change of supervision** team. Formal approval for changes will be sought via RDSC & RDG. The Doctoral College Administrator will confirm the outcome with the student & supervisory team.

4.2 Suspending studies

In the event that a student wishes to take time out from their studies, they should complete a **RD6b research degree suspension of studies application**. The Doctoral College Administrator will coordinate a supervisory team recommendation, report to RDSC & RDG, liaise with registry and student finance and confirm the outcome with the student. During suspension of studies, PGR students will not receive any supervision. Students who take a suspension cannot

be guaranteed that the same supervision team will be available on their return.

4.3 Change of mode or award of study

Due to academic or personal reasons, a student may apply for a change of mode of study (i.e. full-time to part-time or vice versa). In some circumstances, this may be a temporary change.

A student enrolled on the PhD programme may change to complete the MPhil award only. The RDSC also has the option to recommend the student transfer to the MPhil programme, particularly if the student does not pass major review (section 3.4).

To apply for a change of mode or award of study the PGR student should submit a **RD6c research degree change of mode/award of study application**. The Doctoral College Administrator will coordinate a supervisory team recommendation, report to RDSC & RDG, liaise with registry and student finance and confirm the outcome with the student.

4.4 Transfer to nominal registration

In some instances, subject to meeting the below criteria, a student may be eligible to transfer to nominal registration for a set period of time. This stage of the postgraduate research degree is often known as 'writing up'. To apply for nominal registration, students should complete a **RD6d research degree nominal registration application**. This should be submitted at least six months before the end of a student's study term. The Director of Studies must support the **RD6d** application.

To apply for nominal registration, the following criteria must be met (University of Chichester Higher Degree Regulations):

- a. That the minimum period of candidature for either the MPhil or PhD has been completed;
- b. Major Review (for PhD) has successfully taken place;
- c. Research is substantially complete, and the thesis is in the process of being written up.

A student returning from suspension of studies may not transfer to nominal registration until at least two months after their return to study.

The Doctoral College Administrator will coordinate the supervisory team recommendation, report to RDSC and the University of Chichester RDG and liaise with student finance and registry. The outcome of the application will be confirmed with the student.

The Nominal Registration Fee (writing up fee) is payable after six months from the date of transfer to nominal registration for full time students (twelve months for part time). If the candidate submits a thesis before this date, the fee will not be payable. The current writing up fee can be found here <https://www.marjon.ac.uk/courses/fees-and-funding/>. Contact the Doctoral College for further details. If, after the free nominal registration period, no thesis has been submitted, a student wishing to continue in candidature should seek the approval of the RDG via the Doctoral College Administrator.

4.5 Extension to studies

An extension to the maximum duration of studies (outlined in section 1.3) may be agreed in exceptional circumstances. Students should note that although the maximum period of study for a MPhil/PhD is 4 years (full-time), students will only receive scholarships and/or doctoral loans (if applicable) for a maximum of 3 years. Students will need to complete a **RD6a Research degree extension to candidature application** and confirm financial arrangements if going beyond a 3-year period (full-time). This should be submitted at least six months before the end of a student's study term.

The Doctoral College Administrator will coordinate a supervisory team recommendation, report to RDSC & RDG, liaise with registry and student finance and confirm the outcome with the student.

4.6. Probationary status

The general principle is that issues relating to unsatisfactory progress are resolved at a local level by the supervisory team with the involvement of the PGR coordinator and without recourse to the formal probationary process outlined in University of Chichester Higher Degree Regulations Appendix 4. In some circumstances, however, where there are significant

academic concerns and normal supervisory processes have failed to bring about improvements in progress, the RDSC may recommend a probationary status period. This process could be instigated through formal monitoring points such as project approval, annual review or major review or by concerns raised by the PGR Coordinator for instance because a student has not engaged with supervisors.

In cases where significant concerns are raised, the student and chair of RDSC should be notified. If the chair of RDSC is satisfied the concerns are significant and have not been able to be resolved through normal supervision then the student will be placed on probation and the procedures for supporting students in circumstances that may lead to withdrawal or termination will be commenced (as outlined in the University of Chichester Regulations for Higher Degrees Appendix 4: Research Degree Candidature: Procedures for Circumstances that may lead to Withdrawal or Termination). The Doctoral College Administrator will commence completion of **RD6f research degree probation form**.

4.7 Withdrawing from studies

In the event that a student wishes to withdraw from their studies, they should complete a **RD6g research degree withdrawal**. The Doctoral College Administrator will coordinate a supervisory team recommendation, report to RDSC & RDG, liaise with registry and student finance and confirm the withdrawal process with the student.

Students in receipt of any scholarship or bursaries should refer to the full terms and conditions prior to submitting the RD6g.

In some circumstances, where there are significant academic concerns identified either as part of the probational period, project approval, annual review or major review, the RDSC may recommend a student withdraw. In this case, the Doctoral College Administrator will complete RD6g.

4.8 Appeals and complaints

In the first instance, students should speak to a member of their supervisory team if they have any concerns about their progress or if there are difficulties with working relationships and practices that are obstacles to progression. If the student feels uncomfortable discussing concerns with their supervisory team, they may contact the Doctoral College Administrator and/or PGR Coordinator.

All endeavours will be made to resolve any complaints informally and in confidence in the first instance. If these efforts are unsuccessful, or if a student wishes to appeal against a recommendation by the Examiners not to confer an Award, students should refer to the formal procedures set out in Plymouth Marjon University Students Regulations Framework.

Once the University's internal procedures are exhausted, students have the further right to make a formal complaint to the University of Chichester, as per the University of Chichester Higher Degree Regulations.

4.9 Student feedback

Students may provide feedback on their experience of research studies in a number of ways, primarily through the annual review meetings with PGRCs, the annual postgraduate research experience survey (or its equivalent), PGR fora, or informally via coffee chats with Doctoral College staff. The Doctoral College is always open for visits and queries from students who require information about their research degree programme.

A PGR student representative, nominated by the PGR students, can be contacted to raise any suggestions or generic issues on behalf of the PGR student body. Prior to Research & Knowledge Exchange Committee meetings, the PGR student representative is encouraged to hold informal gatherings to allow students to raise any points that they might have.

5. Training and development

The training needs of each individual student are discussed at the outset of studies during the initial student-supervisory meeting and a plan of training needs should be recorded on **RD3a research degree academic needs analysis and induction checklist**. Training needs should be discussed in line with the [Vitae Researcher Development Framework](#) [OBJ10B].

You should continue to discuss any training requirements with your supervisory team throughout your studies. A full training review forms part of the annual and major review process (section 3).

All completed training and development (completed internally or externally) should be recorded on **RD3b research degree supervision record**, which will be submitted to your supervisory team and the Doctoral College on an annual basis as part of the annual and major review process. Research Degrees Scrutiny Committee reserves the right to call for the RD3b, RD4a and RD4b. It is the student's responsibility to ensure that their Director of Studies is aware of the training activities they have undertaken.

Details of training opportunities provided by the Doctoral College can be found via the [PhDZone](#). Students, with their Director of Studies' support, can apply to undertake external training opportunities as part of their PGR student development (section 5.4).

5.1 Researcher Development Series

Research & Knowledge Exchange coordinates a Researcher Development Series to provide a wide range of training workshops and events. Training workshops typically include NVivo, academic writing skills, statistics and writing research bid applications. MPhil & PhD students are also welcome to attend the MRes seminars and lectures to support their studies. PGR students are also eligible to attend most South West Doctoral Training Partnership seminars and events: <https://www.swdtp.ac.uk/events/>

Check the RKE Professional Development Opportunities brochure for details: [PhDZone](#)

5.2 Research seminar series

The Research Seminar series is an opportunity for postgraduate research students and staff to present their research and gain feedback within an informal setting. All MPhil & PhD students are encouraged to attend the Research Seminar series and to present at least once. RKE will contact PhD students to arrange a presentation date or you can contact rke@marjon.ac.uk.

Check the RKE Professional Development Opportunities brochure for details: [PhDZone](#)

5.3 Postgraduate certificate in Academic Practice

For information relating to the University's Advance HE (formerly the Higher Education Academy, HEA) accredited Postgraduate Certificate in Academic Practice (PGCAP), contact Prof. Jennie Winter (jwinter@marjon.ac.uk). Fees will be applicable for self-funded PGR students. There is a fee waiver for PGR students who are required to teach as a condition of their studentship. Refer to the studentship Terms and Conditions for details.

5.4 PGR development budget

As a post-graduate research student, you have demonstrated a commitment to enquiry through your research. The post-graduate research student development budget is aimed at supporting you to develop as a researcher. The PGR development budget covers a wide remit of professional research-related knowledge aligned to the . You will be asked to indicate which domains of the researcher development framework are addressed by the development requested. The guidance for getting started in research might be a useful reference point. Taking responsibility for your own professional development will help you improve your self-awareness and make the most of opportunities. Successful researchers engage in continuous professional development to ensure they are always learning and improving. PGR staff members in receipt of a fee waiver should request professional development through the People Team – [Learning and Development form](#). Please note PGR students in nominal registration are not normally entitled to the development budget.

What can the development budget be spent on?

The development budget can be spent on any development that aligns to the [Researcher Development Framework](#); examples are listed in Table 1. Across all applications you are advised to demonstrate how their proposed benefits will support the broader post-graduate student community and research environment of Marjon for instance by holding a seminar after the event to report lessons learned to peers.

Table 1: *Examples of development activities aligned to the researcher development framework (these are just examples, please familiarise yourself with the framework to ensure alignment between your activities and the framework).*

| | |
|------------------------------------|---|
| <p>Researcher</p> | <p>Personal and professional values and behaviours</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Personal effectiveness workshops e.g. time management • Writing retreats |
| <p>Research</p> | <p>Knowledge and skills to undertake research and deliver outcomes:</p> <p>Knowledge and practice</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Research methods training courses • Accessing specific subject knowledge modules <p>Research management</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Health and safety/technical related training • Funding and grant training • Publication costs <p>Engagement and impact</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Conferences and/or public engagement activities • PG Certification Learning and Teaching |
| <p>Research Communities</p> | <p>Knowledge and skills to engage and work with others:</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Post-graduate student networks, workshops and summer school |

How do I make an application?

Applications to access the postgraduate student development budget should be made using the **PGR student development request form** available on [MyMarjon PhD Zone](#). The development form should be signed by the Director of Studies and submitted to rke@marjon.ac.uk for approval by RDSC.

The details

From 1 August 2024, PGR students can apply for up to a maximum of £1,500 over the course of their PhD, with a maximum of £600 in any one year. Requests for more than £300 are unlikely to be approved prior to successful completion of the Major Review.

5.6 PGR consumables budget

The Doctoral College has a small budget to cover the cost of consumable items that are integral to the completion of the applicant's PhD. If you wish to make a bid to purchase consumables via this budget, please complete the **PGR student consumables bid form** available via the [PhD Zone](#). Please note students in nominal registration are not normally entitled to consumables funding.

Applications are accepted on a monthly basis. For deadline dates, contact rke@marjon.ac.uk. Your bid will be considered by the Research Degrees Scrutiny Committee and you will receive a decision within 10 days of the meeting.

6. Guidance on the Student-Supervisor Relationship

The quality of the student-supervisor relationship is critical to the success of doctoral studies. The following section describes the roles and responsibilities of the student and supervisor and the expectations of both parties in maintaining this relationship and ensuring an excellent student experience.

You should complete RD3b Research degree supervision record on an ongoing basis at all student-supervisor meetings and record any training you have completed. You will be requested to submit an updated RD3b annually as part of the annual/major review process.

The RD3b should be saved in your student Teams area which will be set up by the Doctoral College Administrator. A student's supervisors will also have access to the Teams area and the Doctoral College reserves the right to monitor this folder and ensure the RD3b is being updated.

Supervisor responsibilities – outset of supervision:

- to meet with the student to identify the initial objectives of the research, and to assist the student in an academic needs analysis (section 3.1);
- to ensure that the student has access to information about events relevant to their studies and/or training needs;
- for students whose first language is not English, to advise on additional English language support if appropriate;
- if the research student has disclosed a disability, to identify ways in which he/she may be supported in their studies (section 7.10);
- to explain the roles of the members of supervisory team and to discuss and agree the pattern and frequency of contact between members of the supervisory team. Students should meet with their supervisory team as a whole every three to six months;
- to clarify arrangements for progress monitoring, and ensuring the student is completing **RD3b research degree supervision record** on an ongoing basis;
- to ensure the student is aware of their responsibilities in relation to research ethics (section 3.2);

Supervisor responsibilities – ongoing:

- to maintain contact with the student through regular tutorial and seminar meetings; for full- time students tutorials should be at least once a month and students should meet with their supervisory team as a whole every three to six months;
- to be accessible at other reasonable times to give advice;
- to provide advice and guidance as necessary on the planning and development of the research programme and standard of work expected;
- to monitor the student's progress (requiring written work as appropriate, providing

reports to the Doctoral College as required, and giving constructive and timely feedback which is accessible and useful to the student);

- where progress is unsatisfactory, or the standard of work is unacceptable, to ensure that the student is made aware of this and that steps are taken to develop a constructive plan for improvement. These concerns should be noted within the RD3b;
- to set target dates for successive stages of the work in order to encourage timely submission of the thesis;
- to give assistance to the student in being able to present the work at seminars and conferences etc. or to publish as appropriate;
- to keep the student informed about events relevant to their studies and/or training needs;
- to participate in appropriate staff development activities to ensure competence in all aspects of the supervisory role, including attending the Research Supervisor Forum meetings.

Supervisor responsibilities – later stage:

- to ensure arrangements are made for examination of the student in accordance with University policy (section 3.5);
- to ensure appropriate examination arrangements are made for students with a disability;
- to ensure that, where a student is unable to submit a thesis within the required time, a timely and reasoned application for extension to candidature is made in line with University policy (section 4.5);
- to ensure student is adequately prepared and supported for the viva (section 3.6).

Student responsibilities:

- to meet with the supervisory team to identify the initial objectives of the research, and to complete and submit **RD3a research degree academic needs analysis and induction checklist** (section 3.1);
- to discuss with their supervisors the type of guidance and feedback found most helpful, agreeing and adhering to a schedule of meetings, and preparing appropriately for these;

- to agree with one or more members of the supervisory team the amount of time to be devoted to the research and the timing and duration of any holiday periods;
- to conform to the University Research Ethics processes (section 3.2);
- to maintain the progress of work and training as agreed, completing **RD3b research degree supervision record** on an ongoing basis;
- to provide an annual statement of progress of the work (annual review) as part of the annual monitoring and review procedures (section 3.3);
- to deposit data from research projects as required in the appropriate University repository;
- to take the initiative in raising problems or difficulties and indicating at an early stage any perception that supervision is inadequate (in the first instance, if you have a formal complaint, you should approach your Director of Studies, PGR Coordinator, Doctoral College Administrator or the Head of the Doctoral College).
- to discuss any changes in learning support needs which may arise during the period of study;
- to participate in research training, attend conferences, seminars, present papers for publication or for conferences as appropriate (section 5);
- to maintain clear and regular communication with their supervisory team and the Research & Knowledge Exchange Office, including notifying the appropriate member of staff as to any personal circumstances which may affect their studies;
- to ensure regular monitoring of your @marjon student email account to not miss out on any important communications;
- to notify registry@marjon.ac.uk and the Research & Knowledge Exchange Office of any changes of contact details including changes to postal addresses
- To advise University staff (e.g. Director of Studies, PGRC, the Doctoral College) of any access issues whether current or anticipated. See also section 8.2 on reasonable adjustments.

7. University Facilities and Support Services

This section of the handbook is a general guide to University facilities and support services that postgraduate research students may access. You are strongly advised to use the web links provided to obtain the most recent information.

7.1 PGR Hub

All PGR students have access to the PGR Hub, which is for the sole use of full and part-time PGR students. Desk space is available within the Hub on a hot desking basis, along with a kitchen area, a social space and lockers.

Both students and supervisors should have a clear, agreed understanding of the frequency and nature of contact required at any particular stage, and the extent to which the student needs to be on campus to complete PhD work (refer to section 6 for further details on expectations of students and supervisors).

7.2 Mentor scheme

The purpose of the PGR mentor scheme is to provide a welcoming and supportive sense of community for PGR students throughout their PhD journey. If you are interested in becoming a mentor or mentee, contact the PGR student representative, or rke@marjon.ac.uk, for more information.

7.3 Student Wellbeing and Support

The Student Wellbeing and Support team is your first point of contact for many of the University's welfare related services or if you are not sure who in the University may be best able to advise or assist you.

Staff can provide support, information, advice and guidance on a range of areas, including: health and well-being (including student counselling); disability and inclusion (including support for disabilities, including dyslexia, medical and mental health conditions); interruptions; budgeting and funding advice and out of hours support if you decide to live

on campus. The Student Wellbeing Support team work closely with the Chaplaincy and Student Union who also offer support and advocacy services as well as social activities. They can also provide pastoral care if you would like to discuss anything outside of your supervisory team and/or the Doctoral College.

Contact

Ask the Student Wellbeing and Support desk for quick queries and to make appointments. Check the [Student Wellbeing and Support](#) My Marjon page for a timetable of contact and drop-in times.

Email: studentsupports@marjon.ac.uk Tel: 01752 636891

See also: <http://www.marjon.ac.uk/student-life/student-support/>

7.4 Finance

The finance office can provide support with regards to scholarship payments, student fee payment plans, expense claims and other financial queries.

Contact

Email: finance@marjon.ac.uk Tel: 01752 636805

See also: [Finance and Payment Plans](#) and [Fees and funding](#)

7.5 Library services

Resources

The Library has approximately 120,000 books in stock, and a large collection of e-books which can be accessed from anywhere with an internet connection. In addition to our books, we offer access to over 16,000 electronic journals via Discovery, our single search tool. We also subscribe to Scopus, the largest abstract & citation database of peer reviewed literature, which you can use to find impact factors, citation trends and scholarly community engagement.

Study skills and information literacy

The Library's education team consists of Steve Gunard and Tom Nicholls. Steve is the dedicated contact for all things related to Library services and postgraduate study and can be contacted at sgunard@marjon.ac.uk. His specialism is information literacy which basically covers all aspects of finding, evaluating, and organising information, including systematic literature reviewing. He has

put together an information page especially for post-graduate study here: [Postgraduate Library Resources & Support](#). Tom specialises in teaching academic skills such as critical thinking, academic writing, and referencing and can be contacted via studyskills@marjon.ac.uk. Both Steve and Tom are happy to meet with PGR students on a one-to-one basis, either in-person or via Teams.

Inter library loans

If there are books or journal articles that students need for their research/study which are not stocked by the Library, we will endeavour to obtain them from another Library. MPhil & PhD students are entitled to 100 ILL requests during their study term. The form to make requests can be found on the [Library's resources page](#) (scroll to the bottom).

SCONUL access

As a postgraduate student, you may be able to join and borrow from other participating SCONUL Access libraries. Information is available at <https://www.sconul.ac.uk/sconul-access> along with the application process.

Borrowing from the library

You will be issued with a Library card, which allows you to borrow book stock and gives access to the MFDs around campus for printing & photocopying. As a PhD student, you are entitled to borrow 30 items at a time. Books are checked out using self-service machines adjacent the Library exit, and you must bring your student i.d. card to operate these machines.

Studiosity

Studiosity is an on-demand academic writing feedback service to which the University subscribes. There are two parts to the service: the writing feedback platform and the connect live app. You can access Studiosity via this link: [Studiosity](#).

Useful resources

The following resources are recommended to support your research and thesis submission:

Becker, L.M. *Presenting your research: conferences, symposiums, poster presentations and beyond*. SAGE, 2014.

Bentley, Peter, *The PhD application handbook*. Open University Press, 2006.

Cooley, Linda and Lewkowicz, Jo, (eds). *Thesis and dissertation at postgraduate level: theory and classroom practice*. University of Hong Kong English Centre, 2003.

Day, Abby. *Winning research funding*. Gower, 2003.

Dunleavy, Patrick. *Authoring a PhD: How to plan, draft, write and finish a doctoral thesis or dissertation*. Palgrave Macmillan, 2003.

Hunt, Andy, *Your research project: how to manage it*. Routledge, 2005. O’Leary, Z. *The essential guide to doing your research project*. SAGE, 2017.

Phelps, Renata. *Organizing and managing your research: a practical guide for postgraduates*. SAGE, 2007

Phillips, E. M., & Pugh, D. S. (2000). *How to get a Ph.D.: A handbook for students and their supervisors* (3rd ed.), Maidenhead: Open University Press.

Potter, S. (ed). *Doing postgraduate research*, SAGE, 2006.

Petre, M. and Rugg, G. (2010) *The unwritten rules of PhD research*. McGraw-Hill Education

Turabian, Kate L. *A manual for writers of research papers, theses, and dissertations: Chicago style for students and researchers*. University of Chicago Press, 2013.

Wisker, G. *The postgraduate research handbook: succeed with your MA, MPhil, EdD and PhD*. Palgrave, 2008.

A dedicated Doctoral College Reading list exists which was primarily designed to support PhD supervisors. However, many of the resources available there might also be of interest to PGR students, e.g. writing for academia, organising a research project etc. A link to the reading list is available on Canvas and also on the PhDZone.

Contact

Email: libraryenquiries@marjon.ac.uk Tel: 01752 761145

Check here for opening times and 24-hour access codes: [Library and online resources - MyMarjon](#)

See also: [Welcome to Marjon Library webpage](#)

7.6 Digital and IT services

Digital and IT services aim to provide and support a range of information delivery, computing based services which will further the aims and objectives of the University and in particular

enhance the educational environment for students and assist staff at all levels in fulfilling their roles and responsibilities. Check the [Digital & IT Services - MyMarjon](#) for services provided.

Email: computingservices@marjon.ac.uk Tel: 01752 636700 Ext. 4333

Email: digitalinnovation@marjon.ac.uk Tel: 01752 636700 Ext. 5673

7.7 Futures

Futures, the careers, employability, and enterprise service at Marjon are keen to work with all students and graduates to make sure that your university experience is just the beginning of a life of opportunity. The team offers enriching career, travel, volunteer, enterprise and professional development opportunities. Support from Marjon Futures is available to all students and graduates indefinitely after graduation.

The Futures team offers friendly, accessible and impartial careers information, advice and guidance. Based in the Careers Cube, the Hub, we work with all students and alumni to help them to make the most of the employability opportunities that Marjon offers. You can drop in and see us, or make an appointment to meet with one of the team. If you want to secure part-time work, get involved with volunteering, study or work abroad; or you want to learn how to manage your career development and gain the skills that graduate employers are seeking, the Futures team can help. From thinking about your CV through to supporting you with your applications and interview preparation or if you are thinking about being self-employed, the team is here to help you, in person or through our digital resources. To find out how to make contact, or access resources, please visit the [Futures area of My Marjon](#).

If you are looking for our popular programmes and awards you can find these on Canvas, use this [Link](#) to self-enrol. For information, guidance, professional development opportunities, part-time and volunteering vacancies why not follow Futures on [Facebook](#) and [Twitter \(X\)](#).

Support from the Futures team doesn't stop at graduation – we are here to help graduates achieve their employment goals at any time. We love to hear what our alumni are up to.

Contact

Drop-in to the Careers Cube, situated in the Hub or [book an appointment](#). If you are making a special trip to 'drop-in' please email futures@marjon.ac.uk to check availability. NB: with our staff changes we can't commit to exact office hours but we'll do our best to ensure someone is in the cube Mon-Wed.

Email: futures@marjon.ac.uk

Tel: 01752 636893

For services, links and to book an appointment: [Futures - Careers, Employability & Enterprise - My Marjon](#)

7.8 The University Chaplaincy

The University Chaplaincy (The Octagon Building) is open 24 hours; offering a sanctuary of space comprising a social room, chapel and nap room. During office hours there are staff available to speak about your pastoral, spiritual, academic or personal concerns or just to spend time with. Many students like to use the space for study and relaxation in groups or by themselves and the relaxed atmosphere continues to make it a popular destination for mature students. Many clubs and societies use the building and each week the staff run Christian worship services.

The University Chaplaincy works hard to build the community of students and staff here at Marjon. Many of our team do not consider themselves religious, so whoever you are, we would love you to join in and spend some of your time with us here in the Chaplaincy.

Contact

Email: mparkman@marjon.ac.uk

Tel: 01752 636700 Ext. 6528

See also: [The Chaplaincy](#)

7.9 Disability and inclusion advice service

We provide information, advice, guidance and support covering a wide range of inclusion issues including disabilities, medical and mental health conditions and specific learning difficulties.

Contact

Email: disability@marjon.ac.uk

Tel: 01752 636891

See also: [Disability & Inclusion Advice Service \(DIAS\) - MyMarjon](#)

7.10 Sports facilities

Marjon Sport and Health offers health, fitness, and sporting opportunities for all by providing high quality customer service, world class facilities and expert services at affordable prices. Our modern facilities include a gym, swimming pool, sports hall, climbing wall, 3G and hockey astro turf, Padel courts, Trackman 4 Golf coaching, sports therapy and rehabilitation clinic, Sport and Health Science Lab. To find out more:

- [Marjon Sport and Health facilities](#)
- [Marjon Sport and Health membership](#)

7.11 Student Union

[Marjon Student Union \(MSU\)](#) is a charity, as well as being independent from the institution, which means we always have the students' best interests at heart. However, luckily we have an extremely strong partnership with our institution and we are always looking for that to grow, because when it comes down to it everyone wants the same thing for our students, to have the best time and get the most out of your university, both academically and experience wise.

8. University Policies

PGR students are required to adhere to university policies, and are protected by these policies. This handbook does not cover all of these policies (for a list of policies please see [HERE](#)), but we do draw attention in particular to the university's policy on harassment (please see [HERE](#) for the full policy) and the university's approach to reasonable adjustment for those with disabilities (please see also section 7.9 above).

Here is a useful link to the [Equality and Advisory Support Service](#).

8.1 Harassment and Bullying

The University takes the issue of harassment and bullying very seriously and is committed to a working environment that is free from discrimination and intimidation and in which the dignity of the individual is paramount.

Harassment is “unwanted conduct that violates people’s dignity or creates an intimidating, hostile, degrading, humiliating or offensive environment.”

We draw particular attention to obscene or indecent behaviour, or sexual misconduct which is outlined in the university’s [Disciplinary Policy and Procedure](#).

Bullying can be defined as persistent actions, criticisms or personal abuse either in public or private, which humiliates, intimidates, undermines or demeans the individual(s) involved.

The University recognises that being involved in dealing with bullying and harassment can be difficult for all concerned and it is important that everyone receives an appropriate level of care and support, including both the perceived victim and the perceived bully/harasser. There are a number of supportive measures that could be considered during any bullying and/or harassment case. Appropriate measures will be considered on an individual basis by either Human Resources, the Investigating Officer, Occupational Health, Counselling, or the Inclusion Co-ordinator. Please see the university policy on Harassment and Dignity at Work [HERE](#).

Investigations into allegations of harassment and/or bullying complaints will be dealt with in line with the University Investigations Procedure.

8.2 Disability and Reasonable Adjustments

Plymouth Marjon University aims to offer an inclusive learning environment and to embed a culture of inclusion for disabled students (see also section 7.9 above). The University is continually adapting and as it does so, we strive to provide an inclusive environment where disabled students can demonstrate their full potential and succeed in their studies. Please

see [HERE](#) for the University's Equality and Diversity Policy.

A disability diagnosis is not required to be considered disabled; self-diagnosis is sufficient but medical evidence to show such an impairment may be necessary (for example, when applying for Disabled Student's Allowances).

We appreciate that providing an environment which aims to be inclusive is not always enough to ensure everyone's success. Access to additional individual 'reasonable adjustments' helps to support independence, encourage curiosity and ultimately support students to realise their ambitions.

Students who wish to have additional reasonable adjustments in place will need to declare their disability to the University. For PGRs this includes any reasonable adjustments they deem necessary throughout the lifetime of their studies, including at the enquiry stage.

Responsibility for ensuring an inclusive environment involves the university, the University's Equality, Diversity and Inclusion Committee, staff and students. If a postgraduate student believes they require reasonable adjustments to be made, they should contact their Director of Studies if already enrolled, or the Doctoral College if they are still at the pre-enrolment stage.

Reasonable adjustments provide support to ensure that disabled students can participate in higher education without disadvantage. In assessing what is reasonable, the University will consider how effective the adjustment is in removing the barrier, the resources available to the University and the cost of the adjustment, as well as how practical it is to make the change. Specific guidelines on how to support neurodivergent students are provided to supervisors on the relevant 'PhD Info' Canvas page.

8.3 LinkedIn Learning and EDI

As PGR students you will have access to [LinkedIn Learning](#) (if you've not used this before you will need to register with your university username and password). Alongside a panoply of topics which could be useful as you progress through your studies, and career, the [Vitae Researcher Framework](#) has been mapped against relevant LinkedIn Learning courses. We draw attention to section 'D' - *engagement, influence and impact* which also covers D1: '*working with others*'. Several courses would be relevant and are strongly recommended, these include:

Collegiality:

[Communicating about Culturally Sensitive Issues](#)

[Unconscious Bias](#)

[Understanding intersectionality](#)

Equality and Diversity:

[Diversity, Inclusion, and Belonging](#)

[Managing Diversity](#)

[Skills for Inclusive Conversations](#)

[Cultivating Cultural Competence and Inclusion](#)

[Diversity, Inclusion, and Belonging](#)