

## Research and Knowledge Exchange Annual Report 2021-22

*Including annual statement on research integrity*

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Executive Summary	<p>This is a summary report for 21-22 academic year of research and knowledge exchange activity aligned to the Marjon Growth Plan. A statement of research integrity which is a requirement of the concordat to support research integrity is incorporated within the report. The report includes highlights on a research culture project and progress against the Researcher Development Concordat. Key research and knowledge exchange priorities for 22-23 are summarised.</p> <p>Key Terms and links:</p> <p>HEBCI <a href="#">Higher education and business community interaction survey</a></p> <p>KEF <a href="#">Knowledge Exchange Framework</a></p> <p>KEC <a href="#">Knowledge Exchange Concordat</a></p> <p>PGR Post-graduate research students covering FHEQ Level 8 and research masters' degrees at Level 7 of the FHEQ</p> <p>RDAP Research degree awarding powers</p> <p>REF <a href="#">Research Excellence Framework</a></p> <p><a href="#">Researcher Development Concordat</a></p> <p>UKRIO <a href="#">UK Research Integrity Office</a></p> <p><a href="#">UUK concordat to support research integrity</a></p>

## Building Knowledge Together



Figure 1: Marjon Values and Research and Knowledge Exchange

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## 1. Overview

A significant milestone for Marjon was achieved in 2021-22 as we received the outcomes of our first submission to the Research Excellence Framework (REF2021) ([section 2](#)). The positive impact of this submission on funding, league table position and reputation enable the next phase of development for Marjon. The outcomes of the Knowledge Exchange Framework (KEF2) which included an update on metrics was published and identifies our strengths but also areas for focus. The next iteration of the KEF with updated narrative statements is likely to be required early in 2023. A range of initiatives were supported by knowledge exchange funding for small providers ([section 3](#)). Our PGR provision continued to strengthen in both the size of our cohort but also in terms of the quality of our provision and we were exceptionally pleased with our Postgraduate Research Experience Survey outcomes ([section 4](#)). We continue to work towards Research Degree Awarding Powers, and have developed three workstreams ([section 5](#)). The impact of the withdrawal of the QAA as designated quality body needs a watching brief in terms of possible impact on the timeline. We continue to work to ensure we exemplify best practice for research integrity ([section 6](#)). In year funding to support research culture enabled us to better understand and support a positive and inclusive research culture, with a particular emphasis on part-time academics, early career researchers and practitioner academics ([section 7](#)). The research and knowledge exchange environment continues to be supported by the four Institution wide Research and Knowledge Exchange Groups. Indicators of the research environment demonstrate successful bidding, delivery of projects and outputs ([section 8](#)). The focus for 2022-23 and beyond are summarised in [section 9](#).

## 2. Research Excellence Framework (REF)

<b>KS6</b>	Submit in at least two units of assessment to REF2021 aiming for all outputs and impact to be a minimum of 2*. As a consequence, begin to attract QR funding from Research England to support research infrastructure	2020-2022
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Marjon REF2021 results are summarised in Table 1 which illustrates we met the KS6 performance indicator and achieved the aim of a credible first submission with the target of most of the submission at least 2. The results show that more than half of our submission was rated at 3\* or above i.e., quality that is internationally excellent. Summarising the components of the REF:

- 2.1 59% of the outputs were 3\* or 4\* and the remaining majority the targeted 2\*. A small number of outputs (5 out of 61) were 1\*. No unclassified outputs.
- 2.2 The impact outcomes were excellent. Out of four impact case studies submitted three were 3\* and one was 2\*. This reinforces the applied nature of our research and how we make a difference in society.
- 2.3 The environment statements were always going to be a challenge as our first submission to a REF and really needed to convincingly highlight the positive trajectory. Sport at 2\* (with some 3\*) is excellent, education is disappointing at 1\*.
- 2.4 We achieved inclusivity with the official REF data showing 35% of eligible staff were submitted to education and 45% of eligible staff to sport. This is important as we progress our application for research degree awarding powers.

Table 1: Marjon REF2021 Results

UoA	Unit of assessment name	Profile	FTE	4*	3*	2*	1*	UC
<b>23</b>	<b>Education</b>	<b>Overall</b>	<b>10.50</b>	<b>2%</b>	<b>48%</b>	<b>28%</b>	<b>22%</b>	<b>0</b>
23	Education	Outputs	10.50	4%	39%	46%	11%	0%
23	Education	Impact	10.50	0%	100%	0%	0%	0%
23	Education	Environment	10.50	0%	0%	0%	100%	0%
<b>24</b>	<b>Sport and Exercise Sciences, Leisure and Tourism</b>	<b>Overall</b>	<b>14.00</b>	<b>7%</b>	<b>52%</b>	<b>39%</b>	<b>2%</b>	<b>0%</b>
24	Sport and Exercise Sciences, Leisure and Tourism	Outputs	14.00	11%	60%	26%	3%	0%
24	Sport and Exercise Sciences, Leisure and Tourism	Impact	14.00	0%	50%	50%	0%	0%
24	Sport and Exercise Sciences, Leisure and Tourism	Environment	14.00	0%	25%	75%	0%	0%

\*The overall profile is the weighted average - outputs (60%), impact (25%) and environment (15%)

While the REF exercise is not intended as a 'league table' it is helpful to compare our performance in REF2021 to appropriate benchmark Institutions. Utilising the grade point average<sup>1</sup> Marjon was ranked 114 out of 129 HEIs. Compared with Cathedrals Group universities Marjon were 8<sup>th</sup> out of 15 and compared with Guild HE universities we were 10<sup>th</sup> out of 22. It is worth noting most of these benchmark HEIs had benefitted from QR funding since 2014 and were not submitting to their first REF exercise.

- 2.5 In UoA23 we were ranked 59<sup>th</sup> out of 83 HEIs and exceeded the performance of many of our benchmark HEIs. The impact case studies ranked more highly (44<sup>th</sup>) with outputs (65<sup>th</sup>) and environment being weaker (75<sup>th</sup>).
- 2.6 In UoA24 we were ranked 45<sup>th</sup> out of 61 HEIs (Table 5) and exceeded the performance of many of our benchmark HEIs. Performance was consistent across outputs (49<sup>th</sup>), impact (45<sup>th</sup>) and environment (41<sup>st</sup>).

One of the beneficial consequences of submitting to REF2021 is we become eligible for quality related (QR) funding. Funding confirmation for 2022-2023 is summarised in Table 2 and marks a substantial increase compared to previous years. Consultation with academic staff has taken place regarding how we can maximise the benefit of this QR funding. At Research and Knowledge Exchange Committee (June 2022) the three schemes outlined in 2.7 to 2.10 were agreed as priority, dependent upon funding level, alongside continuation of existing initiatives like writing retreats which received positive feedback. Implementation and delivery plans of these three schemes will be a priority for 2022-2023 ([Action 9.1](#)).

- 2.7 New priority 1, Seedcorn/internal grant scheme. Small internal grant scheme (up to £5k) to support a research outcome (output, impact or environment). Alignment to RKE groups. Priority for bids that build capacity and include for example early career researchers and practitioner academics. Build in preparation support/coaching and ensure transparent criteria to build capacity.
- 2.8 New priority 2, Research Coaching and Mentoring – Directly building on the outcomes of the research culture project (discussed in section 7). Mentoring scheme to support progress through the academic career journey. Coaching specifically to support practitioner academics.
- 2.9 Priority 3, Doctoral Bursary Scheme. Building on the success of the Marjon 180 PhD Bursaries. Align bursaries to RKE groups and support research supervision capacity building. Encourage co-funded PhD bursaries e.g. with private/public sector organisations.

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<sup>1</sup> **GPA** (% at 4\* x 4)+(%) at 3\* x 3) + (% at 2\* x 2) + (% at 1\* x 1)/100 (same index as used in complete university guide quality index, maximum score 4).

Table 2: Summary of Research England Funding 2022-2023

Funding	Amount	Details
Quality-Related Research (QR)..	£134, 282	Directly linked to REF 3* and 4* outputs, impact and environment. Not hypothecated linked to general research enhancement. Experienced 10% uplift as an overall fund.
QR Business Research Element	£2,635	Allocated in proportion to income received from business for research. Received proportionally greater uplift as fund (+36%) to reflect BEIS priorities.
Research Degree Supervision Fund (RDP)	£tbc	Allocated for fte PGR students in REF units of assessment. Update coding of students to REF units in progress.
Policy Support Fund	£50, 000	Hypothecated aligned to build on activity already under way, and to build capacity for future interdisciplinary programmes to help solve pressing public policy challenges.
Participatory Research Fund	£20, 000	Hypothecated to cover the costs of co-produced research and to run capacity-building activities.
Research Culture Fund	£50, 000	Hypothecated with remit to develop and initiate new activities in response to the R&D People and Culture Strategy.
Knowledge Exchange for Small Providers	£193, 548	Hypothecated capacity building allocations to address new government priorities to build back better. Second year of allocation pending review of HEIF etc
<b>Total</b>	<b>£450, 465</b>	

### 3. Knowledge Exchange and Knowledge Exchange Framework (KEF)

<b>KS14</b>	Annually improve our Higher Education and Business Community Interaction return, ensuring it reflects our delivery	Annually monitor
<b>KS15</b>	Submit to the Knowledge Exchange Framework and benchmark against comparator HEIs ensuring our consultancy, exploitation of facilities, public and community engagement and regeneration and development metrics reflect as priorities	2020-21

Our approach to knowledge exchange at Marjon is outlined in our Research and Knowledge Exchange Strategy. The strategy is underpinned by the principles that knowledge is partial, living, co-produced, should have impact and be openly available. We strive to ensure that knowledge is applied to current problems and reflects societal challenges. We engage all our community, including students, staff, alumni, public, key stakeholders and peers to help us co-create this knowledge, to question our knowledge and to ensure it is shared in meaningful ways. We respect our community, and their knowledge, we aim to work with them to support sustainable changes that challenge social injustice and provide more equitable opportunities for all. We strive to maintain the highest standard of integrity in our knowledge practices. We are reflective and developmental in our approach to knowledge production. In particular we focus our knowledge exchange activity on our civic commitments; while these commitments relate to our immediate region they also apply national and globally through our communities of interest (figure 2).



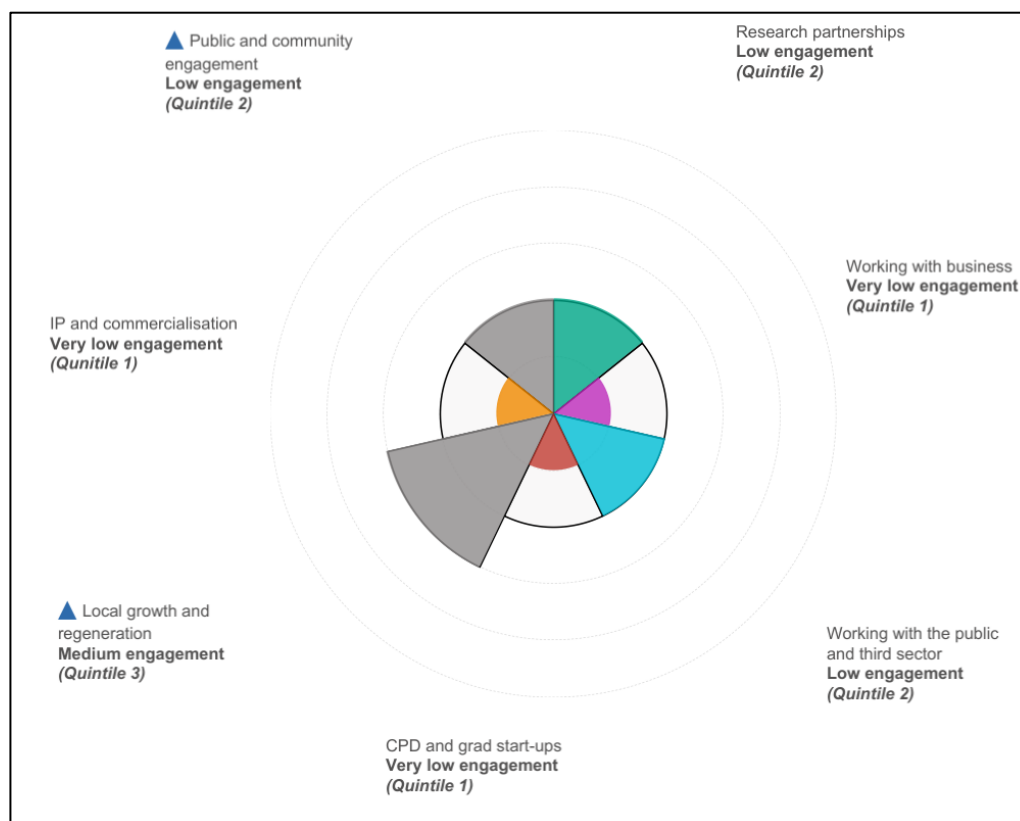
**Figure 2:** Marjon Civic Commitments

#### 3.1 Knowledge Exchange Framework

In September 2022 the second first iteration of the Knowledge Exchange framework (KEF) was published. The KEF illustrates the range of activities universities conduct with external partners across seven perspectives. These perspectives include public and community engagement, working with partners ranging from big businesses to small local firms, and how they commercialise home-grown research. This KEF exercise involved an updating of



metrics (not narrative statements) and was based on HEBCIs returns from 2018-9, 2019-20 and 2020-21 academic years which include pandemic lockdown years.



**Figure 3:** KEF Metrics Dashboard

In terms of the KEF dashboard each segment represents the relevant strength against the KEF perspective. Segments are displayed using quintiles. The black line represents the average result for the Cluster M, comparator universities we were placed within. Cluster M included 18 smaller universities with a teaching focus and activity across disciplines particularly in other health domains and non-STEM. Despite acting as a reasonable benchmark out of the 18 Institutions in cluster M 50% received Higher Education Innovation Funding (> £250 k per annum) which acts as a significant support to universities support and develop a broad range of knowledge-based interactions with the wider world. Furthermore, the definition of smaller university was wide ranging from <5000 students (n=5), 5000-10000 students (n=9), 10000-1500 (n=4). In summary analysis of the perspectives is included below.

- Research partnerships (*cash contribution to public research, co-authoring with non-academic partners as % of total outputs 2019-2021*). We were in the high engagement category and above the cluster average for co-authorship with non-academic partners which is directly linked to our strategy of co-creation of knowledge with partners. Maintaining this is important.
- Working with business (*KTP, contract research, facilities and consultancy income, weighted towards SMEs*). We were in the bottom quintile and overall this perspective indicated very low engagement, similar to the cluster average (low engagement) and, in part, reflective of the impact of Covid-19. This is also linked to our greater

engagement with public and third sector organisations as opposed to business. The one metric that highlighted medium engagement was consultancy and facilities income with SME business (normalised by HEI income). This is an area to boost as we aim to grow our engagement with business to support regional growth and prosperity.

- c) Working with public and third sector (*contract research, consultancy and facilities income with public and third sector*). We were in the low engagement category overall which is comparative to the cluster. The consultancy and facilities income metric demonstrated medium engagement, despite Covid-19 impact. Some of the difference between the perspective decile and our lived experience of activity is likely to be a result of the amount of activity that does not generate income, e.g. consultancy and facilities usage that is part of wider partnership agreements not involving monetary exchange.
- d) Skills, enterprise and entrepreneurship (*Non-credit bearing CPD, learner days, graduate start-ups*). We were in the very low engagement category slightly below the cluster (low engagement). Again, much of our CPD activity is free of charge as part of wider partnerships e.g. mentor training for teaching/health professionals. We should be aiming to improve our performance within this perspective, in particular, non-credit bearing CPD.
- e) Local growth and regeneration (*regeneration and development income*): We were in the medium engagement category comparable with the cluster average. This is unlikely to be a major feature of our KEF in future, in the absence of significant local shared prosperity funding in Plymouth and Devon. We will continue to contribute to the skills agenda and working with others.
- f) Intellectual property and commercialisation (*licensing, spin outs, investment*). We were in the very low engagement category which is comparable to the cluster (low engagement). This is unlikely to be a major focus for Marjon given our range of disciplines and focus.
- g) Public and community engagement (*self-assessment template, not updated*). We were in the low engagement category comparable to the cluster average. This was not updated from the previous KEF exercise and our self-evaluation identified lots of engagement and activity, some systems were new and not fully embedded, activity was not systematic across Marjon and better evaluation of public engagement was needed.

### 3.2 Knowledge Exchange Activity

Delivery of knowledge exchange activity was boosted in 2021-22 by £200,000 in year Research England Funding. This additional funding was allocated to support the sector's continuing contribution, working with partners, to deliver societal and economic benefits across this agenda. In particular the new knowledge exchange funding for smaller providers: capacity building allocations to address new government priorities to build back better and was distributed equally across all providers eligible for, but not currently in receipt of HEIF. This funding alongside expansion of existing knowledge exchange activity led to an incredibly rich year of engagement. Some highlights are summarised below.

- a) Utilising the KE funding we launched Marjon Evaluation, Research and Impact Centre. This centre builds on successful engagement in several evaluation projects to the extent that in education and health & wellbeing we have become the partner of choice. These projects typically have tight turnaround times and tight budgets yet more public funding has evaluation requirements. We have significant evaluation expertise and the launch of MERIC enables increased capacity and a strategic approach to growing this activity. Well-designed and delivered evaluation activities strengthen partnership relationships that lead to reciprocal benefits. During 2021-22 MERIC staff engaged in 16 different evaluation projects, delivered/supported 12 evaluation reports and engaged in 6 funding bids.
- b) The FLAVOUR Project (Food Surplus and Labour, the Valorisation of Underused Resources) will conclude at the end of 2022. This project has been a collaboration between 10 main partners in 3 different countries: the UK, France and Belgium. Overall partners consist of social enterprises, charities, municipalities, and universities. The project is part-funded through the European Regional Development Fund (ERDF) and focuses on the prevention of food waste by collecting and redistributing (and/or processing) food surplus while simultaneously creating jobs, pathways to employment and supporting people living in food insecurity. The overall outcomes of the project, analysed using the social return on investment tool, are summarised in Figure 4, which highlights £9.62 of social value returned for every £1 invested. Figure 5 highlights the social return linked to sustainable development goals, and shows highest contribution to SDGs zero hunger, no poverty, sustainable cities and communities and climate action.



Figure 4 Overall Social Value of the Flavour Project

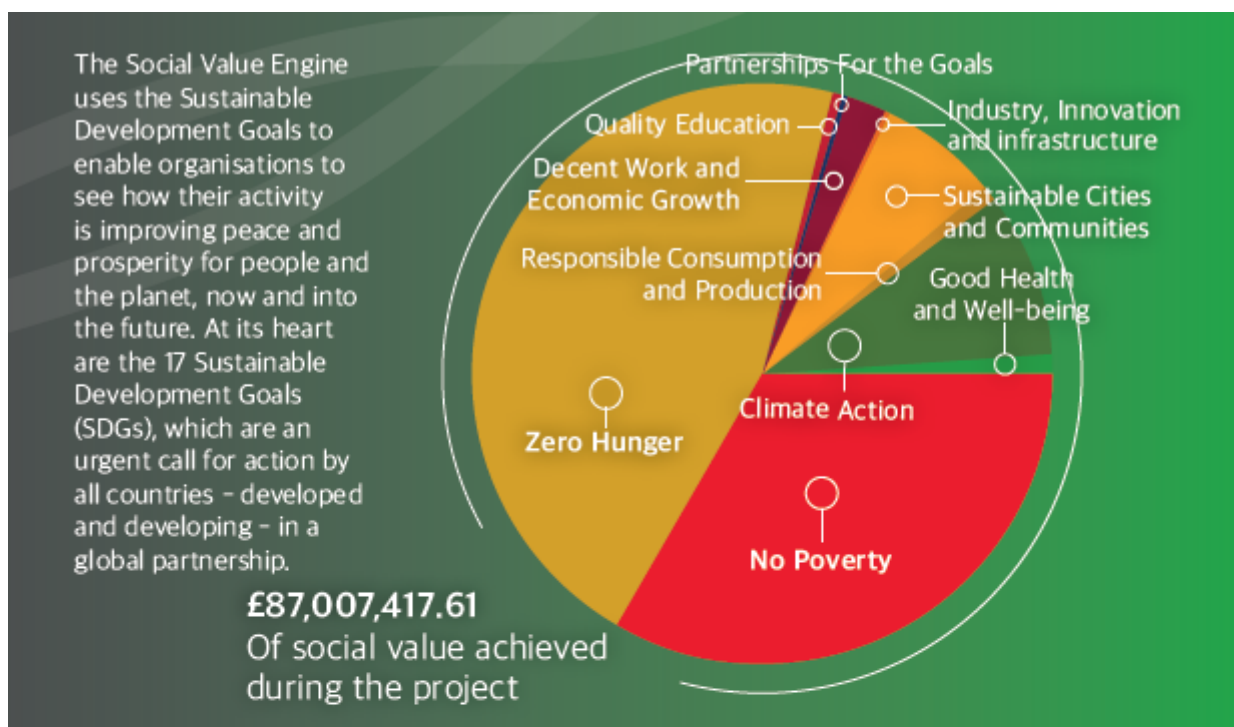


Figure 5: Social Value of the Flavour Project linked to the Sustainable Development Goals

## 4. Post-Graduate Research (PGR)

KS7	Grow our postgraduate community, including postgraduate research students, in line with our developing supervision capacity and aligned to our research groups to ensure an appropriate high-quality research environment.	Annually monitor
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A full annual monitoring report for the provision of post-graduate research degrees is developed separately to this review including an action plan and so this section contains some highlights. During 2021-22 we had 38 students engaged on post-graduate research degree programmes which indicates 15% growth compared to the previous academic year (2020-21, 32 students). The students are distributed across four research environment areas of: education (15), sport and exercise science (6), health and wellbeing (10) and business and social science (7). Business and social science was a new environment area in 2020-21 and we will be steadily growing the number of students.

The investment in Mayflower bursaries to launch the PGR provision in 2017 continued to deliver positive outcomes albeit later than hoped for due to the impact of Covid-19. Four Mayflower scholars submitted; of these one passed their PhD with no corrections, two passed subject to amendments which are in progress, and one passed their MPhil subject to amendments which are in progress. Four Marjon 180 PhD scholars commenced in 2020-21, these were internally funded bursaries aligned to the new research and knowledge exchange groups and the range of topics highlights the increased spread of our research excellence and the continuation of research areas with demonstrated impact.

There were 38 internal academic staff members identified as current or potential supervisors for PGR provision, 25 of these staff members were engaged in supervision of PGR students either at Marjon or externally and 14 staff members were identified as primary supervisors during the academic year 2021-22. To support the environment for our students and early career supervisors, where appropriate, external supervisors also contribute to PGR supervision (n=12). The PGR supervisor's forum, to support the standardisation and sharing of best practice of supervision, continued during the year. Three supervisor forums were held during 2021-22 focusing on preparation for Major Review, engaging students with wider research culture, and PGR supervisor refresher training. The session on engaging students with the wider research culture included a student panel of PGR students which worked particularly well as a unique Marjon approach. Additionally, training was held for those staff acting as internal examiners and chairs of examination panels.

### 4.1 Post-Graduate Research Experience Survey

We engaged with the sector wide Post-Graduate Research Experience Survey (PRES) as part of our agreed approach of biennial utilisation of the PRES with interim focused and qualitative approaches in areas we are seeking improvements. Table 3 summarises the PRES results and some highlights include:

- a) Overall satisfaction was 100% which is above global, Cathedrals Group and Guild HE benchmarks which were 80-82% and a substantial improvement compared to PRES2020 (+25%). Most open comments about the most positive aspect of the research degree programme focuses on the Marjon community, academic support and supervision and the freedom to explore creative approaches to research. For example,

*“The supportive community. This includes my supervisory team and students and staff in other departments who are extremely approachable and provide opportunities for being creative with research”.*

- b) All four questions relating to supervision including supervisor skills and knowledge, regular contact, provision of feedback and supporting development were 100%. This led to an overall supervision category of 100% satisfaction which is above global, Cathedrals Group and Guild HE benchmarks which were 88-90% and a substantial improvement compared to PRES2020 (+17%). Responses highlighted the importance of supervision teams, including external supervisors, who bring different expertise to the process, for example *“Supervision has been really bespoke and supported my needs as both early career researcher, whilst being mindful of my professional responsibilities. I've appreciated the dedicated support, and found supervisions largely to date via Teams to be effective and motivating. The team was well-chosen and so I feel that various needs can be met (i.e. subject specialism/understanding of processes, etc.)”.*
- c) Resources continued to be highly rated by PGR students (95%) which is above global, Cathedrals Group and Guild HE benchmarks which were 79-82% and an improvement compared to PRES2020 (+10%). Within this category questions were added about remote access to studying, library and specialist resources since 2020. Most pleasing is the substantial improvement in response to questions about access to library resources and facilities both on campus (93%) and online (93%) because this has been an area of focus for improvement (previously 67%) through internal partnership working. The updated PGR hub should support continued high satisfaction for students and was commented on by students (who were involved in co-creating the designs), e.g. *“The working space on campus is very good, the new PGR hub will support us when we need or want to work in different ways, not only at a PC, for example group work, online meetings.”*
- d) Research culture includes questions about access to seminar series, opportunities to discuss research, influence of the research community and wider opportunities to become engaged. The overall category satisfaction was 77% which is significantly higher than Cathedrals Group and Guild HE benchmarks which were 50-51% and a substantial improvement compared to PRES2020 (+19%). There remain areas to improve in relation to research culture and professional development (research skills and specialist disciplinary training via external signposting) but nonetheless in the words of one student there is a lot to be positive about, *“I think this is a particular strength of the university. I have really benefited from things like brown bag and the researcher developer series. The writing retreats have also been a fantastic opportunity to discuss research with other students and experienced researchers alike. There is always a feeling that it is safe to share ideas and questions without judgment or hierarchy.”*

Table 3: Summary of PRES Outcomes

	<b>Marjon 2020</b>	<b>Marjon 2022</b>	<b>Change</b>	<b>Global</b>	<b>Cathedral Group</b>	<b>Guild HE</b>
Responses	12	15	+3	13922	687	287
Supervision	83%	100%	+17%	88%	90%	89%
Resources	85%	95%	+10%	82%	81%	79%
Research Culture	58%	77%	+19%	57%	51%	50%
Progression	83%	95%	+12%	80%	82%	85%
Responsibilities	88%	98%	+10%	79%	79%	83%
Support	NA	90%	NA	75%	73%	71%
Research Skills	83%	82%	-1%	86%	86%	87%
Professional Development	78%	73%	-5%	77%	75%	77%
Overall Satisfaction	75%	100%	+25%	80%	80%	82%

## 5. Research Degree Awarding Powers (RDAP)

<b>KS8</b>	Ensure at least half of full-time academic colleagues are active and recognised contributors to subject associations, learned societies and relevant professional bodies.	2021
<b>KS9</b>	Ensure at least a third of academic colleagues have recent (within the past three years) personal experience of research activity in other UK or international university institutions, for example, by acting as external examiners for research degrees, serving as validation/review panel members, or contributing to collaborative research projects with other organisations.	2021
<b>KS10</b>	Ensure at least a third of academic staff are engaged in research or other forms of advanced scholarship and be able to demonstrate achievements that are recognised by the wider academic community to be of national and/or international standing.	2021
<b>KS11</b>	Submit an application for Research Degree Awarding Powers	2022

Achieving Research Degree Awarding Powers (RDAP) is a core part of the Growth Strategy and would complete the development of Marjon from our historical roots as teacher training colleges to becoming a fully mature University. It will enable us to continue the mission of providing a transformative values-based education for all who are capable by enabling progression through to doctorate level. The application for RDAP follows the outcome of our first submission to the Research Excellence Framework (REF) and the momentum this will bring in terms of quality related research funding to the research environment.

### 5.1 Research Degree Awarding Powers Criteria

Achieving RDAP requires us to demonstrate we meet additional criteria beyond those as a registered OFS provider. The application process is via a self-assessment submission which describes, analyses and comments clearly and explicitly, with associated evidence, how we meet the criteria. The overarching requirement is to demonstrate how we have established a sustainable institutional research culture that is conducive to advanced scholarship and research, and supportive for post-graduate research (PGR) students. Additionally, we will need to explain how we intend to apply national standards for awards, comply with the management frameworks for research degrees issued by Research Councils and how our own arrangements for research degrees will differ from those of the University of Chichester, our current awarding body. It is important to note that under OFS requirements we must demonstrate that we meet all the criteria in full at the point of application; the scrutiny process is not a developmental activity and currently as the appointed quality agency QAA's role is to assess the provider against the DAPs criteria<sup>2</sup>. The QAA announced in July 2022 that it has notified the Secretary of State for Education that it will no longer consent to be the Designated Quality Body in England (DQB) after the current DQB year ends on 31 March 2023 and so clarity regarding the RDAP process after this period is being sought. Currently the process involves QAA assessors reviewing the self-assessment document to ensure:

- a) The self-assessment adequately addresses the scope of each DAPs criterion and the evidence requirements/outcomes
- b) The self-assessment is supported by relevant and appropriate evidence that has been selected judiciously and is well organised

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<sup>2</sup> Degree Awarding Powers in England: Guidance for Providers on Assessment by QAA, October 2019.



- c) There is a sufficient level of self-criticality demonstrated
- d) There are any critical issues or recent or impending major developments that could affect gathering of evidence in the scrutiny period
- e) Overall, the self-assessment and evidence base forms a reasonable basis to support a detailed scrutiny.

## 5.1 RDAP Implementation Plan

The first step to support the implementation of RDAP is to launch the Marjon Doctoral Centre. Currently the arrangements for PGR students are centred around the Research and Knowledge Exchange Office who currently administer, support and operate the PGR processes. It is common for similar sized and mission group Universities to have a graduate school/doctoral college as the academic home for post-graduate research students; indeed, the most recent universities to obtain RDAP both had this structure prior to their applications. The launch of the doctoral centre will represent a relatively small shift in practice/costs but will provide a sense of belonging for PGR students by helping to cultivate a community of interdisciplinary researchers, act as the marketing hub for continued growth including the launch of professional doctorate and will provide a central point for the development of our own arrangements for research degrees in anticipation of a post-RDAP Marjon.

Table 4 provides an overview of the preferred timeline for submission for RDAP. Table 4 outlines the required three years of auditable evidence include academic years 2019-20, 2020-21 and 2021-22. Once collation and verification of the 2021-22 metrics/evidence has been completed a key data driven decision to submit January 2024 or delay by a year will be required; if we do not meet the metrics we should not submit. Table 4 identifies the calendar year 2023 as a critical year (spanning 2022-23 and 2023-24 academic years) where the self-assessment document will be prepared, and associated evidence sources collated. Assuming the data/evidence and external scrutiny of the self-evaluation document confirm the submission should be made the intention is to submit January 2024 which means 2024 will be the key year for the full scrutiny process. Following submission an initial assessment and then scrutiny process will be undertaken; this process is likely to take 6 to 12 months. If successful time-limited full DAPS for a probationary three-year period will be awarded and so 2024-25 through to 2026-27 will need continued scrutiny and data monitoring. Implementation of this plan is an important action for 2022-23 ([Action 9.2](#)).

**Table 4:** Overview of RDAP timeline

2019-20	2020-21	2021-22	2022-23	2023-24	2024-2025	2025-26	2026-27
Metrics year 1.  Other evidence sources year 1.  Accreditation review with University of Chichester	Metrics year 2.  Other evidence sources year 2.	Metrics year 3.  Other evidence sources year 3.	Launch of Marjon Doctoral College  Data driven decision to submit or pause.  Preparation of self-assessment document.  External review of self-assessment document	Submission & upload of evidence.  6-12 months scrutiny process including up to 5 visits.  Decision on outcome to award full DAPs (time-limited).  Accreditation review with University of Chichester	Year 1 - time limited full DAPS. Maintain data collection.	Year 2 - time limited full DAPS. Maintain data collection.	Year 3 - time limited full DAPS. Maintain data collection.

Three important workstreams have been identified to enable preparation of our own regulations for post-graduate research provision, prepare the self-assessment document and ensure the metrics and other evidence sources are verified and collated.

- a) **Workstream 1** will focus on preparing Marjon post-graduate research degree regulations and supporting evidence related to demonstrating we align to National Guidance (criterion G and H).
- b) **Workstream 2** will focus on the preparation of the self-assessment document with a key focus on the criterion related to academic staff and research environment and culture.
- c) **Workstream 3** will complement workstreams 1 and 2 with a specific focus on verifying the three essential metrics related to academic staff, alongside collation and review of evidence sources that will be referred to and uploaded in the self-assessment document and scrutiny process.

Workstreams will be formally constituted as part of the cycle of business during the 2022-23 academic year, following our TEF submission to support balancing the resource requirements. Senate will have overarching responsibility for approval of the RDAP preparation and submission. The specific additional criterion related to RDAP would be best evaluated initially by existing committees of Research Degrees Scrutiny Panel and Research and Knowledge Exchange Committee. Confirmation of meeting existing criterion for TDAP is best served through University Board of Studies. Collectively the self-assessment document will therefore be considered at both University Board of Studies and Research and Knowledge Exchange Committee prior to consideration at Senate.

## 6. Research Integrity

KS4	Review current practices and implement any requirements of the revised 2019 concordat to support research integrity	2020
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Marjon is committed to the five commitments identified in the UUK Concordat to Support Research Integrity which seeks to provide a comprehensive national framework for good research conduct and its governance. The commitments identified within the concordat naturally align to our values and the ambition that our research and knowledge exchange is underpinned by rigour, respect, and responsibility. In compliance with the Concordat to Support Research Integrity, Plymouth Marjon University is required to publish an annual statement on research integrity which must be presented to the Board of Governors, and subsequently be made publicly available, ordinarily through the website. The following statement covers the period from 1 August 2021 to 31 July 2022 and summarises the University's status relative to the expectations of the Concordat. It outlines activities undertaken and our approach to strengthening our alignment to the commitments expressed within the concordat and has been underpinned by utilising the 2021 revised UKRIO self-assessment tool for concordat to support research integrity.

Key activities during 2021-22 to support and strengthen research integrity including culture and leadership include ethics researcher development series and the research culture project (summarised in section 7). A summary of how we meet the commitment and activities from 2021-22 are summarised against the commitment of the concordat including addressing research misconduct in the following sections.

- 6.1. *Commitment 1 We are committed to upholding the highest standards of rigour and integrity in all aspects of research.* This commitment is exemplified through our work on ensuring our values of ambition, curiosity, independent and humanity underpin all activities at Marjon. All new staff participate in a living the values session and our values are embedded in all aspects of academic review including probationary processes, performance and development reviews, and as part of academic promotion.
- 6.2. *Commitment 2 We are committed to ensuring that research is conducted according to appropriate ethical, legal and professional frameworks, obligations and standards.* Plymouth Marjon University is an active member of a number of external bodies including UKRIO, Guild HE Research and Cathedrals Group Research and Enterprise group which help to ensure we remain up to date in terms of external frameworks. Researchers within Marjon were supported to attend workshops and conferences e.g. UKRIO annual conference. The Deputy Vice-Chancellor has overall responsibility for overseeing the implementation of the concordat including the oversight of research policies, research governance and ethics, and training and development opportunities provided by the University to its staff and students. The Research Ethics Panel discharges a number of these responsibilities. The ethical approval policy was substantially updated during 2020-21 and 2021-22 saw its successful implementation. The activities of this panel are reported in its annual statement (annex 1).
- 6.3. *Commitment 3 We are committed to supporting a research environment that is underpinned by a culture of integrity and based on good governance, best practice and support for the development of researchers.* There is a named point of contact to act as a first point of contact for anyone wanting more information on matters of research integrity on the website. Our commitment at Marjon is reinforced in the Research and Knowledge

Exchange Strategy, 'Building Knowledge Together' e.g. via the strategic intent of 'building knowledge capacity inclusively across our community, including students and the public, built on trust and integrity'. Learning, training and mentoring opportunities are operated through activities of the research and knowledge exchange office centrally. Academic staff are managed by directors of school who support a culture of integrity in line with Marjon values. Several activities aim to support the research environment including a researcher development series to support rigour and to support understanding of the research ethics process. The research culture project summarised in section 7 also supports this commitment.

- 6.4. *Commitment 4 We are committed to using transparent, robust and fair processes to deal with allegations of research misconduct when they arise.* There is a named point of contact for whistle-blowers or any other person wishing to raise concerns about the integrity of research being conducted. There were no reports of academic misconduct during the reporting period and in such cases, there are appropriate processes to deal with allegations of research misconduct should they arise. Plymouth Marjon University introduced a report and support approach to identify all forms of bullying and harassment and none of the incidents related to research integrity.
- 6.5. *Commitment 5 We are committed to working together to strengthen the integrity of research and to reviewing progress regularly and openly.* This commitment has been strengthened by increasing the contribution to and membership of the relevant committees that have oversight of research and knowledge exchange within Plymouth Marjon university. An open culture exists at Marjon and opportunity for staff from academic and professional services is facilitated through a range of events including brown-bag seminars, an annual staff conference, research and knowledge exchange groups and where possible face to face informal events.

## 7. Research Culture

KS2	Develop a relevant and challenging early career researcher offer in line with the revised 2019 researcher development concordat including an offer for recent PhD graduates and experienced practitioners entering higher education.	2020-2021

An Enhancing Research Culture Project was initiated, utilising in-year Research England 'Enhancing Research Culture' funding received by Marjon in December 2021 led by Professor Pam Dawson. The purpose of the Research England funding was to develop and initiate new activities in response to the R&D People and Culture Strategy, which sets out a vision for *"ensuring the research system is made up of talented and diverse people with the right skills, working in an environment that nurtures and gets the best out of everyone"*. The project is aligned to the Marjon People Strategy and the people related objectives in the 2020-25 Research and Knowledge Exchange Strategy. The project was scoped in relation to the following criteria from the Research England funding guidance: a) Securing and supporting the careers of researchers and associated professions and b) Diversifying recruitment, reward and recognition approaches at all career stages. The Royal Society definition of research culture was used to inform discussions with colleagues, *"Research culture encompasses the behaviours, values, expectations, attitudes and the norms of research communities. It influences who is doing research, what research is done and how it is communicated"*. It has been emphasised throughout that research culture impacts on integrity, diversity, career paths, reward and recognition, open science and the ethos of collaboration. Marjon's values as a university of *Humanity, Ambition, Curiosity and Independence* were used as the underpinning framework for contextualising and interpreting how colleagues experience research culture, and as guiding principles for recommendations.

- a) Phase 1 of the enhancing research culture project aimed to explore the Marjon research culture and to identify the challenges experienced by early career researchers (ECRs), practitioner academics (PAs) and part-time academics (PTAs) in doing research and being a researcher at Marjon. Criteria for inviting colleagues to participate were developed. A total of 24 colleagues (30% of the 81 invited) from across the University participated in Phase 1. Online workshops were held for each of the three groups of colleagues and, to promote participation and inclusion, these were offered via Doodle poll on different days and times. There were multiple ways for participants to contribute their views and ideas. Padlet was used as a tool to facilitate exchange of views and ideas, encourage collaborative discussion, and to capture both 'in the room' and 'after the event' thoughts. The Padlets were pre-designed, around Marjon values, to provoke discussions. Marjon values statements were modified into statements about experiences of doing research and research culture, for example, for the value of Curiosity, *"We encourage potential and possibility"* was adapted to *"We encourage everyone's research potential"*. Participants were encouraged to agree/disagree with each value statement and to add comments to explain why they had given thumbs up or down, and for them to give their wider views related to the statements. The Padlet included opportunities for open comments about the challenges in doing research/being a researcher at Marjon and participants were also asked to give their views on the best and worst things about the Marjon research culture. Open discussion was encouraged during the workshop and Chatham House ground rules were agreed, in that participants were encouraged to share outside the workshops the broad themes of discussion but not to attribute any comments made to any individual.

Phase 1 findings showed overall positive agreement across the three groups for some value statements including; *“Our research makes a difference”*, *“We push boundaries in research”* and *“We encourage equality and diverse views in research”* with comments reinforcing the importance of local, regional and national community based collaboration in research. For other statements, there was a clear difference of opinion across participants, sometimes seen to polarise within specific groups. For value statements *“We have an inclusive research community”* and *“We value researchers and nurture independence”* and *“We work together as researchers”* there was less agreement. It was acknowledged that the new RKE groups have made a start on bringing people together, there was an apparent paradox between having your research outputs valued but not being valued or nurtured to become an independent researcher and there was a thread of opinion about working in silos. On the other hand, the writing retreats were mentioned on more than one occasion as a very positive collaborative and team building activity. The value statements *“We encourage research potential”* and *“We empower people to be the best researchers they can”* are particularly important in gauging how people experience the research culture, and there was a consistent trend towards disagreement with comments highlighting a culture that may be encouraging but isn’t capacity building; perceived lack of resources to support personal/professional research ambition; and concern about the deployment model allocating time only for teaching, leadership and management and that research is not a priority in PDR conversations.

Thematic analysis of Phase 1 comments identified three central themes: 1) difficult to identify and protect time for research, 2) insular cliquey research culture ‘those who do and those who don’t’ and 3) research culture is improving. The most discussed challenge was identifying and protecting time for research. The perceived lack of infrastructure and policies for research, including transparent means to secure and protect time, and mechanisms for getting support, were also raised. Inexperienced researchers said they would like to see projects led by experienced researchers that they could join and contribute to, so they could be part of a research team and learn research skills. Despite the negative views expressed, participants acknowledged that the research culture is improving, research is better managed and monitored than ever before, and that the University’s research ambition and enthusiasm is evident

- b) Phase 2 aimed to explore feedback from Professors, Associate Professors and experienced researchers on Phase 1 findings, to inform co-design conversations. Two group meetings and one individual meeting were held with Marjon’s experienced and independent researchers (n=12 from 27), to present an overview of the findings from Phase 1. The meetings yielded rich and reflective conversations, where experienced researchers identified with the challenges of securing and protecting time, from their experience at Marjon and elsewhere. As senior academics and leaders, they recognised the pros and cons of Marjon’s dominant teaching and learning culture, in relation to the University’s track record and reputation for excellence in teaching and its clear ambition to become ‘research informed’ rather than ‘research intensive’. Nevertheless, they acknowledged the imperatives and dilemmas in driving research forward and recognised that asking colleagues to do research will inevitably mean they will need to do less of something else, therefore efficiencies need to be found. Experienced researchers who attended the Phase 2 meetings could all give examples of where they do mentor and support colleagues in their research endeavours but acknowledged that mentoring is not formally required of them. Some were keen to support cross-university multidisciplinary projects, although there were concerns about how this

would be resourced. It was recognised that structures and policies around research, and its resourcing, were key factors in influencing culture. The question was raised as to whether the Phase 1 findings would be any different if the project had been undertaken elsewhere, and that the University is grappling with the same challenges seen across the sector. Nevertheless, experienced researchers could see how the current research culture may not be perceived as inclusive or developmental and were open to further discussion on how Marjon's research culture could be enhanced.

- c) Phase 3 aimed to co-design (with ECRs, PAs and PTAs) potential career development/support and recognition activities, to improve their experience of Marjon's research culture and enable colleagues to make an enhanced research contribution where appropriate. The 24 participants from Phase 1 were invited to take part in co-design workshops and 11/24 (46%) participants attended (3 ECRs, 5 PAs and 3 PTAs). The different groups were mixed in Phase 3 workshops and two separate groups, and one individual meeting were held. The findings from Phase 1 were presented to participants in the co-design workshops, to share perspectives across the different groups and set the scene. Key cross-cutting themes were used to pre-design a Padlet to facilitate co-design and co-creation conversations. The themes of 'identifying and protecting time', 'improving policies and structures', 'support for research/knowledge exchange' and 'making Marjon's research culture more inclusive' were pre-selected as the most prevalent and pressing concerns from both Phase 1 findings and the feedback from experienced researchers in Phase 2. An option was given on the Padlet for Phase 3 participants to add any other theme they thought had been omitted, but no other themes were suggested. In keeping with co-design methods, three ideation principles were established with participants; 1) be creative (go wide and imaginative in your thinking), 2) be problem/solution focused (think forward not backward and what impact your idea will have), 3) be innovative (can be small/incremental or widespread/disruptive innovation, and the idea doesn't have to be new, but can you visualise your idea in action). The same Padlet was used for all workshops, and it was available afterwards for a 2 week period, so that participants could reflect and add more ideas.

The analysis of Padlet contributions and notes taken during the workshops were synthesised into a total of 30 co-designed recommendations. Recommendations fall under the headings of 'identifying and protecting time for research', 'support for research and knowledge exchange', 'making Marjon's research culture more inclusive' and 'improving research policies and structures'. The recommendations were discussed at Research and Knowledge Exchange committee and have since been divided into short term (delivery during 2022-23, summarised in Table 5 as key actions for 2022-2023) and longer term (developed during 2022-23 and implemented beyond that). Delivery of the short-term recommendations is a key action for 2022-23 ([Action 9.3](#)). Many short-term recommendations focused on research coaching/mentoring and therefore an immediate pilot research coaching programme was implemented during 2021-22

- d) The pilot coaching programme was led by Dr Lynne Wyness, a fully qualified professional coach and experienced academic researcher. Invitations to join the pilot programme were extended to all part-time academics and practitioner academics on a first-come first-served basis. The first six academics to answer the call were included and a total of fifteen coaching sessions was conducted. A range of topics was covered: time management, promotion, research funding, publications, research plans, confidence,

research skills, collaboration and networking, and managing large workloads and expectations.

Coaching, certainly for research, was a new experience for the coachees, although for some it was a familiar concept to them. The coachees differed in what they hoped to gain by engaging with coaching, including, specific research advice, accountability and action planning, support, and dedicated time to explore research plans and ideas. They all approached the process with enthusiasm and commitment. Some of their hopes for the coaching included for example, *'I really wanted some space and time to consider my research plans, hopes and concerns, with someone who understands academia.'* (practitioner/part-time academic) and *'A clearer idea of how to approach research, and what would be meaningful and 'do-able' for me. I also hoped for the coaching sessions to boost my motivation for research. I also hoped for the coaching to help me feel more supported by Marjon.'* (practitioner/part-time academic). The coaching met or exceeded expectations of the coachees.

Coaching helped the researchers explore what meaningful and values-based research meant for them and all coachees reported that their coaching had been useful in varying ways. A common theme emerged as viewing the process of coaching as 'sounding board' and space to explore new ideas. Coaching had given them a chance to:

- Develop new research ideas, make connections and review existing ideas
- Understand and discuss the process of applying for ethical approval
- Understand their strengths and how these apply to research
- Critically reflect on their research practice
- Develop their capacity to take realistic and achievable decisions in their research
- Take stock of their research trajectory and focus attention on next steps
- Identify unhelpful patterns of behaviour or practice that create obstacles and challenges in their research
- Identify and celebrate past achievements
- Learn time management skills and techniques

Coachees commented favourably on the quality of the coaching 'process': the ways in which the coaching worked well for them tended to resonate with coaching competences such as setting expectations and contracting at the start of the series of coaching sessions; the supportive nature of the coach; focus on setting practical, achievable goals at the end of sessions; asking powerful questions to provoke reflection; and summarising key learning points at the end of the series. The coaching was framed from the outset in a strengths and values-based position as opposed to being outcomes driven.

Further developments of the programme could include utilisation of the Vitae Researcher Framework for initial pre-session work, to identify areas of strength and areas that require more focus and planning. The coaching pilot at Marjon has been a success that points to its further potential for a more coherent coaching 'offer' alongside mentoring for implementation during 2022-2023.



Table 5: Research Culture Recommendations for Implementation 2022-23

Short-term recommendations for implantation during 22/23 academic year	Key stakeholders/notes
A1 Transparent agreement within the deployment model that all colleagues, including those who work part-time, should identify and protect time for research/KE activities, within the standard allocation of 175 hours (or pro-rata), without pressure to sacrifice that time for encroaching student facing activities.	AMT (lead) and Academic Contribution Governance Group support needed.
A3 Recognition within the academic contribution framework of the additional time needed for the 'hidden labour' associated with mentoring and supporting Marjon's widening participation students, and support for staff to manage the time demands made by these students, without jeopardising student success.	AMT (lead) and Academic Contribution Governance Group support needed.
A8 DR meetings should always include a conversation about the reviewee's current research/KE activity and future plans, to facilitate time management strategies and hold both the reviewer and the reviewee to account for the reviewee's time allocation for engagement in research/knowledge exchange activities.	AMT (lead) and People Team support needed
C6 Improve research induction for new academic staff, to ensure colleagues are aware of the opportunities, systems and structures that underpin research at Marjon.	RKEO induction (implemented) and AMT
D5 Add to PDR guidance the requirement for a research/KE-related conversation.	People team
D8 Review Marjon's staff induction policies to ensure research induction takes place for new academics	People team
A6 Writing retreats are highly valued in terms of their transparency for time allocation and personal accountability. The concept could be further developed to be more inclusive for colleagues at all stages of writing ability	RKEO
C2 Renew commitment to students as co-researchers, to help embed research across the learning/teaching culture	RKEO
D4 Develop a fair and transparent policy for application for and allocation of research time, to include part-time as well as fulltime staff.	Development of RKE Leave Scheme. RKEO
C4 The University should facilitate cross disciplinary projects, led by experienced Marjon researchers, which offer research capacity building opportunities for new and aspiring researchers. Implicit within this recommendation is the need for a fair and transparent allocation of time for those who participate, including part-time staff.	Seedcorn funding included in QR spend plans addresses the opportunity.
A5 ECRs and others who can demonstrate engagement and productivity in research should be able to flex the deployment model to allow identification of a personal 'research day' where they are supported to protect one day per week for their research activities, without pressure to sacrifice that day for encroaching student facing activities.	This does happen already on an ad hoc basis. AMT support needed.
A2 Review teaching/learning admin related models and activities and explore potential efficiencies to create time for research activities, e.g. better use of technology for administrative functions (including student facing technology), clarity in professional administration structures and roles, reduction in module	AMT and Quality & Academic Standards support needed

resourcing hours where feasible, avoidance of 'one deep' modules, where a single academic has no other colleague to assist with unforeseen modular level issues.	
C3 University managers and leaders should take responsibility for facilitating local team conversations that are research/KE-related, as well as those that relate to teaching/learning and students, to help balance out the dominance of the teaching/learning culture.	AMT support needed
B1 A research coaching/mentoring scheme needs to be introduced, involving qualified coaches and experienced researchers from within and outside the Marjon community as appropriate. Different approaches to coaching and/or mentoring will be required for colleagues at different stages of research capability and career development.	Pilot research coaching implemented. Extend research coaching during 2022/23. RKE Group Leads support needed for research mentoring.
B2 Research mentors/coaches need to be prepared, motivated and have adequate time to devote to the activity.	AMT support needed
B3 PAs should receive appropriate mentorship/coaching from others who have succeeded in research/KE as a practitioner.	Pilot research coaching implemented. Extend research coaching during 2022/23.
C5 Establish a 'coaching culture' for research at Marjon to promote inclusivity and to nurture the research/KE potential of all academic staff.	Pilot research coaching implemented. Extend research coaching during 2022/23. RKE Group Leads support needed for research mentoring.
D1 Establish a formal mechanism for allocation of research coaches/mentors and a system to monitor and evaluate its success	Pilot research coaching implemented. Extend research coaching during 2022/23. RKE Group Leads support needed for research mentoring.
D2 Pilot a coaching/mentoring programme for PAs and PTAs to evaluate what colleagues want/need and how it can be delivered	Pilot research coaching implemented. Extend research coaching during 2022/23. RKE Group Leads support needed for research mentoring.
D3 Scope the coaching/mentoring training needs of experienced researchers	RKE Group Leads support needed for research mentoring.
B5 Research training opportunities should be reviewed to ensure fairness of access for part-time as well as fulltime staff, and to renew and refresh the topics that Marjon offers in relation to staff needs.	RKEO office, pilot twilight sessions, collaborate with other HEIs (GuildHE/Cathedrals group)
B6 There are various research training opportunities at other universities, which we could better utilise for Marjon staff.	RKEO office, pilot twilight sessions, collaborate with other HEIs (GuildHE/Cathedrals group)

#### e) Update on Research Development Concordat

Marjon are a signatory of the Researcher Development Concordat to demonstrate our commitment to achieving the principles for the environment and culture, employment and professional and career development of researchers.

- a) *Principle 1: Excellent research requires a supportive and inclusive research culture.* The People Strategy (2020-2025) aims to enable our people to work together in open and collaborative environments, empowering their growth and development for both their career aspirations but also as part of our university culture and Growth Plan vision. The People Strategy identifies areas for improvement four people promises: 1) people centred approach, 2) creating a community of success, 3) future focused workforce and 4) positive and inclusive working environment. In 2021-22 the enhancing research culture project summarised in section 7.1 to 7.3 was the key activity contributing to this principle.

In line with the equality objective “*Advance gender equality including recognising gender diversity, eliminating discrimination and promoting a fair and inclusive environment*” during 2021-21 the Athena Swan self-assessment team was formed. Led by Associate Professor Julia Stewart the Athena Swan Self-Assessment Team met five times online, including an introductory training session run by Advance HE. The team have gathered most of the core statistical data required and have started some initial data processing. Smaller subgroups have been assigned to consider specific themes, for example, reviewing the maternity process, promotion and progression, and recruitment. Groups are both looking at the data and suggesting areas for inclusion in the action plan or that we may need to do further quantitative or qualitative research on. It is exciting that team members have different areas of interest and are keen to take different themes on and we hope this will drive things forward. A key next decision will be whether we run the full template culture survey, which is not a requirement for an institutional application (or whether we take elements of this and/or assess our culture in other ways. We will utilise the Curiosity Conference “*Fostering Inclusion and Challenging Culture*” in September 2022 to host a world café table to take this forward. Continued support for the self-assessment team to progress to a submission is a key priority for 2022-23 ([Action 9.4](#)).

Aligned to the equality objective “*Develop a mentally healthy university community and culture, in which positive mental health is promoted and mental ill health is thoughtfully and effectively supported*” a working group is working towards the student minds mental health charter. While this work focuses on students it does include the wider community and for example has led to introducing a wellbeing pass, adjusting physical spaces and adjusting roles and responsibilities. One Researcher Development session linked to this objective “*The health resilient researcher*” was highly evaluated by participants with comments suggesting more mindfulness and consideration to wellbeing and work-life balance.

- b) *Principle 2: Researchers are recruited, employed and managed under conditions that recognise and value their contributions.* The Academic Promotion and Career Development Procedure enables any staff member to apply for academic promotion through an annual round. During 2021-22 there were ten applications for promotion submitted and seven were successful. Some of these included substantive evidence about achievement in research and/or knowledge exchange and impact. In relation to this Marjon are committed to the Declaration on Research Assessment ([DORA](#)) and confirm journal-based metrics were not utilised as a measure of quality of individual research articles in making decisions about recruitment of staff or academic

promotion. Specific congratulations to newly promoted Professor Jon Ord and Associate Professors Caroline Law and Alister McCormick.

- c) Principle 3: *Professional and career development are integral to enabling researchers to develop their full potential.* All academic staff have 175 hours (25 days) for activity related to their academic development pathway as articulated in the Academic Contribution Framework which is a whole contribution model (total time 1498 hours). The Academic Contribution Framework Governance Group annually undertake a review and equality impact assessment of time allocated. All staff engage in an annual performance development review which are taking place and/or being finalised for 2021-21 currently, the completion rate for academic staff in 2020-21 was 98% (84 out of 86 eligible staff, with 41 not being required eg due to probationary processes/parental leave etc). Alongside the formal opportunity to engage in a performance development review, a range of additional development opportunities are available including researcher development (summarised in section 8) alongside wider development opportunities e.g. mental health first aid training, project management training that might be relevant to career development. Marjon also provide access to Vitae RDF planner through GuildHE Research shared services.

## 8. Research and Knowledge Exchange Environment

<b>KS1</b>	Establish the researcher development series and brown bag sessions and increase engagement with these activities	Annually monitor
<b>KS5</b>	Celebrate the successes and achievements of all members of our community in relation to research and knowledge exchange	Annually monitored
<b>KS13</b>	Ensure all of our research and knowledge exchange is open access, continuing to support our repository and in line with sector developments	Annually monitor
<b>KS17</b>	Establish interdisciplinary research groups that address global and national issues underpinned by a critical mass of interest and existing expertise to support growth and that engage our broader community.	2020
<b>KS18</b>	Increase grant funding income including collaborative bids as a funded partner with organisations aligned to Marjon values from major grant funding bodies	Annually monitor

### 8.1. Research and Knowledge Exchange Groups

The four Institution wide interdisciplinary research and knowledge exchange (RKE) groups continued to be embedded within Marjon during the academic year, although this was more challenging in the context of lockdowns and social distancing. The RKE groups were developed to ensure sustainable growth in RKE, offer coherence in focus and encouragement for collaboration, and contribute to an inclusive and supportive research culture. Each of the four RKE groups each provided an annual update to the Research and Knowledge Exchange Committee and demonstrated continued vibrancy and critical mass. Some headlines include:

- a) The Sustainability, Creativity and Innovation (SCION) RKE group convened by Professor Debby Cotton, Dr Greg Bourne and Dr Natalie Raven has continued to grow membership, including PhD students and has expanded its external links including working with Visiting Professor Zoe Robinson, submitting a funding bid with the Plymouth Community Climate Centre, and strengthening relationships with local partners including various local community energy groups, Environment Plymouth, and Art and Energy, as well as joining the UK Consortium for Sustainability Research. We also had a SCION representative at COP26 as the Student Climate Commissioner, and representation on the DfE's Sustainability and Climate Change Youth Panel. Group members have had successful publications on topics including energy literacy, sustainable tourism, and toxic chemicals in everyday life. Funded projects include the MarjonXRame project which looks at innovative approaches to actor training in nature, and a collaborative project with Plymouth City Council Driving Resilience, Growth and Sustainability in Plymouth. The group are also contributing to institutional developments around sustainability, including reviewing sustainability on the Marjon campus, developing a resource for sustainability in the curriculum, leading Carbon Literacy training at the university, and contributing to raising the profile of the Ground Source Heat Pump project. A regular newsletter updates members on activities and successes, as well as alerting them to internal and external events.
- b) The Context, Agency, Place and Education (CAPE) RKE group convened by Professor Tanya Ovenden-Hope, Dr Jon Ord and Lee Ballard (ECR) had an active year, engaging with university, school, multi academy trust, college and visiting professor members through a series of masterclasses, development workshops, brown bag sessions and regular group meetings. Engagement with All-Party Parliamentary groups was

extended, with CAPE members leading and participating in an APPG Special Interest Group on Teacher Supply. Evidence for government select committees were submitted to policy calls. CAPE members led BERA special interest groups and developed knowledge exchange projects, such as the Informal and Community Practitioner Seminar Series; supported student as researcher projects and facilitated research output by students.

- c) The Resilience and Human Performance(RHP) RKE group convened by Professor Shum and Dr Joe Layden attracted further new members to the group and had good engagement in the public lecture and the biomechanics and physiology laboratories showcase event. The group has contributed significantly to the successful REF 2021 results in Unit 24, in which 71.4% of our research output has been considered to be 3/4\*. A successful partnership has been established between the RHP group and DDRC Healthcare, an internationally renowned clinical and research specialist in diving medicine and hyperbaric oxygen therapy. A joint 3.5 years PhD studentship, funded by both Plymouth Marjon University and DDRC has been established and plan to recruit a high calibre PhD student to start in February 2023. The RHP group has also continued to provide support for those engaging in running, sports injury rehabilitation and occupational wellbeing especially through partnership with the Institute of Naval Medicine.
- d) The Lifelong Health and Wellbeing (LHW) RKE group, convened by Professor Pam Dawson and Professor Saul Bloxham, had a successful year; characterised by partnership working, collaboration and capacity building, and there was considerable LHW RKE activity during 2021-22. LHW, and its close association with Marjon Health & Wellbeing (MHW), was integral to the success of the University's Student Led Knowledge Exchange (SLKE) project, which involved 6 MHW clinic leads and the MHW architect, who are all LHW RKE Group members. A collaborative Long COVID rehabilitation pilot was jointly delivered, using a student knowledge exchange model, with physiotherapists from University Hospitals Plymouth (UHP), MHW clinic leads and students from the School of Sport Health & Wellbeing. LHW Group members from Speech and Language Therapy (SLT) have secured £95,544 of follow-on funding for an expansion of more than 45 placements, over 4000 placement hours and over 135 referrals. The clinic supports clients with speech, language, and communication needs as well as co-constructing knowledge exchange activities with stakeholders, such as training for schools, carers and other SLTs. The team has presented learning gained from the SLT clinic at National conferences. New funding of £45,943.20 has been secured to design and deliver a Physical Activity Programme for Children and Adolescents of Excessive Weight (CEW) in partnership with students, MHW clinic leads and a multi-disciplinary clinic team from UHP. A research capacity building model was used in 21/22 to deliver a commissioned funded evaluation of Tier 2 Weight Management Services, and LHW collaborated with Marjon Evaluation and Research Impact Centre (MERIC) to enable colleagues new to research to work alongside experienced LHW researchers and a final year PhD student. The LHW RKE Group hosted a well-attended themed Brown Bag event for Practitioner Academics to share their experience of barriers and enablers to becoming active in RKE, and feedback from this event is informing LHW RKE capacity building plans to ensure health practitioners are supported to become active in research and/or knowledge exchange when they join our academic community to deliver new health programmes.

## 8.2. Researcher Development Opportunities

Researcher development opportunities for all Marjon staff and PGR students includes internal development events and opportunity to apply for external events through staff development and/or the PGR development budget. Staff and PGR students have attended National and International conferences to present their research work. The internal development events that support staff and PGR students at Marjon during 2020-21 included:

- a) **Brown-bag seminar series** which typically consists of staff or PGR student presentations of their research to their peers in a supportive setting. During 2021-22 there were 9 brown-bags and 23 different presentations covering a range of subject areas/disciplines including education, sport, health, arts and business and social sciences. Each of the RKE groups convened one brown bag focused on their research and knowledge exchanged activities. The brown bag series remained through the media of MS Teams which seemed to improve engagement with most sessions having good attendance.
- b) **Researcher development series** which supports development aligned to the vitae researcher development framework and is particularly geared towards supporting early career academics/PGR students. Researcher development sessions are delivered by either internal staff or through external experts, one successful approach during 2021-22 was engaging students in delivery of sessions and this will be extended during 2022-23. During 2021-22 there were 32 different workshops covering a range of themes including research methods/approaches (e.g. qualitative techniques, NVivo), funding and bid-writing, research impact and getting social, publishing hints and tips and research ethics. Attendance at some of these sessions has been below capacity, therefore sharing the programme more widely with other HEIs from the Cathedrals Group/Guild HE has been actioned. Evaluation suggests sessions have been well-received and has had impact in terms of influencing research approaches/practice e.g. *"This has allowed me to take a different approach to my data collecting and use of Nvivo", "I have already put some of the advice in to action and gained 70 new Twitter followers yay!", "Thinking about my research's impact going forward and thinking about the wider landscape of who might be the partner organisations and others interested in my research" and "I will be taking a less rigid approach to time - I realised that even in 30 minutes I can achieve a surprising amount. This will help me get more out of the pockets of time I have available"*. Gaps for future workshops have been identified in terms of both participant feedback and in relation to the vitae researcher development framework for 2022-23.
- c) **Writing retreats** were successfully extended during 2021-22 to include six located on campus single day retreats with two external two day retreats. Both formats proved popular with staff, especially the two day retreats where applicants exceeded capacity. Feedback from attendees was positive with staff frequently reporting about the sense of community of writing that is formed, the concentrated time to focus on writing and the 'permission' to focus entirely on research.

## 8.3. Vibrancy and Sustainability of the Research Environment

Indicators of the vibrancy and sustainability of the research and knowledge environment suggest a successful year. A summary of relevant indicators and headlines is included.

- a) **Research Outputs and Open Access.** In total 38 research outputs were included in the open access repository during 1 September 2021 to 31 August 2022. This is consistent with the previous year which is a sign of an active research community. Furthermore 26 different academic staff members were involved in authoring these outputs suggesting research activity is spread across the academic staff. Of the outputs 68% were published in collaboration with partners including those from International and UK based Higher Education, and those outside higher education. It is also worth noting several research outputs were co-authored with post-graduate students which reinforces the important link at Marjon between teaching and research.

We request all research outputs are submitted to Marjon research repository. The outputs are then uploaded following a defined process, by a specialist to support open access as soon as possible within published guidelines. The repository appears well used, for instance data from IRIS-UK shows 14,966 downloads of research between 1 September 2021 and 31 August 2022, which is a 27% increase compared to 2020-2021. Table 6 summarises the top ten downloaded outputs during this period which vary across discipline areas. Since many Marjon outputs are co-authored it is clearly plausible the research outputs are also being downloaded from other locations e.g. other university repositories. Collectively we are making every effort to ensure our research is accessible.

**Table 6:** IRIS UK Top Ten Research Outputs downloaded from Repository 2021-22

Title	Downloads/Requests
A critique of Forest School: something lost in translation	1377
Detecting Ransomware with Honeypot Techniques	556
Teacher wellbeing and workload: Why a work–life balance is essential for the teaching profession	438
The BASES Expert Statement on Mental Health Literacy in Elite Sport	429
Linking corporate social responsibility in sport with community development: an added source of community value	368
Depressive symptoms in high-performance athletes and non-athletes: a comparative meta-analysis	315
Assessing the psychosocial factors associated with adherence to exercise referral schemes: A systematic review	277
Psychosocial factors associated with outcomes of sports injury rehabilitation in competitive athletes: a mixed studies systematic review	273



Ecosystem restoration strengthens pollination network resilience and function	273
Gait Retraining for the Reduction of Injury Occurrence in Novice Distance Runners: 1-Year Follow-up of a Randomized Controlled Trial	269

- b) **Research and Knowledge Exchange Funding.** In total there were 17 bids related to externally funded research and knowledge exchange activity made during 2021-22 by staff and of these 12 were successfully awarded. Total funding awarded for new projects was £195 470 and included funding for a range of projects, primarily in collaboration with other Higher Education Institutions or private/public organisations. New funded projects included a range of evaluation with partners particularly in health and education. Funding led by Professor Sonia Blandford for various stages of 'Are we Included' were successful including evaluation of the measurement tool, pilot implementation, and wider implementation for 2022-23. We were also pleased Professor Jennie Winter, Professor Sue Cooper and Elpida Achtaridou successfully bid for evaluation of the Marjon student colleagues scheme as part of supporting evidence about approaches to evaluation across the sector (TASO).

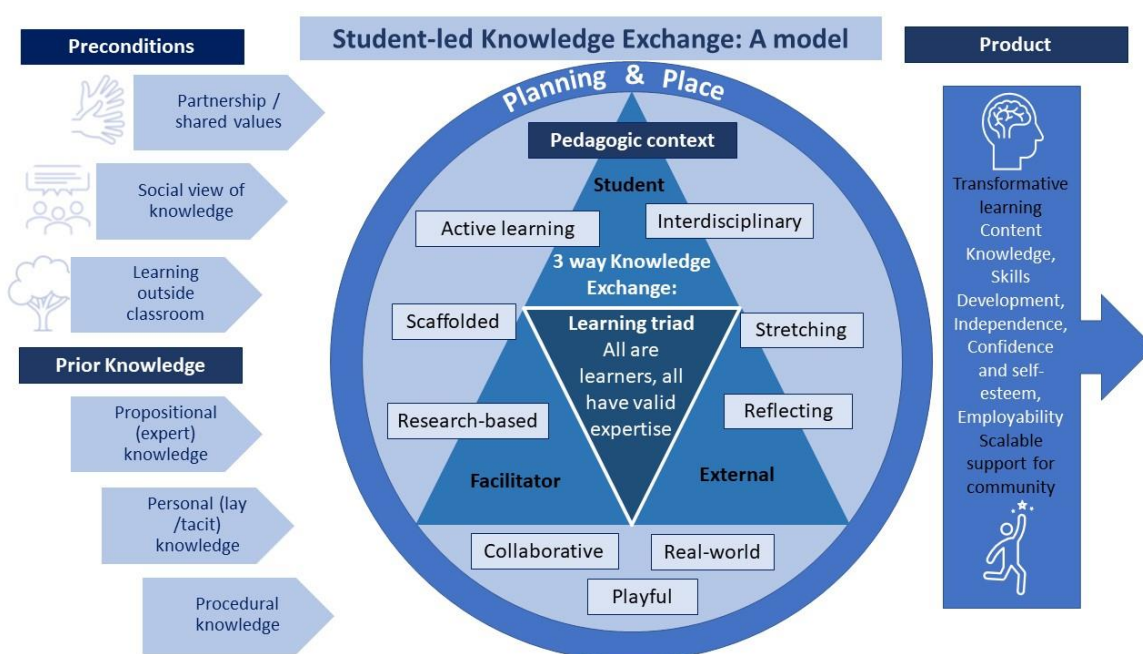


Figure 6: Student Led Knowledge Exchange Model

Research and knowledge exchange activity continued on large long-term projects, for instance we concluded the Flavour project summarised in section 3. August 2022 marked the end of the two-year Student-Led Knowledge Exchange (SLKE) project at Marjon, funded by Research England and the office for Students, and delivered by Professor Debby Cotton, Professor Saul Bloxham, Associate Professor Sue Cooper, John Downey, Dr Mauro Fornasiero, and Dr Joe Allison. The project aimed to explore the conditions which allow a SLKE culture to flourish in undergraduate teaching and learning, and to develop a model for wider use. We worked with student researchers to conduct transformative evaluation which helped understand the benefits of

engagement in health and wellbeing clinics from a student perspective. A stakeholder analysis also allowed us to evaluate opportunities and barriers for wider utilisation of student-led knowledge exchange activities in higher education and develop a pedagogic model of student-led knowledge exchange (Figure 6). 211 students were involved directly in clinic activities and another 33 were involved as student researchers. Of the students who have been involved in our project since its inception, 44% are from POLAR 1 & 2, 41% have been mature students, and 28% have a disability. Through the project, a range of new opportunities were offered to students for engagement in clinics and other health and wellbeing activities such as a long covid clinic and an adolescent obesity hub. The findings of the project have been disseminated at a number of national and international conferences and events, as well as through the Project Conference, run at Marjon in April 2022. Two publications are under review, with further papers in preparation.

## 9. Priorities for Research and Knowledge Exchange 2022-23 onwards

### **Key priorities for 2022-2023 include**

- 9.1. Implementation and delivery of three QR schemes including a seedcorn funding scheme, doctoral bursaries and research coaching and mentoring schemes.
- 9.2. Implementation of the RDAP delivery plan summarised in [section 5.1](#).
- 9.3. Delivery of the short-term recommendations from the research culture project summarise in [Table 5](#)
- 9.4. Support the Athena Swan self-assessment team to submit an application for a Bronze Small and Specialist Award during 2022-23.

## Appendix 1: Annual Research Ethics Report 2021-2022

### Appendix 1: Annual Research Ethics Report 2021-2022

<b>Executive Summary</b>	<i>This Report covers:</i>  <i>1. Applications received in A/Y 2021-22</i>  <i>2. Ethics Policy and Procedures</i>  <i>3. Ethics Panel Membership</i>  <i>4. Ethics Training</i>  <i>5. Final Note</i>
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#### 1. Applications received by the Ethics Panel 1 September 2021 – 31 August 2022

Number of NEW applications received = **36**

Number of NEW applications received to undergo LIGHT TOUCH review = **32**

Number of NEW applications received to undergo FULL review = **4**

Number of amendments processed = **6**

#### Review Outcomes for New Applications Received

Decision	Favourable opinion	Favourable opinion, subject to minor amendments	Requires major amendments	Unfavourable Opinion	No Opinion
Initial	<b>3 (8%)</b>	<b>16 (44%)</b>	<b>15 (42%)</b>	<b>2 (6%)</b>	<b>0</b>
Final	<b>32 (88%)</b>	<b>2 (6%)</b>	<b>0</b>	<b>0</b>	<b>2 (6%)</b>

#### Decision Response Time

Time until decision sent to applicants:	First decision letter	Second and third decision letter
0-10 days	<b>3 (8%)</b>	<b>21 (70%)</b>
11-20 days	<b>33 (92%)</b>	<b>9 (30%)</b>
21-22 days	<b>0</b>	<b>0</b>

## **Rounds of Review to Reach Final Decision**

	Delegated Review	Full Review	Amendment
One Round	3	0	5
Two Rounds	20	2	1
Three Rounds	2	1	
Four + Rounds	3	1	0
No Decision	4	0	0

Panel meeting dates 2021-22:

22 September 2021, 24 November 2021, 20 January 2022, 23 March 2022, 18 May 2022, 20 July 2022

## **2. Ethics Policy and Processes**

The Panel received 36 applications for review in the 2021-2022 academic year. This is a 64% increase from the 22 applications received in 2020-2021. As reported above, the Panel provided 100% of decisions within the stated 20 working day timeframe, a standard we have now maintained for two consecutive years. Sadly, previously 67% of initial decisions were within ten working days, which has decreased to 8%. In order to further assess the timeframe of review (a common complaint directed at ethics review processes from reviewers, worldwide) we identified that 78% of applications for review require fewer than two rounds of review. This indicates the quality, specificity, and support of feedback given to researchers from the Panel, as well as the diligence of researchers engaging in the process. All but one amendment requests required only one round of review, all responses were within 15 working days with 84% within ten working days. Through the 2021-2022 academic year, then, the Panel has not only continued to provide a swift review and supportive process, but done so with significant increase in workload. This should be celebrated not only as an achievement of the Panel, but also as an indication of increased research activity within Marjon.

2021-2022 marked the first full year operating under our 'new' ethics policy. All opinions from the Panel are now communicated to researchers with specific reference made to the relevant sections of our policy. This enables us to demonstrate that our opinions are formed in line with Marjon's values as well as ensuring consistency in decision making, and provides researchers with clear guidance and options for the development of their research. This year we will be trialing new opinion letter formats to make it quicker for researchers to develop their responses and for the Panel to respond to changes made.

Further, as noted in previous annual reports, the Ethics Panel faces challenges regarding workload and workload allocation. The Chair role is supported through 300 hours in the Academic Contribution Framework, which has been immensely positive. Other academic staff members do not receive allocated hours for their work, and accounting for workload of non-academic staff members is challenging. Workload allocation is an explicitly stated requirement of the ethics policy and as such requires the attention of line managers to ensure that members can complete all duties within the scope of their employment.

## **3. Ethics Panel Membership**

In recognition of the increased workload panel membership was increased to six (from five) research-active staff, one post-graduate, one non-research active, and one independent member. In order to ensure a breadth of viewpoints the Panel created a new research active role for an Early Career Researcher. This ensures not only diversity of view within the Ethics Panel, but also provides protected and dedicated space for professional development of our early career research colleagues.

The Panel now consists of five male and five female members. Previously we identified the need to ensure a gender-balanced Panel, especially for research active members. There has been positive change in this regard where previously 4/5 research active members were male, where this is now 3/6.

This year our research active member Professor Jon Ord, non-research active member Claire Stevens, and PGR student Marie Bradwell finished their service on the panel. All three members joined the Panel at a challenging time and have made important contributions to the improvement of the Panel's work and development of the new ethics policy. We have recruited Jessica Holliland as our external member, Philly Ricketts as our new PGR member, and Sarah Martin and Carina Robertson as our new research active members.

The Panel, and I as Chair, benefitted immensely from the excellent support of Johanna Holford as Panel Secretary. Our performance as a panel, especially the response times listed above, are testament to Johanna's work. Claire Benwell has now taken over from Johanna and Claire has already demonstrated she is an excellent addition to our team.

#### **4. Ethics Training**

All Panel members are required to complete ethics training. The Panel continues to use the open source three-module course offered by "Training and Resources in Research Ethics Evaluation" (TRREE) (<https://elearning.trree.org/>) as an induction requirement. TRREE training covers: Introduction to Research Ethics, Research Ethics Evaluation, and Informed Consent.

The Panel is considering including on-going CPD materials in a "journal club" style as a standing agenda item in meetings.

Brown Bag presentations have been made as training opportunities for other staff and PGR students to understand the processes and policies. This was received positively. Additional opportunities for providing training to colleagues are also being explored.

#### **5. Final note**

The Research Ethics Panel has worked consistently to improve review processes at Marjon. In addition to my comments above, I wish to record my sincere thanks to all members of the Panel who have spent many hours working on all aspects of developing research ethics at the University.

*Kass Gibson*

*Chair, Ethics Panel*

*October 2022*

