

## Research and Knowledge Exchange Annual Report 2020-21

*Including annual statement on research integrity*

<b>Action</b>	Approved by Board of Governors meeting 18/11/21
<b>History</b>	Verbal reports on research and knowledge exchange progress have been made at all staff meetings, research and knowledge exchange committee, Senate and Board of Governors.
<b>Author, job title</b>	Professor Michelle Jones, Deputy Vice-Chancellor Appendix 1 Dr Kass Gibson, Chair of Research Ethics Panel
<b>Date</b>	October 2021
<b>Document Type</b>	Report
<b>Status</b>	Public Document
<b>Executive Summary</b>	<p>This is a summary report for 2020-21 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 UUK concordat to support research integrity, is incorporated within the report. The report includes a gap analysis against the principles of the Researcher Development Concordat which informs the action plan for the year ahead. Key research and knowledge exchange priorities for 21-22 are summarised.</p> <p><b>Key Terms and links:</b></p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>• HEBCI <a href="#">Higher education and business community interaction survey</a></li> <li>• KEF <a href="#">Knowledge Exchange Framework</a></li> <li>• KEC <a href="#">Knowledge Exchange Concordat</a></li> <li>• PGR Post-graduate research students covering FHEQ Level 8 and research masters' degrees at Level 7 of the FHEQ</li> <li>• RDAP Research degree awarding powers</li> <li>• REF <a href="#">Research Excellence Framework</a></li> <li>• <a href="#">Researcher Development Concordat</a></li> <li>• UKRIO <a href="#">UK Research Integrity Office</a></li> <li>• <a href="#">UUK concordat to support research integrity</a></li> </ul>
<b>Reason for Paper</b>	Regular annual report to BoG and requirement of the UUK Concordat to Support Research Integrity and Researcher Development Concordat.

## 1. Overview

A significant milestone for Marjon was achieved in 2020-21 as we made a submission to REF2021; a performance indicator in the Marjon Growth Plan and the Building Knowledge Together strategy. We eagerly anticipate the outcomes of the REF in May 2022 and then the impact of this on funding, league table position and reputation (section 2). The outcomes of the first KEF exercise were published and we anticipate a further KEF exercise in 2021-22 (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 (section 4). Our first PhD conferral through the collaborative arrangement with the University of Chichester, which was also our 30<sup>th</sup> conferral as an Institution, was achieved which is an important milestone for RDAP (section 5). We updated our research ethics policy in line with our university values and continued to work to ensure we comply and exemplify best practice for research integrity (section 6). We continued to develop and establish new ways to support a positive and inclusive research and knowledge exchange environment and successfully delivered and bid for research and knowledge exchange projects (section 7). The focus for 2021-22 and beyond are summarised in section 8. All this progress was during a global pandemic, with various lockdowns and social restrictions impacting on activity, and congratulations and thanks should go to all who helped us achieve the successes of 2020-21.

## 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
------------	---	-----------

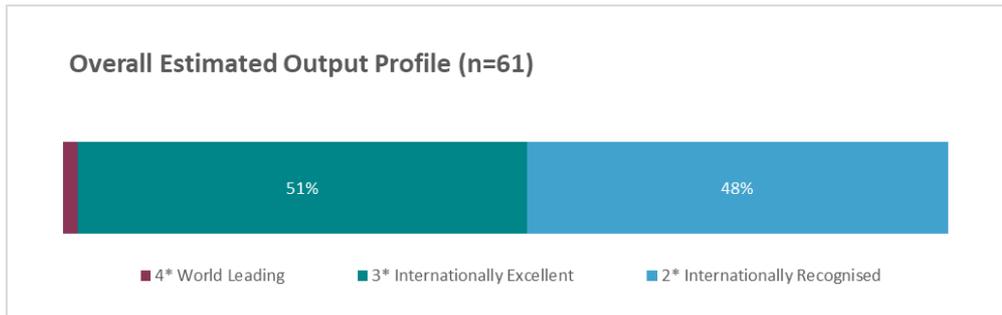
Marjon made a submission to two units of assessment (UoA) aligned to our areas of education provision that we have strong reputations in; UoA23 Education and UoA24 Sport and Exercise Science, Leisure and Tourism. Additionally, we had exemptions approved to not submit to four UoAs where there were fewer than five staff with significant responsibility for research (UoA3 Allied Health Professions, Dentistry, Nursing and Pharmacy, UoA4 Psychology, Psychiatry and Neuroscience. UoA17 Business and Management Studies and UoA33 Music, Drama, Dance, Performing Arts, Film and Screen Studies), these areas will be a focus for future REF activities.

From a people perspective a headcount of 37 academic staff were identified as having a significant responsibility for research out of a population of 87 REF eligible academic staff (43%). Accounting for exempted UoAs the submission to REF2021 comprised a headcount of 30 academic staff out of a population of 87 REF eligible academic staff (34%). The equality impact assessment for REF2021 suggested an inclusive submission reflective of our academic community, that did not unduly discriminate. Some future priorities were identified which we will seek to address through the Marjon Equality & Diversity Committee. These include i) Increasing the diversity of our academic staff population to be more reflective of our region and beyond including staff from ethnic minority backgrounds, ii) promoting gender equality including working towards the small and specialist Athena Swan award, iii) ensuring the Academic Contribution Framework governance group enables equality analysis of time allocated to academic development. Academic staff have reflected positively on the processes for preparing and transparency of the Marjon REF2021 submission and the philosophy of utilising the submission as a learning opportunity.

We set out the strategic ambition to make a credible first submission, with all outputs and impact to be a minimum 2\* (Internationally recognised) and will receive the outcomes in May 2022. Our rigorous approach to preparing the submission, including internal and external reviews, suggests we should achieve out stated ambitions. Section 2.1 to 2.3 provide some highlights of the submission alongside our internal expectations regarding the outcomes.

## 2.1. Outputs

The submission included 61 research outputs which will contribute 60% of the weighting of the outcome of the REF2021. Figure 1 summarises the estimated quality profile of the outputs submitted based on internal and external review. We hope that approximately 50% of the outputs will exceed our initial target and be identified as Internationally excellent (3\*) but anticipate all outputs should be judged as at least Internationally recognised (2\*). The REF is a peer review exercise, and despite criteria, judgements can differ in the actual exercise.



**Figure 1:** *Estimated Output Profiles Based on Internal/External Review Process*

## 2.2. Environment

An Institutional environment statement was submitted that will not inform the outcomes of REF2021 but will form part of a pilot to assess the viability of its discrete assessment in future exercises. Some highlights at an Institutional level include £1.5 million in competitively sourced research income from UKRI councils, UK based charities, UK industry and EU government bodies, with a tenfold increase in annual research income over the assessment period (2014-2020). Marjon open access repository had 531 research outputs deposited during the REF assessment period and a positive trajectory in research capacity was demonstrated by a twofold increase in outputs per annum from the start to end of the assessment period (e.g., 2013-2015, 44 outputs p.a. versus 2016-2020, 82 outputs p.a.), additionally 80% of the outputs in the REF output pool were co-authored with external contributors from UK and International HEIs alongside partners outside academia.

The two-unit level environment statements will contribute 15% to the outcome of the REF exercise. It was always going to be challenging to demonstrate a vibrant and sustainable research environment within the first submission to the REF, however we were able to demonstrate an evidence based positive trajectory in terms of income generation, PGR provision, esteem indicators and our people. Overall external and internal evaluation suggests we should be evaluated as at least 2\* *'an environment that is conducive to producing research of internationally recognised quality and enabling considerable impact, in terms of its vitality and sustainability'*.

## 2.3. Impact

Across the two UoAs four impact case studies were submitted which will account for 25% of the REF outcome. A key challenge for Marjon is that the type of impact the REF exercise evaluates often occurs a long time (10 years +) after the research was undertaken and published and it is more difficult to demonstrate the positive trajectory. Nonetheless the case studies were developed with the support of an external consultant and two research impact officers and external review suggests they should be evaluated as at least 2\* *'considerable impacts in terms of their reach and significance'*. The four impact case studies are outlined below and demonstrate the important link between our research, teaching, knowledge exchange activity and civic engagement.

- a) **Educational Isolation: transforming understanding and support for schools challenged by place.** Plymouth Marjon University research on Educational Isolation identifies schools in areas that are geographically remote, socio-economically disadvantaged, and culturally isolated to enable targeted support for school improvement through access to resources limited by location. The research has had conceptual and instrumental impact, contributing to understanding of place-based school challenges and influencing the development of policy and practice with enduring connectivity. Reach extends to the schools’ regulatory body, school leaders, educational charities and public policymakers, who have applied the concept of Educational Isolation. Impact includes: influencing the Ofsted Education Inspection Framework, increased access to quality CPD, improved teacher retention, participation in externally funded initiatives and restructuring of school support. The beneficiaries of this research in England are found to be at a systemic and individual level and are significant, including government agencies, schools, teachers and students.
  
- b) **Improving the effectiveness of youth work in international contexts through an innovative evaluation methodology.** Marjon researchers developed the ‘Transformative Evaluation’ methodology for use in youth work contexts. Application of this tool has enabled a wide range of youth and community work organisations internationally to demonstrate the impact their work has on the lives of young people and across their wider community, thus filling an identified gap. Impact is threefold: enabling youth workers to better evaluate their practice, leading to improved practice through reflection, increased understanding and deepened relationships with young people; enabling organisations to better identify and share the outcomes of their work; and facilitating changes in evaluation processes within both organisational and national policy.
  
- c) **Enjoyable and Injury-Free Running: Evidence-Based Support for Recreational Endurance Runners.** Research at Plymouth Marjon University has underpinned the development of new and innovative methods, in biomechanics and sports psychology, which are evidenced to significantly support novice and recreational runners engaging in endurance events. Based on the findings of the group’s research, the following impacts in the areas of understanding, quality of experience, performance outcomes, health and wellbeing, and professional practice have been achieved: i) Improved outcomes for recreational runners, such as: Increased understanding of running technique and race preparation; Improved enjoyment, perseverance and satisfaction; Attainment of personal goals, ii) Informed and improved practice of run leaders and clinicians and ii) developed new models for: Biomechanical clinical assessment; Event psychological interventions and educational workshops for recreational runners/leaders.
  
- d) **Marjon Health & Wellbeing: A new approach to enable the self-management and prevention of long-term conditions in the community.** Research by Plymouth Marjon University’s Life-Long Health and Wellbeing Group has proposed a new approach to address Long Term Conditions (LTCs) and complement the prevalent biomedical model. The research has led to i) the introduction of new services in health care and work-based health programmes and ii) Improved health outcomes for persons living with LTCs across Devon and Cornwall.

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

KS14	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
-------------	---	---------

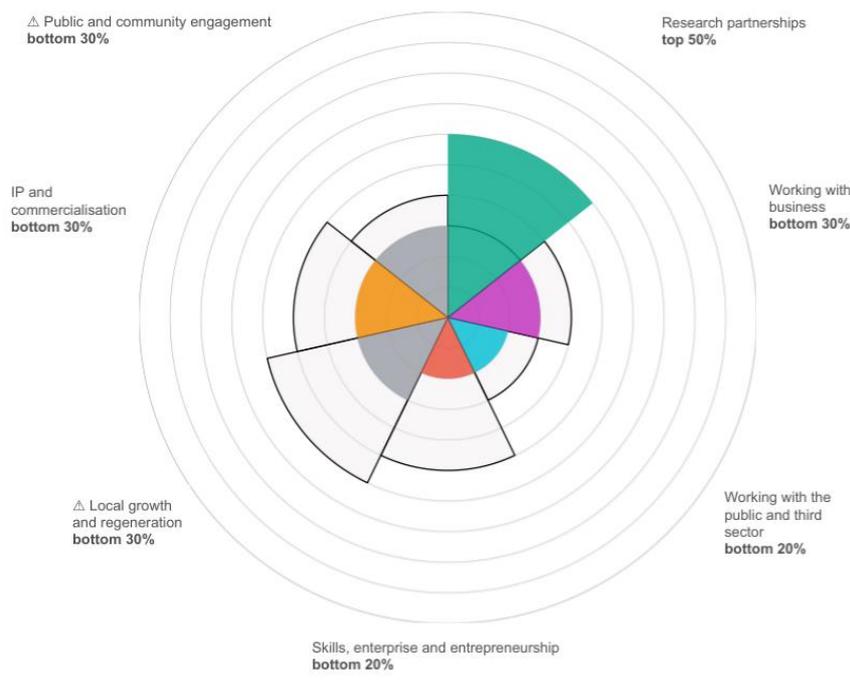
Our approach to knowledge exchange at Marjon is outlined in our Research and Knowledge Exchange Strategy. The strategy is underpinned by the principles that knowledge is partial, living, co-produced, should have impact and be openly available. We strive to ensure that knowledge is applied to current 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 March 2021 the first iteration of the Knowledge Exchange framework (KEF) was published. From a metric perspective this was always likely to show a challenging picture for Marjon since they were based on HEBCIs returns from 2016-7, 2017-18 and 2018-19 academic years. During these returns we were both in the earlier days of widening the reach and impact of our knowledge exchange activities but also hadn't established effective ways of collating the activities to return to the HEBCIs to maximise our outcomes. Figure 3 provides the overall KEF metrics dashboard.



**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 deciles. 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), 10000-15000 (n=4). Therefore, it is relevant to look at strengths and weaknesses of our knowledge exchange activity more closely to those smaller HEIs (<5000 students) that do not benefit from HEIF funding as the closest comparators, especially in relation to the narrative elements. The outer circle is the upper decile of all universities. In summary analysis of the perspectives is included below.

- a) **Research partnerships** (*cash contribution to public research, co-authoring with non-academic partners as % of total outputs 2017-2019*). We were in the top 50% versus the cluster average of bottom 40%. This was particularly strengthened by co-authorship with non-academic partners (top 40%) and is directly linked to our strategy of co-creation of knowledge with partners. Maintaining this is important.
- b) **Working with business** (*KTP, contract research, facilities and consultancy income, weighted towards SMEs*). We were in the bottom 30% and the cluster average was bottom 40%. This is reflective of our greater engagement with public and third sector organisations as opposed to business. Many of those Institutions who benefit from HEIF funding have specific business development manager positions to support this type of engagement.
- c) **Working with public and third sector** (*contract research, consultancy and facilities income with public and third sector*). We were in the bottom 20% and the cluster average was bottom 30%. This is a perspective we would aim to do well within since a lot of our engagement is within this sector. 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 bottom 20% and the cluster average is bottom 50%. Again, much of our CPD activity is free of charge as part of wider partnerships e.g. mentor training for teaching/health professionals. The edge was launched in 2018-19 to offer start-up space but needs a post-covid review. We should be aiming to improve our performance within this perspective.
- e) **Local growth and regeneration** (*regeneration and development income*): We were in the bottom 30% and the cluster average is top 50%. There are some more recent initiatives that are not yet in data relating to specific projects. This is unlikely to be a major feature of our KEF in future since our main contribution to local growth is likely to be through the skills agenda and working with others.
- f) **Intellectual property and commercialisation** (*licensing, spin outs, investment*). We were in the bottom 30% and the cluster average was bottom 50%. 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*). We were in the bottom 30% and the cluster average was bottom 40%. 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.

Analysis of the narrative statements (institutional context, local growth and regeneration, public and community engagement) from other comparable HEIs suggested some broadly similar highlights, strengths, and weaknesses. Some key activities that should be taken forwards based on the KEF metrics and this narrative analysis include; 1) developing a more dedicated website for community, business and others to interact with us to increase engagement and promote activities, 2) developing and enhancing our CPD offer, to include non-credit bearing and bite size modular learning, aligned to regional skills needs, 3) building on our strengths of working with others through evaluation and co-authoring research outputs launching a centre for evaluation and impact and 4) developing a new business plan for the Edge centre.

The next iteration of the KEF is likely to be sometime during 2021-2022 and most likely with data taken from HEBCI returns during academic years 18-19, 19-20, 20-21. There is widespread consultation taking place including for instance KEF focus groups, which Marjon have engaged with. The metrics are likely to show an improved position compared to the first exercise due to both delivery of more embedded activity and improvements in data gathering and support for knowledge exchange. Nonetheless the HEBCI return of Marjon (and the whole sector) will have been impacted significantly by Covid-19. Our 19-20 HEBCI return showed continued income for collaborative research (£96 000 vs £162 000 for the previous year), our first income for contract research (£42 000), increased income for consultancy (£117 000 vs £76 000), and our first income for regeneration (£106 000) but we were unable to deliver our non-credit bearing CPD due to covid-19 (£304 000 income in 18-19). We are currently collating the data for the 2020-21 HEBCI return through the PDR system prior to its submission in March 2022.

### 3.2 Knowledge Exchange Concordat

The knowledge exchange concordat was launched in October 2020 and an opportunity to participate in a pilot year of implementation was extended. We decided not to participate in the pilot year due resource availability and the recent completion of the KEF. Nonetheless we are committed to the principles of the concordat which aims to give universities and their staff and students clarity of mission and to support their development, give partners an accurate representation of the approach that individual universities are taking to KE, provide clear indicators of their approaches to performance improvement, and give our governing bodies and government broad confidence in the activity that is taking place in universities. It also aims to stress how collaboration between universities and partners in various aspects of KE can be beneficial to all participants. In light of this we intend to become a signatory to the Knowledge Exchange concordat which means we will be expected to 1) publicly commit to the KE concordat, 2) adopt the eight principles outlined in the KE concordat as a framework for effective K, 3) actively engage with the KE concordat through forums and webinars and share good practice and 4) following the development year, participate in an evaluation process including carrying out a self-evaluation and producing an action plan.

### 4. Post-Graduate Research (PGR)

<b>KS7</b>	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
------------	--	------------------

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 2020-21 we had 32 students engaged on post-graduate research degree programmes which indicates 50% growth compared to the previous academic year (2019-20, 21 students). The students are distributed across four research environment areas of: education (15), sport and exercise science (8), health and wellbeing (7) and business and social science (2). Business and social science is a new environment area for 2020-21 and we will aim to grow the number of students.

The investment in Mayflower bursaries to launch the PGR provision in 2017 started to come to fruition, slightly later than hoped for due to the impact of Covid-19. One Mayflower scholar submitted and then successfully completed their PhD following viva and amendments. Two further Mayflower scholars have submitted their thesis and will undergo viva examination during 2021-22. 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 via the REF exercise:

- a) Context, Agency, Place and Education: the students research is entitled 'Identifying educationally isolated schools: The creation and use of a multidimensional index of Educational Isolation'.
- b) Sustainability, Creativity and Innovation: the students research is entitled 'Sustainable food consumption and behaviour change: A focus on meat, dairy and palm oil commodities'.
- c) Lifelong Health and Wellbeing: the students research is entitled 'Person-Centred Group-Based Self-Management in Long-Term Conditions: a realist evaluation'.
- d) Resilience and Human Performance: the students research is entitled 'An intervention to support new runners using evidence-based psychology'.

There were 33 internal academic staff members identified as current or potential supervisors for PGR provision, 20 of these staff members were engaged in supervision of PGR students either at Marjon or externally and 11 staff members were identified as primary supervisors during the academic year 2020-21. To support the environment for our students and early career supervisors, where appropriate, external

supervisors also contribute to PGR supervision (n=10). 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 2020-21; i) PRES results – what's going well and area for improvement (8 attendees), ii) Managing difficult situations (16 attendees) and iii) review of supervisor training resources (14 attendees). Additionally, training was held for those staff acting as internal examiners.

We continued to offer a range of events and activities for PGR students and staff during 2020-21 despite lockdowns, social restrictions and government instructions about access to campus (section 7). We did not conduct the standardised Post-Graduate Research Experience Survey (PRES) identifying the PRES was useful for benchmarking, but biennial completion was appropriate. This enabled an internal PGR student experience survey to be implemented focusing on the areas we tried to improve in response to the previous PRES and facilitating increased engagement with the survey. The PGR student survey was completed via MS Forms anonymously by 17 students who took an average of 33 minutes to complete the survey. Some highlights from this survey:

- a. Overall students highly rated their supervision team in terms of skills and subject knowledge (4.47 out of 5 stars), regular contact (4.76 out of 5 stars) and helpful feedback (4.71 out of 5 stars) and qualitative comments were favourable e.g. *"My supervision team have been easily reachable and I have felt like they truly care about me and my development"* and *"The combination of skills, knowledge and acumen of my supervisors is superb. I cannot fault any of them"*. When asked about areas of supervision students would like to see developed the main area continued to be greater attention to be given to the broader researcher development of them as a student.
- b. Questions related to research culture and environment appeared to show improvement in comparison to responses in the previous PRES (responses to questions in the PRES averaged 58% agreed) but there is still room for improvement. Questions included access to a seminar programme (3.44 out of 5 stars), opportunity to discuss research with others (3.53 out of 5 stars) and wider research community opportunities (4.00 out of 5 stars). We were able to ask focused questions to explore the perceived strengths and weaknesses and to ask about engagement with the new RKE groups. Positive qualitative comments were received about the constructive, inclusive and supportive culture e.g. *"PGRs are actively engaged in building a community. Students are supportive of each other's research, but also supportive more generally throughout the process. There is a great deal of interaction in a way that I found lacking in other research environments I've bene [sic] in. I'm certain the Brown Bag sessions play a role in supporting this community development and the welcoming feeling that's obvious"*. Areas for development focused primarily on wanting more discipline specific sessions and the new RKE groups should be a good lever to bring this about with most students indicating they had engaged with them.
- c. The third focus area was research skills development and engagement with the researcher development series. Responses suggested the majority of students felt their research skills had developed (3.94 out of 5 stars), could evaluate findings (3.59 out of 5 stars) and communicate effectively (4.00 out of 5 stars). The qualitative comments indicated good engagement with the researcher development series with many students highlighting particular sessions they had enjoyed and in terms of development sessions they would like to see on the programme which will inform the 2021-22 programme of events. Several students also commented positively on their researcher development budget highlighting its enabled conference attendance and short courses related to their PhD.
- d. The opportunity for open additional comments primarily enabled students to comment on the impact and response to Coronavirus and to provide appreciate for the PGR hub and administration. For example *"I think everyone at Marjon has worked really hard to keep the research 'family' together whilst we've been physically distanced. I really appreciate that there is a genuine consideration for my well-being as a person."* and *"Marjon has been very supportive during the Covid-19 pandemic. The financial support specified for Covid emergency fund were a great help. A great*

*deal of support and care was provided by the supervisors in general and especially during the Covid emergency”.*

Other improvements were made during the year as a consequence of a Marjon Change Maker project to improve the sense of belonging and community for PGR students the outcomes of this included: i) the development of new website material including student testimonials, why choose Marjon and PhD life, ii) a notice board with student profiles and successes, iii) introduction and training for a PGR mentoring scheme and iv) an opportunity for PGR students to present at the start of the 2021-22 internal staff conference.

## 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 RDAP requires us to demonstrate we meet additional standards and criteria above and beyond those as a registered OFS provider and for taught degree awarding powers. The application process requires a self-assessment submission which describes, analyses and comments clearly and explicitly, with associated evidence, how we meet the criteria. Following submission an initial assessment and then scrutiny process will be undertaken; this process is likely to take at least 12 months. The planned timeline is for an application to be made during 2022-2023 with three years of auditable evidence commencing in the 2019-20 academic year. 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 research 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. This section provides an update on the criteria for RDAP and our progress towards achieving them.

### 5.1 Criterion F – Academic staff

This criterion relates to ensuring supervision of research students and the teaching undertaken at doctoral level, is underpinned by academic staff with high levels of knowledge, understanding and experience of current research and advanced scholarship in their subjects of study. There are seven criteria to satisfy broadly in the themes of policies and procedures, research culture, research collaboration, research external engagement and critical mass of research leaders, staff and students. More specifically there are three metric requirements which must be met as part of the broader assessment of the criterion.

Table 1 provides a summary of our data against the metrics with data from 2019-20. This time delay is because data collection is through the PDR system and then needs to be verified and collated. Data for 2020-21 is currently being collated as PDRs are finalised. In summary:

- a. Table 1 illustrates we do not yet meet the 50% and above requirement for active and recognised contributions to at least one organisation such as a subject association, learned society or relevant professional body. This is the first year we have collated this data and we anticipate a positive trajectory closer to the 50% target for 2020-21 through active engagement with staff discussing and defining what might be considered an active contribution. We will need to agree a definition for this metric and highlight examples that apply to different disciplines across Marjon alongside considering an incentive scheme.
- b. We meet metric b which is broadly related to at least one third of academic staff engaging in research collaboration. Table 1 suggests this is met for overall staff (34%) and when broken down to full time (37%) but for part time (27%) we are below the criteria. The difference between full time and part time figures warrants further consideration, alongside the academic contribution framework governance equality impact assessment. Small overall numbers of part-time staff (17 fte) also mean there is likely to be variation year on year.
- c. Table 1 shows we exceed the requirements for metric c, at least one third of staff with recent research achievements, for all academic staff (63%) and when academic staff are divided into full time (67%) and part time (51%). This metric is further strengthened, as indicated in section 2, by 34% of REF eligible staff being submitted to an exercise involving external review and thereby assuring that the research is of at least national or international standing. It is clear, as expected, that not all research active staff were defined as having a significant responsibility for research in REF2021.

## 5.2 Criterion G – National Guidance

This criterion requires us to demonstrate we meet relevant national guidance relating to the award of research degrees. There is good evidence we do meet this guidance including a successful reaccreditation with University of Chichester in January 2020 with good practice noted. The University of Chichester are also supportive of our application for RDAP and have agreed suitable risk based lighter touch quality checks of our PGR provision. We introduced a Research Degrees Scrutiny Panel in 2019-20 and this continues to assure the quality of the PGR provision alongside reviewing external guidance. Will need to develop our own regulations and code of practice in anticipation of RDAP and this will be a focus of work during the latter part of the 2021-22 academic year.

## 5.3 Criterion H Doctoral Conferrals

We will need to demonstrate we have achieved more than 30 doctoral degree conferrals awarded through partnerships with UK awarding bodies. This is a milestone we achieved during 2020-21, in summary the doctoral completions include:

- 29 PhD awards conferred via University of Exeter from 2000 to 2015 in Education (n=15), Theology (n=6), English (n=3), Philosophy (n=3), and Geography (n=2)
- 15 MPhil awards conferred via University of Exeter from 1998 to 2008 in Theology (n=8), Education (n=3), Sociology (n=1), English (n=1), Medical Sciences (n=1) and Management Studies (n=1).
- 1 PhD award conferred via university of Chichester in 20-21 in Sport.

In addition, we will need to demonstrate that:

- a. The majority of conferred doctoral degrees have been achieved by students who are not also academic staff of the organisation. The 2020-21 PGR student population was 23.5 FTE (15 full-time PhD, 16 part-time PhD and 1 part-time MPhil). Of the PGR student population 4.5 FTE

were also Marjon staff (9 part-time PhD) which is 19%. We do not have data on conferrals made via Exeter and their status (staff members or external).

- b. Our completion rates meet sector norms. There is little clarity on what sector norms for PGR completion rates are and the way completion is defined has changed over the time period of our conferrals<sup>1</sup>. We are engaged, via Guild HE Research, in a working group of institutions also seeking RDAP and will enhance clarity through this, including identifying the completion rates of relevant benchmarking HEIs. The evidence we have from the University of Exeter (2000-2008) suggests 29 PhD awards were made from 52 students registered for PhD awards (56% completion). Withdrawals were also a challenge early in the agreement with the University of Chichester (8 withdrawals 2017-19). More recently, since the review of the PGR processes that improve the process for the recruitment, annual monitoring and major review milestones, and wider support for students there have been few withdrawals (one PT student withdrawal due to work commitments). It is important we continue to monitor and support PGR students to support successful completion and where necessary review and refine processes.

**Table 1: Academic Staff RDAP Metric during 2019-2020**

	All Cat A staff with teaching & research, or research only contracts. % FTE returned to HESA 2019-20	FT Cat A staff with teaching & research, or research only contracts (46.66 fte). % FTE returned to HESA 2019-20	PT Cat A staff with teaching & research, or research only contracts (17 fte). % FTE returned to HESA 2019-20
Metric a: A significant proportion ( <b>normally around a half as a minimum</b> ) of its academic staff are active and recognised contributors to at least one organisation such as a subject association, learned society or relevant professional body. Such contributions are expected to involve some form of public output or outcome, broadly defined, demonstrating the research-related impact of academic staff on their discipline or sphere of research activity at a regional, national or international level.	41%	46%	28%
Metric b: A significant proportion ( <b>normally around a third as a minimum</b> ) of its academic staff have recent (i.e. within the past three years) personal experience of research activity in other UK or international higher education or specialist research institutions by,	34%	37%	27%

<sup>1</sup> [https://www.hesa.ac.uk/files/pisg/PITG\\_2013\\_02/PITG\\_13\\_08.pdf](https://www.hesa.ac.uk/files/pisg/PITG_2013_02/PITG_13_08.pdf)

for example, acting as external examiners for research degrees, serving as panel members for the validation or review of research degree programmes, or contributing to collaborative research projects with other organisations (other than as a doctoral student).			
Metric c. A significant proportion ( <b>normally around a third as a minimum</b> ) of its academic staff can demonstrate recent achievements (i.e. within the past three years) that are recognised by the wider academic community to be of national and/or international standing (e.g. as indicated by authoritative external peer reviews).	63%	67%	51%

## 6. Research Integrity

<b>KS4</b>	Review current practices and implement any requirements of the revised 2019 concordat to support research integrity	2020
------------	---	------

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 2020 to 31 July 2021 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 2020-21 to support and strengthen research integrity including culture and leadership include updating the Research Ethics Policy. A wide-ranging internal consultation was undertaken as part of this process which ensures the resultant policy aligns to Marjon values, reflects external guidance and is suitable for different disciplinary and research approaches. The consultation and discussions also enhanced knowledge and understanding about ethical matters and helped identify where further training might be required. Furthermore, the review allowed us to strengthen appreciation of when ethical approval is needed for 'research' activity that falls between the boundaries of research, service evaluation and audit and additional guidance will be developed. Key activities for 2021-2021 following on from the review of the Research Ethics Policy include reviewing the Research Integrity Policy to ensure it aligns to Marjon values and to establish a series of micro-CPD videos that support research integrity. A summary of how we meet the commitment and activities from 2020-21 are summarised against the commitment of the concordat including addressing research misconduct in the following sections.

- a) **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.
- b) **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 and ethical approval policy was substantially updated during 2020-21. The activities of this panel are reported in its annual statement (annex 1).
- c) **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 updated 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. Marjon committed to the Concordat to Support the Career Development of Researchers and this is discussed further in section 7. 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. For example, the Context, Agency, Place and Education RKE group led a researcher development session on 'Ethics and Integrity in Educational Research'.
- d) **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.
- e) **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. The review of the Research Ethics policy also included wide ranging internal

consultation. 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 and Knowledge Exchange Environment

<b>KS5</b>	Celebrate the successes and achievements of all members of our community in relation to research and knowledge exchange	Annually monitored
------------	---	--------------------

Overall, despite a global pandemic, the 2020-21 academic year was successful for the Marjon community in terms of research and knowledge exchange. The following sections highlight some of these successes that contribute to a vibrant and sustainable research environment.

### 7.1. Research Development Concordat

<b>KS2</b>	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
------------	--	-----------

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. It is worth noting the context at Marjon, in the HESA 2019/20 return out of 120 academic staff (80 female, 40 male) most academic staff were employed on teaching and research contracts (n=100) and there were no staff employed on research only contracts. Of those academic positions 25% were employed on fixed-term contracts which is below the sector norm of 33%. As Marjon attract further external funding more research only roles are likely to commence and as such a range of standardised job description for a postdoctoral researcher, research fellow and senior research fellow were developed to ensure consistency and career progression opportunities. In relation to the three principles of the concordat:

- a) *Principle 1: Excellent research requires a supportive and inclusive research culture.*
- The 2018 staff survey told us that overall Marjon is a good place to work, with a team who are significantly more satisfied than the sector. For example, 94% of respondents felt that Marjon is a good place to work, with 93% feeling proud to work with us. We had high scores for leadership, change, and communication, and staff felt that they could understand and engage with our values. This satisfaction is underpinned by a positive culture underpinned by our values (including staff and student awards aligned to our values), policies and practice (e.g. flexible working, bullying and harassment) and by other initiatives (e.g. staff open ideas which enables anyone to provide ideas or suggestions for improvement, regular SMT newsflash). Additionally, we have a leadership and management framework, aligned to Marjon values, that forms part of the performance and development review process and forms the basis of 360 review processes.

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. A range of initiatives and annual action plan will be monitored, and actions will be monitored through SMT and the Board of Governors. In 2020-21 a range of activities were undertaken aligned to the People strategy for instance the introduction of a hybrid working policy, pulse surveys on key issues (eg health and wellbeing, hybrid working), an updated staff newsletter and information sharepoint site (Antler).

Marjon Equality Objectives agreed during 2020-21 aim to ensure the culture is inclusive and avoids discrimination. The equality objectives (2021-2025) are:

- I. Gender equality: Advance gender equality including recognising gender diversity, eliminating discrimination and promoting a fair and inclusive environment,
- II. Racial equality: Advance racial equality promoting diversity and creating an inclusive culture that facilitates belonging and promotes respect for students and staff of minority ethnic backgrounds,
- III. Mental wellbeing: Develop a mentally healthy university community and culture, in which positive mental health is promoted and mental ill health is thoughtfully and effectively supported,
- IV. Social mobility: Enact our social mobility pledge acting as a purpose and values led organisation committing to outreach, access and recruitment and contributing to the levelling up goals
- V. Marjon community: Foster good relations and Marjon community spirit between people who share a protected characteristic and those who do not, eliminating inequalities and tackling discrimination.

b) *Principle 2: Researchers are recruited, employed and managed under conditions that recognise and value their contributions*

One objective within the People Strategy is to create a clearer employer value proposition and ensuring that this is clearly represented on our website to assist with attracting talented people. During 2020-21 the 'working for the university' part of the website was updated as part of meeting this objective, likewise the 'research' part of the website was updated. Aligned to this is the research and knowledge strategy performance indicator 2) 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. Several actions related to this have been undertaken for instance adjustments to the Academic Contribution Framework to recognise the time taken for new academics to engage with Advance HE fellowship and time studying for a PhD and implementing the RKE groups which support activities such as collaborative bids, peer review and mentoring. However further work on meeting this objective is needed during 2021-22 as the possibility of face-to-face discussion returns including focus groups with groups of academics, case studies of academics and then identifying relevant schemes that will attract and support both early career researchers and those entering HE from professional fields (e.g. a research mentoring framework that can be applied through the RKE groups).

The Academic Promotion and Career Development Procedure enables any staff member to apply for academic promotion through an annual round. During 2020-21 there were thirteen applications for promotion submitted and nine 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. Small numbers make equality impact assessment difficult but there was no evidence to suggest

discrimination, indeed it was pleasing to see some successful promotions of females after they had engaged in the Advance HE Aurora leadership development initiative.

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. In 2020-21 the review was undertaken prospectively on provisional academic contribution plans for 2021-22 and the highlights and recommendations from this were openly shared with all staff in July 2021 after consideration at the governance group and by the Senior management team. Allocated academic development pathway time was consistently above the 175 hours (or pro-rata) indicated within the framework and ranged from 196 to 245 hours between schools, was slightly lower for part-time (200 hours pro-rata) than full-time (222 hours), varied from 201 to 244 across age group categories and was similar comparing females (218 hours) and males (201 hours). The governance group recommended a continued focus on ensuring academic development time is consistent across schools and protected characteristics to support academic colleagues achieving their career aspirations and this will be monitored by the governance group.

All staff engage in an annual performance development review which are taking place and/or being finalised for 2020-21 currently, the completion rate for staff in 2019-20 was 95%. 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 7.X) 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.

## 7.2. Research and Knowledge Exchange Groups

KS17	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
------	--	------

The four Institution wide interdisciplinary research and knowledge exchange (RKE) groups started 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 the following sections provide an update.

The Sustainability, Creativity and Innovation (SCION) RKE group convened by Professor Debby Cotton, Dr Greg Bourne and Dr Natalie Raven continued to attract new members and engage in launch events and a themed brown bag event. Additionally outputs included a funding workshop, set up a social media account, submitted an external bid under consideration, developed a newsletter outlining achievements and opportunities, made links with research groups in other UK HEIS and Professor Debby Cotton was also elected to the convenor group of the European Educational Research Association.

The Context, Agency, Place and Education (CAPE) RKE group convened by Professor Tanya Ovenden-Hope and Dr Jon Ord remained vibrant and attracted external members to join the group including Visiting Professors Stephen Gorard and Michael Green and some multi-academy trusts. Alongside the launch event and themed brown bag other outputs included invited speakers, engagement with All-Party Parliamentary groups and evidence submission to policy calls, leading BERA special interest groups and engagement in knowledge exchange projects.

The Resilience and Human Performance RKE group convened by Professor Shum and Dr Joe Layden attracted new members to the group and had good engagement in the launch event and themed brown bag event. Of the members seven (out of 11) published a peer reviewed output within the year. Covid-19 perhaps had the greatest impact on this group due to the limited availability of laboratory equipment/space and for next year a taster day and showcase of the equipment to improve collaboration is proposed. The group continued to provide support for those engaging in running, sports injury rehabilitation and occupational wellbeing especially through partnership with the Institute of Naval Medicine.

The Lifelong Health and Wellbeing (LHW) RKE group convened by Professor Pam Dawson and Professor Debby Cotton had a successful year and maintained vibrancy. Alongside a well-attended launch event and themed brown bag events other outputs included mentoring and engagement of early career staff is ongoing research and knowledge exchange projects, external launch event 'Working Together For Healthcare Excellence' with external partners, and three funded projects (Sheffield Hallam £7.5k- Scoping review physical activity services for social prescribing (Downey), The Art of Dying Well £20k - evaluation of End-of-Life Companion Training (Downey), ctive Devon £5k- Mapping trauma informed systems Plymouth (Bloxham, Brown, Jane, Downey)). Marjon LHW is becoming a partner of choice for evaluation and other small scale research projects, to provide partners with evidence of impact or to further develop local services. Recent examples: Devon CCG and Livewell South West - Tier 2 Weight Management Service. Active Devon and PCC -Mapping the trauma informed systems of Plymouth. Public and patient involvement (PPI) has also featured in 20/21 including in the collaborative SafeST project (Dunhill funded) and via the two PPI breakout sessions to inform future workforce and community self-management.

### 7.3. Research and Knowledge Exchange Events

KS1	Establish the researcher development series and brown bag sessions and increase engagement with these activities	Annually monitor
-----	--	------------------

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 2020-21 there were 12 brown-bags and 40 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 20+ attendees.

- 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 and is delivered by either internal staff or through external experts. During 2020-21 there were 25 different workshops covering a range of themes including research methods/approaches (e.g. JISC online surveys), funding and bid-writing, research impact, publishing hints and tips and research ethics. These sessions have been well-attended, and evaluation suggests they have been well-received and gaps for future workshops have been identified.
- c) **Writing retreats** were largely held off during the academic year due to covid-19 restrictions. PGR students continued to engage in Procrastinators Anonymous writing sessions and staff were aligned to a range of other virtual writing sessions eg via GuildHE and/or external research groups. In July 2020, while many restrictions had lifted it was clear a standard two-day off-site writing retreat that had been so successful pre-covid would not be possible. Therefore, two individual one day writing retreats were organised on campus in a large IT suite following a similar format of structured writing sessions aiming to develop a community of writers. These days proved popular with 13-14 staff/PGR students electing to join and followed a similar pattern to that observed for full writing retreats of being majority female. Feedback from attendees was positive and it was agreed during 2021-22 a combination on structured one day on-site writing days and two-day off-site writing retreats will be delivered.

#### 7.4. Research Outputs and Open Access

KS13	Ensure all of our research and knowledge exchange is open access, continuing to support our repository and in line with sector developments	Annually monitor
------	---	------------------

In total 41 research outputs were included in the open access repository during 1 September 2020 to 31 August 2021. This is consistent with the previous year which is a sign of an active research community, especially since most publications fell beyond the REF publication deadline of 31 Dec 2020 and the outputs were accepted for publication during a global pandemic. Furthermore 27 different academic staff members were involved in authoring these outputs suggesting research activity is spread across the academic staff. Of the outputs 50% 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. These 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 11 776 downloads of research between 1 September 2020 and 31 August 2021. Table 2 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 2: IRIS UK Top Ten Research Outputs downloaded from Marjon Repository 2020-21**

	<b>Title</b>	<b>Downloads</b>
1.	A critique of Forest School: something lost in translation	973
2.	Using Solution-Focused Brief Therapy with an Amateur Football Team: A Trainee's Case Study	612
3.	Reflective practice undertaken by healthcare and medical trainees and practitioners: so what's all the fuss about?	397
4.	Detecting Ransomware with Honeypot Techniques	376
5.	Psychosocial factors associated with outcomes of sports injury rehabilitation in competitive athletes: a mixed studies systematic review	349
6.	The BASES Expert Statement on Mental Health Literacy in Elite Sport	332
7.	Linking corporate social responsibility in sport with community development: an added source of community value	269
8.	Am I employable?;: Understanding students' employability confidence and their perceived barriers to gaining employment	250
9.	Integrating sport events into destination development: A tourism leveraging event portfolio model	237
10.	Conceptualising on-screen Tourism Destination Development	219

### 7.5. Research and Knowledge Exchange Funding

<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
-------------	--	------------------

In total there were 12 bids related to research and knowledge exchange activity made during 2020-21 by staff and of these six were successfully awarded. Total funding awarded was £144 711 and included funding for a range of projects, primarily in collaboration with other Higher Education Institutions or private/public organisations. In the context of a pandemic, where greater attention needed to be placed on switching teaching and learning to online, hybrid and then face to face it suggests a successful year. Research and knowledge exchange activity continued on large long term projects, for instance our involvement in the 4.3 million euro grant funded [Flavour](#) project (September 2018 to 2022) which focuses on sustainability through the valorisation of food surplus while also supporting those far from the labour market and people living in food insecurity).

We also successfully delivered objectives aligned to the £250k OfS and Research England jointly funded project "[Developing a model of Student-led Knowledge Exchange \(SLKE\)](#) using Transformative Evaluation". This project reinforces the essential link between knowledge exchange and teaching & learning. A recent stakeholder report from this project identified key themes emerging from across the different stakeholder groups related to the importance of putting theory into practice through the clinics, and how this offered students opportunities to develop important skills and enhance employability. The pedagogic principles of the clinics, which involved an experiential, collaborative and supportive approach was key not only to student outcomes but also helped patients understand information they were given and prompted behaviour change. Stakeholders talked about multi-directional learning taking place, involving the staff, students and patients all switching between roles of teacher and learner within the clinic environment. The campus setting for the clinics forms part of the hidden curriculum, making the clinics feel more accessible and less frightening for patients, and setting expectations in terms of learning and personal agency for both students and patients. A major strength of the clinic was that everyone was learning together: As patients

learnt more about how to manage their condition, students also learnt more about how to support them. The students were central to the experience for patients as they offered an opportunity for patients to make a contribution which gave them a real psychological boost. All stakeholders discussed the benefits of the clinics from patient and partner perspectives as well as students. Key benefits for patients included accessibility, peer-support, personalised advice and student enthusiasm, leading to empowerment and behaviour change. Benefits for partners included reducing pressure on NHS services, access to research findings and high-tech equipment, and increased national influence. The next steps include refining an approach/model that support other HEIs to adopt student led knowledge exchange approaches within their Institutions.

## **8. Priorities for Research and Knowledge Exchange 2021-22 onwards**

### **Equality, Diversity and Inclusion**

1. Establish an Athena Swan self-assessment team to undertake evaluation in anticipation of an application for a Bronze Small and Specialist Award during 2022-23.
2. Explore barriers and facilitators of part-time staff members to engage in research and knowledge exchange.
3. Explore with academic staff relevant schemes that will attract and support early career researchers and those entering HE from professional fields).

### **Research Degree Awarding Powers**

4. Define active and recognised contributions to at least one organisation such as a subject association, learned society or relevant professional body. Collate exemplar discipline relevant examples. Consider implementing pump priming scheme.
5. Engage, via Guild HE Research, in a working group of institutions also seeking RDAP. Engage in peer review of RDAP related documents.
6. Continue to monitor and support PGR students to support successful completion and where necessary review and refine processes.
7. Launch Marjon Doctoral College and develop Marjon research degree regulations.

### **Knowledge Exchange**

8. Develop a more dedicated website for community, business and others to interact to increase engagement and promote activities.
9. Develop and enhancing our CPD offer, to include non-credit bearing and bite size modular learning, aligned to regional skills needs.
10. Launch a centre for evaluation and impact to build on our strengths in this area.
11. Develop a new business plan for the Edge centre aligned to regional needs.
12. Undertake the KE concordat evaluation process and develop an action plan.

### **Research Environment**

13. Review and update the Research Integrity Policy to ensure it aligns to Marjon values
14. Establish a series of micro-CPD videos that support research integrity and researcher development.

## Appendix 1: Annual Research Ethics Report 2020-2021

<b>Executive Summary</b>	<p><i>This Report covers:</i></p> <ol style="list-style-type: none"> <li>1. <i>Applications received in A/Y 2020-21</i></li> <li>2. <i>Ethics Policy and Procedures</i></li> <li>3. <i>Ethics Panel Membership</i></li> <li>4. <i>Ethics Training</i></li> <li>5. <i>Final Note</i></li> </ol>
--------------------------	--

### 1. Applications received by the Ethics Panel 1 September 2020 – 31 August 2021

Number of NEW applications received = **22**

Number of NEW applications received to undergo LIGHT TOUCH review = **18**

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

Number of amendments processed = **7**

#### Review Outcomes for New Applications Received

Decision	Favourable opinion	Favourable opinion, subject to minor amendments	Requires major amendments	Unfavourable Opinion	No Opinion
Initial	<b>2 (9%)</b>	<b>13 (59%)</b>	<b>5 (23%)</b>	<b>1 (5%)</b>	<b>1 (5%)</b>
Final	<b>15 (68%)</b>	<b>4 (18%)</b>	<b>1 (5%)</b>	<b>1 (5%)</b>	<b>1 (5%)</b>

### Decision Response Time

Time until decision sent to applicants:	First decision letter	Second and third decision letter
0-10 days	<b>10 (48%)</b>	<b>12 (100%)</b>
11-20 days	<b>11 (52%)</b>	
21-22 days		-

### Rounds of Review to Reach Final Decision

	Delegated Review	Full Review	Amendment
One Round	2	1	7
Two Rounds	9	1	
Three Rounds	2	1	

Panel meeting dates 2020-21:

23 September 2020, 25 November 2020, 20 January 2021, 24 March 2021, 26 May 2021, 21 July 2021

## 2. Ethics Policy and Processes

The Panel received 22 applications for review in the 2020-2021 academic year, the same as the previous year. As reported above, the Panel provided 100% of decisions within the stated 20 working day timeframe (an improvement from 93% in 2019-2020), and 67% of all decisions are within ten working days. In order to further assess the timeframe of review (a common complaint directed at ethics review processes from reviewers, worldwide) we identified that 81% 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. 100% of amendment requests required only one round of review, with an average response time of 3 working days and all responses made within 10 working days. Through the 2020-2021 academic year, then, the Panel has provided a swift review and supportive process.

In this academic year, the Panel produced a new Ethics Policy, which has been approved by the Board of Governors. The review and writing process involved email, survey, and face-to-face consultation sessions with staff, which informed policy development throughout the process. Staff input was received gratefully. While the policy has been completely overhauled, the most significant policy development was aligning the Ethics Policy and review process, explicitly and specifically with Marjon's values.

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 new 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**

Panel membership remains as five research-active staff, one post-graduate, one non-research active, and one independent member. The Panel consists of five male and three female members. Attention will need to remain on ensuring a gender-balanced Panel, especially for research active members where 4/5 are male.

This year our External Member, Dr Ted Leverton, stepped down from the Panel. The Panel and University more broadly benefitted immensely from Dr Leverton's work on the Panel and we thank him. An honorarium has been introduced for the external member and a search process was launched with the new member to be interviewed and appointed in September 2021.

The Panel, and I as Chair, continue to benefit 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.

### **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 2021*