

Research Integrity Annual Statement

Section 1: Key contact information

Question	Response
1A. Name of organisation	Plymouth Marjon University
1B. Type of organisation: higher education institution/industry/independent research performing organisation/other (please state)	Higher Education Institution
1C. Date statement approved by governing body (DD/MM/YY)	22/11/25
1D. Web address of organisation's research integrity page (if applicable)	Research Ethics Plymouth Marjon University
1E. Named senior member of staff to oversee research integrity	Professor Michelle Jones Deputy Vice-Chancellor and Provost
	Email address: mjones@marjon.ac.uk
1F. Named member of staff who will act as a first point of contact for anyone wanting more information on matters of research integrity	Name: Elpida Achtaridou
	Email address: rke@marjon.ac.uk

Section 2: Promoting high standards of research integrity and positive research culture.

Description of actions and activities undertaken

2A. Description of current systems and culture

Please describe how the organisation maintains high standards of research integrity and promotes positive research culture. It should include information on the support provided to researchers to understand standards, values and behaviours, such as training, support and guidance for researchers at different career stages/ disciplines. You may find it helpful to consider the following broad headings:

Policies and systems

Communications and engagement

Culture, development and leadership

Monitoring and reporting

Our research culture is heavily influenced by our mission, vision and values. As an organisation we intentionally embed our values; ambition, curiosity, independent and humanity in all we do. Our values are central to Marjon's 2030 Strategy, and Research Ethics Policy. For example, 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.

Our commitment to research integrity and a positive research culture is reinforced in the Marjon 2030 Strategy, where Research and Knowledge Exchange is a core priority, with the intent of addressing applied research problems that have positive societal impact locally, regionally, nationally, and globally, working creatively with partners — including public services, professional and community sectors — to create new insights.

The university has robust systems in place for ensuring high standards of research integrity. The Deputy Vice-Chancellor has overall responsibility for overseeing the implementation of the concordat to support research integrity, 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 Committee, which operates university wide, discharges a number of these responsibilities, overseeing applications for ethical review in line with our ethics policy.

The Research Ethics Committee is chaired by an active researcher and received 29 new applications during 2024-25 and 65% of decisions were provided within 20 working days. All Research Ethics Committee members are required to complete ethics training. The Committee consists of four male and six female members including one PGR member. It is positive that the panel have felt sufficiently empowered to request minor and major amendments and offer unfavourable ethical opinion to ethical applications. The Research Ethics Committee is overseen by the University's Research and Knowledge Exchange Committee, and Senate.

Learning, training and mentoring opportunities are operated through a central research and knowledge exchange team, and through the Doctoral College for PGR students. The University reviewed its research governance procedures with a

cross-institutional role of Dean of Research and Knowledge Exchange created who chairs the Research and Knowledge Exchange Committee and works with RKE Academic Directors. These appointments, alongside our well-established Head of Research and Knowledge Exchange, provide further dedicated direction, oversight and support for our research activities and play a crucial role in shaping, implementing and ensuring adherence to the highest of standards of research integrity. More widely, academic staff are managed by Deans and Academic Directors 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 enhance rigour and promote understanding of the research integrity.

Plymouth Marjon University is an active member of a number of bodies including Guild HE Research, and Cathedrals Group Research and Enterprise group, as well as being part of the South West Doctoral Training Partnership (SWDTP) which help to ensure we remain up to date in terms of external frameworks.

2B. Changes and developments during the period under review

Please provide an update on any changes made during the period, such as new initiatives, training, developments, also ongoing changes that are still underway. Drawing on Commitment 3 of the Concordat, please note any new or revised policies, practices and procedures to support researchers; training on research ethics and research integrity; training and mentoring opportunities to support the development of researchers' skills throughout their careers.

Research Mentoring

In 2022-2023 the research mentoring project for early career researchers was started. It aimed to co-create research mentor good practice guidelines, scope the training needs of research mentors, develop and implement research mentor training, test a process for allocating research mentor/mentee pairs and implement research mentoring and evaluate the experience from the perspective of mentors and mentees. In 2023-24 the programme was scaled up, mentoring circles were trialled and a research mentoring policy was developed. In 2024-25, the research mentoring policy was approved, and an implementation plan is currently in development.

Development and Training

Training in research ethics and integrity is included as part of our annual, well-established professional development programme. In 2024-25, we created online

training and support packages for staff and PGR students. The packages are easily accessible to all and cover a range of different research related areas from research bidding to writing a PhD thesis and journal publications. These resources complement and enrich those created previously for research delivery, with additional and/or updated materials to be added over time.

REF Code of Conduct and Research Data Management

In 2024-25 a draft of our REF Code of Conduct was produced, updating work from the 2021 exercise in preparation for REF2029 as well as an updated version of our research data management policy and guidance.

2C. Reflections on progress and plans for future developments

This should include a reflection on the previous year's activity including a review of progress and impact of initiatives if known relating to activities referenced in the previous year's statement. Note any issues that have hindered progress, e.g. resourcing or other issues.

Progress is reported in 2B.

The university continues to refine our approach to Research Integrity and governance in line with delivering the university's Marjon 2030 strategy and in preparation for REF 2029. Research plays a key role in this strategy – with a focus on promoting an inclusive culture which values, supports, and celebrates ethical and impactful research and knowledge exchange. The strategy reflects our commitment to adapting, evolving and improving in response to the changing landscape of higher education and research. The university successfully applied for Advance HE Athena Swan Bronze award in 2025. This achievement is a significant milestone in Plymouth Marjon University's ongoing commitment to fostering an inclusive and equitable environment. The awarding panel commended the University's use of Equality Impact Assessments which review policies, practices and decision-making to make sure they are fair and equitable. The panel also commented on the development of staff networks and its focus on raising awareness of the University's physical space and how this supports the needs of diverse groups. The Marjon Athena Swan Team will continue to support the delivery of actions identified in collaboration across Marjon.

We plan to conduct an independent comprehensive review of research integrity, related policies and governance structures. This review will ensure that our practices remain current, effective and efficient for our context and aligned with our new strategic direction. We will ensure that learnings are implemented to our

policies, research governance framework, ethics procedures, and training opportunities for staff and students.

Issues hindering developments have included the resourcing issues which are currently impacting on the whole higher education sector, as well as the uncertainties arising from Research England's decision to pause developments and guidance around REF 2029. Despite these issues, research integrity has continued to take centre stage in enhancements to research policies and processes.

2D. Case study on good practice (optional)

Please describe an anonymised brief, exemplar case study that can be shared as good practice with other organisations. A wide range of case studies are valuable, including small, local implementations. Case studies may also include the impact of implementations or lessons learned.

[Please insert response]

Section 3: Addressing research misconduct

3A. Statement on processes that the organisation has in place for dealing with allegations of misconduct

Please provide:

a brief summary of relevant organisation policies/ processes (e.g. research misconduct procedure, whistle-blowing policy, bullying/harassment policy; appointment of a third party to act as confidential liaison for persons wishing to raise concerns) and brief information on the periodic review of research misconduct processes (e.g. date of last review; any major changes during the period under review; date when processes will next be reviewed).

information on how the organisation creates and embeds a research environment in which all staff, researchers and students feel comfortable to report instances of misconduct (e.g. code of practice for research, whistle-blowing, research misconduct procedure, informal liaison process, website signposting for reporting systems, training, mentoring, reflection and evaluation of policies, practices and procedures).

anonymised key lessons learned from any investigations into allegations of misconduct which either identified opportunities for improvements in the

organisation's investigation procedure and/or related policies / processes/ culture or which showed that they were working well.

The university is committed to ensuring research integrity across all levels and areas of the university. All research undertaken includes a statement about where contact can be made if there are concerns about research misconduct. The first point of contact in these cases would be the University Research Ethics Panel. The research ethics committee has the authority to take action if researcher misconduct is suspected and may, where necessary, recommend a further investigation in line with the university's disciplinary policy.

Plymouth Marjon has in place policies to deal with whistle blowing and bullying and harassment. Both of these are publicly available on our website.

3B. Information on investigations of research misconduct that have been undertaken

Please complete the table on the number of **formal investigations completed during the period under review** (including investigations which completed during this period but started in a previous academic year). Information from ongoing investigations should not be submitted.

An organisation's procedure may include an initial, preliminary, or screening stage to determine whether a formal investigation needs to be completed. These allegations should be included in the first column but only those that proceeded past this stage, to formal investigations, should be included in the second column.

Type of allegation	Number of allegations			
	Number of allegations reported to the organisation	Number of formal investigations	Number upheld in part after formal investigation	Number upheld in full after formal investigation
Fabrication	0	0	0	0
Falsification	0	0	0	0

Plagiarism	0	0	0	0
Failure to meet legal, ethical and professional obligations	0	0	0	0
Misrepresentation (eg data; involvement; interests; qualification; and/or publication history)	0	0	0	0
Improper dealing with allegations of misconduct	0	0	0	0
Multiple areas of concern (when received in a single allegation)	0	0	0	0
<i>Other*</i>	0	0	0	0
Total:	0	0	0	0
<p>*If you listed any allegations under the 'Other' category, please give a brief, high-level summary of their type here. Do not give any identifying or confidential information when responding.</p>				
<p><i>[Please insert response if applicable]</i></p>				

