Research Integrity Annual Statement

Action	For approval
History and previous circulation	Submitted to Senate 18/10/23 for information and discussion.
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ELT Sponsor	Professor Michelle Jones
Date	2 November 2023
Document Type	Report
Status	Research Integrity Statement for Publication on the Website
Executive Summary	A statement of research integrity which is a requirement of the concordat to support research integrity.
Communication and Culture	The content of the report is being shared via other relevant committees.
Reason for Paper	Regular report to Senate Research integrity statement requirement of Concordat for Research Integrity
Risk	The report mainly focuses on low-risk items.
Financial Implications	NA.

Plymouth Marjon University Annual Statement on Research Integrity

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)	Scheduled 23/11/23
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	Name: Professor Michelle Jones
	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 our People Strategy, Research and Knowledge Exchange 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 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'.

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, which operates university wide, discharges a number of these responsibilities and is chaired by an active researcher.

The Research Ethics Panel received 43 new applications during 2022-23 and 95% of decisions were provided within 20 working days. All Research Ethics Panel members are required to complete ethics training. The Panel consists of five male and five 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.

Learning, training and mentoring opportunities are operated through a central the research and knowledge exchange team. Academic staff are managed by Deans 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 integrity.

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.

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.

The major focus on activity to enhance research culture during the academic year 2022-23 draws on a co-created series of recommendations developed during 2021-22. The co-created recommendations recognise the unique positioning of Plymouth Marjon University within the research eco-system where we play an important role in developing doctoral students, early career researchers and supporting the transition from professional practice to academic practitioner.

The research mentoring project for early career researchers aimed to co-create research mentor good practice guideline, 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. This was a successful pilot and in 2023-24 will be scaled up, embedded within processes and a research mentoring policy will be established.

In terms of practitioner academics, many of whom are part-time staff, a research coaching scheme was offered by a professionally trained coach. Coaching was not

outcomes based but was rather strengths and values based and did extend beyond research to consider the whole person. A range of topics were covered in the confidential coaching sessions including time management, promotion, research funding, publications, research plans, confidence, research skills, collaboration and networking, and managing workloads and expectations. The coaching met or exceeded expectations of the coaches, helped staff explore what meaningful and values-based research meant for them, and was reported as useful.

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. Research Culture funding from Research England has enabled the activity co-creating and then implementing recommendations.

Alongside continued review and implementation of the co-created recommendations the key priorities for the forthcoming academic year in relation to research culture and research integrity are.

- *Scale up, embed within processes and approve a research mentoring policy.*

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

- *Engaging with the REF2028 initial decisions and the implication for a small value based higher education provider.*

- *Continuing to consider how we can best ensure the integrity of associated activities not formally defined as research (e.g. evaluation, knowledge exchange).*

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.

Plymouth Marjon has in place policies to deal with whistle blowing and bullying and harassment. The whistle blowing policy has not previously been used but during 2022-23 one case was reported that related to concerns about research conduct. A full investigation was undertaken, and the allegations were not upheld. Following this first case, it will be helpful to ensure policies and processes are reviewed and kept up to date.

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	1	1	0	0

received in a single allegation)				
Other*	*0*	*0*	*0*	*0*
Total:	**1**	**1**	**0**	**0**
*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.				
[Please insert response if applicable]				