

Institution: Plymouth Marjon University
Unit of Assessment: 23 Education
<p>1. Unit context and structure, research and impact strategy</p> <p>Context and Structure</p> <p>1.1 Education has a distinctive research portfolio that actively spans formal and informal policy and practice in schools, higher education and youth work. Such diversity is integrated into a seamless approach by the Context Agency Place and Education (CAPE) research group to share existing and emerging research through specific themes and expanding networks. Members of the unit are predominantly located within the Institute of Education and Teacher Education Partnership; however, the research group system ensures a locus for cross-disciplinary collaboration and shared interests that includes our two other Schools - Sport, Health and Wellbeing, and Arts and Humanities. Increasingly, interdisciplinarity is being promoted and cross-School pathways are forged through four distinct university-wide research groups (see REF5a, paragraph 11).</p> <p>1.2 This Education unit consists of 10.5 FTEs, comprising 13 members of staff, all of whom are employed to undertake teaching and research. Plymouth Marjon University (Marjon) has a growing international reputation for research and knowledge exchange related to Education, which has been supported by the Marjon Growth Plans since 2014 and Marjon Research Strategy 2015-2020 (See REF5a, paragraph 7). Marjon had previously submitted to the Research Assessment Exercise in 2008, but this is the first Marjon REF submission and represents the embedding of research development into our values of humanity, curiosity, independence and ambition.</p> <p>1.3 The Research Strategy 2015-2020 is led by the Deputy Vice-Chancellor, supported by the Research and Knowledge Exchange Office and monitored by the Research and Knowledge Exchange Committee. The Context Agency Place and Education (CAPE) Research and Knowledge Exchange Group launched in September 2020 building upon the success of the Agency Context and Education (ACE) Research Cluster and is led by Professor Ovenden-Hope. Marjon's Research Strategy (2015-2020) identified five key strategic drivers (see REF5a, paragraph 7). Significant and sustained achievement against these strategic drivers at unit level includes high-quality research outputs, collaborations and networks and other indicators of International esteem, which are embedded into the output of CAPE (see paragraphs 1.6.1 to 1.6.3 for unit level examples).</p> <p>Research and Impact Strategy: Vitality and Sustainability</p> <p>1.4 The CAPE (previously ACE) research group works within the rapidly changing policy and practice context of formal and informal education, nationally and internationally, and is used to guide, but not direct, our work in and across two themes. CAPE's focus recognises our location in the South West of England and the challenges faced by many of the coastal, rural and socio-economically disadvantaged communities, including access to resources (learning outdoors, high-quality teachers, youth centres, business opportunities, sustainability practices, see REF5a, paragraph 6). The CAPE research group therefore identifies place as providing the context for our themes to develop an understanding of education with an ambition to impact educational agency. The two coherent themes that frame our research focus are:</p> <p>a. Pedagogy and Innovation - applies to the education of children, young people and adults, with a particular focus on promoting and developing innovative approaches to learning. Examples include outdoor learning (Leather, Nicholls, Ord, Porter, Cooper – learning through nature), enterprise education (Preedy – access of students to enterprise engagement), inclusive practice (Harvey, Golder – Maths for millions).</p>

- b. **Professional Practice and Policy** - focuses on informing both transformative practice and policy reform, spanning formal and informal settings, including youth work (Ord, Cooper – transformative evaluation), coastal and rural schools (Ovenden-Hope – Educational Isolation) and higher education (Cotton, Goodall, Winter – sustainability and higher education student identity).

1.5 The research themes reflect and demonstrate a range of methodological and theoretical approaches. The two themes have developed context-rich professional networks and research-active partnerships, many of which involve practitioner-research, participatory inquiry and collaborative research with major stakeholders including pupils, teachers, Multi-Academy Trusts, HE students and youth work organisations. CAPE (and previously ACE) supports both research-active staff and emerging researchers in Education at Marjon. The outcome is internationally excellent research across both themes, alongside a thriving and inclusive network of collaborations and partnerships that implemented interventions and applied concepts that have impacted on practice and policy. Consequently, our reputation regionally, nationally and internationally for place-based and context-informed research has grown in this REF period. Our research culture is thriving, inclusive and is based on a clearly articulated strategy that attracts excellent postgraduate and postdoctoral researchers. Exemplar successes at unit level are summarised in relation to the university research strategy aims in paragraph 1.6.

1.6 The CAPE Research Group provides an ambitious steer for short-term and longer-term research aims set at unit level aligned to the university strategy (see REF5a, paragraph 7). Each of these aims is reviewed in relation to the unit's structure supporting a vital and sustainable research culture to enable both quality of research and reach of its impact (see paragraph 1.7 to 1.11).

1.7 *Research Strategy Aim 1: Establish a reputation for research excellence.* Since 2013 the unit has focused on developing an inclusive and vibrant research environment in line with Marjon values. This has been driven by the Research and Knowledge Exchange Committee, with membership from the academic and student community, including unit members. Marjon have invested £1.29 million in centralised support through expanding staffing of the Research and Knowledge Exchange Office, including a new senior leadership role of Deputy Vice Chancellor, PhD studentships (4 in Education since 2016), additional research-focused academic staff and research-focused facilities (such as the PGR workspace, psychology lab, see REF5a, paragraph 23). This investment has created a framework for the success of the unit, supporting the unit in maximising the International reach of research. Indicators of esteem in relation to research excellence include examples outlined in paragraph 1.7a to 1.7c).

- a. Theme 1: *Pedagogy and Innovation* - the highly successful 'Maths for Millions' (2016 – 2020, €45,874) Erasmus-funded European project led by Marjon for the UK (Harvey, Golder) included school-based practitioner researchers from our Teacher Education Partnership and teachers across Europe to make learning Maths accessible; and the £250k Student-Led Knowledge Exchange Project funded by Research England and Office for Students (2020 – 2022, Cotton, Cooper).
- b. Theme 2: *Professional Practice and Policy* - the transformative Erasmus-funded (€302,640) project that 'developed and communicated the Impact of Youth Work' (2016 – 2019) with five European partners (Ord and Cooper); the Educational Isolation Project (2017 – 2019, Ovenden-Hope) that worked with school leaders and education trusts to conceptualise challenges for coastal and rural schools and changed how these schools are perceived by policy makers and those who can target resources.
- c. Members of the unit have contributed to editorial boards (e.g., Cotton, Leather, Ord), delivered invited keynotes nationally and internationally (e.g., Ovenden-Hope, Cotton, Leather, Cooper), have actively contributed to learned organisations, e.g., BERA

Council (Ovenden-Hope); been invited to share research at APPGs (Ovenden-Hope, Preedy) and been nominated for research-related awards (Ovenden-Hope, Preedy). Research is being sustained through new partnerships, including with internationally recognised research groups focused on similar place-based issues, such as RUR-Ed in Norway (extension to Educational Isolation Project) and The University of Iceland (extension to learning through nature), and the inclusion of early career researchers in these projects.

1.8 Research Strategy Aim 2: Increase and continually improve research outputs in both number and quality. There are strong indicators of success in terms of number and quality of research outputs alongside the number of staff with research outputs over the assessment period (see paragraph 1.8a to 1.8c).

- a. The 10.5 FTEs submitted to unit have published 116 outputs (joint outputs counted as one) in the open-access [Marjon Research Repository](#), which is productive in the context of a teaching-led/research-informed university. Outputs per annum increased substantially over the REF period from 2013, demonstrating the unit's positive trajectory in research capacity-building.
- b. Unit preparations for the REF submission, following the processes in the code of practice, identified 51 research outputs to form the UoA23 output pool. Each of these has been assessed against published criteria for rigour, originality and significance through an internal and independent external review process. Through this rigorous process, over 95% of the outputs were judged to have qualities aligned to the criteria for 'internationally recognised' outputs and more than half demonstrated qualities aligned to the 'internationally excellent' criteria or above.
- c. Research outputs have been published in high-quality, world-leading specialism journals with rigorous peer-review processes, such as the *Journal of Education for Teaching* (JET) (Ovenden-Hope, Leather), *Higher Education Policy* (Cotton), *Journal for Education Policy* (JEP) (Ovenden-Hope), *International Journal of Innovation and Sustainable Development* (Winter, Cotton), *Journal of Outdoor and Environmental Education* (Leather).
- d. The unit has generated income from a range of sources during the REF period to support growth in the number of research outputs, which has been substantial relative to size of the unit. This income aligns with the CAPE focus and themes. Examples of funding includes: £250k for the Student-Led Knowledge Exchange Project funded by Research England and Office for Students (2020, Cotton, Cooper); (£45,874) for the Erasmus Plus-funded 'Maths for Millions' (2016) European project (Harvey, Golder); (£302,640) for the Erasmus funded Youth Work Project and £111k for school-focused projects from a range of funders.
- e. Our research-funding strategy is designed to increase output by promoting (i) follow-on funding (e.g., Erasmus, 2016, Ord); (ii) greater success in small grants awards to build confidence (e.g., Youth Work Evaluation, Australia 16k AUD, Scotland £25k, Cooper and Ord); and (iii) joint initiatives, e.g., as part of larger bids or knowledge transfer projects (CUREE/Marjon Ipswich Opportunity Area £10k Ovenden-Hope); with all projects resulting in a range of quality outputs (including those for impact) supported through CAPE.

1.9 Research strategy aim 3: Achieve maximal societal impact for our research. Societal impact is an important strategic driver for the unit, aligning to our value of humanity. The approach to societal impact is built upon partnership, public and community engagement and our University civic commitments (see REF5a, paragraph 9). Collaboration with organisations regionally, nationally, and internationally underpins much of this activity. The unit have embodied the philosophy of engaging with all our community, including students,

staff, alumni, public, key stakeholders, and peers to help us co-create knowledge, to question our knowledge and to ensure it is shared in meaningful ways. Some of the sustained research activity of the unit was selected to feature in the submitted impact case studies; informing and transforming professional policy and practice through innovative conceptualisation of 'challenges' and 'issues' in both formal and informal education (see REF3 and paragraph 1.9a and 1.9b). As part of our inclusive research culture, researchers within CAPE whose findings are beginning to demonstrate societal impact are encouraged and supported (see paragraph 1.9c).

- a. 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. A recent PhD studentship for this area of research was secured by CAPE to extend the research and potential impact. Unit members continue to work with school leaders, MATs, Ofsted, charitable organisations, and Department for Education and are also working with academics internationally to develop and extend the reach of the impact (Ovenden-Hope, Igelhart).
- b. 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. Unit members continue to work internationally in extending the reach of this research (Ord, Cooper).
- c. CAPE has members that focus on teacher education and research that underpins interventions that impact at school or MAT level, such as through the School Strategic Improvement Fund Numeracy, Phonics and Oracy projects (Golder, Luke, Harvey) and are developed in partnership (with ASTSA). Our unit members also disseminate their findings through professional development events locally, regionally and nationally, for example, learning outdoors (Leather, Nicholls) and enterprise education (Preedy) that support changes in practice, including pedagogy. This demonstrates maximisation of opportunities for impact benefitting local and regional schools, universities, through professional development and improved outcomes. Our focus on challenges of place through our two themes of pedagogy and innovation and professional practice and policy have contextual significance locally, regionally, nationally and internationally, and our research outputs are designed at the beginning of projects to be disseminated for maximum reach and for impact through agency.

1.10 Research strategy aim 4: Develop an enviable network of external collaboration: A prominent dimension in our research profile focuses on multi-level partnerships – both internationally and nationally. Stakeholder collaboration is at the core of our research, which targets professional and organisational impact and contributes to our identity as a unit that focuses on equitable professional practice and policy through sustainable and robust

networks of external collaboration (see paragraphs 1.10a to 1.10d and paragraph 1.9a to 1.9c for impact from these networks). Visiting professors have also contributed to the growing network and enrich the environment (see paragraph 2.7).

- a. An examination of the outputs for the unit in the repository demonstrate that 90% have been co-authored with academics from HEIs across the UK and Internationally (e.g., the Institute of Education, UCL; Edge Hill University; Sheffield Hallam University; University of Victoria, Canada; University of Melbourne, Australia; Waseda University, Japan; University of Southern Denmark; University of Waikato, New Zealand; University of Edinburgh; Zhejiang University, China).
- b. Unit members are part of context-rich professional networks and research-active partnerships. We make full use of regional and business partnerships. e.g., the Local Enterprise Partnership (LEP) and Chambers of Commerce (Preedy). There is increasing collaboration with other research groups in the University, e.g., Creativity, Sustainability and Innovation Research Group resulting in a PhD student exploring health and well-being in parents through connecting to the outdoors. In line with government thinking following the Carter Review (2015) on initial teacher education, successful engagement with research in schools, MATs, ITT provider partnerships and local authorities is evidenced, both with research output (Ovenden-Hope) and through members' wider engagement with Department for Education-funded intervention evaluations, such as the School Strategic Innovation Fund (Golder, Harvey).
- c. The network of external collaboration is consolidated through the roles of esteem in the field that unit members hold (see 1.7c), which includes invited and elected roles on the following: Boards of professional bodies, such as the Universities Council for the Education of Teachers (UCET) (Ovenden-Hope), the International Council for the Education of Teachers (ICET) (Ovenden-Hope), British Educational Research Association (Ovenden-Hope); educational charity advisory groups, such as the Paul Hamlyn Foundation Teacher Development Fund (Ovenden-Hope); Education steering group membership, such as SAGE Education Research (Cotton), Church of England Expert Panel for Rural School Partnerships (Ovenden-Hope), Opportunity Areas (Ovenden-Hope) and government APPG membership (Preedy, Ovenden-Hope, Cotton).
- d. The unit also has the benefit of the Marjon Teacher Education Partnership, which is a formal relationship with schools, MATs, Teaching Schools and SCITTs in the South West of England and in London for Initial Teacher Training. It extends into co-created research activity, such as with the SSIFs, access to participants for academic, and practitioner research and intervention development from underpinning research.

1.11 Research strategy aim 5: Become a supportive generator of and magnet for world-class researchers. We have strategically and deliberately invested significantly in the development of unit staff and in the recruitment of new research-active unit members. This strategy has developed a sustainable and vital research environment for Education that is generating (e.g., Leather, Cooper) and attracting (Cotton, Ovenden-Hope) internationally recognised researchers. It has increased the number of staff with a significant responsibility for research from 3 FTE in 2013 to 10.5 FTE in 2020. Unit members include experienced researchers submitted to previous Research Assessments (e.g., Ord, Edwards) alongside members who are being submitted to their first exercise (e.g., Harvey, Preedy). The unit has also attracted world-class Visiting Professors, renowned in their fields, with research activity pertinent to the CAPE Research Group themes (see paragraph 2.7).

Research Integrity, Culture and Ethical Standards

1.12 Marjon values promote learning, new discovery and the pursuit of wisdom for the good of all. Unit members are guided by the need to conduct research and their behaviours to the

highest ethical standards. This is expected at all levels of decision making, especially considering how these decisions might affect others and the natural world. The code of conduct for research outlines the expectations (see REF5a, paragraph 12). As members of representative organisations, including Guild HE Research and Cathedrals Group Research and Enterprise Group, BERA, UCET and ICET, we are supported to ensure we stay up to date with key policy agendas.

- 1.13 The unit and its research are guided by the Marjon Research Ethics Panel's policy and code of conduct. This panel is committed to supporting the development of research which is original and leads to the creation or gaining of new knowledge and understanding. Marjon's ethical procedures align with the core values, ideas and five commitments set out in the Concordat for Research Integrity. Ethics panel members within the time of this REF, and CAPE co-convenors (Ord and Ovenden-Hope), are members of the submitting unit and ensure our research environment, and all aspects of research, are 'ethically, legally and professionally informed'.
- 1.14 Marjon is committed to open-access research, and outputs from the unit are deposited as outputs in Marjon Research Repository (see paragraph 1.8a). Analysis identifies that outputs from unit members have been downloaded over 2,000 times during the assessment period from the repository, e.g., Leather 876 downloads, Ord 975 downloads, Nicholls 632 downloads.
- 1.15 The CAPE (and previously ACE) runs regular research development seminars for Educational Research Ethics and Integrity, embedding robust research ethics, integrity and standards into the research culture of the group/unit.

Aims for the next five years 2020-2025

- 1.13 A revised university research and knowledge exchange strategy '*Building Knowledge Together*' (2020-25) was recently approved (see REF5a paragraph 8). This revised university-level strategy builds upon the significant strengths and achievements at unit level where applied knowledge exchange and research, built through collaborative partnerships, have grown and led to impactful internationally excellent research. This revised strategy reinforces the priority for the unit to sustain growth in interdisciplinary research activities, knowledge exchange and impact.
- 1.14 In line with the revised strategy during 2019-20, the Research Clusters were reviewed and restructured to support multi- and interdisciplinary collaboration between unit members, to strengthen links with partners and to support impactful and high-quality research. This unit therefore replaced ACE Research Cluster with the CAPE Research and Knowledge Exchange Group (see REF5a, paragraph 11). CAPE, led by Professors Ovenden-Hope and Ord, builds upon the successes of ACE and guides our work in and across two themes – pedagogy and innovation, and professional practice and policy. The themes are framed by our location in the South West of England and the challenges faced by many of the coastal, rural and socio-economically disadvantaged communities in achieving equity of access to resources (see paragraph 1.4). The research output will sustain and develop impact on practice and policy (see paragraph 1.9).
- 1.15 The strategic headlines applied to the unit priorities for the next five years are summarised in paragraph 1.15a to 1.15d (see REF5a paragraph 8).
 - a. *Humanity - building knowledge capacity inclusively across our community including students and the public, built on trust and integrity.* The unit will continue to recruit, attract and develop ECRs and emerging researchers, including recent PhD graduates, and offer strong mentorship from research leaders aligned to the new research and knowledge exchange group.

- b. *Ambition - working in partnership to empower our community to be the best we can be, enhance decision making and promote our knowledge capacity.* The unit will increase the quality of research outputs, supporting colleagues through CAPE. We will continue to grow our PGR community and have demonstrable PhD completions supporting the university ambition for RDAP.
- c. *Curiosity - stimulating debate and discussion to develop questions, establish new insights and encourage innovation.* The unit will continue to promote open-access research and support academic engagement in policy and practice.
- d. *Independence - exploring what we can contribute individually and in partnership, appreciating we can all make a difference in the world.* Driven by CAPE the unit will continue to work in partnership through public and community engagement and knowledge exchange to meet our civic commitments and ensure societal impact from our research.

2. People

- 2.1 As outlined in paragraph 1.2, the unit consists of 10.5 FTEs, comprising 13 members (seven full-time and six part-time). This is 34% of academic staff returned to HESA at the census date from the university. There are two professors (Ovenden-Hope, Cotton), four associate professors (Ord, Cooper, Winter, Leather), six senior lecturers (Porter, Preedy, Wyness, Harvey, Nicholls, Goodall) and one lecturer (Edwards). Many additional colleagues contribute to the research environment through scholarly activity and impactful knowledge exchange projects and are supported as part of our inclusive research culture.
- 2.2 Members of CAPE had successful careers as education professionals, including in youth work, prior to becoming teacher educators and professional programme academics. Hence, there is a mature age profile compared to other university departments. Professional development and support for staff has been a key commitment of the university and the unit (see paragraphs 2.8 to 2.11). The philosophy of the unit is that enabling knowledge exchange and strengthening research capabilities of all staff will escalate the vitality of the research environment. It is this commitment to developing a vibrant, inclusive and forward-thinking research culture, incorporating PGR students, ECRs and emerging researchers alongside established research leaders, which provides the foundations upon which the International reach of research has excelled, and which lays strong foundations for a sustainable research environment.

Staffing strategy and people management

- 2.3 Our strategic approach to developing research capacity was to deliberately invest in the development of existing unit staff engaging in research and in the recruitment of new research-active unit members (see paragraph 1.11). New appointments were made between 2017 and 2019 targeting experienced research-active professionals with academic expertise to support the development of existing emerging and early career researchers alongside contributing to the research priorities of ACE (e.g., Ovenden-Hope, Cotton, Wyness, Winter, Edwards); an early career researcher post-doctoral appointment was made to support our = work in 2018 (Preedy). Existing staff engaging in research were developed, including a Visiting Lecturer with a PhD and developing research within the themes of ACE/CAPE was promoted to a permanent Senior Lecturer post in 2018 (Harvey); three Senior Lecturers with increasingly significant and sustained research output and reputation were promoted to Associate Professor (Leather, Ord, Cooper) and two Lecturers to Senior Lecturer (Nicholls, Porter). These appointments provide evidence that our staffing strategy is on target. New staff become members of ACE/CAPE and join existing members in being supported in developing their research within themes of the research group (see paragraph 2.5).

- 2.4 The convenors of CAPE purposefully include three levels of academic experience to support an inclusive approach to engagement with research (Professor, Associate Professor and Lecturer). An inclusive research culture is embedded in our strategic staffing plan to engage increasing numbers of academics (at any stage of their research career), practitioner-researchers, PGR students, PGT and UG students and CAPE partners (associate members). A planned feature of our work is to capitalise on 'research-led teaching' so that our 'research' not only impacts on our programmes (e.g., initial teacher education, MA Education, UG Outdoor Learning, UG and PG Youth Work, Business) but actively includes tutors and students in the research process. Each year, hundreds of students are involved in class-based inquiry, action research and empirical research with staff, which in turn collaboratively generates larger data sets (e.g., Leather, Nicholls, Porter investigation of outdoor learning with UG students). This enables both staff and students to extend their skills in quantitative and qualitative data analysis and publish these findings collaboratively in a range of professional and academic journals.
- 2.5 The unit aims to recognise and develop the talents, skills and experience of academic staff and research objectives form a substantive aspect of the Performance and Development Review (PDR) discussions, which may involve dialogue with the unit lead (CAPE lead convenor). Research is one of four academic pathways outlined in the process of academic promotion and career development (see REF5a, paragraph 17). Examples of successes in this approach include first research/conference papers (e.g., Hadfield – future ECR, staff part-time PhD), joint publications (e.g., Ovenden-Hope, Blandford, Cain and Maxwell (2020)), joint project applications (Ipswich Opportunity Area Teacher Mentoring Project, Cordingley and Ovenden-Hope), and institutional links (e.g., leading to keynote lectures, partnership developments of taught research programmes).
- 2.6 Aligned to the PDR, all academic staff members engage in a process to establish their academic contribution plan in line with the academic contribution framework (see REF5a, paragraph 17). All unit members make a substantive contribution to teaching and learning (being HESA-returned Teaching and Research), but also have time allocated aligned to their chosen academic career pathway, e.g., 25 days dedicated to research (pro rata) for the research pathway. Time is also allocated to research leadership, for example, for the PGR coordinator role in Education (Cotton), REF Unit of Assessment lead (Ovenden-Hope) and co-convenors of the newly formed research and knowledge exchange groups (Ovenden-Hope and Ord). Such adjustments are made to demonstrate our support for staff, their excellence in learning and teaching, but equally that we value their contribution to research and research leadership.
- 2.7 The unit has purposefully expanded its network of Visiting Professors appointed since 2017 (see para 1.10) to support the vitality of the research environment for all unit researchers and those engaging with scholarly activity. Blandford (IoE UCL), Lofthouse (Leeds Beckett University), Czerniawski (University of East London), Cordingley (CUREE) and La Velle (Bath Spa University) use their expertise to provide value added to both the CAPE themes and to support research skills growth, such as writing for academic journals (La Velle & Lofthouse are also Journal Editors), establishing impact (Blandford, Cordingley, Czerniawski). The Visiting Professors in the unit have all contributed to staff development events (see paragraph 2.11b).

Staff Development

- 2.8 Marjon is a signatory to the Concordat to Support Career Development of Researchers (see REF5a, para 17), which the unit supports. For example, a mentoring system includes opportunities for ECRs to research, co-author and apply for grants/funding bids with emerging researchers and professors. Evidence of such collaboration connected with CAPE includes a recently successful funding bid for student-led knowledge exchange, led by Cotton (and Bloxham from UoA24) and including an ECR (Downey).

- 2.9 The Staff Development process has a research-focused budget that provides opportunities for staff to attend conferences, share ideas, network with international colleagues and attend writing workshops. The Marjon writing retreat, for example, successfully launched in 2018, supports staff with productive writing time to generate REF outputs alongside developing a community of writing practice. Several unit members have been able to develop and finalise research outputs through the writing retreats (e.g., Leather, Ovenden-Hope, Nicholls).
- 2.10 To generate future prosperity and development of staff, Marjon proactively encourages all staff to become research trained to PhD level; for example, Goodall was supported to successfully complete during the assessment period. Additionally, unit members have been supported to present research findings to a wide range of international and national conferences, enabling them to build networks, discuss latest research trends and stimulate research collaboration with external research partners. Examples include BERA (Leather, Ovenden-Hope), ECER (Ovenden-Hope, Cotton), AARE (Ovenden-Hope), EEUK (Preedy).
- 2.11 A programme of scheduled events provides a vibrant environment to enhance staff and PGR student research capabilities and support their professional development (see paragraph 2.11a to 2.11c).
- Researcher development series, aligned to the vitae researcher development framework, is delivered by internal staff or through external experts. For example, during 2019-20, there were twelve different workshops covering a range of themes, including research methods/approaches, funding and bid-writing, research impact, publishing hints and tips, and research ethics.
 - The Academy Series Lecture offers lectures from established researchers/practitioners from a range of fields relevant to the interests of the CAPE. For example, the Academy Series Lectures aligned to ACE/CAPE have included a) Prof Rachel Lofthouse, Professor of Teacher Education and Director of CollectiveED 'Examining the collective in teaching', b) Professor Sonia Blandford, Director of Achievement for all 'Exploring Social Mobility', c) Professor Sam Twisleton, Dean of Education, Sheffield Hallam University 'An evening with...discussing teacher education policy', d) Profs Lofthouse, Czerniawski, Blandford and Cordingley 'A masterclass in professional Learning' (postponed to June 2021 from June 2020 due to Covid).
 - The 'brown-bag' (lunchtime) seminars consist of staff, PGR and Research and Knowledge Exchange Group associate members e.g. practitioner-researchers, presenting on an area from their current research. The presentations are given to a peer audience and the setting is supportive to encourage constructive feedback. In 2019-20, 10 brown-bag seminars were held and 23 different presentations covering a range of subject areas/disciplines were given. From March 2020, these sessions were adapted to be delivered online, which seemed to increase engagement, and this will be maintained moving forwards.

Postgraduate Research Community

- 2.12 An identified priority of the unit has been to build on the teaching excellence in undergraduate and taught postgraduate courses and extend this to post-graduate research (PGR) provision. At a university level, this was facilitated through a partnership agreement with the University of Chichester to offer PGR degrees from 2015 (see REF5a, paragraph 3). The recency of this agreement means the significant progress made by the unit is not yet reflected in doctoral completion data but is demonstrated in the consistent increase in doctoral student numbers in the unit year on year.
- 2.13 The unit has ensured PGR students are embedded as part of the inclusive research environment and that unit staff are supported to be effective PGR supervisors (see paras

1.10 and 2.3). Each PGR student is typically supervised by at least two supervisors, including a Director of Studies who has supervised at least one student to successful completion. The recruitment of professors (e.g., Ovenden-Hope, Cotton) who have supported students to successful completion has increased supervision capacity. The appointment of the PGR coordinator for Education (Cotton), with dedicated time for this role, provides additional support to PGR students and supervisors.

- 2.14 The unit has had significant successes in taught masters (MA Education) over the assessment period, which has proven to be successful preparation for and a pathway to PGR study. Several students, with appropriate support and guidance from their supervisory team, have successfully applied from the MA Education to the PhD (for example, three February 2021 PhD starts from the MA Education).
- 2.15 Marjon made a significant financial investment in Mayflower student PhD bursaries in 2017 to support the ambition to establish PGR provision and work towards RDAP (see REF5a, paragraph 23). Members of the unit successfully internally bid for and benefited from two full-time Mayflower PhD scholarships in 2017 from India and Pakistan: one 'Exploring reasons for parents employing dyslexia tutors' (supervisors Luke, Cotton) and the other 'School choice in Muslim communities in England' (supervisors Cooper, Ovenden-Hope, Lundie). This investment successfully supported the aim of nurturing an emergent research environment. Additionally, each of the new research and knowledge exchange groups were awarded a Marjon 180 PhD bursary, and an additional student commenced PhD studies in October 2020 in the unit. The Marjon 180 bursary is focused on: 'Creating a model for identifying Educationally Isolated schools' (supervisors Ovenden-Hope, Luke and Passy).
- 2.16 There are currently 15 PGR students enrolled, aligned to research interests within the unit, demonstrating successful growth since 2015. The research projects align to the CAPE themes: for example, in theme one (pedagogy and innovation) *the role of play in pedagogy and fear of learning* (supervisors Cotton, Porter) and in theme two (professional practice and policy) *teacher retention and new teacher identity* (supervisors Ovenden-Hope and Goodall). PGR students are contributing to joint publications with supervisors, such as Luke, Ovenden-Hope and Milner (2018) (see Marjon Repository), demonstrating the inclusive research environment and vitality of the research culture.
- 2.17 PGR students have a dedicated annual development grant allocation to support their development (see REF5a, paragraph 18). For example, a unit PGR student (Milner) was supported with a paper accepted for BERA Conference 2020 and presented a paper at the Association of Colleges Conference in 2019. Additionally, PGR students can bid for research consumables to support the rigour of their research, while at the same time developing their bid-writing skills.

Equality and diversity

- 2.18 Promoting equality and diversity aligns well with the values of Marjon and the inclusive research culture of the unit. Using the approved Code of Practice process, 33% of staff from the subject level were identified as REF-eligible with a significant responsibility for research (SRR). Of staff with SRR, 70% identified as female, which is slightly lower than the 81% female REF-eligible staff at subject level. The subject level has a higher female academic staff base (81%) compared to the university level (64%) and sector for Education (HESA 2018/19 data 68% female). With relatively small staff numbers, other equality analysis at unit level is challenging, but in summary: 17% had a declared disability, higher than 9% declared disabilities of REF-eligible academics; none of the staff with SRR at subject level were from an ethnic minority or identified as LGBTQ.
- 2.19 Selecting outputs for submission was conducted in line with the Code of Practice. Equality factors were considered to inform the identification of 3 outputs from the output pool to finalise the submission (these were the 'best of the rest' of output and all equally judged by

the submitting unit as 3*). A high proportion of outputs were attributed to females (77%) which reflects the gender balance of the subject staff profile and was positively impacted by two female professors who contributed a significant proportion of the outputs. Likewise, a higher proportion compared to University and national levels of outputs were attributed to those with declared disability (27%). Overall, while numbers are low, it does seem the processes were equitable and resulted in a unit-level submission reflective of the subject-level REF-eligible academic community. Further work is needed at subject level to attract academic staff from ethnic minorities and to continue to support, enable and promote research to female academics.

3. Income, infrastructure and facilities

Income

3.1 During the assessment period, data in REF4b for HESA cost centre code 135 shows the unit has generated £477,000 in competitively sourced research income (2013-2020), which is an average of £68,000 per annum. Competitive income has included funding from UKRI councils, UK-based charities, UK industry and EU government bodies. In addition to the data in REF4b, there is substantive income not included, for instance, for knowledge exchange activity that aligns to our research excellence and supports the continual generation of new knowledge and its impact. Income and activities associated with the research cluster/group (ACE/CAPE) are summarised in paragraph 3.1a to 3.1b (also see paragraph 1.8d and 1.8e for examples of additional funded projects)

- a. Our excellent network with schools, the wider public sector, and private and voluntary sectors results in sustained smaller research grants targeted at school partnerships, such as, the School Strategic Improvement Fund. These smaller grants support our capacity-building strategy. They lead to significant impact since outcomes are often directly linked to practice. Two examples include Ovenden-Hope £10,000 Ipswich Opportunity Area Mentoring Project with CUREE, and Golder Tofaen County Borough research £12,000. We encourage staff to build confidence in tender writing through small grant bids as one of our strategic priorities in the unit/research group.
- b. We have had success with large research grant applications, particularly through the Erasmus plus funding stream, such as 'Maths for Millions' (Golder, £39,500) and Transformative Evaluations in Youth Work (Ord and Cooper €302,640) that link directly to theme 1 and 2 of our research, respectively. Another recent [grant award of £250,000](#) in 2020 (Cotton, Cooper) utilises the transformative evaluation methodology from unit staff to explore the impact of on higher education students of engagement in health and wellbeing clinics (UoA24, Bloxham, Downey) to develop a model which other universities could follow.

3.2 The income from external sources that has supported the development of vitality in the research environment has been supported by strategic investment of £1.29 million by the University, despite the absence of mainstream QR funding (see REF5A, paragraph 23). During the REF assessment period, this internal funding has included PhD bursaries (see paragraph 2.15), a vibrant programme of research events (see paragraph 2.11), support for PhD completion, and attendance at conferences (see paragraph 2.17). Subsequent to this first REF submission, the unit expects to continue to be able to generate external grant income while also enabling more pump-priming funding and similar initiatives from the resultant QR funding.

Infrastructure and Facilities

3.3 Within the University, the convenors of the Research Groups operationalise the research strategy through the Research and Knowledge Exchange Committee. As a small university, the Research and Knowledge Exchange Committee has representatives from the four

Schools and consists of staff and student representatives. A University system of managing research ethics is in place for all staff and student research (see paragraph 1.12 to 1.15). Ethical guidelines of the British Educational Research Association (BERA) are strictly followed, and research integrity is paramount.

- 3.4 The successful achievement of transparent goals to grow our inclusive research culture has been underpinned by: an audit of research activity to assure a research-aware staff; a review and development of the University Research and Knowledge Exchange Office, with dedicated staff to provide an administrative focus for research activity, dissemination of relevant and targeted information, and support in linking the research themes and outputs; dynamic business and innovation links to support research bid writing; the successful creation of the post of Deputy Vice Chancellor with a responsibility for Research and Knowledge Exchange. These actions support significant changes in raising the profile and in the prioritisation of research and scholarship as core work within the University and the unit.
- 3.5 The unit's facilities for staff are dedicated, providing a suitable infrastructure for research engagement through quiet, well-appointed offices with IT facilities for one or two staff. For students, the PGR Hub was established in 2018 and includes a large, purpose-built facility accommodating hot-desking facilities (for 18), PCs and storage space, and a meeting room. This resource supports a community environment for our PGR students. The library has excellent resources for staff and students fundamental for both campus-based and distance research. Additionally, specialist facilities support research of the unit including for instance the Edge enterprise and employability hub (£159k investment, see REF5a paragraph 26).
- 3.6 Overall research of the unit is supported centrally by the Research and Knowledge Exchange Office, including support for grant bids and funding, organisation of research events, administration processes for PGR students, and administration of research ethics (see REF5a paragraph 14 and 24). Research leadership within the unit is supported through the release of staff time (see paragraph 2.6).

4. Collaboration and contribution to the research base, economy and society

- 4.1 As outlined in paragraph 1.10 a strategic aim during the REF assessment period was to develop a reputation for research excellence through an inclusive research culture that was embedded in our network of external collaboration. There is good evidence of a strong network of external collaboration with practitioners, public-sector organisations, governments, and other research institutions across the unit, summarised in paragraph 1.10.
- 4.2 As outlined in paragraph 1.9, a further strategic aim during the REF assessment period was to achieve maximal societal impact for our research. The overall approach to societal impact is one built upon partnership, public and community engagement, and our University civic commitments. Collaboration with organisations regionally, nationally and internationally underpins much of this activity, and some of the more sustained research and knowledge exchange activity of the unit were selected to feature in the submitted impact case studies (see paragraph 1.9a and 1.9b).
- 4.3 A system for PhDs and Masters' level supervisory teams within and across Schools/Institutes enables staff without doctorates to gain insights into the supervision process. The MRes (Social and Educational Research) is available for members of staff and PGR students and has been well attended since 2013 both on a module and programme basis. Learning from and building on this success, the University has undertaken a review of the research degrees pathways available and will be adding a professional doctorate route to support both staff and professionals within our community in engaging with doctoral-level research. Opening access to a variety of doctoral routes will create an even more vibrant,

collaborative research culture through increasing shared discussion and activity between tutors and students following different pathways.

- 4.4 As outlined in paragraph 1.7, a strategic aim during the REF assessment period was to establish a reputation for research excellence, which directly links to influencing and contributing to the wider research base. These activities and initiatives have supported the unit in maximising the international reach of research. Indicators of esteem in relation to research excellence were summarised in paragraphs 1.7a to 1.7c. Unit researchers make a significant contribution to the discipline and research base for Education through an extensive range of outputs (see paragraph 1.8a and 1.8b) and activities on a regional, national and international level. CAPE has expertise in qualitative and mixed methods research, and staff have published articles that exemplify methodological pluralism. Marjon has become an important centre for scholarship focusing on professional practice in the two themes at regional, national and international level (see paragraph 1.4).
- 4.5 Our research in CAPE supports organisations to secure funding and increases the potential for greater impact of funds (see paragraph 1.9) and impact on the economy. This is demonstrated in, for example, the improved ability to identify and promote outcomes of youth work for better youth prospects for employment (Cooper, Ord). Our research also develops undergraduates through knowledge exchange activities, enhancing the influence they will have in the future (Cotton). Our research on disability demonstrates how disabled people have much to offer the economy, is changing thinking and supporting a more inclusive society (Harvey). Outdoor recreation opportunities in the South West (surf schools, sailing centres, beaches, etc.) have been developed because of the research environment (Leather, Nicholls, Porter). Work on disparity in education is leading to reform on teacher recruitment and retention, that will save the loss of funds in training new teachers (Ovenden-Hope). Insight is provided into mechanisms for encouraging numbers of enterprising graduates, a perceived route to enhancing national competitiveness (Preedy).
- 4.6 As outlined in paragraph 1.9 a further strategic objective during the REF assessment period was to achieve maximal societal impact for our research. Collaboration with organisations regionally, nationally and Internationally underpins much of this activity. Exemplar collaborations, that support the unit research environment and impact on society, are summarised for CAPE in paragraphs 4.6a to 4.6c.
- a. Our research in CAPE creates greater understanding of the impact of interventions and improved evidence base to inform future practice (Cooper, Ord). It allows analysis of inequality of access, experience, and outcomes on development of HE policy and practice (Cotton). Linking education and behaviour change agendas contributes to development of new social norms related to sustainability. This in turn leads to improved provision, increasing the sustainability of programmes, the retention of learners, academic staff and teachers (Cotton, Ovenden-Hope). The connection of our research to the bigger picture as to the purpose and function of schools, higher education, outdoor education in a time of global crisis has been supporting understanding in society at a time of uncertainty and increasing the mental wellbeing of the population. The work in CAPE on outdoor education has encouraged people to connect with the outdoors as a place of personal growth through health, wellbeing and 'oneness' with environment rather than a place to do battle and conquer (Nicholls).
 - b. The strategy for societal impact in our research promotes publishing in high-ranking academic journals and writing research-oriented professional books, to maximise impact. For example, Cooper's book on Transformative Evaluation in Youth Work (2018) has led international changes in practice and is accompanied by peer reviewed papers on the topic; Ovenden-Hope's experiences provide leadership and model a *modus operandi*, e.g., her Routledge book *Exploring Teacher Recruitment and Retention* (Ovenden-Hope and Passy, 2020) and accompanying peer reviewed journal papers have extensive international readership by students, educators, researchers

and policymakers alike. CAPE operates within the Researcher Development Agenda, ensuring that policies and procedures reflect the principles of the Concordat (UUK/RCUK).

- c. Our staff submitting to the unit have all disseminated their findings at invited keynotes, panels, seminar and symposia nationally and internationally, for example, Outdoor Education Conference, Iceland (Leather), ICET World Assembly (Ovenden-Hope); many of the staff have been invited to contribute papers to All Party Parliamentary Groups (Ovenden-Hope, Preedy, Cooper, Ord); all review papers for peer reviewed journals; and many are on editorial boards (Ord, Cotton, Leather). These indicators of esteem for the research output in the unit demonstrates the growth in reputation of our research and the collaboration of the unit in contributing to the unit research base and impacting on educational outcomes.