UNIVERSITY OF PLYMOUTH

Chief Marketing and Growth Officer

Candidate Pack
September

2026

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Thank you for your interest in this significant opportunity to join the University of Plymouth as our Chief Marketing and Growth Officer. The University of Plymouth is entering an exciting new phase in its history. Guided by a refreshed vision:

Together we shape extraordinary futures, creating knowledge, innovation and opportunity in Plymouth, our region and around the world.

This an important and influential leadership role. Working across academic faculties, professional services and external partnerships, the successful candidate will lead a coordinated approach to recruitment, engagement and reputation building, ensuring the University's strengths are effectively communicated to audiences in the UK and internationally.

This is an opportunity to join an ambitious, collaborative and forward-looking executive team at a university that is proud of its history, confident in its future, and committed to making a positive difference to lives, communities and society. We are looking for an inspirational leader who can bring strategic vision, creativity and commercial insight, while building strong relationships across the institution and beyond. I hope that, having learned more about the University and this opportunity, you will be inspired to apply and help shape the next chapter of the University of Plymouth's success.

Professor Richard Davies
Vice-Chancellor and Chief Executive
University of Plymouth

Welcome

Role: Chief Marketing & Growth Officer

Level: University Executive Group

Reports to: Vice-Chancellor

Direct responsibility for: Marketing & Communications, Plymouth Global, and Enquires and Admissions Service, and working closely with Research, Partnerships and Innovation.

ROLE SUMMARY:

The Chief Marketing & Growth Officer (CMGO) is responsible for shaping and delivering the University's integrated growth, marketing, external engagement, and communications strategies.

As an executive level leader, you will provide strategic, empowering and compassionate leadership to the teams within your portfolio, striving for excellence in delivery whilst ensuring a healthy and productive team environment.

You will be accountable for shaping and driving the University's strategy for sustainable student-related and education-led growth, increasing student numbers and income, expanding domestic and global reach, and developing new markets, partnerships and sources of education-related revenue.

In this role, you will be instrumental in positioning the University as a distinctive, confident and connected Institution, enhancing our differentiated brand presence to maximise impact and reach. As the University's brand guardian, you will ensure that our reputation and market positioning resonate powerfully and authentically with target audiences worldwide.

With direct accountability for student recruitment and related growth, you will lead efforts to optimise marketing investments, ensuring they yield measurable returns in pipeline development, student acquisition, and long-term institutional growth. You will oversee market intelligence and, together with colleagues, will identify emerging opportunities to shape innovative education partnerships, new products, services, and delivery models that strengthen Plymouth's competitive edge.

Your leadership will be critical in leveraging our network of regional, national, and global partners, supporting the University to thrive through partnering at scale while also delivering value for our city, region, and country.

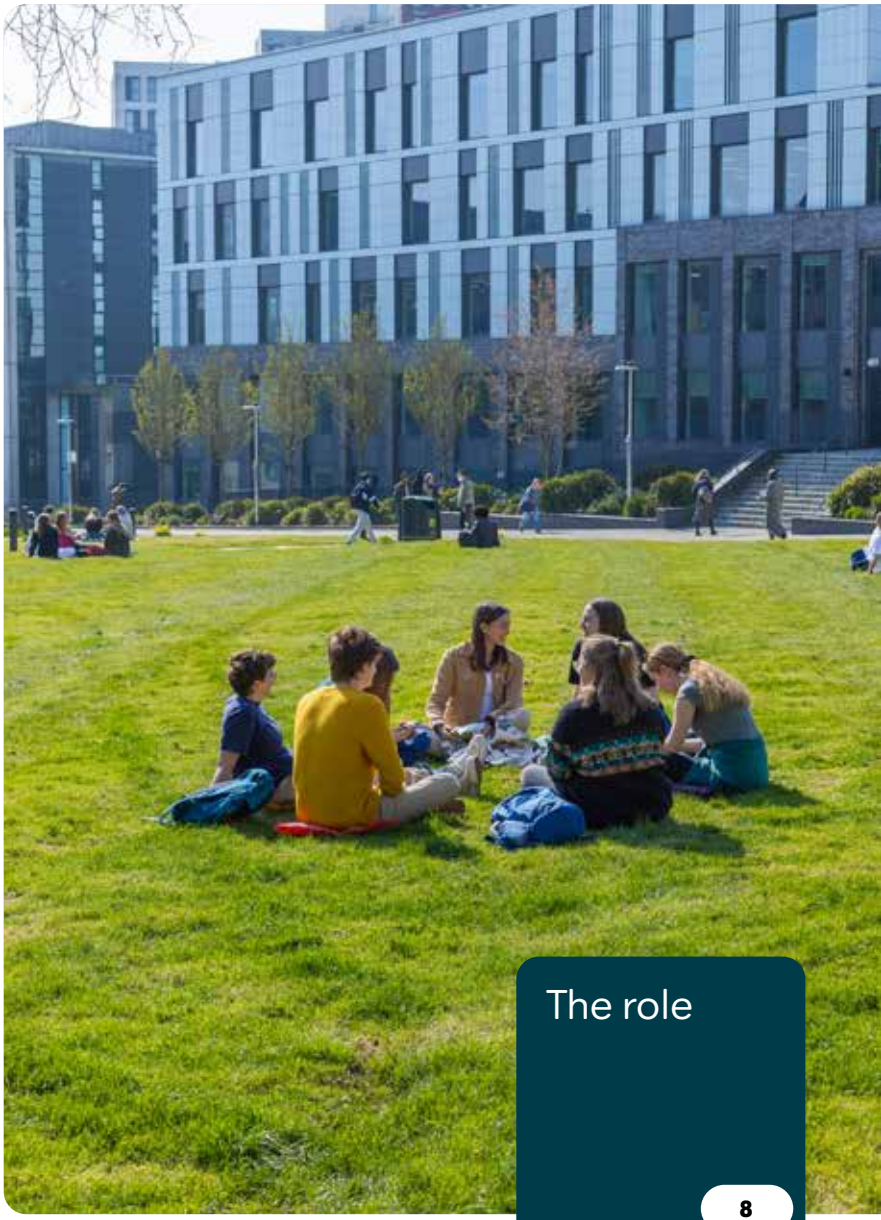
The role

Key Accountabilities:
1. Strategic Leadership & Governance
Provide strategic, empowering and compassionate leadership to the teams within your portfolio, striving for excellence in delivery whilst ensuring a healthy and productive team environment.
Work collaboratively with the University Executive Group (UEG), and other senior leaders to shape and implement strategies which support the University's strategic ambitions and which are contextualised for the operating context for the HE sector.
Ensure effective governance, regulatory compliance and management of institutional risk across the portfolio, maintaining high standards of assurance and accountability
Champion and embed University of Plymouth policies, including financial management, health & safety, people and equality & diversity, ensuring they are fully integrated into all operations.
2. Brand & Reputation Management
Review and refine the University's positioning and brand identity, strengthening its national and global market position and act as the Institution's brand custodian.
Enhance the University's reputation by acting as a key ambassador in local, national, and international engagement.
Ensure the University's communications and content consistently reinforce its positioning, brand identity and strategic narrative across audiences and channels. Strengthen media and public relations, ensuring the University maintains a strong, positive, and high-profile presence across traditional and digital channels.
3. Marketing Strategy & Student Recruitment Growth
Own and integrate the University's strategy for student-related and education-led growth, providing a single point of Executive accountability for the overall growth plan while recognising that responsibility for delivery will often sit outside of your direct control.
Build shared ownership, align priorities and use influence to ensure activity across the University contributes coherently to agreed growth objectives. Provide the market and commercial insight that informs development of the University's academic portfolio, identifying changing learner and employer demand, underserved markets, new modes of delivery and opportunities for sustainable growth.
Lead the strategic development of marketing and commercial initiatives that support portfolio innovation, program expansion, and new market opportunities.

Engage proactively with corporate, governmental, and sectoral stakeholders to enhance the University's external collaborations and reputation.
In close partnership with Research, Partnership & Innovation (RP&I), build and leverage strategic partnerships to accelerate commercialisation opportunities, ensuring the University's research, education and innovation strengths are translated into tangible commercial, societal and reputational impact.
4. Financial & Resource Management
Hold executive accountability for agreed student-number and education-related income growth plans, working in partnership with Faculty leadership and other University leaders who hold responsibility for delivery. Translate strategic ambition into clearly defined targets and measurable commercial outcomes, identifying and addressing barriers to delivery.
Ensure optimal return on investment from marketing and brand budgets, prioritising spend for maximum impact on student recruitment and market positioning
5. People Leadership & Organisational Development
Provide visible, purposeful and inclusive leadership, building high-performing teams with the confidence, capability and empowerment to innovate, collaborate and deliver outstanding outcomes.
"Build strong cross-University relationships and shared ownership of growth, connecting Faculties and Professional Services around common objectives and breaking down organisational barriers to delivery.

Criteria
Knowledge, Education and Training:
Educational attainment at higher education level (or demonstrable equivalent experience).
Professional qualification in marketing, communications or another relevant discipline and/or professional membership at an appropriate level of a relevant professional body (i.e., CIM)
Evidence of continuing professional development
Experience:
Executive-level leadership in a large complex organisation.
Significant growth, marketing, brand and commercial experience.
Track record of repositioning a significant organisation or brand.
Leadership of major marketing/commercial investment.
Leadership and development of substantial multidisciplinary teams.
Evidence of working through others to deliver enterprise-wide outcomes.
Skills and capabilities
Exceptional strategic and commercial judgement.
Sophisticated use of data, market and competitor intelligence.
Ability to influence across organisational boundaries without direct authority.
Ability to translate strategy into measurable outcomes.
Outstanding communication, influencing and relationship-building skills.
Ability to operate confidently through complexity, ambiguity and change

Criteria
Behaviours:
Demonstrates self-leadership
Develops self and others to deliver
Leads and operates in times of change and ambiguity
Builds and secures value from relationships
Drives innovation and action
Creates and contributes to a shared vision
Creates a culture of 'can do' and problem solving
Uses sound business and commercial judgement



How to apply

The University of Plymouth has appointed Peridot Partners to manage this executive search and support the recruitment of its next Chief Marketing and Commercial Officer.

For full details of the opportunity, including the candidate brief and information on the selection process, please visit the dedicated recruitment website.

For further information or to arrange a confidential discussion, please contact our advising consultants at Peridot Partners:

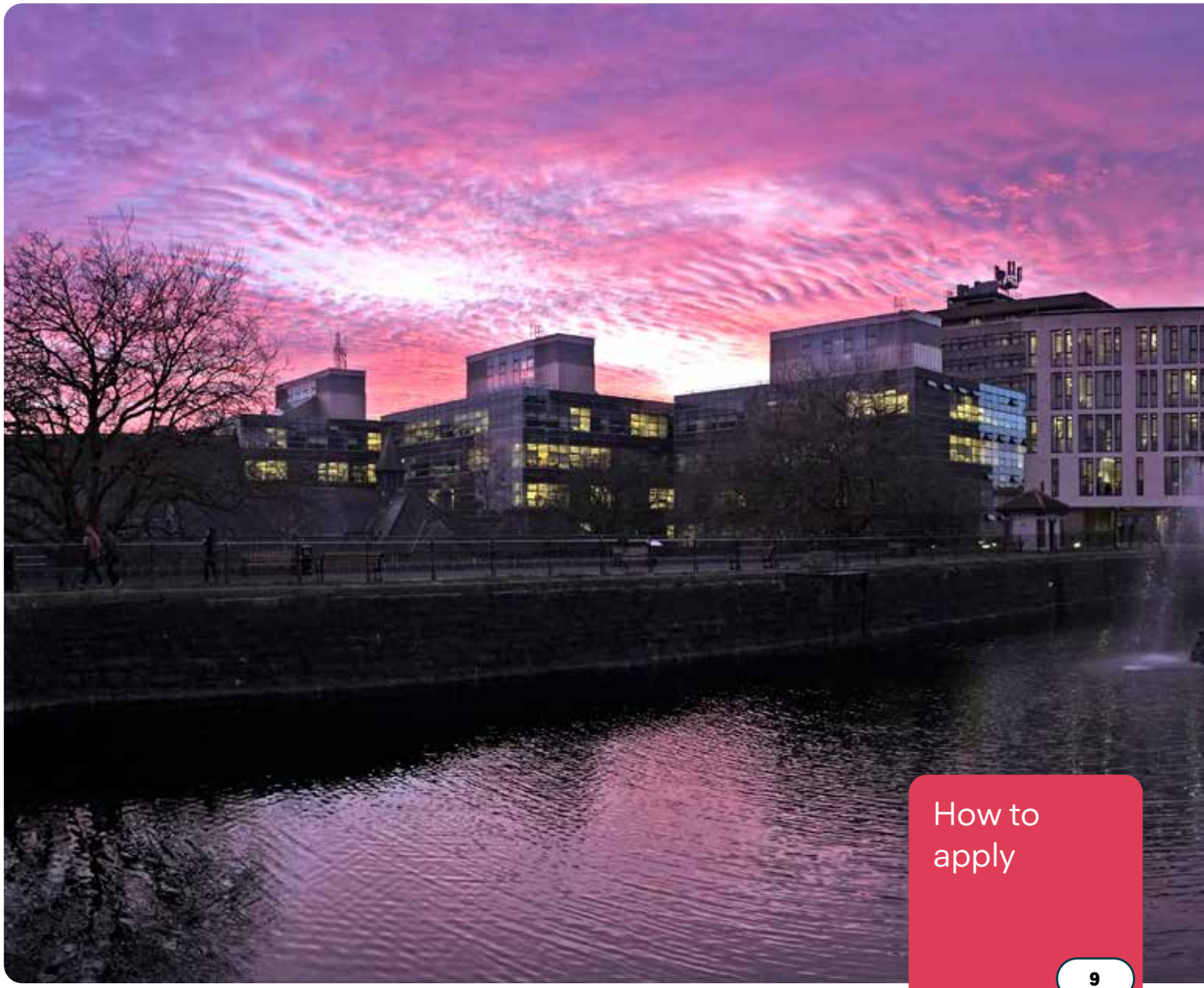
Julie Hacon, Research Associate
julie@peridotpartners.co.uk

Drew Richardson Walsh, Partner
drew@peridotpartners.co.uk
07739364033

Privacy notice:
Peridot Partners acts as the data controller for personal information collected through its executive search and recruitment activities.

They collect personal data needed to match candidates with current and future opportunities and to assess applications during recruitment processes.
Information may be collected through their website, recruitment microsites, CV submissions, emails, telephone conversations, and job applications.
Special category data (such as equality monitoring information) is only processed with explicit consent and may be anonymised when used for monitoring purposes.

The notice explains how personal data is used, shared, stored, retained, and what rights individuals have under UK GDPR.



How to apply

A UNIVERSITY WITH A POWERFUL STORY TO TELL

The University of Plymouth is recognised internationally for its research, teaching and innovation. Guided by its mission of Advancing Knowledge, Transforming Lives, the University is making a global impact across disciplines including marine and maritime science, medicine, health, law, computing, sustainability and climate action. A three-time recipient of the Queen's Anniversary Prize, Plymouth's pioneering work continues to shape solutions to some of the world's most pressing challenges.

Its influence extends far beyond the campus. Recently named Community University of the Year 2027 by the Daily Mail University Guide, the University was recognised for its exceptional contribution to its city, region and wider society. This award reflects Plymouth's unique position as a university with both a global outlook and a deep commitment to civic leadership, partnership and economic development.

For the incoming CMGO, this represents a rich and authentic institutional story, one that combines academic excellence, social impact, innovation and place, and offers significant opportunities to strengthen awareness, differentiation and reputation among prospective students, partners, alumni, government and industry.

A STRATEGIC LEADERSHIP OPPORTUNITY

This role comes at an especially significant time as the University refreshes its strategy around a new vision:

Together we shape extraordinary futures, creating knowledge, innovation and opportunity in Plymouth, our region and around the world.

Central to that vision is a renewed focus on sustainable growth, student recruitment, student experience, reputation and strategic partnerships.

The University's first institutional priority is to deliver an exceptional experience to a growing student population. In a highly competitive recruitment market, attracting and converting students is fundamental to the University's long-term success.

The Chief Marketing and Commercial Officer will lead this agenda, overseeing the student recruitment life cycle, admissions, brand and marketing strategy, data-driven campaign activity and audience engagement. The second priority is to grow and diversify partnerships of scale and significance.

As a civic university with global ambitions, Plymouth's success depends on its ability to build meaningful relationships with industry, government, communities and international partners. The CMGO will play a central role in enhancing the University's profile, strengthening reputation and stakeholder engagement and ensuring the institution's impact is effectively communicated to audiences across the UK and around the world.

WHY THIS ROLE MATTERS

This is far more than a traditional marketing leadership role. It is an executive position at the heart of the University's future direction.

For a visionary, commercial and ambitious marketing leader, the University of Plymouth offers a rare opportunity: the chance to define and amplify the story of a university that is growing in influence, delivering tangible impact and shaping extraordinary futures.

197,000
alumni in over 159 countries

OVER 15,800
undergraduate and postgraduate students

OVER 6,500
studying for a Plymouth degree at partner institutions in the UK and around the world

WINNER
Community University of The Year 2027
Daily Mail

£24m
contracting with local businesses

3 TIMES WINNER
Queen's Anniversary Prize

TEF 2023 Overall: Gold
Student experience: Gold
Student outcomes: Gold
Teaching Excellence Framework

TEF GOLD
ranking across all three categories (Teaching Excellence Framework 2023)

750+
learners enrolled on our apprenticeship programmes

2,300+
members of staff

150
international partnerships with institutions from **30** countries for collaboration in teaching and research

OUR STUDENT POPULATION

UNDERGRADUATE

94.4%
Undergraduate first degree

1.4%
Undergraduate foundation degree

4.2%
Undergraduate other degree

POSTGRADUATE

55.1%
Postgraduate taught higher degree

32.7%
Postgraduate taught other degree

12.2%
Postgraduate research higher degree

University of Plymouth in numbers

The University of Plymouth is a distinctive and ambitious institution with a global outlook and a strong civic mission.

The University of Plymouth is a place-based University which leverages ts unique location in Britain's Ocean City to drive regional impact, civic responsibility, and research which addresses global societal challenges.

Founded in 1862 as the Plymouth School of Navigation, the University draws on more than 160 years of heritage while remaining firmly focused on the future. Today it supports more than 15,000 students on campus, thousands more through international partnerships and an alumni community approaching 200,000 graduates worldwide.

Its academic strengths span marine and maritime science, medicine, health, engineering, business, law, sustainability, environmental science and digital technologies. Across these disciplines, Plymouth has earned a reputation for combining academic excellence with practical application and real-world impact.

This combination of world-class expertise, civic commitment and international ambition creates a powerful platform for future growth and an increasingly compelling institutional profile.

TEF 2023
Overall: **Gold**
Student experience: **Gold**
Student outcomes: **Gold**
Teaching Excellence Framework

PROUD TO BE
COMMUNITY UNIVERSITY OF THE YEAR 2027
(Daily Mail University Guide 2026)
UNIVERSITY OF PLYMOUTH

About the University of Plymouth

Student success sits at the heart of the University's mission. For more than 160 years, Plymouth has maintained a clear focus on preparing students not only for academic achievement but for success beyond graduation. This commitment is reflected in a distinctive approach to education built around experiential learning, professional relevance and strong employer engagement.

Students learn in environments that mirror the settings in which they will ultimately work, from healthcare simulation facilities and clinical environments to engineering laboratories, design studios, marine research vessels and moot courtrooms. Placements, internships, fieldwork and live industry projects are embedded throughout the student experience, ensuring graduates leave with both knowledge and practical experience.

This approach has earned national recognition. The University is one of only a select number of institutions to achieve Gold in all aspects of the Teaching Excellence Framework, recognising outstanding performance in teaching quality, student experience and student outcomes.

The University supports a diverse and ambitious student community, providing extensive academic, wellbeing and employability support designed to help every learner reach their potential. From first enquiry to graduation and beyond, students are part of an institution committed to helping them succeed academically, professionally and personally.

What makes Plymouth distinctive is not simply the quality of its teaching or the strength of its outcomes, but the stories that emerge from the student experience itself. Whether it is a nursing student gaining hands-on clinical experience, an engineer working alongside industry partners, a marine scientist undertaking research at sea, or a graduate launching a successful career through professional placements and employer connections, the University's impact is most powerfully demonstrated through the lives it helps to shape.

As the University continues to grow and attract new audiences, these authentic experiences provide a compelling narrative that brings together academic excellence, opportunity, ambition and transformation. They speak directly to prospective students and their families, illustrating not only what students study at Plymouth, but what they can become because of it.

Education and student experience

Research is a defining strength of the University and a major contributor to its growing national and international reputation.

Plymouth's researchers are united by a commitment to addressing real-world challenges and generating knowledge that has meaningful social, environmental and economic impact. Working across disciplines, they tackle issues ranging from climate change and ocean sustainability to health inequalities, technological innovation and community resilience.

The University has established a particularly strong international profile in marine and environmental sciences, reflecting both its coastal location and longstanding expertise in understanding and protecting the world's oceans. Alongside these strengths, Plymouth continues to deliver influential research across medicine, healthcare, engineering, computing, business and the social sciences.

Research excellence is reflected in the most recent Research Excellence Framework, where 78% of submitted research was assessed as world-leading or internationally excellent.

Collaboration sits at the centre of Plymouth's research culture. Partnerships with governments, businesses, healthcare providers, charities and international organisations extend the reach and impact of the University's work while creating opportunities to influence policy, drive innovation and contribute to public debate.

These achievements provide a strong foundation for enhancing institutional visibility, strengthening reputation and demonstrating the University's contribution to addressing global challenges.

Research, innovation and partnership

As a civic institution with global ambitions, Plymouth works extensively with organisations across the public, private and third sectors to translate knowledge into practical outcomes and create lasting impact.

Its partnerships support innovation in sectors including marine technology, clean energy, advanced manufacturing, healthcare, defence and digital technologies. Through research collaborations, business engagement programmes and knowledge exchange initiatives, the University contributes directly to economic growth, productivity and social development.

Plymouth's wider innovation ecosystem includes Plymouth Science Park, specialist research facilities and innovation centres supporting high-growth businesses throughout the region. Together, these activities reinforce the University's reputation as a place where research, enterprise and partnership come together to address real-world challenges.

At a time when strategic partnerships are becoming increasingly important to institutional growth, these relationships provide valuable opportunities to enhance visibility, build influence and strengthen engagement across a wide range of stakeholders.

THE World University Rankings 2026

A top-ranked university in the South West for industry engagement (Times Higher Education World University Rankings 2026).

Partnerships

The new refreshed institutional strategy sees people at the heart of our success. Puposeful leaderships will set our direction ...

We are committed to fostering a culture where everyone feels valued, respected and empowered to perform at their best. As we refresh our institutional strategy and shape the future direction of the University, creating an inclusive, supportive and high-performing environment for our people remains a fundamental priority.

Equality, diversity and inclusion are central to our values and are embedded throughout the University's academic faculties, schools and professional services. We believe that diverse perspectives strengthen decision-making, drive innovation and enrich the experiences of our students, staff and partners. Through a range of staff networks, wellbeing initiatives, mentoring opportunities and professional development programmes, we actively support colleagues at every stage of their careers.

Our commitment to advancing equality has been recognised through the University's Athena Swan Silver Award, achieved in 2024, placing us among a select group of UK universities to receive institution-wide Silver recognition. This achievement reflects long-term efforts to create a more inclusive workplace and our commitment to increasing representation at senior levels across the organisation. We continue to develop initiatives that support career progression, flexible and agile working, leadership development and enhanced family-friendly policies.

As a Disability Confident Employer, we are committed to removing barriers and creating opportunities for talented people from all backgrounds. We actively encourage applications from individuals who share our values and believe that diversity of thought, experience and perspective is essential to our continued success.

The University is committed both to fostering an inclusive community and to securing freedom of speech and academic freedom within the law. We seek leaders who can create environments in which people are able to contribute fully, challenge ideas respectfully, engage in open and rigorous debate, and express lawful views without fear of disadvantage. Our commitment to inclusion extends beyond our own institution. Through initiatives such as our award-winning Law Clinic, our patient-led health facilities including the Dental Clinic and our Centre for Eyecare Excellence, we are demonstrating our belief that higher education should be accessible, welcoming and transformative for all. This reflects our wider mission as a civic university, one that is committed to creating opportunity and improving lives both within and beyond our campus.

For the incoming Chief Marketing and Growth Officer, this culture provides an opportunity to join a collaborative and ambitious executive team at a university that places people at the heart of its success.

Athena SWAN

Stonewall DIVERSITY CHAMPION

The University of Plymouth is governed by its Board of Governors and led by the Vice-Chancellor and University Executive Group.

THE UNIVERSITY IS ORGANISED THROUGH THREE FACULTIES:

Faculty of Arts, Humanities and Business

- Plymouth Business School
- School of Art, Design and Architecture
- School of Law, Humanities and Social Sciences

Faculty of Health

- Peninsula Medical School
- Peninsula Dental School
- School of Biomedical Sciences
- School of Health Professions
- School of Nursing and Midwifery
- School of Psychology

Faculty of Science and Engineering

- School of Biological and Marine Sciences
- School of Engineering, Computing and Mathematics
- School of Geography, Earth and Environmental Sciences

Working across these diverse academic communities, the Chief Marketing and Growth Officer will be uniquely positioned to support institutional priorities spanning student recruitment, research visibility, reputation enhancement, partnership development and stakeholder engagement.

Our University structure

Plymouth is one of the UK's most distinctive and exciting cities: a place where innovation, heritage, natural beauty and opportunity come together. Located on the south coast of Devon, where the land meets the sea and the UK looks outward to the world, Plymouth combines the advantages of a growing regional city with an exceptional quality of life.

Home to more than 260,000 people, Plymouth is the largest city in the South West peninsula and serves as the region's economic, cultural and educational centre. It is a city with a rich maritime history and a bold vision for the future, making it an attractive destination for students, businesses, researchers and talented professionals from across the UK and internationally.

The city is undergoing a period of significant transformation and investment. Ambitious plans for growth include the creation of thousands of new jobs, homes and businesses, supported by major public and private sector investment. Plymouth is increasingly recognised as a national centre for innovation in marine technology, advanced manufacturing, sustainability, defence and clean energy, sectors in which the University plays a leading role.

Recent government investment and policy announcements have further strengthened Plymouth's strategic importance. The city has been designated a National Defence Growth Area, creating opportunities for research, development and innovation in marine autonomy, cyber security, defence technologies and high-value engineering. These developments align closely with the University's research strengths and reinforce Plymouth's growing reputation as a centre for excellence and innovation.

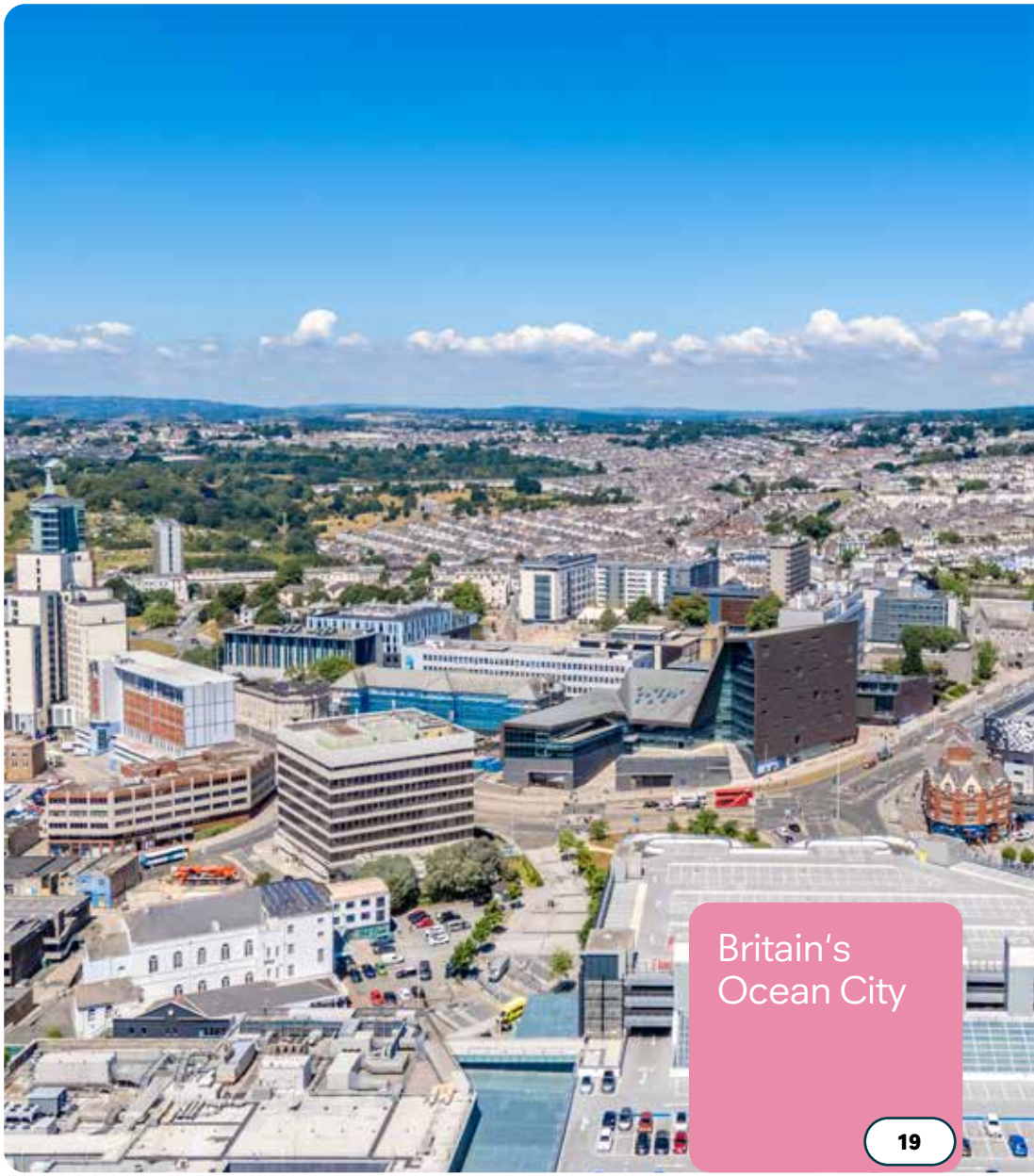
Alongside its economic ambitions, the city is building a thriving arts, music and creative sector that continues to attract investment and talent. From major festivals and cultural events to independent galleries, theatres and waterfront attractions, Plymouth offers a dynamic and increasingly diverse cultural experience. The Box in Plymouth, a University partner, was recently named Art Fund Museum of the Year 2026, the UK's most prestigious museum award and the world's largest museum prize, accompanied by a £120,000 award. The judges praised The Box for its ambitious, community-focused approach, its impact across Plymouth, and its success in making culture accessible to local communities.

Britain's Ocean City

What makes Plymouth truly special, however, is the balance it offers between professional opportunity and quality of life. The University's main campus sits at the heart of the city, just minutes from one of Europe's most impressive natural harbours and a spectacular waterfront that stretches from the historic Barbican to Plymouth Hoe. Residents enjoy easy access to award-winning beaches, sailing and watersports, coastal paths and stunning countryside.

To the north lies Dartmoor National Park, offering hundreds of square miles of open moorland, rivers and woodland, while to the west are the dramatic coastlines and beaches of Cornwall. Few UK cities can offer such immediate access to both an ambitious urban environment and some of the country's most beautiful natural landscapes.

Plymouth provides a compelling story in its own right. The city embodies many of the qualities that define the University: ambitious, outward-looking, innovative, collaborative and deeply connected to place. As the University continues to strengthen its national and international profile, the unique appeal of Britain's Ocean City will remain a powerful part of its identity and a significant asset in attracting students, staff, partners and investment.

> "Plymouth is the coolest little city by the sea."
> GQ Magazine

> "I have never before, in my long and eclectic career, been gifted with such an abundance of natural beauty as I experienced filming War Horse on Dartmoor."
> Steven Spielberg