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Newsletter

University of
Kent

Bringing you the latest news from Enrolment Management Services at the University of Kent

Autumn 2017



Enrolment Management Services

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Director's update

So much is happening at the moment that a general update is in danger of just being a list of all the activities and projects in which EMS is engaged! But I relish the opportunity to bring all these together in one place to keep you informed and to recognise and celebrate our successes. Although I guess it's also incumbent upon me to alert you to some of the real challenges we face in the current environment.

Gold for Kent!

Let's start with the really good news: Gold in the Teaching Excellence Framework (TEF)*. This is excellent news for Kent and for the work we undertake in EMS. Our TEF, together with our REF, makes us one of the leading universities in the UK and secures us firmly in the top 20. Most significantly, it gives credence to our statement voiced in the University Plan that Kent delivers an *'excellent education delivered by world class researchers'*.

The comments supporting our TEF rating further demonstrate our audience strapline of *'A place to inspire/An approach to challenge'*. Clearly, as the UK's European university, our locations, from the Historic Dockyard to the ancient ruins in Elusina, remain inspiring. The TEF confirms our excellence in teaching quality, particularly 'the extent to which teaching stimulates and challenges students, and maximises their engagement with their studies'.



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The TEF further demonstrates that we are delivering against our Admissions and Widening Participation strategies by acknowledging our learning environment (the effectiveness of resources and activities such as libraries, laboratories and work experience) which supports learning and improves retention, progression, attainment and our student outcomes – the extent to which all students achieve their educational and professional goals, in particular students from disadvantaged backgrounds.

Among other points, which included our culture of excellence, student support and our co-curricular activities, the TEF Panel gave particular acknowledgement to the **Student Success Project** driven from the Partnership Development Office (PDO), managed by Jen Wyatt and led by Jan Moriarty and Sharon Smith. A very big congratulations to them for work well done and for contributing to Kent's continued success.

This builds on the contributions made by EMS to the University's achievements; previous commendations include our work in admissions and the programmes plan for the QAA's Higher Education Review.

In short, the TEF has validated all we know about teaching and the student experience at Kent – we can move forward promoting Kent in the knowledge that all our claims are true!

Promoting the TEF

EMS and the Design and Print Unit have created some promotional materials that can be used by schools and departments. These, along with some general guidance for using TEF descriptions and statements, can be found on the brand website at www.kent.ac.uk/brand/tef-materials.html

EMS round-up

The Digital Communications team have been working non-stop on the KentWeb project, which looks fantastic, and ensuring the programmes plan is CMA compliant; the Scholarship and Foreign Loans Office has administered (so far!) over 1,300 undergraduate awards and is driving forward the KentVision scholarships and awards module, and the PDO Summer Schools were a great success.

We have also introduced a new Access programme in Medway, which commenced this September. The **University Entrance Diploma (UED)** is a full-time course designed for people who enjoy learning but want an alternative to traditional A level or BTEC courses.

In other news, our **VC's Cup team** have come second overall! This is an excellent achievement and testament to EMS regularly staffing both a full team of players and supporters at the majority of the events. A huge congratulations to all who took part, and special thanks to Jack Fox in PDO and Russell Jordan in the Recruitment team for co-ordinating players and generally encouraging us to get out from behind our desks and be a bit more active.

I just want to finish by acknowledging all the support we have been given from colleagues across the University. Let's count on the new academic year being a continued success in all that we do.

Mary Hughes

Director, Enrolment Management Services

*The University of Kent's Statement of Findings can be found at www.kent.ac.uk/tef-statement



News

National Collaborative Outreach Programme

The National Collaborative Outreach Programme (NCOP) supports the most disadvantaged young people in England to progress into higher education (HE).

The programme consists of 29 consortia including HE providers, schools, colleges and other organisations such as employers, third-sector bodies and local enterprise partnerships. It is funded by the Higher Education Funding Council England (HEFCE) and will run from 2016-17 to 2019-20.

The consortia will undertake outreach activity in geographical areas where the HE participation of young people with good GCSE attainment is much lower than expected.

Aims of the programme

The programme aims to support the Government's goals to:

- double the proportion of young people from disadvantaged backgrounds in higher education by 2020
- address the under-representation of young men from disadvantaged backgrounds in HE.

Kent wins funding bid

The University's Partnership Development Office has successfully led a £4.1m bid to HEFCE, securing the University as the lead partner in the Kent and Medway Collaborative Outreach Programme, one of the 29 consortia selected to participate in NCOP.

Other members include Canterbury Christ Church University; University of the Creative Arts; University of Greenwich; the East Kent and Canterbury FE Partnership; MidKent College and 50 targeted secondary schools.

Focus

The consortium's work will address the gap in progression for young people from POLAR3 Q1 postcodes, and will focus particularly upon addressing the progression of students from years nine through to 13 currently in schools and colleges across our area.

Our targeted wards are clustered in rural and coastal areas, often isolated from good transport links and other infrastructure. Our data shows that in all schools there is a significant gap between the attainment of boys and girls at every level.



The project began in January 2017, and there are four members of staff in the core team. Daniel Berry is Project Manager, Joni Chase, responsible for coordinating further education, Claire Parsons, responsible for coordinating schools and Liz Lukehurst, project administrator. In addition, we have welcomed Heather Collingwood, Lucy Frost and Joanna Parsons, who will develop Access provision and schools outreach work.

Strands

Each of the University partners will lead a particular strand. They are as follows:

University of Kent: A new access programme (University Entrance Diploma) and HE progression models for further education (FE) students

Academic progression pathways are diminishing for those students who might not wish to study within a school setting. Working in partnership with further education colleges with high numbers of target students, Kent has developed alternative academic pathways for students.

It will also seek to provide modules and support packages to cover gaps in skills and knowledge that may prevent young people, particularly those in FE settings, from successfully progressing to, and succeeding in, higher education, particularly where some qualifications might not fully prepare individuals for its demands.

Canterbury Christ Church University: Information, advice and guidance project

A comprehensive information and guidance offer will be available to targeted schools working with targeted students. Where existing accredited qualifications are available through partner institutions, teachers and practitioners in schools and further education colleges will be offered free professional development, at undergraduate and postgraduate levels.

University of the Creative Arts: Creative Careers Project

Activities aimed to develop creative thinking to enhance attainment and to introduce a range of potential progression opportunities in subjects not studied in school, including, for example, higher level crafts.

University of Greenwich: Mentoring and mentoring-related support

This strand will encompass a range of initiatives, including mentoring programmes where target students in harder-to-reach rural and coastal schools will be supported in school.

For more information, please contact Daniel Berry at d.j.berry-67@kent.ac.uk

News

Admissions

As we reach the peak of the recruitment and admissions year, we look back over the busy August clearing and confirmation period.

Despite a drop in undergraduate applications of around 3% nationally, and the fallout from Brexit impacting negatively on EU recruitment numbers, undergraduate conversions were surprisingly similar to last year. With UCAS warning of fewer clearing applicants, many institutions were prompted to accept more students at confirmation as institutions scrambled to hit targets.

The number of students required through clearing was reduced by both an improvement in the offer conversion rate and by a late surge in the number of insurance acceptances on A level results day. Staff at both Canterbury and Medway worked very hard over the clearing period to achieve some ambitious undergraduate targets. Our TEF Gold rating will surely make us a more attractive proposition to all applicants in the next application cycle.

Concern remains over whether our postgraduate numbers will hold up, given the growth of undergraduate student debt impacting on taught postgraduate recruitment of home/EU applicants and the negative perceptions of the UK as a result of Brexit



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and tighter visa controls impacting on overseas recruitment. The Confirmation of Acceptance for Studies (CAS) team have been working to ensure visa applications can be processed as quickly as possible and visa refusals are minimised. In conclusion, despite a tough year for the sector it's one in which the University has held its own.

Clearing update

As in previous years, the University managed its call centre operations from the Jennison building. This year, we recruited 37 student operators to handle the incoming calls from our current applicants, and from new clearing applicants.

The clearing call centre handled **10,098 telephone calls** across the main clearing days on Thursday 17, Friday 18 and Saturday 19 August.



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The importance of being a web-first clearing operation should not be underestimated, given that our switchboard reached full capacity on Thursday 17 August. As anticipated, clearing activity again proved to be very concentrated on the Thursday. The clearing application system had received 3,853 clearing applications by the end of Saturday 19 August. We have now placed over 700 clearing applicants.

A Clearing Open Day was held on Saturday 19 August at both the Canterbury and Medway campuses to meet and greet applicants who had applied during clearing and wanted to visit the campus ahead of making their final decisions.

We would like to extend our thanks to all the staff and students who have been involved in clearing this year – it went very smoothly due to the hard work of everyone involved before, during and after!

Recruitment & Marketing

The spring and summer terms were particularly busy with the Recruitment team attending a large number of UCAS Higher Education fairs (36 to be exact!) around the UK to promote Kent to thousands of prospective students in preparation for 2018 entry.

UK and EU events

In addition to the large volumes of UCAS visitors, we have delivered a range of presentations in schools and colleges across the south-east region and attended fairs in Sussex, Kent and Medway, Manchester, Birmingham and many counties in between.

The team have also attended 20 postgraduate education fairs to raise the profile of our postgraduate courses. We have also

welcomed 1,200 students and their teachers to the Canterbury campus as part of the school visits we conduct throughout the year.

These events provide a fantastic opportunity to showcase the University and its facilities to students who are at the stage where they are considering their future options.

Along with our trips around the UK, the team have also visited a number of European countries, meeting prospective undergraduate and postgraduate students. We have attended education fairs in Romania, Greece, Cyprus and Italy – to name but a few! Added to this there was a Germany schools tour, individual tours to international schools, and conversion talks to our current applicants at the Ambassador's Residence in Athens. In total the team have attended 71 events across the EU during this period.

Open and Applicant Days

Applicant Days continue to be important conversion events: 52.8% of Canterbury applicants and 48% of Medway applicants who attended an Applicant Day went on to make Kent their firm choice university. The team are currently preparing for the next round of Applicant Days, which commence at the end of November.

We had beautiful weather for both the summer **Open Days** and both events went very well, with 63% of booked visitors attending the Medway event and 56% attending Canterbury.

Open Days are a key factor when prospective students are choosing their universities. In *The Sodexo International University Lifestyle Survey 2017*, UK students stated that the one single factor that influenced their choice of university more than anything else was a good experience at an open day.

All visitors are asked for their feedback in a post-event survey. We use this feedback (the majority

of which is overwhelmingly positive) to enhance and improve the events. A new feature this autumn is from the Accommodation Office, who will be offering virtual tours of Canterbury study bedrooms using motion control technology. It's essential that we keep up the great work and continue to ensure our Open Days are innovative, informative and enjoyable.

The autumn Open Day dates are:

- Saturday 7 October (Canterbury)
- Saturday 14 October (Medway)
- Saturday 21 October (Canterbury)

Marketing

We are now preparing for the Open Days in October. We created more video content for the clearing campaign this year, and we are working with a new digital marketing agency **Crafted Atom**. We have analysed the data and metrics from all the media used in the marketing packages last year and have put together our recommendations for schools for 2017/18.

Market research

We are currently conducting market research for several academic schools. The reports will cover existing programmes, some of which are not recruiting well, variations on current programmes to update them for future recruitment, and investigation of new subject areas, mostly at postgraduate level. Any schools or centres that would like research conducted should contact their Faculty Marketing Officer to start the process. The Faculty Marketing Officers are:

- **Humanities** – Cordelia Mason
- **Sciences** – Emma Nevill
- **Social Sciences** – Fiona Holden.

The Recruitment and Marketing Forum convenes twice a term at Canterbury and once a term at Medway. Dates for this academic year will be confirmed shortly. For more information, please email marketingoffice@kent.ac.uk

Team update

We have welcomed two new Recruitment Officers to the team, Dominika Majewska and Shannon Hardy.

Dominika graduated from Royal Holloway, University of London in 2014 with a BSc in Psychology, then completed a PGCE in Secondary Education at the University of Sussex. She completed her Master's at Kent and, during her studies, worked as a tutor and a Postgraduate Ambassador for the Faculty of Social Sciences.

Shannon Hardy studied at Bournemouth University. She has an undergraduate degree in Archaeological, Anthropological and Forensic Sciences and an MSc in Forensic Anthropology. She spent a year at the University of Surrey as their UK/EU Student Recruitment Officer and has recently moved back to Kent, where she is originally from.

Outreach & Community

Summer was a busy time for outreach delivery. The Partnership Development Office (PDO) delivered its summer programme of activities for students from the University's partner schools, colleges and the local community.

Some of these events were run on-campus, whereas others take place in schools and community settings across Kent and Medway. The events are underpinned by teams of student ambassadors who work for the PDO across the full range of activities.

Summer schools

We ran three successful summer schools in June and July. Students from partner further education colleges were offered a 24-hour residential programme, which included curriculum activities to support their studies particularly in sport, business, computing and science. This year, students from all four local colleges were present and gained an insight into what it is really like to be a university student.

At the end of July, we held the annual Year 10 summer school. This four-day residential combines academic sessions with opportunities for students to participate in a range of non-curricular events, including sporting and cultural activities. It is designed to raise aspirations among young people from partner schools who have no family background of university study. We were also pleased to pilot a one-night residential for Year 12 students, also aimed at partner school students and focused on ensuring students were well-equipped to make informed decisions when starting the process of applying to university.

World Languages Day

Run in both Medway and Canterbury, this popular event was launched in 2005 and is aimed at encouraging students in Year 8 to consider studying languages at higher levels. Participants undertake three workshops, which are either based on languages they are learning in school, or introduce them to new languages and cultures. This year, workshops included

a physics experiment in Spanish, workshops on the ancient world, salsa, African drumming and puppets, and sessions on language themes including German, Italian, Japanese, Russian, Polish, Greek and Portuguese.

Year group visits

We offered a number of campus visit days to partner schools tailored to a specific year group. These visits provide an insight into higher education and the range of subjects on offer. Students had the opportunity to undertake interactive seminar sessions on the Canterbury campus, as well as seeing the types of facility available to university students.

Celebrating student success

Summer also provides a chance to celebrate the successes of the students we work with throughout the academic year. In addition to a large number of partner school students obtaining places at university, a total of ten students completed the University's Access to HE Diploma and five of these students have been successful in obtaining a place at Kent. As the start of the academic year approaches, we look forward to delivering a number of new exciting projects, including the University Entrance Diploma (UEd).

University Entrance Diploma

The University Entrance Diploma (UEd) is a full-time course designed for young people who enjoy learning but want an alternative to traditional A level or BTEC courses. Delivered at the Medway campus, this innovative new course, which will launch in September 2017, qualifies students for entry to higher education and offers the opportunity to explore a range of subjects in a supportive and encouraging environment.

Available as a one or two-year option, the UEd will help students to develop independence, autonomy and confidence while gaining the skills and subject knowledge needed to make a success of higher education. Based at the Historic Dockyard Chatham, students will be able to access the library and other facilities offered by the Medway campus. See www.kent.ac.uk/courses/part-time/access/ued for further details.

To find out more about the work of the Partnership Development Office, please email outreach@kent.ac.uk

News

Scholarships and funding

The Scholarships Office is proud to announce that Kent has been able to secure a total of 16 Consortium of the Humanities and the Arts South-east England (CHASE) AHRC Research Council Studentships, and a further seven South East Network for Social Sciences (SenSS) ESRC Research Council Studentships.

Undergraduate scholarships

The Scholarships Unit is currently confirming the award of scholarships to undergraduate students who are starting their Bachelor's degrees at the University of Kent in the 2017/18 academic year. To date the scholarships awarded to these students are as follows:

- Kent Scholarship for Academic Excellence: 790
- Partner Scholarship: 391
- Ambassador Stipend: 148

We are still processing these scholarships, so numbers may rise.

Postgraduate awards

We are pleased to welcome 84 new Vice Chancellor's Graduate Teaching Assistantship awardees.

The Scholarships Office attended this year's Arrivals Weekend along with members of HR to greet all new Graduate Teaching Assistantship (GTA) recipients. We helped with the processing of the Right to Work forms for new GTAs and answered queries from new scholarship recipients. For our 23 new Research Council Consortium students, specialist introductory sessions have been arranged by the Graduate School to illustrate the unique opportunities offered to them through these prestigious awards.

Other awards

Although the majority of our scholarships have now been awarded, there are still a limited number of awards available for students:

First 500 scholarship

This award provides one scholarship of £2,000 per annum to a new undergraduate student who has attained AAB from three A levels or equivalent (ie 340 points or higher), and who is not eligible to receive the Kent Scholarship for Academic Excellence or needs-based financial aid. The deadline is 8 October 2017.

Sir David Ankers Jones Hong Kong and China Fund

This award provides scholarships of £1,000 to students wishing to study at one of our partner institutions, or to fund a work placement in Hong Kong or mainland China. The deadline is 1 October 2017.

Please inform us of all awards so we can ensure all potential students and applicants can easily access funding information.
Email scholarships@kent.ac.uk

Publishing

The Publishing Office is made up of the Publications Team and the Digital Communications Unit. The Office, as a whole, publishes recruitment-based information for the University both in print and online.



Publications

Summer was a very busy time in the Publications team. We completed the undergraduate subject brochures needed for the summer Open Days – there were 26 in total across several schools and centres.

The format of these brochures has changed slightly this year to bring them in line with changes the team made to the website earlier in the year. Other publications completed over the summer included the Graduate Prospectus; International Student Guide; brochures for Brussels, Rome, Paris and KBS, both the undergraduate and postgraduate Information packs and their contents.

The Publications team also work on the programmes plant and other parts of the website as part of their regular workload. The undergraduate programmes on the Programmes Plant were proofread earlier this year and the postgraduate programmes will be done in the future.

Having been involved in the user-testing and rewriting of content for the undergraduate programmes as part of the KentWeb design, Senior Editors are working closely with Digital colleagues on the school migration project.

News

Digital communications and KentVision update

The Digital Communications Unit are working with Information Services on the 'three schools' pilot project, migrating the Kent Business School, School of Architecture, and School of Sport and Exercise Sciences into the new KentWeb design. We are due to launch all three school sites in a beta testing phase by the end of October.

As part of our data-driven and user-centric approach, the pilot project will involve testing new design concepts on real users prior to launch. We'll also analyse how the live beta sites are being used, and will continue to refine the design based on our research. The pilot project will inform the design templates that will later be made available to academic schools as part of the wider website migration.

Our research will also inform the guidance we provide to schools on how to use the new design and get the most out of their websites. We're also creating resources to help departments undertake their own user research and use data to inform the decisions they make about their websites. In other good news, the Digital Comms Team were recently **nominated for an Academic Division Award** for their work on their redesign project.

If you would like to know more about the user research consultancy services we offer, please email Angela Watson (a.watson@kent.ac.uk).

Video update

We have enjoyed working on a number of video projects over the past few months. We've worked with colleagues in recruitment and marketing on a suite of videos for the 2017 clearing website, focusing on advice around the clearing process, what to do on results day and a wide range of video stories from students who joined via clearing in 2016.

Successful launches

We are also working with the **Accommodation Office** to produce videos for each student residence, with current first-year students talking about why they love their particular accommodation. A number of these videos have already been completed, and have been particularly successful on social media.

We also produced undergraduate course videos for the **School of History** and **Centre for American Studies**, in the form of two-minute talking-head style testimonials from final-year students reflecting on what they love about their course at Kent.



Analytics

Our analytics have shown that these videos are getting a lot of views on our course pages and are very effective promotional tools. As such, these course videos will be offered as a service to all academic schools from next academic year. We are also hoping to work on some postgraduate video content, with several schools already expressing an interest.

Communications

The University has a suite of central communications, which are sent to applicants at key points in the recruitment cycle. These consist of letters, emails and notifications and are managed by the KentVision team and EMS.

2018 conversion communications

These communications are sent centrally on behalf of academic schools to undergraduate and postgraduate applicants once an offer is made, when an applicant accepts their offer and, for undergraduate applicants only, once they have attended an Applicant Day.

The communications are in the process of being uploaded to SITS and will be ready for the start of the new recruitment cycle.

Updating throughout the year

It is possible to update the following elements of the conversion communications throughout the year:

- subject line
- body text
- sign off.

The opening and closing paragraphs are standardised and cannot be updated/tailored per school.

If you wish to update your conversion communications, please contact Clare Saunders in the Publishing team at c.saunders@kent.ac.uk

If you need to contact the Publishing Office about a recruitment-based publication, please email publications@kent.ac.uk

For web/digital queries, please email the Digital Communications team at emsweb@kent.ac.uk

A week in the life...



I'm Sam Charman, digital communications officer in EMS. I've been at Kent in my current role since August 2014.

Prior to this I was at the London School of Economics and Political Science for seven years. I really enjoy working in the HE digital sector, it's always changing and leading me to new projects. I currently work across a wide range of digital; including web projects, video, social media, web and digital marketing analytics, content and strategy.

Monday

Since May I've been working my hours over four days instead of five, so Mondays are spent looking after my one-year-old daughter, Astrid. We usually go swimming or on a day trip to a local attraction. Here's us having fun at Leeds Castle, (one of us more than the other).



Tuesday

Into the office for an 8am start. First job of the day is to check emails and catch up with anything that happened on Monday, both via email and with the rest of the Digital Communications Unit (DCU). Check the calendar and meetings for the coming week. I have a meeting with the office of the Vice-Chancellor to train their web publisher on the Google Analytics web-tracking platform.

Other jobs today include carrying out Google monitoring, where I check how our course pages perform in a variety of Google searches, and building some creative and advert tracking for the EMS marketing team. I'm also quality checking a number of videos produced by schools for correct branding and CMA content compliance.

Wednesday

Wednesdays are our team meeting day, so I'm meeting with the rest of the DCU and catching up with our various web and consultancy projects. I'm also planning our next batch of user testing for the undergraduate and postgraduate course pages, and how best to facilitate that with prospective students at both levels. I also have a meeting with KBS to discuss tasks and timelines for a project to film student talking-head videos for their postgraduate offering.

Good news! There's cake in the office today (Battenberg, my favourite!) It would be rude not to indulge in a much needed sugar hit in the afternoon. This sets me up nicely for writing a strategy document for an EMS video service offer to all schools in the 17/18 academic year. This will focus on undergraduate courses and increase our video provision for web/social media/digital marketing significantly.

Thursday

Today I'm chairing the monthly central social media meeting. This brings together EMS, Corporate Communications, International Recruitment and Kent Union. On the agenda today (among other things) is use of Snapchat, our 2017 freshers' Facebook group and social media in China. It's great to get updates from colleagues and drive improvements to our social media presence.

I find some time in the morning to run some Google analytics stats for a market research document, and also start setting up some Facebook and Google advertising campaigns on behalf of various schools.

I'm also editing outstanding video content for open day videos, school course videos and Kent Hospitality accommodation videos, making sure videos are branded correctly, subtitled and uploaded to YouTube for use on social media and the Kent website.

Met with colleagues from Information Services to discuss our presentation and workshop at the Institutional Web Management Workshop (IWMW) conference. This is an annual event for the higher educational web management community. Attendees include web publishers from across the higher education sectors, and we'll present on *'Reviving our online brand'*, drawing on the work that went into the launch of the new Kent website earlier this year.

Friday

I run social media content analytics for the past month, looking at our top-performing content and the key engagement metrics for Kent's presence on Facebook, Twitter and Instagram. I also run and analyse tracking data for recent digital marketing campaigns on third-party websites and on social media, creating analysis reports.

I'm currently working on some site audits for a few different websites. This involves analysing site usage over the past year, working out the key user journeys, navigation and most popular content via stats from both Google Analytics and heat map data. Building this up into a report to provide to the relevant departments with a follow-up meeting to discuss.

It's been another busy week, and I'm looking forward to getting home, seeing the family and having a weekend of being Dad.