News

Director’s update

Goodness me! It hardly seems possible we’re into March and the 2019 recruitment cycle is upon us. However, before we finish the 2018 conversions and look ahead to 2019, I’d just like to take a moment to look back at a couple of key events that took place as we bought 2017 to a close.

December: Farewell Shirley!

Colleagues from across the University came together to wish Shirley Prosser, the Admissions Operations Manager and one of the longest serving members of staff at the University, all the best for her retirement. Shirley has given over 30 years of service to the University, many of them in admissions, and we wish her a long and happy retirement.

November: Award-winners

In case you’ve not heard the good news already, I’m delighted to announce that the University received the Times Higher Education (THE) award for Outstanding Support for Students. The award has been given to the Student Success (EDi) Project which, over two years, has taken a combined approach of using very high-quality data analysis and research to underpin development based within nine pilot academic schools.

The judges said that Kent ‘stood out from the pack with its impressive and innovative approach to improving academic outcomes for the least advantaged students.

By creating a comprehensive network of tailored support and dedicated institutional research opportunities for such students in nine pilot schools, the University has made outstanding progress in narrowing the attainment gap, and has created a model that can be rolled out across the institution.

Phase two of the project is now underway within seven academic schools, and will continue until 2020. This work is complemented by ongoing data analysis and research in addition to central initiatives such as the vibrant inspirational speakers programme for students and outreach participants, which last term featured speakers such as Akala, and this term will include the Vice Chancellor, Karen Cox and Canterbury’s poet laureate Lemn Sissay.

I’m sure you will join me in offering congratulations to Jan Moriarty and the whole team on a fantastic achievement.

Looking ahead to 2018

It will be a busy year, which will no doubt present its own challenges. The Admissions Systems Development team are working incredibly hard on a number of long-running projects, while providing technical support and making changes to the structure of the offer letters in order to ensure compliance with the CMA and the General Data Protection Regulations (GDPR). The team are also working closely with the KentVision Project team so that, when KentVision replaces the Student Data System later this year, the two systems will work together seamlessly (p3).

Admissions, Recruitment and Marketing

Undergraduate applications for 2018 across the sector have started off tentatively. Kent’s applications mirror the national picture, meaning our conversion activities will be vital to demonstrate to prospective students why they should make Kent their firm choice. The marketing team are working closely with academic schools, providing detailed market insight reports, and the recruitment team have already hit the ground running, attending multiple undergraduate and postgraduate events across the UK and in Europe. Shannon and Dominika joined the recruitment team last summer – you can find out how they’ve found their first few months in the Staff Spotlight feature on p6.

Outreach and Community

We’ve been celebrating a number of significant achievements in the Partnership Development Office; the creation of the Universities of Kent Academies Trust (UAKT), meaning the University can now sponsor more than one school, our inclusion in a new case study published by the Office for Fair Access (OFFA) as part of its good practice series, and the development of a new Curriculum Framework which schools can use to determine which activities will be most effective for specific groups of students. We have also enrolled 20 students on the new University Entrance Diploma (UED), which launched in September, and have recruited 120 student ambassadors!

Read the full round-up on p5.

Looking ahead to 2019

The first sign that we are in the next recruitment cycle is the arrival of the next academic year’s prospectus! The 2019 undergraduate prospectus has just launched and I have a shiny (yes, shiny!) copy on my desk. Well done to the Publications team and Lesley in the Design and Print Unit for creating a fresher look that works more cohesively with the new website design.

The Kent Web Project continues to go from strength to strength with Architecture and Sports Sciences already using the new theme as part of the pilot schools project, and the launch of KBS’s site imminent. The schedule for migration of School sites has been announced, and we are aiming for completion of these by the end of the calendar year. This is a huge challenge but the cross-service team (EMS and IS) are fully committed to the delivery of this exciting project.

The Digital Communications team are also hard at work producing ‘talking-head’ videos for academic schools and the Publications team have held a series of proof-reading workshops, which are due to restart later in the year. If you are looking to brush up on your skills, I urge you to sign up for the next sessions as the team have considerable experience working across different industries in both the public and private sectors (p7).

Mary Hughes
Academic Registrar

THE award for Outstanding Support for Students

Saying farewell to Shirley after over 30 years!
Admissions Systems Development

Many of you within academic schools and professional service departments have already been working with Admissions Systems Development across a range of projects. Here, Antony Brenton, the team manager, gives an overview of the ongoing development work, and the plans for the coming year.

Who we are

We are a multi-disciplinary team spanning EMS and Information Services. Our purpose is to ensure the admissions systems, mainly KentVision and GeckosForm (another enquiry management solution used by the University), are maintained and developed to support all aspects of admissions processing, Clearing, enquiry management, recruitment and marketing activity (including communications, events and scholarship applications processing).

We also look after aspects of reporting and integrations with other systems such as Accommodation and the Student Data System, as well as external bodies such as UCAS and UK Visas and Immigration (UKVI).

The team:

- Antony Brenton – Manager
- Guy Banister – Analyst/Developer
- Neil Cole – Analyst/Developer
- Natalie Hallwood – Analyst/Developer

We are line-managed through EMS, but based in Cornwallis with other IT Development teams, working collaboratively with them.

What we do

- Developing new system features from an initial request, through to requirements gathering, specification, solution design, development and testing. Projects can take anything from an hour to several months to complete. We currently have about fifteen substantial (long-running, taking weeks or months) projects in progress.
- Ensuring the systems meet compliance and statutory requirements such as CMA, GDPR, UKVI, UCAS and HE Sa.
- Collaboration with other IS teams to ensure the underlying infrastructure (servers, connections, security etc) is configured correctly and fit for purpose. We annually put the system under extreme load to ensure it will cope with the anticipated demand in Clearing.
- Upgrading the systems to the latest version. The enquiries system upgrade in spring 2017 took over 18 months to plan, test and get a working version live!
- Provide users with technical support to resolve issues and fix bugs.
- Provide advice on business process best practice and manage reference data within the system.

Plans for 2018

Our plans for this year are being steered by many internal drivers and compliance changes. However, with minimal development time, we have

- improved the enquiries process: enquirers now have simple forms for making an enquiry from the online prospectus or requesting a printed prospectus, and do not have to engage with some of our more complex systems.
- amended the rules for email routing within the enquiries system: this will hopefully cut down the number of times staff have to pass enquiries on before they are with the correct team for resolution.
- planned changes to the applicant portal: to provide a more streamlined and user friendly view of the information about their application. This will also be fully-responsive and mobile device enabled.

Compliance work requires us to

- look at the offer letter content (including the correct tuition fee) for CMA, ensuring GDPR compliance
- work on data retention and privacy policies, looking at the consent process for marketing communications
- redevelopment of the CAS-checking and issuing process for UKV.

The internal drivers we are working on are the KentVision project and system upgrades. We completed two upgrades in November, and we are working on two more. We also need to make further changes to the Clearing process and application.

KentVision project

While the team is not part of the project, we do need to make sure that the live system currently used for admissions is ‘ready’, as applicant and student data will be held in one system for the first time. This now includes an IS-led project to rebuild the servers and connections on which KentVision sits to ensure the new combined system is able to cope with the additional demand.

This is a major change which will be tested intensively to ensure everything works as it should. The anticipated go-live of the student element of KentVision is August/September 2018. Significant planning is underway to ensure there is minimal impact on the A-level results download and Clearing processes. There is also other work to ensure that the two systems work together and provide a seamless user experience.

Enhancement and new feature requests

We always welcome requests for something new; however priority is given to compliance changes and enhancements to the applicant/enquirer experience rather than staff-facing processes.

Making a request

Please email us via helpdesk@kent.ac.uk including ‘admissions change’ in the subject line. We’ll ask you to complete a form making your case with anticipated benefits and possible impact.

Once full information is available, and subject to cost/benefit analysis, your request is passed to the governance group for consideration and we will inform you of the outcome once a decision has been made. We also take feedback from the Faculty Recruitment and Outreach Committees and Recruitment and Marketing Forum.

Contact us

For issues/requests: email us via helpdesk@kent.ac.uk, including ‘admissions’ in the subject line.

Consider who is best placed to help; we are a technical team and often someone in EMS will be able to advise, such as the relevant Faculty Admissions Team (or Manager) or Marketing Officers.
Admissions

It’s all change in Admissions and we are pleased to welcome Emma Bates as the new Admissions Operations Manager, taking over from Shirley Prosser who retired at Christmas after many years dedicated service in Admissions.

Undergraduate

Taking stock of the undergraduate cycle, now that the main scheme January deadline has passed, points to a very similar position to last year. The cycle got off to a slow start with Home applications nationally dipping by around 2%.

The University, as expected, is mirroring the national picture but, on a positive note, our current conversion rate of offers to acceptances is running at a much higher level than at this time last year. Undergraduate overseas applications are also 3% higher than last year, however EU applications are marginally down at Kent, with numbers of European applications stabilising nationally.

As ever, the Applicant Days will be critical in showcasing what we have to offer, both academically and with regard to the student experience. The recruitment and marketing team are working closely with academic schools to support their conversion activity, and the recruitment officers are attending numerous recruitment events in the UK and Europe and giving presentations to schools and colleges.

Postgraduate

The postgraduate recruitment cycle is still in the early stages, but it is likely to prove a challenging year with completion in both the home and overseas markets remaining fierce. The latest up-to-date application data is available via Qlikview with weekly comparisons and trend data also accessible via this route.

Recruitment & Marketing

During the 2017/18 autumn term, the Recruitment team were busy promoting the University to a wide range of prospective students and stakeholders. Now, as 2018 begins, the team are busy planning for the forthcoming 2019 recruitment round.

Recruitment round-up

- 69 school and college events (presentations, HE fairs, parents’ evenings)
- 55 European events (UG and/or PG)
- 6 postgraduate-only events (UK and EU)
- 2 UCAS Applicant Days (across all faculties, Canterbury/Medway)
- 4 School visits to campus, UK and EU, Canterbury/Medway
- 535 one-off visitors to the University on campus tour days (Canterbury), consisting of 249 prospective students and 286 guests
- 64 one-off visitors to the University on campus tour days (Medway), consisting of 33 prospective students and 31 guests

The 2019 undergraduate prospectus has been launched, and the UCAS higher education fairs have begun. These events run until July and attract large volumes of prospective undergraduate students who are just starting their journey to find out what university life has to offer and for them to consider which universities to apply to.

In addition to the UCAS fairs, the recruitment officers are promoting Kent at a number of postgraduate recruitment fairs across the UK, and will promote undergraduate and postgraduate study across mainland Europe through attendance at education fairs and visits to international schools.

Find out which events we are attending:

- Undergraduate events
  www.kent.ac.uk/courses/visit/arounduk.html
- Postgraduate events
  www.kent.ac.uk/courses/visit/arounduk-pg.html

The Applicant Days team are also busy coordinating our key conversion events across the Canterbury and Medway campuses. During the day, applicants and their families are able to view student accommodation, meet current students and spend time with their academic schools. See www.kent.ac.uk/courses/visit/applicant-days

Open events

We held two successful open events at our European centres in Brussels and Paris at the end of February, and our Postgraduate Open Event at the Canterbury campus at the beginning of March. Each event was well attended, with lots of interest in the University from prospective and current applicants.

Thank you!

We would like to extend our thanks to all staff from academic schools and professional service departments for your continued support at these important recruitment events.

Marketing

The Marketing Team have been working on new and innovative initiatives, and we continue to support schools and centres with their marketing activities. We have also coordinated the marketing packages, which have seen some great results in terms of lead generation and raising brand awareness. Content marketing continues to be a key trend in 2018 and we are continuing to produce more video and other digital content in response.

Market insight

Market insight has become increasingly vital in informing key decisions, and the team have been incredibly busy working with our colleagues in the Planning and Business Information Office (PBIO) to provide Schools and departments with the market insight they need in order to have a better understanding of their current markets. This understanding can inform small changes to existing programmes, or their marketing strategies or the implementation of new programmes. For more information please email marketingsight@kent.ac.uk.

Team update

We have welcomed two new Applicant Day assistants to the Recruitment and Marketing team; Lindsay Banks and Ieva Bruzgaite. Lindsay joins us from Leeds Castle and has experience of event organisation, as well as having taught in a range of schools and colleges both in the UK and across the world.

Ieva previously worked as a Graduate Recruitment Officer at Canterbury Christ Church University. Ieva has experience of promoting higher education having attended recruitment events and presented a range of topics to prospective students in schools and colleges in the UK.
News

Outreach & Community

The University’s sponsorship of schools further evolved in September with the creation of the Universities of Kent Academies Trust (UAKT), a multi-academy trust which is able to sponsor more than one school.

Building upon our longstanding and successful sponsorship of Brompton Academy in Gillingham, Chatham Grammar School for Girls (CGSG) has now been incorporated into UKAT. 273 staff are employed by the Trust and we now have close to 2,000 secondary age students who belong to a Kent sponsored school.

Celebrating best practice

The University’s sponsorship of schools, our dual PhD and teacher training programme (Graduate Secondary Teaching Scheme (GSTS)), the Access to HE diplomas, our role in the Kent and Medway Progression Federation (KMPF) and the Higher Education Access Tracker (HEAT) database all featured in a new case study that has just been published in a booklet.

The briefing can be found online: www.offa.org.uk/universities-and-colleges/guidance/topic-briefings/topic-briefing-raising-attainment/case-study-university-kent/

New curriculum framework

We have reviewed the University’s outreach provision and, using extensive evaluation data collected over a number of years, devised a framework that schools can use to determine which activities will be most effective for specific groups of students. The framework has been presented to a number of head teachers at the University’s partner schools and has been well received. Elements of the framework are now being delivered in schools and further development work is under way, particularly around the subject-based curriculum.

More information

You can read more about the framework and all our activities in the The Outreach programme/Our work with Schools booklet.

It is available online at www.kent.ac.uk/secondary/outreach/activities/our-work-with-schools.pdf

1. Emma Bates, the new Admissions Operations Manager
2. Student Ambassador at World Languages Day

Student Ambassadors

Each autumn we recruit undergraduate and postgraduate ambassadors from across the University to support and deliver our outreach events and activities. This year, 120 new ambassadors were recruited in addition to those continuing from last year.

All new ambassadors undergo training and complete a Disclosure and Barring Check (DBS) so they can work in partner secondary schools and colleges across the county. Postgraduate ambassadors are recruited by academic schools and deliver generic aspiration-raising sessions in schools and on campus (eg Stepping Up), subject based sessions and longer projects to raise attainment. One example is the Quest project, developed by the School of English, which uses storytelling and creative writing to support literacy in schools.

National Collaborative Outreach Programme (NCOP)

The Kent and Medway strand of NCOP (KaMCOP) is working with up to 50 schools in Kent and has a number of key activities and projects underway specifically aimed at KaMCOP schools and KaMCOP target students. These students have been identified as living in specific target wards and having the academic potential to progress to university.

Projects include:

- The SUCCEED Programme: a year-long programme on the Canterbury campus for year 12 students. It is designed to help young people in Kent and Medway explore the opportunities and challenges offered by higher education. There are currently 33 participants registered on the programme.
- What Happens Next?: an hour-long activity designed to encourage year 9 and 10 students to think about where their GCSE exams are leading them, and their post-16 choices.

- Confidence in the Classroom: designed for students whose low self-confidence may be preventing them from reaching their full potential.
- University Support Course: designed to support students throughout the UCAS application process, and with the transition into higher education.

Bespoke campus visits are also available to the KaMCOP-only schools who would not otherwise have the opportunity to visit the University.

The University Entrance Diploma (UED) update

Launched in September 2017, we have enrolled 20 students on the new UED. It provides a new route into higher education and is designed for young people who enjoy learning, but want an alternative to the traditional educational routes such as A-level or BTEC.

Membership of the Templeman Library for 16-18 year olds

We have been working closely with the Templeman Library on the launch of their new 16-18 membership, which enables young people to borrow books and use many of the facilities. Partner schools regularly bring their students to the library for research and study skills sessions, and a number of the young people have already joined the scheme. Further details are available online at www.kent.ac.uk/library/visitors/schools.html

Access

The University’s Access to HE programme at Brompton Academy has 66 students studying on part-time pathways in English literature, creative writing, psychology, fine art and sociology. A second Access programme was launched at Hartsdown Academy in Margate in September 2017, and this has attracted 20 students.

The Access programme is a part-time course offered in the evenings and was developed to provide an alternative route into university study for mature learners. 14 current students have so far applied to Kent for undergraduate programmes beginning in 2017-18.

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

We welcomed two new members of staff to the Recruitment team during the summer of 2017: Shannon Hardy and Dominika Majewska. They’ve had a hectic few months, but have found time in between different events in the UK and Europe to share how they’ve been getting on...

Q: What’s your background prior to joining Kent?

S: I studied at Bournemouth University and have an undergraduate degree in Archaeological, Anthropological and Forensic Sciences and an MSc in Forensic Anthropology. I spent a year at the University of Surrey as their UK/ EU Student Recruitment Officer before relocating back to Kent, where I am originally from.

D: I graduated from Royal Holloway, University of London in 2014 with a BSc in Psychology, then completed a PGCE at Sussex University. In 2016, I decided to pursue my interest in Psychology and completed the MSc in Research Methods in Psychology at Kent. During my Master’s I worked as a Postgraduate Ambassador for the faculty of Social Sciences and as a private tutor.

Q: What do you like about working at Kent?

S: I love the variety of the role; always being in different places, and no day being the same. Kent’s structure has similarities and differences to my previous university and it’s been great to see alternative ways of doing things. Kent has a lot of great things about it, and they’re often factors that made me want to attend university myself — the opportunities available to travel and get involved, as well as meeting a diverse range of people from all over the world.

D: I really appreciate the fact I can represent the university I attended. I enjoyed studying here and found my MSc really interesting, so I’m always enthusiastic when I’m answering questions from prospective students! I found great support in my tutors and lecturers, and continue to receive support from my colleagues.

Q: What’s been the biggest work challenge?

S: The British Council Spain events in Madrid and Barcelona back in October were really interesting – the students had a lot of questions surrounding Brexit, but it was also the week of the political uprising in Catalonia and this had an impact on the student’s mindset and the questions being asked. I also spotted turtles in Madrid train station – a very unexpected sight!

D: For me it’s probably been the transition from being a student to a staff member and trying to decipher what my meetings said when I got back to the UK, when the only Greek word I know is ‘thank you’, was definitely a challenge!

Q: What’s been the most interesting event you’ve been to?

S: The British Council Spain events in Madrid and Barcelona back in October were really interesting – the students had a lot of questions surrounding Brexit, but it was also the week of the political uprising in Catalonia and this had an impact on the student’s mindset and the questions being asked. I also spotted turtles in Madrid train station – a very unexpected sight!

D: I particularly enjoyed the fairs in Athens, as I spoke to some fantastic students. The fairs were busy, and I spoke to students and parents throughout the whole event on both days. Also, being 15 minutes away from the Acropolis and seeing some beautiful places in warm weather in November was not a bad experience at all!

Q: What’s a typical week like as a recruitment officer? Is there such a thing?!

S: There’s definitely no such thing as a typical week. Some weeks I can be solely in the UK, with lots of events around the country to travel to. Other weeks I can be in a few different cities or countries with a different hotel every night. When it is a quiet time for events it’s usually still not that quiet as we then spend time catching up on admin in the office.

D: In a way, no week is the same. You do different events, visit different schools and colleges, speak to different people each day. But there are some similarities between events. For instance, students often ask similar questions, and the recruitment fairs are often organised the same way. Some months, such as October, November, March and June, are busier than others, so I may be out most of the week. However, during half term weeks, and certain points throughout the year when schools are busy, I have more time to catch up on emails, reports and plan my next events.

Q: What’s the oddest or strangest question you’ve been asked?

S: Sometimes a student will walk up to the stand and say, ‘What is this?’, which always makes me laugh. There are also the type of students who get too nervous to talk, and will just stare for a while and panic, or shout out one word like ‘Biology!’ and want me to guess what they are trying to say.

D: Hmmm…. if Sandwich is an actual place.

Q: What do you like to do outside of work?

S: I like to attend music concerts and stand-up comedy shows. I also enjoy going to the cinema, shopping, reading, catching up with family and friends and going back to Poland, which is where I’m from.
News

Publishing

Publications
We have recently completed the 2019 undergraduate prospectus which has undergone some changes this year. It has been increased in size, allowing for a cleaner, fresher layout with more white space and a lightened colour palette while still remaining on brand. Copies are now available and can also be requested from Despatch and Postal Services.

We are currently working on the undergraduate subject brochures needed for the summer Open Days and, building on changes that were started last year, the tone and design of these is also being refreshed. Before Easter, work will start on the postgraduate prospectus and several other publications that are needed later for the summer months and the start of the next academic year.

Proofreading workshops
The series of proofreading workshops run by Karen Donaghy and Alison Grace in the team will restart later this year. If you have any staff who would benefit from understanding the Kent brand and housestyle, how to correctly proofread and fact check, then do get in touch to register your interest. Please contact Alison by email at a.m.grace@kent.ac.uk

Digital Communications
Several members of the Publishing Office have been continuing to work with Information Services on the KentWeb project, migrating key areas of the website into the new design theme. We are just finishing our work on the ‘Pilot Schools Project’ (moving Architecture, KBS and Sports Sciences into the new theme) and are currently working on migrating our seven location sites at www.kent.ac.uk/locations/

We are enjoying using the new design, which lets us produce high-impact pages that really showcase the University. It’s rewarding to see the new website take shape and we’re looking forward to helping more schools and departments migrate into the new theme over the coming months.

Video update
This term has seen the launch of the EMS talking-head video project, where we work with a School a week to film videos of students talking about their course and why they love Kent. The project has got off to a great start; we have worked with nine schools this term filming over 50 students and are now getting on with the editing.

We’re also using this as an opportunity to capture content we can use in more general videos for social media, including a ‘sum up Kent in one word’ video spanning students from across campus. We’re already booked up for 2018, and should have worked with every School by Easter. These videos will be a great recruitment asset and will be featured on relevant course pages, YouTube and social media.

Contacts
Publishing Office: publications@kent.ac.uk
Digital Communications: emsweb@kent.ac.uk

New EMS staff
We’ve had a number of new staff join us since December. We’d like to extend a very warm welcome to all of you!
• Lindsey Banks
  Applicant Day Assistant
• Emma Bates
  EMS Admissions Operations Manager
• Ieva Bruzgaite
  Applicant Day Assistant
• Roxanne Conlon
  Outreach Activities Co-ordinator (NCOP)
• Lisa Govans
  Pastoral Tutor (NCOP)
• Daniel Hatfield
  Outreach Administration Assistant
• Jenny Overy
  Central Support Assistant (Reception)
• Nayan Shah
  Business Analyst/Trainer

Scholarships & funding
The Scholarships Office is currently updating the University of Kent’s Scholarships Finder with information on scholarships for students starting their programmes of study in September 2018. The Scholarships Finder is online at www.kent.ac.uk/scholarships/search/.

Undergraduate scholarships
The Scholarships Unit has confirmed 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:

<table>
<thead>
<tr>
<th>Undergraduate scholarships awarded 2017/2018</th>
<th>Awarded to new students starting in September 2018</th>
<th>Total number of students in receipt of scholarship</th>
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<tr>
<td>Kent Scholarship for Academic Excellence</td>
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<td>1,474</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Partner scholarship</td>
<td>61</td>
<td>171</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Ambassador Stipend</td>
<td>28</td>
<td>56</td>
</tr>
</tbody>
</table>

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

Keep updated...
For more about KentWeb project and details of what sites are being migrated next, see the IS Web Development Team blog. https://blogs.kent.ac.uk/webdev/
2018 DATES FOR YOUR DIARY

Medway Open Days
• Saturday 16 June
• Saturday 13 October

Canterbury Open Days
• Saturday 7 July
• Saturday 6 October
• Saturday 13 October

www.kent.ac.uk/visit