Kent Research Leads to Legislation Change in January 2014

From 6th January 2014, it will be compulsory for high risk sex offenders in England and Wales to be polygraphed as part of their license conditions. This is a direct result of the research conducted by Kent’s Centre of Research and Education in Forensic Psychology (CORE-FP).

Director of CORE-FP, Professor Theresa Gannon and Dr Jane Wood led a two year pilot polygraph scheme across the East and West Midlands probation areas and monitored seven other probation areas where polygraph was not being implemented. Evaluation of the research provided evidence that offenders subject to polygraph made more clinically significant disclosures. Theresa said that ‘Sex offenders taking part in the pilot project made more disclosures about entering an exclusion zone or making contact with children than sex offenders supervised under normal probation conditions’.

The findings were presented to the Government in the form of their Ministry of Justice Report in 2012. This led to debates in both the House of Commons and the House of Lords about the impact of additional polygraph stipulation on the risk-related disclosures of sexual offenders in relation to the legislation required for supervision.

Justice Minister Jeremy Wright said ‘the report concludes that polygraph testing has the potential to lead to more informed and effective supervision by probation officers’. The statutory instrument allowing for polygraph testing to be introduced under the Offender Management Act (2007) passed after a short debate in the House of Commons. Lord McNalley also referenced the research evaluation in a later debate at the House of Lords. In particular, he highlighted the actions which resulted from improved communication such as ‘changing the focus or frequency of supervision’.

Theresa and her colleagues also found that ‘sex offenders themselves reported finding the polygraph useful for them to manage their behaviour in the future’.

Formal approval was given by the House of Lords earlier this year resulting in the change in legislation for 2014.

The Ministry of Justice are incorporating findings from Gannon et al.’s (2012) research evaluation in guidance for Offender Managers and polygraphers. The research evaluation is also informing the development of data capture and monitoring in the empirical evaluation of the national roll-out occurring next year.

You can read the full evaluation at: http://bit.ly/1gAR4J0. To find out more about the research conducted by CORE-FP staff also including Dr Emma Alleyne, Dr Caoilte O’Ciardha, Dr Afroditi Pina and Dr Eddie Vasquez, go to: www.kent.ac.uk/psychology/core-fp/index.html.

Furthermore, if you are thinking about studying forensic psychology at postgraduate level, you can apply now for a place on our BPS accredited MSc programme: www.kent.ac.uk/forensicprogrammes/index.html. Applying is quick and easy via the online system (www.kent.ac.uk/courses/postgraduate/apply), you will need to upload your marks to date and include the names and email addresses of two academic referees. The application process for this course does include an interview in which the panel will be interested to know about a candidate’s knowledge of forensic psychology, reasons for studying forensic psychology, research experience, and forensic-related work experience (though this is not mandatory).

If you have any queries about applying for a postgraduate place in Psychology at Kent, please email psgadmissions@kent.ac.uk. The Research Scholarships 2014 advertisement is published at: bit.ly/18Tfr70.

Season’s Greetings from Psychology

The School of Psychology was fortunate to play host to a very special visitor this December. Of course he is always watching, but Santa wanted to know more about what goes on in the department and so decided to get involved in a café psychology brain dissection demo, take part in some experiments and experience Psychology at Kent for himself.

Thankfully, we managed to capture these magical moments and have put together some festive snapshots for our students, applicants and alumni to enjoy!

Take a look at the full album on the School of Psychology webpage: www.kent.ac.uk/forensicpsychology/festivepostcard.html.

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Putting the Zest in Creative Communication

On 27th November, Dr Tendayi Viki’s Work Experience team put together an enterprise event for students. Psychology Enterprise Events Organiser Nadine Steiner had this to say:

Mr Terry Hewett, owner and managing director of “Zest”, a creative communications agency based in Kent, was able to come down to the University and speak to interested students. The talk was aimed at introducing the roles that psychologists and social scientists can play in organisations. Zest is intended to help clients deliver their communications activities and build more effective and stronger brands; these span over a wide range of sectors, including travel, tourism, financial services, healthcare, food and produce, and so on.

Students were able to listen and gain a deeper understanding into the business of advertising and marketing. Mr Hewett provided multiple evidence and examples of his company’s work throughout the hour, with great insight on statistics and the reasons of why advertising and presenting information in the right way is so important for positive impacts to occur.

It was a great pleasure having Mr Hewett come down for the first of this academic year’s Psychology Enterprise Events Talks. From brief discussions after the seminar, students conveyed that they enjoyed the talk and greatly benefitted from insight into Mr Hewett’s experiences.
Recent Publications


Kent Psychologists in the Media

Research co-led by Dr Mario Weick, exploring the relationship between power and revenge, was highlighted in the Mail Online last month. The research concluded that revenge and other acts of aggression are more likely to be enacted by individuals who are new to holding power and feel more vulnerable to threats, relative to those who feel more self-assured and experienced in their exercise in power. Read about Mario’s research at dailym.ai/1demGpM.

Dr Jane Wood was interviewed on Swedish National Radio recently about Kent research into the increased disclosures made by sex offenders using polygraph testing.

On 3rd December, Dr Robbie Sutton appeared in the BBC One imagine... series ‘Afraid of Machiavelli?’.

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Congratulations

Congratulations to Lindsey Cameron who has been awarded £3,000 by the British Psychological Society for a project entitled “Growing up with Diversity”.

Congratulations to Theresa Gannon who has been awarded £1,050 by the North London Forensic Service for a project entitled “Good Lives Training”.

Congratulations to Tim Hopthow who has been awarded £5,344 by the King Baudouin Foundation for a project entitled “Contribution to the Training and Research for Academic Newcomers (TRAIN)”.

Congratulations to Heather Ferguson, David Williams and James Cane who have been awarded £2,260 to host a symposium entitled “The role of executive functions in self and other perspective use” at the April 2014 Experimental Psychology Society Meeting, to be held at Kent.

Congratulations to Heather Ferguson, Zara Bergstrom and Joseph Brooks who have been awarded £3,500 by the Experimental Psychology Society Committee to fund a Research Workshop on Electroencephalography (EEG) and Transcranial Magnetic Stimulation (TMS) techniques as tools in Experimental Psychology.

Congratulations to Heather Ferguson who has just been invited to join the Steering Committee of the Experimental Psychology Society.

Congratulations to Giovanni Travaglini who has been awarded £1,500 by the Barry Amiel and Norman Melburn Trust for a project entitled “Towards an interdisciplinary dialogue in social protest research”. Giovanni conceived, wrote and submitted the proposal with enthusiastic support from his PhD supervisor, Dominic Abrams.

Congratulations to Kirsten Abbot-Smith who has been awarded £3,416 by ESRC (via University of Plymouth) for a project entitled “Lexicon development in bilingual toddlers”.

Congratulations to Anna Brown who has been awarded £1,694 by the German Federal Employment Agency for a project entitled “Providing statistical and methodological advice on developing a forced-choice self-report measure of personal competencies”.

Congratulations to Mario Weick on winning a University Teaching Prize in the Social Sciences Faculty category (prizegiving pictured left) and for being selected to serve as a representative of academic and research staff on the University’s Council (2013-2016).
Staff-Student Christmas Party 2013 Photos

Thanks to everyone who came along, it was a really successful event. More photos can be viewed at the Kent Psychology Facebook page.

Good Reads

If you enjoy reading, or need some extra motivation to get back into reading for pleasure, the Psychology Book Group is for you! The Book Group has been running for a few years now, with over 100 members. We have compiled a list of 26 books, nominated by Psychology staff, and challenge Book Group members to read a number of these by graduation. The list includes contemporary fiction, popular science, biographies, travelogue, poetry, historical fiction as well as classics, so there is something there for everyone. You can sign up at any point in your degree (so third years, it’s not too late!). And as we have just moved to ‘Goodreads.com’

Student Journal Call for Submissions

The work produced by three Kent Psychology postgraduate students, Hamood Alenezi, Janice Attard, and Rachel Moore, was published online in a special forensic face matching issue of the Applied Cognitive Psychology journal last month. To read the articles and others in the issue which was guest edited by experts Dr Markus Bindemann and Professor Robert Johnston, go to: bit.ly/1e7Cqv.

Alumnus Heather Agyepong has also been published in Neurocase: The Neural Basis of Cognition this month. The article titled ‘Signing below the dotted line: signature position as a marker of vulnerability for visuospatial processing difficulties’ is available for download now: bit.ly/1bels5f.

Student Publications

The University of Kent Psychology society founded its own journal, the Student Journal in 2011 and provides undergraduates and postgraduates with the opportunity to get a publication during their university degree. This is the first time any Psychology Society in the UK has provided this to their students. It is our aim to allow students the flexibility and creativity to write about what interests them in psychology. With the Student Journal of Psychology we aim to provide undergraduates and postgraduates with a chance to refine their academic and writing skills by encouraging them to write publishable articles. Furthermore, we want to encourage scientific thinking and debate around current topics of psychology.

We welcome any articles, book or literature reviews, conference reports, and commentaries on any aspect of psychology. We also welcome publications of scientific research or systematic reviews. The next deadline is Monday 20th January 2014. This time, there will also be a theme about “Music and the Brain” and the author of the best article will be awarded a £50 cash prize. However, you can also submit a non-themed article. Every author will also get an amazon voucher for their submission. Please visit our website www.psychsocjournal.com for more information or get in contact via email psychsocjournal@kent.ac.uk.

Anna Magdalena Biller
Editor-in-Chief 2013/2014

Need Help/Advice?

If you have any personal or academic issues that may affect your ability to study you can talk to Lisa Clark, Student Advisor for Psychology.

Please email her at: psychadvisor@kent.ac.uk

There are a range of services available to all Kent students including the following:

- Careers and Employability Service
- Disability and Dyslexia Support Service
- International Students
- Counselling
- Chaplaincy
- Medical

Plus many more...

You can find more out about Student Services from the following webpage: www.kent.ac.uk/guidance/

Any Suggestions?

If you have any comments or suggestions for the staff in the School of Psychology, then you can feed these back to us by using our suggestions box located outside the Psychology Student Office (Keynes M1.13).

Kent Psychologist

The School of Psychology’s Newsletter is for students and staff. We welcome contributions from both students and staff for future issues. If you would like to write an article or have any news you’d like to share, please contact Carly Turnham.

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