New Work Experience Scheme

The School of Psychology is introducing a new scheme that allows local enterprises and student volunteers to collaborate on a project. As Dr. Ulrich Weger, the scheme’s new coordinator, points out: “It is an excellent opportunity for students to get a first-hand insight into the local enterprise world and learn something about applied psychology in action. It is an opportunity for students to branch out, make new experiences, and broaden various skills.” Note that this scheme is not restricted to working with enterprises in a commercial sense; it is equally open to other bodies, such as charities, public institutions, council, NGOs etc. Three placements are currently offered this term: With People United; with Kent, Surrey and Sussex Health Psychology Networks; and with Kent County Council.

We are very excited about this new scheme and seek to expand it substantially in the Autumn Term.

If you would like to ask any questions about the scheme please contact Dr Ulrich Weger at U.Weger@Kent.ac.uk.

Don’t Forget the NSS 2011!

Dear All

The new term is already in full swing – and it is once more the time when we begin to reflect on our teaching approach and would like to encourage you share your own views by taking part in the National Student Survey.

The National Student Survey (NSS) is targeted mostly at final year undergraduates and provides students with an opportunity to express their views about their experience of university and course of study. The results are used to compile a year-on-year comparison of data which helps prospective students make informed choices of where and what to study. The data also feed into the material used to establish the league tables of UK Universities, which are important to both prospective students and graduate employers.

What’s in it for me?

To encourage a high response rate to the survey, there will be a reward/incentive scheme to maximise participation. Each student who completes the survey and produces the receipt from IPSOS Mori to nssreward@kent.ac.uk will receive a £10 Amazon voucher.

Why is it important?

This is a very important indicator for the School of Psychology, and will impact standings in league tables very quickly.

What difference does it make?

As a School, we have made a real push to listen to your feedback -- through your student reps, our internal survey and via our Student-Staff Liaison Committees. We’ve continued to organise more student-staff social events, we are developing closer links with the Psychology Society, and we are developing new initiatives to help you gain more experience of psychology, like the new Work Experience Scheme and the Research Experience Scheme.

Additionally, we have put in place academic initiatives that are a direct result of student feedback such as the dedicated final year project workshops. We continue to run regular drop-in surgeries. These are weekly drop-in sessions where any student can ask questions about anything from how to run an analysis, help with an essay, or explaining complex jargon. The idea is to provide fast, effective one-on-one academic assistance for questions as they come up. In addition, based on your comments we have updated our APA section on the psychology website, including a FAQ section. We have also opened the student counter for longer hours with a dedicated administrative staff member. These new activities have arisen, either wholly or in part, from talking -- and listening -- to you and your feedback.

Our figures show that Psychology at Kent continues to be an immensely popular choice, and in terms of employability prospects we are now ranked 5th in the The Times Good University Guide 2010. This all is on top of the FIRST place ranking we received in overall student satisfaction from last year’s graduates in the most recent NSS. We are committed to maintaining -- and furthering these successes, and we know that to do this we need to listen to you. So please do try to find the time to complete the survey, it only takes about five minutes and can be found at: www.thestudentsurvey.com

Best wishes
Professor Richard Crisp
Head of School

Kent tops the league tables in 2011

A degree in Psychology from the University of Kent is highly regarded in the UK. These figures reflect the fantastic learning experience and academic excellence students can expect from our School. We are committed to maintaining these high-ranking positions and to making our students’ experience even better!

Student satisfaction — 1st in the 2010 National Student Survey

Employability prospects — ranked 5th in The Times Good University Guide 2011

Class of degree — 8/10 on value added in 2011 Guardian University Guide
more data, making it easier for us to study language processing and attentional biases in adult populations. The user-friendliness of Tobii Studio makes it easy to get students started with eye tracking and helps them actually see their experimental effects in action.”

The School’s Cognitive Group’s research takes place in one of our recently refurbished state-of-the-art laboratories. Specialized equipment includes:

- 2 EyeLink eyetrackers (EyeLink 1000 & EyeLink II headmounted)
- 2 Tobii eyetrackers (Tobii X120 & Tobii T60 XL portable)
- 2 Brain Vision EEG labs (32 & 64 electrodes)
- Galvanic vestibular stimulation (GVS, Magstim)
- 2 Biopac labs
- Virtual reality lab
- Numerous PC and Mac labs to run behavioural experiments

They claim that this new technology will advance neuroscience studies (especially those combining eye tracking and EEG data) developmental psychology and psycholinguistics, reading studies, children and infant studies and ophthalmology studies.

Heather had this to say about the new eye tracker: “My lab has just started to use the Tobii TX300 Eye Tracker, and we think that the non-intrusive design and increased sample frequency will enable us to retrieve

Tobii is considered a world leader in eye tracking and they have announced that the new model is the first higher-frequency eye-tracking hardware that allows research participants the freedom of head movement. This will help scientists create more realistic testing environments for detailed and efficient research of natural behavior and higher definition samplings at 300 hertz.

SMS Text Alert Service

The School of Psychology has recently introduced a SMS Text Alert service for when we need to contact students urgently about things like a last-minute lecture cancellation.

This is a free service and allows us to get information to you much more quickly and directly than email.

You need to sign up to be able to receive these SMS text alerts. You can do this quickly and easily via the Student Data System. Here is what you need to do:

1. Visit the UoK Student Portal at https://portal.kent.ac.uk
2. Click on the ‘Student Data System’ link (top right of page)
3. Log on to the Student Data System with your username and password
4. Select ‘Details & Study’
5. Choose ‘SMS Text Facility’
6. Enter your mobile number and click ‘Text Me a Verification Code’
7. A six-digit verification code is sent to your mobile
8. Enter this code on-screen and click ‘Verify Mobile Number’
9. Select the ‘University & Departmental Announcements’ service
10. Click ‘Confirm Subscription’

We do hope that you will sign up to SMS Text Alert service and are sure that you will find it useful during your time at Kent.

White Campus

Canterbury experienced a very cold December in 2010 which resulted in a magical transformation on campus just before the Christmas break.

Whilst the snow across the UK did cause some disruption, the School did well to keep services running for its students and enjoyed the snowy scenery.

Thank you to Sarah Whitfield, Clerical Assistant in Psychology for taking these wonderful photos.
Congratulations

The Medical Research Council has awarded a grant of £313,752 to David Wilkinson to trial a novel treatment for hemispatial neglect. This impairment affects the ability to direct attention to one side of space, and is the single biggest predictor of general functional recovery from stroke. The trial will test the effectiveness of a novel form of brain stimulation, pioneered here within the School of Psychology. The study will be conducted at the local hospital trust in conjunction with clinical neurologists and neuro-rehabilitation specialists, and will also involve academics from other parts of the University. The grant is one of the largest the School has won in recent years, but very few other academics from the University of Kent have obtained Medical Research Council funding within the last decade. Well done David!

PhD student Hannah Swift has been awarded a 3 month internship working in the Parliamentary Office for Science and Technology (POST) department. The department produce POST notes which are published reviews of a particular aspect of research for parliamentarians and policy makers. Hannah’s application was based on how psychological research on Ageism is relevant to public policy. Hannah was one of ten shortlisted for the position, who were interviewed in December. The BPS research board provided Hannah with £5000 for the 3 months she is based at POST. Well done Hannah!

Many congratulations to Stephen Loughnan and Ulrich Weger who have been awarded £80,489 by the ESRC for a project entitled “The impact of sexualised images on thoughts, perceptions and behaviours”. Well done Stephen and Ulrich!

Congratulations to Kate Hamilton-West who has been awarded £16,511 from East Kent Hospitals University NHS Foundation Trust for Psychology Consultancy. Well done Kate!

Congratulations to Georgina Randlesley de Moura and Tim Hopthrow on the birth of their lovely baby daughter Grace on 8th January 2011. Well done George and Tim!


Where Are They Now?

The School of Psychology is proud of its graduates and regularly hears great things about what they go on to do after study.

Former undergraduate and Master’s student Nanette Bech-Nielsen wrote to us recently to share news about her new job.

“I am currently working for the North East National Cancer Research Network within London and the Barts NHS Trust. I am working as part of the Institute of Cancer as a Clinical Research Assistant, based in St. Bartholomew’s Hospital in St. Paul’s, London. I was very lucky to get this role straight after finishing my MSc in Social and Applied Psychology, after seeing the role advertised on the NHS website. The role is based on cancer medical trials with patients within the trust and is admin and patient contact based. I feel both my Undergraduate degree in Applied Social Psychology and MSc in Social and Applied Psychology at the University of Kent prepared me well for this role as I have the experience and knowledge of research theory and methods. Due to the applied aspects of both degrees, I was also well equipped for the role in a practical manner too. I thoroughly enjoyed both degrees, especially my MSc and feel they were both valuable for my future.”
The Centre for Research on Social Climate, in collaboration with Kent Enterprise, hosted an event titled “Taking Charge of the Next Step: Initiative taking Skills Workshop”. In an unusual and remarkable interdisciplinary collaboration, Dr. Ulrich Weger, the Centre’s Director, and Tracy Crowther and Stephanie Eydam from Kent Enterprise, organised the workshop together. As Ulrich pointed out: “We all have some sense of what we are good at and what we would like to achieve - the challenge is to translate our visions into actions. In fact, we often belittle our own ideas by questioning whether they are good enough or whether others are interested in what we have to offer. It is important, however, to be bold about the ideas that excite us and it is our duty to sharpen and develop them rather than put them back to rest. Everybody has something valuable to offer and the question really is how to bring this potential to the surface.”

There was a noticeable sense of excitement and enthusiasm in the room – and, perhaps most important, people left the workshop with a number of new contacts. Indeed, in the end it is all about meeting likeminded spirits who can carry and support an initiative. Future workshops will be posted on the Centre for Research on Social Climate as well as the Kent Enterprise website and a module on developing one’s own initiative taking skills is in planning. [http://www.kent.ac.uk/psychology/research/crscc/index.html](http://www.kent.ac.uk/psychology/research/crscc/index.html)

Martin Large, a social entrepreneur and prolific initiative-taker, facilitated the 3-hour session and helped people articulate their dreams and develop and sharpen them further. Participants started out by identifying an experience in their life where they made things happen and subsequently explored with a partner what made them successful. They continued by looking outside and by analyzing demands in the world around them: How are things developing, how is the world changing, what is needed in the future, and where do my own skills come in? Quoting Goethe, Martin’s motto for the event was a wake-up call that was very much alive during the afternoon: “Whatever you can do, or dream you can, begin it. Boldness has genius, power and magic in it.”

The Kent Child Development Unit recruited families in the Canterbury City Centre this month, letting parents know about the Child Development Unit and inviting for their help.

Thanks to the efforts of PhD student Rebecca Croll, MSc student Angelique Eydam (in the bunny suit), Dr Erika Nurmsoo and several undergraduate students, nearly 100 families volunteered to join the list of over 1300 children between 0 and 10 years, whose parents are happy to be invited to participate in studies in the Child Development Lab.

As many of the studies use very narrow age ranges - sometimes of just one month - the Kent Child Development Unit is always looking for more interested families; see the Kent Child Development Unit website (www.kent.ac.uk/psychology/childdevelopmentunit) for more information about the projects, or to sign up.

In addition to these recruitment activities, Erika Nurmsoo, Kristen Abbot-Smith, and Mike Forrester also recently gave a talk on ‘how children learn to talk’ at the Canterbury district National Childbirth Trust Members.

Initiated by Dr. Ulrich Weger, the Centre's Director, and hosted by Koerber-Foundation in Hamburg, the workshop and public discussion on October 26th in Hamburg/Germany involved representatives and academics from the German Research Foundation, the Universities of Hamburg, Jena, Lueneburg and Aachen.

What is the topic you would continue to work on if you were not to get personal credit for the outcome? The Centre for Research on Social Climate, in collaboration with Koerber-Stiftung Hamburg, has initiated a dialogue on the question of how research can be conducted in a meaningful way in a climate where the ultimate focus often is on getting credit for a publication per se. What are the implications for the quality of research and what are alternatives to such an approach?

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 staff and students for future issues. If you would like to write an article or have any news you’d like to share, please contact Carly Bloomfield.

School of Psychology, Keynes College University of Kent, CANTERBURY, Kent. CT2 7NP

Email: C.Bloomfield@kent.ac.uk Telephone: 01227 824775

### 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 is a range of services available to all Kent students including the following:

- Careers Advisory 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: [http://www.kent.ac.uk/guidance/](http://www.kent.ac.uk/guidance/)

### Child Development Unit

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