Five Psychology Graduates Three Years Later

Six years ago, Nicola Abbott, Jumana Ahmad, Melissa Alexandrou, Clare Carty and Rebecca Eley began their studies at the University of Kent and became great friends. Now they are all embarking upon different and exciting career paths and want to share their experiences of Psychology at Kent:

Clare Carty wrote:
Psychology is a fascinating subject which is linked to all aspects of life and study which the School of Psychology at University of Kent showed me. Also allowing me to develop and enhance skills in all areas providing me with a number of valuable transferable skills. These skills in particular allowed me to gain a post as a Mental Health Support Worker in a women’s homeless hostel on a mental health unit which I undertook for two years and my recent position as a Learning Support Assistant within a Special Needs school for moderate needs. With my undergraduate degree in Psychology and my working experience I hope to gain a place on Educational Psychologist training or to qualify in Psychotherapy.

Along with meeting four amazing girls, the department of psychology was brilliant with lots of means for support.

Rebecca Eley had this to say:
I was an Applied Psychology student which involved undertaking a placement year. For the first 12 weeks I was a research assistant at Promis Recovery Centre, a rehabilitation centre for addicts, and then I returned to the University and worked as a research assistant for Enterprise. I found both of these experiences extremely fulfilling, because they gave me a chance to experience the practical side of things, but also develop a greater understanding of the theoretical side too.

The placement at Promis also gave me the relevant experience to apply for a job as Alcohol and Addictions Advisor with Triage Healthcare which I undertook alongside my final year studies. After graduation, I was then inspired to train as a counsellor and took up a Level 3 Counselling Skills course at Canterbury College. Once this is completed, I intend to start the Diploma which will qualify me as a counsellor and in the future I would like to complete an MSc to reach my goal of becoming a counselling psychologist.

I really feel that Psychology at Kent has enabled me to get where I am, having sparked my interest in the field of addictions with my placement, and then making me aware of an employment opportunity that has further allowed me to develop. I also feel that they gave me some of the best friends I could hope for, and although we are all moving in different directions, that bond will always be there.

Nicola Abbott told us:
After 4 years working for a high street Bank I decided that I still had a thirst for learning and was ready to start University. During my break from being in education, I knew that I had a passion for Psychology, and that I wanted my studies at University to help build a career in this area. I studied for my undergraduate Psychology degree from 2006-2009, three years which I am sure will always be the best of my life!

In my third year I chose to write an essay on intergroup contact as I found the lecture and seminar readings fascinating. This interest was enhanced by the fact I came from a small town with virtually no ethnic or cultural diversity. My final project supervisor was also the marker of this module and after reading my work asked me if I wished to pursue it into Postgraduate study. At the time, I thought I would need to work to afford to study beyond undergrad. However, my supervisor explained that there are opportunities to gain funding into postgraduate study. I applied to do my PhD here at Kent, and I was lucky enough to be granted the departmental studentship funding.

The teaching that I now do at the University as part of my PhD has allowed me to share my interests with new students, with the hope that the University can provide them with the opportunities it has given me.

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Summer Vacation Clinical Research Bursary
Applications are invited from psychology undergraduate students in their penultimate year of study to work on a clinical research project during the summer vacation. The project will involve a literature search and meta-analysis of the effects of brain stimulation on neurological impairment, and is intended to encourage the recipient to consider a career in healthcare research or practice. The project will be jointly supervised by Dr. David Wilkinson (School of Psychology) and Dr. Mo Sakel (consultant physician in neuro-rehabilitation, East Kent Hospitals Trust) who have been awarded funds for this prestigious bursary from Kenthealth (www.kent.ac.uk/health). The project will run for 8 weeks over the summer (earliest start date is June 18th 2012) and will pay £150 per week, plus £300 research costs. Aside from developing a greater understanding of translational neuroscience, the successful applicant will co-author a journal article and present the study findings in poster format at the annual East Kent Hospitals R&D symposium. Applicants are requested to submit a copy of their CV, including all degree marks so far obtained, and a supporting letter explaining why they should receive the bursary. Closing date for applications is 30th April, with interviews and notice of award scheduled for early May. Please send your application, and any queries, to David Wilkinson at dtw@kent.ac.uk.
Society Publishes Student Journal

Last month saw the release of the inaugural issue of the Student Journal of Psychology. Published by the Psychology Society, it featured 10 articles, along a broad range of topics, all written by undergraduate Psychology students here at Kent.

The Journal was set up to provide a formal extracurricular outlet for students who wish to write academic pieces in subject areas that are not necessarily covered in the course material. It was also intended to give students a small taste of the peer review process and the prestige of getting articles published. Although application of psychology is paramount, students are otherwise free to write on any topic of interest to them.

The response to the first issue has been overwhelmingly positive, with many of the staff being the first to come forward to congratulate the authors and editorial team for their hard work. Founder and Editor in-Chief, Toby Santo said: "I've been very happy with the response to the Journal, both in terms of the quality of the submissions and critical appraisal of the Journal upon its release. I feel that the articles in the first issue tackle some fascinating, important and sometimes controversial topics - I would hope that some of these can generate a response from other students, to be considered in future publications. I can't wait to start viewing submissions for the next issue!"

President of the Psychology Society, James Findon further commented: "This year, the Society has been dedicated to supporting the development of psychology students. The SJP is a fantastic new project that will promote excellence and give students an opportunity to communicate their scientific ideas. I want to thank the School of Psychology for their support in publishing this first issue!"

The society is accepting feedback which should be directed to James, at jf218@kent.ac.uk.

The first issue is available for free download and can be found on the Psychology Society website (www.ukcppsychsoc.co.uk). Students looking to make submissions can view the guidelines and requirements for entries here as well. The Editorial team are now accepting submissions for the next issue, the deadline for which is May 7th.

Hannah Swift on Fellowship at Westminster in the POST

In September 2011, I took 3 months out of my PhD studies in Ageism to undertake a fellowship at Westminster in the Parliamentary Office of Science and Technology (POST). I applied for the fellowship, which sponsored by the British Psychological Society (BPS) because I believe there is huge potential for psychology research to inform policy and parliamentary debates.

POST has a unique role within Westminster by offering impartial advice to both the House of Commons and the House of Lords about all aspects science and technology. They do this by providing short briefing notes for parliamentarians on current issues or particular topics of interest written by POST fellows, like me. My task was to produce a note on the impacts of video games.

I soon found out that video games is a highly emotive topic. Opinions about the influence of violent video games on aggression often arise in parliament, within the media and are even debated amongst psychologists. The purpose of my note was to clarify recent policy changes to the age classification system for video games, but more importantly it was to summarise psychological research surrounding the impacts of video games. This included reviewing the evidence for and against the influence of violent video games on aggression, and reviewing other impacts of gaming that receive relatively less attention, such as video game addiction, social interaction, the role of games in education and what we know about video games and brain development.

To write about these issues I spent my time reviewing the relevant psychology literature and policy documentation, but more importantly I spent my time interviewing and consulting with people from all related aspects of research, policy and industry. These included a number of psychologists, directors of charities, MPs, policy makers, game developers, game publishers and those who classify video games. In all, this was a great opportunity to provide a balanced analysis of the evidence to accurately inform parliamentarians of the research in this area. It was a great lesson in science communication. It helped me think about how to communicate aspects of psychological research effectively and developed my understanding of the role of scientific evidence in policy.

The note will be available at www.parliament.uk/post
Congratulations

Well done to Professor Richard Crisp for winning the Gordon Allport Intergroup Relations Prize. This prestigious prize was awarded for a paper on the benefits of living in diverse, multicultural societies. Professor Richard Crisp has also been appointed Editor-in-Chief of the Journal of Applied Social Psychology. Published since 1971, JASP is a monthly publication devoted to applications of experimental behavioural science to problems of society (e.g., prejudice, health, leadership, gender, jury decision making, academic performance, and the environment). JASP is now the second major international journal based in the School (along with Group Processes and Intergroup Relations), and its addition further strengthens our reputation as a world leading centre for research in social psychology.

Well done to Afroditi Pina who has been awarded a grant of 33,000 Euros by the Spanish Government. The research will be conducted in collaboration with the University of Granada and the project is entitled “Sexist Ideology and psychological knowledge.

Congratulations to Afroditi Pina and Robbie Sutton who are included on the team who have been awarded a grant of 33,000 Euros by the Spanish Government. The research will be conducted in collaboration with the University of Granada and the project is entitled “Sexist Ideology and psychological knowledge.

Congratulations to Dominic Abrams who has been awarded £79,291 by the ESRC for a project entitled “Psychological and societal bases of attitudes to age: a multilevel cross-national analysis”.

Well done to Mario Weick (PI), Dominic Abrams (Co-I) & Tim Hopthrow (Co-I) who have been awarded £27,866 by ESRC (including contribution from Lighthill Risk Network & Lloyds) for a project entitled “Risk perception and behaviour: What we know and what we need to know”. Professor Peter Taylor-Gooby from SSPSSR is also Co-I.

Congratulations to Professor Diane Houston who has been elected a Fellow of the British Psychological Society for her outstanding contribution to the advancement and dissemination of psychological knowledge.

Recent Publications


Kent Psychologists in the Media

At the end of January, Professor Dominic Abrams’ editorial for the New Scientist entitled ‘Scotland’s social mind will settle independence vote’ was published: http://bit.ly/Abmsjp.


Course/School Rep Elections

Nominations will be opening shortly for Undergraduate Course and School Rep elections for the 2012/13 academic year.

To be a course rep you need to nominate yourself via the Kent Union website. You will be able to do this from Wednesday 28th March at 9am with nominations closing on 10th May at 12pm.

By becoming a Course Rep you will be one of approximately 300 students out of the 19,966 students at the University of Kent!

Creativity & Innovation Training

Dr Małgorzata Gocłowska and Professor Richard Crisp have developed a 12 hour-long workshop of Creativity and Innovation, drawing upon cutting edge research to develop an accessible, interactive and practical guide to boosting creativity.

With the help of Kent Innovation & Enterprise and the ICE directory they were able to contact external organisations to market the taster session that took place in October 2011. The workshop was attended by a mixture of University staff from various departments ad well as professionals from consulting companies in Kent among others. The feedback was very positive, showing that the majority of participants found it ‘very interesting’ and ‘relevant’ to their organisation. Market research on purchasing the workshop as a product is ongoing.

Katharine Pyke is CAWG Prize Winner

On Monday 27th February the Canterbury Association of Women Graduates presented final year Computing and Psychology student, Katharine Pyke, with a prize in recognition of her hard work.

Katharine is pictured right with a CAWG Committee member and Keynes College Master Dr Michael Hughes.

Each year a mature female student from Keynes College is selected to receive this prize from the Canterbury branch of the British Federation of Women Graduates. The BFWG has been supporting women in higher education since it was founded in 1907. Impressively, the federation has been providing Scholarship Funds for women in their final year of PhD study since 1912. Well done Katharine!

Vice Chancellors Cup - Dodgeball

Last week, Psychology staff and students took part in a dodgeball competition as part of the Vice Chancellor’s Cup (Back row l-r: Caolite O Ciardha, Xiao-Hui (Peter) Guo, Neil McLatchie, Ernie Collings; Front row l-r: Tom Price, Andy Russ, Mike Wood). Other staff including Stephen Loughnan, Hannah Swift, Sarah Hotham, John Allen and Dinkar Sharma have also participated in Badminton, Squash and Table Tennis events.

The Vice Chancellor’s cup was introduced in 2011 by the Vice Chancellor and Kent Sport. It is an inter-departmental staff competition for all abilities to encourage staff to keep active in a fun and non-threatening environment. The 2011 VC’s cup proved to be a huge success enabling staff to meet other members of staff who they may not otherwise deal with in a relaxed environment. If you would like to take part in a women’s only Netball event or in Petanque (teams are mixed pairs), please contact John Allen at J.A.Allen@Kent.ac.uk.

NSS 2012 Rewards

This year, the School of Psychology offered students the opportunity to enter a prize draw to be one of ten lucky winners of a £15 Dolce Vita voucher in return for completing the National Student Survey by 30th January. The Head of School, Dr Joachim Stoeber, and Clerical Assistant Sarah Whitfield met with some of the winners to offer their congratulations. The School would also thank everyone who took part and gave us their feedback! Final year students can still complete the survey at www.thestudentsurvey.

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: 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

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 Turnham.

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