

UNIVERSITY OF KENT/  
GENDER PAY GAP  
REPORT 2020



# INTRODUCTION

**This is the University of Kent's fourth Gender Pay Gap Report and also the tenth anniversary of our commitment to Higher Education's 'Athena SWAN' programme, focused on advancing gender equality in the workplace.**

Our work in both these areas continues to underline the central importance of continuing to focus on correcting the under-representation of women in senior, higher paid roles in order to close the gender pay gap.

We recognise that closing the gender pay gap is a long-term challenge and one that is affected by wider social and cultural factors. There are however a range of actions that we can take so that we do our part to remove barriers to pay equality.

Through local action we are seeing real change and progress toward closing the gender pay gap and over the last three years our mean gender pay gap in favour of male colleagues has reduced to 14.3% from 17.9% and the median gap from 13.7% to 8.2%.

We remain focused on continuing to improve gender pay equality and providing an environment for both staff and students that is characterized by concrete and visible work to advance gender equality.

This report presents an analysis of our 2020 Gender Pay Gap data together with an update on our ongoing work to further close the gap.

# GENDER PAY GAP DATA

## Gender pay gap

Gender pay gap data measures the difference in the hourly pay of women and men in all roles across the University.

Figure 1  
Gender pay gap data 2018-2020

	2020	2019	2018
Mean pay gap	14.3%	17.1%	17.9%
Median pay gap	8.2%	13.7%	13.7%

The mean gap is the difference in the average hourly earnings/bonus between men and women. The median gap is the difference in the mid-point of hourly earnings/bonus when they are ordered from lowest to highest. This minimises the effect of any particularly high or low pay rates or bonuses. A positive value denotes a gap in favour of men and a negative value in favour of women.

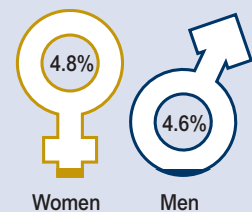
## Gender bonus pay gap

Gender bonus pay gap measures the difference in bonus payments given to women and men across the University.

Figure 2  
Bonus pay gap data 2018-2020

	2020	2019	2018
Mean bonus pay gap	28.6%	20.2%	-11.4%
Median bonus pay gap	33.3%	-20.8%	20.0%

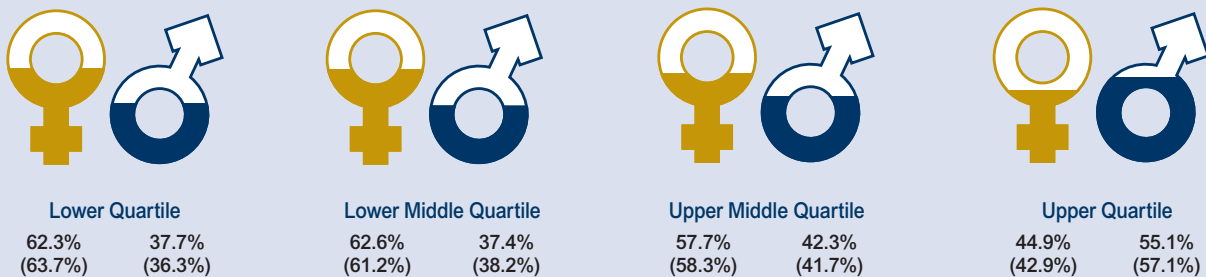
Proportion of colleagues receiving a bonus



## Pay quartiles

The proportion of women and men in each hourly rate quartile pay band. Figures in brackets are 2018 figures.

Figure 3  
Changes in Quartile pay data between 2018 and 2020



The data illustrates the gender distribution at the University across four equally-sized quartiles.

Data is based on the legal sex of colleagues and is therefore presented as either male or female rather than reflecting self-identified gender terms such as non-binary.

## Key achievements

The data in Figure 1 shows a reduction in the pay gap over the last three years. The mean pay gap is now at 14.3% (compared to 17.1% across all roles in Education in the UK in 2020), meaning that on average, across all the roles in the University, women are paid a 14.3% lower hourly rate than men. The median pay gap which removes the effect of particularly high or low pay rates compared to the mean calculation is now at 8.2% in favour of men, down from 13.7% in previous years (compared to 24.6% across all roles in Education in the UK in 2020).

The proportion of women receiving the highest quartile of hourly pay is 2 percentage points higher than the 42.9% figure of 2018.

1 Data provided by the Office for National Statistics (Industry) [www.ons.gov.uk/employmentandlabourmarket/peopleinwork/earningsandworkinghours/datasets/annualsurveyofhoursandearningsashegenderpaygaptables](http://www.ons.gov.uk/employmentandlabourmarket/peopleinwork/earningsandworkinghours/datasets/annualsurveyofhoursandearningsashegenderpaygaptables)

# UNDERSTANDING OUR DATA

**At Kent, we offer a wide range of job roles encompassing different professional occupational groups varying from academic and research, teaching and technicians to administrative and managerial occupations, cleaning and catering occupations. Unlike a number of peer institutions, the University has resisted out-sourcing of key campus functions believing that employing all staff directly is a strong commitment to inclusivity and equal treatment. These same positive values do though affect the pay gap in a potentially negative way as many of the roles most suited to outsourcing and lower pay are filled by women.**

A key factor affecting the size and challenge of closing the gender pay gap is the imbalance of men at senior levels. This is prevalent within academic positions and has been evidenced for many years, particularly at professorial level. This senior academic position has had a long and persistent under-representation of women across the whole Higher Education sector. Currently only 26.7% of all professors in the UK are women. The pace of progress in this area is somewhat slowed by the fact that there is no longer a minimum age for retirement resulting in a relatively static workforce at this level due to the retention of a significant number of long-serving male academics with salaries that are – in many cases – significantly above the levels of more recently-promoted or recruited academic

staff. This, added to the number of years it takes for women to access those positions within the talent pipeline and the fractured pay market means that, although the proportion of women academics in senior posts is increasing, progress is slow.

Against this background, our continual review and improvement of our internal academic promotions process, with a particular focus on those on teaching rather than research contracts (and more likely to be women) has resulted in an increase in the proportion of female professors over the last three years from 33.2% to 36.9%. Although our proportion of female professors is well above the sector average, we remain committed to making further progress.

Other factors have contributed to reducing the pay gap figures; i) new salary sacrifice schemes for pensions and purchase of holiday allowance ii) profile of colleagues that have recently left the University. Both of these have had a gendered impact in reducing the average male hourly rate more than the female hourly rate.

Only a small proportion of staff apply for the University's additional salary awards scheme (reported as bonus payments) each year, resulting in the calculations being sensitive to fluctuations year on year as seen in figure 2. However, in 2020 a new scheme was introduced, containing a broader range of awards more suited to recognising the additional contributions of staff across diverse roles at all levels. Therefore, it is hoped that in future the number of staff receiving awards will increase and the reported figures will stabilise and become more meaningful.



# KEY AREAS OF PROGRESS OVER THE LAST YEAR



## Analysing and monitoring the impact of organisational change on our workforce profile

Since 2018, the University of Kent has seen a period of significant organisational change including the launch of the **Kent Voluntary Severance Scheme (KVSS)** rolled out in phases over 2019/20. As a result of our efforts to “re-profile” our workforce through voluntary severance and ensure close monitoring of the potential impact of change on female staff by undertaking regular equality impact assessments, we have observed a reduction of the gap by approximately 1% directly attributable to those initiatives, in particular to the profile of leavers in senior academic positions.

In addition, we have ensured our processes to recruit, promote and retain women in senior roles were sufficiently robust with tailored support offered during the transition to the new structure.



## Launching a new Reward Strategy

The University is taking proactive action on analysing, identifying and equalising historic gender salary imbalances. In 2020, Kent launched its new **Pay and Reward Strategy** which has standardised senior academic and professional services staff pay scales which are now segmented into career stage zones to enable equal pay comparisons. It is now easier to differentiate the remit and pay scales of newly-promoted versus well-established professors and heads of larger versus smaller professional services directorates.

Work undertaken since 2017 means that professional services staff are already correctly positioned on the new pay scales according to job size (determined by job evaluation) and remit. When broken down in this way, there are no significant pay gaps for senior professional services staff.

### Next steps

The University will also continue to monitor the positioning of senior academic staff on pay scales according to career stage and to correct any anomalies identified, particularly for professorial staff. This will enable more precise reporting and monitoring in the future.

A new reward framework will also be introduced in 2021 to recognise teams and individuals for their outstanding contributions.

Our next equal pay audit is also planned to start in 2022.



## Using positive action statements to encourage a balanced gender distribution in lower-level roles

In 2019/20, we continued to improve our recruitment practices by further enhancing our recruitment system (Stonefish) capabilities to embed the use of **positive action statements** by automatically prompting recruiting managers to consider the addition of a statement encouraging applications from under-represented groups, such as men for instance, who are typically under-represented in lower-level roles.

### Next steps

We will continue to promote and monitor the impact of positive action statements. We are also looking to increase visibility and transparency for recruiting managers by enabling them to track the gender profile of applicants and appointments for their area.

We will continue to work on developing our **employer brand** at University level and locally, building on the work already started in a number of academic schools as part of their Athena Swan submissions. This includes for example the use of diverse recruitment channels, inclusive imagery and gender-neutral language in job descriptions and webpages, designed to reflect and attract a diverse workforce.

## KEY AREAS OF PROGRESS OVER THE LAST YEAR (CONT)



### Supporting women's career progression at the University

In May 2019, the launch of the **Academic Career Map (ACM)** was a key milestone toward supporting academic promotion and progression at the University by setting out clear expectations at each academic career stage with specific consideration for teaching contracts where we see an over-representation of women. In 2020, work continued to embed the ACM although plans to develop mentoring practices to support the framework had to be postponed due to COVID-19.

In 2020, extensive work took place in preparation of the University submission to the Government's Research Excellence Framework (REF) which assesses the quality of research in UK higher education institutions and takes place every seven years. Supporting our academic staff with their submissions (ie, managing mitigating circumstances) is always a key priority for Kent considering the impact of the REF on their profile and career prospects. Over the last three submission cycles, the percentage of female academics with REF submissions has increased from 30% to 39.4%.

**Promotion and salary award processes** have also been reviewed to ensure those are sufficiently robust with appropriate monitoring in place. Application and success rate data is provided to promotions panels broken down by gender and ethnicity to enable the monitoring of candidates coming through the pipeline. Both promotions and salary award processes include the provision for manager-led applications to ensure that staff who would not usually come forward for promotion or review are put forward for consideration, where merited. Managers are asked to consider the demographic of their areas to ensure equal access to opportunity for all staff. The University has also taken steps to equalise starting pay on promotion by providing clear **guidance to appointment panels on setting the starting salary**. Appointment panels are also provided with extensive salary data indicating the current staff salaries and market salary data for the role in question, to help inform decisions on starting salaries.

#### Next steps

The University will continue its work toward removing barriers to women's career progression where possible, particularly in regard to promotion and salary award processes, by ensuring that processes are robust and panels are provided with relevant data and training to ensure fairness and transparency. The potential impact of the coronavirus pandemic on women's career development and potential progression is of particular concern and work will take place in 2021 to identify how this particular impact can be mitigated as a part of a formal policy aimed at ensuring staff contributions continue to be recognised and the impact of the pandemic considered.



### Supporting women's career development and access to senior roles

The University has a broad personal and professional development provision available to all staff including leadership development programmes. A full review of Kent's leadership development offering was undertaken in 2019 and existing programmes – including Kent's senior women leadership development programmes "**Insights**" – were refreshed. The University continues to offer access to AdvanceHE's **Aurora** programme since the development of an equivalent in-house programme had to be delayed due to COVID-19.

Our "**Pathways**" programme was launched in 2019 to support professional services with their career development. It is designed to identify transferable skills and support PS colleagues to build their confidence and apply for roles they may not have previously considered. So far the programme has been very successful with a number of individuals securing higher grades roles. In the context of the pandemic and the transition to remote learning, a bite-sized version of Pathways was launched to continue to support staff in the context of restructuring.

Several of our development programmes already include elements of **Mentoring**. In 2019, a cross-university working group was formed to look at opportunities to develop a more structured University-wide framework for mentoring at Kent. The project has now resumed and will likely be implemented incrementally over the next few years.

#### Next steps

We will continue to review and expand on our development programmes to ensure those are fit-for-purpose in the current organisational context and that they respond to current and future needs for skill development. In 2021, we will launch our refreshed Leadership Behaviour Framework (LBF) alongside our revised leadership development portfolio, thus consolidating and furthering opportunities for career development for women. We will also look more closely at coaching practices at the University and how we can embed developmental conversations in everyday work.



### Embedding gender equality in our culture through Athena Swan

Most of our gender equality work is under the Athena SWAN umbrella. In 2019/20, Athena SWAN has once again been a top priority for Kent, and significant work has been done to continue to identify barriers to gender inclusion, design and plan interventions to reduce inequalities and to foster university-wide engagement.

The central Athena SWAN team has been supporting the growing number of Schools engaged with the Athena SWAN charter. With 20 Schools now with self-assessment teams this is a strong network where experience and best practice can be shared. A further three Schools were successful in achieving a Bronze award, bringing the total number of Schools holding either a Bronze or Silver award to 13.

At an institutional level, the team continued to capture the voices of colleagues via a range of focus groups, interviews, surveys and events, with specific efforts to involve more men in the gender equality conversation. Conversations with our PDRA colleagues on their experiences of being female researchers at Kent revealed the challenge of working in isolation and this has led to the creation of the Women's Researcher Network (WREN). Other firsts this year have included an International Men's Day discussion panel in November 2019 and a Menopause Café in February 2020.

These insights have led to direct policy changes including a set of proposals to enhance Kent's Family Friendly offering which placed Kent at the helm of best practice in the sector, for example improving the pay and leave entitlements for parents of premature babies. Further details are available in the [Family Friendly Policies Briefing Note](#).

The impact of the pandemic on women and their pay (eg due to responsibilities for home schooling) has also been in the forefront of our thinking. A sector leading Covid-19 pay policy has ensured that women's income has been secure during such extraordinarily challenging times for them alongside ensuring a focus on well-being and continued support for career development

#### Next steps

In November 2020, the Institution submitted its first application for a Silver award with results expected in April 2021. The accompanying five-year action plan will be progressed in 2020/21 including for example:

- supporting our early career researchers, the majority of whom are female, to stay and develop their career at Kent
- continue to support the University to review and develop sector-leading family friendly offerings and building a culture where everyone feels comfortable talking about their caring responsibilities.

# LOOKING AHEAD

**Our long term strategic focus remains on tackling the over-representation of women in junior roles and their under-representation in senior roles. The University will continue to take steps to ensure that women are better represented at all levels by building strong talent pipelines and maximising skills and potentials. In 2020/21, we will review the academic promotions process, and hope that the revised approach will help remove barriers to women's progress.**

The University is also continuing to focus on diversity in recruitment practices such as EDI training for recruiters and panel members, anonymised applications and positive action statements. More work will be done to attract and retain a diverse workforce that is representative of our student population.

The University will continue to provide support for women to stay and develop their careers at Kent. More analysis will be done to understand the impact of caring commitments and the need to support the career development of those working part-time, which for the general UK workforce is mostly women. We see part-time and flexible working as promoting a good work-life balance for all and as such encourage flexible working practices as much as possible across all roles at the University. We will continue to continuously improve our family friendly offering.

Much like we have done for the REF, we will also continue to promote and embed considerations around mitigating circumstances in other key processes such as promotion, salary awards or appraisals for example to ensure fairness of treatment for all. This means that the impacts of individual circumstances such as long term leave or periods of part-time working will be better understood by line managers and by those making performance evaluation decisions

We will continue to identify visible role models at all levels of the organisation, ensuring that championing of diversity and inclusion is embedded in our organisational culture. Our learning and development portfolio will be improved and expanded on to include targeted developmental programmes designed to enhance career progression for under-represented groups (ie, STEMMS, Early Career Researchers). We continue to work to prevent stereotyping and address discrimination and bias through training for staff particularly in managerial roles with a focus on inclusive leadership.

In 2021, we will start to put in place the foundations for the development of an Institutional Talent Management Strategy covering talent attraction, recruitment, development, promotion and progression, succession planning and retention, which will drive improvements in equality, diversity and inclusion. The review of our framework for appraisal (Referred to as "RPD Phase 2") has already begun and will be instrumental in the building of this strategy.





# FIND OUT MORE

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