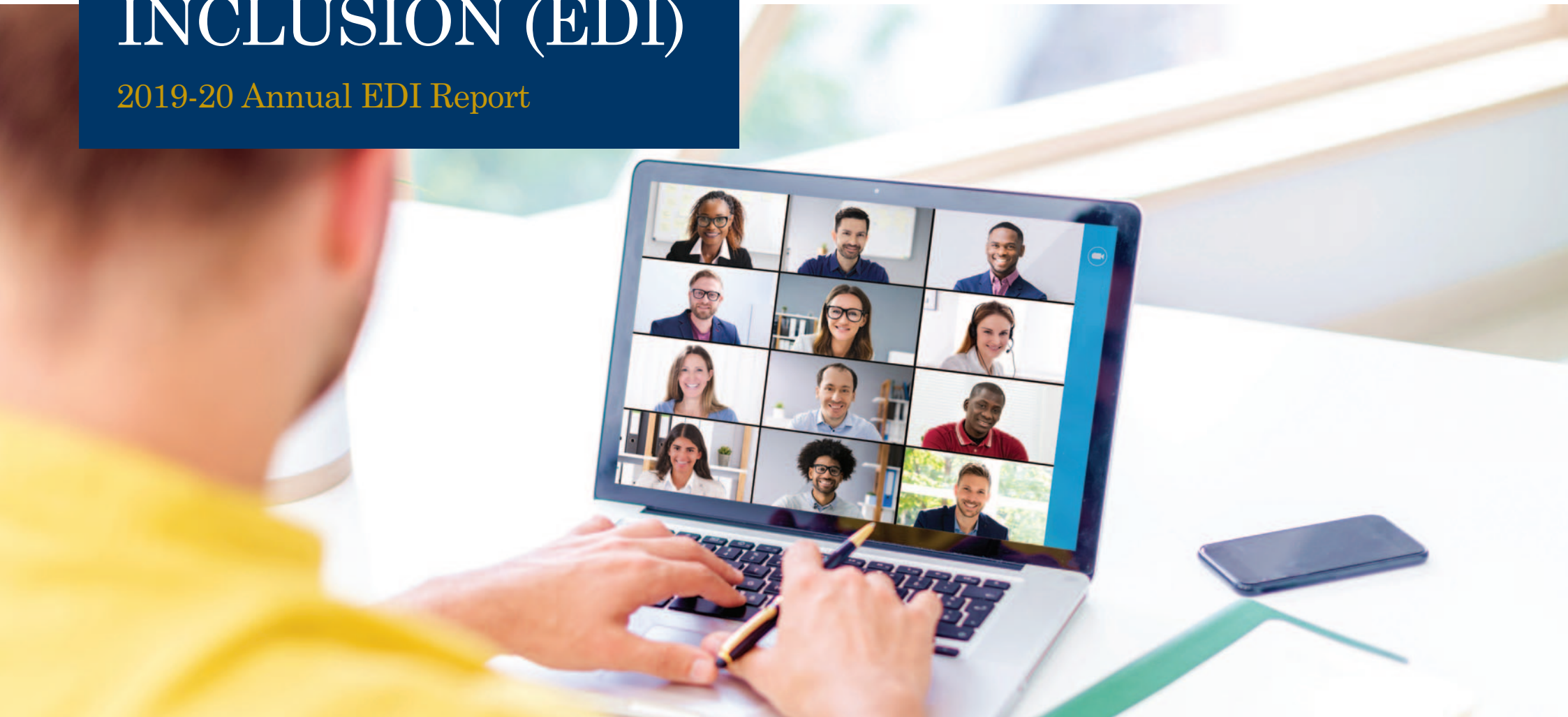


EQUALITY DIVERSITY AND INCLUSION (EDI)

2019-20 Annual EDI Report



CONTENTS

Foreword	3
Introduction	4
1 Progress against our strategic objectives	9
2 Our staff and student profile	23
3 Looking ahead – our continued commitment to inclusivity	28
4 2020-21 Strategic Delivery Plan	31
Glossary	35



FOREWORD



As a university community, we know the positive impact that a more diverse and inclusive environment can have on people, and on our ability to provide the best possible learning and working experience for colleagues and students. This report reflects our commitment to embed sustainable, positive change that not only meets our equality obligations but also, beyond that, encourages all of us to work together towards a common purpose.

2019-20 has brought unprecedented challenges, which we did not anticipate. The resilience and dedication of colleagues and students have allowed us to respond and adapt, while striving for improved sustainability in a challenging external context. In 2020, the resurgence of the Black Lives Matter movement captured global attention following the death of George Floyd. Evidence also started to emerge highlighting the fact that Covid-19 and the measures designed to tackle it have impacts that heighten inequalities. These issues have prompted us to reevaluate our priorities as a university, highlighting the need for us to focus more on racial inequality and the fallout from Covid-19.

We have progressed our work redesigning the foundations for our EDI governance structures, which will provide a stronger framework for action. These changes will increase visibility around our strategic priorities for EDI, maximise engagement at all levels in the University, improve accountability and help to support our aspiration to increase our diversity and foster a culture of inclusivity. Bringing together staff and student community groups working across all protected characteristics, including disability, sexuality, gender and race, will place the University in a strong position to achieve our ambitions and strategic objectives.

This report highlights the fact that we have much to be proud of, and it focuses on our achievements in 2019-20. We have continued to be recognised for our work towards gender equality with more Athena SWAN accreditations in place, and we are hopeful that spring 2021 will be a time to celebrate as we

anticipate the results of our Silver University application. We made good progress on strengthening our gender pipeline, which is reflected in a narrowing gender pay gap. We have taken positive steps to ensure improved access to our mental health support – for example, with the launch of our Employee Assistance Programme (EAP). We have made noticeable progress against our harassment action plan, with six new harassment contacts trained and the launch of new bystander training.

There is still much to do! In 2020-21, we will make tangible progress against our race equality action plan, as part of our signed commitment to the Race Equality Charter. We have recently become a member of Inclusive Employers and our first step will be to take stock of where we are by undertaking the Inclusive Employers Foundation assessment. We will continue our work on accessibility, mental health and wellbeing (Thriving at Work), and on tackling harassment. We also recognise that more needs to be done to equip our managers with the confidence and competence to be inclusive leaders at every level, including training for the Executive Group starting in January 2021.

The global protests of the past months in response to the killing of George Floyd have brought sharp and stark focus on racial inequality, including in higher education. As a community, we feel passionately about these issues, and we want to play a leading role in bringing about lasting change in the higher education sector and in wider society. It is with this in mind that we will be launching our 'Challenging Racism' campaign in early 2021.

Covid-19 has shone a spotlight on the underlying inequalities in our society and communities, and has exacerbated many of them. As we emerge from our immediate response, we will focus on creating safe and open spaces to share experiences, discuss inequality and confront our own biases – conscious and unconscious. With perseverance and hard work, we can foster an environment where all are supported to thrive and meet their potential.

Georgina Randsley de Moura

Deputy Vice-Chancellor – Academic Strategy, Planning and Performance

INTRODUCTION

The University is committed to fostering an environment where everyone can bring their whole selves to campus and flourish, without the need to diminish whom they are or what they aspire to achieve. We believe that when people feel accepted, included and valued, they are more engaged, work more collaboratively with others and deliver better outcomes for our staff and students.

A more focused annual EDI report

The University's annual EDI report 'Valuing Everyone' has always aimed to go beyond the compliance requirements of the public sector equality duty and to reflect Kent's progress against its action plan, showcase EDI achievements across the University and set out future ambitions and priorities.

For this latest 2019-20 edition, the format of the Annual Report has been changed to reflect the feedback received from key stakeholders across the University, including the feedback received from Council when the last report was approved in March 2020. There was consensus that, although very informative, the report was too long and difficult to navigate and lacked strategic focus. It was therefore agreed that the report would be stripped back to only encapsulate 1) high-level strategic information (ie progress against strategic priorities), 2) an analysis of staff and students equality data and 3) a high-level strategic action plan to address any gaps or challenges identified.

Although the report is still retrospective, covering a defined 12-month period (August 2019 to August 2020), it will be complemented by the launch of a new University-wide EDI website designed to serve as a 'hub' for staff and students to engage with and to signpost EDI events, networks, policies, training, projects, etc. The aim is for the website to offer a more dynamic platform for the showcasing of good practice across the University, as well as the promotion of upcoming initiatives in which staff and students can take part, which is more conducive to an inclusive culture.



www.kent.ac.uk/equality-diversity-inclusivity

A clear strategy for EDI

The University's vision and overarching institutional strategy is to be internationally known for a transformative student experience and employability outcomes, regardless of background. The Kent 2025 strategy sets out the ambition to provide an exceptional student experience and to be an employer of choice. Integral to this is recognising, celebrating and improving our EDI practices.

Our strategic objectives for EDI for 2020-21 build on the commitments made by the University in previous years and align with the Kent 2025 strategy. Such objectives are detailed in the Strategic Delivery Plan, which provides greater detail in respect of the actions and timescales for completion, which are monitored by the relevant staff and student committees.

However, the need for an EDI strategy has become increasingly apparent over the past few years, not only to provide clarity and direction so that EDI priorities can be agreed collectively and pragmatically but also to enable Kent to better adapt and respond to sudden shifts in the EDI landscape (eg Brexit, Covid, Black Lives Matter movement), which are placing increasing pressures on individuals and teams. Once the new EDI governance structure is implemented in 2021, the newly formed EDI Strategy Committee will be instrumental in undertaking this work.

In the interim, existing EDI strategic objectives for staff and students have been consolidated under four strategic pillars. Key focus areas include: harassment, mental health and wellbeing, accessibility, and evaluation and recognition of EDI practices.

The strategy is built on four key strategic pillars:

Pillar 1

Lead the way in the development of an environment that is free from harassment

Understanding the extent and nature of harassment against all characteristics so that a robust prevention strategy can be created

Pillar 2

Provide a supportive and inclusive culture conducive to good mental health and wellbeing for staff and students

Gain a greater understanding of mental health amongst all of our staff and students so that we can identify and act on trends

Pillar 3

Identify and remove barriers in relation to all forms of accessibility

Increase the extent to which disabled staff and students can participate in all areas of the University

Pillar 4

Continue to raise our profile as an employer and education provider through accreditation and investment in key strategic projects

Raise our ambitions for recognition in equality charters and projects including continuing our journey for gender equality with Athena SWAN, committing to the Race Equality Charter, and understanding and benchmarking our level of inclusion via external assessments

Emerging issues

Since March 2019, the unprecedented Coronavirus outbreak completely changed the way in which the University operates, forcing the sector to adapt to a new environment and ways of working, with new priorities and work pressures that no one could have anticipated. In addition, the killing of George Floyd in May 2020 and the global protests that ensued (Black Lives Matter movement) have pushed issues related to race and ethnicity to the fore, thus prompting Kent to review its EDI priorities to address this major shift in the EDI landscape.

In light of these emerging issues and in order to ensure adequate levels of response and support for staff and students in this context, the University's Strategic Delivery Plan for 2019-20 had to be reviewed, with some activities suspended or postponed.

Coronavirus impact and response

As we worked to keep our community safe, the need to be proactive in EDI was not underestimated, and Kent's immediate response to the pandemic was to centre on staff and student wellbeing, including the challenges of individuals working while caring for dependants.

In addition, extensive work was undertaken to embed equality impact analyses (EIAs) in policy development and decision-making as part of crisis management processes, in order to 1) analyse the effect of Covid-19 and the changes to our delivery on both our staff and student populations, and 2) ensure that any potential negative impact for key groups could be planned for and mitigated against (eg move to online learning, teaching and examinations).

Key support measures put in place as a result included, for example: the creation of a Covid-19 taskforce to mitigate the impact of Covid-19 on the student experience; the creation of No Detriment policies for both staff and students, to minimise the impact of Covid-19 upon academic outcomes and employment; the 'Risk and Concern' policy, to manage returns work; the Covid-19 Contribution policy; and the introduction of technological support (laptop loans and dongles) for students who found themselves without adequate provision, to support online learning and examinations.

Tackling racial inequality

In early July 2020, a collaborative dialogue opened up at Kent and an event was organised around 'Understanding and Interrupting Institutional Racism', giving staff an opportunity to share their experiences and perspectives on institutional racism with members of the University's Executive Group.

Soon thereafter, Karen Cox, our Vice-Chancellor, announced that Kent had signed up to the Advance HE Race Equality Charter (REC); meanwhile, a number of 'call for action' items were received from a collective of student societies, which the University responded to in the Statement of Intent on Racism and Discrimination.

Building on the discussions and engagement with staff and students over the summer and recognising that long-term sustainable action is needed to instil tangible change, significant work was undertaken to formulate Kent's 'Tackling Racism Action Plan 2020-21', which aims to identify gaps in provision and support at university and department level, as well as highlight key areas for future work.

In January 2021, the University will be launching its 'Challenging Racism' campaign, focused on raising awareness and understanding around the barriers to race equality at Kent. More information can be found on the campaign's dedicated "Challenging Racism" website. The BAME staff network webpages have also been updated with several resources in response to Black Lives Matter and Covid-19.

Moving towards a new governance structure for EDI

All members of the University's community have a role to play in driving forward and acting upon Kent's EDI agenda. A number of groups and individuals are particularly involved in promoting and embedding an EDI culture at Kent:

Council

The broader aim of building a diverse and inclusive university that fosters equality of opportunity is supported at the highest levels of the institution, including University Council. Council regularly considers matters pertaining to EDI, in addition to receiving, discussing and ultimately endorsing this report, and views EDI as integral to the Lay Nominations Committee and the business of Council.

Executive Group (EG) EDI Champions

During 2019-20, members of the Executive Group continued to support EDI, embracing the principles of EDI and recognising the University's obligation to ensure that staff and students benefit from a higher education, irrespective of difference.

Executive Group members are actively engaged in EDI activity and have supported a range of EDI initiatives during 2019-20, including sponsorship of the Thriving at Work project group, attendance at Staff Network meetings, supporting the implementation of the Digital Accessibility Legislation and the work of the Kent Digital Accessibility Working Group and holding an open online discussion about racism at Kent.

As highlighted in the previous Annual Report, a Task and Finish Group was formed in 2019-20 to review the governance and structures of EDI at the University. This group was created as a stepping stone to ensuring that the University was structurally able to register and apply for the Race Equality Charter. The T&F Group was dissolved in January 2020 and a report was submitted to the Executive Group with suggested recommendations.

EDI lead

Based on these recommendations, Professor Georgina Randsley de Moura, DVC Academic Strategy, Planning and Performance, was appointed as the Executive Group lead for EDI and has since taken forward work to propose a new governance and operational structure for EDI across the organisation.

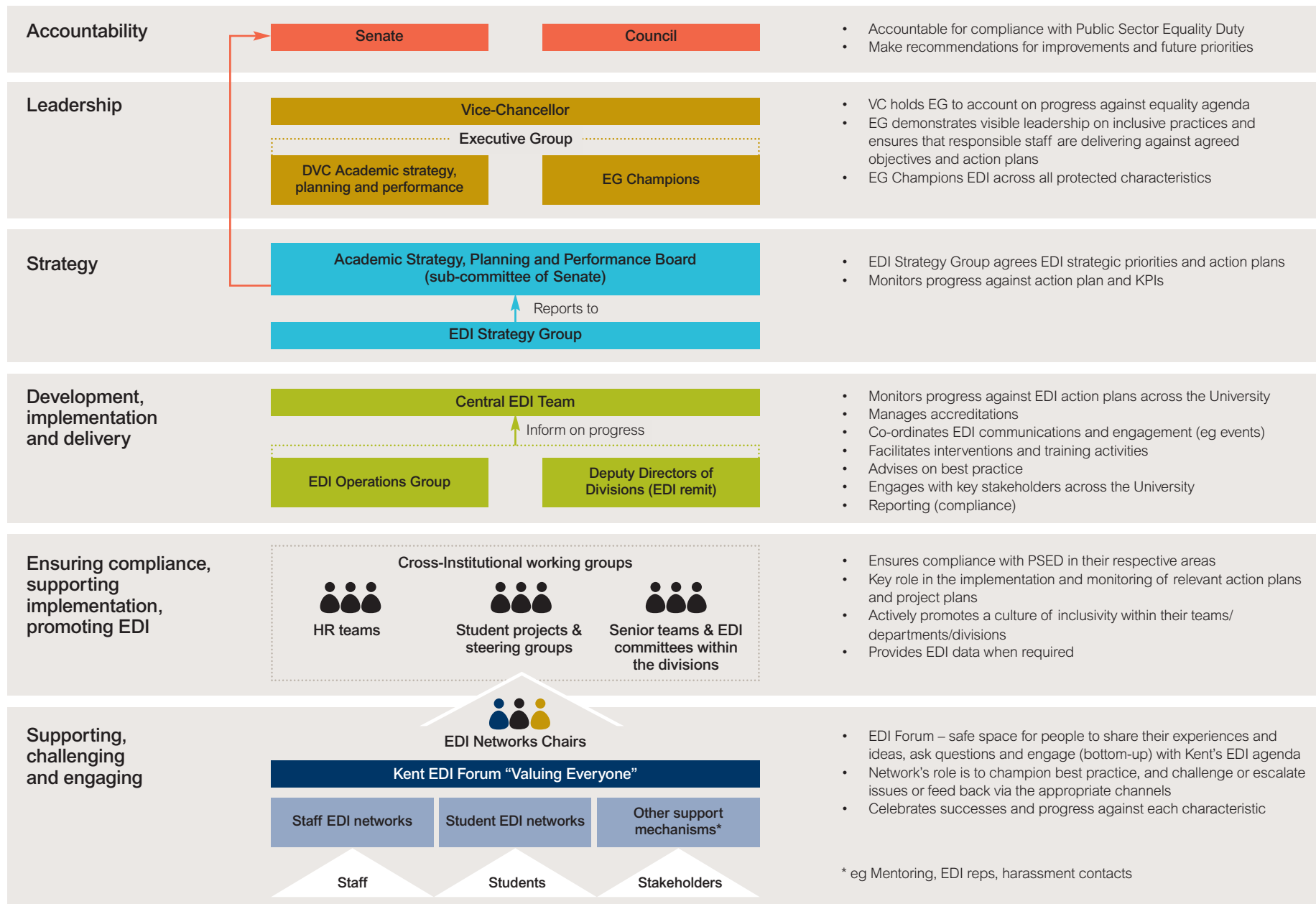
Proposals for these structures have now been approved by Senate and JSNCC, and will be implemented in early spring 2021. The new governance structure will be a key enabler for the University to meet the requirements of the Race Equality Charter and, more broadly, to support the delivery of the new EDI strategy, as well as clarify accountabilities and foster a collaborative culture through greater bottom-up engagement and representation from staff and students.

EDI embedded within the divisions

EDI has also been embedded within the new divisional structures as part of the delivery of Organising for Success, with the role of Deputy Director of Division having responsibility and accountability for EDI, thus ensuring ownership and leadership for EDI within the divisions.

Overview of new proposed EDI governance structure to be implemented in 2021

Please note that the below governance structure is indicative and subject to consultation with relevant stakeholders.



1

PROGRESS AGAINST OUR STRATEGIC OBJECTIVES

This section focuses on key highlights and progress made against objectives for each of the four strategic pillars and the impact that this work has had on the advancement of the University's EDI agenda. However, this report could not do justice to the breadth and depth of activities that have taken place throughout the year, which are instead showcased on our new University-wide EDI website.



Pillar 1 – Lead the way in the development of an environment that is free from harassment

The issue of harassment – specifically sexual and, more recently, racial harassment – has been a high profile one now for well over three years, with widespread local, national and international media coverage concerning multiple sectors (#MeToo). This has generated copious discussion and analysis of the issue in the UK higher education sector.

This increase in awareness and interest, together with the publication of several reports¹ and guidance on the topics of harassment and sexual misconduct, has spurred the sector into action and has informed and influenced work that was already underway at Kent on the topic of harassment (of any kind), as well as providing an important and timely opportunity to review practices.

What we said we would do

- Review current harassment processes in line with published guidance and recommendations, and identify opportunities for improvement.
- Develop a risk-based approach to all forms of harassment.
- Enhance reporting capabilities for harassment, in order to increase visibility around the extent and nature of harassment against each of the protected characteristics and to identify hot spots.
- Develop a robust prevention strategy.
- Promote and raise awareness of the key processes related to harassment, in particular how to access support and report (or investigate) incidents.
- Continue to develop networks of support by providing further training and guidance around harassment and by expanding on the existing pool of harassment contacts.
- Publish a commitment to tackling harassment, discrimination and hate crime.

✓ What we have done

- A comprehensive gap analysis was carried out to assess current practices against the findings and recommendations of each of the reports published by key influencers in the sector (ie EHRC, UUK, NUS, 1752 group, ACAS, etc). A specific action plan was subsequently implemented to address gaps for both staff and students, in line with University objectives.
- Significant progress has been made to raise awareness in staff and students on how to report incidents of harassment, via targeted communication campaigns and extensive work to refresh both staff and student EDI-related webpages, with the aim of improving signposting to support mechanisms and reporting tools.
- Training and group awareness sessions were offered to students on the topic of racism and harassment. In addition, the compulsory all-student 'Expect Respect' module was refreshed to include sessions on 'How to Become Actively Anti-Racist' and 'Bystander Intervention Training'. Similar work was undertaken for staff, with the development of further training for existing harassment contacts, including training on 'The Role of the Harassment Contact', 'Crucial Conversations' and 'Bystander Training'.
- Policies, procedures and processes relating to harassment for both staff and students have been reviewed in light of the recent recommendations contained in the reports – for example, in relation to changes in guidance around non-disclosure agreements or anonymous reporting for staff. All student conduct and complaints procedures have also been reviewed and updated to include specific information on racism and harassment.

¹ www.equalityhumanrights.com/en/publication-download/tackling-racial-harassment-universities-challenged
https://assets.publishing.service.gov.uk/government/uploads/system/uploads/attachment_data/file/818324/confidentiality-clause-consultation-govt-response.pdf
<https://equalityhumanrights.com/en/publication-download/sexual-harassment-and-harassment-work-technical-guidance>

Impact

The gap analysis carried out in 2020 has provided clarity around key opportunities for improvement. Staff and student policies and processes have been updated in line with recommendations and best practice, thus further mitigating risks for the institution.

As a result of the update to the intranet pages and subsequent targeted communications, a further six staff harassment contacts have been trained, doubling the number previously in place.

What happens next?

It is clear that the topic of harassment is going to remain under scrutiny in the sector in respect of how institutions manage current and future harassment allegations. Although Kent has already made significant progress in effectively tackling issues of harassment and sexual misconduct by implementing a robust action plan, the complexity and volatility around the topic will require continued focus in 2020-21.

A key milestones for the next reporting year will be:

- The implementation of a new staff online reporting tool in early 2021, similar to the student example (InK), which will contribute to enhancing existing reporting capabilities.
- Work will continue to develop a prevention strategy, including by expanding on existing networks of support with the introduction of an Inclusive Allyship programme and an Inclusive Leadership programme.

Challenging Racism at Kent

In light of this significant shift in the EDI landscape (eg Black Lives Matter movements) and the University's new commitment to sign up for the Race Equality Charter (REC), EDI priorities for 2019-20 were adjusted to include focused work around race equality, in particular around issues of racism. The work undertaken included, for example:

- A new Campus Security Code of Conduct and a Campus Security Charter, which will be launched in 2021. Campus Security has been working closely with both Kent Union and relevant student societies to improve awareness and understanding of the role, remit and boundaries of Campus Security authority.
- The Student Conduct and Complaints processes have been reviewed to include specific sections on reporting racism and sanction for the 2020-21 academic year.
- A refresh of the compulsory all-student Expect Respect module to include sessions on 'How to Become Actively Anti-Racist' and 'Bystander Intervention Training' for the 2020-21 academic year.
- The commissioning of a programme of blended learning and development for staff to be launched in early 2021, designed to 1) open up channels for discussion and reflection around race and offer a 'safe space' for the sharing of experiences at organisational and team level, 2) raise staff awareness and understanding around the EDI challenges associated with ethnicity/race (eg micro-aggression, white privilege, etc) and 3) support the University to prepare for the REC.

In 2020-21, tackling racism will remain a key area of focus, and the University's ongoing commitment will be reflected in the delivery of the Kent 'Tackling Racism Action Plan 2020-21' and the roll-out of the Challenging Racism campaign, both of which are building on the outcomes of the discussions and engagement with staff and students in 2019-20. A racial harassment steering group will also be formed to monitor incidents of racism and harassment at Kent and provide recommendations for improvement.

Pillar 2 – Provide a supportive and inclusive culture conducive to good mental health and wellbeing for staff and students

The [World Health Organisation](#) describes mental health as ‘a state of wellbeing in which every individual realises his or her own potential, can cope with the normal stresses of life, can work productively and fruitfully, and is able to contribute to her or his community’.

The mental health of university students and staff has been a focus of increasing concern in the UK, with a weight of evidence suggesting that large numbers of students and staff are experiencing poor mental health while a part of their university. The number of students declaring a pre-existing mental illness to their university has more than doubled since 2014-15. There have also been increases in demand for services to support student mental health.

Data from the Office for Students has demonstrated that students experiencing mental illness are more likely to withdraw from university and to underperform academically and are less likely to secure higher level employment or go on to postgraduate study. Most significantly, it is estimated that in 2017-18, 95 students took their own lives.

In addition, the mental health of university staff is a growing area of focus in the sector – what certain frameworks such as the UUK Stepchange framework or The University Mental Health Charter² (Advance HE) refer to as the ‘whole University approach’ – alongside increases in organisational OH capacity and a strengthened culture around the importance of wellbeing.

Kent is already in a strong position to tackle those challenges, with robust support mechanisms in place for staff – including a facility for self-referral – and line managers.

Given the severe negative consequences that poor mental health can have for learning, achievement, health and life, providing a supportive and inclusive culture conducive to good mental health and wellbeing is clearly an important goal for the University and one that requires attention, resource, expertise and action. The Covid-19 pandemic has also raised serious concerns around the short- and long-term impacts that the pandemic will have on staff and students with pre-existing conditions, notwithstanding the risks engendered by prolonged isolation, additional workload pressures, challenging domestic circumstances and job uncertainty, which are likely to continue for some time.

What we said we would do

- Gain a greater understanding of mental health challenges among all of our staff and students and identify implications for policy development and potential prevention strategies.
- Embed best practice in all aspects of the student and staff life-cycles by implementing the government’s Thriving at Work core mental health standards and the Student Minds Mental Health Charter and by signing up to the Time to Change pledge.
- Ensure that all staff have access to timely independent help and support for mental health referrals by implementing an Employee Assistance Programme (EAP).
- Ensure that support services for students are adequately resourced and working effectively and that such services are representative of a diverse student population.
- Equip leaders and managers to better understand and support staff with mental health issues as well as to safeguard and promote good mental health and wellbeing through strategic planning and operational practices.



What we have done

- Successfully procured and implemented independent support services for staff in the form of an [Employee Assistance Programme \(EAP\)](#) through Care First and Sodexo, a free-of-charge benefit for staff providing expert help on both workplace and personal issues, and which can be accessed online, via the phone or face to face.

- Formed the Thriving at Work working group to produce a University plan to implement the findings of the Stevenson/Farmer 'Thriving at Work' review into employee mental health and employer support. The working group is chaired and led by Occupational Health and supported by a multi-disciplinary team from the following areas: Human Resources, Occupational Health, Corporate Communications and Union representation. A comprehensive plan was created and presented to selected members of the Executive Group for feedback in February 2020. After the project was put on hold due to other priorities associated with Covid-19, work has now resumed and a detailed action plan will be implemented in 2020-21.
- The application to the Student Minds Mental Health Charter has been delayed due to Covid-19 and the impact upon the pilot institutions. Kent is aiming to register in summer 2021, after the appointment of a new Head of Student Support and Wellbeing. In the meantime, Student Support and Wellbeing has committed to undertaking the Diverse Cymru Certificate in BME Mental Health to increase the mental health support provision for students from BAME backgrounds, with the process starting in spring 2021.
- Delivered five virtual mental health training sessions to support managers to strike the right balance between the needs of the individual and the needs of the institution, including: signs of when a staff member may be struggling; the impact of Covid-19 and the issues to be aware of; the Good Practice Framework; guidelines for managing sensitive conversations; and practical support, eg. reasonable adjustments during and after the Covid-19 pandemic. Fifty-seven staff have attended the events.
- Marked Mental Health Awareness Week (18-24 May 2020) by offering staff and students a series of online events and activities.
- The Talent & OD Department delivered the 2020 edition of the Belong and Grow (BaG) week, a series of events that support personal growth and wellbeing, which were adapted and delivered virtually; 120 spaces were taken up over 11 events.
- Increased student awareness of how to offer peer-to-peer mental health support via Kent Union-run training sessions.
- Care First, Kent's Employee Assistance Programme provider, delivered several specific webinars in June and July to support staff with their mental wellbeing during the Covid-19 pandemic.

Impact

The implementation of the new Employee Assistance Programme offers more visibility around access to support for staff to resolve stressful events or situations of all natures, including access to face-to-face counselling offered to those who need the most support. Since the launch of the EAP, data shows that the use of the service by staff was initially slow but increased in March, which is thought to be linked to Covid-19, and has remained steady since.

Contact type	Jan	Feb	Mar	Apr	May	Jun	Jul	Total
Face-to face counselling	0	0	4	4	10	9	11	38
Online counselling	1	0	2	0	0	1	2	6
Telephone – counselling	1	9	25	11	8	10	5	69
Telephone – information specialist	0	1	3	0	1	3	2	10
Total	2	10	34	15	19	23	20	123

The second EAP usage report was supplied to the University on 2 September (covering the period May-July 2020). This shows that usage continues to be steady, with the percentage of staff accessing the service remaining encouragingly low compared to the total staff population – particularly in the context of restructuring and the start of the pandemic. Of these, 57% were calls to telephone counsellors and 31% were face-to-face counselling sessions, 79% of contacts self-referred to the EAP, 16% were referrals from OH and 5% were informal referrals from managers.

Over 50 students were trained in the 'Look After Your Mate' training run by Student Minds. Kent Union have also worked with student networks, societies and the University to increase the awareness and activity of key events and initiatives such as University Mental Health Day and other awareness months and days.

What happens next?

Fostering a supportive and inclusive culture conducive to good mental health and wellbeing for staff and students will remain a priority for 2020-21.

We will continue to consult and collaborate with students' unions and associations, and particularly with students with mental health difficulties, when formulating and implementing student mental health-related policies and procedures and identifying areas for improvement. We will investigate the implementation of the Student Mental Health Charter, with the aim of signing up to the Time to Change pledge.

More emphasis will be given to building organisational and individual resilience for staff through tailored learning and development opportunities, particularly given the lasting challenges brought by the pandemic. As such, we will offer domestic violence awareness training to our staff and roll out a full programme of learning and development called the 'Future of Work' programme, designed to support staff working remotely.

The work on the Thriving at Work framework has resumed and will now focus on the implementation of the recommendations contained in the report, including the development of resource packs and training.

Coronavirus response

Some University plans for 2019-20 were put on hold to allow an adequate response to the pandemic and additional support to be implemented, such as:

- A Covid-19 Code of Conduct for students and staff was created, aimed at explaining the changes to the University environment and the necessary adaptations that were made to maintain safety for all, with specific guidance for vulnerable staff and students, including advice to safeguard mental health.
- A COPE framework was launched for staff – a resource pack to help staff and managers to find ways to adjust to the new working environment, with the aim of relieving any unnecessary workload-related pressure and improving mental health.
- A Risk Assessment and Concern Conversation document was created for line managers to use with their staff as they returned to work. This provided a mechanism for staff to talk through their concerns and provided managers with guidance on how to respond to these concerns and provide reassurance of the measures in place.
- A policy statement regarding the impact of Covid-19 on staff contributions was issued in July 2020. This highlighted the fact that managers making recommendations or decisions for which performance, contribution or organisational participation was relevant (including, where appropriate, University panels and committees) were required to recognise the wide variety of ways in which the pandemic and resultant lockdown may intersect with existing challenges, personal circumstances and protected characteristics.
- Student Support and Wellbeing provided additional support to students by creating online one-to-one and peer support groups. Workshops were moved online and dedicated webpages were created to provide information on initiatives and resources to help students engage with the University community remotely.

Pillar 3 – Identify and remove barriers in relation to all forms of accessibility

Accessibility refers to the design of products, devices, services or environments to be usable by people with disabilities. The concept of accessible design and practice of accessible development ensure both 'direct access' (ie unassisted) and 'indirect access', meaning compatibility with a person's assistive technology (for example, computer screen readers).

In September 2018, [The Public Sector Bodies \(Websites and Mobile Applications\) Accessibility Regulations \(2018\)](#) (PSBAR) became law. These require websites and mobile applications (herein referred to as apps) created by Public Sector Bodies to meet accessibility standards so that people who use assistive technology or have added needs can access services and information.

The Kent Digital Accessibility Working Group (KDAWG) was formed to ensure the University's compliance with the new PSBAR regulations, which required a whole-university approach and clearly defined workflows. The complexity of the project necessitated input from multiple subject-matter experts from across the University. A comprehensive transition plan was developed, building upon the existing strategies of the OPERA project (such as the Kent Inclusive Practices), resulting in significant progress being made by both groups towards meeting digital accessibility requirements. This work has also been invaluable in preparing the University to respond to the Covid-19 pandemic, in particular given the shift in ways of working and the need to provide teaching materials and exams in alternative formats, thus placing a sharp and stark focus on accessibility. The work produced by the OPERA project and the ongoing work towards meeting the PSBAR regulations meant that robust solutions were already in place to support this.

The University has taken a proactive stand in leading the way in the sector with its work on digital accessibility, thus defining practices that have been adopted by other institutions across the sector. In keeping with this ethos, a lot of the work being done at the University is being shared with other institutions to help to identify consistent processes and to help to provide answers for questions that have not been fully addressed by the government's guidance.

What we said we would do

- Continue to improve the physical environment on campus so that all disabled staff and students can take advantage of the education, facilities and services provided by the University and can actively participate in all areas of university life.
- Improve the delivery of digital information to all staff and students in line with the Public Sector Bodies (Website and Mobile Applications) Accessibility Regulations 2018.
- Following the formation of the Kent Digital Accessibility Working Group (KDAWG), implement the government digital accessibility legislation to ensure that all digital content is fully accessible.
- Manage the migration from the current intranet platform to the new platform (Site Editor) to enable accessibility of content across the university.
- Provide training and guidance to all staff to create accessible digital content.



What we have done

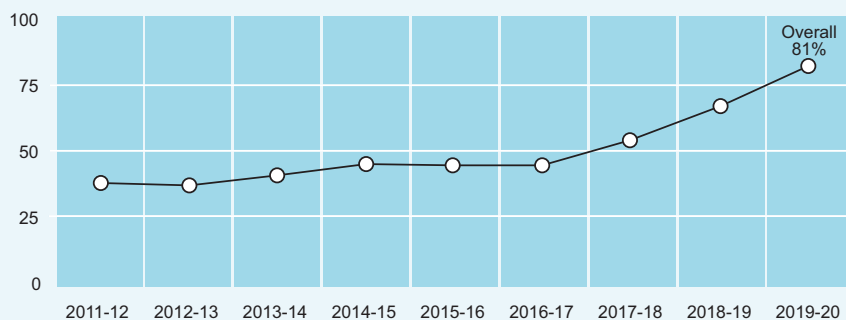
- In May 2020, Kent reviewed the kent.ac.uk/accessibility landing pages and statement templates in partnership with Kent County Council, in line with the revised Government Digital Service sample statement wording.
- Following a successful series of audits that revealed an excellent level of built-in accessibility, the work of the KDAWG has been focused on supporting the smooth migration of all University of Kent web content to the Site Editor template. Kent Union also increased the [accessibility of their webpages](#) using a tool called 'Recite Me'.
- Significant efforts have been made in raising awareness of accessible design for content creators through the [Digitally Enhanced Education course](#), [staff communications](#), the second [Kent Digital Accessibility Conference](#) and the redevelopment of Productivity Tools as a [central portal for University software](#).
- Furthered Kent's capability to quality-check the accessibility of content and documents by investing in a three-year subscription to [Blackboard Ally](#), a specialist diagnostic software.
- Created comprehensive [digital guidelines](#) for all web and content creators that clearly describe the principles of accessible editorial content within the Site Editor platform.
- Provided specific guidance to students on how to access exam papers in alternative formats as part of the University's central communications on exams in the context of Covid-19. Provided access to technological support for students throughout the transition to online teaching, learning and assessment.
- Promoted and delivered awareness sessions on digital accessibility regulations within schools and the [eLearning forum](#) and rolled out an online learning module in partnership with Kent County Council; 52 people have completed the online learning.
- Held the Kent Digital Accessibility 2020 Conference over three days virtually, which was a good opportunity to demonstrate accessibility strategies, such as allowing remote access to sessions and real-time captioning. The event featured international speakers, including representatives from Google, Microsoft, SensusAccess and searchBOX. Two students from the University gave presentations that were particularly well received. Over 730 individuals registered to attend.
- The Careers and Employability Service (CES) have launched the Work Placement (WP) project, which aims to offer students with protected characteristic(s) a more accessible service, taking into account particular needs and supporting employability. For example, a series of talks were delivered on topics such as 'Finding LGBTQ+ Employers', 'Talking About your Disability to Employers' and 'Finding Disability Confident Employers', as well as offering one-to-one appointments on these topics (including talking about your pronouns to employers). The WP project also involved a series of alumni events, which will continue to take place across 2020–21, the first being a BAME Alumni Panel in summer 2020. CES are also engaging employers in this campaign, encouraging them to speak about their inclusive culture at events. The 2019 Careers Fair involved an 'Access Hour', where students and graduates with disabilities/mental health conditions could access the fair before other attendees, which was attended by 371 students.
- The Careers and Employability Service rolled out the Autism and Employability project. In 2019–20, 151 students attended one-to-one appointments with a specialist careers adviser. The collaborative project between CES and Student Support and Wellbeing is continuing, through events and specific workshops for autistic students and recent graduates.
- The Accessibility Student Network worked with Student Support and Wellbeing to promote the [Accessibility Pledge](#) to ensure that accessibility is considered for all lectures and events.
- As part of [UK Disability History Month 2019](#), Kent hosted an exhibition in Keynes College about Mike Oliver (who died aged 74 on 2 March 2019), acclaimed as the 'Father of the Social Model of Disability'. It showcased extracts of his work and personal effects kindly lent by Oliver's widow, Joy, as well as the ways in which the University of Kent and Kent Union are trying to improve accessibility now.

Impact

Graph 1 shows the improving accessibility scores since the implementation and use of Blackboard Ally.

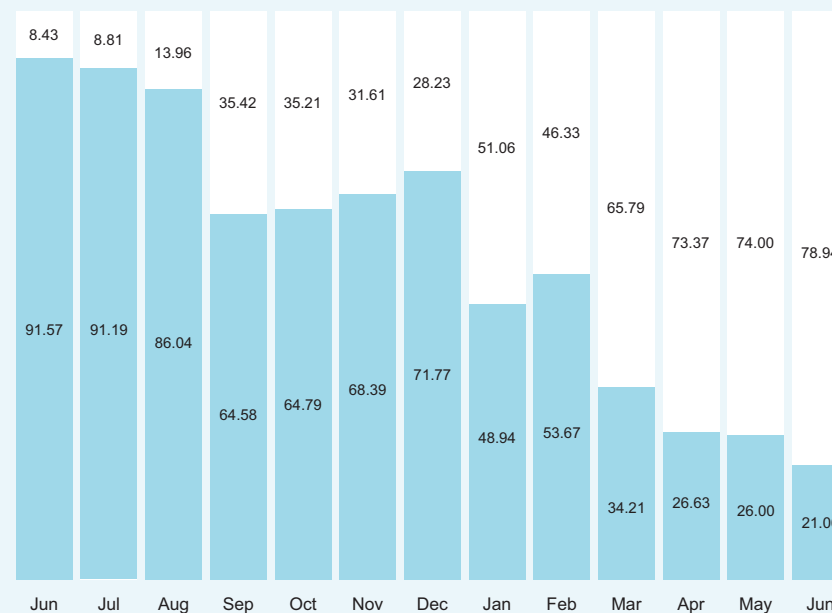
Blackboard Ally is a product that integrates with Moodle and focuses on making digital course content more accessible. Providing alternative formats for staff and students to access the content within Moodle, it also provides an accessibility score for the authors of material.

Graph 1 – Accessibility score



Graph 2 provides evidence that the work undertaken to transfer content onto Site Editor, which is an accessible template, has had a positive impact on traffic compared to content using the old less accessible templates (Pantheon). This is encouraging not only because more users are accessing and engaging with web content but also because it provides tangible evidence of the extensive work undertaken by the working group to ensure University compliance with PSBAR regulations.

Graph 2 – Pantheon/other vs Site Editor traffic % (top 500 pages only)



What happens next?

- Continue with campus accessibility forum and accessibility tours.
- Review new building status to ensure accessibility across all characteristics.
- Review local webpages and support the move to the Site Editor template to allow for accessibility.
- Be part of the Digital Transformation Strategy Group to create and implement a digital capability framework.
- Ensure that all content meets PSBAR requirements.
- Review Disability Confident scheme and perform a feasibility study in gaining level 3 leader status; maintain level 2 status with fair recruitment, retention and development practices.
- Investigate technology support options for students, to increase accessibility to online teaching and learning.

Pillar 4 – Continue to raise our profile as an employer and education provider through accreditation and investment in key strategic projects

The University of Kent participates in several equality charter marks and schemes, with the aim of evaluating, recognising and benchmarking the extensive work undertaken to advance the University's equality agenda and fostering an inclusive environment for work and study. The awards and charter marks that the University is currently signed up to are:



In addition to its work towards accreditation and recognition, the University invests in significant strategic projects at institutional level aimed to increase access, participation and opportunities for marginalised groups.

The Student Success project is a key priority at the University of Kent, which focuses on addressing differential student outcomes. The Student Success team was set up in 2015 to address sector-wide institutional factors and barriers that trigger lower rates of attainment, continuation and progression among students from low socio-economic groups, those with disabilities and students from black and minority ethnic (BME) groups.

The OPERA project (Opportunity, Productivity, Engagement, Reducing barriers, Achievement) is a university-wide project that aims to pilot a range of initiatives and monitor their impact on the development of a more accessible environment for students at the University of Kent. The project investigates approaches to mainstreaming accessibility (reasonable adjustments) in higher education to demonstrate the productivity potential of inclusive design in education.

Kent is also committed to understanding the additional challenges faced by part-time, mature, commuting and students with caring responsibilities (PMCC) and to identifying barriers to attendance, engagement, progression, performance and graduate outcomes. Our data shows that these students are less satisfied with their education and student experience than Kent's overall student population.

What we said we would do

- Continue to work towards an inclusive culture through accreditation (eg equality charters), evaluation and benchmarking to understand our level of inclusion and how we compare to other institutions in the sector (ie, via external assessments).
- Continue to invest in key strategic projects to ensure an inclusive and accessible student experience, eg the Student Success (EDI) project and OPERA.
- Support the University in achieving an Athena SWAN Silver Award for its continued work towards improving gender equality.
- Achieve the targets set out in the 2020-2025 'Access and Participation Plan' (APP).
- Establish a working group to investigate support for part-time, mature, commuting and students with caring responsibilities (PMCC) and opportunities for improvement.
- Assess the feasibility of becoming a member of the Race Equality Charter in light of the feasibility study carried out in 2019, the outcomes of the REC review by Advance HE and the recommendations of the EDI T&F group in 2020.

What we have done

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 carried out to continue to identify barriers to gender inclusion, to 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 having self-assessment teams, this is a strong network where experience and best practice can be shared.

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](#).

Given the progress made since our institutional Bronze Award submitted in 2016 and the measurable impacts that we can evidence, the institutional self-assessment team (ISAT) approved the plan to prepare an early submission for a Silver Award in November 2020, the results of which will be known in spring 2021.

OPERA

In addition to the work described under Pillar 3, OPERA has been working with the Project Management Office to share work documenting the entire student journey to ensure that key processes are accessible at every point of contact with the University, from initial contact through to graduation. The OPERA project has refreshed the University's Code of Practice for programme approval (Inclusive Curricula) to reflect the requirements of the new regulations.

The Kent Inclusive Practices (KIPs) were reviewed to see how they might be updated to ensure that they provide the best possible inclusivity support for the online learning-focused environment and develop clear policies and supporting guidance for the sustainable delivery of inclusive online learning and teaching during the switch to online or blended learning

The aim for 2020-21 is to focus further on bringing together multiple strands of accessibility work to ensure a holistic University approach.

PMCC

The part-time, mature, commuting and students with caring responsibilities (PMCC) working group was formed, focusing on auditing the support available on Kent campuses from the University, Kent Union and informal networks, to consider their effectiveness and benchmark against peers. This work included the analysis of available data relating to the student journey, from admission to graduation, including academic performance (eg entry profile, progression, retention, referral/deferral, classification, attendance and engagement), campus location, mode of transport and distance travelled, use of student support services and graduate destinations.

Student Success (Access and Participation Plan)

The Student Success project team have once more made astonishing progress toward furthering student access and participation. Key highlights are:

- The work carried out by SDS Development and Web Development teams to upgrade students' 'Progress Profiles', which provide all undergraduate students, academic advisers and senior tutors with a record of progress to facilitate discussions on attendance and attainment.
- The One Hour Degree is an award winning web-based degree simulation game accessible by anyone, anywhere. The game's aim is to assist with the orientation and transition of new students to Kent, as well as highlighting key services and resources that they may otherwise not have been aware of. This is particularly useful for students from non-traditional backgrounds who may face additional barriers in accessing student support, advice and information crucial to enabling them to succeed in a university setting. In 2020, the Medway element of the game was launched to provide information specific to their unique setting and community. To date there have been almost 7,000 players from across 123 countries.
- MOSAIC was launched in September 2020. It provides an animated mosaic montage of video clips, each lasting approximately ten seconds, to introduce and signpost students to processes relating to transition, attainment and belonging.

More information on the Student Success project and local initiatives taking place across the University can be found on the Student Success website.

Race Equality Charter

During summer 2020, Kent formally submitted its application to membership of the [Advance HE's Race Equality Charter](#); this framework will enable a step change at the University and will advance the work required as part of the Tackling Racism at Kent Action Plan.

Work has already begun to encourage debate, facilitate the sharing of experiences with our BAME students and colleagues, and understand the impact of those experiences on academic performance.

The 'Inspirations' website was launched in January 2020. The initiative is a student-led project aiming to share the experiences of our black, Asian and minority ethnic (BAME) staff and those considered first in the family to attend university.

Impact

Athena SWAN

- 20 schools now have Athena SWAN self-assessment teams. Eighteen have applied for awards and 13 hold either Bronze or Silver, up from five in 2016.
- Proportion of female professors increased from 27.8% to 33.8%.
- Proportion of female lecturers increased from 45.7% to 48.5%.
- Overall female academic population increased from 42.1% to 44.1%.
- Number of reader and professor posts filled by colleagues on teaching only contracts (where women are overrepresented) increased from one in 2016 to nine in 2019.
- Proportion of female Heads of School increased from 19% to 31.8%.
- Proportion of female applications for academic roles increased from 32.4% to 46.2% and for STEMM roles from 22.9% to 43.9%.
- Success rate for applications for promotion to professor has been higher for women compared to men every year since 2016.
- Proportion of female academics submitted to REF increasing: 2008 RAE 30%, 2014 REF 36.9%, 2021 REF 39.4%.

Student Success

The awarding gaps have significantly reduced over the last year across a number of the targets. This was predominantly due to the move to online exams as a result of the Covid pandemic. However, data revealed that improvements were greater in academic schools engaging with Student Success work, whether that was with subject-specific interventions, eg cultural competency training for staff, or through involvement in University-wide initiatives, eg [Diversity Mark](#), use of Progress Profiles, or signposting students to the One Hour Degree.

Progress Profiles

Analytics demonstrate that students and staff continue to access [Progress Profiles](#). There have also been a number of points in the year where access to the training videos has increased: August, November and January. The last two coincide with assignment submissions in some subjects, but also with Covid lockdowns and an increase in online academic advising.

One Hour Degree

While University life has changed over the last year due to the pandemic, the [One Hour Degree](#) (OHD) and its accompanying video collection MOSAIC continue to be accessed by students worldwide. As a result of the work completed, there was a rise in OHD access, which coincided with the first national lockdown, and a more prolonged increase throughout September, when new students are preparing for university. There were also spikes in access as a result of both the shortlisting and winning of the [Guardian University Award for Digital Innovation](#).

Academic Excellence Longitudinal Research

Findings from the first year of the report have been shared with senior University leaders, EDI Operations and divisional committees. It clearly demonstrates some of the struggles faced by students in adapting to online learning due to the pandemic. Issues with lack of time and space to study and the absence of contact with peers, combined with difficulties in access to adequate IT equipment and connectivity, all had an impact on students' motivation and academic performance. Emerging findings revealed health consequences of the pandemic, including family bereavement, having a direct impact on students' mental health and wellbeing and their overall university experience and performance.

SECL focus groups

The report by the former School of European Culture and Languages has been shared with the University's Executive Group to inform thinking on the new Equality, Diversity and Inclusion strategy.

OPERA

The Student Journey Map was completed and integrated into the Project Management Office's (PMO) approach to the roll-out and delivery of Organising for Success and is now part of the 'How We Work' strand as the University progresses with simplifying processes. The University's Code of Practice for programme approval (Inclusive Curricula) has been embedded in and applies to all new programmes in development at Kent, which now ensures compliance to new accessibility regulations.

What happens next?

The University remains committed to evaluating, benchmarking and recognising its EDI work and will therefore continue to work towards the standards and best practice of the Equality Charters to which it has signed up. It will also continue to invest in key strategic projects, assessing progress against targets and adjusting action plans for 2020-21.

With the recent submission of Kent's Silver Athena SWAN application in November 2020 and the exceptional work achieved by the Athena SWAN project team over the last few years to raise awareness around gender equality and improve practices across the University, Athena SWAN will be embedded into business as usual activities and supported by the new central EDI team once it is in place.

The University will continue with its membership with Stonewall Diversity Champion and focus on improving processes at Kent to support its staff and students in line with the new Workplace Equality Index criteria. The Disability Confident employer – level 2 accreditation will be renewed in July 2021 and a feasibility study will be completed into becoming a Disability Confident leader – level 3.

The OPERA team will continue to work with the PMO to adjust the Employee Journey Map according to the changes identified through the various restructures, and will audit touch points and related digital objects to ensure that they are compliant with the regulations and good inclusive practice. 2020-2021 KIPs continue to be a key feature of the EDI Considerations for Students during the next year; a paper will be created to help support academic divisions and professional service departments in the planning process, considering ongoing Covid-19 issues and its potential impact upon different student demographics.

Student Success work will continue to meet the 2025 targets; specific work on the Inspirations website will continue to be developed, with a new student intern recruited for the 2020-21 academic year. Many speaker events are being organised locally in academic schools and the new divisions, and continue to grow in popularity and attendance during Covid. Ring-fencing scholarships for BME students is also being explored.

In 2020-21, the University will become a member of Inclusive Employers and launch an Inclusive Allyship programme. As part of its preparation for the REC, it will also undertake the Inclusive Employers Foundation Assessment in order to audit inclusive practices within the University and inform future action plans, including the REC action plan.



2

OUR STAFF AND STUDENT PROFILE

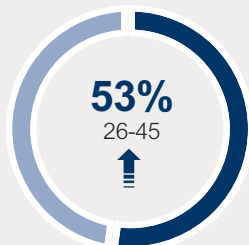
The content of this section introduces highlights and key demographics across all protected characteristics for staff and students across the University, providing comparisons from previous data and looking at how we compare against other universities, using benchmarking data from Advance HE³.



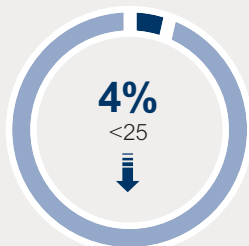
³ www.advance-he.ac.uk/knowledge-hub/equality-higher-education-statistical-report-2020
www.kent.gov.uk/about-the-council/information-and-data/facts-and-figures-about-Kent/area-profiles

Staff overview

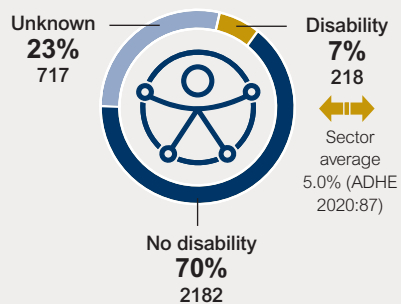
Age



Sector average 51.6% (ADHE 2020:50)



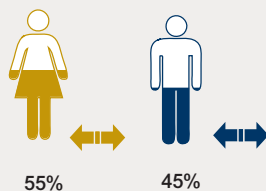
Disability



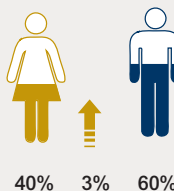
Gender

University composition

Matches sector average (ADHE 2020:201)

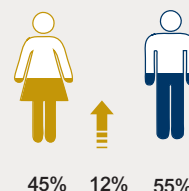


Managerial and professional

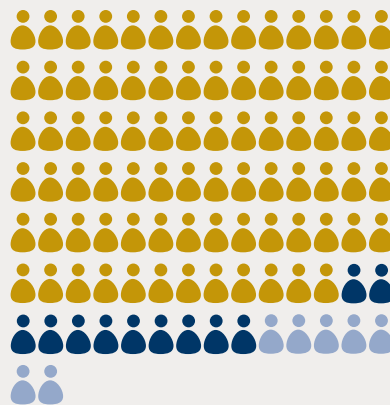


Professors

Female – sector average of 26% (ADHE 2020:201)

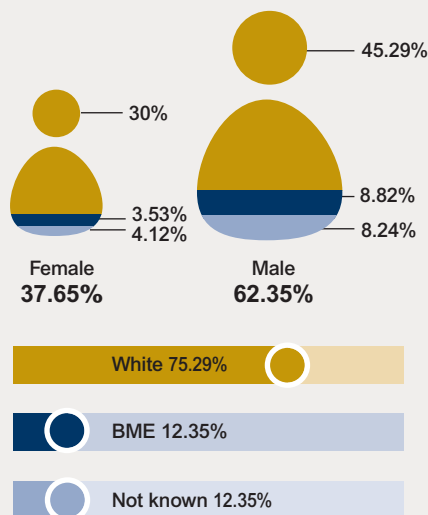


Ethnicity

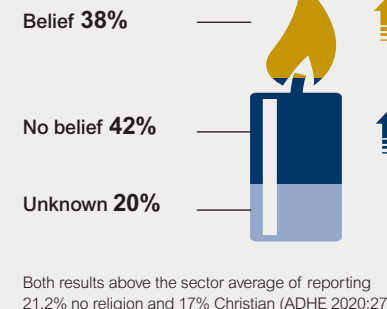


- White 82% (2543)
- BME 11% (355)
- Not known 7% (219)

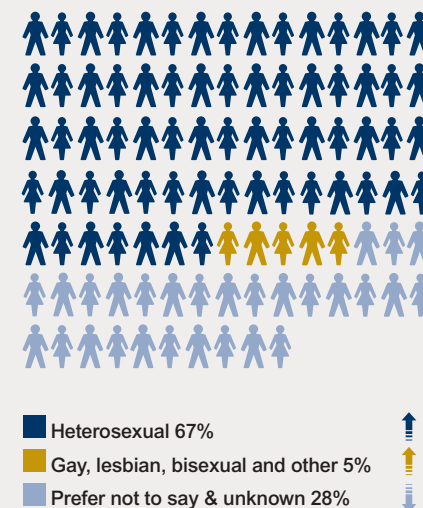
Professors by gender and ethnicity



Religion and belief

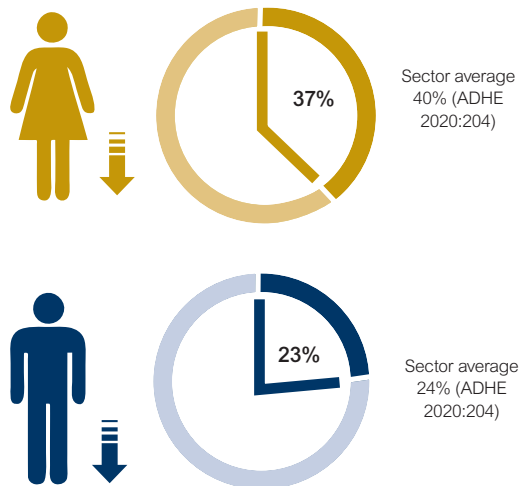


Sexual orientation

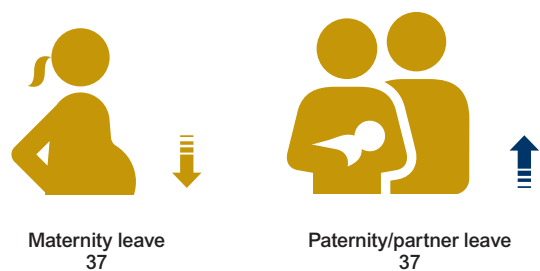


Staff other data

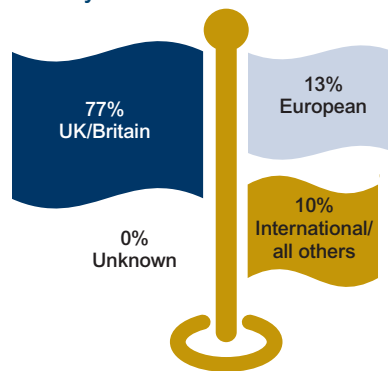
Gender – part-time working patterns across all staff



Maternity and pregnancy leave

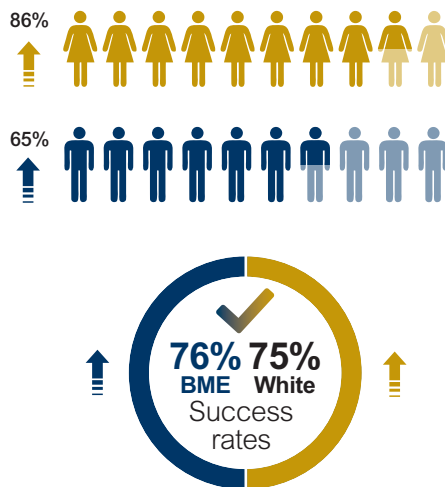


Nationality

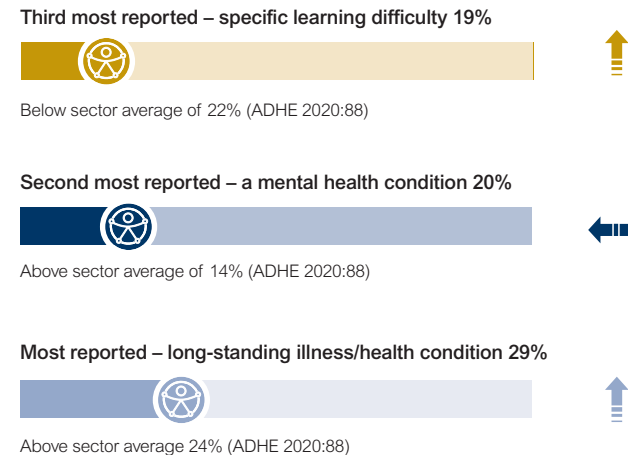


NB: this figure is for all staff at Kent

Promotion success rates



Disability impairments



OH referrals work-related mental health issues



Student overview

Age

Young < 21
77.67%



Mature > 21
22.33%

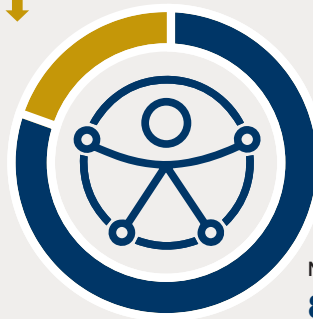


Gender



Disability

Disability
15.14%



No disability
83.20%

Religion and belief

Belief 49.31%

No belief 44.19%

Unknown 6.50%



Ethnicity

White
66.23%



BAME
31.97%



Sexual orientation

Heterosexual
82.68%



Prefer not to say & unknown
8.92%



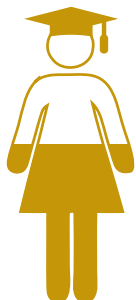
Gay, lesbian, bisexual and other
8.38%



Indicates an increase from 2018 to 2019
 Indicates a decrease from 2018 to 2019
 Indicates same as 2018 to 2019

Students other data

Gender – undergraduate

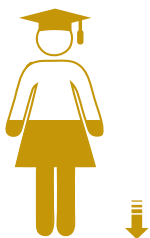


53.40%

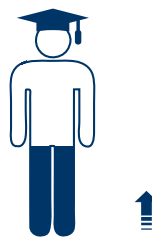


46.58%

Gender – postgraduate



56.15%



43.82%

Postgraduate Researcher (PGR)



50.24%



49.68%

Postgraduate Taught (PGT)

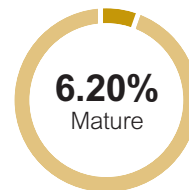
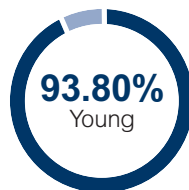


59.26%

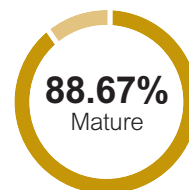
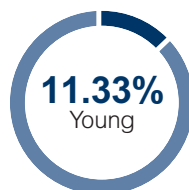


40.74%

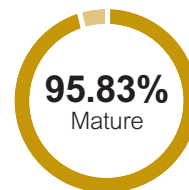
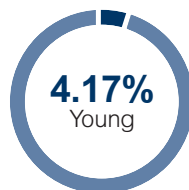
Age – undergraduate



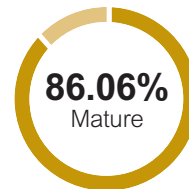
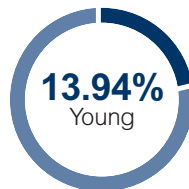
Age – postgraduate



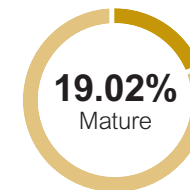
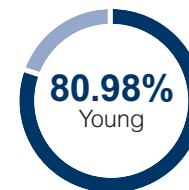
Postgraduate Researcher (PGR)



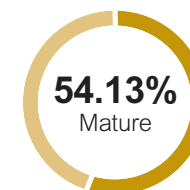
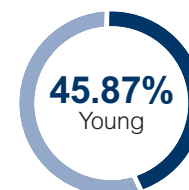
Postgraduate Taught (PGT)



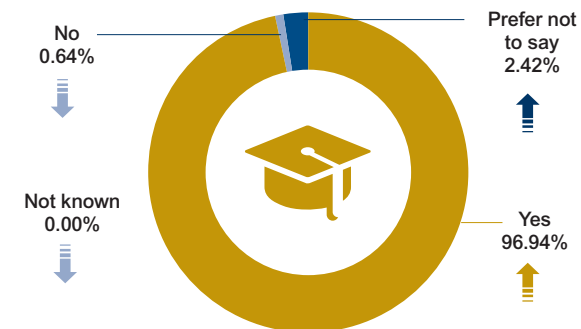
Age – full-time



Age – part-time



Gender – identity



Indicates an increase from 2018 to 2019
 Indicates a decrease from 2018 to 2019
 Indicates same as 2018 to 2019

3

LOOKING AHEAD – OUR CONTINUED COMMITMENT TO INCLUSIVITY

This section looks at the University's ambitions for EDI within the current context and identifies key priorities for action to continue to meet the current EDI strategic pillars, based on the review of the data and external factors impacting the strategic environment.



The University of Kent is proud of its commitment to equality, diversity and inclusivity and the progress that has already been made towards a more inclusive culture. This report is a testimony to the steady, gradual improvements already made over the years and to the hard work and efforts of individuals and teams to keep advancing our EDI agenda, even in the most challenging of circumstances. This year has been like no other but so has our response. Not only have we delivered on the majority of our strategic objectives but we have also provided extensive support to our staff and students during the pandemic and we have revised our priorities to respond to major shifts in the EDI landscape, such as the global focus on institutional racism, meanwhile concluding a review of our EDI structures to support future plans.

Using equality data to inform future plans

Analysing our equality data continues to provide invaluable insight into our staff and student profile and representation, as well as informing our strategies and plan.

This year, our work on gender equality reached its pinnacle with the submission of our Athena SWAN Silver application in November 2020. In 2020-21, we will continue on our journey by implementing our ambitious action plan, emboldened by our successes over the last few years. Our data shows an increase in women's representation in senior positions and at managerial level (eg 38% of our professors are women, which is above sector average), a reduced gender pay gap (14.3% from 17.9% last year⁴) and a better promotion success rate for female staff, all of which are attributable to the extensive work undertaken by the Athena SWAN team to embed gender equality across the organisation, along with the delivery of our gender pay gap action plan and the range of career development opportunities (eg Aurora and Insights programmes) offered to female staff at the University. In the coming year, the University will continue its work on promoting and providing greater opportunities for part-time working and flexible working arrangements, and will look at potential new working practices in light of the move to working from home as a result of the Covid-19 pandemic. Closing the gender pay gap also remains a key area of focus for Kent.

In 2020-21, we will also be looking to better understand and improve the student experience for mature students, especially as mature students at Kent are more likely to study on a part-time basis (54.13% PT compared to 10.02% FT) and require different forms of support. This work will be carried forward by the Part-time, Mature, Commuting and Students with Caring Responsibilities Working Group. Our data shows that Kent's mature student population is significantly lower than the national average, at 22.33% compared to 43.3% nationally. Early anecdotal evidence from these groups is demonstrating that they have particularly benefitted from the move to online and blended learning in 2019-20. It will be valuable to monitor student progress in terms of attainment and retention in light of the current remote teaching and learning environment.

The proportion of BME staff has remained stable (11%), above the local demographic (6.3%), and the proportion of BME professors has increased by 1.5% points compared to the previous year and is slightly higher than the sector average of 9.1% (ADHE 2020: 222). However, while promotion application rates from white and BME staff remain comparable, success rates continue to be higher for white staff than BME staff, with 65% and 50% respectively, compared to 74% and 62% success rates in 2018-19. This will continue to be monitored, and BME representation and attainment will remain an area of focus in 2021-22. Opportunities for mentoring and leadership development will also be explored to support BME colleagues with promotion applications and career progression.

Kent continues to have a higher proportion of BME students than the national average (31.97% compared to 24.29%). However, the proportion of BME students at a postgraduate level continues to be significantly below white numbers (40.96% compared to 9.04%). Work is actively taking place to provide focused opportunities for BME postgraduate scholarships in some targeted areas, but this work would benefit from a systematic, whole-University strategic approach. Nationally, this driver for increased opportunities for PG BME students is also gaining momentum, especially as a means of addressing the gap in BME academia at all career levels.

The University's commitment to the Race Equality Charter (REC) and the delivery of the 'Tackling Racism' strategy and plan will be instrumental in

⁴ www.kent.gov.uk/about-the-council/information-and-data/facts-and-figures-about-Kent

overcoming the barriers to race equality with greater opportunities for student and staff groups to debate and share their experiences. The results of the BAME staff network survey will also be analysed and fed into our action plan. The University will also produce ethnicity data as part of pay gap reporting activities.

Mental health will remain a key area of strategic focus in 2020-21. The launch of the Employee Assistance Programme was an important milestone in providing staff with access to timely support, but more needs to be done.

Mental ill health is still the second most reported disability after long-term illness from staff (19.7%) and, at this time, the effects of the Coronavirus pandemic are being felt worldwide; however, the crisis is not one that is being experienced equally by all. Existing structural and societal inequalities are being compounded, bias – conscious and unconscious – is appearing in times of stress, and some communities are being affected more than others, particularly the most vulnerable. Kent will continue to support staff and students through the pandemic. In addition, along with the implementation of the Thriving at Work standards, the University will be registering for the Student Minds Mental Health Charter in the 2020-21 academic year. Student Support and Wellbeing will be seeking to undertake the Diverse Cymru Certificate in BAME Mental Health and will take steps to recruit new BME Wellbeing Advisers in recognition of the additional support needed in relation to mental health faced by BME communities.

More work will be done to ensure that Kent systems and processes take into account the needs of our transgender students, particularly during the transition to online learning and teaching. Work around ensuring that preferred names are shown on learning and teaching platforms will be a priority focus for 2020-21 and moving forward.

As a Level 2 Disability Confident employer, Kent will continue to embed inclusive recruitment practices and ensure that the systems in place remove any bias, continuing to deliver the message on what it means to be a Disability Confident employer and ensuring that all processes are accessible. The exemplary work of the Kent Digital Accessibility Working Group (KDAWG) will continue to implement the new government regulations and support the institution in rolling out its phased action plan, particularly with the arduous task of transferring content to Site Editor.

2020-21 will see the launch of Kent's Religion and Profound Belief policy for staff. The move to online and blended learning and teaching should also result in greater academic flexibility for students observing religious practice, but the guidance for Ramadan and other religious events should be reviewed in 2020-21 in light of the change in the academic learning environment. The potential adoption of the IHRA definition of anti-Semitism will also be discussed and assessed.

Equality impact assessments will continue to be embedded into our processes to ensure that the needs and requirements of staff and students are taken into consideration prior to any change in policy or practices.

Developing an EDI strategy at Kent

In 2020-21, the implementation of the new EDI governance structure will support the University in improving representation and accountability for the setting of EDI priorities. The newly formed EDI Strategic Group met for the first time in February 2021 and will be working on developing an EDI strategy for Kent. More emphasis will be given to measuring impact, reinforcing mechanisms for collating EDI data to improve decision-making, and evaluating and benchmarking practices. An important first step will be the Inclusive Employer Foundation Assessment to identify areas for improvement.

Alongside the strategy, an EDI risk register will also be created to identify and mitigate potential risks to staff and students in respect of EDI matters, taking into consideration the staff and student demographics as well as the operating environment (ie Covid).

The strategic pillars as set out in the Strategic Delivery Plan presented in section 4 of this report will be reviewed by the EDI Strategic Group once a strategy has been agreed, to ensure that it is aligned and fit for purpose.

More information around events, success stories, strategies, action plans, etc can be found on the new University-wide [EDI website](#).

4

2020-21 STRATEGIC DELIVERY PLAN

This Strategic Delivery Plan sets out the University's equality objectives. These actions support the University's commitment to transforming the way in which all staff and students are supported. The action plan is a live plan that will be reviewed regularly to adjust and respond to the changing environment.



Strategic activities	Objective	Staff activity	Student activity
EDI review – from strong leadership and ownership to a framework for EDI in an ever-changing environment	Implement robust structures, processes and policies to ensure consistency of messages and actions	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> Implement central governance and structures with clear guidance on the role of each committee. Implement a central approach to equality impact analysis. Create a University EDI Risk Register. Plan to undertake the Equal Pay Audit (EPA) in 2021-22 while exploring intersectionality between gender and ethnicity pay gaps. Continue to support REF 2021 application. Review the role of the EG as EDI Champions, taking into account recent changes in roles and the expansion of EG. Creation of University-level externally facing EDI website combining staff and student information. 	
Lead the way in the development of an environment that is free from harassment	Understand the extent and nature of harassment against all characteristics so that a robust prevention strategy can be created	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> Understand the extent and nature of harassment against all characteristics. Develop a risk-based approach to all forms of harassment. Enhance reporting capabilities for harassment for staff. Develop a robust prevention strategy, eg Inclusive Allyship programme. Embed policies and practices into institutional culture. Communicate existing support. 	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> Establish a Racial Harassment Steering Group to monitor incidents of racism and harassment at Kent and provide recommendation for improvements. Increase knowledge of all forms of harassment and the support and reporting mechanisms in place for students. Promote and increase engagement of the updated 'Expect Respect' module.
Provide a supportive and inclusive culture conducive to good health and wellbeing for all staff and students	Gain a greater understanding of mental health amongst all of our staff and students so that we can identify and act on trends	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> Produce, implement and communicate the Thriving at Work strategy, which promotes good mental health of all employees and outlines the support available for those that need it. Develop mental health awareness among employees by making information, tools and support accessible. Encourage open conversations about mental health and the support available through the complete employee life-cycle. Provide employees with good working conditions and ensure that they have a healthy work-life balance. Promote effective people management to ensure that all employees have the opportunity for a regular conversation to discuss their health and wellbeing. Routinely monitor employee mental health and wellbeing, understanding the data available and taking action on risks. Increase transparency and accountability and provide visible leadership commitment. 	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> Understand the requirements to implementing the Student Mental Health Charter with a view to implementing it in 2021-22. Undertake the Diverse Cymru Certificate in BAME Mental Health to increase the mental health support provision for students from BAME backgrounds, with the process starting in spring 2021. Continue to consult and collaborate with students' unions and associations, and particularly with students with mental health difficulties, when formulating and implementing student mental health-related policies and procedures and identifying areas for improvement.

Continued overleaf

Strategic activities	Objective	Staff activity	Student activity
Identify and remove barriers in relation to all forms of accessibility	Increase the extent to which staff and students can participate in all areas of the University	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Increase the extent to which all members of the university can access and participate in all areas of the University. • Improve the physical environment of the campus so that all members of the University can take advantage of the facilities and services provided. • Improve the delivery of digital information to all members of the University in line with PSBAR 2018. 	
		<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Ensure fair recruitment, retention and development practices, in line with Disability Confident scheme. • Review approach to Unconscious Bias Training practices in light of changes to public sector thinking in this area. 	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Investigate technology support options for students to increase accessibility to online teaching and learning.
Continue to raise our profile as an employer and education provider through accreditation and investment in key strategic projects	Raise our ambitions for recognition in equality charters and projects, including our journey with Athena SWAN and the Race Equality Charter, and understand and benchmark our level of inclusion via external assessment	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Athena SWAN <ul style="list-style-type: none"> - Establish Athena SWAN in new organisational and EDI structures. - Increase the proportion of female STEMM researchers. - Support our researchers in developing an academic career at Kent. - Understand motivations of staff leaving or planning to leave. - Maintain efforts to provide sector-leading family-friendly offerings and support a culture where everyone feels comfortable to talk about their caring responsibilities. - Establish a new Talent Strategy to continue strengthening the career development support available to academics, professional services and technicians. - Embed EDI principles into everyday behaviours and work. • Participate in the Inclusion Matters partnership with Nottingham and Lincoln University. • Implement project team for the Race Equality Charter. • Review Stonewall WEI. • Complete Inclusive Employers Foundation Assessment. • Complete feasibility of Disability Confident level 3 and ensure the University remains at level 2. 	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Promote institutional projects to ensure student equality, diversity and inclusivity, eg Student Success and OPERA. • Work to support our mature student population, investigating the support required and available to these groups.
Understand and interrupt structural racism within the HE environment	Implement the Challenging Racism programme and action plan	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Improve understanding and knowledge across the organisation on racism. • Implement the Tackling Racism strategy and action plan. • Explore opportunities for mentoring as a tool to help break down any barriers. • Start to implement REC requirements. 	

Continued overleaf

Strategic activities	Objective	Staff activity	Student activity
Understand the EDI impact of Covid-19 on University processes and protected groups	processes to ensure that the impact of Covid-19 and long Covid has been considered	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> Identify policies for review, update and issue to the organisation. 	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> Understand and address the disproportionate impact of Covid-19 on particular cohorts of students.

*Only those characteristics where work is being undertaken outside of strategic projects are listed.

Protected characteristics	Objective	Activity
Sexual orientation	Promote a culture of inclusivity and reaffirm Kent's values – our diversity is based on equality, diversity and respect	Plan how to use the Lambeth Conference in 2022 as an opportunity to promote the University's values and ethos. Promote a programme of events to include spouses of people attending the Conference.
Sex		Review and develop women into leadership programmes.
Religion		Implement and issue recommendation on the Religion and Belief policy.
Gender reassignment		Review current guidance and seek feedback on the impact of the University guidance on transitioning at work. Update and issue guidance.

GLOSSARY



A**ACAS**

Advisory, Conciliation and Arbitration Service

APP

Access and Participation Plan

AS

Athena SWAN

B**BAME**

Black, Asian and minority ethnic

BME

Black and minority ethnic

C**CES**

Careers and Employability Service

D**DVC**

Deputy Vice-Chancellor

E**EAP**

Employee Assistance Programme

EDI

Equality, Diversity and Inclusivity

EG

The University's Executive Group

EHRC

Equality and Human Rights Commission

EIA

Equality impact analysis

EPA

Equal Pay Audit

H**HE**

Higher education

I**IHRA**

International Holocaust Remembrance Alliance

ISAT

Institutional self-assessment team

H**JSNCC**

Joint Staff Negotiating and Consultation
Committee

K**KDAWG**

Kent Digital Accessibility Working Group

KIPs

Kent Inclusive Practices

KPI

Key performance indicator

N**NUS**

National Union of Students

O**OD**

Organisational Development

OH

Occupational Health

OHD

One Hour Degree

OPERA

Opportunity, Productivity, Engagement,
Reducing Barriers, Achievement – project to
embed accessibility

P**PDRA**

Postdoctoral Research Associate

PG

Postgraduate

PGR

Postgraduate Researcher

PGT

Postgraduate Taught

PMCC

Part-time, mature, commuting and students with caring responsibilities

PMO

Project Management Office

PSBAR

Public Sector Bodies Accessibility Regulations

PSED

Public sector equality duty

R**REC**

Race Equality Charter

REF

Research Excellence Framework

S**SDS**

Student Data System

SECL

School of European Culture and Languages

STEM

Science, technology, engineering, and mathematics

STEMM

Science, technology, engineering, mathematics and medicine

T**T&F**

Task and Finish

U**UUK**

Universities UK

W**WP**

Work Placement

WREN

Women's Researcher Network

University of Kent
The Registry, Canterbury
Kent CT2 7NZ

www.kent.ac.uk

University of
Kent