

INTERNATIONAL  
PARTNERSHIPS STRATEGY  
2015-2020



# EXECUTIVE SUMMARY

International Partnerships play a pivotal role in positioning the University of Kent's international impact as it seeks to drive forward to meet its strategic aims and objectives.

The International Partnerships Directorate will support the University in realising its strategic objectives through enhancing and deepening international partnerships with institutions that share Kent's founding principles and values and are strategically advantageous for Kent's advancement.

This strategy builds upon previous institutional strategies where particular focus has been given to a more traditional view of International Partnerships which in the main encompassed student and staff mobility through Study Abroad/Erasmus and international credit-bearing articulations. In an effort to make a more strategic step change to meet the new and ambitious internationalisation targets, this strategy takes a broader definition of International Partnerships, together with a more analytical review of our current position, in order to demonstrate how these distinctions will enable this step change to take place over the life cycle of this strategy.

International partnership and network development is an activity that cuts across all sections of the university and needs to be sustainable and mutually beneficial in order to have lasting cross-border impact. This strategy will demonstrate, through its five objectives, the particular role the International Partnerships Directorate will play, in conjunction with other key stakeholders, in supporting the Institution to achieve its strategic ambitions.

Hannah McNorton  
Director of International Partnerships



# INSTITUTIONAL CONTEXT

*“By 2020, the University of Kent will have secured its position as a UK top 20 university and be a globally recognised research institution. We will build on our distinctive position as the UK’s European university to extend our reach and impact and become a beacon of excellence in education and research in our region, the UK and internationally. Our global reputation will be built on the application of our knowledge and expertise to find solutions to some of the world’s major challenges”*

Institutional Plan 2015-2020

## The three pillars of the Institutional Plan:

- 1 Research: The delivery of research of the highest quality, meeting international standards of excellence across the full range of our subjects
- 2 Education: The provision of an excellent education to our students, delivered by world-class researchers
- 3 Engagement: Strengthening our reputation for excellence, regionally, nationally and internationally, through effective engagement and communication with our communities and the wider world

## The strategic objectives of the Internationalisation Strategy 2015-2020:

- 1 Raise the profile and increase international esteem of the University of Kent and its research
- 2 Embrace, learn from and respond to cultural diversity and embed cross-institutional internationalisation
- 3 Champion and extend the University’s unique position as the UK’s European university
- 4 Further develop and enhance partnerships and networks in the wider international world
- 5 Continue to increase and support international student recruitment

# SECTOR CONTEXT; INTERNATIONAL PARTNERSHIPS

International Partnerships encompass a broad range of activities which directly support an institution's internationalisation strategy.

The sector, and indeed Kent, broadly defines International Partnership activity to include:

- Staff and student (study and work) mobility through inbound and outbound study abroad and/or Erasmus exchange arrangements
- Overseas delivery of an institution's programme/s through an Academic Centre
- Transnational Education (TNE) including: overseas campus (ie Liverpool Jiaotong in Suzhou, China or Nottingham Ningbo, China), collaborative provision (ie validation, franchise, articulation arrangements 2+2, 1+3), dual/joint awards
- Massive Open Online Courses (MOOCs) and other electronic forms of mass engagement
- Research projects
- Summer Schools
- Partnerships with business, as well as educational institutions (such as enterprise, innovation, training and knowledge transfer alliances)
- Bilateral institutional visits
- Academic and non-academic international networks
- International Training, Capacity Building and Funding Projects such as Erasmus+

However TNE and international partnerships are defined, and however an individual institution chooses to engage with TNE, that engagement needs to be sustainable and mutually beneficial in order to have lasting cross-border impact.

Experience shows that there are a number of challenges which could directly impact the sector during the different phases of International Partnership development and these, in turn, may directly impact on the realisation of this strategy. Such challenges include:

- Competition from within the UK HE sector, as well as from other countries including Australia, USA, Canada, France, Germany
- Competition from intraregional mobility (within ASEAN countries)
- Decreased appetite amongst UK students to take advantage of an international mobility opportunity (According to the UK Strategy for Outward Mobility 2013 the 'UK currently ranks sixth in terms of the overall number of outgoing students taking part in the Erasmus programme')
- International mobility/partnership funding mechanism fluctuations (ie European Commission and the Erasmus+ scheme)
- Frequent changes to UK immigration policy
- Navigating international Quality Assurance regulations

*“As the phenomenon of Internationalisation of higher education grows in complexity and scope, how do we and the institutions we represent understand partnerships? What do we need from these arrangements, and how do we achieve desired ends?”*

Laura Rumbley, EAIE Forum Summer 2015



# INTERNATIONAL PARTNERSHIPS OBJECTIVES

The objectives below have been identified to support the University of Kent in meeting its strategic goals. The links between the University Plan, the Internationalisation Strategy and our International Partnership objectives are summarised below:

Objectives	Corresponds to the University plan objectives	Corresponds to the Internationalisation Strategy objectives
A Undertake a critical review of existing partnerships and their impact on Kent's Internationalisation Strategy and global engagement	3	4b, 4c, 4d, 4f, 4k
B Increase the number of international partnerships with top ranking institutions worldwide, in a series of calendared, targeted regions	1, 2, 3	1b, 1c, 1j, 1n, 2f, 2m, 2n, 2o, 5d
C Cultivate major and multi-lateral strategic partnerships for cross-institutional engagement	1, 2, 3	2a, 2e, 2h, 2i, 3b, 3c, 3f, 4e, 4p, 4n, 5j
D Enhance engagement with international education and training funding organisations (eg Erasmus+) to increase the quality and success rate of consortia bid submissions	1, 2, 3	1f, 1m, 3k, 4q, 4m
E Establish new initiatives to increase student and staff participation in international mobility programmes	2, 3	1e, 1k, 2b, 2j, 2p, 2s, 2t, 3d, 3g, 3n, 4h, 4i, 4o, 5b, 5c



# INTERNATIONAL PARTNERSHIPS STRATEGY IMPLEMENTATION

## Strategic Aim 4a of the University of Kent's Internationalisation Strategy sets the requirement for the:

*“Development of a sub strategy for international partnerships in conjunction with Schools and Departments to include elements linked to different collaborative models and proactive means of extending school-to-school and cross-institutional engagement with partner institutions”*

### Internationalisation Strategy 2015-2020

In order to realise this strategic aim, a series of actions, leading from each of the above five objectives (A-E) have shaped this strategy and will be noted in the associated action plan. Aims noted in the action plan which have been taken directly from the Internationalisation Strategy will appear in *italics*.

Although the International Partnerships Strategy sits most immediately within the series of aims leading from Strategic Objective 4 of the Internationalisation Strategy, the aims from all five strategic objectives of the Internationalisation Strategy have been crossed referenced to address areas of overlapping significance and to link them more directly to the International Partnership aims and associated action plan.

KPIs noted in the aims below, and associated action plans, will be reviewed annually to enable us to judge and better monitor our progress more closely. During the Strategy's life cycle, a regular Strengths, Weaknesses, Opportunities and Threats (SWOT) team analysis will be conducted and appropriate modifications made.

Objective A will be met during year one of this strategy and then continued as part of an annual review of activity. During this first year of the plan, discussions will also take place between the Dean for Internationalisation and Directors of International Partnerships and International Recruitment with Academic Schools and Professional Service departments, in order to develop a more localised and focused international partnership strategy.

The remaining objectives will feature as a particular focus from year two onwards.

Through consultation with the Faculty Internationalisation Directors, Academic Schools and Professional Service departments, these objectives will be used to inform, and subsequently develop, department level international partnerships action plans informed by clear and accurate data.

In addition to the International Partnerships Strategy, a more operational work plan, which includes one-off projects, has been devised. This will be updated on an annual basis.

Factors for consideration as the action plan is implemented include:

- Impact of exchange rate fluctuations and cost of living variations on international mobility programmes
- Changes made to local (UK or international) government policy relating to compliance, immigration, European Referendum, Quality Assurance and likely impact on any international partnership activity
- Shifting institutional/School level priorities at both partner institutions and at Kent, including staff changes
- Consideration of the local cultural context when new International Partnerships are initially sought and the diverse approach, for example, partner institutions may take in supporting students with additional needs

In order to achieve the aims and actions leading from Objective B, a series of calendared, targeted regions have been identified to increase the number of international partnerships with top ranking institutions by 2020:

- Europe
- Asia Pacific
- South America
- North America
- Africa
- Middle East



The table below presents the countries within these target regions cross-referenced with the International Recruitment Strategy's redefined Tier Markets 2016\*. As this International Partnerships strategy is realised, continual reference and due consideration will be given to where a country or region is placed within the broader context of International Recruitment's tiered markets.

### Europe

Extend faculty-wide partnerships in the region. Increase interactions with European centres.

Belgium (Brussels)  
France (Paris)  
Turkey (Tier 1)

### Asia Pacific

Extend partnerships in:

Australia (Tier 4)  
China (Tier 1)  
Hong Kong (Tier 1)  
India (Tier 1)  
Indonesia (Tier 2)  
Japan (Tier 1)  
Malaysia (Tier 1)  
Singapore (Tier 2)  
South Korea (Tier 2)  
Taiwan (Tier 1)

Create new partnership in 2 other countries eg New Zealand (Tier 4), Sri Lanka (Tier 3), Thailand (Tier 1)

### South America

Extend partnerships in the following:  
Brazil (Tier 2)

Create new partnerships in one other country eg Chile (Tier 3), Colombia (Tier 3), Ecuador (Tier 4), Mexico (Tier 2), Peru (Tier 3), Uruguay (Tier 4)

### Africa

Establish 1 new partnership in each of the following:

East Africa eg Kenya (Tier 2), Uganda (Tier 2)  
West Africa eg Nigeria (Tier 1), Ghana (Tier 2)  
South Africa (Tier 3)

### Middle East

Establish new partnership in one of the following:

Bahrain (Tier 2)  
Oman (Tier 2)  
Saudi Arabia (Tier 3)  
UAE (Tier 2)

### North America

Identify 1 or 2 multi-lateral partners for deeper strategic alliance in each of the following:

Canada (Tier 1)  
USA (Tier 1)

### Key:

Tier 1 Priority Recruitment Markets  
Tier 2 Established Recruitment Markets  
Tier 3 Emerging Recruitment Markets  
Tier 4 Monitored Recruitment Markets



\* Tier Markets are reviewed by International Recruitment (IR) on an annual basis

## INTERNATIONAL PARTNERSHIPS STRATEGY IMPLEMENTATION (CONT)

### References

British Council (2013) Erasmus: Facts and Figures at a Glance. *UK Strategy for Outward Mobility*, UK HE International Unit

Rumbley, L (2015) *European Association for International Education EAIE Forum member magazine* pp. 4

### Internal additional resources

Institutional Plan:  
[www.kent.ac.uk/about/plan](http://www.kent.ac.uk/about/plan)

Internationalisation Strategy:  
[www.kent.ac.uk/global/int-strategy.html](http://www.kent.ac.uk/global/int-strategy.html)

International Partnerships:  
[www.kent.ac.uk/global/partnerships](http://www.kent.ac.uk/global/partnerships)  
[www.kent.ac.uk/goabroad](http://www.kent.ac.uk/goabroad)

Talking Cultures and intercultural communications:  

- Internationalisation Strategy SharePoint site under 'Intercultural Comms Library'
- [www.kent.ac.uk/talkingcultures](http://www.kent.ac.uk/talkingcultures)

### External additional resources

International Unit's Go International:  
[www.go.international.ac.uk](http://www.go.international.ac.uk)

British Council: [www.britishcouncil.org](http://www.britishcouncil.org)







# APPENDIX: WORLD MAP OF KENT'S INTERNATIONAL PARTNERS

(As of August 2016)

Kent has 388 links\* with institutions from around the world

## North America

33 partners:

- 27 x Student Exchange Agreements
- 3 x Incoming Study Abroad arrangements
- 5 x Memorandum of Understanding
- 1 x Dual Award (M Level)

## South America

9 partners:

- 5 x Student Exchange Agreements
- 4 x Memorandum of Understanding

\*Explore our links with institutions around the world at [www.kent.ac.uk/internationalmaps](http://www.kent.ac.uk/internationalmaps)

A world map with three regions highlighted in light blue: Europe, Asia Pacific, and Africa. Each highlighted region has a corresponding dark blue text box containing information about international partnerships.

### Europe

169 partners:

- 124 x Student Exchange Agreements
- 7 x Erasmus Staff Only exchange agreements
- 6 x Memorandum of Understanding
- 2 x Erasmus Mundus Joint Doctorates
- 29 x Dual Awards (1 x UG Level; 7 x M level; 21 x PhD)

### Networks, Research & Enterprise Activity

The University of Kent is a member of the S Group European Universities Network and Erasmus Mundus Action II Lotus Mobility Network. Aside from agreements with partner universities, Kent has a further 123 links across the world through networks, research and enterprise activity.'

### Asia Pacific

53 partners:

- 23 x Student Exchange Agreements
- 6 x Incoming Study Abroad Agreements
- 8 x Articulation arrangements
- 24 x Memorandum of Understanding
- 1 x Dual Award (M Level)

### Africa

1 x Student Exchange Agreement

# FURTHER INFORMATION

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