Welcome to the first RIS Newsletter of the New Year!

You will of course have always known us as Research Services and Kent Exchange and Innovation but a new year brings with it a newly integrated Research and Innovation Services (RIS) directorate uniting Research Services with Innovation to ensure that guidance, expert advice and comprehensive support is delivered throughout research and innovation collaborations.

Message from Deputy Vice-Chancellor
Professor Shane Weller
First and foremost, I would like to wish all RIS staff members a very happy New Year. I am acutely aware of the challenges that you have all had to face on account of the simultaneous impact of the pandemic and the O4S restructure.

I have been enormously impressed by how well you have coped with the consequent pressures and, for many of you, the increased workload. I am also aware that the current pressures are not sustainable in the long term, and that it will be essential to reduce those pressures as soon as possible.

I very much look forward to working with you in 2021, a year in which, while we will certainly face challenges as a result of the pandemic, I believe that RIS, working closely with the Divisional R&I teams, will be able to make a very significant contribution to the University's success. Read more.
REF 2021 Update

REF Manager Betty Woessner

The REF is now on the immediate horizon and we are on track to make our submission on the 31st of March 2021. The deadline has been extended from the original November date to take into account the effects of Covid-19 and this has been very helpful in our preparations.

We have also been running several staff surveys throughout this period, recognizing the serious disruption caused by the pandemic, to ensure that we take into account the huge effects this has had on staff involved in and supporting research. We are continuing to work on our REF submission and do not want to lose momentum, but are also conscious of the many time constraints that exist at this time – getting to grips with remote teaching, demanding caring responsibilities etc.

The Knowledge Exchange Framework (KEF)

Currently, we are awaiting the outcome of the KEF Narrative Submissions. This was submitted mid October 2020, and is due by the end of February. In the meantime, a retrospective review (i.e. lessons learned exercise) is being undertaken of the narrative data collation and writing process. We hope this enables us to consider improvements ready for the next submission. It is believed that this will be an annual process.

In addition, we have reached out to colleagues at other universities within our KEF Cluster (X) to see if those working with the KEF at an operational level would like to take part in a KEF Professional Network. We hope to launch the KEF Professional Network soon, as we anticipate this being an opportunity to discuss processes, share best practice and tackle challenges faced, related to KEF. Interest in the group is currently being evaluated, with a hope to host our first meeting around Easter time.

RESEARCH AND INNOVATION UPDATES
GCRF Impact & Partnership Opportunities for Researchers

The Research and Excellence team, in collaboration with KMTV, are running a campaign to encourage researchers to develop virtual research communities. The team are currently accepting project funding applications. This funding opportunity connects research and innovation with the developing world by working with communities across the globe to help with issues such as health, environment, and social changes. For more information, please visit our website.

Update

As many of you may be aware the Government announced in the Spending Review that the UK’s ODA budget is going to be reduced from 0.7% to 0.5% of GDP; this may have an impact on the future of the Global Challenges Research Fund (GCRF) and Newton Fund. UKRI are currently awaiting the outcome from a short cross government review; until this has happened, they will be unable to give any firm guidance on what the impact will be on these Funds. Read more.

Horizon Europe
As part of the UK Government’s recent announcement confirming the EU/UK ‘trade and cooperation agreement’, the UK will associate to the EU’s €95.5 billion seven year Horizon Europe research and innovation programme. This was formally launched on 2nd February 2021.

Association will give UK scientists, researchers and businesses access to funding under the programme on equivalent terms as organisations in EU countries. The next step is for both sides to formally adopt the full text of the agreement taking into account the finalised EU Programme Regulations.

Once finalised, the UK’s associated status will provide Kent researchers with full access to participate, lead and receive funding from the Horizon Europe programme, as they have under Horizon 2020 and the previous EU research and innovation funding programmes.

The strategic planning around the implementation of Horizon Europe is still ongoing; the preliminary structure is illustrated below.
Knowledge Exchange and Innovation (KEI) have recently launched a Recovery Innovation Fund (RIFund) as a direct result of the COVID-19 pandemic. Purposefully, this fund aims to support businesses to innovate and grow, by facilitating knowledge exchange via academic collaborations.

Our RIFund can provide your small or medium-sized business (including 3rd sector) with up to £7.5k to engage with Kent’s expertise, with the opportunity to foster a long-term partnership. Read more.

A COVID-19 Business Recovery Webinar series will be made available in the upcoming weeks. If interested, please click on link to apply online.

ACTIVE KENT PROJECTS
Coronavirus - Kent in Action

Dr Mark Wass and Professor Martin Michaelis from the School of Biosciences explain how they are researching the impact of #Covid19.

Digital Creative Internship with Visit Kent

Visit Kent hosted an innovation internship; this was made possible through the University of Kent’s Employability Points Scheme and EIRA funding. Read more.
Think 'Kent' Discovers

Following the successful release of the first Think 'Kent' Discover film series in the summer of 2020; the Research Excellence Team has been working tirelessly with KMTV to produce the next research impact films. You can watch the Think ‘Kent’ Discover series on our YouTube page.

Open Access Webpages

Wellcome has a new Open Access policy. To find out more and discover how to comply with the requirements, please see our dedicated blog page.

International Thinking and Global Energy Project

A new project from the Division of Natural Sciences, titled Energy Futures, Diverse, Dynamic, Demand-Driven, Environmentally Founded (EF 3D EF), sets out to fully acknowledge the climate and ecological crisis facing the planet. UoK is determined to harness the unique strengths we can offer as a university in tackling this crisis, bringing together combined expertise across our education, research and wider functions. Read the full brochure online.
Website Development
To capture our unity, RIS landing page has been developed from which you can navigate to the KEI, RPS and RIS Ops sites.

The RIS Ops site and RPS sites are coming live soon. In the meantime, why not take a look at the new KEI website to gain a complete view as to the breadth of our collaboration pathways available?

Meditation with Jasmine

Whether you are a pro or a novice, just 10 minutes of stillness during a busy day really makes a difference. You can join this fortnightly meditation via Microsoft Teams.

We want to hear from you!

The RIS team is continually working on adapting the service to improve support. If you would like to:

- Share or recommend a success story.
- Provide feedback on the content of the newsletter.

Please contact us on risactive@kent.ac.uk.

Social Media

Research Services
Joke of the Month

Q. Did you hear about the explosion in the cheese factory?
A. There was de-brie everywhere