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University of  
**Kent**

# DIRECTOR OF BUSINESS DEVELOPMENT, RESEARCH & INNOVATION

Candidate brief – April 2025



# Message from Interim Chief Operating Officer John Duffy

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**We are delighted that you have expressed an interest in the post of Director of Business Development, Research & Innovation at the University of Kent.**

The University is transforming the way we manage our research and innovation to deliver the University's Research & Innovation Strategy and create a coherent cross institutional business development strategy.

We will appoint a Director who will provide leadership to unlock new research, knowledge partnerships and innovation potential within the University, and to build constructive and mutually beneficial relationships to realise the potential of the University.

Working collaboratively with our academic community, the Director will establish a new business development function, joining innovation, employability, and apprenticeships to support engagement with business and partners. They will lead and develop a team of business development professionals supporting academics to collaborate with industry and other partners, to deliver a wide range of knowledge exchange activities and create a Business-to-Business strategy, identifying key strategic partners for growth. Their staff will manage our existing portfolio of research grants and contracts, support bids for new grants and contracts, and manage our participation in sector evaluations such as the REF and KEF.

This is a great opportunity to bring your business development experience and expertise to transform major elements of the work of our University.



John Duffy  
Interim Chief Operating Officer



# The University of Kent

*The University of Kent is moving forward, working to deliver our ambitious Kent 2030 strategy. We are building on our world-class teaching and research reputation to become a leading civic university, supported by progressive courses that place us at the heart of public and intellectual life.*

We are a university embedded in our community at a regional, national and global level. We build relationships, connections and partnerships, bringing the University's skills and expertise to make a difference in the world.

We strive to be a community that empowers students from a wide range of backgrounds to find and shape their place in the world, where academics are free to explore and deepen our understanding of it.

Canterbury, our historic base, has been a hub of learning for centuries, while our Medway campus is at the heart of its region's cultural aspirations. We are proudly international in outlook with our Kent International College supporting international recruitment and partnerships with more than 300 universities worldwide.

We are determined to build on this to meet local, national and international needs. The Kent and Medway Medical School will bring vital skills to the region, while a growing Institute for Cultural and Creative Industries will support the fastest growing sector of the UK economy.

Our students are diverse, passionate and independent. They are thoughtful leaders, volunteers and co-creators. They decolonise curricula and help shape their communities.

Our highly rated, inspirational teachers, work with award-winning staff to ensure everyone reaches their potential. We actively seek new ways to open up education, from online learning to apprenticeships, to support personal and community development as well as business growth.

We are home to some of the world's most influential thinkers, with recent biology research named among the UK's best breakthroughs of the last century. We are establishing an internationally renowned knowledge base in key areas including cyber security and digital accessibility.

By 2030, the combined talents of our students and staff will ensure we are known for our transformative student experience, groundbreaking discoveries and the significant role we play in wider society.



# The context

*As we work towards delivering our Kent 2030 strategy, we continue to put our students at the heart of all we do: offering courses that inspire and meet employer needs; providing facilities that add another dimension to their studies and a window into future career options; creating an environment where students are supported and challenged by academics at the top of their field.*

The Director of Business Development, Research & Innovation will provide leadership and strategic direction to unlock research, knowledge partnerships and Innovation within the University.

Working collaboratively with academic community to deliver the University's Research & Innovation strategy, the Director will establish a new business development function, joining Innovation, employability and apprenticeships to support engagement with business and partners.

The role will lead and develop a team of business development professionals supporting academics to collaborate with industry and other partners, to deliver a wide range of knowledge exchange activities. These include industrially funded research programmes and studentships, contract research, consultancy, Kent's portfolio of KTPs, co-ordination of large-scale project applications, business partnership aspects of Degree Apprenticeships and other related activities. They will create a Business-to-Business strategy, identifying key strategic partners for growth.

Complex changes in economic, social, governmental, legal and technological environments necessitate that the Director has a breadth of knowledge and ability to forecast and develop agendas that meet the needs of the University in terms of increasing impact and income in these areas (for example, identifying new funding sources, spin-offs and licensing opportunities). The role requires both a short term and long-term horizon.

The role operates with a high degree of independence and has substantial authority to make decisions and will be required to use judgement and extensive experience to resolve complex situations and issues, taking a view of risks and odds within a changing landscape, guiding others and enabling them to create appropriate and relevant policy.





# The role

*The Director will provide professional leadership to the University's research, innovation and business development agenda to increase impact and income.*

The Director will manage a large department, bringing together a number of teams.

## Key accountabilities

- Provide professional leadership of the University's research, innovation and business development agenda, including working closely with the Executive Group on the development of the University's Research & Innovation strategy and plan.
  - Provide high level strategic advice and guidance to the wider University for all issues relating to research, innovation and business development policy and performance, and on opportunities to grow international visibility, partnerships and funding.
  - Act as an advisor to the Executive Group in the development of strategy and lead in the development of policies, frameworks and processes to: build strength in business provision and partnerships for Kent; create a leading research and innovation environment; provide support for staff in raising the profile of their ideas, knowledge generation and exchange; maximise income and; identify potential commercialisation and licensing opportunities from University research and innovation, to meet the University's objectives whilst ensuring audit and regulatory compliance.
  - Lead the creation of a business strategy with the aim of achieving a step change in the University's engagement with external partners to help increase impact, income and influence across the region and more global, including commercially and the business community.
  - Lead the work of business development across the University's campuses, ensuring there is a pipeline for developing new partnerships that are in line with the mission, vision and purpose.
  - Maintain awareness of any new developments in the academic field and represent the University at national level through membership of relevant bodies, to ensure that the University adapts to any new requirements or demands, to support and enhance research and innovation objectives, and to monitor the quality and impact of our research and innovation, business and commercialisation activity.
- Develop external partnerships to gain support for the University's objectives and for research, innovation and business development, acting as the University's lead representative as required in external partnerships with international, national and regional bodies, and leading negotiations on the University position in relation to investment or exit opportunities, where these add value and contribute to those objectives.
  - Lead on the planning and management of resources for the directorate and the management of people and appropriate budgets, to ensure that agreed policies are implemented, relevant training delivered, and targets met.
  - Oversee the management of the University's participation in sector-wide evaluations such as REF and KEF, and oversee research governance and compliance.
  - Work in partnership with other professional services Directors to support delivery of high quality, seamless services with an emphasis on continuous improvement.
  - Lead, motivate and develop relevant staff, providing clear objectives and managing performance against these, to ensure that staff are appropriately motivated and trained to carry out their responsibilities to the required standards. Support the creation of a culture that is highly performance and contribution focused, built on a foundation of equality, diversity, belonging and inclusivity and that inspires people to bring their best every day.

### Salary

Attractive salary based on Senior Professional Services scale

### Contract

Full-time and ongoing

### Location

Canterbury campus; with work at other campuses including Medway

### Responsible to

Chief Operating Officer

### Responsible for

Research, Innovation; and Business Development

# Person specification

*With a successful record of leading and winning major funding bids and enterprise, the Director of Business Development, Research & Innovation will bring knowledge of the UK innovation landscape with excellent and effective negotiation, influencing and communication skills.*

You will be able to demonstrate the following skills, experience, abilities and personal interests:

The person specification details the necessary skills, qualifications, experience or other attributes needed to carry out the job. Applications will be measured against the criteria published below.

Selection panels will be looking for clear evidence and examples in an application, CV and/or cover letter, which back-up any assertions made in relation to each criterion.

## Essential

- Proven track record of Business-to-Business leadership and growth with substantial business development experience within a HE or research organisation setting (A, I)
- Degree in a relevant field or equivalent qualification (A)
- A successful record of leading and winning major funding bids and enterprise (A, I)
- Demonstrable experience of the principles of research services and/or innovation (A, I)
- Knowledge of the UK innovation landscape, policy framework, key players and funding streams that align with the university's research and innovation capabilities (I)
- Excellent and effective negotiation, influencing and communication skills and the ability to produce clear and concise written materials and presentations (I)
- Ability to effectively navigate continuous change and uncertainty by challenging status quo to drive continuous improvement, balancing long-term goals and tactical execution, and acting decisively in the face of incomplete information and limited resources. (I)
- Values collaboration, breaks down siloes, and promotes cross synergies, shared decision-making and co-consultation/engagement with diverse stakeholders and team members, to achieve Directorate and University goals collectively (I)
- Leads with empathy and emotional intelligence especially in the face of uncertainty and ambiguity, nurtures an open, trusting team environment and drives team and individual performance through coaching and co-development (I)
- Firm commitment to achieving the University's vision and values, with a passion for continuous improvement (I)
- Commitment to deliver and promote equality, diversity and inclusivity in the day to day work of the role (I)

## Desirable

- The ability to think and act strategically, working both consultatively and at pace (I)
- Strong financial acumen with experience managing budgets and resource allocation (I)
- Cognisant of the challenges and strategic issues facing higher education (I)
- Experience of contributing to the drafting and negotiation of contracts (A)

Assessment stage: A = Application/CV/Letter; I, T = Interview/presentation/test (after shortlisting stage)

# Additional information

**Annual leave:** The annual leave entitlement for full-time staff on this grade is 30 working days and 8 public and other holidays. There are also 5 additional days, which are taken between Christmas and New Year when the University closes.

**Pension:** You will be automatically enrolled to become a member of USS (Universities Superannuation Scheme).

**Location:** The primary location is at the University's Canterbury campus with regular working at our Medway campus, although the post-holder may be required to work from time to time at other campuses and centres, both nationally and internationally.

**Relocation:** You will be required to live near enough to Canterbury to perform the duties of the post fully. The University offers assistance with relocation expenses for those who have to move to the vicinity.

**UK Visa & Immigration:** You will be required to meet the current UK Visa and Immigration requirements for this position. Further information on Certificate of Sponsorship requirements can be found at [www.bia.homeoffice.gov.uk](http://www.bia.homeoffice.gov.uk)

**Equality, Diversity & Inclusivity:** We are proud to be a Disability Confident employer, supporting and promoting disabled people in the workplace. We welcome applications from disabled people and we will:

- ensure our recruitment and selection process is inclusive and accessible

- communicate our vacancies through a range of different channels
- offer an interview to applicants with a disability who meet the minimum essential requirements of the role as detailed within the person specification (Guaranteed Interview Scheme)
- anticipate and provide reasonable adjustment as and when required
- provide support to any existing employee who acquires a disability or long-term health condition.

All University staff are expected to be aware of, comply with, and support the University's policies with regards to ensuring and promoting equality, diversity and inclusivity. Relevant training and development should be undertaken, as required. Further information about EDI is available from the University's website at: [kent.ac.uk/hr-equalityanddiversity/](http://kent.ac.uk/hr-equalityanddiversity/)

**Childcare:** The Oaks Nursery based at the Canterbury campus is an excellent benefit for staff and a great asset to the University.

Places are offered on a first come first served basis and baby places are particularly limited so staff may wish to make contact as soon as their pregnancy is confirmed.

**Healthcare Plan:** A corporate employee-funded healthcare plan partnered with Benenden Health is open to all staff.



# The city of Canterbury

*The University's main campus is in Canterbury; a vibrant, exciting and well-connected city with a world-famous cathedral. One of medieval Europe's great places of pilgrimage and knowledge, it has a distinctly cosmopolitan feel thanks to its international visitors and the students and staff from its three universities. Less than an hour from London, it takes little more than that to visit France.*

People come to Canterbury from across the globe for its world-class heritage, for culture and festivals.

The city and its immediate area have an increasingly rich cultural offer. Turner Contemporary, the nationally-acclaimed art gallery, is within easy reach. The Marlowe Theatre is one of the country's leading regional theatres complemented by the rich offering of the Gulbenkian Arts Centre with its cinema, theatre and a powerful youth programme. The Curzon Canterbury showcases independent films from around the world and the Sidney Cooper Gallery is a contemporary arts space in the heart of the city. The nearby Beaney House of Art and Knowledge is an art museum and library.

Canterbury Festival, the Whitstable Biennale and the Folkestone Triennial are just some of the regular events taking place in the region.

Kent is often described as the Garden of England and you will find local produce in cafés, pubs and restaurants: Romney Marsh lamb, cherries, ale from local hops and award-winning wine from Kentish vineyards.

Canterbury is surrounded by some of the country's most attractive landscapes. To the north of the city is one of England's largest ancient woodlands, the Blean, and a few miles away there is the seaside town of Whitstable. Dover Cliffs offer one of the most iconic views in the country.





# APPLICATION PROCESS

Applications are to be submitted via the University's online recruitment system: <https://jobs.kent.ac.uk/vacancies.aspx>

You will be required to complete and submit the application form and upload a CV detailing career and achievements and a cover letter of no more than two pages that addresses your motivation and suitability for the role.

## Deadline

The closing date for applications is 11 May 2025.

Interviews are expected to be held late May early June.

If you need this document in another format to meet accessibility needs, please request this by email to: [E.L.Milton@kent.ac.uk](mailto:E.L.Milton@kent.ac.uk)

University of Kent, Canterbury, Kent CT2 7NZ

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