

WE STAND FOR AMBITION.

University of
Kent

PRO-VICE CHANCELLOR

RESEARCH, INNOVATION & INTERNATIONAL

Candidate brief – November 2025



Message from the Acting Vice-Chancellor and President



We are delighted that you are considering the role of Pro-Vice Chancellor for Research, Innovation & International (PVC RI&I) at the University of Kent.

This is a pivotal leadership position at a time of great opportunity for Kent. We are seeking an outstanding and visionary individual to join our executive team and help shape the future of higher education. As PVC RI&I, you will lead our research and innovation strategy, foster a culture of creativity and enterprise, and strengthen our national and international partnerships and collaborations to enhance Kent's profile and reputation.

Now in our 60th anniversary year, we are proud to celebrate our achievements and reaffirm our foundational values: inclusion, academic freedom, and making a positive difference to our communities. We are deepening our civic contribution and supporting knowledge creation and skills development in a rapidly changing world.

Our **Kent 2030 strategy** places students at the heart of everything we do. A thriving research and innovation environment, rooted in a global community of partners and scholars, ensures our students learn from world-leading academics whose teaching is informed by cutting-edge research, innovation, and contemporary debate. Our graduates leave Kent as engaged citizens, ready to make a positive impact.

We are looking for a dynamic and inspiring leader who champions collaboration, impact, and the transformative role of universities in addressing regional, national, and global challenges. You will work to enhance our distinctive strengths, specialisms and our contributions to economic, social, and cultural growth and enrichment.

If this sounds like you, we warmly invite you to apply for what promises to be a stimulating, challenging, and professionally fulfilling role.

Professor Georgina Randsley de Moura



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, to make a positive difference in the world.

We are 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 meet regional, national and international needs. The Kent and Medway Medical School brings 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 thought 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.

As part of our ongoing commitment to ensure the University remains agile, responsive, and aligned with its strategic goals, the structure of the University Executive Group has recently been reviewed. This review has led to the creation of a new senior leadership role: Pro Vice-Chancellor for Research, Innovation & Impact (PVC RI&I).

Our Executive Group, on which this role will serve, plays a pivotal role in providing strategic leadership, supporting the Vice Chancellor and President in delivering the University's mission and strategy.

Reporting to the Deputy Vice Chancellor & Provost, the PVC RI&I will work in close collaboration with executive colleagues, Directors of Professional Services and Heads of School to align academic and operational priorities. The role holder will work through influence and partnership, as part of a collaborative approach.

The PVC RI&I will develop and implement initiatives to enhance research excellence, foster innovation, and expand the University's global engagement. The role includes leading the University's research agenda, supporting schools to create and grow opportunities for innovation, and building national and international partnerships to strengthen the University's global profile, reputation, and impact. The role holder will drive knowledge exchange, start-ups and spinouts.

Using extensive experience and judgement, the PVC RI&I will navigate and resolve complex challenges, interpreting the evolving internal and external landscape to shape relevant, forward-looking policy and institutional direction.

Representing the University with key stakeholders locally, nationally, and internationally this is a highly visible role requiring effective leadership, diplomacy, and adaptability.





The role

Supporting the creation of a culture of continuous improvement that is highly performance and contribution focused, the PVC RI&I provides strategic leadership to the University's research and innovation agenda, international policy and activities, focusing on enhancing innovation, global reputation. The role serves as a key ambassador for the University, representing Kent across international networks and strategic forum, building mutually beneficial relationships with external stakeholders to create new opportunities including commercialization of research.

The role holder may also provide leadership and line management for academic schools to support their delivery of the overall academic strategy.

Key accountabilities

- Provide strategic leadership for research and innovation, to expand income and success across the University, support major projects, and foster a culture and environment where academic careers can thrive.
 - Drive growth in research and innovation funding, diversify income streams, and improve cost recovery.
 - Drive knowledge exchange, start-ups and spin-outs.
 - Identify key areas for investment that showcase the University's strengths, achieve global impact, and strengthen Kent's research and innovation profile and reputation.
 - Collaborate with the Director of Business Development, Research & Innovation and the Director of Planning, Insights and Improvement to cultivate an environment where research and innovation income grows, and to deliver success in REF/KEF/HEIF outcomes.
 - Sponsor the University's global engagement strategy, in partnership with the Director of External Engagement, prioritising international reputation to support income generation, fostering international partnerships, and engaging academic staff with the University's global engagement and international reach.
 - Champion academic freedom and freedom of expression to ensure advancement of knowledge creation and exchange.
- Provide strategic and academic leadership, direction and support to academic schools developing and building effective strategies that are aligned with the University strategy, including supporting effective planning, budgetary and staffing controls, and maximising performance to all KPIs.
 - Support the creation of a culture of continuous improvement 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.
 - Chair the REF Steering Group to advance the University's position in national research assessments.
 - Deputise for the Deputy Vice Chancellor & Provost and Vice Chancellor as required.

Salary

Competitive salary

Contract

0.7 – 1 FTE negotiable and fixed term for five years, with possibility of substantive academic appointment

Location

Canterbury campus; with work at other campuses including Medway

Responsible to

Deputy Vice Chancellor & Provost

Responsible for

Strategic development of the University's research, innovation, and global engagement activities
Some line management of Heads of School

Person specification

Politically and commercially astute, you will have a proven track record in developing and implementing strategy, underpinned by the ability to think and plan with clarity and foresight.

The role demands excellent and effective communication, negotiation, and influencing skills along with experience in a professorial role.

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

Essential

- Academic and/or professional qualifications and relevant experience which reflects the senior nature of the appointment (A)
- Experience in an academic professorial and leadership role(s), with a strong academic track record and international research and/or innovation reputation and a record of external grant and innovation income capture (A, I)
- Strong record of external engagement and recognition, including with industry (A, I)
- Knowledge and experience of research assessment exercises (A,I)
- Skilled in engagement with regional/national/international funding bodies and commercial organisations (A,I)
- Evidence of integrating international strategy to improve global reputation (A, I)
- Financially and commercially astute with substantial experience of budget and people management (A,I)
- A successful record in developing effective partnerships to support research and knowledge exchange (A,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
- Values collaboration, breaks down siloes, and promotes cross synergies, shared decision-making and engagement with diverse stakeholders and team members, to achieve portfolio and University goals collectively (I)
- Demonstrable ability to deliver strategic priorities in line with wider University strategy (I)
- Cognisant of the challenges and strategic issues facing higher education (I)
- Ability to relate to, engage with, and command the confidence of senior colleagues in international, national and regional organisations (I)
- Experience of building partnerships internally and externally, with evidence of collaborative working and a successful record of developing networks and relationships, locally, nationally and internationally (A, I)
- Evidence of successfully working across a range of different academic & professional service areas to deliver enhanced inter-disciplinary working, cross-university/ organisational collaboration and innovation in order to drive excellence (A,I)
- Firm commitment to achieving the University's vision and values, with a passion for a transformative student experience and multidisciplinary, impactful research and innovation (I)
- Commitment to deliver equality, diversity and inclusivity in the day-to-day work of the role (I)

A = Application/CV/Letter; I = Interview (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

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 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/

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 the iconic and world-famous UNESCO heritage site of Canterbury Cathedral. One of medieval Europe's great places of pilgrimage, culture and charm, Canterbury 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 on the train, and 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. It has a buzzing city centre, with access to high street chains and independent outlets but also with lots of beautiful green spaces, including the University of Kent's Canterbury campus and its outstanding park land.

The city and its immediate area have an increasingly rich cultural offer. 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 nearby Beaney House of Art and Knowledge is an art museum and library.

There are two Curzon cinemas, which showcase independent films from around the world and the Sidney Cooper Gallery is a contemporary arts space in the heart of the city. The Turner Contemporary, a nationally-acclaimed art gallery, is within easy reach in Margate.

Canterbury Festival, the Whitstable Biennale and the Folkestone Triennial are just some of the regular events taking place in the region. There are also excellent primary and secondary schools and colleges, with good public transport links.

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 the many and growing 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 and a few miles away there are the seaside towns of Whitstable, Herne Bay, and Folkestone. Dover Cliffs offer one of the most iconic views in the country.





APPLICATION PROCESS

Applications are to be submitted via the University's recruitment system – Stonefish.

As part of the application process, you will need to upload:

- full CV detailing career and achievements;
- cover letter of no more than two pages that addresses your motivation and suitability for the role.
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Deadlines

The closing date for applications is Wednesday 3 December

The first stage of the interview process will be held week commencing 15 December 2025

Panel interviews are expected to be held on Tuesday 6 January 2026