

Brexit: 'No Deal' Communications Plan

In the event of the UK leaving the EU without a deal, there may be significant disruption to both the day-to-day and medium-term activity of the University. While it is impossible to anticipate the full impact of Brexit, we will need to be prepared to communicate a high volume of information to multiple internal audiences. The following plan outlines how this activity will be coordinated, both centrally and within individual departments, to allow timely, consistent and accurate information to go out.

APPROACH

Initially all communications will be produced and disseminated through the usual channels, with approval for top-level activity by the Brexit Working Group (BWG) and coordination where necessary by the Corporate Communications Team. In the event of major disruption – such as local travel issues – we will move to a more controlled, day-to-day Comms cycle as we would with eg a Snow Day.

It is vital that this process is fast, responsive and adaptable so that we can address the needs of different departments as they arise.

The Chair of the Brexit Working Group will:

- Be responsible for all final sign-off of top-level Brexit communications, via the Corporate Communications Team

The Brexit Working Group will:

- Agree on the schedule for top-level communications, such as all-staff emails
- Sign-off all central messaging, policies and advice before publication
- Approve requests for large-scale communications from specific teams
- Gather feedback on arising comms issues and agree priority areas for future comms

The Corporate Communications Team will:

- Produce central messaging to be shared with and disseminated by teams as needed
- Update central comms channels such as the website and social media as appropriate
- Have oversight of all Brexit comms activity across departments, ensuring activity is coordinated and that all essential information is displayed where it should be
- Be the point-of-contact for Brexit comms requests and clarification across teams

Individual Departments will:

- Update their own web pages and communication channels, using both central messaging and advice specific to their audiences
- Check with the Brexit Working Group via the Corporate Communications Team ahead of sending any large-scale Brexit communications
- Direct their audiences to central Brexit advice where appropriate

KEY MESSAGES

- The University is well prepared for a ‘no deal’ Brexit. We will do everything we can to minimise disruption and ensure the day-to-day life of the University continues uninterrupted as far as possible.
- The Brexit Working Group has been meeting for a number of months to prepare for all possible Brexit outcomes, bringing together key University departments including Estates, International Partnerships, Research, Kent Union and Human Resources.
- Each relevant department has a plan in place to ensure ‘business as usual’ as the UK leaves the European Union, which has been approved by the University’s Executive Group. We are fully committed to supporting staff and students and recognise that many will be concerned at what is an unstable time for the country as a whole.
- Across the country, the last few months have been characterised by widespread debate and – at times – division. Whatever our differences of opinion, however, our university is based on equality, diversity, respect and valuing each other.
- We are, and will continue to be, the UK’s European University. We are proudly outward looking, while our education and research reflect the expertise and knowledge of our European experts. That will not change.
- Our dedicated Brexit webpages will be kept up-to-date with latest information. Your Head of School / Line Manager can also support you if you need it.

CHANNELS / TACTICS

CHANNEL	TACTIC	OWNER
WEBSITE	Centralised Brexit web pages, including ‘Latest Updates’ section	CC
WEBSITE	Staff (HR) and Student (IP) Brexit web pages with more detailed info	HR / IP / CC
WEBSITE	Specific latest advice via individual Department web pages	Various, EG - Estates
WEBSITE	Leadership Blog: Specific top-level Brexit comms as appropriate	CC
EMAIL	Vice-Chancellor’s Monthly Update: Top-level Brexit comms as appropriate	CC
EMAIL	Kent Staff Weekly: Links to key Brexit information as appropriate	CC
EMAIL	All-Staff emails as needed, agreed by BWG	BWG / CC
EMAIL	All-Student emails as needed, agreed by BWG	WG / CC
EMAIL	Large-scale emails to specific lists as appropriate by Department, approved by the Corporate Communications Team	Various / CC
CAMPUS ONLINE	News stories linking to wider advice as appropriate	Various / CC
SOCIAL MEDIA	Central social media channels for updates as appropriate	CC

SOCIAL MEDIA	Individual social media channels for updates as appropriate	Various
SAFEZONE APP	Urgent All-Staff and Student communications relating to Campus Security or closure	CC, Estates

TIMELINE

ASSUMING NO FURTHER POLITICAL CHANGE

Wednesday 11 September

WEBSITE

- Campus Online news story from [REDACTED] with reassurance on Brexit plans

EMAIL

- Kent Staff Weekly to include link to Campus Online story

Tuesday 8 October

EMAIL

- Vice-Chancellor's Monthly Update to include Brexit reassurance

ASSUMING 31 OCTOBER DEADLINE IS STILL IN PLACE FOLLOWING GENERAL ELECTION

Tuesday 22 October

NB – Timing of this will be subject to political situation; this is assuming the 31 October is still the likely deadline

EMAIL

- All-Staff / All-Student Emails based on VC Leadership Bulletin content
- Email to all Line Managers email with advice on preparing for Brexit, including:
 - Home Working policy and advice from HR
 - Encouraging use of the SafeZone app
 - Reminder of some increased risks and what to do about them (eg Campus Security and Government warning around heightened 'Phishing' risk)

Thursday 31 October

EMAIL

- All-Staff / All-Student Emails with VC Update, covering:
 - Reassurance around University plans to mitigate the impact of Brexit
 - Confirming continued commitment to Europe and our strategy
 - Reminder of need for unity, respect and tolerance of different views at a time of heightened tension both on and off campus
 - Pointing to Brexit advice online

- Mention of more emails coming to specific groups with more detailed information, eg Erasmus Students, current EU students etc
- Subsequent Emails to specific groups, sent by relevant Departments:
 - All current EU students, if necessary (CC)
 - Kent students on Erasmus placements (International Partnerships)
 - Students from partner universities on Erasmus placements at Kent (IP)
 - Kent students preparing for Erasmus placements (IP)
 - Students from partner universities preparing for Erasmus placement (IP)
 - Heads of Schools and SAMs (IP)

WEBSITE

- Central Brexit web pages updated with latest Brexit advice
- Individual Brexit web pages updated with latest Brexit advice

Friday 1 November

WEBSITE

- Central Brexit web pages updated with link to latest travel advice
- Estates Brexit pages updated with latest travel advice

SOCIAL MEDIA

- Central and Estates travel advice as appropriate

OTHER CHANNELS

- As appropriate – depending on level of disruption

Ongoing

- As required – depending on need and on priorities agreed by the Brexit Working Group