**Associate Research School: The Research School Network in Kent**

The Education Endowment Foundation (EEF) is an independent grant-making charity dedicated to breaking the link between family income and educational achievement, ensuring that children from all backgrounds can fulfil their potential and make the most of their talents. The Research School Network has played an important role in supporting this mission over the last five years. Research Schools aim to lead the way in the use of evidence-based practice. Through the Network they share what they know about putting research into practice, and support schools in their region to make better use of evidence to inform their teaching and learning so that they really make a difference in the classroom.

Associate Research Schools (Associate RSs) support the existing Research Schools to expand their reach and capacity to support local partnership working and evidence-based school improvement where there has been an identified need. The designated Associate RS will work with and receive its funding from Durrington Research School, which has accountability for development, support and quality assurance of the work of the Associate RS.

The EEF has partnered with Kent County Council (KCC) on an ambitious multi-year project, the [EEFective Kent Project](https://www.kelsi.org.uk/eefective-kent-project), running from 2019 to 2023. As part of this project, together we are seeking to designate an Associate RS in Kent to support **ongoing, sustained collaboration between** **Kent schools beginning in January 2021**. Funding will be provided shared equally between KCC and EEF from the EEFective Kent Project funding stream. This designation would be until July 2023 in the first instance, in line with the designation of the rest of the Research School Network.

For more information on the EEF’s regional strategy please see:

<https://educationendowmentfoundation.org.uk/support-for-schools/eef-regional-support>

**Applicant Specifications**

Research School activity is primarily targeted at state school pupils in England (age 2-18). Most Associate RSs are led by a host school (or group of schools). In exceptional circumstances, we will consider applications from organisations related to schools (for example where a Teaching School has become a charitable organisation/company), where they are able to explain how they intend to work with schools to draw on their expertise to provide exemplification of teaching practice.

For the Kent Associate RS we do not have a preference for phase or geography except to be within the county of Kent. However, the EEF’s mission is dedicated to reducing the socio-economic attainment gap so the successful applicant will demonstrate the ability to build capacity and relationships in areas of Kent with high levels of deprivation, support the overall reach of the RSN and complement the existing RS Network expertise.

**Funding:**

Through Durrington Research School, the Associate RS will receive a core grant in 2021-22 and 2022-23 that will cover leadership time, staff development and deployment for delivering training. Associate RSs receive around £15,000 core funding annually to support Research School activity, which can be supplemented by partnership work and advertised courses, where applicable. Funding will be determined through discussion with Durrington RS around the needs of the successful Associate RS.

**Expectations for activity:**

Core expectation of the Associate RS will be to:

* Appoint an Associate Research School Director to lead activity for the Associate Research School.
* Attend half termly meetings with the Durrington Research School team to plan and review progress.
* Attend EEF-delivered ‘train the trainer’ days as required to enable Associate RS staff to deliver Research School training programmes according to needs identified in Kent.
* Sit on the EEFective Kent Project steering group and ensure Associate Research School activities contribute to the successful implementation of this project by July 2023 through:
  + Using local networks and building relationships to establish the development needs of Kent schools in relation to using research evidence to inform their practice.
  + Providing training and support directly to schools in Kent, in collaboration with Research School Network colleagues nationally and particularly through Durrington RS.
  + Supporting the recruitment, training, deployment and quality assurance of Kent Evidence Leads in Education (ELEs) to provide wraparound support for schools engaging with Research School training. Whilst building capacity in the Associate RS should involve some ELEs being trained in the host school, the Associate RS can recruit and deploy ELEs from other schools.
  + Supporting ongoing communication of evidence within Kent, for example through regular guidance report briefings, blogs and social media, raising the profile of the EEFective Kent Project and opportunities through the Associate Research School.
  + Contributing to the ongoing Research Hubs project in Kent as required, playing a leading role in enabling school leaders to build collaborative partnerships around evidence-informed practice.

**Application Process**

An information event will be held at 8am on 24th September to give initial information for potential applicants and made available online shortly thereafter. On 11th October at 4pm, prospective applicants are invited to join a Q&A session to answer any queries and troubleshoot any issues they are having with the application. Outside of these two sessions, please direct any questions to info@researchschool.org.uk

The application process consists of two stages:

* **Stage 1:** A sift based on an application form
* Please note: There is a word limit of **1,500 words** for the whole application document.
* **Stage 2:** An interview process
* The interview will be an online 15 min presentation followed by questions with representatives from Durrington Research School, KCC and the EEF. It will be expected that an executive leader and a senior leader who would act as the Research School Director of the proposed Associate RS attend.

**Application Timeline**

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| **Open** | 24th September 2021 |
| **Information event** | 8am-9am 24th September 2021 |
| **Applicant Q&A** | 4pm-5pm 11th October 2021 |
| **Close** | Midday 1st November 2021 |
| **Shortlist notified** | 8th November 2021 |
| **Shortlist interviews and presentation (via Teams)** | 16th November 2021 |

Please return forms by email to info@researchschool.org.uk

**Application Form (word limit 1,500 words for whole application)**

|  |  |
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| **Proposed Associate Research School** (include name and address of lead school or organisation)**:** |  |
| **Name of proposed Associate Research School Director:** |  |
| **Contact details for this application:** |  |
| Credibility  **How will the Associate RS be able to demonstrate credibility to other schools when working with them to influence evidence-based school improvement?**  Please make reference to i) progress and attainment outcomes (including internal data and national validated outcomes) ii) FSM/PP % and iii) Ofsted Rating iv) how you’ll model evidence informed practice in the context of school improvement.  Please try to use specific examples of system leadership where your school has supported other schools to improve.  *(We don’t expect schools to be stellar in every respect, but rather self-aware and articulate about their own development in a way that is credible with other schools. We are not looking for any school phase in particular but we would like to see consideration of how your team would interact credibly with nursery, primary, secondary and special school colleagues.)* | |
| Building and sustaining capacity  **How will the proposed Associate RS ensure it has the capacity to meet the requirements of the partnership work?**  Please make reference to:   * Administration and communication. * Training delivery (including sourcing physical space for training). * Specific examples of existing capacity: including practitioners with expertise in working to tackle disadvantage. * Specific areas you are looking to develop with support from Durrington RS. | |
| Developing understanding and use of evidence  **How has the proposed Associate RS used research evidence to improve teaching and pupil attainment?**  We are looking for the Associate Research School Director to demonstrate research literacy and experience of improving research literacy in others. Please refer to specific examples of *both*engaging with evidence and the application of it to support decision making and change within schools. | |