



Royal College of Art

Postgraduate Art & Design

JOB DESCRIPTION

Post: Academic Registrar

Directorate: Registry

Responsible to: Deputy Vice Chancellor & Provost

Responsible for: Deputy Registrar (Information Systems)
Head of Student Admissions
Head of Registry Operations
Senior Registry Administrator (Examinations & Assessment)
Telecommunications Co-ordinator

Grade: Senior Management (SM1)

Key contacts: Directors, Deans, Head of Student Experience, Assistant Deans, Heads of Programme, School Administrators

Background:

The Royal College of Art is the UK's only entirely postgraduate institution of art and design, dedicated to teaching, research and knowledge exchange with industry. The RCA has been ranked the number one university-level institution for art and design, internationally, for the eighth consecutive year according to the QS World University Rankings by Subject, 2022.

The College currently has some 2,700 students registered for Graduate Diploma, MA, MRes, MPhil and PhD degrees, and this is set to rise to 3,300 in coming years with the introduction of the new campus at Battersea during 2022. The majority of postgraduate teaching and research supervision is delivered by the RCA's four Schools: Architecture, Arts and Humanities; Communication; Design, with each School led by a Dean of international standing, and a recognised leader in their field.

In addition, the RCA has a number of established and planned research centres: the Helen Hamlyn Centre for Design; the Material Science Research Centre (which includes the Burberry Materials Futures Research Group and the Textiles Circularity Centre); the Intelligent Mobility Design Centre, Computer Science Research Centre, and a future centre in Drawing. The RCA is also home to one of the UK's most successful university incubators, InnovationRCA.

Our People

The RCA's Royal Visitor (Patron) is HRH Prince of Wales; its Chancellor is Sir Jony Ive, and the Pro-Chancellor and Chair of Council is Sir Peter Bazalgette. The RCA's Vice-Chancellor - the CEO of the institution - is Dr Paul Thompson. The RCA has more than 500 permanent staff, including internationally renowned artists, designers, architects, theorists and curators. These staff, together with an innovative pedagogy, world-class technical facilities and research centres, all contribute to an exceptional environment and a remarkable record of graduate employment. Generations of eminent graduates have created far-reaching impact and influence, such as Barbara Hepworth, Bridget Riley, David Hockney, Sir Ridley Scott, Sir James Dyson OM, Asif Kapadia, Thomas Heatherwick, Chris Ofili, Tracey Emin, Jake and Dinos Chapman, Christopher Bailey, Idris Khan, Chantal Joffe, Sir David Adjaye, Erdem, Philip Treacey, Monster Chetwynd, Oscar Murillo and Lina Lapelyte.

Strategic Plan 2022–2027

The RCA has developed a new strategic plan, involving all staff in a process that was concluded in March 2022, with the publication of a new Strategic Vision and Plan for the next five years, and the appointment of our new Chair of Council, Sir Peter Bazalgette.

This plan will embrace the roll out of a new model of delivery for our taught postgraduate programmes to support access and flexibility; it will underscore our commitment to being the world's most research-intensive art and design university; and it will commit to a number of Equity and Diversity goals which will lead towards the RCA becoming an anti-racist institution.

The Registry:

The Royal College of Art has grown in size from around a thousand students a decade ago, to around 3,000 students studying on programmes at Graduate Diploma, MA, MRes, MPhil and PhD level, with new programmes and awards in development including MFA, MDes and Professional Doctorate. The College is a highly selective postgraduate-only institution, attracting over 15,000 applications for 1,250 new places (2022/23) from around 80 countries, to study on one of more than 30 programmes of study. Over the same timeframe, changes in the higher education landscape have transformed the basis for university funding, regulation, internationalisation, and expectations around the student experience.

In this context of growth and transformation, both for the RCA and the wider higher education sector, the Registry plays a critical role in the student's relationship with the College, 'from applicant to alum', overseeing the students' entire data journey with the RCA from initial enquiry, through application and admission, enrolment and registration, progression and examination, to participating in Convocation and becoming graduates and alumnae and, hopefully, lifelong ambassadors for the College, based on the experience of a world-class education.

To support these critical stages of the applicant and student journey, the Registry aims to provide an efficient, agile, responsive, supportive, and welcoming service to all, seeking to play its part in enhancing the student experience, and supporting the wider College in achieving its strategic goals.

The Registry team (currently 18 people), work to deliver an accurate and user-focused service, with responsibility for student number modelling, fee assessments, management of student records including the student record system, admissions, enrolment and registration, Student Route visa compliance, provision of statutory and management information (including statutory returns to HESA and the OfS), administration of USA government loans, assessment, progression, convocation, production of transcripts and certificates and support for academic appeals.

Purpose of the post

The Academic Registrar will:

- Provide leadership and direction across the range of Registry functions to support the Strategic Plan, including the identification and monitoring of key performance indicators; staff recruitment, performance management, and development; budgetary planning and management insofar as they relate to Registry or Registry performance;
- Ensure that the Registry systems and team are able to support applications (currently 15,000pa), registrations (currently 3,000), enrolment checks and verification, issuance of Certificates of Acceptance to Study, administration of US Loans, statutory returns and the interface with regulatory bodies (HESA, OfS, OIA);
- In association with the Marketing team, ensure that Registry is able to support student number growth across multiple modes of study (full-time, part-time, flexible, blended, campus-based, distance and transnational) and channels (physical, digital, hybrid; professional courses; micro-credentials, APL/APEL, credit accumulation; articulation and progression), with respect to recruitment and diversity targets approved by Senate and Council;
- Lead on the delivery and success of the College's Recruitment Strategy, including the continuous improvement of the College's admissions processes, actions, systems and skills, to support the College in meeting its student recruitment targets in a rapidly changing higher education and geopolitical context;
- In association with the Academic Development Office, ensure that all recruitment, application and student material, information and handbooks are produced in a timely and efficient manner, are externally compliant including with consumer legislation and quality assurance requirements, are updated regularly, and are monitored for effectiveness and impact;
- Lead on the preparation of the Registry for closer involvement in, and potential integration of, the academic regulation and policy framework, the academic quality assurance and enhancement function, the effective operation of the Academic

Board and School Examination boards, and associated processes, and performance monitoring, to ensure continuous enhancement of the student experience;

- Lead on the service design, delivery agreements, and modernisation of the Registry across skills development, staff recruitment, processes, systems, policies and procedures to ensure fitness for purposes and 'future-proofing' alongside the College's continued development and portfolio diversification;
- Work pro-actively and collaboratively with teams across the Registry and the wider College to champion continuous improvement and enhancement of academic support services;
- Provide reports, data, analysis, interpretation and advice to the College's senior decision making bodies, including but not limited to Council, Planning and Resources Committee, Senate, College Executive Group, Senior Management Team, Academic Standards Committee;
- Provide regular status updates and reports to the College's senior leadership (Vice-Chancellor, Deputy Vice-Chancellor, Executive Director Operations, Director of Finance, Director of Academic Development), and timely alerts requiring senior leadership intervention.

Main Duties and Responsibilities

Leadership and management

- Lead on the strategic development of the Registry, ensuring that services are designed to be fit-for-purpose and help drive strategic improvement.
- Lead the effective operation of the Registry functions; delegating as appropriate while retaining accountability and strategic oversight.
- Line manage the Head of Student Admissions in ensuring that recruitment targets are met.
- Line manage the Head of Registry Operations in ensuring that systems and communications are agile, effective, accurate, and customer focused.
- Line manage the Deputy Registrar (Information Systems), in ensuring that data management and statutory returns are compliant with regulatory requirements and data protection legislation and best practice, and delivered in a timely and accurate manner.
- Line manage the Senior Registry Administrator (Examinations & Assessment) to ensure that student assessment marks and transcripts, tutorial reports (as the student records system permits), progression and examination, convocation and graduation are delivered accurately, on time, and with attention to data protection.

- Line manage the Telecommunications Co-ordinator and, with the Chief Information Officer, develop the College's telecommunications infrastructure and strategy.
- Act as member of the College's Senior Management Team, advising the Vice-Chancellor and Deputy Vice-Chancellor on the implementation of College strategy in areas of the Registry's remit, including performance indicators and operational delivery.
- Report to senior College governance and operational committees, including (but not limited to) Council, Planning and Resources Committee, Senate, College Executive Group, SMT, ABCD and ASC on the effectiveness of the Recruitment Strategy, Regulations, Academic Policies, and Procedures.
- Manage the allocation and deployment of Registry resources: staff, accommodation and funds, and in association with HR, determine and prioritise staff development.
- Lead on projects designed to implement effective change within Professional Services.
- Lead and implement change for student-related processes to support the enhancement of the student experience including registration, assessment and convocation.
- Ensure that robust metrics and key performance indicators are devised, developed and used effectively for each of the Registry teams in delivery of the Strategic Plan.
- Ensure that appraisals, setting of objectives and staff development plans are carried out in alignment with College priorities, in a timely fashion, with appropriate performance measures and management.

(i) Services and systems

- Lead, plan and manage service review projects within the Registry, championing excellence in delivery, a positive service culture and ensuring that outcomes are delivered on time and to budget.
- Oversee the review and enhancement of student recruitment and admissions processes to ensure that they align with the College's Recruitment Strategy.
- Be accountable for the review and enhancement of the external on-line student recruitment portal service.
- Be accountable for the review and enhancement of the student records system (in liaison with the Digital Delivery team) which incorporates all applicant, student and academic records; to oversee a training programme for users of the system in the

central administration and in Schools and, once established, ensure the continued effective operation of the system.

- Recommend the development of new services or processes as required to support the changing requirements of the College.

(ii) Regulatory requirements

- Ensure compliance with relevant statutory and regulatory requirements including, but not limited to, the submission of data to HESA and the OfS.
- Ensure compliance with the responsibilities of the College's UK Visa and Immigration (UKVI) Student Route sponsorship licence and to act as the College's Key Contact for all licences.
- Ensure compliance with consumer protection legislation and guidance from the Competitions and Markets Authority (CMA) in respect of student information and registration.
- Lead, plan and manage the development and operation of the College's appeals processes, ensuring compliance with the Office of the Independent Adjudicator's Good Practice Framework.
- Ensure that the College's academic and regulatory framework supports the ambitions of the Strategic Plan to develop new modes and formats of academic delivery, conforms to external requirements, and assures the standards of its awards.
- Advise staff and students on the implementation of the College's academic and regulatory framework.

(iii) Management information

- Utilise, and/or instruct the utilisation of, management information to facilitate effective planning for growth and the monitoring of data relating to admissions, progression and attainment (including recruitment trends and patterns, recruitment forecasts and retention forecasts, provision of scholarships and bursaries).
- Contribute to determining, in consultation with senior colleagues, and as approved by Senate and Council, the numbers by school and programme to meet the College's financial and student number requirements, and plans for growth.

(iv) Operational

- Oversee and be accountable for the management of the Registry to ensure effective:

- processing of student applications, offers, fee status assessments, admissions, registration, leaves of absence and withdrawals;
 - administration of postgraduate loans and US government loans;
 - academic record keeping;
 - academic administration and support for applicants, students, staff and partner institutions;
 - efficient and secure processing of results and conferment information along with the notification of final award results and the provision of accurate transcripts;
 - organisation of the College's graduation ceremonies.
- Provide high level, expert advice in relation to relevant aspects of the work of the Registry, for example, in relation to complex student cases.

(v) Communication

- Instruct and oversee the production, maintenance and accuracy of Registry areas of the College's website.
- Ensure effective communication between the Registry, the Vice-Chancellor's Office, the Senior Management Team, the Academic Strategy Group, the Operations Group, General Managers and administrators, and operational and support functions including Human Resources, Finance, Information, Learning and Technical Services (ILTS), Estates & Campus Operations and Health & Safety.
- Ensure that College policies are communicated to, understood, and complied with by all members of the Registry.

(vi) General

- Undertake continued professional development and engage with national and international institutional and professional networks related to the role of Academic Registrar and the academic administration of small and specialist institutions (e.g. Academic Registrars' Council);
- Represent the College externally ensuring constructive engagement with relevant sector bodies such as the Office of the Independent Adjudicator, the Student Loans Company, and UKVI.
- It is essential to the development of the Registry function that the role holder is able to respond flexibly and positively to changes in the requirements of the post. This job description is therefore a guide to the type and range of responsibilities the role holder will be expected to undertake and the duties of the post may be altered from time to time to meet changing operational requirements.

Person specification

Essential:

Education

- Educated to first degree level or equivalent.

Experience

- Significant experience in a comparable leadership role in an HE academic registry environment.
- Experience of effective staff management and development, including performance and appraisal management.
- Significant demonstrable operations management experience as well as evidence of process management, development and review.
- Significant experience and a detailed understanding of student records systems and data management.

Knowledge

- Full understanding and working knowledge of UK HE policies, practices and academic regulations in relation to student administration
- Demonstrable knowledge of compliance and understanding of UKVI requirements.

Skills and abilities

- Excellent numerical and analytical skills with the ability to use digital technology to support business processes and record keeping, analyse complex problems and recommend and execute appropriate solutions.
- Ability, capacity and willingness to adapt quickly to changing pressures and demands, to apply experience to new or unfamiliar challenges, to plan, prioritise and organise own workload effectively and that of others, to meet deadlines and get things done and to initiate and sustain improvements in service.
- Proven ability to translate strategy and policy into actions and operations, including questioning accepted viewpoints and ability to challenge 'upwards'.
- Demonstrable effective interpersonal skills including negotiating, persuasion and influencing skills.
- Ability, drive and personal presence to establish effective working relationships, engagement with key stakeholders (internally and externally), and the political acumen to be effective at a senior level within the College.
- Highly effective people management skills, with the ability to motivate and engage others and drive high performance
- Strong IT skills and the aptitude to learn, and where necessary specify, new systems and/or software.

General

- Membership of relevant educational and/or professional bodies and networks.
- Evidence of commitment to continuous professional development.

- Commitment to equality of opportunity and diversity with the ability to work harmoniously with colleagues and students of all cultures and backgrounds.

Desirable:

- Educated to postgraduate level.
- Experience of working in a postgraduate, research-intensive environment.
- Experience of working in an internationalised environment, including experience or knowledge of non-UK higher education systems, frameworks and quality assurance and enhancement regimes.
- Project management skills.
- An understanding of, and experience in, student support services in higher education.

PAY & BENEFITS

Pension

The Royal College of Art is a member of the Superannuation Arrangements of the University of London (SAUL) which is a contributory defined benefit pension scheme. The college will contribute a sum equal to 19% of your salary while you pay 6%.

Holiday

5 weeks (25 days) paid leave a year plus bank and public holidays normally observed in England and Wales. In addition, the college is normally closed for six days a year, one day either side of Easter and the remainder between Christmas and New Year, at the discretion of the college. Part-time staff will be entitled to the pro rata equivalent.

Season ticket loans

Interest-free loans are available for staff to purchase annual season tickets.

Enhanced maternity and adoption pay

Qualifying employees are entitled to enhanced maternity/adoption pay: 26 weeks' full pay, 13 weeks Statutory Maternity/Adoption Pay. This compares to the statutory provision of 90% of average pay for 6 weeks followed by Statutory Maternity/Adoption Pay for 33 weeks.

Enhanced paternity pay

Qualifying employees are entitled to two weeks' paternity leave entitlement at full pay. This compares to the statutory provision of two weeks' pay at the statutory rate.

Enhanced sick pay

Occupational sick pay after six months' service is three months' full pay/three months' half pay.

24/7 confidential support

Staff and family members in their household have access to a free, external confidential support service for work, financial, legal, family and personal problems 24 hours a day, 365 days a year.

Occupational health

Occupational Health support for the College is provided by Imperial College's occupational health service at their South Kensington Campus.

Cycle to Work Scheme

The Royal College of Art has signed up to the Cycle to Work Scheme – part of the government's Green Transport Initiative – which allows employees to make significant savings on purchasing new bikes and safety equipment.

Life Cover

Active members of the SAUL pension scheme automatically receive life cover. A lump sum of four times your salary together with a refund of your contributions and a 2/3 pension for your dependant/spouse is payable should you die whilst in employment.

Library

All staff are welcome to join the college library.

Events

All staff are welcome to attend exhibitions, lectures and private views held by academic schools and programmes.