



Royal College of Art

Postgraduate Art & Design

JOB DESCRIPTION

Post: Research Fellow (Insight Compilation and Communication)

Department: Design Age Institute/Helen Hamlyn Centre for Design

Grade: 9

Responsible to: Senior Research Fellow

Background

Founded in 1837, the Royal College of Art is the world's largest community of postgraduate art and design students. It is also the oldest art and design university in continuous operation and has been ranked as the world 's number 1 art & design university for a remarkable nine consecutive years, according to the QS World University Rankings by Subject 2023 – the largest world-wide survey of academic and industry opinion.

The RCA is research-led and recognised in the UK-wide REF (Research Excellence Framework) as the UK's most research-intensive institution – with an increased proportion of the College's outputs classed as 'internationally excellent' and 'world-leading' in the most recent REF assessment of 2022.

Studying at the RCA is the starting point for the world's creative leaders. With more than 20,000 RCA alumni across the globe, the RCA's graduates form a unique international network of artists, designers, creators and innovators. Every year, RCA alumni are recognised as leaders in their discipline, making national and international headlines for their work, which shapes the world we live in. Its graduate start-up incubator, InnovationRCA, is one of the most successful in the country with a high proportion of female start-up founders and a high 'survival' percentage after five years of trading.

Over 2,700 students are spread across four schools, studying at Graduate Diploma, MA, MPhil, MRes and PhD levels, with plans for this to rise to 3,300 by 2027. The College's mix of professionalism and creative freedom, together with its renowned academic community and rigorous academic framework provides the ecosystem in which students flourish and achieve their highest potential.

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 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.

The RCA espouses a hybrid approach, supporting 'traditional' making and technical skills in fine and applied art and design alongside the foundational sciences, engineering and technology which underpin designers' ability to solve today's global challenges. The RCA champions the value of interdisciplinary learning and was the first art and design university in the world to implement a STEAM (Science, Technology, Engineering, Art and Design and Mathematics) academic vision, with investment in new faculty posts in Materials Science; Computer Science and Robotics alongside art and design disciplines. By applying creative insights to evidence-based science, its staff, students, researchers and start-ups are addressing major global challenges such as rapid urbanisation and transport; loss of biodiversity; ageing populations; unsustainable consumption and production; and the rise of AI.

Our People

Prior to the death of Her Majesty, the RCA's Royal Visitor (Patron) was HRH Prince of Wales; however, His Majesty King Charles III's office has yet to confirm which institutions he will continue to serve as a Patron, following his ascension to the throne. The RCA's 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, who joined the College in 2009.

The RCA's academic faculty bring world-leading expertise and industry knowledge to the tutorial-based model of teaching. There is a core academic and research workforce of 230 FTE, supported by around 170 Associate Lecturers and a wide range of Guest Lecturers who bring 'live industry' experience into the taught curriculum – for example, Amin Taha of GrantOn design, whose work was twice shortlisted for the RIBA Stirling Prize in 2017 and 2021, teaches in the School of Architecture; and Yao Yingjia, who is Vice President and Chief Designer at Lenovo teaches in the School of Design.

The RCA operates a high staff-to-student ratio, combined with contemporary and industry-focused teaching perspectives. It also employs a team of 75 highly skilled technicians, many of whom themselves have postgraduate qualifications in their fields of specialism, which range from rapid prototyping and subtractive manufacturing to film and sound engineering, and from digital modelling to metal fabrication and jewellery making.

Strategic Plan 2022–2027

The RCA's Strategic Plan 2022–27 is available on the RCA website. During this time, the RCA's strategic vision is to increase its influence on the world stage of globally ranked universities, punching significantly above its weight, and attracting, supporting and convening the world's most talented faculty, students, artists, designers and creative leaders.

The RCA will remain an independent, postgraduate institution with a sharply distinctive and fresh research agenda and a research-driven approach towards

our taught programmes that keeps it always one step ahead. It will focus on areas of expertise that only the RCA can offer – including some big-bet propositions where there is an appetite for well-managed risk and preparedness to enter new ventures with new associates. The RCA will lead in new fields of creative practice and intellectual inquiry where we believe creative insights and a uniquely RCA perspective will catalyse new solutions to global challenges. The RCA recognises that the winning formula must be built upon a diversity of student talent with a taught Master's model that is more inclusive, affordable and better suited to twenty-first-century lifestyles and careers.

The Strategic Plan includes the rollout in 2022/23 of an entirely new model of delivery for the RCA's taught postgraduate programmes to support access, widening participation and student flexibility; it underscores the RCA's commitment to remain the world's most research-intensive art and design university; and it commits to a number of equity and diversity goals which will lead towards the RCA becoming an anti-racist institution. Many of the initiatives within the former and current Strategic Plan are predicated upon the success of a very active comprehensive capital campaign, entitled GenerationRCA which launched in early 2018 and which has raised over £85m to date against a goal of £100m. GenerationRCA supports major capital projects, professorial posts, student financial aid and scholarships. The College's five-year Financial Plan assumes c.£45m of new cash receipts will be secured between 2022–27.

The Strategic Plan is 'twinned' with an underlying Operating Plan which outlines the delivery and KPIs which will enable the institution to deliver its ambitious strategic plan.

The RCA community operates in line with four agreed values:

Curiosity

We have a tenacious commitment to innovation and openness to change. We positively interrogate ideas, assumptions and plans and welcome the honest scrutiny that is alive in a learning community.

Inclusion

We celebrate diversity and embrace difference as a source of strength. We strive for an inclusive RCA community, removing barriers and challenging exclusionary and discriminatory practices.

Collaboration

We value what happens together and we help and support each other to achieve our collective goals. We work in partnership with our students, staff, alumni, institutions and communities across the globe to make a lasting difference.

Integrity

We are always willing to listen, we offer constructive feedback and we promote accountability, building relationships of mutual trust and respect. We are resilient in the face of challenges, pursuing outcomes with individual, cultural, societal and economic impact.

The Helen Hamlyn Centre for Design

The Helen Hamlyn Centre for Design (HHCD) provides a dedicated focus for people-centred design and innovation at the RCA. Established in January 1999, the HHCD has built a large programme of research, knowledge transfer and international outreach to academic, voluntary sector and business communities.

The HHCD runs a number of programmes, the largest and most complex of which is the Helen Hamlyn Research Associates Programme for new RCA graduates, which collaborates with external research partners to employ the graduates on a year-long programme. As the HHCD has developed in size and reputation, two Research Groups and two Impact Areas have been created to rationalise the operational and intellectual structure. The Research Groups are: Age & Diversity and Healthcare. The Impact Areas are Inclusive Design for Social Impact and Inclusive Design for Business Impact.

Design Age Institute

The Royal College of Art set up a new design institute in 2020 dedicated to supporting the UK Government's Grand Challenge on Ageing, following the award of a £5 million grant from the Research England Development Fund. The new centre, the Design Age Institute (DAI), provides a range of strategic design services to business and industry as part of the Government's industrial strategy, which aims to position the UK as a major exporter of new products and services for the global longevity economy. This initiative builds on nearly 30 years of research and practice in inclusive design undertaken by the Helen Hamlyn Centre for Design (HHCD). The new Institute is based in and overseen by HHCD at the RCA's new Battersea campus which recently opened in 2022.

The DAI has been working with a range of national strategic partners, including The Oxford Institute of Population Ageing at Oxford University, the National Innovation Centre for Ageing at Newcastle University, the International Longevity Centre UK and the Design Museum in London, to build a national design-for-ageing network, activate a series of demonstrator projects and communicate findings and insights through public engagement to directly address the challenges of an ageing society, one of the most pressing issues in the UK, and globally.

Purpose of the Post: Audit, Mapping, Communication and Tool Development

Working as a key member of the DAI research team, the researcher will investigate design for ageing markets in terms of market supply and demand in the UK and create communication pieces around findings.

The researcher will investigate and compile existing research around the later-life market, specifically examining the UK 'longevity economy' in terms of existing design (supply) and later lived-life (demand). Producing concise communication pieces summarizing key concepts around age-related market and policy (existing and potential) building on DAI research and drawing from external sources, to develop engaging information and tools towards informing and inspiring designers, innovators and beyond, with key concepts around the ageing economy. Intended outputs include an audit of existing products and services, and a map of the policy landscape for comparison in order to identify gaps in provision and opportunities for innovation.

Overall, this is an exciting opportunity to play a key applied research role in a design initiative of national importance, engaging with partners across industry, government, public sector, policy and education (including engagement with the Royal College of Art's student body).

Specific deliverables of the role:

To gather and compile market insights around spending, age and design from existing literature (grey; academic; marketing; etc.)

To create insights and tools sets around ageing and design: curating ageing insights from a market perspective, creating design tools/methods for use in professional education settings and beyond.

To create an audit of existing best-practice products and services that are aimed at, or distinctly inclusive of the later-life market, including international comparators. This would include an overview of existing suppliers/groups in the space.

To work alongside the Knowledge Exchange Fellow towards creating coherent communication pieces, based on existing research and that already generated by the DAI.

To assist in the management and updating of the existing National Design Directory in collaboration with DAI Impact Manager and DAI Content & Communications Officer. Potentially adding an 'academic institutions' section, towards identifying how HEI research institutions in the ageing space can be engaged more effectively.

Responsibilities:

- To undertake high-quality, rigorous, and (where relevant) collaborative research which leads to robust research outcomes.
- To develop personal research objectives and interests, working with the DAI Director to ensure these are in line with the strategic direction of the Institute and of the College as a whole.
- To work with academic, industry and third sector partners as appropriate on collaborative research and knowledge exchange projects.
- To produce and disseminate research outputs that are effectively shared with the world through appropriate channels (for example books, peer-reviewed journals, conferences) to the discipline.
- To produce research outputs that are suitable for submission to the national Research Excellence Framework (REF) exercise, with a quality of at least 3* as per the REF definition.
- To communicate research outcomes to a wide variety of audiences, tailoring content and style to a broad range of specialist and non-specialist audiences.
- To engage with relevant academic, industry, government and policy networks as appropriate, representing the Centre, enhancing its profile, and seeking new partnership and sponsorship and funding opportunities.
- To participate in team meetings and activities, events and workshops, contributing ideas for development, delivery and promotion of projects.
- To contribute to the RCA Academic community through presentations or teaching in appropriate forums.
- To contribute to identifying opportunities, preparing material for and supporting the delivery of Executive Education courses and workshops.

- To conduct research reflecting best practice in ethics, integrity, research data management, ensuring compliance with RCA policies.
- To ensure confidentiality of sensitive project information is maintained, through appropriate project data protection.
- To undertake general administrative and other tasks relevant as part of the team's and the Centre's work, as required by the senior staff.

Person Specification:

Experience and Skills:

- Demonstrable ability to be an effective and collaborative member of a broader team, working constructively with senior staff and supporting the work of less experienced staff or students involved in projects.
- Demonstrable understanding of good practice in research conduct (including in research ethics, research integrity and handling research data).
- Evidenced excellent writing, communication and presentation skills, able to adopt an appropriate style for a range of specialist and non-specialist audiences.
- Evidenced experience of carrying out research and communication projects, producing high quality research outputs.
- Evidenced experience of contributing to and reporting on projects, including working with project budgets.
- Evidenced experience of working at post-doctoral level (or equivalent) in an academic or commercial setting.
- Evidenced flexibility and confidence to tackle a wide range of tasks, with an open, proactive, creative and problem-solving approach.
- Evidenced strong interpersonal and team-working skills (with the potential to develop mentoring skills).
- Experience in design-thinking and design-led practice
- Flexibility and confidence to tackle a wide range of tasks and information
- Genuine commitment to the aims of the DAI/HHCD.
- Knowledge around the topic of design and age inclusion
- PhD or equivalent experience in a relevant discipline
- Relevant subject knowledge for the project, evidenced through experience and research outputs.

Additional Information:

- Location: Battersea
- Full time salary: £50,331 - £56,125 per annum inclusive of London Allowance. Salary will be pro rata 0.5FTE. The successful applicant will be appointed to the first increment on the advertised pay grade. Thereafter and subject to satisfactory performance, the role holder will be eligible for an annual increment each year, normally with effect from 1 August.
- Normal hours will total 17.5 per week, between Monday to Friday, 9.30am to 5.30pm with an hour each day for lunch
- Currently working on-site is expected 3 days (or p/t equivalent)
- 25 days annual leave plus extended breaks at Christmas and Easter at the discretion of the College – pro rata for part time employees.
- A contributory defined benefit pension scheme and interest free season ticket loan are available.

- The College has a policy which prohibits smoking in all areas of the College.

PAY & BENEFITS

Pension

The Royal College of Art is a participating institution of the Superannuation Arrangements of the University of London (SAUL). As such the College can offer all new starts joining on or after 1 April 2023 membership of SAUL START, a new contributory, defined contribution, pension scheme. The college will contribute a sum equal to 16% of your salary while you pay 6%.

SAUL is not able to enrol any new Members in its defined contribution scheme (SAUL CARE), however, if you are currently a member of SAUL's CARE scheme or believe you have historical entitlement to join SAUL CARE, please inform the HR team on accepting an offer of employment.

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 dependent/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.