RCA

Research Contracts Manager
March 2025
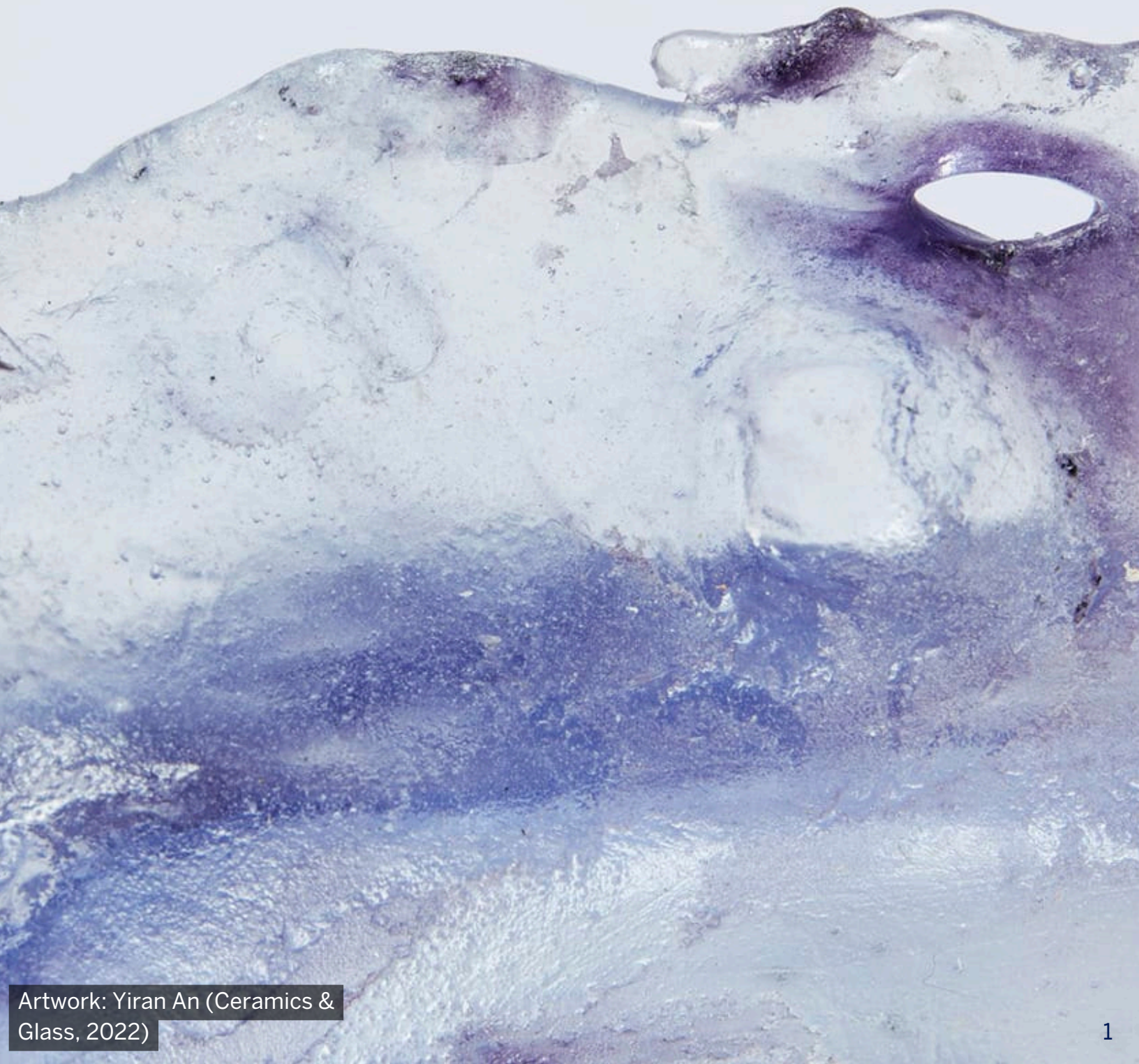
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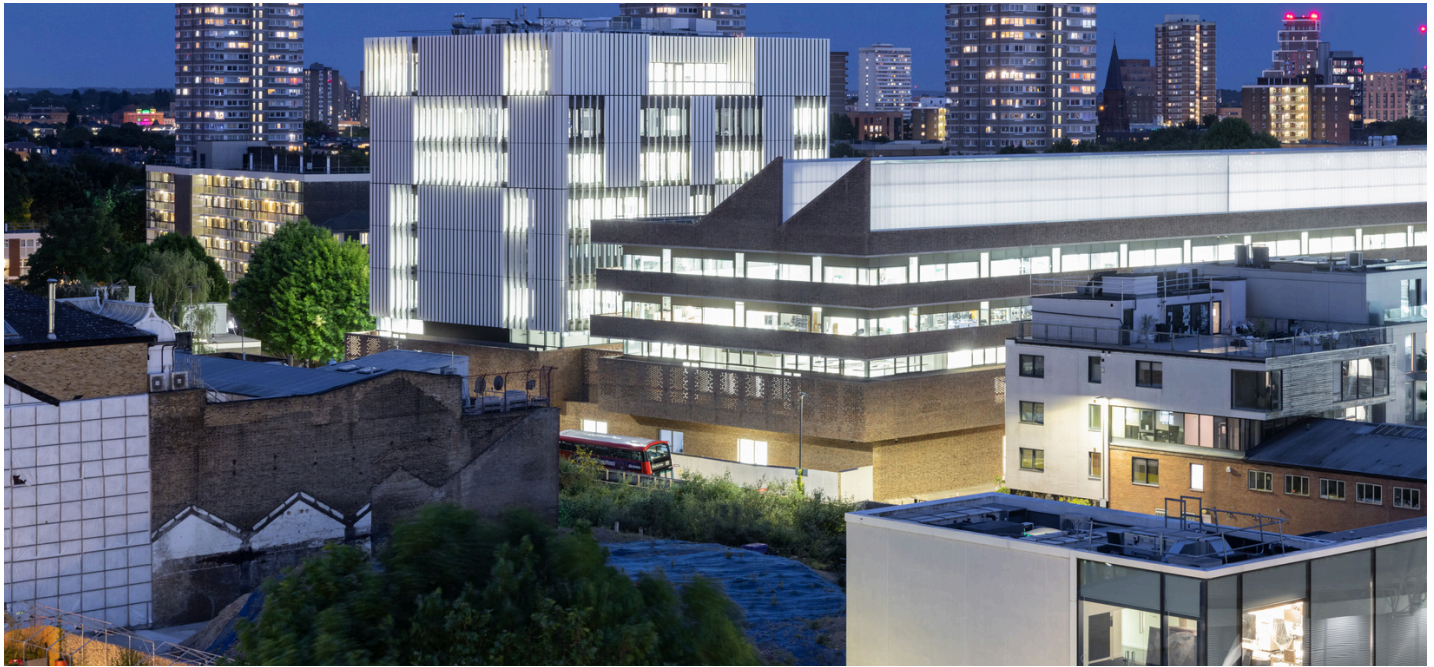

Photo: Richard Haughton

WELCOME TO THE RCA

Photo: Iwan Baan

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 one art and design university for a remarkable eleven consecutive years, according to the QS World University Rankings by Subject 2025 – the worldwide 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 2021.

Studying at the RCA is the starting point for the world's creative leaders. With more than 25,000 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.

More than 2,800 students are spread across four schools and research and academic departments, studying at Graduate Diploma, MA, MFA, MDes, MArch, MEd, MRes, MPhil and PhD levels. 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.

Photo: Richard Haughton

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 Strategy

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. For more information on The RCA's Strategic Plan 2022–27, please click on this link: Strategic Plan 2022–27.

Photo: Richard Haughton

The role of Royal Visitor to the RCA was taken on by The former Prince of Wales – now His Majesty The King – in 2018. The announcement of HM The King's retained Patronage of the RCA marks the first anniversary of Their Majesties' Coronation. As part of the official Coronation Concert in May 2023, the Royal College of Art along with The Royal Ballet, The Royal Opera, the Royal Shakespeare Company, and the Royal College of Music came together for the first time ever to create a spectacular one-off performance, with a striking visual backdrop of specially-designed artworks contributed by students from the Royal College of Art.

The RCA's Chancellor is Sir Jony Ive, and the Pro-Chancellor and Chair of Council is Sir Peter Bazalgette (please see link to Council independent members' biographies). The RCA's President & Vice-Chancellor – the CEO of the institution – is Professor Christoph Lindner who joined the College in April 2024.

The RCA's academic faculty bring world-leading expertise and industry knowledge to the practice-based model of teaching. There is a core academic and research workforce of 196 FTE, supported by around 215 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 combines contemporary and industry-focused teaching perspectives. It also employs a team of 95 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.

Our Values

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.

Research & Innovation

As a research-led university, Research underpins all the College's academic activities – from funded research projects to individual staff and student research, knowledge exchange and corporate partnerships and executive education.

Research Contracts Manager

Purpose of the Post:

This postholder will review, draft and negotiate research and knowledge exchange agreements with a range of partners including universities, research funders, industry, commercial organisations, government departments, and other public and third sector organisations.

The postholder will design processes and procedures for effective processing of RKE contracts, ensuring effective and efficient contracting that complies with RCA policies and processes, and with internal and external reporting requirements. They will provide professional and pragmatic advice to staff, and work with colleagues to understand the risks in projects and ensure contractual terms and conditions are appropriate, proportionate and aligned with RCA policies.

The ideal candidate will have experience working with contracts and legal agreements in a higher education environment; be an effective communicator, able to provide tailored advice and guidance to staff in a range of roles and levels of seniority and have the ability to analyse and prioritise key risks to ensure effective and efficient compliance.

<u>Main Duties and Responsibilities:</u>

Agreement execution

- Manage and execute a wide variety of research and research-related agreements for the RCA including: research funding agreements; research collaboration agreements; framework agreements; contract research and consultancy contracts; doctoral studentship funding and related agreements; non-disclosure and confidentiality agreements; memoranda of understanding; and data sharing agreements.
- Draft, review and negotiate legal contracts to ensure that appropriate measures and terms are in place to ensure risks are acceptable and understood and secure the best possible outcome for the RCA.
- Provide professional and pragmatic advice to staff and work with colleagues to understand the risks in projects and ensure contractual positions are appropriate and proportionate.
- Develop a suite of model agreements to cover all aspects of the RCA's research relationships with external organisations.
- Tailor, HE sector standard contracts to meet the needs of the RCA and the collaborating partner.
- Make pragmatic recommendations on the appropriate terms to underpin Research and Knowledge Exchange projects, indicating how risks may be mitigated and ensuring researchers and project staff understand their obligations.
- Interpret contract clauses for a non-specialist audience, translate practical arrangements and requirements into contractual terms.
- Ensure that contracts include provision for protecting the RCA's intellectual property and maximising opportunities for future dissemination and exploitation of research.
- Develop good 'antennae' in order to identify and intercept where RKE collaborations and contracts may be being developed outside due process.
- Instruct the RCA's external legal advisors in relation to particularly complex contracts.
- Prepare and make recommendations for signature of agreements.

Photo: Richard Haughton

Management and planning

- Design processes and procedures for effective management and delivery of the RCA's Research and Knowledge Exchange contracts, ensuring effective and efficient contracting that complies with RCA policies and processes and with internal and external reporting requirements. Plan and organise the workload for RKE contracts, ensuring that the timeframes match project needs and that partner expectations are managed appropriately.
- Own the negotiation process with collaborators to deliver optimal contractual terms promptly and pragmatically, including appropriate limitation of liability, retention of publication rights, framing of intellectual property rights, sustainable pricing, and other relevant issues.
- Oversee risk analysis and due diligence for research contracts, liaising with colleagues and the external legal team where appropriate to mitigate risks.
- Working with InnovationRCA, develop and maintain a tracker of contractually protected Intellectual Property to support appropriate exploitation.
- Ensure that accurate records are maintained of signed contracts and contracts subject to negotiations.
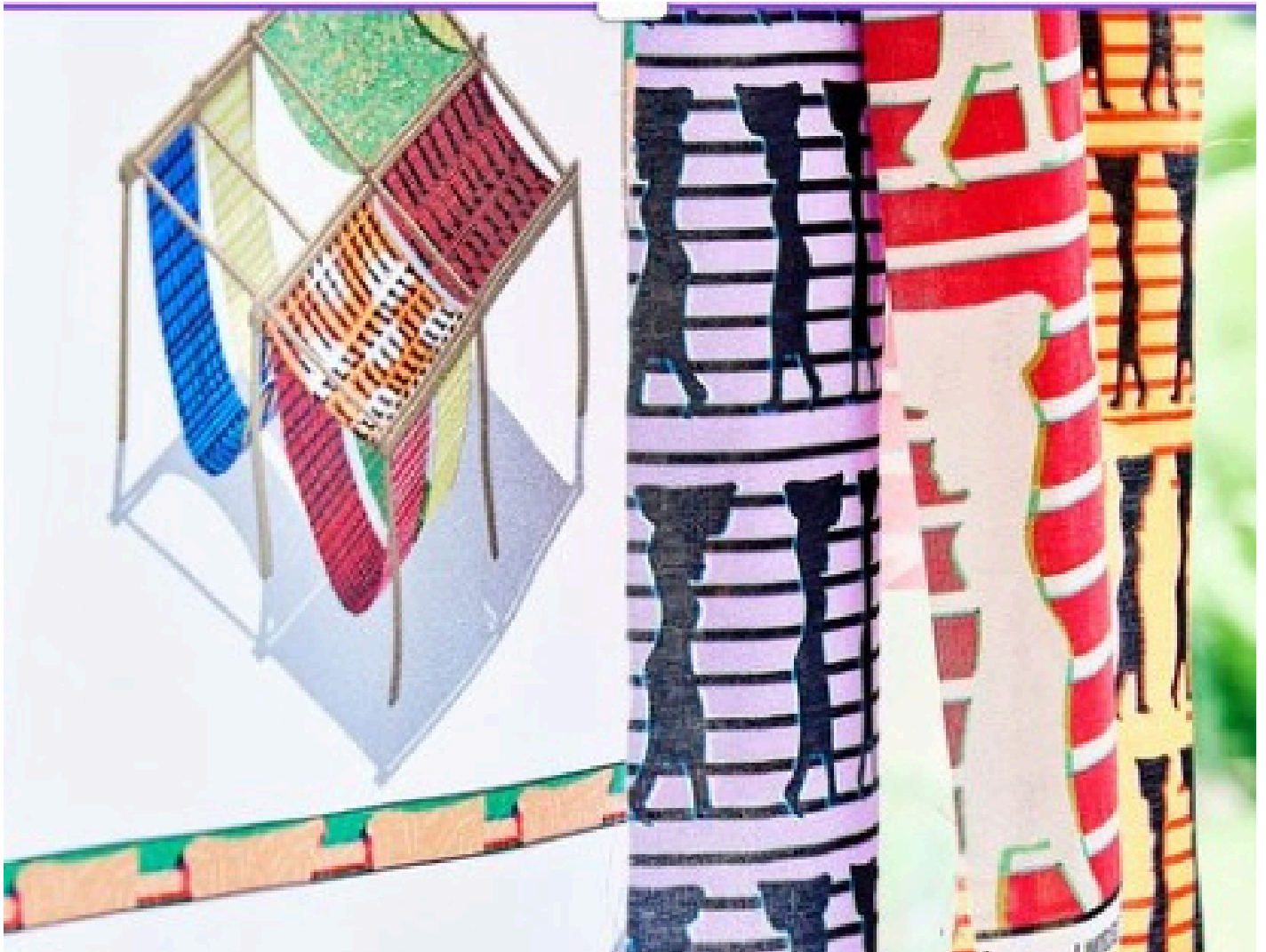
Other

- Work closely with and seek advice where appropriate from the Research & Innovation senior team, ensuring they are informed in a timely and proportionate way about high-risk contracts.
- Maintain an up-to-date understanding of changes to external funders' contractual practices, requirements, terms and conditions and policies relating to academic research and knowledge exchange.
- Develop and maintain constructive working relationships with academic, research and professional service staff across the College, to ensure a positive and effective contracts service.
- Input into development of policies, processes and best practice in relation to the external compliance environment including the NS&I Act 2021, Strategic Export Control environment, and Data Protection.
- Provide support to the Head of Research Development and Head of Knowledge Exchange in organising and managing staff training on relevant issues and processes.
- Work effectively with the Research Office teams, maintaining constructive working relationships and ensuring awareness of team priorities and deadlines
- Carry out such other duties consistent with the post as directed by the Head of Research Development or Pro Vice Chancellor, Research & Innovation.

Person Specification

Essential Criteria:

- An honours degree (or equivalent experience), with evidence of strong analytical skills.
- Knowledge of key contract topics (e.g. intellectual property, performance, publication, confidentiality, data protection/privacy, liability and indemnity, governing law and jurisdiction) and an understanding of how these can be addressed when reviewing, drafting and negotiating research contracts or legal agreements.
- Experience of working at a relevant level in an administrative/business management capacity in Higher Education or a research institution.
- Experience of reviewing, drafting and negotiating research contracts and/or legal agreements.
- Experience of identifying and providing advice on potential risks for a variety of activities including competing contractual obligations.
- Ability to convey complex information to a non-specialist audience.
- Experience of managing relationships with partners in different sectors.
- Proven interpersonal and communication skills with a high degree of tact and diplomacy, able to deal with internal and external contacts, senior academic staff, and students, appropriately.
- Ability to prioritise and manage a large, complex workload, taking ownership of tasks and responding to shifting priorities and competing deadlines.
- Demonstrable commitment to equity, diversity and equality of opportunity, with the ability to work harmoniously with colleagues and students of all cultures and backgrounds.
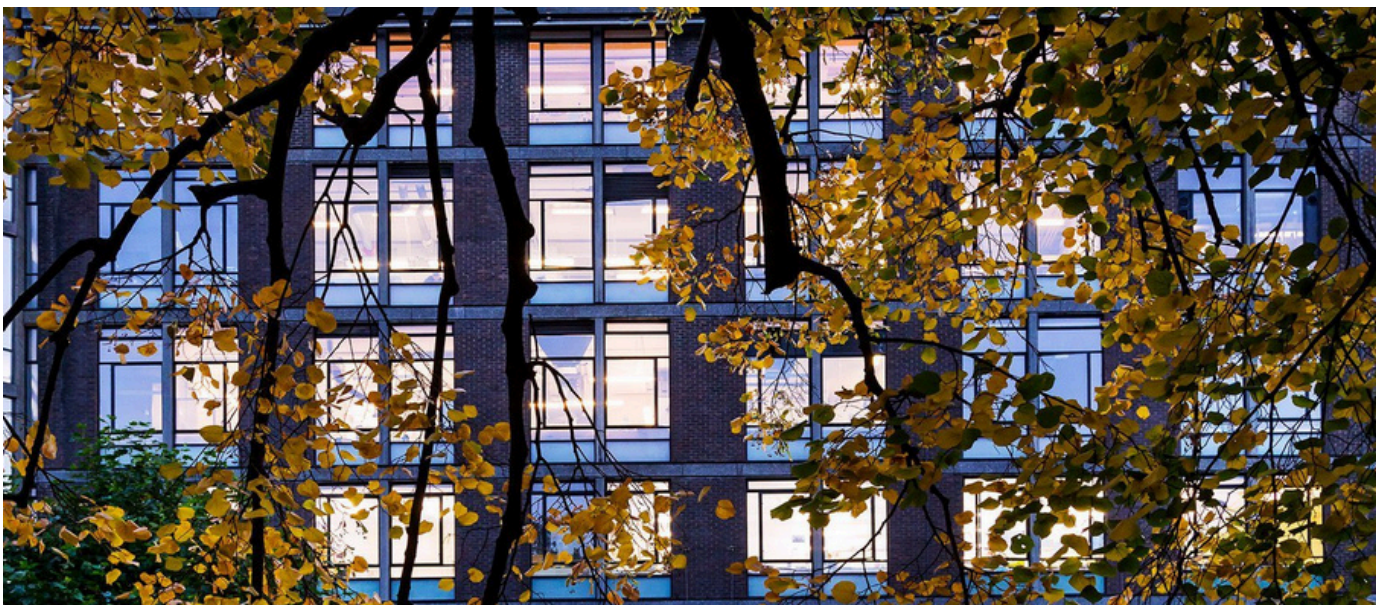
Person Specification

Desirable criteria:

- Professional legal training or qualifications.
- Good working knowledge of research funding, support and contracts within the Higher Education sector or a commercial research environment, such as Lambert Agreements, Brunswick Agreements, DESCA or similar.
- Experience of working with complex research funding mechanisms such as UKRI or EU.
- Ability to be forward thinking and offer strategic insight, with an Innovative and flexible approach to work.

Pay & Benefits

Additional Information:

- Responsible to: Head of Research Development
- Full time salary: Grade 8 - £48,832 - £52,853 per annum including London Allowance - salary will be pro rata at 60%.
- Permanent and part time role (21 hours per week - 0.6fte)
- 27 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, along with many other benefits.
- Location: Battersea/Hybrid (with travel to other sites)
- Department: Research & Innovation

Photo: Philip Vale

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 16% of your salary while you pay 6%.

Holiday

27 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 on either side of Easter and the remainder between Christmas and New Year. 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 six weeks' paternity leave entitlement at full pay.

Enhanced sick pay

Occupational sick pay after three 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.

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.

<u>Equality, diversity and inclusion - Disability and neurodiversity</u>

Disability Confident

RCA is a Disability Confident Committed employer. You may recognise the logo from our job adverts.

Disability Confident is a government scheme designed to encourage employers to recruit, retain, and develop disabled people. RCA was originally awarded the Disability Confident certificate in October 2022, which broadens and deepens our existing commitment as an employer.

As a Disability Confident Committed employer, we commit to the below core activities:
- ensure our recruitment process is inclusive and accessible
- communicating and promoting vacancies
- offering an interview to disabled people who meet the minimum criteria for the job
- anticipating and providing reasonable adjustments as required
- supporting any existing employee who acquires a disability or long-term health condition, enabling them to stay in work
- at least one activity that will make a difference for disabled people

11

11 years
as the world's
N°1 University
for Art & Design

QS World University Rankings
by Subject 2015-25

Together, the RCA community can generate change now for a sustainable future everywhere.