

Appointment of Pro Vice-Chancellor (Research and Innovation)



Royal College of Art
Postgraduate Art & Design



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Welcome from the President and Vice-Chancellor

Dear Applicant,

Thank you for your interest in the role of Pro Vice-Chancellor (Research and Innovation) at the Royal College of Art.

The Royal College of Art was founded in 1837 as the first publicly funded Government School of Design. Today, we are the world's largest community of postgraduate art and design students, ranked first in the world for a remarkable 11 consecutive years by QS World University Rankings by Subject (2015-2025). The most talented students come to us to push the boundaries of their fields and learn from leading faculty.

We are stepping towards our vision of the Royal College of Art at our 200th anniversary in 2037 as the world's most influential art and design community. Each word in that vision has importance. We will be a global institution, with research and education hubs outside of the UK for the first time. We will set the direction of art and design education – not just through our own work, but by reaching out and engaging with more partners than ever before. And our students, staff, researchers and alumni will be at the heart of everything we do.

By 2030, we will already have made significant progress towards our bicentenary vision. Our historic Kensington home will be renovated, and the RCA will once again be on two central London campuses – bringing our community together with a new creative energy, driving cross-disciplinary exploration and creating more connections and possibilities. New technologies and trends will shape what and how we teach, research and work.

We will be at the forefront of exploring the potential of those technologies in the creative industries, as well as how we use our work to tackle urgent challenges such as climate change and inequality. We will also interact with even more global artists, educators, designers, researchers and innovators through UK-wide and international partnerships.

As Pro Vice-Chancellor (Research and Innovation) you will provide strategic leadership across our entire research, knowledge exchange, innovation and consultancy portfolio. You will oversee our Research Centres, doctoral programmes, InnovationRCA, executive education, and consultancy functions, playing a pivotal role in driving growth, diversifying income, and enhancing our national and international research profile. You will lead our submissions to the Research Excellence Framework and Knowledge Exchange Framework, ensuring we maintain and strengthen our position as a leader in creative research and innovation.

We are looking for a visionary leader who is passionate about advancing research excellence and impact. The successful candidate will possess deep expertise in research strategy, funding, partnerships, and intellectual property management, along with a strong commitment to research ethics, integrity, and compliance. You will champion a culture of impact, value demonstration, and continuous improvement, while fostering inclusive collaboration across our academic and professional services communities.

The Royal College of Art is a welcoming, dynamic, and global art and design university based in one of the most exciting capital cities in the world. We are committed to creating an environment of mutual respect, where differences are valued and respected, and where innovation, creativity, and diversity can flourish.



This is a unique opportunity to shape the future of creative research and innovation at one of the world's leading institutions. As part of the RCA Executive Board, you will influence the College's strategic direction at the highest level and contribute to shaping its global impact. If you are passionate about positioning creative research at the forefront of technological and societal change, we encourage you to apply for this pivotal role.

We hope you share our excitement about the role, and we look forward to receiving your application.

Professor Christoph Lindner
President and Vice-Chancellor

About the RCA

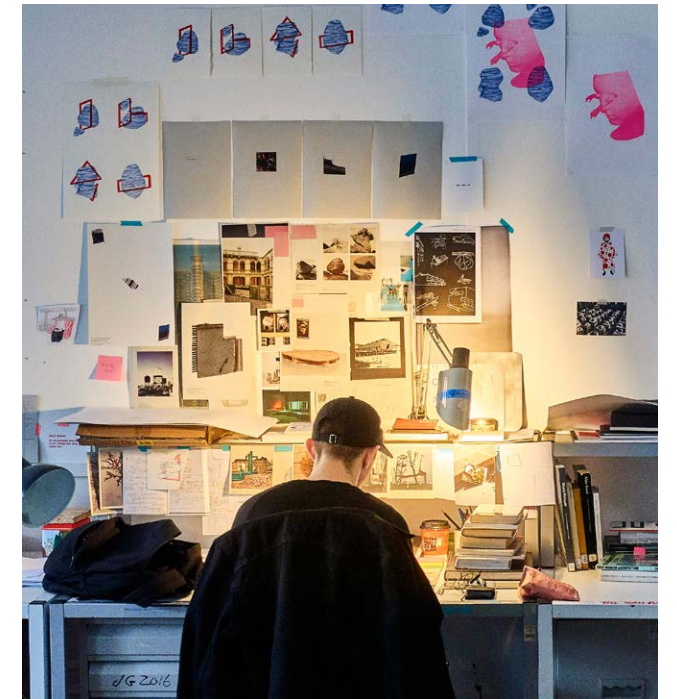
The RCA is research-led and recognised in the UK-wide REF (Research Excellence Framework) as a world-leading research-intensive institution, with an increased proportion of the College's outputs classed as 'internationally excellent' and 'world-leading' in the most recent REF assessment.

Studying at the RCA is the starting point for the world's creative leaders. With more than 30,000 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 disciplines, 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, and has a global reach, having delivered consulting and training across the world, including South Korea, the Middle East, and Japan.



Over 2,500 students are spread across four schools (Architecture, Arts & Humanities, Communication, and Design), four research centres and two Directorates, studying at Graduate Diploma, MA, MPhil, MRes and PhD levels. The College also offers a suite of MFA, MDes, MArch, MRes and MEd programmes. 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.

The RCA combines support for, and training in, the 'traditional' craft and professional skills of art and design with the belief that art, design, science and technology all play a part in solving today's global challenges. The RCA champions the value of interdisciplinary learning and was one of the first art and design universities 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 Academic Approach

The RCA's academic approach is based on active problem-solving and learning-by-doing, with current 'real world' practices of our disciplines fully integrated into our teaching delivery and student learning. We understand that creativity has a vital role to play in solving global problems and shaping a better future, which enables RCA's students to acquire skills, test knowledge, and work on projects and challenges in exactly the same way in their studies as they will in their future careers.

All of the RCA's teaching is based on a research-driven approach, and it is the only entirely postgraduate art and design university. All faculty, including senior management, are actively engaged in their relevant industries and professional practice beyond academia, and we are the only specialist art and design university where all of our permanent academic staff are also research active and included in the RCA's submissions to the UK Research Excellence Framework.

The RCA model consciously uses both the high research-active levels of faculty and the advanced level of postgraduate provision to provide concentration and focus, in order to use research to creatively 'disrupt' the learning experience. This provides skills, tools and techniques, translates new knowledge into rapid content in the curriculum, generates problem identification and real-world projects, and embeds desired research methods, critical enquiry, and professional skills that carry students throughout their RCA career and into professional life.



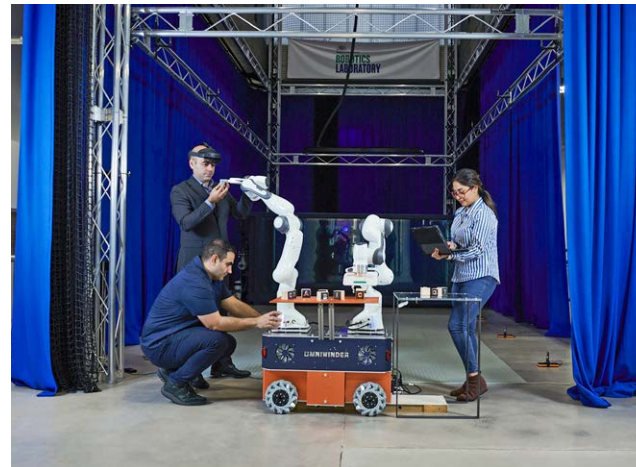
A key part of the RCA postgraduate taught approach is to ensure that students will have access to either individual or group studio space to support 'learning by doing', practical experimentation and prototyping, which reflect the professional industries and careers for which they are preparing.

This open learning environment fosters peer-to-peer learning in close collaboration with researchers and allows students the opportunity to pin work on studio walls, store models and materials, ponder, reflect, return and refine, share with colleagues, and be asked to explain or articulate their propositions and ideas.

Our Research

The Royal College of Art excels in world-leading art and design research with real-world impact. Its research is characterised by its roots in creative and innovative practice, by engagement with partners in business, industry, government, and communities, as well as across the creative and cultural sectors. Its focus is collaboration across disciplines, and on addressing today's global challenges, from climate change and the circular economy, clean growth, and the future of mobility, to a healthy ageing society and the future of human interactions with AI and robotics.

Research takes place across the College's four schools - Architecture, Arts & Humanities, Communication, and Design - and especially in its interdisciplinary, industry-facing Research Centres: the Helen Hamlyn Centre for Design, the Intelligent Mobility Design Centre, the Materials Science Research Centre, and the Computer Science Research Centre and Robotics Lab. The RCA works with partners from around the world and receives support from national and international research funders and from industry investors to establish new collaborative research partnerships with human-centred, design-led approaches at their heart.



Major UKRI investment in recent years includes funding for the RCA Design Age Institute, the Textiles Circularity Centre, and projects in citizen science for ecological citizens, and robotics for working in extreme conditions. Past research has delivered a new design for the NHS emergency ambulance, NHS clinical trials of a new digital platform designed to support people with paranoia, and an inclusive redesign of the River Foyle area in Northern Ireland which attracted £25 million of infrastructural investment.

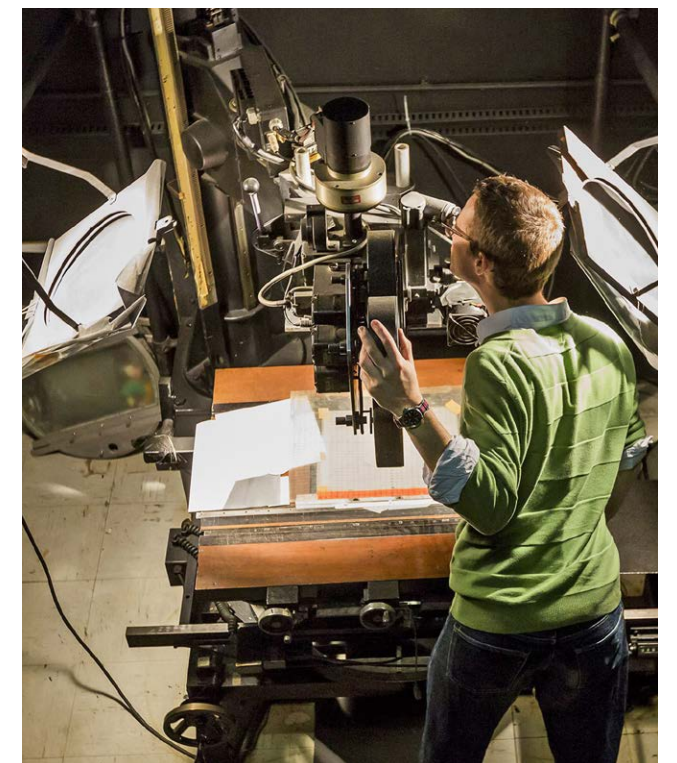
RCA research into open design and public participation helped change public understanding of nature and biodiversity and led to curriculum changes in schools and new biodiversity learning strategies in major public organisations including the Natural History Museum. Over 2 million viewers were engaged through BBC SpringWatch, and conservation organisations including the UK Wildlife Trusts and The Durrell Trust engaged new audiences, creating new conservation opportunities and fostering new community activities.

The RCA maintained its reputation for high-quality research in the most recent UK Research Excellence Framework exercise (REF2021), submitting 100 per cent of eligible staff and increasing the proportion of outputs graded world-leading, while doubling its research power (volume of research multiplied by quality) compared to REF2014.

RCA research continues to generate demonstrable benefits and impact for businesses and communities internationally, through projects ranging from long-term collaborative research (e.g. our Intelligent Mobility Design Centre with Hyundai-Kia) to short-term consultancy and design sprint projects with partners ranging from the NHS to global fashion brands and local community groups. Our Snap Visualisation Lab offers a multimodal immersive and interactive virtual space for displaying complex constructed environments and real-world simulations, with motion capture technology allowing for real-time interactions, as part of our Knowledge Exchange offer to business partners.

The RCA model consciously embeds research and professional practice into teaching, drawing on the expertise of our research-active faculty, many of whom are also creative practitioners, and taking advantage of our postgraduate-only environment to provide creative and innovative skills, tools and techniques; translate new knowledge into rapid content in the curriculum; generate real-world projects; and embed desired research methods, critical enquiry, and professional skills that carry students throughout their RCA career and into professional life.

As part of its Royal Charter commitment to working with industry, the RCA provides students with a range of studio projects set by leading companies, charities, and NGOs in a range of industries, including the automotive, advertising, service, and banking sectors, as well as not-for-profit organisations dedicated to improving both human lives and the planet. In recent years, RCA students have worked on live projects with the likes of OPPO, Outernet London, Telefonica, McKinsey, JP Morgan, Burberry, CERN, Logitech, Extreme E and British Airways; they have also taken part in cross-curricular 'Grand Challenges' tackling major global topics such as environmental sustainability. The RCA's research centres are all strongly industry-facing.



Our Research

The Future for Research

The College’s plans for Research are ambitious. We experiment, question and discover, putting research and practice at our heart, to equip students for new futures and opportunities and build on current knowledge.

To achieve this, we will:

- Create new ways of thinking about pedagogical excellence in art and design.
- Drive a strategic and integrated approach to world-leading research.
- Practice continuous innovation, embracing emerging technologies.

Examples of how we will work towards this in the next five years:

- Launch a new Research and Innovation Strategy for 2026–30, bringing interdisciplinary researchers together across the College to build on our strengths, and focus on where we can make the most difference.
- Create two new College-wide Research Institutes focused on sustainability and regenerative practices, and the impacts of future technologies and convergence science; as well as new cross-College Research Groups and Labs.
- Explore adaptations for environments affected by climate change, through teaching, research and collaboration with industry.



This work will be enabled by:

- Enhancing our research culture, including improving academic and research career development.
- Researching, innovating with, and defining the role of AI and emerging technologies, both as a creative tool and as a practical tool to improve staff and student experience.
- Ensuring sustainability and regenerative practices are embedded in our programmes, as well as in our cross-programme and cross-School units.
- Expanding the range of research funders supporting the College’s world-leading work.

Our overall aim is by 2030 to have increased research quality, with the number of outputs scoring 3 and 4 stars in REF2029 rising by at least 10%.



Our People

Our academic and technical staff

The RCA's academic faculty bring world-leading expertise and industry knowledge to the studio-based model of teaching. All faculty, even at senior management level, are research-active and 100 per cent are included in the Research Excellence Framework (REF) submission.

The RCA has a total academic and research workforce of around 400 people, which includes Associate Lecturers and Guest Lecturers who bring live industry experience into the taught curriculum – for example, Cathy Hawley in the School of Architecture is a RIBA Stirling Prize winner and Mark Titchner in the School of Arts & Humanities a former Turner Prize nominee; Andrea Edmunds brings over 30 years of experience to MA Service Design, including heading up Service Design at IDEO; and Adrian Shaughnessy brings insight as a leading design writer and founder of a multi-award-winning design group to MA Visual Communication.

The RCA also employs a team of over 100 highly skilled technicians, many of whom themselves have postgraduate qualifications and are well-established and recognised practitioners 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 skilled technical staff and technical resources are integral to delivering an interdisciplinary approach which is a key part of the student experience. Our expert staff provide technical consultations on project development and emerging methodologies, materials and processes for students and researchers to explore further.



Our alumni

RCA alumni, numbering more than 30,000 all over the world, are recognised as leaders in their disciplines, making national and international headlines for shaping the world we live in. They are highly prominent in a wide range of industries, from the Apple design studio in Cupertino, California, to the automotive sector in Sweden and Germany, to fashion in India and Italy. Alumni include such major figures as Henry Moore OM, Dame Barbara Hepworth, Bridget Riley, David Hockney OM, Sir Ridley Scott, Dame Zandra Rhodes, Sir Frank Bowling, Sir James Dyson OM, Dame Tracey Emin RA, Chris Ofili CBE, Christopher Bailey CBE and Thomas Heatherwick RDI, CBE.

Our Governance

The Council is the governing body of the Royal College of Art. The membership is made up principally of independent (non-College) members and includes a number of staff and students (please see [here](#) for biographies of the Council's independent members).

The Council is the governing body of the College responsible for all matters concerning property and finance, administrative policy, overall strategy and any issues affecting the general welfare of the College. All the most senior appointments within the College are ultimately made by the Council; Chancellor, Chair of Council, the President and Vice-Chancellor and Deputy Vice-Chancellor and Provost.

His Majesty King Charles III is the Royal Visitor of the RCA having taken up the role in 2018. The RCA's Chancellor is Sir Jony Ive, and the Pro-Chancellor and Chair of Council is Sir Peter Bazalgette.



The RCA Executive Board is the senior executive management team led by the President & Vice-Chancellor. It is a decision-making body responsible for all aspects of the College's strategic direction within the authority delegated by Council. It is responsible for all matters associated with the College's development and management.

It acts as a representative voice of the RCA staff and student community and is responsible for developing and delivering the College Strategy (and its sub-strategies) and for the effective management of the College, including agreeing on core College policies.

The RCA's President & Vice-Chancellor – the CEO of the institution – is Professor Christoph Lindner who joined the College in April 2024. For more details on the Executive Board, please see [here](#).

The Senate exercises full responsibility over the academic work of the College and, subject to the powers reserved to the Council by the Statutes, takes measures and acts to promote the academic work of the College both in teaching and research, and for the regulation and superintendence of the education, welfare and discipline of the students.

The Senate agrees the appointment of external examiners, new academic developments, syllabi and student numbers and revisions to the Regulations. It approves the final examination results and awards the degrees. The membership of 20 includes Deans of School, Students' Union and elected representatives of the staff. The Senate normally meets three times a year.

Our Schools

School of Arts & Humanities

The School of Arts & Humanities provides transformative learning experiences for our engaged and curious global cohorts through intellectually and conceptually linked postgraduate degrees from Master's level through to PhD.

Art intersects with curating, writing, and the history of design, integrating both traditional and contemporary studio-based making with innovative humanities, fine and applied art programmes. Fostering a unique culture of peer-to-peer learning, our responsive curriculum is developed by expert staff who are both researchers and practitioners. Students benefit from opportunities to collaborate across the School, College, and with London's leading cultural organisations.

Reflecting contemporary shifts in global social and ethical dynamics, our ambition is to nurture creative exploration alongside speculative and critical thinking in order to shape and develop our understanding of how creativity and culture can become the most significant agents of change. Graduates from the School of Arts & Humanities lead influential careers worldwide, making significant contributions across the international cultural landscape.

Courses offered within the School include: Arts & Humanities (MPhil/PhD); Arts & Humanities (MFA); Ceramics & Glass (MA); Contemporary Art Practice (MA); Curating Contemporary Art (MA); Jewellery & Metal (MA); Painting (MA); Photography (MA); Print (MA); Sculpture (MA); V&A/RCA History of Design (MA); and Writing (MA). Short courses offered by the School include Contemporary Art Summer School, and Curating Contemporary Art and Design: Theory and Practice.

School of Design

The School of Design engages with design on multiple levels, from the highly conceptual to the deeply practical, with a strong culture of innovation, experimentation, and debate. Programmes are supported by staff with reputations in world-leading research, teaching, and practice.

By developing key opportunities within specialist programmes, the School encourages different student cohorts to network, test new ideas, evaluate, take risks, and even fail, thereby allowing successful design practice to be significantly elevated. These are critical components to building confident, mature, diverse, and self-aware future design leaders who are ready and prepared for evolving global challenges within their chosen disciplines.

Programmes collaborate and innovate with industry partners and also across subject areas to allow strategic opportunities for multidisciplinary teaching and project development to enhance and ensure student mobility, independent learning, and interdisciplinary activity.

Courses offered within the School include: Design (MPhil/PhD/MDes); Design Futures (MDes); Design Products (MA); Fashion (MA); Healthcare & Design (MRes); Innovation Design Engineering (MA/MSc); Intelligent Mobility (MA); Service Design (MA); and Textiles (MA). Short courses include Service Design Masterclasses and Design Thinking & Innovation in Practice.





Our Schools

School of Communication

The School of Communication interrogates the fundamental ways in which communication shapes our lives, and uses this knowledge to develop new ways of experiencing, interacting, and communicating with the world.

Through studio-based practice, field trips, technical workshops, research projects, and relationships with external partners, the School makes space for conversation, inter-cultural exchange, new ideas, and diverse voices. Programmes explore social, political, environmental, and philosophical implications of communication practices including VR, AR, AI and quantum technologies in storytelling, experimental communication systems, and interfaces.

Students conceptualise, craft, and curate in many mediums including those traditionally aligned to School of Communication disciplines: animation, data visualisation, game design, graphic design, illustration, photography and moving image, or through creating installations, digital experiences, site-specific work, and other less explored territories such as spatial-temporal experiences, immersive world building, and soundscapes.

Courses offered within the School include: Animation (MA); Communication (MPhil/PhD); Communication (MFA); Digital Direction (MA); Information Experience Design (MA); and Visual Communication (MA). Short courses include Graphic Novels, Typography and Editorial Design.



School of Architecture

The School of Architecture provides a stimulating and vibrant cultural context for study in one of the world's leading cities, realising live projects and work alongside leading designers and artists in a postgraduate-only environment.

This context allows students to push their material, conceptual, and technical skills beyond traditional disciplinary boundaries – expanding the potential of future practice while forming friendships.

The studio-based learning environment is supported by historical, theoretical, media, and technical seminars where students are introduced to a wide range of design research methods and approaches. Within each programme, opportunities for live projects and fieldwork are provided in line with the pedagogical ambitions of studio leaders.

Practice mentor schemes across all programmes pair students with practices and help expand professional networks.

Courses offered within the School include: Architecture (MA); Architecture (MPhil/PhD); City Design (MA); Design Practice (MArch); Environmental Architecture (MA); and Interior Design (MA). Short courses include the RCA's Architecture Summer School.

InnovationRCA

InnovationRCA is the Royal College of Art's centre for entrepreneurship and commercialisation, helping staff, students, and alumni transform compelling ideas into successful businesses. InnovationRCA is unique in that it produces design-led start-ups and spinouts in a broad swathe of sectors: from agri-tech, climate-tech, and medtech to fintech, fashion, and education. Its companies frequently combine new materials with digital tech and engineering with creativity. Around 60% of its companies are patent-based businesses, and around 40% are impact-driven for-profit companies.

Housed in the Clore Innovation Centre at RCA Battersea, InnovationRCA set up an incubation programme in 2009 to support students and alumni to commercialise their ideas and build successful businesses. InnovationRCA services cover intellectual property advice and support, as well as incubation and acceleration services that provide expert coaching and business mentoring built on InnovationRCA's unique design-led, user-centred ethos and methodologies together with access to office and workshop facilities and funding.

In 2024, InnovationRCA launched its RCA Design & Innovation S/EIS Fund in partnership with Infinity Asset Management LLP to invest in exceptional RCA start-ups and spinouts. InnovationRCA also operates its own angel investor network, AngelClubRCA. Leveraging its established network and unique experience, InnovationRCA also runs consultancy programmes and accelerators worldwide aimed at external entrepreneurs, start-ups, and organisations looking to promote and support innovation and entrepreneurship.

InnovationRCA has an outstanding track record of turning RCA ideas into successful, high-impact businesses. In July 2019, InnovationRCA won the 'Accelerator of the Year 2019' award given by the UK Business Angels Association, in recognition of the programme's excellence and InnovationRCA's outstanding incubation track record.

To date, highlights include:

- 84 companies have been created by 120 RCA graduates.
- 52% have had female founders over the last five years.
- £145m has been raised by these companies in investor funds and a further £38m in competitive grant funding (included in this grants figure is over £17m from InnovateUK, over £5m from the Bill and Melinda Gates Foundation and £4m from Horizon2020).
- These companies have a combined valuation of over £308m.
- InnovationRCA's portfolio of companies has achieved a gross multiple of 4.9x invested capital.
- The companies which are trading had a combined turnover of £38m in 2023.
- Over the past decade, the combined turnover of the companies which are trading was over £250m.
- Over 850 UK jobs have been created.



Role Description

Job Title:	Pro Vice-Chancellor (Research and Innovation)
Location:	Royal College of Art (RCA), London, UK
Reports to:	President & Vice-Chancellor
Key contacts:	PVC Education & Student Success, PVC Academic, Deans, Chief Financial Officer, Chief Operating Officer, Director of Technology, Director of Engagement, Brand and Marketing, Director of People & Culture, Director of Advancement & Alumni Relations, Director of Estates
Responsible for:	Head of Research Development Head of Knowledge Exchange Head of Executive Education Head of Doctoral Programmes Head of Research Centres Director of InnovationRCA Director of Consultancy (role to be appointed) Director, Helen Hamlyn Centre for Design Chair, Helen Hamlyn Centre for Design Director, Material Science Research Centre Director, Intelligent Mobility Design Centre Academic Lead, Computer Science

Salary:	General Manager, Research and Knowledge Exchange Competitive and commensurate with experience
Duration:	5-year term (renewable), with substantive permanent professorial role

Purpose of the role

The PVC (R&I) is accountable to the President & Vice-Chancellor for the strategic development, leadership and delivery of the College’s research, knowledge exchange, innovation and consultancy ambitions and objectives, ensuring it retains its position as the most research-intensive art and design specialist institution with a world-leading track record of local, national and international partnerships with business, industry, governments and communities, and one of the UK’s most successful university incubators.

The PVC (R&I) will proactively design and shape new RKEI initiatives, including working with Executive Board members and relevant internal and external stakeholders to develop new international research and knowledge exchange collaborations, in order to maintain the RCA’s profile and to increase and diversify industry contacts and RKEI income, and improve the recoverability of research costs.

As a member of the RCA Executive Board, the PVC (R&I) will be responsible for the shared leadership and management of the institution, and will work with the P&VC to design the RKEI KPIs at the beginning of each academic year, ensuring that they are carried out and met through continuous review, through line management of the College’s Research Centres, Research Office, Doctoral Programmes,

Consultancy and Executive Education functions, and InnovationRCA, and through collaborative working with the Deans and Professional Service Directors and their teams.

The PVC (R&I) will actively engage in external advocacy programmes with colleagues, particularly relating to communications and public affairs in order to leverage influence on policy, strategy, and funding; and promote the College’s RKEI achievements in Westminster, Whitehall, and among the media, enhancing the overall reputation of the RCA. The PVC (R&I) will have oversight of the College’s research culture and governance, its RKE systems, processes and regulatory reporting, and of the successful delivery of high-quality College-wide doctoral programmes and the taught postgraduate programmes linked to the Research Centres.

- **Vision and leadership:** The PVC (R&I) will lead the development of a forward-looking, cross-disciplinary research and innovation ecosystem that anticipates - and shapes - global creative, technological futures and societal shifts, positioning the College as a thought leader;
- **Research strategy:** The PVC (R&I) will design and deliver a research strategy for the university that aligns with the institution’s mission and goals and delivers agreed goals in terms of the intellectual and physical research environment, infrastructure and culture; people and performance; financial sustainability; profile, partnerships and impact;
- **Funding and grants:** The PVC (R&I) will deliver agreed returns in relation to funding and grants for research centres and projects, including identifying funding opportunities and overseeing the preparation of grant applications and the maintenance of an effective funding pipeline and high-performing research development team;

- **Partnerships and collaborations:** The PVC (R&I) will support the development and monitoring of strategic partnerships and collaborations with industry, government, NGOs, donors and other academic institutions to enhance the university’s research and innovation capabilities and capacity, and support the delivery of interdisciplinary and complementary research projects;
- **Exploitation of research impact and intellectual property management:** The PVC (R&I) will ensure the application and exploitation of new knowledge to deliver social, economic and cultural impact, and financial and reputational benefits to the institution arising from dissemination, commercialisation, production, sharing, licensing, and other forms of exploitation; they will understand and ensure the application of intellectual property law and oversee the work of the InnovationRCA team managing the College’s intellectual property assets, including patents, trademarks and copyrights arising from its research and innovation;
- **Research ethics, integrity and compliance:** The PVC (R&I) will possess a strong understanding of research ethics, research integrity and regulatory compliance, and ensure that the university’s research practices adhere to ethical standards and comply with regulatory requirements, including those set within the institution, by funders, by government, and by partners;

Role Description

- **Leadership and management:** the PVC (R&I) will have strong leadership and management skills to oversee the RKEI delivery of Deans and Research Centre Directors, Knowledge Exchange Laboratories, and the work of academic and research staff, RKE Office staff and professional services and administrative staff across the College in delivering the College's RKEI strategy and priorities;
- **Impact and value demonstration:** the PVC (R&I) will drive a culture of demonstrating impact and value for money in research, knowledge exchange, executive education and consultancy, including seeking and delivering continuous improvement in developing metrics and results in full economic costing and cost recovery;
- **Collaboration and communication:** The PVC (R&I) will provide leadership and will work collaboratively with other departments, stakeholders, and services in the College and beyond, as well as communicate effectively with staff, research students and the wider community, to ensure the delivery of a high-quality, inclusive and supportive RKEI culture and environment and an ethos of research integrity and continuous improvement. They will ensure transparent and open research communication practices in line with UKRI's access policies, strengthening the visibility of RCA research through digital dissemination, exhibitions, media engagement, and international collaboration.

Main Duties

These include, but are not limited to:

- Contributing to and being responsible for, through membership of the Executive Board, the management, strategic development and leadership of the College.
- As a member of the Executive Board, playing an active role in shaping pan-institutional policies, processes and being a valued, collegial team player.
- Driving the institution's research, knowledge exchange and innovation (RKEI) strategy and priorities, leading delivery of the relevant objectives in the College's strategic plan and ensuring performance across the College meets the institution's ambitions for research quality, impact and intensity.
- Supporting and driving growth in consultancy and other income-generating and income-diversifying activities across the College.
- Working collaboratively with the Deans of School, Research Centre Directors and Directors of professional service teams to ensure strategic RKEI goals in relation to quality and financial sustainability are understood and met.
- Leading the institution's planning and submissions to national exercises including the Research Excellence and Knowledge Exchange Frameworks to ensure the College maintains and improves its profile and the associated funding allocations.

- Setting and ensuring the Schools and Research Centres achieve annual research, KE and Executive Education income targets, focusing on continued growth and on increasing the FEC recoverability of research.
- Working collaboratively with other senior staff to contribute to the wider leadership and management of the institution as a member of the Executive Board, Senate, and relevant College committees.
- Working with the Directors of professional services across the College to maintain and enhance a sustainable and high-quality RKEI culture and environment, including on issues relating to research career development; space, facilities and technology planning; financial management; communications, marketing and influencing; and philanthropic fundraising and liaison with donors.
- Leading the College's work on research governance and integrity, acting as Chair of the Research & Innovation Committee, as a member of the Professorial Board, and as chair of other relevant working groups, including the REF oversight group.
- Developing and sustaining relevant external collaborations and partnerships, representing the College in local, national and international contexts, including with UK government, policymakers, and business and industry partners, and undertaking advisory and assessment roles with UKRI to enhance the College's profile with the UK funding bodies.

- Fostering and promoting an inclusive research culture that supports high-quality research, impact, innovation, commercialisation and entrepreneurship across the institution for postgraduate students and for staff at all career stages.
- Anticipating and responding to emerging trends in global research policy, digital scholarship, and the creative industries, ensuring that the RCA remains agile, future-facing, and well-positioned to lead creative knowledge economies.
- Overseeing the College's doctoral programmes and MA programmes linked to the Research Centres, ensuring strong academic management, quality assurance, assessment and student progression in line with College academic policies, working collaboratively with the PVC (Education & Student Success).
- Working with the PVC Education & Student Success, continuously developing and enhancing the pipeline for graduates of the RCA to receive opportunities to progress into InnovationRCA.
- Line managing the Directors and academic leads of the College's research centres, doctoral programmes, InnovationRCA and RCA Consultancy; and line managing and leading an effective and proactive Research & KE Office.
- Demonstrating an active commitment to the College's Equality and Diversity and environmental sustainability policies.
- Undertaking other duties as reasonably required by the P&VC.

Process

The Royal College of Art will be supported in this appointment by executive search firm Perrett Laver.

Completed applications should be uploaded at <https://PlusPortal.PerrettLaver.com> quoting reference number **8129**.

For informal inquiries, please contact Harvir Bains at harvir.bains@perrettlaver.com.

The deadline for applications is **9:00am GMT on Monday 1st December 2025**.

Formal panel interviews will take place at RCA's Battersea Campus on Friday 23rd January 2026.

Accessibility

For a conversation in confidence or should you require access to these documents in alternative formats, please contact Harvir. If you require any reasonable adjustments to assist you in the selection process, please advise us of these so that we can make appropriate arrangements.

If you have comments that would support us in improving access to documentation, or our application processes more generally, please do not hesitate to contact us via accessibility@perrettlaver.com.



Inclusion

Perrett Laver believes that excellence will be achieved through recognising the value of every individual. A broad range of perspectives, backgrounds and opinions amongst our global community of colleagues is crucial in maintaining our culture of openness, intellectual curiosity, and creativity. We take an active role in supporting under-represented communities and groups in becoming better and more fairly represented in the leadership of all organisations. We also know that diverse and inclusive teams have a positive impact on our ability to identify, engage and secure candidates from these groups.

Our commitment to inclusion across race, gender, age, religion, sexual orientation, identity, and experience drives us every day – for clients, for candidate identification and in the recruitment, development and retention of colleagues.

To ensure inclusion on the basis of age, disability, ethnic or national origin, family circumstance, gender, gender identity, marital status, nationality, political or religious beliefs, race, socioeconomic background, and sexual orientation, we would like to specifically invite applications from under-represented groups.

Data Protection and Privacy

Protecting your personal data is of the utmost importance to Perrett Laver and we take this responsibility very seriously. Any information obtained by our trading divisions is held and processed in accordance with the relevant data protection legislation. The data you provide us with is securely stored on our computerised database and transferred to our clients for the purposes of presenting you as a candidate and/or considering your suitability for a role you have registered interest in.

Perrett Laver is a Data Controller and a Data Processor, and our legal basis for processing your personal data is 'Legitimate Interests'. You have the right to object to us processing your data in this way. For more information about this, your rights, and our approach to Data Protection and Privacy, please visit our website <https://perrettlaver.com/privacy-policy>.





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