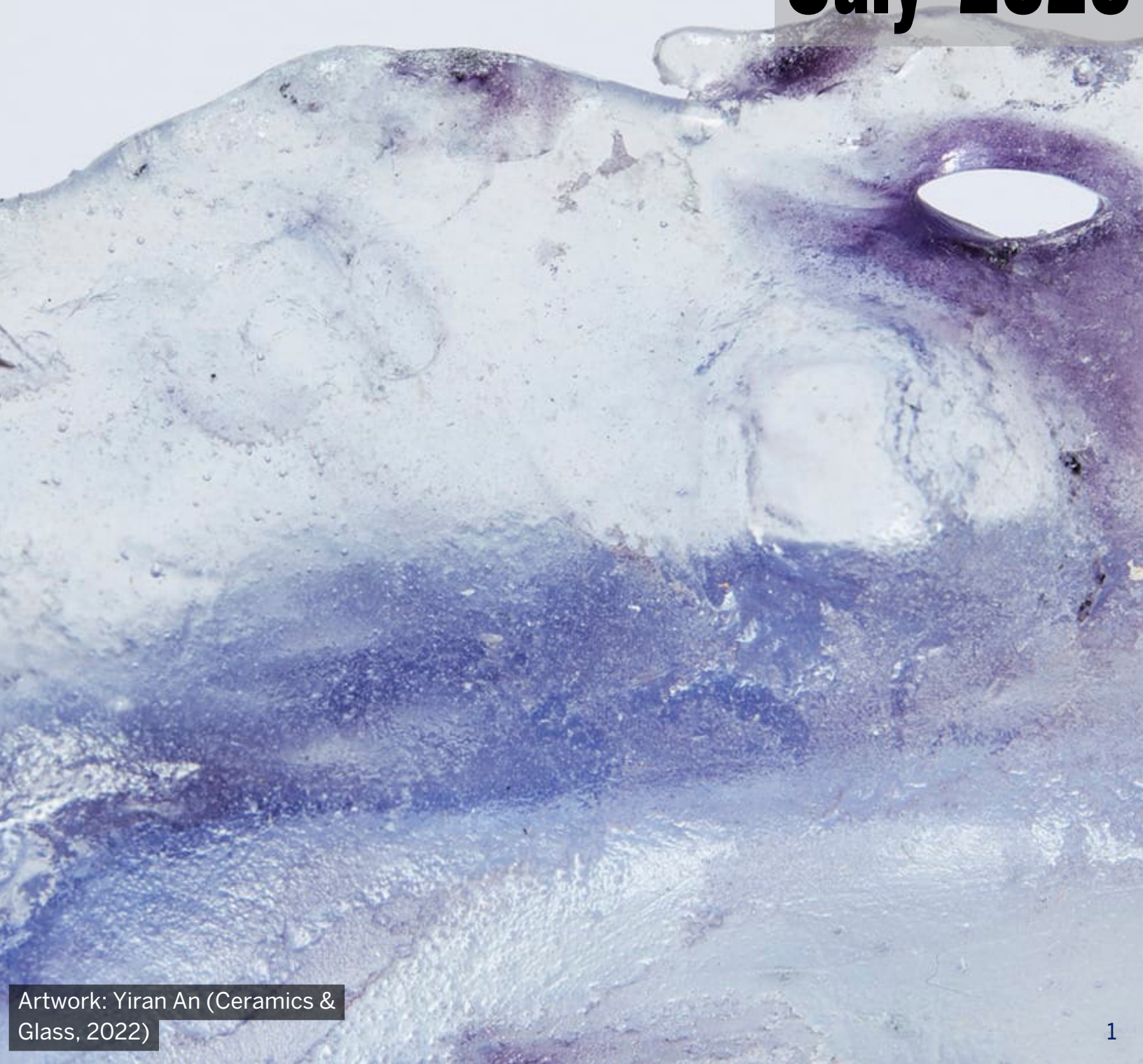


RCA

Head of Programme (Interim) Visual Communication MA July 2026



Artwork: Yiran An (Ceramics &
Glass, 2022)

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Photo: Richard Haughton

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WELCOME TO THE RCA



Photo: Iwan Baan

Founded in 1837, the Royal College of Art is the world's largest postgraduate-only community of art and design students. It has been ranked number one in the world 12 consecutive years (QS World University Rankings by Subject 2015-2026).

Studying at the RCA is the starting point for UK and global creative leaders. With more than 30,000 RCA alumni all over the world, the College's graduates form a diverse international network of artists, designers, creators and innovators.

Around 2,500 students are spread across three schools – Architecture, Arts & Humanities, Communication and Design - and in the RCA's Research Centres. The College creates an environment that champions exploration, collaboration and interdisciplinary learning - using art and design to reframe the possibilities of the humanities, technology, and ethics; and equipping graduates for new futures and opportunities

Research is at the heart of the RCA's impact. In active discussion with the world, the College brings interdisciplinary researchers and partners together in vital areas such as climate and sustainability, technology and society, and leads the field in practice-based research. As a result, the RCA is ranked as one of the most research-intensive specialist art and design universities in the UK [under the Research Excellence Framework 2014 and 2021].



Photo: Richard Haughton

The RCA champions exploration, collaboration and interdisciplinary learning - using art and design to reframe the possibilities of the humanities, technology, and ethics. 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.

Current 'real world' practices of our disciplines are fully integrated into our teaching delivery and student learning. The RCA model also consciously uses both the high research active levels of faculty, and the absence of undergraduate provision, to provide concentration and focus, in order to use research to creatively 'disrupt' the learning experience.

Our People



Photo: Richard Haughton

The strength of the RCA lies in its people: our students, academic community, researchers, technical specialists, professional services teams and our global network of alumni and partners.

The RCA's Chancellor is Sir Jony Ive, one of the world's most influential designers. The Pro-Chancellor and Chair of Council is Sir Peter Bazalgette, and the President & Vice-Chancellor — the College's Chief Executive — is Professor Christoph Lindner, who joined the RCA in 2024.

The RCA's academic faculty bring world-leading expertise and industry knowledge to the College's model of teaching. All faculty are actively engaged in their relevant industries and professional practice beyond academia, and the RCA is 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 has a total academic and research workforce of over 400 people, which includes Associate Lecturers, Visiting Professors and Guest Lecturers who bring 'live industry' experience into the taught curriculum

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. Our skilled technical staff and technical resources are integral to delivering an interdisciplinary approach which is a key part of the student experience.



OUR STRATEGIC DIRECTION: TOWARDS THE RCA AT 200 (2026–2030)

The RCA's new Strategic Plan sets out a transformational five-year phase as we begin our journey towards our bicentenary in 2037. Our ambition is to become the world's most influential art and design community, with a global footprint and a renewed approach to research, education, partnerships and organisational culture.

By 2030:

- The College will operate across two revitalised central London campuses, including a reimagined Darwin Building at Kensington.
- We will establish research and education hubs outside the UK for the first time.
- We will strengthen our global partnerships, increase access to scholarships and widen participation for students from all backgrounds.
- We will be recognised for leadership in emerging creative technologies, especially AI, and for our contribution to sustainability, regenerative practice and public good.

Our work is underpinned by the RCA's four values — Collaboration, Curiosity, Inclusion and Integrity — and by commitments to long-term resilience, financial sustainability, staff and student wellbeing, and a culture where creativity and innovation thrive.



The College's ambitions will be delivered through three Strategic Pillars:

Strategic Pillar One

Creating and delivering the best art and design education, dialogue and research.

Strategic Pillar Two

Championing a community with outstanding potential who are diverse, inclusive and connected.

Strategic Pillar Three

Convening transformational exchanges of art and design expertise and ideas.

Our Values



Photo: Shaun James

The RCA community operates in line with four agreed values:



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.



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.



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.



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.

Programme: Visual Communication



Programme: Visual Communication

Visual Communication at the Royal College of Art is committed to a practical and discursive approach to making. We see communication as a conversation to form bridges, connect people and exchange ideas. We are a community of critical thinkers and makers leading the way in social, cultural, and political practices. We have a long history of collaborative and cooperative working methods centred on compassion, listening, respecting and (un)learning. We encourage our students to question the status quo, explore multiple viewpoints and embrace complexity. Our purpose is to work together across different fields to bring about transformative movements that invite activism and change.

Head of Programme (Interim): Visual Communication MA

THE ROLE

Head of Programme (interim),

Responsible to: Dean of School of Communication and Design

Responsible for: The Programme's staff

Grade: Senior Manager

The appointment of an interim Head of Programme will ensure continuity of programme leadership during the 26/27 academic year.

Reporting to the Dean and also working closely with senior colleagues across the School of Communication and Design and the College, the Head of Programme (Interim) will provide hands-on academic leadership and will take overall responsibility for academic quality and direction, research, teaching and learning, and management of all the resources of the programme and staff team. They will build upon the recognised status and high standing of the programme to ensure that the established academic philosophy and vision for the programme is closely aligned with the mission and strategic plan of the College, continuing to develop and refresh it and take on new advances and challenges.

As a member of the School Leadership Team of the School of Communications, the new Head of Programme (Interim) will be expected to engage in planned research aligned to the College's and School's strategy, which is eligible for submission to the REF2021 and subsequent research assessment exercises at 3* or 4* levels.

They will prepare the programme for substantial change including Major Modifications to bring the programme in line with the College's new Academic Framework, and in preparation for the relocation to the Kensington campus. They will stay abreast of current issues and developments in higher education and keep up to date with current relevant practice nationally and internationally, ensuring that the programme is informed by changes in practice, education, and the wider socio-political and technological environment.

The Head of Programme (Interim) will communicate and represent the interests of the programme within the School and College as a whole, and will facilitate the possibilities for collaboration and further links with other Schools, aligned to the School and College plans. They will also work across the RCA contributing to planning, management, development and communication at institutional level through participation in College committees, and will be responsible for staffing, financial management, curriculum, and quality assurance and enhancement.

Critical to the success of the post-holder will be their role in assuring high quality recruitment in line with annual College targets. Their ability to direct the MA Programme, and make an individual contribution to the academic work of the programme based on personal expertise, particularly through teaching, supporting learning and supervising research, will also be important.

Main Duties and Responsibilities

Learning and Teaching

- Ensure that the programme is organised and managed effectively, that resources and budgets are deployed efficiently, and that communications with students, applicants and alumni, and partner organisations, are carried out clearly and in good time.
- Ensure that students are issued with all relevant information in a timely and accurate fashion to enable them to succeed in their studies, including course materials, timetables, project briefs, assessment guidelines, and any changes to delivery that might arise.
- Ensure that appropriate learning, teaching and assessment strategies, curriculum content and organisation are employed for the programmes of study and are communicated effectively to students.
- Propose and initiate developments which improve the effectiveness of learning, teaching and assessment and which maintain the currency of the curriculum.
- Encourage innovation in content and delivery, and to support pedagogical innovation in line with developments in higher education, and the development of the RCA's academic framework.
- Ensure that proposed enhancements to content and curriculum are articulated appropriately to all stakeholders and introduced in a timely fashion with appropriate consultation and approval from the College's Academic Standards Committee.



Main Duties and Responsibilities

Research

- Ensure that research activity aligns with the RCA's strategic plan and has the potential to advance the research foci of the School, and to deliver credible outputs through staff, practice-based and thematic research, and externally-funded research; to ensure that the curriculum reflects advances in the discipline through research.
- Be actively involved in, and proactively support staff in, the development of individual research plans, and competitive external research grant applications to RCUK, charities, industry and creative arts funding bodies, as a contribution to the School of Design's research income target.
- Be research active, and eligible for submission to the REF at a minimum 3* level.
- Produce, in consultation with the Dean, a personal 5-year research plan and annual milestones, and ensure the production of 5-year research plans and annual milestones for direct academic reports.
- Disseminate research outcomes to the public domain through recognised appropriate means, ensuring that their impact is planned and tracked and recorded on the College research repository.

Knowledge transfer & executive education

- Actively build relationships with the profession and with industry, and other relevant partners to promote the College and its students, to develop potential research and other revenue opportunities.
- Lead proposals for knowledge exchange funding and manage any grants awarded to ensure delivery of objectives.
- Develop opportunities for knowledge exchange and lead on knowledge exchange projects ensuring value for the College.



Main Duties and Responsibilities

Recruitment

- Ensure that the programmes meet their recruitment targets agreed annually by Senate and allocated within the School by the Dean, including in consultation with partner organisations.
- Undertake timely and effective recruitment activities as directed by the Dean (in liaison with Communications and Marketing), to ensure that sufficient offers to study are made to high quality candidates at MA to achieve College recruitment targets agreed annually by Senate.
- Ensure an appropriate balance is achieved in recruitment of Home, EU and International students, at both MA and research degree level, in agreement with College targets.
- Support the Dean in any appropriate recruitment activities that may be required, in line with the College Strategic Plan and Recruitment Strategy.
- Ensure staff in the programmes receive appropriate training and support in order to be able to carry out recruitment activities to ensure that annual recruitment achieves target and is completed in a timely fashion.
- Ensure that the programmes maximise opportunities for progression from the RCA Graduate Diploma programme, including fulfilling commitments to accept applicants from the Graduate Diploma meeting the College's published admissions criteria.

Staff Management

- Be responsible, in consultation with the Dean (and for senior appointments, the Deputy Vice-Chancellor), for the recruitment of staff in the programmes; to manage and appraise their performance annually enabling staff to become more effective in their roles through personal and professional development, including through the creation of an agreed five-year research plan and annual milestones.
- Ensure that contracted academic staff are engaged in research bidding and projects whilst continuing to build their own high-quality outputs in preparation for the REF.
- Ensure that all staff are engaged in, and supported to become engaged in, the College's 3rd goal of knowledge exchange and executive education, with appropriate milestones.
- Ensure that all contracted academic staff on the programmes are in possession at appointment, or attain within their specified probationary period, recognised professional qualifications in learning and teaching and in research supervision; further, ensure staff undertake appropriate professional development to ensure currency, and plan effectively to ensure capacity is able to meet demand in this area.
- Support and, where appropriate, direct staff in the planning, conduct, delivery and public dissemination of high quality research.
- Delegate responsibility for these activities where appropriate and monitor the effectiveness of such arrangements.

Main Duties and Responsibilities

Resource Management

- Liaise with colleagues from Library and Technical Services over workshop and IT provision, planning and maintenance, and to work with the Technical Services Manager to ensure effective and efficient matching of workshop facilities to MA and staff research requirements.
- Liaise with the College's timetabling manager over the timing and most efficient use of facilities.
- Manage and monitor the use of facilities and the deployment of available resources to the benefit of the students, and in line with the established policy and strategy of the School Leadership Team.
- Ensure that annual and other cycles of resource planning and space allocation are conducted in a timely and proactive fashion, particularly in support of student recruitment.
- Where responsibility is held for a facility or resource intended for use by students from a number of programmes, to direct, manage and monitor use to the benefit of all and to ensure that facilities and resources are used by staff and students in accordance with appropriate regard for health and safety and in accordance with relevant regulations.

Student Progress and Welfare

- Implement College systems for enabling, supporting and monitoring students' academic progress and personal welfare.
- Establish systems which ensure effective feedback from students on the quality of their learning or research expertise.

Examinations

- Participate in student assessments, to chair Admissions and Examinations Boards and to ensure that there is compliance with the College regulations for the constitution and conduct of Admissions and Examinations Boards.
- Ensure that programme staff of appropriate seniority are trained, inducted and competent to conduct and chair examinations.
- Provide all results and records required by the College in a timely manner, and to attend meetings as required by the College to report and discuss the outcomes of Examinations.

Main Duties and Responsibilities

Quality Assurance and Enhancement

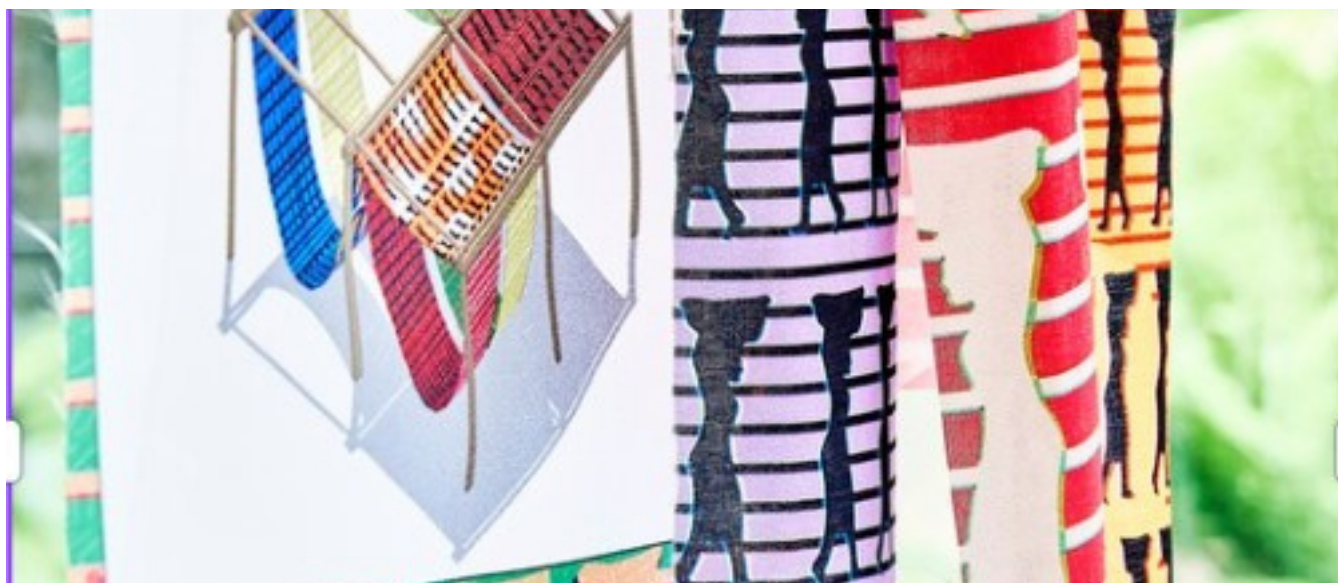
- Ensure the programme's alignment with the College's systems for academic quality and standards assurance (for example in the preparation of School annual review documents, recommendation for appointment of External Examiners and Internal Moderators, leading preparation for, and participation in, periodic validation events).
- Ensure the programme achieves minimum threshold standards of student satisfaction as set by Senate and measured by the annual student survey, and ensure that if the programme fails to achieve minimum threshold standards that an action plan is implemented and realised to the satisfaction of the College's Academic Standards Committee.
- Support proactive engagement, including that of staff, with enhancement of student learning opportunities and the student experience.

Information and Documentation

- Ensure the accuracy, reliability and consistency of any printed or electronically published information about the programme and its activities intended for the students, staff or public, including annual reviews, prospectus entries, staff profiles, research reports etc.
- Ensure that information in the public domain about the programme is compliant with guidance and/or requirements of the Competition and Markets Authority and the Office for Students, in liaison with the Communications and Marketing team, and Registry.

Internal Liaison and Communication

- Liaise with other staff within the School and the College for the purpose of sharing good practice and promoting interdisciplinary activity for the benefit of students.
- Ensure the dissemination of information about the programme within the College and to ensure the dissemination of information from School and College sources within the programme.



Main Duties and Responsibilities

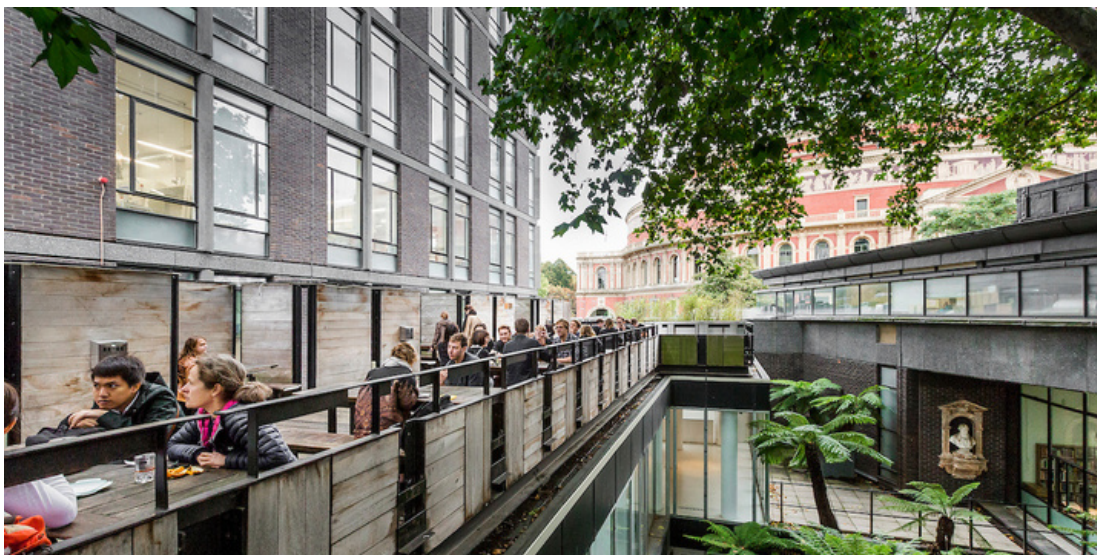
External Liaison and Collaboration

- In agreement with the Dean and Communications and Marketing, direct and manage the programme's external relations, in partnership with key colleagues and in alignment with the College's strategies for recruitment, internationalisation, marketing, research and knowledge exchange; maintaining and developing contacts and collaboration with other institutions, public bodies, funding organisations, commerce and industry to the benefit of the programme and its students.
- Ensure that appropriate systems are in place to review regularly the effectiveness of any formal collaborations with other institutions, and ensuring satisfaction of all partners, and to liaise with the Dean and Deputy Vice-Chancellor as appropriate and/or required.
- A Head of Programme will have an established reputation in the discipline and the ability to provide energetic leadership and professional vision in a demanding academic environment, and should have a combination of skills and experience, acquired in both academic and professional contexts, which provide the competence to fulfil the managerial, teaching and research aspects of the role.



Essential

- A proven leader of international stature in the expanded field of Visual Communication;
- An inspirational teacher dedicated to enhancing the student experience and the development of independent postgraduates through currency of content and innovative teaching methods;
- Intellectually curious, the Head of Programme will seek out interdisciplinary opportunities both within the RCA and among other cultural, scientific or educational organisations nationally and internationally.
- A leading academic or practitioner with an internationally recognised track record in research (3* minimum);
- An expert in one field, with an appetite for making connections to other fields of intellectual enquiry in the sciences, arts, or humanities;
- A pragmatist who recognises that intellectual rigour and creative excellence must be underpinned by sound infrastructure, financial sustainability, and administrative systems;
- Experience of working around themes and discourses that will further the diversity of the RCA community;
- Experience of academic and financial management, including budget control;
- Demonstrable commitment to diversity, equality of opportunity and the ability to work harmoniously with colleagues and students of all cultures and backgrounds;



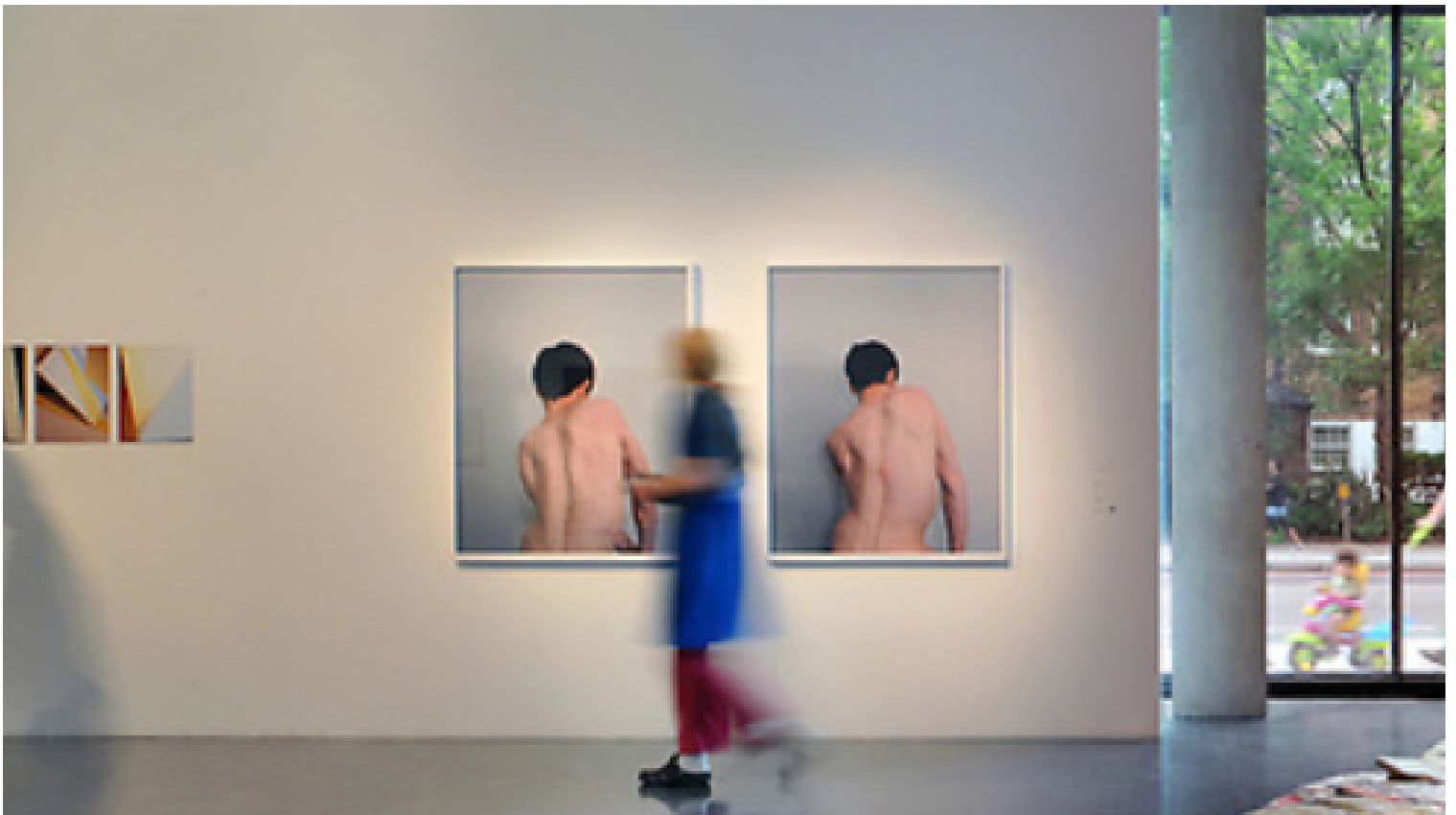
Desirable

- Experience of academic and financial management, including budget control;
- Experience of programme management and quality assurance and enhancement frameworks in higher education;
- Possession of an earned doctorate;
- Possession of a recognised qualification in teaching and learning (or equivalent in research degrees supervision);
- Fellowship of the Higher Education Academy (Advance HE).

Pay & Benefits

Additional Information:

- Responsible to: Dean of School of Communication and Design
- Responsible for: Programme's staff
- Location: Battersea, Kensington and White City, London
- Contract: Full-time. Appointment, fixed term for 1 year
- Grade: SM1



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

30 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.



Equality, diversity and inclusion - Disability and neurodiversity

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





12 YEARS as the world's
N°1 University for Art & Design

QS World University Rankings by Subject 2015–26

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