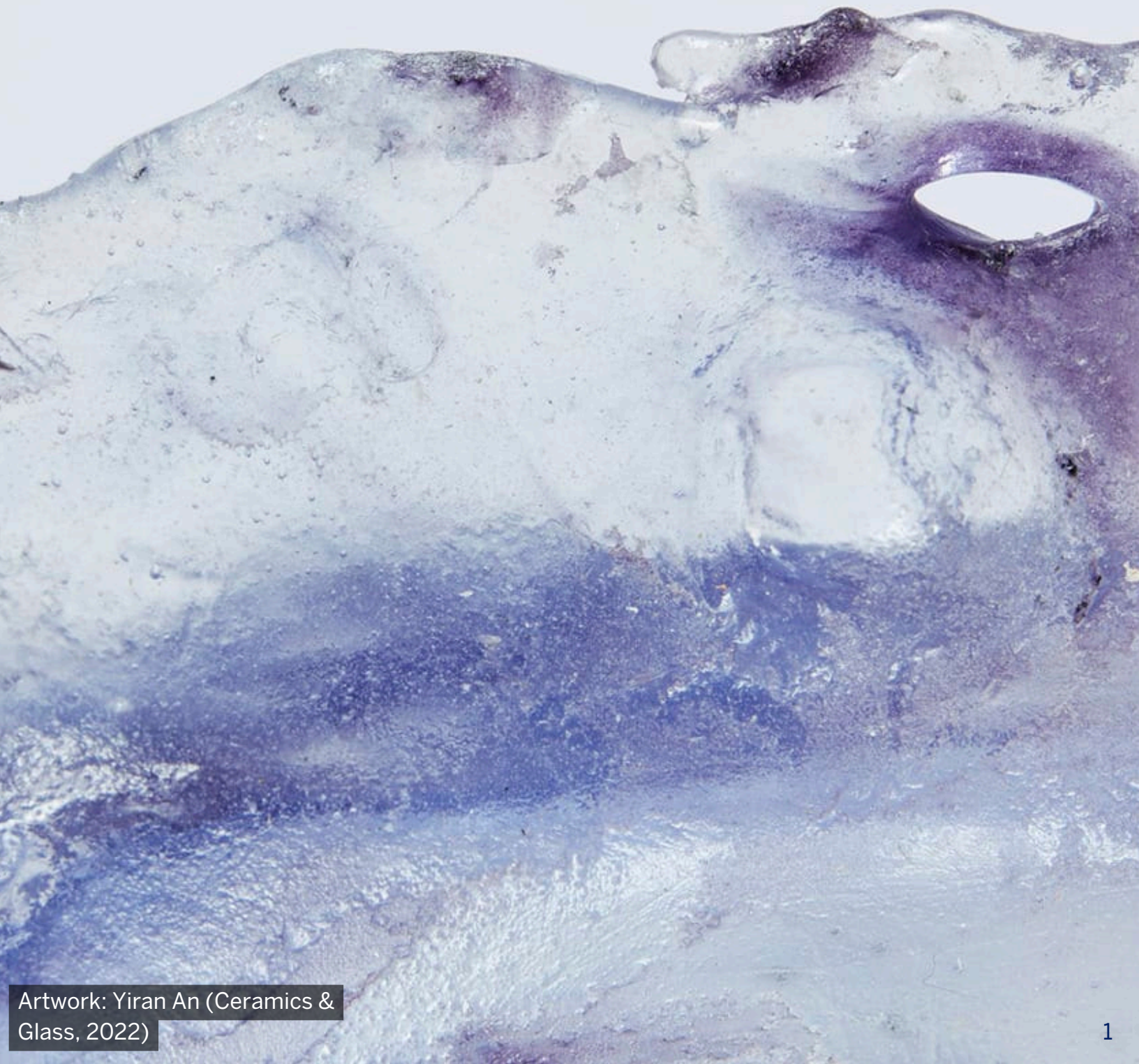


RCA

Principal Gifts Manager August 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 & 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.



Philanthropy plays a significant role in the life of the RCA and Advancement & Alumni work with a community of engaged philanthropists to support the College's vision for the future.

Our alumni, alongside donors, companies, trusts and foundations are all integral to ensuring our students and staff have the resources to perform at their best.

The Advancement & Alumni culture is collaborative, ambitious and transparent. We work closely with colleagues across the College as well the Council and value the ability to act as an ambassador for the RCA.

Principal Gifts Manager



Purpose of the post:

The Principal Gifts Manager reports to the Deputy Director of Advancement & Alumni and, working alongside two Major Gift Managers and an Officer, will manage a portfolio of prospects and donors giving 6 to 7 figure gifts to support the College's mission and vision.

The current Advancement & Alumni relations team is small, comprising 16 members at present, operating in a small postgraduate university of only approximately 418 FTE. The team is responsible for all philanthropic income to the College and for the relationship with the College's over 30,000 alumni.

It is important that any prospective employee is comfortable with the scale and ethos of a small postgraduate university. There is a strong sense of collegiality that drives the RCA's success and team members at all levels work together to a shared goal and purpose. Pulling together as a team, a willingness to assist a colleague on an assignment, to have an open mind to new ways of working and indeed the desire to jump in and deliver a new project, are the attitudes and mindset we prize at the RCA and which have contributed to our sustained high performance.

The Principal Gifts Manager will shape fundraising propositions from individuals both in the UK and internationally, dedicating time to stewarding and cultivating current and prospective donors to ensure renewals and developing new philanthropic income streams. As Principal Gifts Manager, you will make a genuine and direct impact by working closely with academic colleagues to craft compelling and exciting fundraising proposals to actively support the RCA and its students.

The successful candidate will have experience of building relationships to successfully raise philanthropic gifts and meet agreed targets, an entrepreneurial flair with a high level of self motivation and initiative, and a demonstrable desire to achieve results and make a difference. They will also have excellent organisational and prioritisation skills with the ability to manage a portfolio of donors and prospects, while maintaining thorough attention to detail, whilst working to tight deadlines.



Main Duties and Responsibilities

- Strategic cultivation and management of a portfolio of prospects and donors giving £1m+ annually to a range of areas across the College including capital projects, academic ambitions and scholarships needs.
- Development of creative plans in close collaboration with the Director and Deputy Director of Advancement & Alumni that include; research, cultivation, solicitation, and stewardship to build institutional support and confidence
- Represent the RCA at prospect meetings and accompany senior staff and in engagement activity, including undertaking international travel when appropriate
- Develop and agree a plan for securing new philanthropic funding and take responsibility for managing and implementing this plan, ensuring delivery within timescales to targets agreed with the Deputy Director
- Write and produce excellent proposals and cases for support, ensuring they include clear, realistic and achievable delivery and stewardship targets, and are delivered in a timely fashion.
- As appropriate, ensure that donors and prospects are provided with knowledge and information about legacies and of their importance to the College.
- Work with colleagues in Advancement & Alumni and beyond to ensure donors receive regular and timely submission of proposals and reports.



Main Duties and Responsibilities

- Ensure that all communications with donors are of a consistently high quality and adhere to donor and RCA standards, including where appropriate, brand guidelines.
- Ensure donor intelligence and feedback is captured and recorded, including through meetings, telephone calls, events, correspondences and any other interactions.
- Ensure records for donors are current and accurate, making effective use of the RCA's prospect tracking systems and ensuring accurate recording of data.
- Research new and existing prospects that align closely with the RCA's strategic objectives, seeking support, as appropriate, from the Prospect Research Team.
- Working with colleagues in Advancement & Alumni, ensure RCA staff receive concise, accurate and informative briefings, allowing meetings and contacts with prospects and donors to be as effective as possible.
- Build effective working relationships with colleagues across the RCA to promote philanthropy and the work of the Advancement & Alumni team and ensure productive cross-department cooperation.
- Work with the A&A events team to propose appropriate engagement opportunities for donors.
- Provide advice and guidance to senior staff across the College in relation to fundraising research, cultivation, approaches, solicitations and stewardship.
- Participate in cross-departmental meetings connected to the post holder's portfolio of prospects and donors, fostering good levels of open information sharing, intelligence gathering and communication.
- Take responsibility where appropriate to liaise with Finance, Academic, Marketing & Communications and other departments to ensure that all aspects of each donor's journey are delivered in a timely manner, providing creative, powerful, engaging and inspiring experiences.
- Ensure that all activities comply fully with current GDPR legislation, codes of practice and ethical guidelines.
- The Principal Gifts Manager may also be expected to carry out other duties, which may be reasonably requested. The job may involve travel or occasional evening and weekend work as required.

PART ONE

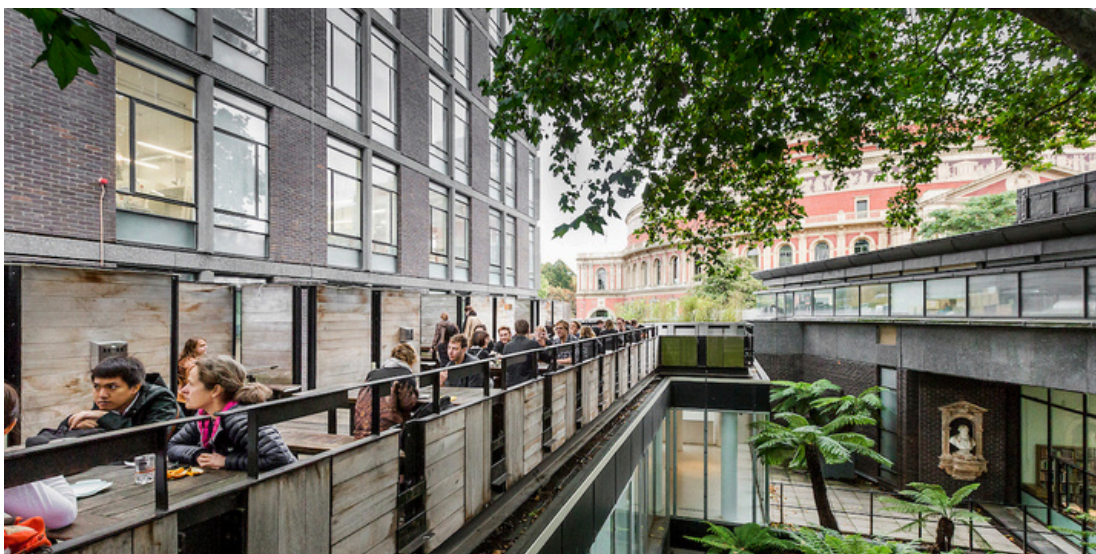
Knowledge and experience

Essential:

- Significant experience working with high net-worth individuals, trusts and foundations and companies in a philanthropic context, in a university or other large complex organisation.
- Demonstrable experience working with a portfolio of prospects and soliciting gifts of 7 figures.
- Experience of building relationships with donors and prospects to successfully raise philanthropic gifts and meet agreed targets.
- Experience of developing fundraising strategy and/or contributing to the planning and strategic delivery of campaigns.
- Experience of managing multiple and complex fundraising activities and leadership activities simultaneously.
- Proven track record of establishing credibility and confidence with key stakeholders at a senior level, with the ability to influence and negotiate effectively.
- Proven track record of working closely with senior academics or subject matter experts to achieve fundraising goals.
- Experience of using Raisers' Edge or other similar fundraising CRM database.

Desirable:

- Experience of fundraising for Capital projects.



PART TWO

Skills and abilities

Essential:

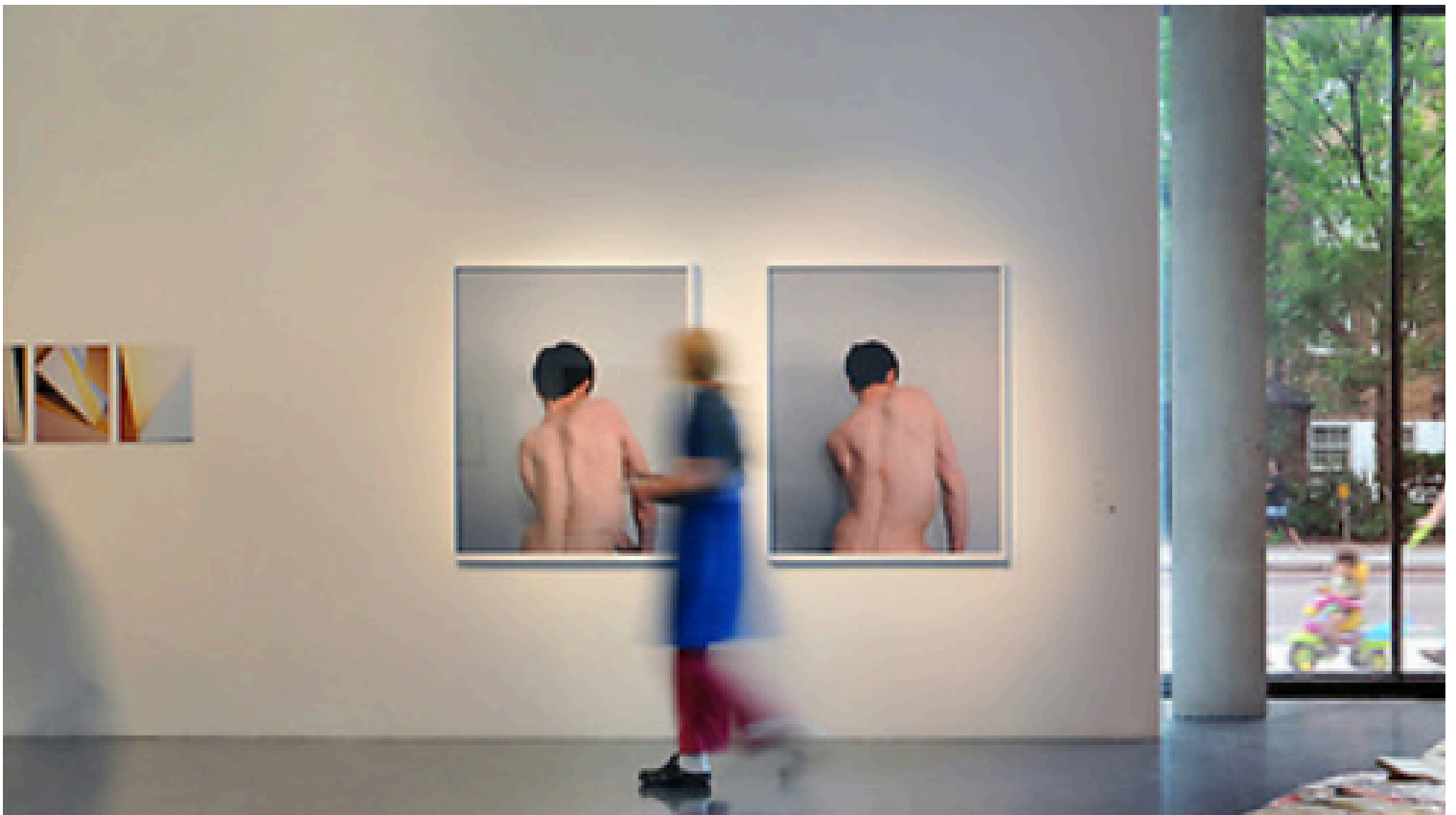
- Interest in and enthusiasm for art, design, higher education and the work of the RCA.
- Excellent organisational and prioritisation skills with the ability to manage a portfolio of donors and prospects, while maintaining thorough attention to detail whilst working to tight deadlines.
- Excellent interpersonal skills, confident written and verbal communication skills and the ability to work collaboratively to build relationships with credibility and gravitas, including using tact and diplomacy when required.
- An ability to act independently and decisively without constant direction when the situation demands, whilst also having the skill to know when others should or must be consulted.
- Excellent working skills and abilities in using MS Office (Word, Excel, PowerPoint), Google G Suite (Gmail, Calendar, Docs, Sheets, Drive), Adobe Creative Cloud (InDesign, Photoshop), and other relevant IT tools.
- Financially literate with the ability to accurately develop budgets and financial forecasts for proposals and reports, particularly where several colleagues or departments are involved



Pay & Benefits

Additional Information:

- Location: Based at the Kensington campus.
- Hybrid working possible with a minimum of 3 days per week in the office.
- Working hours (35 hours per week) 9.30am to 5.30pm with an hour each day for lunch.
- 30 days annual leave plus extended breaks at Christmas and Easter, at the discretion of the College.
- Cycle to work scheme, pension, Interest-free season ticket loans are available alongside many other benefits.
- Department: Advancement & Alumni
- Tenure: 1.0 FTE, permanent role
- Responsible to: Deputy Director of Advancement & Alumni
- Full time salary: Grade 8 £49,533 - £53,609 per annum including London Allowance



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