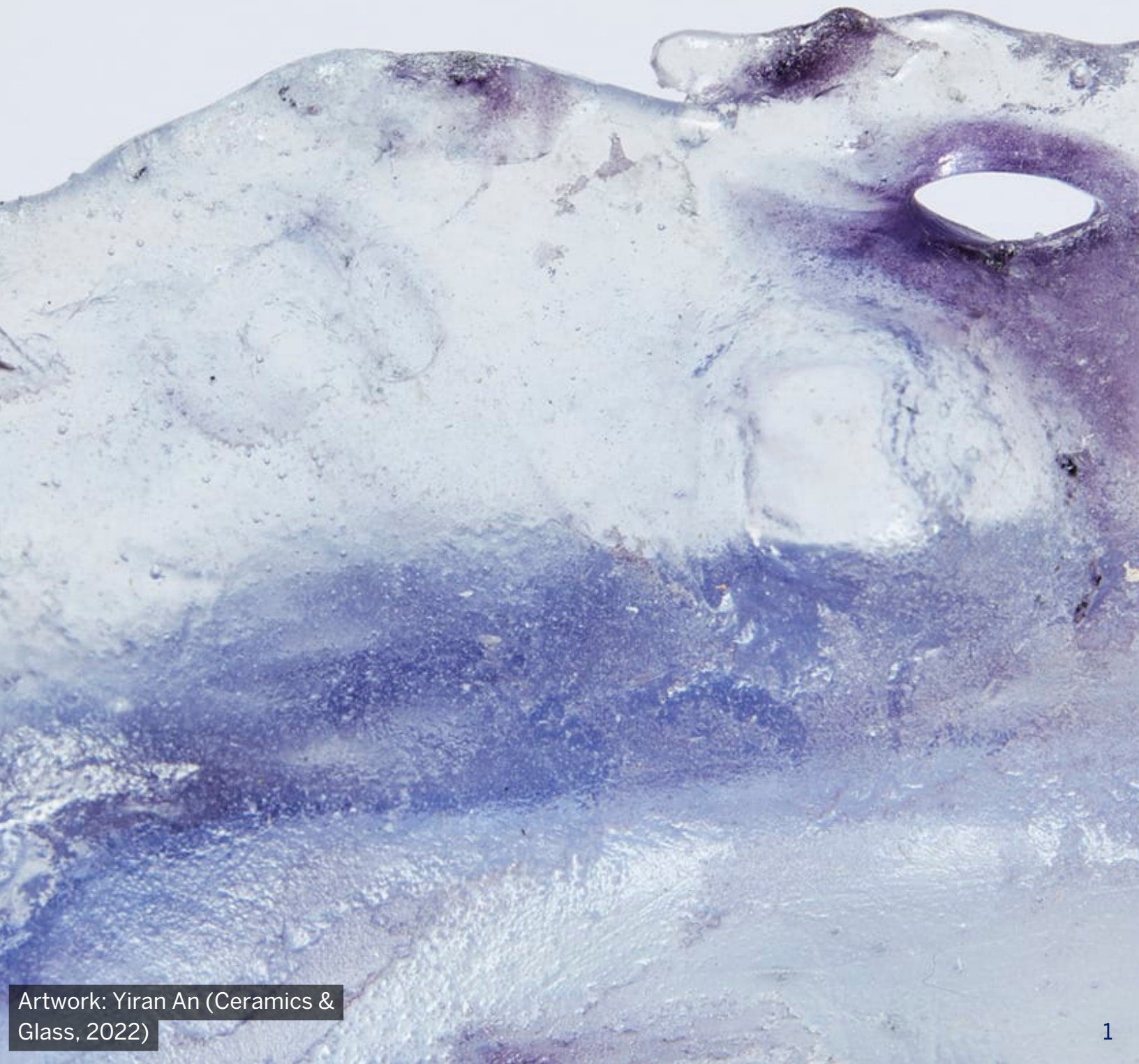


RCA

Head of Quality & Partnerships 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.

Head of Quality & Partnerships



Purpose of the Post

The Head of Quality & Partnerships will provide senior leadership and institutional oversight for quality assurance and academic governance across the College's international partnership portfolio, with an initial focus on the Riyadh University of Art programme launches, validation and ongoing annual review.

The postholder will design, implement and oversee robust validation, monitoring and regulatory frameworks to ensure that partnership provision aligns with institutional regulations and UK sector expectations. They will act as the College's senior lead for partnership quality assurance, holding responsibility for safeguarding academic standards, managing regulatory risk and ensuring governance integrity in a transnational context.

The role combines operational leadership with embedded senior governance oversight. The postholder will operate with a high degree of autonomy and authority, advising Executive leadership and academic committees on matters relating to academic standards, regulatory compliance and reputational risk.

Main Duties and Responsibilities

Strategic Leadership and Governance

Provide senior leadership for partnership quality assurance, ensuring that validation, monitoring and review processes are robust, proportionate and aligned with institutional strategy.

Develop and maintain a partnership quality framework that aligns with the UK Quality Code, UK statutory requirements and institutional regulations and expectations.

Advise the Pro Vice-Chancellor (Education & Student Success), Academic Registrar and Executive leadership on regulatory risk, standards assurance and governance implications.

Design and deliver a suite of policies to support the development, implementation and sustainability of partnerships, including the development of a staff-facing toolkit to enable success.

Collaborate with Executive leadership and senior academics to ensure that partnership proposals are robust, and serve the RCA strategic plan.



Main Duties and Responsibilities

Establish clear expectations for identifying and managing risk, and be responsible for overseeing and reporting on risk.

Advise international partners on the requirements for UK quality assurance and standards, where required.

Establish clear escalation pathways for quality and compliance risks, ensuring timely resolution and reporting to appropriate governance bodies.

Contribute to institutional committees including Academic Standards Committee and related forums, providing expert advice on partnership quality matters.

Programme Validation and Approval

Lead the design and coordination of validation and revalidation processes for partnership programmes.

Ensure that programme specifications, assessment frameworks and regulatory documentation meet institutional and sector standards.

Oversee the tracking and resolution of validation conditions and recommendations.

Provide strategic guidance to academic programme leads on standards, curriculum coherence and regulatory compliance.

Ensure validation processes are documented, transparent and audit-ready.



Main Duties and Responsibilities

Quality Monitoring and Enhancement

Establish and oversee Annual Programme Review (APR) processes for partnership provision, ensuring alignment with internal cycles.

Develop a set of relevant KPIs to measure quality, standards and ongoing success, and embed these into an annualised cycle of institutional governance.

Monitor programme performance indicators including student progression, attainment and feedback data.

Ensure systematic tracking of action plans and enhancement activities.

Identify trends, risks or emerging issues and recommend appropriate mitigation strategies.

Promote continuous improvement of the partnership frameworks, relevant policies and quality systems to ensure they remain proportionate, effective and aligned with internal requirements.

External Examining and Assessment Governance

Oversee the appointment and induction of External Examiners for partnership provision.

Ensure moderation and assessment frameworks are consistent, transparent and aligned with institutional standards.

Monitor external examiner reporting and institutional responses, ensuring accountability and timely resolution of issues.

Advise on assessment governance matters in complex or high-risk contexts.



Main Duties and Responsibilities

Risk Management and Regulatory Compliance

Maintain expert knowledge of the OfS Conditions of Registration, UK Quality Code and any other relevant regulatory expectations within the UK higher education sector.

Interpret regulatory requirements in complex or novel partnership contexts, using appropriate judgement to ensure compliance.

Ensure partnership activity is compliant with institutional policy and external expectations.

Prepare reports for Executive Board and Planning & Resources Committee where required.

Contribute to audit preparation and external review processes.

Partnership and Institutional Liaison

Act as the primary senior contact for quality assurance matters within international partnerships.

Develop effective working relationships with Project Directors, Project Managers, academic leads, Registry, Student Success and other professional services teams.

Ensure alignment between partnership quality processes and internal quality systems, avoiding duplication or inconsistency.

Support the integration of partnership provision within broader institutional governance structures, work closely and collaboratively with colleagues in Academic Registry and Student Success.

Dimensions of the Role

- Leads partnership quality assurance across multiple staged programme launches.
- Exercises independent professional judgement in high-risk regulatory contexts.
- Advises Executive leadership on academic standards and governance risk.
- Manages a defined quality portfolio with institutional reputational impact.
- Line manages the Quality Assurance Manager.

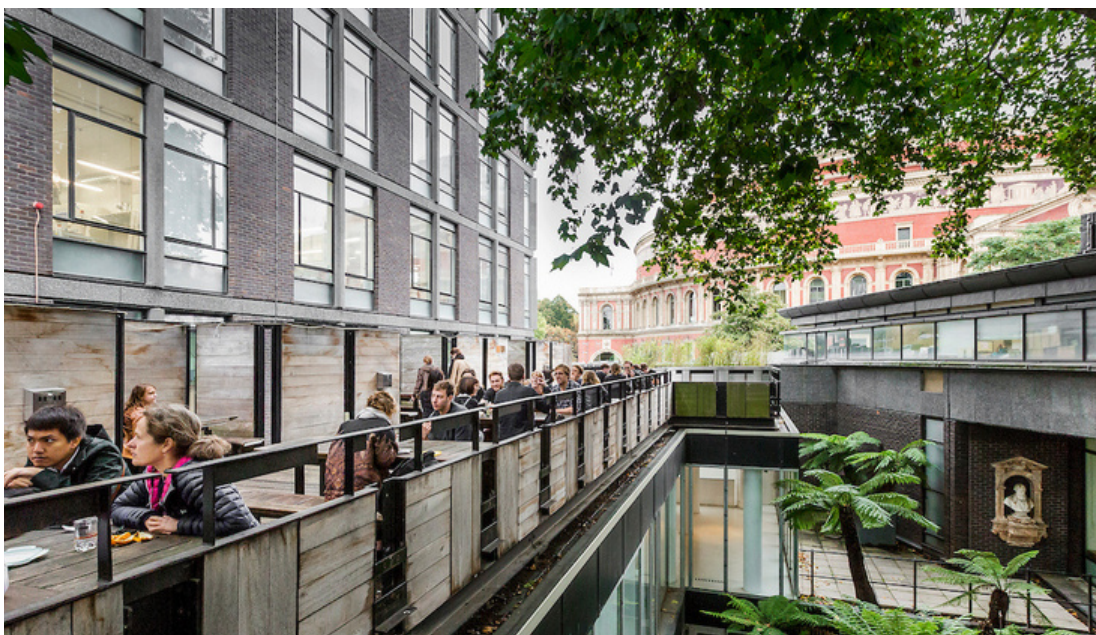
The role does not carry direct budget ownership but has a significant impact on institutional risk management and standards protection.

Essential

- Educated to postgraduate level or equivalent professional experience.
- Extensive experience of quality assurance and academic governance within UK higher education.
- In-depth knowledge of programme validation, annual monitoring and external examining frameworks.
- Demonstrable understanding of the UK Quality Code and regulatory expectations.
- Experience of chairing or supporting validation events and academic committees.
- Proven ability to interpret complex regulatory requirements and apply them in practice.
- Strong analytical and report-writing skills, with experience advising senior leadership.
- Excellent organisational and project management skills, with the ability to manage concurrent complex workstreams.
- Ability to exercise sound judgement and manage risk in sensitive or high-profile contexts.
- High level of digital literacy and understanding of data protection and information governance principles.
- Strong interpersonal and influencing skills, with the ability to work effectively across academic and professional services teams.

Desirable

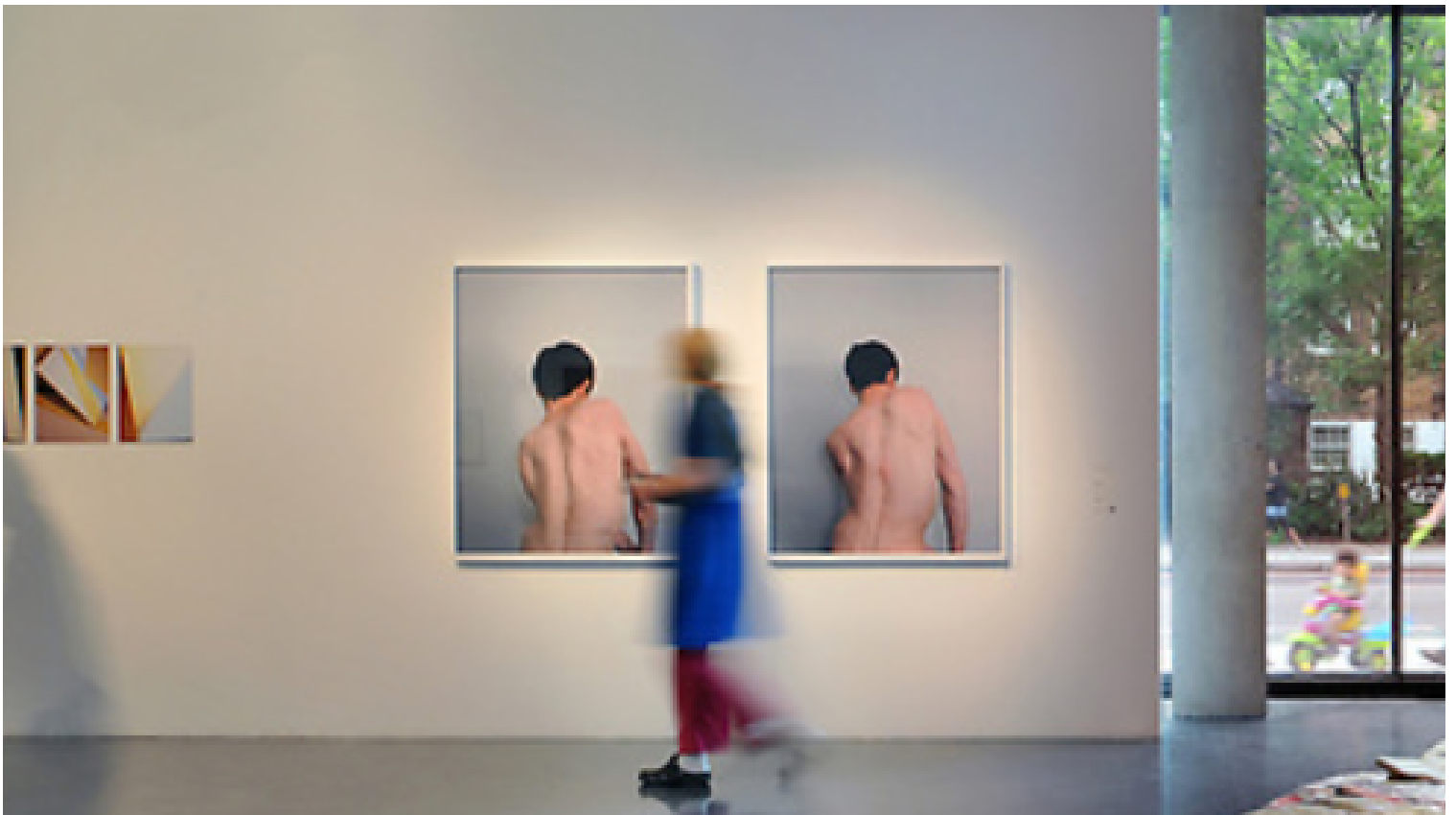
- Experience of transnational education or international partnerships.
- Experience operating at institutional committee level.
- Experience in a specialist art, design or creative higher education context



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: Education & Student Success
- Tenure: 1.0 FTE, 3 year fixed term contract
- Responsible to: Academic Registrar
- Full time salary: Grade 10 £64,753 - £72,255 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