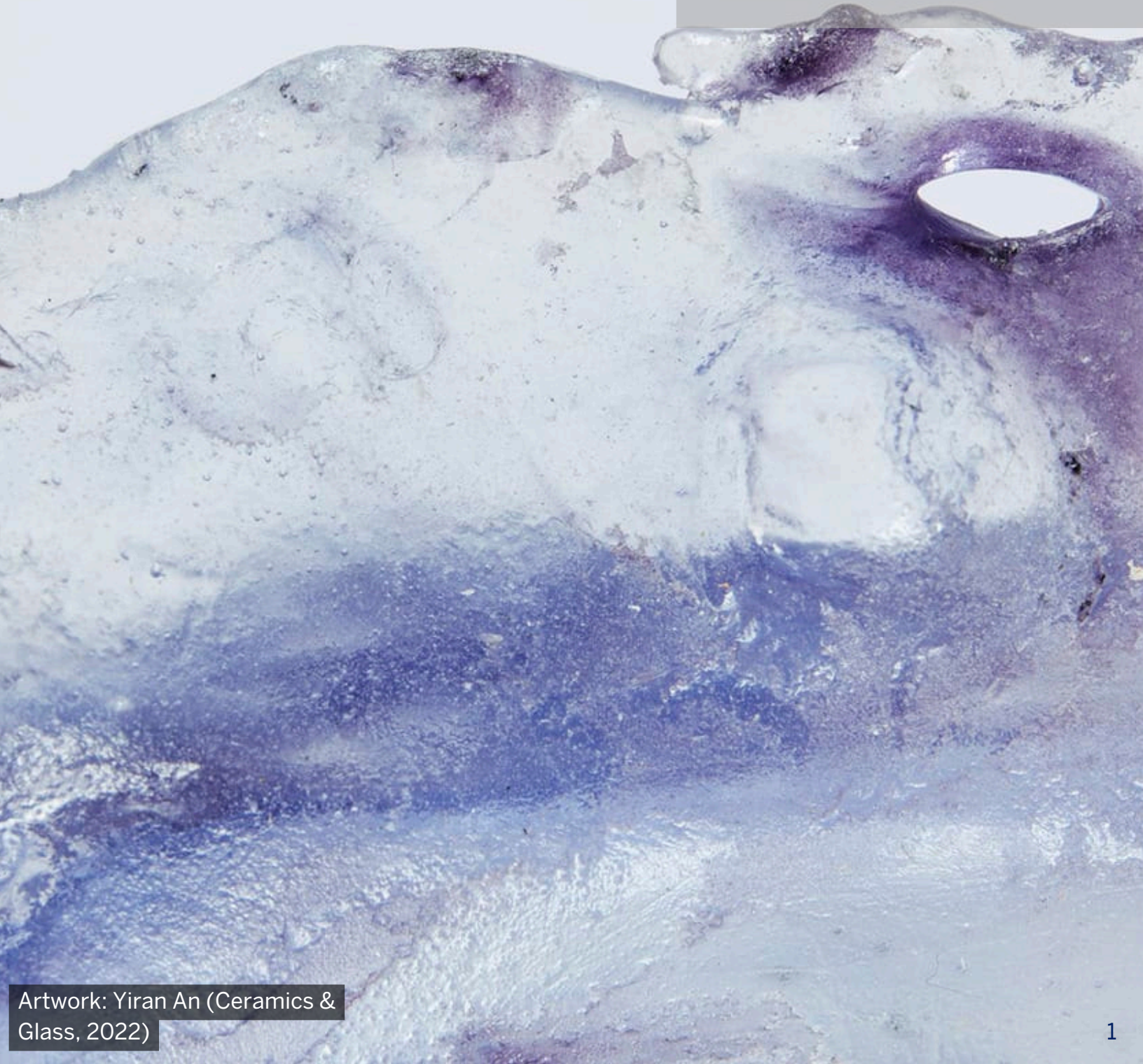


RCA

Postdoctoral Research Associate - School of Architecture October 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:



Curiosity

We have a tenacious commitment to innovation and openness to change. We positively interrogate ideas, assumptions and plans and welcome the honest scrutiny that is alive in a learning community.



Inclusion

We celebrate diversity and embrace difference as a source of strength. We strive for an inclusive RCA community, removing barriers and challenging exclusionary and discriminatory practices.



Collaboration

We value what happens together and we help and support each other to achieve our collective goals. We work in partnership with our students, staff, alumni, institutions and communities across the globe to make a lasting difference.



Integrity

We are always willing to listen, we offer constructive feedback and we promote accountability, building relationships of mutual trust and respect. We are resilient in the face of challenges, pursuing outcomes with individual, cultural, societal and economic impact.

School of Architecture



Purpose of the post

The School of Architecture is looking for a Postdoctoral Research Associate to support its new Intergenerational Design Lab and other strategic research initiatives within the School, including expertise in the following areas:

- Climate change and its relationship to the built and natural environment, including how environments are understood and experienced across different scales and epistemological perspectives;
- Architectural histories of the Global South, particularly West Asian, Southeast Asian or African contexts, including decolonial approaches that situate architecture within broader cultural and anthropological frameworks.
- Models of green transition within architecture especially in relation to impacts of heat and water stress within cities and the role of design innovation.
- Systems of representation within curatorial and exhibition-based practices within architecture and the visual arts, especially relating to spatial representation, technology and performance.
- Interdisciplinary research on housing and social value, building on existing work by Sam Jacoby (see <https://housingstandardisation.com> and <https://ldml.org>).

They will also contribute to the development and delivery of collaborative research projects, and executive education in the School. The role will include project management and reporting, as well as close liaison with academic, industry, public-sector, and other external partners.

Postdoctoral Research Associate



The post requires a researcher with excellent research skills, experience of project management, and the ability to work independently and collaboratively within multidisciplinary research teams.

We are seeking to fill two complementary positions, comprising 0.6 FTE and 0.4 FTE appointments. Applications are welcomed from individuals interested in either role, as well as from candidates who wish to be considered for both positions, i.e at 1.0FTE.

The final appointment structure will be determined through the selection process. Subject to the outcome, we may appoint two candidates or offer both posts to one candidate as a full-time appointment.

Responsibilities

- To undertake high-quality, rigorous, and collaborative research within the Intergenerational Design Lab, particularly on housing and social value in relation to aforementioned areas of expertise
- To develop research objectives and interests that align with the Lab's research agenda and wider School research priorities, working closely with the Research Lead.
- Manage own research to agreed milestones and contribute to the development of collaborative research projects with academic and external partners.
- Support the development and day-to-day coordination of the Intergenerational Design Lab, including its research activities, projects, and partnerships.
- To contribute to the preparation and submission of research, knowledge exchange and executive education proposals, working with the Research Lead and other colleagues.
- To contribute to the coordination and management of research, knowledge exchange and executive education projects, including management, monitoring progress against agreed milestones, and reporting on outcomes and impacts.

Main Duties and Responsibilities

- To work with academic, industry and third sector partners on collaborative research projects and initiatives, supporting the development and maintenance of productive partnerships.
- To produce and disseminate high-quality research through appropriate academic and public channels (for example books, peer-reviewed journals, conferences).
- To produce research outputs. These outputs may be suitable for submission to the national Research Excellence Framework (REF) exercise, with a quality of at least 3* as per the REF definition.
- To support communication of research outcomes to specialist and non-specialist audiences, including through public engagement, events, and workshops, and participation in relevant academic and professional networks.
- To contribute to the School's research culture through participation in research activities, presentations, and academic exchange, including supporting the Annual Research Programmes.
- Contribute to major School, including collaborative research projects and activities that support the School of Architecture's Research Strategy.
- Contribute to the School's preparations for REF 2029 through evidence gathering and the preparation of supporting materials, as appropriate.
- Where appropriate, assist in the supervision of junior researchers or project workers engaged in projects, ensuring they are equipped to deliver outputs within agreed timescales and are undertaking work at an appropriate level.
- Support the School of Architecture Research Website, including the coordination and review of submissions.
- To conduct all research reflecting best practice in ethics, integrity, research data management, and research governance, ensuring compliance with RCA policies and external funding terms and conditions and sector standards.
- To ensure compliance with RCA processes and procedures in relation to procurement and use of equipment and facilities, including health and safety policies, working with relevant departments across RCA.
- To ensure confidentiality of sensitive project information is maintained, through appropriate project data protection.
- To undertake general administrative and other tasks relevant as part of the team's and the Centre's work, as required by senior staff.

Skills, knowledge, and experience

Essential

- The successful candidate must be able to demonstrate at least one of the following
 - o PhD in a relevant discipline,
 - o or a Masters degree and significant experience in research projects.
- Excellent research skills and experience of applied or practice-based research, including analysing, interpreting, and synthesising diverse types of evidence and source materials.
- Experience of contributing to research projects in academic, professional practice, or other relevant research environments.
- Evidence of producing quality research outputs relevant to the career stage and discipline, including academic publications, research reports, or practice-based research outputs.
- Experience of research project management, including coordinating activities, managing milestones and deadlines, and contributing to project reporting.
- Ability to undertake independent research and work collaboratively with academic colleagues and external partners.
- Excellent written and verbal communication skills, including preparing reports, presentations, and materials for different audiences, able to adopt an appropriate style for a range of specialist and non-specialist audiences.
- Experience of academic publishing and research dissemination, including engagement with non-academic audiences.
- Demonstrable understanding of good practice in research conduct (including in research ethics, research integrity, and research data management).
- Ability to be a collaborative member of a broader team, working constructively with senior staff and supporting the work of less experienced staff or students involved in projects.
- A proactive, flexible, creative approach to research and problem-solving.
- Strong interpersonal and organisational skills, with the ability to manage competing priorities, work constructively with colleagues, and contribute to a collaborative research environment.





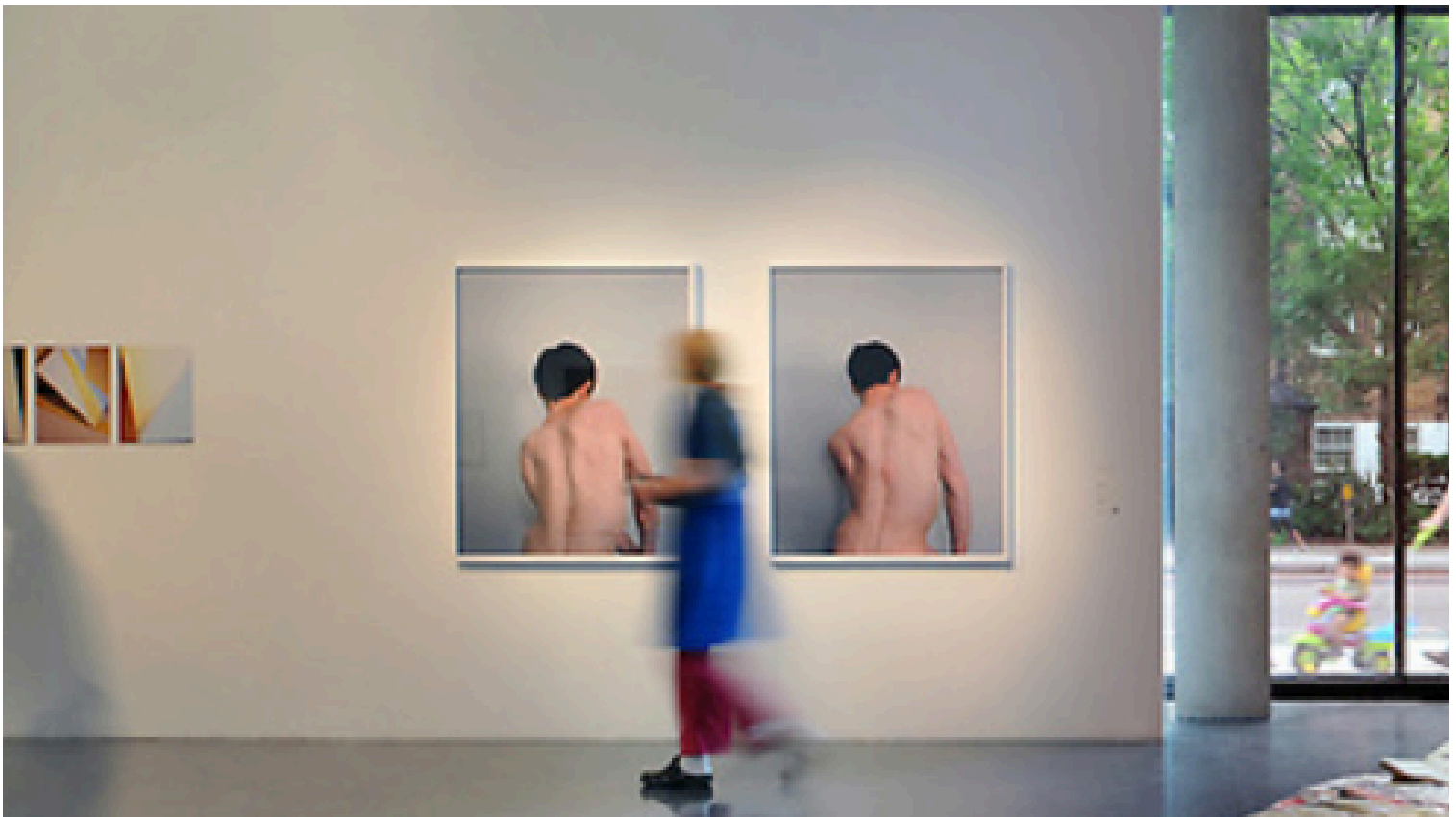
Desirable

- Experience of research relating to housing, social value, or heat stress.
- Experience of machine learning, particularly computer vision, and the analysis of large datasets.
- Experience of contributing to research funding applications and new project development.
- Experience of executive education, consultancy, knowledge exchange, or other externally facing research activity.
- Experience of managing and updating website content.

Pay & Benefits

Additional Information:

- Full time salary - Grade 7: £45,638 - £50,575 per annum including London Allowance
- We are seeking to fill two complementary positions, comprising 0.6 FTE and 0.4 FTE appointments. Applications are welcomed from individuals interested in either role, as well as from candidates who wish to be considered for both positions. The final appointment structure will be determined through the selection process. Subject to the outcome, we may appoint two candidates or offer both posts to one candidate as a full-time appointment.
- Fixed term for up to 30 months
- School: School of Architecture
- 30 days annual leave plus extended breaks at Christmas and Easter. Pro rata for part time employees and those on a contract less than a year.
- A contributory defined benefit pension scheme and interest free season ticket loan are available, alongside many other benefits
- The successful candidate will be required to work at our Kensington Campus, London
- Responsible to: Professor Sam Jacoby/Adrian Lahoud



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