

ROYAL ACADEMY OF DANCE

Head of Higher Education Job Description

The RAD is committed to Safeguarding and promoting the welfare of children and young people and expects all colleagues to share this commitment.

About the Role

Role Summary:

As the Head of Higher Education, you will provide strategic academic leadership for the development, innovation and future positioning of the RAD's Higher Education portfolio, ensuring that its provision is distinctive, academically excellent, sustainable and informed by contemporary practice across Higher Education, the performing arts and the creative industries.

The postholder will lead the development of new academic opportunities, partnerships, educational models and areas of interdisciplinary practice, strengthening the RAD's position within UK and international Higher Education while ensuring that established provision continues to meet appropriate academic and regulatory standards.

Department Summary:

The Education & Participation department, led by the Artistic Director, oversees the Royal Academy of Dance's educational and artistic ambitions, with the purpose of delivering exceptional and inclusive dance education elevating and advancing the art of dance as per the Academy's charter and byelaws.

The department provides diverse educational and professional opportunities across dance, dance teacher education, musical theatre and

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Patron: Her Majesty Queen Camilla

President: Dame Darcey Bussell DBE **Chairman:** Stephen Moss CBE

Chief Executive: Elizabeth Honer CB **Artistic Director:** Alexander Campbell
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related performing arts disciplines. This encompasses Higher Education, RAD qualifications and awards, professional development, syllabus-based and vocational education, and wider participation and engagement.

Working nationally and internationally with colleagues, partners and stakeholders, the department promotes excellence, innovation, creativity and lifelong engagement in dance and the performing arts.

Location: Hybrid | RAD Headquarters, 188 York Road, London SW11 3JZ

Hours: Full-time | Monday to Friday | 34.5 hours per week

Contract: Permanent

Job Purpose

Working within the strategic direction established by the Deputy Artistic Director – Education, the Head of Higher Education will bring substantial external sector experience and intellectual leadership to the role, connecting the RAD with developments beyond its existing disciplines and translating emerging practice, research and sector intelligence into institutional opportunity.

Key Responsibilities

Higher Education Leadership and Academic Governance

- Provide senior academic leadership for the RAD's undergraduate and postgraduate Higher Education provision, ensuring programmes remain academically robust, professionally relevant, strategically aligned and appropriately resourced.
- Lead academic planning, programme development, validation, review and enhancement activity across the Higher Education portfolio.
- Maintain oversight of academic governance arrangements, including Boards of Examiners, Student Progress and Assessment Boards, Programme Committees and related decision-making processes.

- Provide leadership and direction to Programme Managers, academic staff and colleagues involved in Higher Education delivery.
- Ensure academic regulations, policies and procedures are implemented consistently and in accordance with institutional, regulatory and partner requirements.
- Work collaboratively with the Registrar, Head of Quality Assurance and Higher Education partners to ensure effective governance, risk management and academic decision-making.

Higher Education Strategy, Portfolio Development and Innovation

- Lead the strategic development of the Higher Education portfolio, ensuring provision remains distinctive, sustainable, innovative and aligned with institutional priorities.
- Identify and develop new academic opportunities, partnerships, disciplines across dance and musical theatre, modes of study and markets through evidence-based planning and sector intelligence.
- Lead the development of new programmes and initiatives from concept and business case through to validation, approval and implementation.
- Promote interdisciplinary, flexible, digital and partnership-led models of education that support future-focused learning and graduate outcomes.
- Evaluate emerging educational practice, technologies and industry developments, translating opportunities into strategic recommendations for growth and enhancement.
- Establish external advisory and stakeholder networks to inform portfolio development and educational innovation.

Regulation, Quality and Standards

- Maintain strategic oversight of the RAD's Higher Education regulatory, quality assurance and academic standards responsibilities.
- Ensure compliance with the requirements of regulatory bodies, awarding and validating partners, professional bodies and relevant sector frameworks.

- Lead institutional preparation for audits, reviews, validation events and external quality assurance activities, ensuring effective responses and implementation of recommendations.
- Work with relevant colleagues to identify, monitor and mitigate academic, regulatory and quality risks.
- Monitor student, programme and institutional performance data to support quality enhancement and continuous improvement.
- Foster a culture in which quality assurance and academic standards are embedded within enhancement, innovation and excellent student outcomes.

Sector Leadership, Partnerships and External Engagement

- Maintain a credible and influential profile within Higher Education, arts education and the creative industries, representing the RAD nationally and internationally.
- Develop strategic relationships with universities, conservatoires, cultural organisations, employers and professional networks.
- Lead the development of academic partnerships, collaborative provision, progression pathways and knowledge exchange opportunities.
- Monitor sector developments and emerging trends across Higher Education and the performing arts, ensuring external intelligence informs institutional planning and decision-making.
- Benchmark provision against comparable providers and identify opportunities to strengthen the RAD's reputation, influence and sector contribution.

Student Experience, Progression and Academic Enhancement

- Provide academic leadership to ensure a high-quality, inclusive and engaging student experience across Higher Education programmes.
- Monitor progression, retention, achievement and graduate outcomes, ensuring appropriate interventions and enhancement activity are implemented.
- Ensure student feedback, external examiner reports and performance data are used effectively to inform programme development and continuous improvement

- Promote innovative approaches to learning, teaching and assessment, including the effective use of digital and blended learning methodologies.
- Work with Programme Managers and academic colleagues to remove barriers to student success and strengthen engagement, belonging and achievement
- Contribute to teaching, research supervision and academic activities appropriate to the seniority of the role.

Research, Scholarship and Knowledge Exchange

- Provide strategic leadership for research, scholarship, practice research and knowledge exchange across the Higher Education portfolio.
- Develop and implement a research and scholarship plan aligned to institutional priorities and academic development.
- Support academic staff in developing research activity, publications, conference outputs, funded projects and professional enquiry.
- Foster interdisciplinary and collaborative research partnerships with academic, cultural and professional organisations in the UK and internationally
- Contribute personally to research, scholarship and knowledge exchange activity, maintaining an active national/international profile that strengthens the RAD's academic and artistic reputation.
- Ensure research activity informs curriculum development, enhances academic practice and contributes to institutional impact.

Academic Leadership, Staff Development and Performance

- Provide leadership, management and support to Programme Managers, academic staff and other designated colleagues within the Higher Education portfolio. This requirement requires a degree of flexibility and therefore the postholder should expect future changes in terms of who and how many people they are required to line manage as the team and this area of our work, continues to evolve.

- Advise the Deputy Artistic Director - Education and Artistic Director on Higher Education strategy, opportunities, risks, performance and emerging developments.
- Contribute to strategic, operational and resource planning to support the sustainable development of Higher Education provision.
- Establish clear objectives, undertake performance management and support professional development, scholarship and leadership capability.
- Foster a culture of academic excellence, innovation, accountability, collaboration and continuous improvement.
- Support workforce planning and the development of future academic capability required to meet evolving institutional and sector needs.

Membership of Internal and External Committees

- The postholder will represent the Education & Participation department on relevant internal and external committees and governance bodies, as agreed with the Deputy Artistic Director – Education.
- These may include:
 - Learning, Teaching & Quality Committee
 - Policy & Strategy Committee
 - Finance & Resources Committee
 - Research Ethics Committee (Chair)
 - Senior Management Team meetings
 - Programme Committees and Programme Review meetings
 - Student Progress and Assessment Boards
 - Boards of Examiners (Chair)
 - Education Sub-committee
 - Relevant Higher Education partner committees and boards

- Relevant external academic, professional and sector committees
- The postholder may act as Chair, academic lead or institutional representative where appropriate and with approval from the Deputy Artistic Director - Education.

Other Education Team Representation

- Actively support and participate, as appropriate, in Graduation ceremonies.

Reporting to Programme Managers (HE Programmes) & Other designated academic staff, as appropriate.

This job description is a starting point for the role we are asking you to fulfil. It is a working document and as such may change and evolve as the role, team and the RAD develop.

All colleagues are required to promote and safeguard the welfare of children they are responsible for or come into contact with and to adhere to and ensure compliance with the RADs Safeguarding Policy at all times. If, in the course of carrying out your responsibilities you become aware of any actual or potential risks to the safety and welfare of children in the RAD you must report any concerns to a Safeguarding Lead.

Our Values, Mission and Vision

Our mission – why we exist

We inspire the world to dance, promoting excellence and joy in dance teaching and learning for all. Through dance we empower people and build communities.

Our vision – where we are in 5 years

By 2030 we have increased our impact in dance and in society around the world. We are innovators in dance teaching and learning, have increased participation, widened access, and entered new markets. As such, we are financially resilient and sustainable for decades to come.

Our Values – We are

- Exceptional Together - working collaboratively to achieve exceptional outcomes.
- Creative Innovators – at the forefront of new artistic ideas and approaches.
- Champions of wellbeing – providing a supportive environment and promoting the wellbeing of the dance community.
- Open to all – removing barriers to participation.
- Happy to help – providing excellent customer service and being helpful and friendly.

Head of Higher Education Person Specification

The RAD has responsibility for, and is committed to, the safeguarding and promoting the welfare of children, young people and adults at risk and requires all colleagues to share this commitment.

All candidates are obliged to disclose in their application details of convictions, cautions and any previous concerns raised in relation to safeguarding issues. If there are any disclosures made, these will be discussed in confidence with the candidate.

	Essential Criteria	Desirable Criteria <i>(extra qualities which can be used to differentiate applicants)</i>
Education and Qualifications	Master's degree in a relevant field. Senior or Principal Fellowship of Advance HE (or commitment to achieve). Evidence of continuing professional development.	PhD in Dance, Performing Arts or related discipline, or equivalent professional standing. Relevant professional qualifications within Dance, Musical Theatre or the Performing Arts.
Skills and Abilities	Strong academic leadership and management skills, with the ability to lead change, manage complexity and drive continuous improvement. Demonstrable ability to develop and implement innovative academic strategies, programmes and partnerships. Strong analytical, organisational and project management skills, including the	

	ability to interpret performance data and manage competing priorities. Excellent communication, influencing and relationship-management skills, with the ability to collaborate effectively across academic, professional and external stakeholder groups. Ability to represent the RAD credibly and professionally within Higher Education, industry and wider professional settings. Strategic and creative thinker with the ability to identify opportunities that support future growth and development.	
Experience and Knowledge	Substantial experience within Higher Education and vocational training, with a strong understanding of contemporary developments across dance and musical theatre to inform institutional strategy. Evidence of senior academic leadership, including responsibility for the strategic	Experience as an External Examiner in Dance, Performing Arts or related disciplines. Experience of developing Higher Education partnerships and collaborative provision. Experience of chairing academic boards, committees or governance forums.

	development, implementation and review of Higher Education provision. Significant experience of programme design, validation, enhancement, academic governance, quality assurance and regulatory compliance. Evidence of an established national and/or international profile as an academic leader, practitioner, researcher or specialist within a relevant discipline. Experience of leading and developing academic teams, including performance management, scholarship, research and professional development. Demonstrable research, scholarly and/or professional practice activity, with evidence of contributing to knowledge, innovation or sector development. Experience of using sector intelligence, external partnerships and emerging practice to inform institutional strategy, academic development and organisational growth.	Experience of working with awarding, validating or regulatory bodies. Experience of supervising research projects at postgraduate level. Established engagement with Higher Education, conservatoire, cultural, creative industries or professional networks.
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Personal Attributes	Inclusivity: committed to fostering an inclusive environment and valuing diverse perspectives and experiences. Collaboration: works effectively and respectfully with colleagues and stakeholders across disciplines and departments. Integrity: demonstrates professionalism, discretion and ethical decision-making. Excellence: maintains high standards and a commitment to continuous improvement. Creativity and Curiosity: embraces innovation, learning and new approaches. Responsiveness: demonstrates adaptability, initiative and a solution-focused approach.	
Other requirements	A commitment to safeguarding and promoting the welfare of children and adults at risk. A willingness to undertake colleague training as required, e.g. Child Safeguarding/Protection.	

Prepared by:	Deputy Artistic Director - Education
Date:	26/10/2026