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Dean of Research and Knowledge Exchange

Central Saint Martins
University of the Arts London

Candidate Pack | November 2026

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Candidate Pack

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01. Introduction from the Provost

Thank you for your interest in the role of Dean of Research and Knowledge Exchange. At Central Saint Martins, we are regenerating creativity by rethinking what an art and design college should focus on and how this might work.

Central Saint Martins has a legacy of engaging with global debates about the visual and creative arts, performance and design, and the role they play in societal transformation. This is at the heart of what we do: we challenge what people think they know about the arts, performance, and design, and how it shapes and impacts us all.

We know that creativity is at the brink of great change and there is a galvanising call embedded in the heart of our University's Strategy, a copy of which you can access by clicking on the image below:



Important to the delivery of the UAL 2032 strategy is our **Education Strategy** and our **RKE Strategy**.

To remain at the heart of creative education in an era of polarisation and new intelligences, we have undertaken a total rethink of our systems, skills and the sectors we partner with.

Building on the College's core spirit of interdisciplinarity and thematic integrity as an art school, CSM has transformed itself into three **Schools of Thought**: C School [Culture], S School [Systems] and M School [Material]. This involves a deliberate de-emphasising of disciplinary categories such as art, design and performance.

Our naming strategy highlights the whole (C + S + M = CSM) and aims to allow space for working across schools and adapting to societal and planetary conditions as called for in our University's ambitious strategy.

Our CSM Schools are open, adaptive and (re)generative. Grounded by our disciplines, they foster communities – of staff, students and collaborators – with a shared sense of purpose, practice, pedagogy and enquiry. The thematics of culture, systems and material invite conceptual challenge as they plot coordinates around our courses identifying challenges that each School can explore in its teaching, research and knowledge practices. There is space to ensure students and staff can approach issues of social, racial and climate justice through their practice.

We hope you find this to be an exciting opportunity and will consider joining us on this important journey for art and design education.

We look forward to receiving your application.

Professor Rathna Ramanathan

Provost, Central Saint Martins & Executive Dean for Global Affairs, University of the Arts London



02. Executive Summary

University of the Arts London is seeking an exceptional academic leader to join Central Saint Martins (CSM) as Dean of Research and Knowledge Exchange (RKE).

At Central Saint Martins, research and knowledge exchange are not separate from practice. They emerge through making, questioning, experimenting and collaborating across disciplines, cultures, contexts and communities. From creative practice, research and doctoral study to industry partnerships and civic engagement, research and knowledge exchange at CSM shapes how we understand and respond to the complex social, cultural, and environmental challenges of our time. This is a rare opportunity to lead and grow that distinctive research culture at one of the world's leading centres for art, design and creative practice.

Working with the Provost and the College Executive, the Dean of Research and Knowledge Exchange will provide strategic leadership for research, knowledge exchange, postgraduate research and innovation across the College. The role will shape the next phase of CSM's research and knowledge exchange development, strengthening the research environment, supporting our diverse community of researchers and practitioners, and advancing the College's contribution to impact and public knowledge.

We are looking for an exceptional leader who can articulate a compelling place-based vision for research and knowledge exchange in a creative and interdisciplinary context. You will champion a culture of curiosity, rigour and generosity, supporting practice that moves across disciplinary boundaries, attracts external investment and creates meaningful impact through partnerships with industry, cultural organisations, communities and policymakers. You will support an environment in which bold ideas can flourish, while ensuring that research maintains the highest standards of academic quality, ethics and integrity.

You will bring substantial senior leadership experience in higher education research, knowledge exchange and innovation, together with a strong understanding of the UK research landscape, including REF, KEF, research funding, and relevant quality assurance frameworks. Equally important is an appreciation of the distinctive role that creative practice plays in generating knowledge, and the ability to foster an environment where diverse forms of enquiry can thrive.

This is an opportunity to shape the future of research, knowledge exchange and innovation at a College known for challenging conventions, bringing different ways of knowing into dialogue, and creating new possibilities through creative practice.

To ask a question, or to apply, click here. The deadline for receipt of applications is 12 noon GMT on Wednesday 16 December 2026.

UAL is committed to creating diverse and inclusive environments for all staff and students to work and learn – a university where we can be ourselves and reach our full potential. We offer a range of family friendly, inclusive employment policies, flexible working arrangements and staff support networks. We welcome applicants from diverse backgrounds, including race, disability, age, sex, gender identity, sexual orientation, religion and belief, marriage and civil partnership, pregnancy and maternity, and caring responsibility.

03. About University of the Arts London

For the 8th consecutive year, University of the Arts London (UAL) has been ranked 2nd in the QS World University Rankings by Subject 2026 for Art and Design and is the top university offering undergraduate courses.

UAL generates and inspires the creativity the world needs for a better future. Since 1854, our colleges have been defining creative education. With curiosity, imagination and intent we make work which creates lasting change for people and our planet. London is core to who we are, a place where we meet and share ideas with people from different backgrounds and cultures.

Our creative network influences learning, culture, industry and society on a global scale. Our academics and practitioners deliver creative education and inspire new ways of thinking through research and innovation. We work with students at every level from pre-degree and short courses to postgraduate and online learning, enabling them to build the careers they want. Together, we are a community of makers, thinkers, pioneers and storytellers redesigning the future.

We are a global University, welcoming over 22,000 students and 6,000 staff from 130 countries. We aim to be a university where people can be themselves and feel supported to reach their full potential. That's why we are proud to hold a Bronze Award from the Race Equality Charter (REC). We are members of the Business Disability Forum and Employers for Carers, and maintain our status as a Disability Confident Scheme and Living Wage employer.

Our University not only awards more than 7,000 undergraduate and postgraduate degrees each year, but also delivers short creative courses and executive education to over 13,500 students.

For more information, visit **arts.ac.uk**



Photo: Cheer Manlekha

04. Our Collegiate Structure

The University's Colleges work together to enrich the student and staff experience and to increase their impact on the creative and cultural sectors, not only in London and the UK but also globally.

UAL is structured as a Collegiate University: each College has a distinctive academic ethos within a practice-led tradition, informed by its own distinctive history and relationships. Our students graduate with work that breaks boundaries, engages with our changing world, and challenges our preconceptions. From wherever in the world they come, they will go on to influence the way we all think and live.

We are formed of six Colleges with unique histories and identities. UAL also has four Institutes, five research centres, one Pre-Degree School and two subsidiary companies delivering specialist activities.



Camberwell College of Arts offers courses in fine art and design and its unique studio culture gives students the freedom to explore their creativity and use facilities that embrace traditional craftsmanship and digital technology.



Central Saint Martins is a world-leading centre for transdisciplinary art and design education, with courses covering a wide range of creative arts disciplines from art and architecture to business and curation, fashion, industrial and material design, and performance.



Chelsea College of Arts specialises in curating, fine art, graphic design communication, textile design, interior and spatial design. It provides students with a stimulating space and supportive atmosphere so they can develop their practice.



London College of Communication is a pioneering centre teaching courses in design, media and screen. It works at the cutting edge of new thinking and prepares its students to define the future of the creative industries.



London College of Fashion is a leading global provider of fashion education, research and consultancy. It offers undergraduate and further education courses, integrated and postgraduate masters, research degrees and short courses.



Wimbledon College of Arts has a long history of providing world class teaching in all aspects of technical arts for theatre, film and television, including acting, costume and stage design.



Photo: Joy Kirigo

05. Research and Knowledge Exchange

Research and Knowledge Exchange are at the heart of our world-leading education and our drive to address global challenges and create positive social change. We place creativity at the heart of positive societal change and have a vibrant RKE culture across our six Colleges, University research centres, and Institutes.

Through our research and knowledge exchange, we create pathways between the educational world and professional practice, providing unique opportunities for students, alumni and the creative industries. We work closely with a diverse and high-profile range of business, creative and cultural partners. We embed 'place' at the heart of our work to generate meaningful exchange and mutual benefit with our neighbours and with places and sectors where our expertise aligns to local priorities.

In REF 2021, UAL was the largest submission to Unit of Assessment (UoA) 32: Art and Design. 85% of our research, 90% of our impact, and 100% of our environment was judged to be world-leading or internationally excellent. In KEF4 (2023) UAL performed strongly across several areas, including scoring 'Very High' in working with the public and third sector, local growth and regeneration and public and community engagement.

At Central Saint Martins, we are connected by a shared commitment to putting creative practice at the heart of understanding, doing, and making. We work with the intention of addressing shared concerns and challenges, and generating new knowledge in the world. Practice is more than a mode of making, it is a way of knowing, a space for experimentation, collaboration, disruption, and transformation. It is through practice that we continually reimagine what's possible.

Our research and knowledge exchange covers the entire spectrum of art and design and is realised in our teaching and through exhibitions, artworks, designs, books, policy, films, photography, fashion, textiles, craft, performance, architectural and spatial practices and more. Through our work we challenge thinking and innovate solutions to emerging and vital social issues.

We are proud of our centres and labs, including the acclaimed Afterall, Future Denim Lab and Maison/0. We regularly work in collaboration with national and local government agencies, businesses, NGOs, scientific organisations and policy groups to deliver real-world impacts. Through interdisciplinary partnerships and networks, we develop joint research initiatives, consultancy and co-designed public engagement activity that contributes positively to society both locally and globally.

06. Central Saint Martins

The identity of Central Saint Martins is inherited from two groundbreaking arts and design schools: St Martin's School of Art (the oldest of the University's Colleges, founded in 1854) and the Central School of Arts and Crafts. From these beginnings, both educational institutions developed radical creative practices and progressive social values in education. The two schools merged in 1989 to create Central Saint Martins.

The recent transformation of Central Saint Martins' academic structure was inspired by a fundamental question*: 'What does it look like when we work together at our best?'* This wasn't an abstract exercise. We ask students to be creative, adaptive, bold; to embrace complexity and imagine different futures. What could our universities achieve if we reorganised ourselves with the same creativity we demand from students? If we can't model the adaptive, experimental, principles-led thinking we claim to teach, why should anyone trust us to prepare the next generation for an uncertain future?

Creative education isn't primarily about self-expression. Approaching it as we are at Central Saint Martins, creativity becomes a methodology for engaging with uncertainty. It values prototyping over perfect solutions, holding contradictory ideas simultaneously, collaborating across difference, making abstract possibilities tangible – critical for navigating unpredictable futures.



Photo: Jamie Johnson

At Central Saint Martins, we believe that art, design and performance can generate real, productive change. Our students create the ideas, materials, and actions for a better future. Creative practice combines the ability to imagine new futures with the means to deliver them. As such, artists and designers are equipped to address our urgent global challenges – from tackling the climate and biodiversity emergencies to forging more equitable societies. Our disciplines and practices are often seen at Central Saint Martins as vehicles for protest, comment and community engagement. This is particularly the case with the current political and social context, against which our students have found means of expressing their personal and collective positions through creative practice.

What we do is always connected to others. Our community goes beyond building, beyond disciplines and beyond borders. From local neighbours to global partners, Central Saint Martins collaborates with others to build knowledge and transform objects, systems, and lives for the better. We understand that good things happen when people work together.

07. Our Locations and Facilities

Our shared spaces – in King's Cross and Archway – are hubs of interdisciplinary collaboration; places to share ideas, to problem solve, and to make lifelong friends and studio partnerships. The specialist workshops are the backbone of our courses, providing a place for students to make and create, with technicians on hand to share their expertise.

In 2011, we moved to our award-winning building in King's Cross. We sit at the heart of a dynamic part of London: The British Library, Google, The Guardian, Tom Dixon, Universal Music, Camden Council and the Francis Crick Institute are our neighbours and partners. In this fast-changing environment, we draw from our own history while always looking to the future.

The building houses a broad sweep of creative practices under one roof, encouraging generosity and collaboration. Increasingly the work emerging from the College crosses traditional disciplinary boundaries, as students find hybrid and unexpected ways of working.

Find out about our shared spaces, studios and workshops at Central Saint Martins, University of the Arts London **here**.



08. Central Saint Martins: Schools of Thought

Building on our core spirit of transdisciplinarity and thematic integrity, we created three Schools of Thought that deliberately de-emphasise traditional disciplinary categories.

C SCHOOL emphasises **culture** as an urgent form of inquiry into the contemporary world, developing thinking and practice across diverse forms of artistic and performative exploration.

C School staff and students develop cultural production in, and across art, performance and curation that not only allows us to understand the present but also to imagine different futures.

S SCHOOL explores how, through different forms of designing, we can understand and intervene in the complex human **systems** that shape our world, to inform alternative futures.

The disciplines of S School investigate how different forms of design can challenge and change those systems so that people and planet can flourish. Spanning graphic communication and product design, architecture and environments, business innovation and creative enterprise, S School works across scales of space and time and often across disciplinary boundaries.

M SCHOOL investigates radical approaches to **materials**, making, and the construction of meaning, probing fashion, textiles, jewellery and material innovation.

The common thread across the disciplines within M School is creative attention to the materials we use, and how we can push the boundaries of what can be done with them. Many of the practices represented in M School have a strong historical context in the hands-on craft of designing, but M School goes well beyond this, embracing text, film, digital interactions, scientific materials innovation and multi-species thinking and regeneration.

Together, CSM Schools embody our principles of seeking common ground for contemporary practices to flourish, bringing practice to every space, and deepening external connections.



Photo: Paul Cochrane



Photo: Jamie Johnson

09. Role Description

You will provide strategic leadership for research, knowledge exchange and innovation at CSM, ensuring College priorities align with the UAL strategies and the College's Operating Plan. Working with the Provost, Pro-Vice-Chancellor (Research, Knowledge Exchange and Enterprise), Deans of School, Dean of Academic Strategy, and Director of Operations, you will deliver strategic priorities, develop research capacity and resources, and enhance the postgraduate research (PGR) student experience.

You will foster an inclusive and ambitious research culture, supporting high-quality grant applications, increased research and knowledge exchange income, industry partnerships, sponsorship, commercialisation and consultancy. You will ensure research activity maintains high standards of academic quality, ethics and integrity, in accordance with UAL policies and relevant Concordats.

College-Specific Purpose

You will advance a distinctive culture of practice-based and transdisciplinary research, knowledge exchange and innovation, fostering new methods of enquiry through the College's Schools of Thought framework and generating creative responses to contemporary social, cultural, environmental and technological challenges.

Key Duties and Responsibilities

- leading the development and delivery of College research, knowledge exchange and innovation priorities and plans, aligned with UAL strategies, the College Operating Plan and University objectives, including relevant postgraduate research priorities;
- working with the Provost, Pro-Vice-Chancellor (Research, Knowledge Exchange and Enterprise), Directors of Research and Knowledge Exchange, Deans of School, Associate Deans and College colleagues to implement and continuously

enhance UAL research and knowledge exchange strategies and cross-UAL priorities;
- auditing and evaluating research and knowledge exchange activity across the College, identifying established strengths, emerging areas and future opportunities to inform strategic decision-making.
- leading College preparations for the Research Excellence Framework (REF) and Knowledge Exchange Framework (KEF), reviewing submission quality and coordinating College input with UAL research and knowledge exchange teams;
- developing strategies and pathways from research to knowledge exchange, innovation, alternative education, consultancy and collaboration with governmental, non-governmental and other external organisations;
- building a mature and inclusive culture for high-quality funding applications, driving growth in external research and knowledge exchange income, and securing industry partnerships, sponsorship and commercialisation opportunities;
- fostering an inclusive and interdisciplinary research culture across the College, supporting academic staff to develop research and increase the volume and quality of outputs with national or international standing;
- monitoring existing research strengths and developing new areas of expertise in response to disciplinary, technical, technological, scientific and funding opportunities;
- working with Deans of School to set targets and monitor research and knowledge exchange performance and pathways, including for Professors, Readers and other research-active staff;
- collaborating with Deans, Associate Deans and College colleagues to develop research centres, networks and communities, improve staff outputs and strengthen research and knowledge exchange activity;
- overseeing staff development and performance, supporting academic and professional development and enabling colleagues at all career stages to thrive;
- working with the Dean of Academic Strategy to oversee postgraduate research culture and student experience, supporting a vibrant and positive environment and high-quality annual Postgraduate Research Experience Survey (PRES) outcomes;
- leading and developing College research and knowledge exchange governance, ensuring academic quality, research ethics, integrity and compliance with UAL policies, procedures and relevant codes and concordats;
- promoting the communication, dissemination and visibility of College and University research, knowledge exchange and innovation achievements;
- contributing to College strategic and operational development as a member of the College Executive Group, advising the College Executive Group and College Steering Group, and representing CSM on University research and knowledge exchange committees and external bodies.



Photo: Jamie Johnson

Management Responsibilities

- providing academic and managerial leadership for research and knowledge exchange across the College within an inclusive culture;
- leading delivery of UAL RKE Strategy and the College Operating Plan, including agreed objectives and key performance indicators;
- participating fully in College operational and strategic development processes and advising the College Executive Group and College Steering Group as required;

- managing and optimising allocated staffing and non-staffing resources within budget;
- line managing staff and direct reports as appropriate, including responsibility for staff discipline, development and professional practice;
- advocating for UAL's social purpose objectives, including inclusion, fairness and the work of the Climate Action group.

General Duties

- performing duties and tasks consistent with the scope and grade of your role as reasonably may be expected and assigned to you from anywhere within the University;
- undertaking health and safety duties and responsibilities appropriate to the role;
- working in accordance with the University's **Staff Charter** and Dignity at Work Policy, ensuring equality, diversity and inclusion in your work to fulfil the University's obligations under the Equality Act;
- undertaking continuous personal and professional development, and supporting it for any staff you manage through effective use of the University's Planning and Review Conversations (PRC) scheme and staff development opportunities;
- making full use of all information and communication technologies to meet the requirements of the role and to promote organisational effectiveness;
- conducting all financial matters associated with the role in accordance with the University's policies and procedures, as laid down in the Financial Regulations;
- contributing to the University's **Climate Action Plan** which sets out our principles, commitments and goals towards climate justice and our socio-environmental purpose.

Additional Duties

- you may be required to work such additional/different hours as may from time to time be necessary for the proper and efficient discharge of duties which may include evenings, Saturdays, Sundays and bank holidays;
- you may be required to regularly travel to other sites and internationally as necessary.

Key Working Relationships

- Provost of Central Saint Martins and Executive Dean of Global Affairs;
- UAL Pro-Vice-Chancellor (Research, Knowledge Exchange and Enterprise);
- CSM College Executive Group, including Deans of School, Dean of Academic Strategy, Director of Operations, and Head of Technical Resources;
- Co-Directors of Innovation;
- Associate Deans of Research and Knowledge Exchange and College RKE teams;
- Professoriate across Central Saint Martins;
- Members of CSM College Steering Group;
- Director of Research Management and Administration;
- Director of Knowledge Exchange;
- College Deans of Research and Knowledge Exchange;
- College HR and Finance Business Partners.

10. Person Specification

The successful candidate will be expected to demonstrate evidence of the following attributes:

Experience, Knowledge and Qualifications

- a doctorate or equivalent standing through professional practice, supported by a relevant postgraduate qualification and a record of research, knowledge exchange or professional practice in art and design education;
- significant senior leadership experience in higher education research, knowledge exchange and innovation, with a strong understanding of REF, KEF, the UK research funding landscape and relevant quality assurance policies, processes and procedures;
- experience of developing and securing external research funding and partnerships, including industry collaboration, and of growing research and knowledge exchange income through innovation, commercialisation or consultancy;
- desirable: experience of leading or contributing to interdisciplinary research and knowledge exchange addressing contemporary social, cultural, environmental or technological challenges;
- desirable: experience of developing research centres, networks or communities of practice, and of supporting the dissemination and public impact of research.

Communication Skills

- outstanding influencing and stakeholder management skills, with the ability to communicate compellingly in an accessible manner with diverse internal and external audiences.

Leadership and Management

- ability to provide strategic leadership, drive research culture change, motivate teams, promote collaboration across organisational boundaries and develop high-performing, inclusive teams, with a demonstrable commitment to equality, diversity and inclusion in research and knowledge exchange, fostering an environment in which colleagues and students can thrive.

Research, Teaching & Learning or Professional Practice

- a national and/or international profile in research, professional practice or knowledge exchange, recognised by peers for expertise and contribution to the field.

Planning and Managing Resources

- ability to manage significant budgets and resources, and to plan and prioritise complex activities to deliver long-term strategic objectives.

Teamwork

- ability to build effective collaborations across disciplines and sectors, including networks and communities of practice.

Student Experience or Customer Service

- commitment to supporting doctoral researchers and research supervision cultures, and to enhancing the postgraduate research student experience.

Creativity, Innovation and Problem-Solving

- ability to develop innovative approaches to research and knowledge exchange, identifying solutions and opportunities with strategic impact.

11. Appointment Details and How to Apply

University of the Arts London is being assisted in this appointment process by the executive search firm Society – A Norman Broadbent Company (**www.society-search.com**).

Applications should consist of:

1. an up-to-date curriculum vitae;
2. a concise covering letter (ideally no longer than two pages), addressing the criteria in the Person Specification, and explaining your interest in, and suitability for, the Dean role;
3. contact details of three referees (although referees will only be approached at the final stage of the process, and only with your express permission).

General advice on how to write a **strong CV** and **strong covering letter** can be found on our website.

To upload your documents via Society's website, **click here**.

UAL aims to be an equal opportunities employer embracing diversity in all areas of activity and we are working actively to increase representation among academic staff of people from black, Asian and minority ethnic backgrounds, people who are LGBTQ+, people with a disability, or learning difference, from different nations and regions, or from a less advantaged socio-economic background.

The deadline for receipt of applications is 12 noon (GMT) on Wednesday 16 December 2026. Candidates may be required to meet with one of the consulting team at Society on Tuesday 5, Wednesday 6, or Thursday 7 January. Shortlisted candidates will then be invited to an interview which will take place in person at the College on **Thursday 21 January 2027.**

Appointment to this post will be subject to appropriate checks, including necessary statutory checks such as proof of right to work in the UK, Disclosure and Barring Service checks, a satisfactory health check and other due diligence checks. The preferred start date for this position is by the end of April 2027, but this is open to discussion with the University's preferred candidate.

We are committed to ensuring that anyone can access our application processes. This includes people with hearing, sight, mobility, and cognitive impairments. Should you require access to this document in an alternative format, wish to apply in a different format, or need any other reasonable adjustments (including at interview), please contact us at **inclusion@society-search.com**. We also welcome suggestions or comments about any more general access improvements we should consider.





Photo: Paul Cochrane

The executive search firm Society is a proud part of Norman Broadbent Plc. We advise on board and leadership appointments all around the world with a specific focus on charity, education, and public sector organisations.

Founded in 1979, Norman Broadbent is an established executive search, interim management, board advisory, and leadership consultancy firm. With over 45 years of experience shaping leadership across diverse sectors and functions, the business has a proven track record of success supporting SMEs, major brands, household names, and global organisations both in the UK and internationally.

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