

RADA

Royal Academy of Dramatic Art



Vice Principal (Academic)
Candidate Pack
October 2026

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Welcome from Helen Slater, Principal and CEO

Thank you for your interest in the role of Vice Principal (Academic) at RADA.

RADA is at the forefront of dramatic arts training, widely recognised as one of the world's leading conservatoires, with a distinguished track record of preparing graduates for exceptional careers across theatre, film, television and the wider creative industries. While our heritage remains a defining strength, we are equally focused on the future, committed to maximising our relevance and impact, striving to be world-class in all that we do.

As we begin delivering an ambitious new strategic plan, we have a significant opportunity to build on our strengths, embracing emerging opportunities and enhancing our influence nationally and internationally. We are determined that RADA should be recognised not only for the excellence of our reputation and legacy, but also for innovation, inclusivity, wellbeing and sector leadership.

Success will require us to strengthen our sustainability, broaden our impact and continually evolve in response to a rapidly changing creative and higher education landscape. By doing so, we will ensure that RADA continues to thrive and inspire future generations of artists, practitioners and audiences alike.

The new role of Vice Principal (Academic) will play a key role in informing RADA's educational mission and artistic identity, safeguarding the quality, relevance and reputation of our training and our standing within the creative industries and the higher education sector. As a member of the Group Executive, they will make a broad contribution to the overall leadership and management of RADA, helping to shape organisational priorities, contributing to



institutional strategy and support sound decision-making across a complex and ambitious creative education organisation.

Providing strategic leadership for RADA's academic vision and framework, as Vice Principal you will ensure coherence and quality across our entire programme and related activities, applying your experience and strong understanding of our academic landscape to ensure that our teaching, research and industry engagement align behind a shared academic purpose to deliver world-class provision and sector leading student outcomes.

The successful candidate will be a credible, inspiring and respected academic leader, able to engage and collaborate confidently with our academic and artistic community and champion the highest standards of teaching and learning. They will value what makes RADA great, respectful of our heritage, but future focused, with the personal gravitas to take others with them where change is needed. Sharing our commitment to intensive, high-contact conservatoire training, they will be equally committed to strengthening our research profile and reputation. Ultimately, we are looking for someone who can cultivate and support an environment of continuous improvement, encouraging new thinking, collaboration and creativity while ensuring that quality remains at the heart of everything we do.

As Vice Principal you will also play a significant role in supporting the evolution of our overall offer. We are making intentional moves to expand influence in areas such as digital performance and technical

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training, recognising the changing needs of the students and industries we serve. We see exciting opportunities to accelerate progress through partnerships, collaborations and innovative models of delivery, and we are particularly interested in hearing from individuals with experience of building successful strategic relationships, joint ventures or other initiatives that have extended organisational reach and capability.

If this opportunity resonates with your experience and aspirations, I very much look forward to hearing from you.

Helen Slater
Principal & CEO

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About us

For over 120 years, the Royal Academy of Dramatic Art has been at the forefront of dramatic arts training, educating generations of actors, directors, writers, producers and technical artists who shape theatre, film and television worldwide. From our historic home in central London, RADA continues to operate with substantial reach and influence, playing an essential role in the UK's £148 billion creative industries, contributing culturally and economically at national and international levels.

This is an exciting moment to join us. The Academy has set out its ambition for the next fifteen years in a Strategic Vision to 2041, with an Academic Development Strategy for 2026 to 2032 as its first phase. Together they describe a conservatoire that stays small and intense at its core while growing its reach, its partnerships and its place in the industry. The Vice Principal (Academic) is a new post, created to lead and to shape, with the academic community, how the strategy is realised.



World-leading academic provision

With just over 200 students, RADA is one of the smallest providers of vocational degrees in acting and technical theatre arts in the UK. Formally recognised by the Office for Students as a world-leading small specialist institution, RADA's training is triple Gold-rated in the Teaching Excellence Framework (TEF). In 2025, RADA was the top-ranked National Student Survey performer among comparable institutions, and in 2026 The Hollywood Reporter again named RADA the top-ranked UK drama school and fifth internationally.

Academic portfolio

RADA offers eight higher education courses, all validated by King's College London. Undergraduate provision includes BA (Hons) Acting and a specialist technical theatre pathway comprising a Foundation Degree in Technical Theatre and Stage Management with a BA (Hons) top-up year. Postgraduate provision includes MA Theatre Lab and MAs in Theatre Costume, Performance Lighting Design, Stage Management and Playwriting.

Training balances the developmental needs of individual students with the creative, technical and interpretative demands of professional practice in the UK and internationally. Public productions, exhibitions and industry-facing showcases are integral to the curriculum.

Postgraduate development

Four new MA programmes took their first intakes in 2025. The Academic Development Strategy commits RADA to keeping undergraduate training small by design. The significant growth over the next six years will be in postgraduate study and professional development. The Vice Principal will lead that growth.

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Equity and inclusion

Equity is central to RADA's academic mission and informs how training is designed, delivered and experienced across the Academy. RADA allocates places solely on talent, regardless of background or financial circumstance, with around 45% of undergraduates receiving financial support. Its access and participation programme aims to remove barriers for underrepresented groups. RADA's academy-wide anti-racism and inclusive practice action plan underpins inclusive teaching and learning environments.

Wellbeing

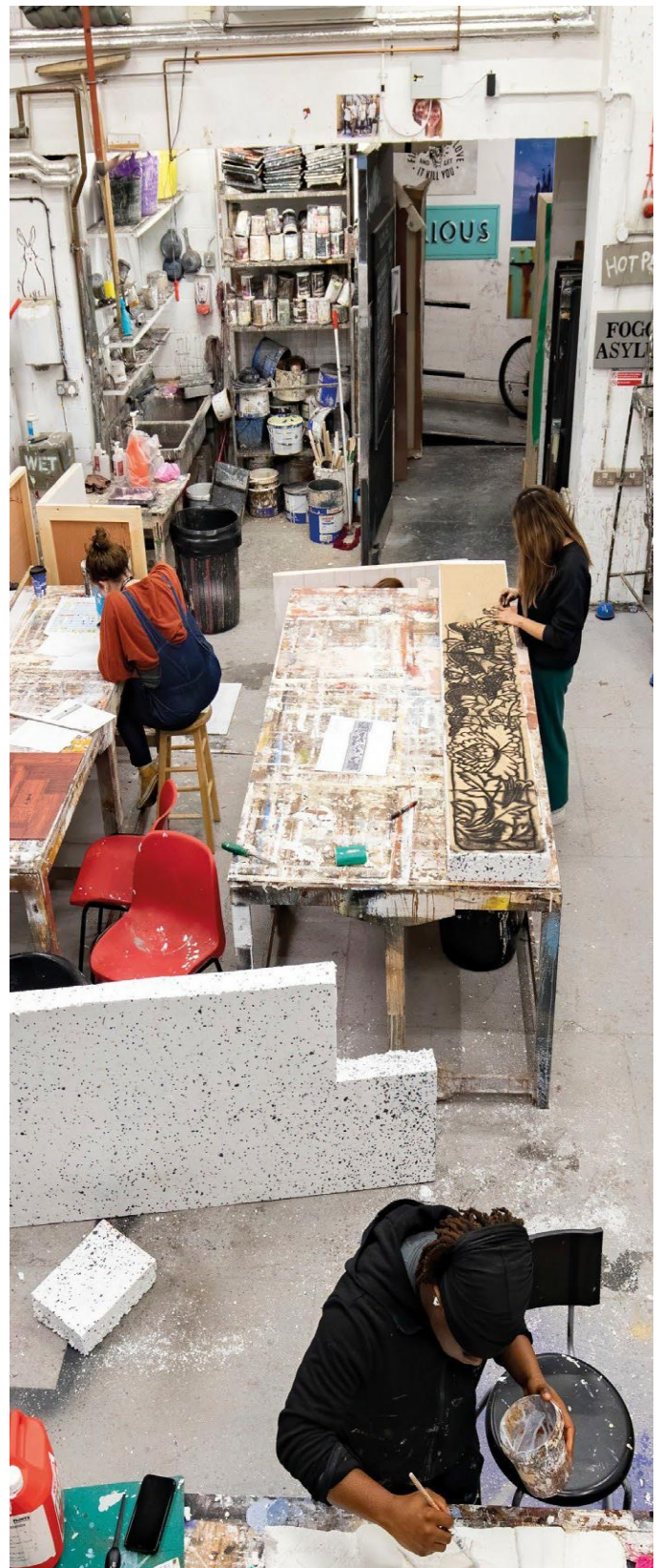
Mental health and wellbeing are strategic priorities. RADA provides an extensive Student Wellbeing Service, including counselling and specialist support, recognising the intensity of conservatoire training.

An integrated academic and enterprise model

RADA operates through a joined-up academic, commercial and philanthropic model that supports educational excellence and access. Alongside undergraduate and postgraduate provision, the Academy delivers Short Courses and professional training and works through RADA Business to extend its expertise into wider professional and organisational contexts. RADA is an enterprising academy: the commercial arms fund its independence, and their success is reinvested in training, access and the estate.

Further reading

- RADA website: <https://www.rada.ac.uk/>
- Annual reports: **Reports - RADA**
- Equality, diversity and inclusion at RADA: **Equality, diversity and inclusion at RADA**



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Vice Principal (Academic) Role Profile

Strategic context

RADA's ambition for 2041 is to be the global benchmark in performance training: small and intense at its core, globally connected, with a flagship home in London. The Academic Development Strategy 2026–32 covers the first six years of that journey for the academy: a more explicit pedagogy, a broader creative curriculum, and training that reaches across disciplines, borders and platforms, while the conservatoire stays at the centre and undergraduate training stays small.



Job title:

Vice Principal (Academic)

Reports to:

Principal & CEO

Direct reports:

Course leaders, the Director of Technical Theatre Arts, the Registrar, and roles connecting training to industry and partners. The Vice Principal will work with colleagues to shape the team's development.

Key Relationships:

Executive peer group, RADA Business, RADA Council.

Prime function of the role

The Vice Principal (Academic) is RADA's lead academic and a member of the Group Executive. They hold delegated responsibility for academic standards, quality and governance, and they lead the academic community and the student experience: course leaders, faculty, the Registrar and student and academic services.

The Vice Principal will deliver Academic Development Strategy 2026 - 32. That means making RADA's signature pedagogy explicit across the portfolio; building the curriculum pillars into a coherent academy; introducing intentional cross-disciplinary training; integrating screen, digital and immersive practice into the curriculum; developing a global network of partners; and growing postgraduate and professional development provision while keeping undergraduate training small by design.

Working with the Principal & CEO, the faculty, and colleagues across commercial activity, philanthropy and estates, the Vice Principal will also:

- align academic development with financial sustainability and estates planning.
- steward the creative ambition of RADA's training, ensuring that it remains rigorous, ambitious, contemporary and connected to evolving professional practice.
- facilitate the development of a coherent creative direction across the Academy, drawing on the expertise of programme leaders, faculty, visiting artists and practitioners.
- shape a high impact industry liaison and support function, which includes industry partnerships.

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Key responsibilities:

A member of the executive, articulating the strategic vision of RADA, providing the highest level of support for the Principal & CEO, collaborating with other members of the senior team to create the finest and most effective delivery environment.

Academic strategy and curriculum

1. Lead delivery of the Academic Development Strategy 2026–32, reporting progress to the Group Executive and the Board.
2. Make RADA's pedagogy explicit (embodied knowledge, experiential process, command of technique) and embed it in course design, assessment and staff development.
3. Develop the six curriculum pillars into a coherent academy, including new programme development where it strengthens the core.
4. Design and introduce cross-disciplinary learning across the portfolio, so that the roles of actor, maker, producer, writer and director intersect in training as they do in the industry.
5. Lead the integration of screen, digital and immersive practice into training, working with the investment strategy for digital infrastructure.
6. Lead the growth of postgraduate and professional development provision, and the pathways from Short Courses into accredited learning.
7. Lead critical academic stakeholder relationships to secure the academic strategy.

Artistic ambition

8. Nurture and develop the creative ambition of RADA's training, working with the Principal & CEO and senior academic leaders to foster an ambitious and contemporary creative culture, bring outstanding and relevant practitioners and artists into the Academy, and ensure high standards in the work they make with students.

Standards, governance and student services

9. Ensure the Academy continues to hold the status of world-leading and TEF Gold as the leading conservatoire for dramatic arts training.
10. Hold delegated responsibility for academic standards, quality assurance and governance; lead readiness for Office for Students and King's College London requirements.
11. Chair committees and working groups as required to fulfil academic standards, enhancement and development
12. Lead, with the Registrar, the development of student and academic services in line with RADA's goals for student inclusion and success.
13. Align academic structures, staffing and resources to strategic priorities, and manage the academic budget.

People

14. Lead the faculty people strategy, including recruitment, development, performance, succession and culture, setting a clear expectation that academic staff grow as educators, artists and leaders.
15. Lead the embedding of equity and inclusive practice in curriculum, pedagogy and student outcomes, in alignment with RADA's institutional Inclusive Practice Framework and commitments to anti-racism, equity, accessibility and inclusion.

Industry, partnerships and profile

16. Strengthen industry relationships and employability pathways, so that graduates enter sustainable careers across performance, screen and related sectors.
17. Oversee RADA's industry-facing showcases, exhibitions and events, connecting students with professional networks.
18. Build international academic partnerships of equivalent standing, contributing to RADA's first deep international partnership in the 2028–32 phase.
19. Act as a senior ambassador for RADA, representing its academic and artistic ambition to the sector, funders and partners.

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Research

20. Develop research practice and a research strategy appropriate to a small specialist conservatoire, linked to teaching and internationalisation.
21. Ensure effective governance and sustainable resourcing for research.

Person Specification

Knowledge:

Essential:

- Higher Education teaching and learning in a peer institution and relevant field.
- UK HE sector frameworks and regulation.
- Understanding of screen, digital or immersive practice and its implications for training.
- Understanding of how research and scholarship can support teaching in a practice-based institution.

Desirable:

- Recognised expertise in contemporary performance practices, theatre training or a closely related artistic field.

Skills and abilities:

- Able to provide clear academic leadership and facilitate and steward creative direction.
- Highly effective communicator, able to engage and influence internal and external audiences.
- Experience shaping academic priorities in ways that support financial sustainability; competent in budget planning and resource allocation.
- Draws on evidence and analysis to inform improvement.
- Sets clear priorities for self, teams and individuals and manages competing demands.

Experience:

Essential:

Academic change leadership

- Leading substantial curriculum or academic development from design to successful implementation and impact
- Depth of experience leading academic teams and academic portfolio
- Leading organisational change while maintaining stability and trust.
- Shaping creative outputs aligned with educational objectives and industry relevance.
- Leading initiatives that improved faculty performance or engagement, with measurable outcomes.

Desirable:

- Track record in developing research culture and outputs.
- Experience of international academic partnership.

Cultural competency

- Experience embedding inclusive practices that improved equity in student experience and outcomes.

Influencing and advocacy

- Building partnerships that enhance academic goals
- Acting as a senior ambassador, influencing external stakeholders and securing partnerships or funding.

Collaborative leadership

- Fostering cross-functional collaboration and building high-performing teams.

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Qualifications

Essential:

- Level 6 Higher Education (or above) or equivalent professional standing in a relevant discipline.

Desirable:

- Postgraduate qualification in one of the academic fields

Leadership Style and Attributes

- Leads with humility and respect, demonstrating an approach that values RADA's heritage, identity, and community.
- Maintains a visible and engaged leadership presence, appropriate to a small, specialist environment.
- Collaborative and a good team player and strategic partner.
- Pragmatic. Understands inter-relationships and dependencies and takes them into account.
- Provides calm, credible leadership, offering reassurance while constructively challenging and supporting progress.
- Balances effective operational oversight with delegation and empowerment, enabling others to perform at their best.
- Future-focused and strategically curious, with the ability to anticipate change and respond thoughtfully to emerging challenges.
- Commercially and financially aware.
- Inclusive leader in all respects, committed to ensuring parity of esteem across acting and technical disciplines.

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Terms of Appointment

- The appointment will be on a full-time, permanent basis.
- The role is based in London, with an expectation of regular and substantial on-site presence, reflecting the nature of the role and RADA's close knit, community-based culture.
- Salary: competitive, dependent on experience
- Pension: The postholder will be eligible to join RADA's pension scheme, with employer and employee contributions of 4%.
- Annual leave entitlement: 30 days plus statutory UK bank holidays, plus one additional day for each completed year of service after the first, up to a maximum of five extra days.
- Professional development opportunities.
- The appointment will be subject to appropriate pre-employment checks, including the right to work in the UK.



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How to apply

To apply for this post please click: [LINK](#)

For a full application, we will need three elements:

1. **A curriculum vitae**
(no more than three pages).
2. **A structured application statement**
(no more than two pages) addressing the role profile and person specification.
3. **A short video**
Using the link provided record a short video of up to three minutes in duration responding to the following:
 - Why do you wish to become RADA's Vice-Principal (Academic) and what would you bring to the role?

To record your video: [LINK](#)

RADA is committed to an inclusive and accessible recruitment process. If you require any support or adjustments in relation to any part of the application process, including the video submission, please contact **manjit.mundair-lalli@gatenbysanderson.com** for a confidential discussion.

Closing date: Friday 30 October 2026, 17:00

Key dates:

GatenbySanderson preliminary interviews:
w/c Monday 9 November

Informal conversations with the Principal and CEO: From Monday 23 November 2026

Assessment day comprising Staff Engagement Exercises and a panel interview:
Thursday 3 or Friday 4 December (tbc)

Equity, diversity and inclusion

We are very interested to hear from Black, Asian, and Global Majority candidates as well as candidates who identify as D/deaf or disabled, who are underrepresented at this level at RADA. We are taking positive action by guaranteeing progress directly to the preliminary interview stage of the process, to any applicant who self-identifies as being from a Black, Asian or Global Majority background, and/or who self-identifies as D/deaf or disabled and has professional experience in a senior executive leadership role, either at a Conservatoire or in Higher Education.

If you require any support to be able to take part in the interview process, please let us know when you apply, and we will ensure our interview process is accessible for you

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Registered Charity No. 312819

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Vice President: Cynthia Erivo MBE