

# RADA

Royal Academy of Dramatic Art



Candidate brief for the position of  
**RADA Chair of Council**

January 2021

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# Introduction

**“RADA and its MA Theatre Lab have given me far more than I expected and have opened a new chapter of my life. I am very proud to say that I am a part of RADA”**

**Dash You, MA Theatre Lab 2018**

Sir Stephen Waley-Cohen retires as Chair of RADA Council in 2021, having served as Chair since 2007.

The Royal Academy of Dramatic Art (RADA) is a world-renowned centre of excellence. Since its foundation in 1904, RADA has trained many of the world's most celebrated actors, directors, stage managers, designers and technical stagecraft specialists.

Our community is diverse, united by a shared passion for theatre-making, the power of stories and how they are told.

We pride ourselves on the exceptional standard of our teaching and the productions staged by our students. We continue to be at the forefront of developments in actor and technical theatre training. The expertise of our teachers, the success and ethos of our students and graduates and our relationships with the industry all support our reputation for excellence. Our financial sustainability is based on longstanding and successful commercial and philanthropic income streams which, prior to the pandemic, continued to grow.

RADA's graduates have an impressive track record as award-winners and leaders in their fields. They include, among many others, Kenneth Branagh, Fly Davis, Taron Egerton, Cynthia Erivo, Patsy Ferran, Lindy Hemming, Tom Hiddleston, Anthony Hopkins, Glenda Jackson, Adrian Lester, Gugu Mbatha-Raw, Rufus Norris, Paul Pyant, Fiona Shaw, Michael Sheen, Juliet Stevenson, Indira Varma, Phoebe Waller-Bridge and Aimee Lou Wood.

The creative industries, for which we prepare our students, contribute over £100 billion per year to the UK economy. They punch well above their weight and are a powerful voice on the global stage.

## Ambition

Recent world events, from the impact of Covid-19 and the resulting economic downturn, to the vital calls for change from the Black Lives Matter Movement, have transformed the landscape of our society, culture, education and the performing arts industry, both in the UK and abroad. RADA's ambition to support fully a diverse and empowered student and staff community, leading and responding to change, is more important than ever. RADA's training must continue to evolve to provide the best possible basis for careers in an ever-changing industry.

And we must continue to uphold our culture which is based on respect, equity, transparency and open-mindedness to sustain a 21st-century Academy that is truly inclusive, creatively challenging and playing a leading part in shaping the future of the dramatic arts. We continue to focus on significantly increasing participation among marginalised socio-economic groups and BAME students. In July 2020, RADA committed to upholding an anti-racist culture and institution, launching an anti-racism steering group to ensure a fair and equitable educational experience for all.



# Purpose, values and strategic commitment

**“My three years at RADA undoubtedly set an invaluable foundation for my last few years as an actor, and I am excited for whoever chooses RADA as the drama school for them”**

**Patsy Ferran, BA (Hons) in Acting, 2014**

## Purpose and mission

RADA believes in the power of the dramatic arts to inspire transformation and growth in individuals and in our society. RADA delivers world-leading training in the dramatic arts by cultivating exceptional talent in a community dedicated to curiosity, rigour, creativity and craft.

## Values

We are inclusive, rigorous, committed to our craft, collaborative and transformative.

## Strategic Commitment

Our strategy is to deliver the highest standard of training, evolving as the training and industry landscape shifts to new distribution models and technologies and capitalising on RADA's proven expertise.

Our 2019-24 strategic commitments and objectives (as set in late 2019 but currently under review in the light of the pandemic) are set out below.

## Training

We provide transformational training for exceptional talent, aiming to exceed the expectations of our students and the performing arts industry. We are committed to supporting, developing and attracting outstanding teachers and ensuring our programmes and curricula continue to excel in shaping the disciplines of actor and arts production training.



### ***Students and graduates***

We focus on delivering an exceptional student experience that creates resilient professionals. We aim to attract the most talented, diverse students and support them while at RADA, ensuring they have a strong voice in the RADA community and a lifelong engagement with RADA and its values.

### ***People***

We want to provide conditions for everyone to achieve their full potential. We are committed to modernising the way the Academy is run to support and enable our staff and students to do their best work.

### ***Operations and estate***

We must have the right facilities, equipment, systems and operational processes to sustain learning, teaching, performance and decision-making – all fully fit for purpose in the 2020s and beyond.

### ***Sustainability***

We are working towards enduring financial viability – a challenge for any higher education provider (HEP) in our sector, but particularly for RADA where the costs of providing our bespoke training inevitably exceed, by some way, the direct income received from student fees and government support.

We are committed to growing fundraising revenue, increasing the contributions from our income generating streams, in particular RADA Business, and promoting, protecting and nurturing RADA's brand and reputation.

### ***Leadership***

RADA has a well-established senior leadership team which, since 2008, has been led by Edward Kemp as the Director. Edward has recently announced that he will be stepping down in the 2020-21 academic year and the search for his successor will be under way shortly. The successful candidate for the Chair role will play a significant part in the selection process.

### ***Context***

During Stephen Waley-Cohen's 14 year tenure as Chair of RADA Council, RADA has improved its financial stability significantly, become an HEP in its own right (with high ratings from both regulators and students), completed detailed reviews of its acting and technical training courses and launched a capital project to enhance RADA's estate (currently on hold due to Covid-19).

In line with all HEPs, RADA has faced considerable challenges during the last year as a result of the Covid-19 pandemic. There has been an impact on student numbers, with a reduced intake in Autumn 2020, reflecting the pressures on space and the teaching resources needed to support the new ways training is being delivered, to accommodate social distancing and online tuition, where practicable. Inevitably RADA's finances have been stretched considerably, with a significant reduction in commercial income from RADA Business, particularly at the start of lockdown, and the absence of fundraising events which usually generate an important income stream for the Academy.

RADA is now embarked on the next exciting phase in its journey; embracing the challenges and opportunities that lie ahead with the passion, professionalism and creativity that has made RADA the world-renowned institution it is today.

### ***Structure and Finance***

RADA relies on fees from students and grants from the Office for Students (OfS) to deliver its world-leading under-graduate and post-graduate courses. However, the intensive nature of the work means that the full costs of the core courses have to be subsidised by other sources of income. The major sources of this additional funding are the profits earned by RADA Business, the wholly owned trading arm of RADA, and fundraising. Together these activities account for over a third of RADA's total income.

RADA is established by Royal Charter and is a registered charity. The primary responsibility for RADA is vested in the Council (the governing body) – the members of which are trustees – with management

of RADA being delegated to the Director, currently Edward Kemp, and through him to the senior leadership team. Council's current membership of 27 is made up principally of independent members and includes two student governors.

The Council is supported by the following committees chaired by independent Council members, with relevant senior RADA staff attending as appropriate:

- Audit and Risk Committee
- Finance and General Purposes Committee which also oversees remuneration
- Nominations Committee (chaired by the Chair of Council)
- Training Committee
- Development Board

**“RADA is a community that undoubtedly encourages its students, from all walks of life, to believe that they can be whatever they want to be. Whether it be an actor, stage manager, designer or director, the sky is our limit”**

**Bethany Lockitt, FdA in Technical Theatre & Stage Management 2019**



# The Role

- Be a highly vigorous and visible leader of the Academy, a respected ambassador externally and an admired, active and engaged leader internally, supporting and developing the culture of RADA
- Ensure that all key external stakeholder relationships are managed in a manner consistent with the support and funding required for success. Represent RADA's vision and aspirations to press and media.
- Leadership of the RADA Council. As Chair of its meetings, they are responsible for ensuring that the necessary business of the Council is carried out efficiently, effectively and in a manner appropriate for the proper conduct of business in line with the highest standards of good governance.
- Ensure the Council exercises control over the strategic direction of RADA, through an effective planning process, and that the performance of the Academy is adequately assessed against agreed objectives, with appropriate action taken on a timely basis to address any significant issues identified.
- Establish a constructive and supportive but challenging working relationship with the Director and the senior leadership team, both personally and on the part of the Council, recognising the proper separation between governance and executive management.
- Working with the Finance and General Purposes Committee, monitor closely the financial performance of the Academy in light of the annual budget and financial targets approved by Council, agreeing appropriate action, where required. Lead fundraising initiatives and seek new and effective partnerships with organisations and individuals to further the aims of the Academy.
- Ensure that the Council exercises collective responsibility. Seek to build consensus, encouraging all members to work together effectively, contributing their skills and expertise as appropriate.
- Lead the process of recruitment of new members of the Council, through chairing the Nominations Committee, and ensure that Council members actively contribute during their terms of office and that the Council approves and operates a procedure for the regular Council appraisal/review.

**“I can’t even imagine having had a career without RADA. It is inseparable from who I am as an actress”**

**Juliet Stevenson CBE,  
RADA Acting graduate, 1977**



# The Person

The ideal candidate for the position will have capability in a number of the following areas:

- Passion for the performing arts and creative industries and a commitment to the nurturing of talent.
- A commitment to education and the vocational training provided by RADA. Prior experience in the tertiary education sector would be helpful.
- A proven track record of leadership, whether in the commercial, public or not-for-profit sectors.
- Strong understanding of governance and the role of a non-executive Chair, with a focus on leading and developing Council members and working closely with the Director and senior leadership team to provide strong leadership to the Academy.
- A fluent and persuasive ambassador, who can represent the organisation externally as well as internally; a visible leader within the Academy engaging actively with staff and students, providing leadership to a diverse institution in a period of significant change.
- Able and willing to play a lead role in the Academy's ongoing fundraising activities, including acting as the host for events around the student shows and alumni performances in the West End; willing to use contacts for the benefit of RADA.
- First class communication and interpersonal skills capable of developing strong and constructive relationships with key stakeholders including funders and the wider dramatic arts and creative industries across the UK and abroad.
- Demonstrate sound judgment and the ability to evaluate risk within the context of a performing arts training organisation and support the executive team in managing risk effectively.
- A firm commitment to the ambition, ethos and values of RADA, and an empathy with the students and staff.
- Of any nationality, but able to spend significant time in Central London.



# How to Apply

## Terms and Conditions

The initial term of this unpaid appointment is three years, with the expectation that this would be renewed for a second, and potentially third, term. The Council usually meets four times a year and there are a number of committee meetings that the Chair would be expected to attend, with additional attendance required at performances, Patron / fundraising events and other meetings or events as appropriate. In order to apply, please submit a comprehensive CV along with a covering letter which sets out your interest in the role and describes the aspects of your experience relevant to the required criteria. Please include the names and addresses of three referees. Referees will not be approached until the final stages and not without prior permission from candidates.

The preferred method of application is online at:

**[www.odgers.com/80961](http://www.odgers.com/80961)**

If you are unable to apply online please email:

**[80961@odgersberndtson.com](mailto:80961@odgersberndtson.com)**

All applications will receive an automated response.

Interviews are expected to take place in late March / early April 2021.

All candidates are requested to complete an online Equal Opportunities Monitoring Form which will be found at the end of the application process. This will assist RADA in monitoring selection decisions to assess whether equality of opportunity is being achieved. Any information collated from the Equal Opportunities Monitoring Forms will not be used as part of the selection process and will be treated as strictly confidential.

## Personal data

In line with GDPR, we ask that you do NOT send us any information that can identify children or any of your Sensitive Personal Data (racial or ethnic origin, political opinions, religious or philosophical beliefs, trade union membership, data concerning health or sex life and sexual orientation, genetic and / or biometric data) in your CV and application documentation. Following this notice, any inclusion of your Sensitive Personal Data in your CV/application documentation will be understood by us as your express consent to process this information going forward. Please also remember to not mention anyone's information or details (e.g. referees) who have not previously agreed to their inclusion.

## Contact details

For a conversation in confidence, please contact:

**Samantha Colt**

**[Samantha.colt@odgersberndtson.com](mailto:Samantha.colt@odgersberndtson.com)**

**James Bailey Johnson**

**[James.baileyjohnson@odgersberndtson.com](mailto:James.baileyjohnson@odgersberndtson.com)**

We are committed to ensuring everyone can access our website and application processes. This includes people with sight loss, hearing, mobility and cognitive impairments. Should you require access to these documents in alternative formats, please contact **[response.manager@odgersberndtson.com](mailto:response.manager@odgersberndtson.com)**

Also, if you have any comments and / or suggestions about improving access to our application processes please don't hesitate to contact us

**[response.manager@odgersberndtson.com](mailto:response.manager@odgersberndtson.com)**

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