



RECRUITMENT OF DIRECTOR OF FELLOWSHIP

February 2026

Reference: PBBSVB

A LETTER FROM OUR CEO

Thank you for your interest in applying to be the Director of Fellowship at the Royal Society of Arts. This is an exceptional opportunity to lead one of the world's most remarkable communities of changemakers at a transformative moment in our history.

The RSA was founded in 1754 as The Royal Society for the Encouragement of Arts, Manufactures and Commerce. For over 270 years, we've been at the forefront of social progress: planting 60 million trees, initiating the Great Exhibition, creating the Royal Academy of Arts and the Blue Plaques scheme, pioneering public examinations, and coining the word "sustainability". We were the first Royal institution to admit women. Our Fellows have included Benjamin Franklin, Marie Curie, Judi Dench, David Attenborough, Tim Berners-Lee and Nelson Mandela. Our Patron is HRH The Princess Royal.

At times, we can be a complicated organisation to explain given our breadth. Whilst remaining deeply respectful of our founding principles in the encouragement of arts, manufactures, and commerce, we are simplifying our identity to The Royal Society of Arts: a place that acknowledges excellence across these fields. A place where you have a ringside seat to ideas and creativity across all parts of society. Where we convene the most interesting minds, where the arts become a way of solving problems, and where creativity and

commerce meet to find solutions. Not just ideas, but action. Our reset is clear: The RSA is the home of creativity applied for the good of all.

But we've faced retention challenges. Fellows need a clearer value proposition – a compelling reason to belong beyond events. The world is craving connection, intellectual curiosity, and meaningful participation. We need to transform our Fellowship from a membership into a movement where people actively shape the future.

As Director of Fellowship, you'll reimagine what fellowship means for our community of close to 30,000 members. You'll run a team of between 15-20 people and lead the strategy to deepen connections, create pathways for Fellows to contribute their expertise, and ensure being an RSA Fellow is one of the most valued distinctions someone can hold. Working alongside our new directorate team – including the Director of Strategy and Creative, and our Directors in Education, Arts, and Community Programming – you'll help shape how we deliver on our mission. Our focus is strategic: understanding what our Fellows need and building a community that truly energises them whilst keeping the RSA relevant, inspiring, competitive, and optimistic.

To succeed in this role, you'll need substantial experience in membership organisations, with a proven track record of developing compelling

value propositions that drive retention and engagement. You should be fluent in data and analytics, able to understand the competitive landscape, and skilled at translating insights into strategy. You need to understand community at a deep level – not just as a concept, but as something you build, nurture, and sustain.

This is a dynamic and entrepreneurial workplace. We need someone with an exceptional mindset for change, critical thinking, and problem-solving. Someone who can inspire teams whilst listening to the Fellowship itself. Someone as comfortable analysing data as building relationships. Most importantly, you need to believe that convening brilliant, curious people to apply creativity to society's challenges can change the world.

As Director of Fellowship, you'll report directly to me and help shape the future of the organisation. This role is for someone who sees the potential in what we could become and has the vision and tenacity to help us get there.

Whatever your background, if you believe you have the skills and passion to shape our future, we want to hear from you.

We look forward to reading your application.

David Joseph CBE
Chief Executive Royal Society of Arts

WHAT IS THE RSA?

The Royal Society of Arts is the home for creativity for the good of all.

Founded in 1754 in a Covent Garden coffee house, the RSA has spent more than 270 years turning possibility into progress. We were granted a Royal Charter in 1847 and today are proud to have HRH The Princess Royal as our President.

The RSA has always been a place for restless minds, and the creativity that powers innovation and progress. Artists, designers, engineers, reformers, entrepreneurs, technologists and cultural leaders have found a home here as Fellows. They have included Adam Smith, Dame Judy Dench, Vivienne Westwood, Edmund Burke and Karl Marx; Marie Curie, Deborah Meaden and Tim Berners-Lee; David Attenborough, Mona Chalabi and Demis Hassabis. Their diversity tells an important story: the RSA is not ideological. It is practical, curious and outward-looking.

We were the first society to admit women, and to welcome people of any class, ethnicity or nationality. Convening across boundaries is core to who we are. A potter sits next to a programmer; environmentalism meets AI; tradition meets reform. We believe progress comes from bringing different perspectives into meaningful dialogue and then acting together.

Across everything we do, one belief endures: ideas matter most when they are tested in the open and put to work in the world.



THE ROLE

The RSA has been turning possibility into progress since 1754. From pioneering invention and design to shaping social change, we are a home for ideas and action – a place where people drive real impact. Fellows (members) and our internal RSA teams are at the heart of this mission.

As we sharpen our purpose and strategy, we are putting Fellows at the center of everything we do, both in the UK and internationally. Reporting to the Chief Executive and sitting on the Executive Leadership Team, the Director of Fellowship is a pivotal leadership role. You will help shape RSA's overall strategy and ensure the Fellowship voice is embedded in every decision.

Your mandate: to grow and engage a diverse global Fellowship community, lead a high-performing team, and collaborate across events, content, and programme teams to create a vibrant, connected, and inspiring Fellowship that strengthens RSA's reach and influence worldwide.

What You'll Do

- **Lead Membership Strategy:** Design and deliver a compelling membership experience that fosters curiosity, connection, and belonging - from first encounters to lifelong engagement.
- **Shape Organisational Direction:** Contribute to RSA's strategic priorities and decision-making as part of the Executive Leadership Team.
- **Inspire Team Excellence:** Lead, mentor, and develop a high-performing Fellowship team with an international remit, promoting collaboration, creativity, and innovation.
- **Drive Growth and Engagement:** Create outreach campaigns and partnerships that attract new cohorts and the next generation of Fellows globally.
- **Champion Collaboration:** Work across teams to align Fellowship initiatives with RSA's broader strategic objectives.
- **Act as an Ambassador:** Build strong relationships with Fellows, new audiences, and external partners to amplify RSA's influence.
- **Ensure Financial Sustainability:** Deliver Fellowship growth that supports RSA's long-term financial health.
- **Harness Data for Impact:** Set clear goals, track results, and use insights to inspire fresh approaches.
- **Embed Governance and Trust:** Ensure feedback and complaints from Fellows are resolved transparently and in line with RSA values.

PERSON SPECIFICATION

Who You Are

- A strategic, engaging leader with experience shaping and executing organisational strategy.
- Growth-minded and commercially astute, confident in setting and achieving ambitious targets.
- A creative problem-solver with a member-centric mindset who inspires trust and brings people together.
- A natural communicator adept at stakeholder engagement and network-building.
- Highly organised, results-focused, and skilled at managing complex priorities across geographies.
- Committed to diversity, equity, and inclusion in all aspects of Fellowship engagement.
- Governance-aware and comfortable working with boards and senior stakeholders.

Your Key Experience

- Proven success in growing, retaining, and engaging diverse membership communities, ideally with international reach.
- A track record of achieving significant membership-generated income targets (c.£5m+).
- Demonstrable experience leading and developing multi-talented teams.
- Expertise in cross-functional collaboration and influencing organisational priorities.
- Fluency in CRM systems and data-led decision-making.
- Degree or MBA in marketing or a related field, or equivalent professional experience.

HOW TO APPLY

Saxton Bampfylde is acting as an employment agency advisor to the RSA on this appointment. Candidates should apply for this role via www.saxbam.com/appointments using code **PBBSVB**. Click on the 'apply' button and follow the instructions to upload a CV and cover letter and complete the online equal opportunities monitoring* form.

The closing date for applications is **midday on Monday 9 March**.

*The equal opportunities monitoring online form will not be shared with anyone involved in assessing your application. Please complete as part of the application process.

Inclusion Statement

As a social change organisation, the RSA believes everyone, regardless of visible or invisible difference, should be welcomed to participate in creating a better future.

We aspire to maximum inclusion in our work and endeavour to challenge systemic inequity and all forms of discrimination. We therefore welcome applications from anyone who is committed to our vision and values and can demonstrate the skills, competencies, and experience required for the role.

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Saxton Bampfylde

LONDON

79-81 Borough Rd
London SE1 1DN

EDINBURGH

46 Melville Street
Edinburgh EH3 7HF
saxbam.com

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