

Head of Student Services

Professional Support Services

Candidate Information Pack – January 2023



A Welcome from the Vice-Chancellor



We have been developing leaders, entrepreneurs and innovators at the Royal Agricultural University ever since 1845. The RAU was established at a time of burgeoning industrialisation and great famine in Ireland when enlightened individuals, and members of agricultural societies, recognised that the transformation of UK agriculture – needed to increase food production – could only be achieved through education, and the application of science and innovation.

'Practice with Science' was the mantra of our founders as indeed it still is today - as we aim to equip a new generation of graduates to meet the most pressing challenges that face us in the world now – climate change, food security, sustainable land use, biodiversity loss, heritage management and so on.

We were ranked the top university in the UK for being a Learning Community in this year's National Student Survey, and 4th highest for Overall Student Satisfaction across all English universities. We were also graded in the 'Top Ten' English universities for both Academic Support and Organisation and Management and outperformed all 24 of the universities of the Russell Group.

This year's Research Excellence Framework outcome adjudged that more than half of our research is 'world-leading and international in quality'. We are the leading small specialist university for research in England.

We are also one of only six universities in the UK to be designated a "Centre of Excellence" by the Institute of Enterprise and Entrepreneurship (IOEE), and the only specialist university to be so.

If you would like to play a leading role in shaping the future development of the RAU and you share our passion and commitment to the land-based sector – to agriculture, food and the environment; real estate land management; rural business and entrepreneurship; cultural heritage and equine management and science– then we would be delighted to hear from you as a prospective member of our staff.

Thank you for your interest in the Royal Agricultural University.

Best wishes

A handwritten signature in black ink that reads "Peter McCaffery".

Professor Peter McCaffery
Vice Chancellor

About the Royal Agricultural University

The Royal Agricultural University has been at the forefront of agricultural education and a key contributor to the land-based sector for over 175 years.

Our heritage

The Royal Agricultural University (RAU), formerly the Royal Agricultural College, was the first agricultural college in the English-speaking world. The first 25 students were admitted in September 1845.

From its early days, the College was staffed with innovators and pioneers and made a considerable impact on farming practice and agricultural science. In 2013, the Privy Council awarded the College full University Status with Taught Degree Awarding Powers, in recognition of its long record in the provision of higher education.

The present

The RAU has some 1,200 students studying a range of subjects, including agriculture, animal science, business, environment, equine science, farm management, food, real estate and rural land management. Set on the edge of Cirencester in the beautiful Cotswold countryside, its small size provides an exceptional sense of community amongst students and staff, which supports, develops and encourages students from all backgrounds to achieve their ambitions.

The University motto is 'Arvorum Cultus Pecorumque', a quotation from Virgil's Georgics, meaning 'Caring for the Fields and the Beasts'. This maxim has been enduringly relevant for a University which, in every area of its activity, has worked to promote sustainable use of the land, safeguard the environment and animal welfare and the wellbeing of rural communities. The RAU prides itself on combining subject expertise with industry connectivity and an innovative, forward thinking, enterprising approach. This opens doors for students, and RAU graduates are well prepared for successful careers in their chosen field, whether that be leading innovation and change in industry, informing future land-based policy, or setting up their own businesses. rau.ac.uk



The future

Since 2016, the RAU has achieved significant progress against its strategic plan and has delivered transformation and change. The RAU has redefined its purpose as "to cultivate care for the land and all that depend on it".

Core elements of the strategy include:

- Growing and diversifying the student community by providing an outstanding student experience and excellent employment outcomes. Innovative programmes will be informed by the evolving needs of industry and designed for learners at all stages of life, delivered via traditional and online learning platforms.
- Establishing a Knowledge Hub that will help industry navigate change and uncertainty making it possible to tackle big challenges more effectively, thereby delivering societal benefit and impact. The Hub will provide a focus to catalyse farmer led innovation, act as an accelerator of rural enterprise and become a centre for thought leadership for development of evidence-based policy and strategic thinking.
- Becoming a sustainable, efficient organisation that can fund a continuing investment in its physical, digital and human infrastructure, ensuring a continually improving and excellent experience for students and staff.
- Partnering with land-based colleges and schools to extend and diversify the student community. The University will foster thriving linkages to a variety of localities and communities across the UK, thereby extending the reach of learning opportunities it offers and the impact of its research.
- Developing sustainable partnerships with industry and research-leading institutions to provide a wider perspective, ensuring that what it teaches is relevant, improves student employment outcomes and enables sustainability-oriented innovation.
- Building on existing and successful international partnerships, among which a prominent feature has been teaching partnerships with Chinese universities.



Select highlights

The RAU has achieved significant progress against its strategic plan. Recent successes include:

- Ranked one of the UK's Top Ten Universities. Whatuni Student Choice Awards, both 2019 and 2020 <https://www.whatuni.com/student-awards-winners/university-of-the-year/>. We were also top 10 for job prospects in both years.
- Enterprising Learning Provider of the Year 2019: IOEE Celebrating Enterprise Awards 2019 <http://ioee.uk/2019/10/07/celebrating-enterprise-awards-2019/>. Awarded Centre of Excellence by the Institute of Enterprise and Entrepreneurs (IOEE) in the same year.
- Winning £1.1m of Catalyst funding to develop the next generation of agri-food/ tech leaders and to create new industry- led programmes that aim to position the RAU as a thought leader post-Brexit.
- Addressing highly relevant global grand challenges – such as climate change, food security and urbanisation– through the [Rural Knowledge Hub](#), which initiates thought leadership activities and accelerates the growth of rural enterprises through the Farm 491 agri-tech business incubator based in the new Alliston Centre and also the new [National Innovation Centre for Rural Enterprise](#).
- Increasing the percentage of state - school entrants launching two new funds with a specific focus on widening participation and getting involved in two national outreach programmes and the Agrespect rural LGBT+ network.
- Securing a £2.2 million endowment from the John Oldacre Foundation to support research students. Current PhD projects include crop science, land values in London boroughs, and equine nutrition.
- Expanding its CPD offer via the [John Oldacre Rural Innovation Centre](#), which is based at Harnhill and offers a large range of practical, industry-facing courses that teach rural skills.
- Establishing new and mutually beneficial academic partnerships with further education providers, such as the validation arrangement with Plumpton College and the urban farming focus afforded by the link with Capel Manor College in London.

Further information on other initiatives and successes can be found [here](#).



The Role

Job title:	Head of Student Services
Department:	Academic Services
Responsible to:	Director of Academic Services
Location:	Royal Agricultural University, Cirencester
Salary:	Grade 9: £40,931 - £51,805 per annum depending on qualification/experience
Term:	Permanent, full time
Relationships with:	staff, students, guests, contractors and suppliers

We have a number of different ways to work flexibly, so at your interview feel free to talk about what flexibility means to you. There are no guarantees, however, examples of how our employees already work flexibly include part-time, job share, hybrid-working and compressed hours.

The Purpose

The post holder will oversee and develop a proactive, influential, and outward-facing support service accessible to all RAU students. They will be a key part of the RAU's drive to enhance the student experience across all areas but particularly relating to diversity and inclusion, safeguarding, financial support, and mental health. The post holder will be a member of the Senior Leadership Team, relevant Committees, and will work with colleagues across all areas of University operations.

The Head of Student Services leads the Student Support Services team, including the Disability and Inclusive Learning Advisor, Disability and Inclusive Learning Officer, Student Helpdesk Advisor, Student Advisor (Wellbeing and Funding), Mental Health Coordinator, the Chaplaincy, and the Community Assistant peer-support group. In addition, the post holder will be responsible for ongoing and new partnerships with external support providers including counselling provision, and will have oversight of the multi-service Student Hub access point.

The post holder will maintain a key relationship with the student body via positive interaction and support of the Students Union and through operational feedback mechanisms which they will establish. They will take an important role in the development and implementation of the University's APP aims and will likewise be active in leading efforts to engage with students in matters relating to the NSS and other OfS and external feedback and monitoring opportunities.



They will be expected to be a leading voice championing institutional approaches to inclusive practice and will be a thought-and-action leader on anti-discrimination, anti-bullying, and campaigns relating to harassment and sexual misconduct.

The post holder will have experience of working across University departments and have a track record of creating and implementing new processes and policy. They will be familiar with the HE sector, have strong links to relevant professional networks, and have a good understanding of the specific issues impacting a small and specialist institution. They will have leadership and line-management experience, excellent interpersonal skills, and the ability to network and influence effectively. They will be data-literate and have the ability to analyse data relating to usage, trends, and to support external reporting requirements such as HESA and the OfS.

As a member of its leadership team, the post holder will also make a general contribution to the running of the wider Academic Services Directorate, including taking ownership of the organisation of department-wide training and development opportunities, and deputising the for Director of Academic Services in relevant areas as and when required. Most importantly, the post holder will have a passion for creating and encouraging inclusive environments and communities which allow students to thrive.

Key Responsibilities

- 1 To work within the Senior Leadership Team, Academic Services Leadership Team, and relevant Committee structures to champion, develop, and actively support projects, procedures, and policies which increase institutional awareness and action on inclusive practice, mental health, EDI, and the equality of experience and access within the RAU student journey.
- 2 To provide line management to the Student Support Services team and positive leadership across the wider Academic Services department; ensuring all areas of the team provide a cohesive, coherent, highly visible, and accessible service to students.
- 3 Continue the development of the Student Hub as a one-stop-shop, working across Professional Services teams to bring together information and support provision to enhance the RAU student experience.
- 4 Alongside senior colleagues, take a leading role in the development, monitoring, and communication of the RAU's Access and Participation Plan, acting as an authoritative voice working across departments to champion the objectives identified in the plan. Similarly, to understand, monitor, and deliver any actions needed to support the NSS in relevant areas.
- 5 Work closely with the Students Union and other student groups to support student voice projects and to facilitate and encourage the gathering of student experience feedback, using this insight to develop collaborative projects, policies, and procedures which respond to challenges and trends.

- 6 Within the wider Academic Services department coordinate, monitor, and implement training and development plans in consultation with other service managers. Devise, plan and deliver department-wide training and development opportunities, including away days, intra-departmental sessions and to encourage participation in relevant professional networks.
- 7 Develop an identity connecting Student Support Services, the Student Hub, and the wider student-facing elements of the Academic Services department, and communicate this to students effectively.
- 8 Use data and statistical analysis of service usage, student feedback, and registration trends to identify areas requiring targeted interventions to enhance student success, progression and retention.
- 9 Ensure that institutional approaches to mental health and inclusive practice are identified, understood, accepted, and delivered.
- 10 To act as the Lead Safeguarding Officer working closely with the other Safeguarding Officers to ensure that clear processes exist to monitor and assess identified risks, to communicate relevant policy and reporting routes, and to effectively work as a Safeguarding unit.
- 11 Take a leading role, along with other senior colleagues, in the planning and delivery of on-boarding activities including specific provision for international students.
- 12 Develop policy provision relevant to Student Support Service activities, working individually, via line management, and via Committee structures to achieve approval and to ensure implementation and adherence.
- 13 Participate in sector-wide conversations and development opportunities to ensure the RAU is represented and visible in relevant networks.
- 14 To deputise for the Director of Academic Service when required and to undertake such other duties as may be reasonably requested commensurate to the level of experience and responsibilities expected.

General Responsibilities

- The University is committed to equality of opportunity. All staff are required to comply with current legislation, University policies and good practice guidance.
- All staff are required to act in a way that safeguards the health and wellbeing of children and vulnerable adults at all times. The post holder must be familiar with and adhere to appropriate safeguarding policies and guidance and participate in related mandatory/statutory training. Managers have a responsibility to ensure their team members understand their individual responsibilities with regard to safeguarding children and vulnerable adults.

- All staff are required to participate in the University appraisal process and should ensure they are familiar with the process and plan time to prepare for their appraisal. Following the appraisal, staff are expected to undertake in any necessary learning and development and work towards the objectives that have been set.
- The University expects staff to attend any training designated as mandatory and to undertake learning and development activities to support their role. Managers must facilitate learning and development within their teams.
- It is a condition of employment that staff will not disclose any information obtained in the course of their duties other than to those entitled to receive it. The post holder must ensure that the confidentiality of personal data remains secure and that restricted information or highly restricted information to which they have access remains confidential during and after their employment at Royal Agricultural University. All staff must undergo appropriate data protection training as required.
- All absence from work must be reported in accordance with the University's absence procedures and recorded on iTrent.
- The University acknowledges its responsibility to provide a safe, smoke free environment, to its employees, service users and visitors. It is the policy of the University not to allow smoking on University premises other than in specifically designated areas.

Person Specification

Requirements The post holder must be able to demonstrate:	Essential or Desirable	Measured By A) Application Form B) Interview
Experience		
Demonstrable experience of managing culture change and laying out positive pathways to enhance community cohesion within a student body.	E	A/B/C
Experience of leading institutional approaches relating to mental health, wellbeing, and safeguarding.	E	A/B/C
Experience of successfully initiating and implementing process, policy and procedural improvements in relation to student services.	E	A/B/C
Experience of defining service boundaries and communicating this to colleagues both within and outside of the team.	D	A/B/C
A history of engagement with relevant professional networks.	D	A/B/C
Knowledge, Skills, and Abilities		
Ability to interpret data and produce relevant statistical information, business reports and make presentations as required.	E	A/B/C

Ability to ensure high levels of service and a focus on the student experience within a resource constrained environment combined with experience of managing a team budget.	E	A/B/C
Ability to effectively collaborate and network internally and horizon-scan for opportunities to come together on projects relating to student experience and community.	D	A/B/C
A sound understanding of internal communication strategies to varied audiences, combined with a proven ability to use this to influence decision-making relating to areas of support provision.	D	A/B/C
Ability to work under pressure and deliver to deadlines, including a willingness to work flexible hours on occasion, including evenings, weekends and public holidays.	D	A/C

General Terms and Conditions of Employment

- This post is a full-time appointment, offered on a permanent basis. It will be remunerated on the single pay spine, at Grade 9 £40,931 - £51,805 per annum. The appointment is normally made at the minimum of the pay scale and is subject to meeting all pre-employment clearances and requirements of the Person Specification.
- All new employees undergo a period of 6 months' probation in accordance with the terms and conditions of employment confirmation of employment is dependent on the satisfactory completion of that probationary period.
- The nature of this post is such that it is expected that you will respond to the operational requirements of the University in order to fulfil your duties in a professional manner. You will be required to work such hours as are reasonably required to discharge your duties effectively and competently. The exact number of hours in any week will vary in accordance with institutional requirements, but will not be less than 35 hours a week.
- The University holiday year runs from January to December. The post carries an entitlement to 30 working days (for a full-time position, otherwise pro rata) of paid leave during the course of the holiday year (pro rata if the appointment is made during the holiday year), in addition to Statutory Bank Holidays. There may also be discretionary days and days when the University is closed on particular dates in the interests of efficiency.
- It is a condition of employment that all relevant posts are vetted by the Disclosure & Barring Service (DBS) and if it applies to this appointment you will be required to undertake a DBS check. The University will pay the fee for this service. Any false declarations or any findings from the Disclosure could affect the suitability for employment.

Pensions and Auto Enrolment

If you meet the criteria set out below, and are not already an active member of any of our pension schemes, the University is required to auto-enrol you into a suitable pension scheme. The criteria for auto-enrolment is:

- Age - if you are 22 or over but no more than State Pension Age
- Earnings - a minimum of £10,000 per year
- Working in the UK

The pension schemes supported by the RAU are:

AVIVA CATEGORY X - all eligible RAU employees (except teachers) are automatically enrolled

- 5% (minimum) contribution by employee and
- 3% contribution by RAU

AVIVA CATEGORY Y1 - RAU Group Pension Scheme (defined contribution) - employees are able to upgrade to this scheme before their 6-month probation.

- 6.5% (minimum) contribution by employee and
- 6.5% contribution by RAU
- life assurance is an additional benefit (two times annual salary)

TEACHERS' PENSION (for teaching staff)

- employee contribution according to salary scale – between 7.4% and 11.7%
- 23.68% contribution by RAU
- life assurance is an additional benefit (three times annual salary)

Staff Benefits

We offer a range of Staff Benefits including a 35-hour working week, a generous 30 days annual leave entitlement plus bank holidays (pro rata for part time posts), pension scheme, free and guaranteed parking on campus and free shuttle bus from campus to Cirencester town centre, discounted catering facilities, discounted onsite gym, free library services, employee assistance programme, occupational health and counselling services, cycle to work scheme and staff development opportunities.

Further details of the full range of staff benefits available can be found on our [website](#).

Application Procedure

If you are interested in applying for this role, please send:

- University [Application Form](#) together with the [Equal Opportunities Monitoring Form](#) available on the University website www.rau.ac.uk – you may attach your up to date CV if you wish to add additional information.
- Details of two referees who must be people who can comment authoritatively on you as a person and as an employee in relation to the level of the post, and must include your current or most recent employer or their representative.
- Please forward to the HR Team, Royal Agricultural University, Cirencester, Gloucestershire, GL7 6JS or via email to jobs@rau.ac.uk stating where you saw the advert for the role

- Informal enquiries can be made to Dan Todhunter – Director of Academic Services Dan.Todhunter@rau.ac.uk or Dan Tasker – Head of Student Services (until 10th Feb 2023) Dan.Tasker@rau.ac.uk
- **Closing date:** 12 February 2023 with **Interviews on:** 2 March 2023.
- Should you be selected for interview please be aware that we are unable to reimburse interview expenses.

The RAU is an equal opportunities employer and we particularly welcome applications from black and minority ethnic candidates as they are underrepresented within the RAU at this level.

International applicants

Permanent or fixed-term positions

To take up an appointment at the Royal Agricultural University, applicants who are nationals of countries outside the UK and Republic of Ireland, and who do not have existing permission to work in the UK, need to get permission from UK Visas and Immigration (UKVI). Should you be successful in the selection process, the University will apply for a certificate of sponsorship that enables you to seek permission from the UKVI to take up our offer of employment. If you are from the EU, Switzerland, Norway, Iceland or Liechtenstein and have family already resident in the UK you may be eligible to apply under the EU settlement scheme.

Your success in applying for a certificate of sponsorship will rely on meeting certain criteria – for the most up to date list of these, as well as further information on working in the UK, please visit the UKVI website.

Please be aware that we have a legal responsibility to ensure that all employees are eligible to live and work in the UK. Should you be successful in your application we will need to see documentation confirming your entitlement before you take up your appointment.

General Data Protection Regulations: Applicant Privacy Notice

The Royal Agricultural University collects and processes your personal data so that it can meet its statutory and legal obligations, and when it has a legitimate interest in processing personal data before, during and after the end of the employment relationship.

The data which forms part of your job application (for example, application form, CV, references, Equal Opportunities Monitoring Form, shortlisting and interview records) will be stored in a range of different places, which will include the University's HR and recruitment management systems (electronic and paper based), and in IT systems (including the University's email system). Your information may be shared internally with the HR Department and with employees who are involved in the recruitment and selection process, but only if access to your data is absolutely necessary for the performance of those roles.

The University may share your data with third parties in certain circumstances. Personal data that the University uses for the purposes of equal opportunities monitoring and reporting is anonymised or is collected with the express consent of applicants, which can be withdrawn at any time. Applicants are entirely free to decide whether to provide such data and there are no consequences of failing to do so.

The University takes the security of your data seriously and has internal controls in place to try to ensure that your data is not lost, accidentally destroyed, misused or disclosed, and is not accessed except by the above employees in the performance of their duties. If your application is unsuccessful, your applicant data will be destroyed 6 months following the advertised closing date of the post you have applied for. If your application is successful, your applicant data will be retained during your employment and for 6 years following your leaving date. You can access and obtain a copy of your data on request and you can ask the University to change incorrect or incomplete data.

In certain circumstances you can ask the University to stop processing your data, or you can object to the processing of your data. If you believe that the University has not complied with your data protection rights, you can complain to the Information Commissioner. Further information about your rights in accordance with Data Protection and the GDPR Regulations can be obtained from the University Data Protection Officer. A detailed Employee Privacy Notice is available to view [here](#).