

# Director of Commercial Innovation

## Job Description

### The Role

<b>Job title:</b>	Director of Commercial Innovation
<b>Department:</b>	Transformation
<b>Responsible to:</b>	Executive Director of Transformation
<b>Location:</b>	RAU Campuses
<b>Salary:</b>	£76,050 per annum pro rata
<b>Term:</b>	9 months fixed term, 24.5 hours per week (0.7 FTE)
<b>Relationships with:</b>	Vice-Chancellor's Executive and Advisory Groups; RAU; Staff, students and other stakeholders; Governing Council; partner organisations and prospective partners

### Purpose

The Director of Commercial Innovation will lead the transformation of the Royal Agricultural University's innovation ecosystem based at the University's Cirencester campus. This role is responsible for designing, building, and scaling a high-value innovation cluster that bridges the gap between research validation and commercial adoption across land, food, agriculture, sustainability, and rural enterprise.

The Director will shape the Alliston Centre as Building 1 of the RAU's Innovation Village by establishing global partnerships, commercial programmes, specialist knowledge hubs, and revenue-generating services that integrate RAU's academic assets with industry demand.

### Key Responsibilities

#### 1. Strategic Leadership & Vision

- Lead the repositioning of the Alliston Centre into a specialist, RAU-aligned innovation ecosystem.
- Develop and execute a unified commercial strategy that integrates memberships, CPD, consultancy, knowledge hubs, and strategic partnerships.

- Establish the Centre as the commercial crucible for the future Innovation Village, testing new institutes, business models, and impact metrics.

## **2. Revenue Growth & Commercialisation**

- Oversee the consolidation of Farm491, Growth Hub, and other legacy brands into a single membership model.
- Expand high-margin revenue streams including:
  - CPD & Lifelong Learning (target: £300k)
  - Membership & virtual ecosystem (target: £250k)
  - Specialist Knowledge Hubs (target: £250k)
  - Consultancy, sprints, challenge prizes, and corporate partnerships
- Implement a 70% gross margin baseline for all new commercial activity.

## **3. Ecosystem Building & Industry Partnerships**

- Recruit and manage Anchor Partners across agriculture, sustainability, food systems, and rural innovation.
- Build global institutional links and secure strategic partnerships with corporates, investors, and international research bodies.
- Lead the creation of a £50M external venture fund headquartered at the Alliston Centre (advisory role, no fund management).
- Position the Centre as a high-growth magnet within the Oxford–Bristol–Golden Valley innovation arc.

## **4. Operational Excellence & Data-Driven Management**

- Implement a unified CRM and data pipeline to track lead generation, conversion, retention, and ecosystem lifetime value (LTV).
- Oversee spatial optimisation, including redesigning meeting rooms and under-utilised spaces.

## **5. Academic Integration & RAU Alignment**

- Ensure all commercial activity supports RAU's core values: Academic & Student Value | Industry Value | Innovation Value
- Embed "translation-first" protocols into RAU research bids (KTPs, industrial bids, JV research).
- Oversee the Student Consultancy Programme to enhance student experience and SME engagement.
- Undertake any other duties and responsibilities commensurate with the grade of the post, directed by the line manager. You may also be required to undertake alternative, additional, or ancillary duties from time to time as the University may reasonably direct.

## **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.

## University Values

As a University we have chosen five values to underpin our learning community. These are the values which we will all work by and for which we want the RAU to be known. We are:

- Collaborative - we believe in the power of working together. We are stronger as a community of practice - inspiring each other, identifying shared goals, and providing reciprocal support leads to greater success.
- Open-Minded - we are receptive to new ideas and we value the diversity of experiences and skills. We are committed to listening to everyone across the RAU community.
- Resourceful - we adopt creative approaches to achieve our goals while setting higher standards, promoting professionalism and sustainability.
- Responsible - individually and collectively we take accountability for our actions working with integrity to achieve the highest ethical standards.
- Inclusive - we acknowledge the fundamental value and dignity of all individuals and are committed to maintaining an environment that seeks to eliminate all forms of discrimination and respects diverse traditions, heritages, and experiences.

## Person Specification

<b>Requirements</b> The post holder must be able to demonstrate:	<b>Essential or Desirable</b>	<b>Measured By</b> A) Application Form B) Interview C) Presentation
<b>Qualifications:</b>		
Higher degree and/or professional qualification	E	A
Evidence of continued professional development	E	A
<b>Knowledge, Experience and Skills:</b>		
Proven track record of leading innovation hubs or accelerators, research commercialisation units, or sector-specific clusters.	E	A, B, C
Strong knowledge of agriculture, land management, sustainability and rural enterprise sectors.	E	A, B, C
Evidence of delivering significant revenue growth through services, partnerships, memberships, or commercial programmes.	E	A, B, C
Experience working with investors, venture funds, or innovation finance (not necessarily as a fund manager).	E	A, B, C
Demonstrated success in securing corporate partnerships, anchor clients, or strategic alliances.	E	A, B, C
Demonstrable understanding of university–industry partnerships, KTPs, industrial bids, and translational research.	E	A, B, C
Ability to design and execute a coherent commercial strategy across multiple revenue streams.	E	A, B
Excellent communication and influencing skills, including public speaking and thought leadership.	E	A, B
Strong analytical skills with the ability to interpret financial data, margins, and performance metrics.	E	A, B
Strong stakeholder management across academia, industry, government, and investors.	E	A, B

## 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](http://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](mailto:jobs@rau.ac.uk) stating where you saw the advert for the role
- Informal enquiries can be made to Teresa North, Executive Director of Transformation [Teresa.North@rau.ac.uk](mailto:Teresa.North@rau.ac.uk)
- **Closing date:** Wednesday 24 June 2026 with **Interviews on:** Friday 10 July 2026
- We acknowledge receipt of all applications within two working days. If you do not receive an email from us after submitting your application, please let us know by sending a new email **without any attachments** to [Human.Resources@rau.ac.uk](mailto:Human.Resources@rau.ac.uk) so we can check if your application has reached us.
- 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.**