

Pro Vice-Chancellor - Education & Students

Candidate Information Pack – May 2021



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About the Royal Agricultural University

Our heritage

The Royal Agricultural College (RAC), now the Royal Agricultural University (RAU), 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 1,100 students studying a range of subjects, including agriculture, 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. In addition, it has recently established the RAU Joint Institute of Advanced Agri-Technology at Qingdao Agricultural University in China where, by 2024, 1,200 Chinese students will be studying for double degrees in agriculture, environment, food production and supply management, and business management.

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.



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.



“The RAU’s mission is to equip a new generation to thrive through change”

Select highlights

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

- Ranked one of the UK's Top Ten Universities in the Whatuni Student Choice Awards, both 2019 and 2020: 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: 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 agritech 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 bursary schemes with a specific focus on widening participation and getting involved in two national outreach programmes and the Agrespect rural LGBT+ network.
- Securing a £2.2m endowment from the John Oldacre Foundation to support applied research, and PhD 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](#).



Academic structure and offering

Delivery of the University's academic offering is structured according to four broad programme areas:

- **Agriculture, Food and Environment (UK and China)**
- **Equine Management and Science (UK only)**
- **Real Estate and Rural Land Management (UK only)**
- **Rural Business and Enterprise (UK and China)**

The portfolio of courses has been specifically designed to help students realise their potential, whether they have their sights set on further study or a career in the land-based professions.

The RAU's academics care about their subjects and their students. Working alongside business leaders and employers, they deliver courses that provide students with the tools, mindset and networks they need to embrace the opportunities ahead and play essential, leading roles in shaping the future of the industry. The reach and influence of the RAU alumni network worldwide is extraordinary.

Teaching and learning

The University is engaged in a review of the curriculum to ensure that RAU programmes are delivered through innovative and inclusive approaches to teaching and learning, by academics with a passion and commitment to land based subjects.

Student experience



A key strategic priority for the University has been improvement in the student experience.

The RAU ranked in the top ten at the Whatuni Student Choice Awards in 2019 and in 2020 in both the Job Prospects and University of the Year categories, based on feedback from our students.





Enterprise and entrepreneurship

The RAU places a strong emphasis on [entrepreneurialism](#), creating opportunities for students to develop their own business ideas and receive tailored support.

From student societies to workshops and awards, budding entrepreneurs can benefit from the knowledge and experience of their lecturers and the strong industry links the University has carefully cultivated over the years.

With the aim of developing the leaders of tomorrow, adding value to students' degrees and providing better graduate employment to the students, the University promotes Student Enterprise projects such as the 'Grand Idea', which engages external business people and entrepreneurs to mentor and advise budding student entrepreneurs at the RAU. These projects are designed to improve the life skills of RAU graduates, allowing them to contribute to the local community and wider society.

"The award-winning Enterprise and Entrepreneurship Programme (EEP) provides an inspiring and supportive environment in which students can share, develop and launch their ideas."

Guided by lawyers, insurers, marketing professionals and accountants, students from all courses and years have the chance to realise their aspirations in a professional and rewarding environment.

As well as acting as a springboard for the business leaders of tomorrow, this celebrated programme has attracted the support of business leaders and PR sponsors across the UK, enabling the RAU to organise networking events, enterprise workshops, mentoring services, work placements and inspirational talks.



Employability

The University aims to ensure that all its students maximise their ability to secure satisfying, meaningful and rewarding careers and to make an effective contribution to the economic and social wealth of society. Graduates continue to enjoy excellent employment rates according to the annual national survey by HESA (the Higher Education Statistics Agency).

On average, based on 2016/17, over 93% of RAU undergraduates are in employment or further study within six months of leaving the University. The University's employability statistics are strong and bear out the educational merit and value its courses deliver to society. The provision of a steady stream of high-calibre graduates benefits not only the industries the University serves, but also employers and the economy. As well as fostering a community-based learning environment which supports a range of students from more than 45 different countries, the University actively encourages interaction with business and social enterprises.

Widening participation

Encouraging applicants from the widest possible range of backgrounds to choose the RAU is one of our key strategic priorities and we are continuing to take a whole University approach to widening participation. Through our [Access and Participation Plan](#) we have invested in significant plans and targets for the coming 5 years, including in our work with schools and colleges, strong links with collaborative partner colleges and our extensive range of outreach activities including summer schools, subject enrichment activities and a collaboration with the School Farms Network.

The RAU aims to offer programmes of study that are attractive to a diverse range of potential students, including our provision of foundation degrees and integrated foundation years. We have fair and transparent admissions policies that minimise barriers to admissions at the RAU, and provide financial support to students from low-income and underrepresented backgrounds.



Research and knowledge exchange

From its inception, the express aim of the RAC was to deliver what is now termed translational research. Academic staff at the RAU hold true to that mission today, and work on applied research projects across sustainable agriculture, agribusiness, real estate and land management, animal and equine science. The University expects to submit to the next Research Excellence Framework in 2021. With its close links to industry, many of the [University's research projects](#) are done in collaboration with commercial businesses and thus have genuine impact. Recent work has focused on product development for improved health and welfare in horses, improved crop management systems to reduce inputs, novel methods for insect control and development of new feedstuffs all of which contribute to a more efficient and sustainable industry.

Finance

Total income for the year was £17.8m (2019: £21.0m), a decline of £3.2m. In 2019 we were fortunate to receive a generous donation of £2.2m, compared to £267k in the current year. The remaining reduction was largely due to a fall in tuition fees of £0.6m and a drop in other income of £0.7m principally resulting from the Covid-19 pandemic.

Total expenditure for the year was £19.7m (2019: £20.2m), a saving of £0.5m. This comprised a saving in finance costs of £0.16m, with the remaining savings arising from reduced operating expenditures following the Covid-19 'lockdown'.

Covid-19 has had a significant impact on the financial results for 2020, and this is expected to continue into the 2021 financial year. Covid-19 had an immediate impact on the RAU's revenue streams: first, the University received no student accommodation fees for the third semester; second, the RAU lost essentially all commercial revenue from the initial 'lockdown' in March through to the end of the financial year.

Financial statements can be viewed [here](#).

The Role

Job title:	Pro Vice-Chancellor (Education & Students)
Responsible to:	Vice-Chancellor
Location:	Royal Agricultural University, Cirencester
Salary:	Competitive
Term:	Full -time, permanent

The Purpose

The Pro Vice-Chancellor (Education & Students) is a mission critical role in the University's senior leadership team, providing outstanding academic leadership to support the University to implement its future focussed academic strategy.

The Pro Vice-Chancellor is accountable to the Vice-Chancellor for the quality assurance and enhancement of the University's academic provision, the strategically aligned development of academic staff and for the continual improvement of the RAU student experience.

The Pro Vice-Chancellor will work closely with:

- the Chief Operating Officer to align the University's academic strategy to support efficient and effective operations
- the Deputy Vice Chancellor to align the University's staff and other resources to provide a student centred and innovative educational environment
- the Pro Vice-Chancellor (International) to develop and optimise the University's educational partnerships and alliances
- the President of the Students Union to build a student-centred culture in which the voice of students is embedded across all aspects of the University's decision making

The Pro Vice-Chancellor shares responsibility with the wider leadership team for promoting the University and enhancing its reputation regionally, nationally and internationally.

Key Responsibilities

- Lead the modernisation of the University's **academic portfolio** to position the RAU as the market leader in the provision of fit for purpose, innovative, and financially viable programmes that maximise student choice, meet the needs of employers and are inclusive
- Lead the development of stretch plans for **admissions and widening access** to support the University's strategic growth plans and commitments to equality, diversity & inclusion
- Lead the ongoing development of the University's **quality assurance and enhancement** framework to implement a culture of continual improvement of the University's taught provision
- Acting as a role model for educational innovation drive the University's approach to **innovative pedagogy**
- Lead the whole of institution **enhancement of the quality of teaching** to enable the University's goal of securing and sustaining TEF Gold

- Drive high performance, confidence, and pride across the **academic community**, ensuring collaborative working and a culture in which staff are empowered to embrace their professionalism and take personal responsibility within a clear framework of accountabilities
- Participate in **corporate** management and governance and chairing committees and other groups as required
- Identify and evaluate resource related **risks**, developing options and strategies to manage and mitigate risk with courage and insight
- Keep abreast of **national and international policy and practice** affecting operations in the HE sector and informing strategy and delivery in the University accordingly
- Undertake any other duties as may be assigned from time to time by the Vice-Chancellor.

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 - Skills, Experience & Mindset

Knowledge and Experience

- Experience of strategic leadership gained within a complex, mission driven organisation
- Sound understanding of the opportunities and challenges facing the HE sector with particular regard to small, specialist HE providers
- Record of achievement in leading learning and teaching innovation
- Evidence of success in enhancing the student experience
- Thorough understanding of quality monitoring arrangements and evidence of contribution to excellence in improving measurable quality outcomes (e.g. TEF, Ofsted, NSS etc.)
- Experience of building trust and confidence with a range of internal and external stakeholders including non-executive directors/governors
- Experience of leading change and of developing policies and practice in response to changing, sometimes conflicting, external and internal requirements
- Sound understanding and commitment to equality, diversity and inclusion
- Understanding of best practice in learning and teaching innovation, academic quality assurance and enhancing the student experience

Skills

- Strong inter-personal skills capable of presenting ideas and proposals robustly and persuasively, listening carefully and acting decisively
- The capacity to react and respond quickly and coherently as opportunities for action and change are identified
- Excellent verbal and written communication skills
- Able to work in a pressurised environment with high levels of demand and potentially conflicting priorities
- The gravitas to establish credibility at governing body level and challenge in a positive, constructive manner, with the ability to present to the governing body in a clear and concise manner
- Role model positive and empowering leadership attributes that bring energy and dynamism to the University
- A natural networker internally and externally

Mindset

This is an exciting opportunity to lead the RAU as it positions itself as a national and international market leader for specialist rural and land-based education in a post Brexit and post pandemic UK. To be successful in this role, the candidate will need:

- commitment to RAU's mission, purpose, vision and values
- personal and professional resilience to thrive when operating in complexity and uncertainty
- student centred, relentlessly focussed on improving quality and standards
- to be proactive and flexible, able to identify and take forward opportunities and work effectively in partnership with others.

- deep pragmatism with a positive and can-do attitude, willing to roll their sleeves up to get into details where necessary
- open-mindedness and a willingness to embrace and understand the diverse communities the RAU serves
- a willingness to collaborate internally and externally to achieve our mission
- confidence in challenging the status quo with due regard to the history of RAU
- strong leadership communication skills.

General Terms and Conditions of Employment

- This post is a full-time appointment, offered on a permanent basis. Confirmation of appointment is subject to meeting all pre-employment clearances and requirements of the Person Specification.
- All new employees undergo a period of 12 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 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 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, free gym, discounted catering facilities, 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

For further information about this exciting opportunity, please click [here](#) or for an informal and confidential conversation, please contact our advising consultant at GatenbySanderson:

- Ross Highfield 07891 138 886 ross.highfield@gatenbysanderson.com

The closing date for applications is **midnight on Friday 18th June 2021**.

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](#).

