

Appointment of

Academic Head of Department Comparative Biomedical Sciences

Candidate Pack



Introduction from Professor Stuart Reid

This is an exciting time to join the Royal Veterinary College (RVC) as Head of Department for our Comparative Biomedical Sciences (CBS) team and I thank you for your interest in this role.

Joining the RVC means becoming part of a heritage going back over 233 years at an institution where students are at the heart of everything we do. The RVC has always been at the forefront of veterinary science and animal health and our reputation is testament to our constant efforts to innovate in the delivery of our curricula to our students. The RVC is a small, specialist Higher Education Institution consistently achieving global recognition as a leading veterinary school and for its high impact research. Whilst being a Member Institution of the University of London, the RVC has recently acquired full University status in its own right. Spread across two campuses in central London and Hertfordshire, the RVC has a turnover of circa £130mn and undertakes a wide range of educational, research and clinical activities. Its international footprint has expanded considerably in recent years. Future plans include the capital development of a new small animal hospital and the expansion of its commercial activities, including through the London Biosciences Innovation Centre. The university faces the same challenges as the broader Higher Education sector, in particular through a constrained funding environment, with the additional challenge of competing with the private sector for its substantial third-stream business: risks that need to be managed in the context of future strategic development. Despite these challenges, the RVC has generated a consistently positive financial return over the past decade.

As the university develops, so do its teams, systems and processes, and there is now an opportunity to join the institution as Head of Department (HoD) for our Comparative Biomedical Services (CBS) function. Reporting to the Deputy Principal, the new HoD will be an excellent people leader in the field of biomedical sciences and a strong advocate embracing the diverse interests of those working in biomedical research and teaching. Working with the Vice Principals, the HoD will take an active part in promoting the University's activities, nationally and internationally. They will sit on the College Executive Committee and will play a key role in shaping the future strategy and direction of the RVC. The new HoD's role will be broad and evolving, and candidates should be comfortable operating as a partner to the other academic HoDs and other members of the University's senior leadership.



Ideal candidates will be experienced senior academic leaders with a strong track record of research in the biomedical field and with excellent strategic, finance and resource planning, used to working in a complex environment. They will have prior experience of overseeing and delivering operational management and be a natural ambassador and negotiator for the RVC.

We look forward to discussing the post further with you.

Professor Stuart Reid
RVC President & Principal

About the Royal Veterinary College



About the RVC

Founded in 1791, the Royal Veterinary College (RVC) is the longest-established veterinary school in the English-speaking world and a member institution of the University of London. In April 2023, the RVC was granted full University status by His Majesty the King.

The RVC's mission is to be a leading international authority in education, clinical care, research, expert opinion and employment in veterinary and biomedical sciences.

Education

The RVC offers outstanding undergraduate and postgraduate programmes in veterinary medicine, veterinary nursing and biomedical sciences to a talented and vibrant community of 2,500 students from more than 70 countries across the world, as well as CPD programmes in veterinary medicine and veterinary nursing.

Ranked as the top veterinary school in the world in the QS World Rankings by subject for the last four years, the RVC is one of the few veterinary schools internationally whose professional programmes are accredited in the US, Canada, EU, Australasia and South Africa.

Research

The RVC's research mission is to create, communicate and apply scientific knowledge to improve the health and welfare of animals and people and the environments in which they live. The aim is to conduct world-leading research and discovery in veterinary medicine, comparative biomedicine,

One Health, disease biology, animal welfare, and allied disciplines. The past two decades have seen sustained growth in the scale, range, and impact of research at the RVC. In the 2021 Research Excellence Framework, the RVC ranked first in the UK for research power and impact in the veterinary, agriculture and food sciences. University status provides the RVC with a new opportunity to consider how research and innovation is fostered.



Clinical care

The RVC provides support for the veterinary professions and animal owners through primary care practices and its three world-leading referral hospitals, including the Queen Mother Hospital for Animals, Europe's largest small animal hospital.

People and innovation

The RVC has a dedicated workforce of over 1,100 employees based across two campuses; one in Camden, Central London, the other, Hawkshead, near Potters Bar in Hertfordshire.

The London Bioscience Innovation Centre (LBIC), a hub for commercial research collaboration and business incubation in the biosciences and biotechnology, is based at Camden. LBIC is currently home to more than 50 life science companies, ranging from entrepreneurial start-ups, venture investors and university spin-outs, to several more established businesses.

Culture

The RVC is passionate about, and fully committed to, ensuring the health and welfare of animals and humans. Professionalism, care, and compassion are at the heart of everything we do. We foster an inclusive culture that promotes equality of opportunity, values diversity and maintains a working, learning and social environment in which the rights and dignity of all our staff and students are respected.

Finances

Within the context of a higher education sector facing an unprecedented level of challenge, the RVC is in a good financial position. We have maintained healthy operating surpluses in recent years, which has allowed us to invest strategically. For the financial year to the end of July 2024 our turnover was £129 million with an operating surplus of £8.8 million. Our annual accounts can be found [here](#).

Strategic Plan and the Future

The RVC is midway through its ambitious Strategic Plan 2022-26 and on track to achieve its objectives.

A copy of the Strategic Plan can be found [here](#).

Ranked #1 in the world for Veterinary Science

(QS World University Rankings 2023)

1100 staff

approx.

We have (+ Casuals/
contractors/visiting staff/
honorary etc)

We own the **London BioScience
Innovation Centre (LBIC)** - home
to **over 60 biotechnology and life
science companies**, from small
start-ups to established players

1791

We have been serious about
science for 233 years

2500 students

approx.

We have a vibrant international
community, with students
from **71 countries** and staff
from **94 countries**

Internationally Recognised Courses

Our **Biological Science**
programmes are accredited by the
Royal Society of Biology, with our
MSci and placement year options
gaining **Advanced Accreditation**

Based in **London**, ranked as
the top student city in the world
(QS Best Student Cities 2024)

and **Hertfordshire**
students are based on a 575-acre
countryside campus

280

approx.
professional services employees
(under the current COO structure)

The RVC is one of the few
veterinary schools in the world
that holds accreditations from
the **Royal College of Veterinary
Surgeons (RCVS)** in the UK,
the **European Association of
Establishments for Veterinary
Education (EAEVE)** in the EU,
and the **Council on Education of
the American Veterinary Medical
Association (AVMA)** in the USA
and Canada

Key Facts 2024





Academic Structure

The RVC's academic departments are home to the research, teaching and impact that delivers our academic mission. Our work addresses global challenges and we operate at the forefront of global veterinary medicine and science.

Department of Comparative Biomedical Sciences

The Department of Comparative Biomedical Sciences is responsible for teaching and research in basic science disciplines including Anatomy, Biochemistry, Molecular and Cellular Biology, Pharmacology, Genetics and Physiology. The focus of the Department is advancing understanding of animal biology from the molecular level to the whole animal level. The diverse research interests, which feed into the RVC wide research themes, includes longstanding international strengths in a number of areas including Biomechanics, Musculoskeletal biology, Cardiovascular biology, Neurobiology Reproduction and Development, and Pharmacology.

Department of Pathobiology and Population Science

The Department of Pathobiology and Population Sciences is home to a broad range of disciplines, comprising production animal (also known as farm animal, food animal or livestock) medicine, animal welfare, epidemiology, economics and veterinary public health, veterinary pathology, microbiology and immunology. This broad range of skill sets is reflected across our education and research in extensive undergraduate and post-graduate teaching; research that is focused on One Health, vaccinology, epidemiology and infectious diseases; and provision of a diagnostic service for the RVC's hospitals and external practitioners.

Department of Clinical Science and Services

The Department's aim is to improve the welfare of animals by understanding all aspects of animal health and disease through education, research and clinical service. Clinical Science and Services is involved in all aspects of veterinary scholarship including lifelong learning, research and, through our hospitals, the provision of the most comprehensive clinical services in Europe. Collectively, the Department is committed to promoting improved animal health through an active clinical research programme supported by our Clinical Investigation Centre and incorporating national and international collaborations using standardised recording to utilise clinical information obtained from affiliated first opinion practices. Collaboration between our specialist clinicians and scientists ensures the highest standards of clinical medicine and research.

Our Research

The RVC's research mission is to create, communicate and apply scientific knowledge to improve the health and welfare of animals and people and the environments in which they live. The scope of the RVC's research and innovation is defined by this mission – the aim is to conduct world-leading research and discovery in veterinary medicine, comparative biomedicine, One Health, disease biology, animal welfare, and allied disciplines. The past two decades have seen sustained growth in the scale, range and impact of research at the RVC. In the 2021 Research Excellence Framework, the RVC ranked first in the UK for research power and impact in the veterinary, agriculture, food and sciences. University status provides the RVC with a new opportunity to consider how research and innovation is governed and fostered. UK bioscience research has in recent years been supported by relatively steady levels of funding, and the association of the UK to Horizon Europe ended a period of uncertainty.

The UK government's 10-year Life Sciences Vision, published in 2021, includes an aim to maintain and grow investment in life sciences research and to support the UK's rapidly expanding bioscience and MedTech industries. However, financial pressures are increasing at UK's universities, leading to a growing focus on the cost recovery of research activity, which is estimated to average 70% across the higher education sector. The biological sciences are experiencing a period of discovery and rapid advancement, driven by the development and availability of new technologies in multiple fields. In the next decade, animal and veterinary sciences have the potential to be transformed by the application of tools such as genome sequencing, biosensing, gene editing, robotics, bioinformatics, and artificial intelligence/ machine learning. Directed investment in people and skills will be needed to realise this potential and to enable the RVC to fulfil its responsibilities to animal and human health in a rapidly changing world.



Learning, Teaching and Assessment

The RVC staff community consists of highly qualified, award-winning academics who are also world-renowned researchers, and/or clinicians that are passionate about their fields, all supported by an expert team of professionals. We are committed to offering, and evolving, curricula which prepare our students for their career destinations and lifelong learning with a focus on cultural competency and learning outcomes. We deploy modes of delivery which accommodate the needs of all our students, and continue to upgrade and develop learning resources to provide students with a flexible learning experience, for class-paced and independent study. Through our learning, teaching and assessment, we aim to build a diverse community of lifelong learners enabled to understand and proactively curate their own learning and experiences, with a growth mindset and a continuing connection to the RVC as a place to further their development.



Professional Services Department (PSD)

There are seven PSD teams currently overseen by the Chief Operating Officer (COO) comprising approximately 280 people and a budget of £33 million. These include:

- Learning and Wellbeing
- The Registry
- Infrastructure Services
- International Engagement and Strategic Partnerships
- Human Resources
- External Relations
- Governance Services



Finance

The Chief Financial Officer has overall responsibility for all financial matters relating to the university: strategic, governance-related and operational. They are supported by the Director of Finance who heads the Central Finance Department.

The Role

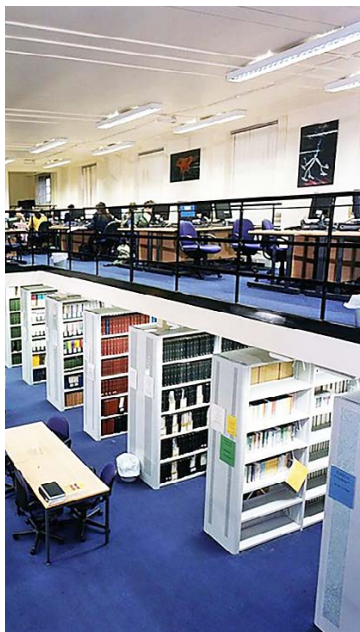
Role Summary

The Head of the Department of Comparative Biomedical Sciences (CBS) will lead the academic and non-academic members of staff with a commitment to deliver the University's missions. This position of leadership will have responsibility for colleagues in the department delivering its teaching and research programmes, and its interaction with major stakeholders.

A major part of the role will be to ensure that the department retains a strong identity and purpose that embraces the diverse interests of those working in biomedical research to ensure that new academics achieve their full potential. Flexibility in relation to any new structures developed by the University as part of university status will also be important.

Working with the Vice Principals, the Head of Department will take an active role in promoting the University's activities, locally, nationally, and internationally. The Head of Department will have line management responsibility for academics and non-academics in the department, as appropriate, will lead on recruitment to the Department and will also have responsibility for non-pay budgets.

The Head of Department will be part of the College Executive Committee (CEC). The position, will be for 4 years in the first instance.



Job Description

Main duties and responsibilities:

Accountable to the Deputy Principal is responsible for providing leadership by -

Contributing to the delivery of the University's strategic plan.

Ensuring staffing (recruitment and talent management) plans are developed and maintained for the Department.

Ensuring effective communication of CBS activities to all staff.

Providing academic leadership to the department, facilitating the development of academics so they achieve their full potential in their chosen field.

Developing appropriate operational objectives for departmental staff that align with institutional level objectives.

Working with the cognate VPs and Associate Deans to support the requirements of undergraduate and postgraduate teaching.

Ensuring the Department operates according to the highest standards in relation to ethics and matters of equality, diversity, inclusion, and environmental sustainability.

Representing the Department on all relevant committees, chairing where appropriate.

Where appropriate and/or necessary, developing and stewarding relationships with major stakeholders.

Reviewing, revising and developing the University's strategy for Comparative Biomedical Sciences within the framework of RVC's strategic plan.

Providing leadership, where appropriate, in achieving accredited status.

Ensuring, in conjunction with the VP(R&I), that the environment is conducive to collaborative and interdisciplinary research initiatives, that facilitate basic science-clinical collaboration where appropriate.

Providing leadership and management for the development of integrated teaching and research in various basic science disciplines.

Ensuring department staff and students are managed in a way that they take responsibility for their health and safety and comply with legally required processes

Engaging in the University's strategic planning cycle and associated objectives.

Ensuring effective contribution of departmental staff to the University's objectives.

Leading on recruitment searches for academic members of staff.

Taking responsibility for ensuring staff have, as far as is possible, equitable and manageable workloads, taking account of research, teaching, administrative and outreach activities.

Ensuring effective mentoring, appraisal, and development of departmental staff, reviewing line management structures as and when appropriate.

Providing departmental leadership and advocacy to the University's Academic Probation and Promotion (APPP) and Senior Academic Promotion (SAPP) panels.

Ensuring effective communication of the University's activities to all staff, and feedback departmental views and needs to CEC.

Providing departmental input in the management of the University's Workplace Allocation Model and Talent Management Process.

Delivering on the university's commitments to equality and diversity and wellbeing.

Through the annual budget process, advising the Principal and CEC on the needs of the CBS department.

Working with the VPs and the Director of Finance to develop a robust and workable budget.

Taking responsibility for the management of budgets as appropriate.

Person Specification

Essential

Appropriate undergraduate qualification

A PhD/higher degree

Experience of complex project management

Experience of line management

Experience of working across multiple teams and stakeholders

Experience of working within a Higher Education environment (ideally with a clinical service provision).

Experience of teaching undergraduate and postgraduate students and knowledge of assessment of quality of teaching (TEF) exercises.

An outstanding record of publications in biomedical research in peer-reviewed journals of international standing.

A track record of grant funding acquisition from appropriate funding bodies.

Knowledge of the UK research funding environment and research assessment (REF) exercises.

A track record of successful programme and project management in relation to change delivery.

Ability to develop a clear vision of what is to be achieved by the research and education teams under the post-holder's line management and ability to encourage individuals to contribute to this common goal.

Excellent verbal and written communication skills.

The ability to relate effectively to people in a variety of different scenarios

Ability to construct and effectively communicate evidence based business cases for change to all stakeholders.

Excellent negotiation and influencing skills

Ability to build and sustain relationships with a variety of audiences inside and outside the University.

Ability to represent the University's research and educational activities with clarity and confidence to the wider profession, media, and other stakeholders.

Experience of successful management and control of complex/multifaceted budgets.

Experience of formulating, developing, and delivering a high-level strategy.

Excellent people skills.

Credibility and a strong sense of purpose and a clear mission.

Confident and significant leadership and management in a changing environment.

Experience of team building and leadership.

Ability to deal with interpersonal issues of a complex, sensitive and confidential nature.

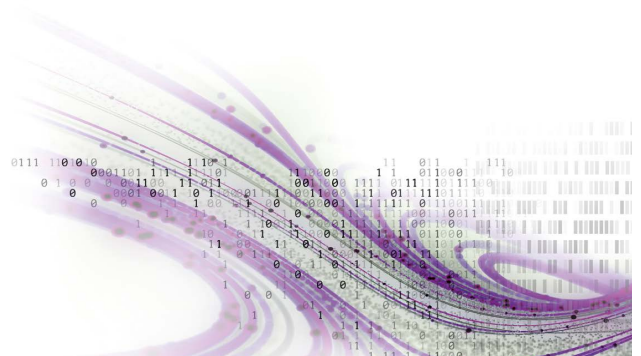
Desirable

Experience of senior financial management in a Higher Education institution

Involvement in the delivery of major capital projects

An understanding of basic contract law

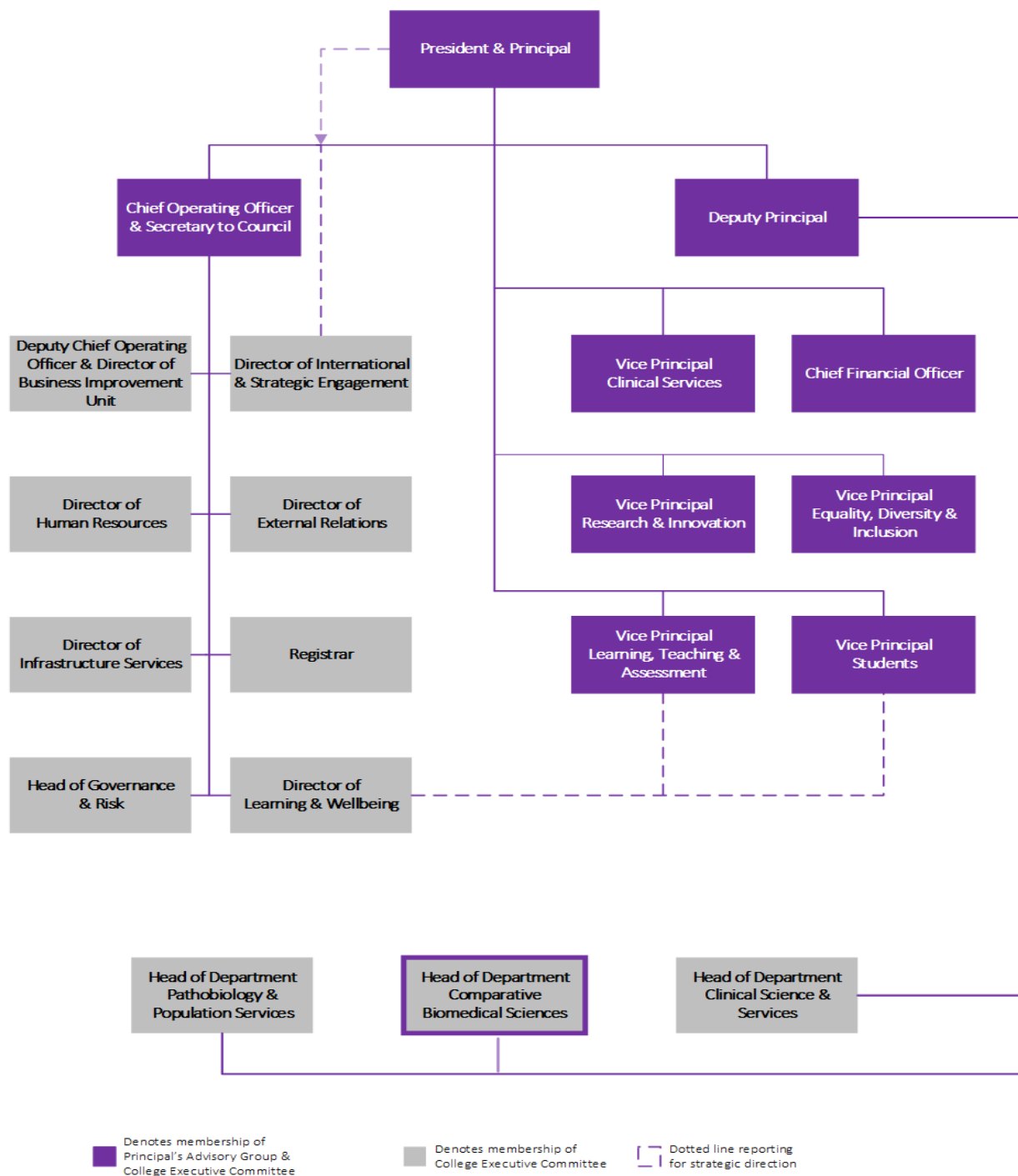
Previous representation on, or active involvement with, external professional bodies/networks



Senior Executive Committees

The Principal's Advisory Group (PAG) is the university senior leadership group that provides strategic advice and support to the Principal in managing the university.

The College Executive Committee (CEC) is the primary decision-making body responsible for overseeing the day-to-day management and strategic direction of the university.



Our Campuses

Camden



The historic Camden Campus is where Veterinary Medicine (BVetMed) students spend their first two years, or the first year of the Accelerated BVetMed and Veterinary Gateway, before Gateway students join the BVetMed students for another two years at the Camden Campus. Biological Sciences pathway students study at Camden throughout their courses, except Animal Biology, Behaviour, Welfare and Ethics students who spend their final year at Hawkshead.

The Hobday Building is the centre of the Camden Campus. In 2021 it benefitted from extensive redevelopment. Approximately £14 million was invested to provide students with new classrooms, extra social learning spaces, an extended dining facility, larger common rooms, and much-improved social areas. It also holds lecture theatres, a learning resource centre, a teaching laboratory and dissection room, World-class laboratories including molecular biology labs with cell culture, as well as state-of-the-art cell and tissue imaging facilities. There is also student accommodation on site which is currently undergoing extensive renovation and improvements.

The RVC Beaumont Sainsbury Animal Hospital is a first-opinion practice and animal hospital located right next door to the main campus and is the starting point for hands-on clinical experience for veterinary medicine and nursing students. The practice is also a leading centre for veterinary nurse training.

Also located next door to the main Camden campus is the **London Bioscience Innovation Centre (LBIC)** which is wholly owned by the RVC and is home to over 60 biotechnology and life sciences companies, from small start-ups to established global organisations, who regularly provide placements for our Biological Sciences pathway students. LBIC is shortly due to expand into new leased premises in the London Kings Cross Quarter.

Hawkshead

The Hawkshead Campus in Hertfordshire houses facilities to deliver both the theoretical and practical elements of the RVC courses as well as student accommodation, Students' Union and other student facilities including sports and social spaces. It is where veterinary medicine students are based for their final three years, alongside student veterinary nurses, final year Animal Biology, Behaviour, Welfare and Ethics students and specialists-in-training.

The campus has recently completed the largest and most ambitious single capital development the RVC has ever undertaken providing new teaching laboratories, a library and a main lecture theatre, alongside informal social learning spaces. The campus also houses other modern lecture theatres and laboratories. The redevelopment has significantly increased research facilities, including the launch of the RVC Centre for Vaccinology and Regenerative Medicine. This is the latest specialist centre on campus, which already houses the Centre for Emerging and Endemic Diseases, Structure and Motion Laboratories, Clinical Skills Centre, and Clinical Investigations Centre. The RVC small animal referrals operate from the Queen Mother Hospital for Animals which is one of the largest and most advanced veterinary hospitals in the world, treating in excess of 20,000 cases each year. Veterinary medicine and nursing students spend much of their clinical experience working here – meeting and treating patients and learning to carry out procedures – all supervised by expert senior vets and vet nurses.

The RVC Equine runs both an equine practice and referral hospital combining a first-opinion ambulatory practice with 24-hour emergency and referral services, complemented by world-leading research with the largest number of RCVS Equine Specialists of any UK veterinary teaching hospital. Veterinary medicine students undertake Equine rotations as part of their clinical training.



Boltons Park Farm

Based less than a mile from the Hawkshead Campus in Hertfordshire, Boltons Park Farm is a working dairy and sheep farm and provides practical teaching facilities for students.

The farm consists of 200 hectares of mainly grazing grass, along with 14 hectares of wildlife stewardship plots and 20 hectares of ancient mixed woodland along with the younger woods that we have planted over the years.

Equity, Diversity, and Inclusion



The RVC's core values of compassion, professionalism, respectfulness, and commitment speak to its institutional determination to undertake its mission in a manner that aspires to the highest standards of behaviour, a culture that is open and inclusive, and a full commitment to Equity, Diversity, and Inclusion (EDI).

Whilst working within the legislative framework provided by the Equality Act 2010 for all organisations, the aim is to go beyond legal statutory duties and integrate EDI into all RVC's operations and processes, and in the daily experiences of all members of the RVC community.



Terms and Conditions of Employment

Salary will aligned to RVC senior academic career paths + responsibility allowance

In addition, the RVC offers a range of excellent employee benefits including:

30 days annual leave entitlement plus bank holidays and concessionary days



Generous sick pay



Family friendly policies



Membership of the USS Pension Scheme



Free state of the art gym



Cycle to work scheme



Access to student discount benefits such as Totum card



Many more

How to Apply



To apply, please submit your application through our on-line recruitment system by **Sunday 2nd March 2025**.

The interview dates will be confirmed.

Prospective applicants are encouraged to contact the current CBS Head of Department, Caroline Wheeler-Jones, cwheeler@rvc.ac.uk or Deputy Principal, Professor David Church, at dchurch@rvc.ac.uk, if they wish to discuss the role,



