

Appointment of University Secretary Candidate Pack



Introduction from Chief Operating Officer - Tim Bianek

This is an exciting time to join the Royal Veterinary College (RVC) as University Secretary 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 RVC as University Secretary, initially on a fixed term basis. Reporting to the Chief Operating Officer (COO), and supporting the College Executive Committee, the new University Secretary will have considerable and first rate experience working in a similar senior role with Higher Education (HE) governance principles and good practice, including the Nolan Principles, or similar and will be an inspirational manager & leader. With an excellent understanding of contemporary HE environment and how it's affected by developments in the wider economy and society, candidates will have demonstrable experience of the policy, legal constitutional and the complex regulatory environment in which universities operate; knowledge of and up-to-date understanding of governance trends, regulation and best practice. With substantial experience of committee administration, leading on risk management, candidates will require experience of operating as a Data Protection Officer, and or extensive knowledge. Working with the COO, initially the role will focus on establishing, developing and shaping the function to meet the strategic needs of the University.



We look forward to hearing from you.

Tim Bianek
Chief Operating Officer

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 profession 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.

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.



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.

Strategic Plan and the Future

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

Ranked #1 in the world for Veterinary Science

(QS World University Rankings 2023)

1100 staff approx.

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

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

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**

Key
Facts
2025





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.

We have 3 academic Departments:

- **Department of Comparative Biomedical Sciences**
- **Department of Pathobiology and Population Science**
- **Department of Clinical Science and Services**

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.

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
- **Secretariat**



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.



Secretariat

The University Secretary will lead their team to provide a range of services covering professional support to the COO and the University Executive in accordance with RVC's aims, objectives and statutory responsibilities, including:

- Governance and administration of Council, key committees and sub-committees
- Management of risk and due diligence
- Statutory and regulation framework management
- University legal services management
- Data Protection

The Role of University Secretary

Key Responsibilities

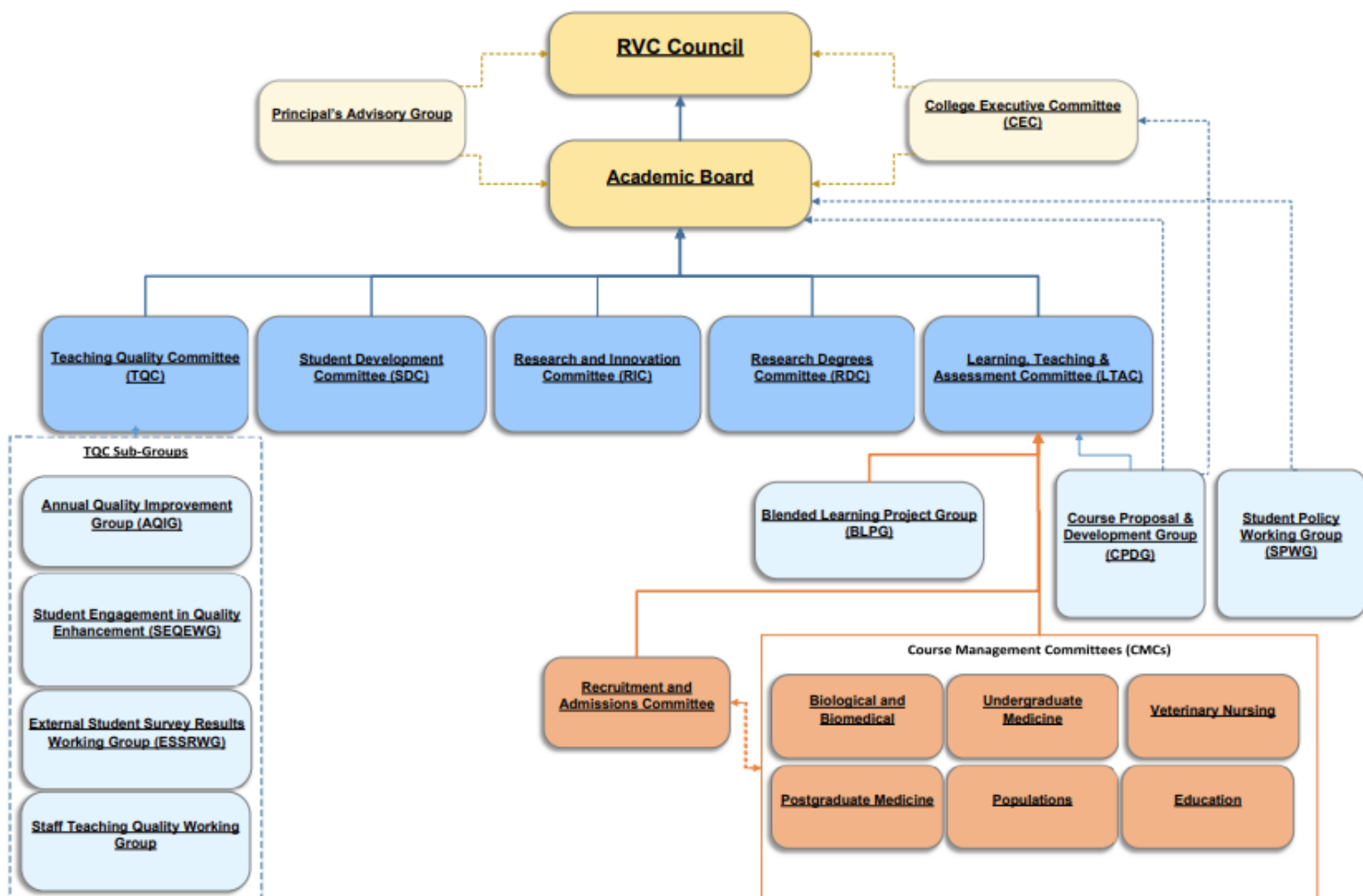
Governance, Data Protection & Legal - Service Delivery

- Working closely with the Chair of Council, lead the Governance Team in providing high-quality support to Council, all its sub-committees, delivering effective administration, logistics and information flows as required.
- Maintain RVC's governance and regulatory frameworks and best practice.
- Act as a key point of contact for Council and co-opted members of RVC's committees, including recruitment and induction.
- Lead University's governance and act as Secretary to a range of university committees as required, overseeing all administration.
- Lead the effective design and operation of risk processes, including consolidated reporting to executive committees.
- Support the CFO in the management of the internal audit process including maintenance of the internal audit action tracker.
- As the university's Data Protection Officer, lead on all aspects of information governance and compliance overseeing the management of Freedom of Information and Subject Access Requests within the Governance Team.
- Oversee the delivery of a quality and cost-effective suite of legal services to the University.

Leadership, Team Management, Motivation & Culture

- Lead, mentor and inspire a high-performing team fostering a positive culture of collaboration innovation and accountability, demonstrating an inclusive, ethical and approachable leadership style
- Role model the university's commitments to equality, diversity and inclusion, health and safety, and wellbeing.
- Ensure recruitment and talent management plans are developed and maintained for the team, including appropriate operational objectives.
- Develop talent through coaching, training, and clear career development paths.
- Ensure the Governance Team (4) are regularly appraised, have opportunities for new and challenging tasks and have rewarding careers. Ensure the Team are informed and engaged in the strategic plan, sub strategies and operational plans, and understand how their roles contribute to the success of those plans.

Academic Committee Structure



The Role

Key Responsibilities continued

Teamwork and Motivation

- Be an active member of leadership, management, operational and project teams across the university.
- Contribute to the management of the team by helping to ensure team objectives are met, established, monitored and delivered in line with RVC's overall objectives and allocated budgets.
- Provide cover as appropriate for team colleagues.

Communication

- Produce and co-ordinate the preparation of a range of high-quality written papers and numerical management information/data analysis to committees and other audiences
- Develop templates and procedures to enable the alignment of sub-strategies and operational plans to overall RVC Strategy
- Provide verbal updates and presentations on any matters relating to the key tasks listed in the Service Delivery section (on previous page)

Planning & Organising

- Support the delivery of RVC's Strategic Plan by leading the development of sub-strategies and operational plans relating to the Governance team members and the wider Professional Services Department (PSD)
- Accountable for the Team's budget, working with Management Accounts to ensure the university achieves value for money from its expenditure and delivers an effective service to the university.
- Initiate and implement ways of improving efficiency and effectiveness to maintain a culture of continuous improvement and sound financial management.

Liaison and Networking

- Develop good working relationships and maintain effective communication with other departments and services within the RVC, including by attending and contributing to local meetings.
- Facilitate and manage a strategic link between all departments across the university and the Team.
- Build and develop relevant external professional networks, especially relating to the Higher Education sector.

Analysis and Research

- Actively seek to 'horizon-scan' on all areas of responsibility, reporting opportunities and emerging risks to the university's executive as appropriate.
- Coordinate and instigate research activity which supports university policy development, keeping abreast of new developments and best practice.
- Analyse university League Table outcomes and provide advice about their development and implications.

General & Flexibility

- Respect the confidentiality of personal and organisationally/commercially sensitive information.
- Flexibility to deliver services effectively, including requirement to perform work not specifically referred to within the role responsibilities.

Person Specification

Essential Criteria

Skills, Knowledge & Experience

- Degree level qualification (or equivalent)
- Significant experience of working in similar roles at a senior level, and working with Higher Education (HE) governance principles and good practice, including the Nolan Principles, or similar.
- An excellent understanding of the contemporary HE environment and how this is affected by developments in the wider economy and society.
- Demonstrable understanding of the policy, legal, constitutional & the complex regulatory environment in which universities operate; knowledge of & up-to-date understanding of governance trends, regulation & best practice
- Substantial experience of committee administration, including presenting to formal committees.
- Experience of leading on risk management processes at a senior level.
- Effective analysis & application of management/Board information.
- Strategic approach, influencing & delivering change/improvement

Data Protection

- Experience of operating as a Data Protection Officer, and/or extensive knowledge, experience & responsibility for data protection and information compliance issues in a UK context.

Leadership, Teamwork and Motivation

- Demonstrable and significant skills and experience in leading, managing & delivering services through others, including developing team & development and succession plans.
- Ability to quickly develop professional credibility at all levels, and to convey a strong sense of personal and professional purpose.
- Experience of leading and managing professional administrative teams.
- Ability to work effectively as part of a team while also being able to work efficiently under own initiative

Communication

- Sophisticated interpersonal skills, including the ability to communicate orally & in writing with, & to influence, people at all levels & to external audiences; ability to communicate complex information accessibly to a specialist and non-specialist audiences.
- Ability to identify sensitive issues, exercise discretion and confidentiality.

Liaison and Networking

- Proven ability to build effective working relationships with people at all levels, both internally and externally.
- Problem solving skills and political awareness.

Planning and Organising Resources

- Ability to forward plan, & prioritise varied workloads/conflicting deadlines.
- Experience of successful management and control of budgets

Attributes

- Independent thinker and creative problem-solver.
- Open, approachable & able to build effective working relationships with people at all levels, both internally and externally.
- Understanding of the contemporary HE environment and how this is affected by developments in the wider economy and society.

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- Chartered membership of Institute of Chartered Secretaries and Administrators or equivalent
- Substantial experience of institutional planning/reporting processes.
- Experience & understanding of project management and techniques.
- A sensitivity to the increasingly commercial environment within which the university works.
- Experience of business continuity planning and managing incidents.
- Accredited or equivalent professional qualification in Data Protection, such as CIPP/e or CIPM.
- Information security qualification such as CISM or CISA.
- Knowledge & experience of UK HEI data protection legislation issues
- Formal senior leadership training/ management qualification.
- Experience of developing institutional policies and/or practices.
- Experience of developing accessible guidance and advice.

Our Campuses

Camden



The historic Camden Campus is where Veterinary Medicine (BVetMed) students spend their first two years. Biological Sciences pathway students study at Camden throughout their courses.

The Hobday Building is the centre of the Camden Campus. In addition to classrooms, social learning spaces, an extended dining facilities and 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.

The RVC Beaumont Sainsbury Animal Hospital is a first-opinion practice and animal hospital located right next door to the Camden 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 has recently expanded 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



The RVC small animal referral services 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, Bolttons 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.

Terms and Conditions of Employment

University Secretary

Location: Hawkshead Campus (near Potters Bar, Hertfordshire)

Grade 9: Range from circa £75,000 to £85,000 (including London Weighting)

The RVC offers hybrid working, the opportunity to work from home, following initial induction.

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

The RVC values Equality, Diversity and Inclusion and therefore welcome applicants from all backgrounds and communities. We particularly encourage and welcome female applicants, applicants with a disability, and applicants from a Black, Asian, Minority Ethnic (BAME) background as we are committed to increasing our representation within these groups who are currently under-represented at senior levels within the RVC. Balancing both the needs of the business with those of our staff, we will consider applications to work on a flexible basis where possible.

Equality, 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 Equality, 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.

How to Apply

To apply, please submit your application through our on-line recruitment system by 18th September 2025.

Prospective applicants are encouraged to contact Tim Bianek, Chief Operating Officer, tbianek@rvc.ac.uk, if they wish to discuss the role.

Closing date:

Thursday 18th September 2025

Panel Interviews will likely be held week commencing
29 September 2025.





**Royal
Veterinary
College**
University of London

