



## **Royal College of Art**

Postgraduate Art & Design

# **International Agent Policy**

### **Scope and purpose**

This policy sets out the criteria and procedures for appointing and managing international agents, and supporting prospective students for postgraduate programmes including taught master programmes, Graduate Diploma programmes, research and doctoral programmes, and English Language pre-sessionals.

International Agents offer a wide range of services. Their core service is to find and advise prospective students and guide them through the application and admissions process. However, agents also provide a number of 'add-on' services such as advertising, providing space for interviews, arranging interviews, developing materials, generic UK education promotion, market intelligence, student road shows and seminars, education fairs and offering staff support and assistance at education fairs. These are summarised below:

- Up to date UK visa advice and guidance to applicants
- Source of local information for parents, to include generic UK education promotion
- Advertising and PR in local media/websites and social media sites
- Facilitate interviews
- Advise on education qualifications and local institutions and access to local education institutions
- Provide market intelligence and insights
- Organise student road shows and / or education fairs
- Staffing and assistance at education fairs
- Translation services

The policy aims to ensure that International Agents act with professionalism and integrity in representing the Royal College of Art (the College) and comply with relevant internal and external regulations. The policy covers any international recruitment agent contracted to represent the College and College staff who work with them.

### **Selection criteria**

Appointment of agents is done following comprehensive procurement processes that ensure that agents are financially sound, legally suitable, compliant with appropriate standards in areas such as modern slavery, equality and environmental responsibility, and meets the standards set out in the British Council's Agent Quality Framework. In addition, agents and their counselling staff must be suitably knowledgeable about the UK Higher Education system; art and design education; specialist knowledge of UK visa application processes; and be committed to regular and appropriate training.

- We expect our agents to be reliable, professional, and trustworthy providers of advice to students.
- Agents shall at all times act with integrity and in the best interests of students or prospective students as well as of the Royal College of Art.
- Agents must hold appropriate business registration with due regard to the regulatory conditions in the market(s) in which they operate. They shall comply with all applicable national laws, regulations, and official policies.

### **Agent appointments and contracts**

All agent appointments must be approved by the Director of Engagement, Brand and Marketing and the Chief Finance Officer. Agent numbers and areas of representation will be tightly monitored and controlled to ensure that the College has the capacity to fully support and train the organisations that we work with

Agent contracts will be for specified areas, programmes and lengths of time, and will contain as a minimum:

- Appointment date and duration
- Duties and responsibilities of each party in respect of the contract
- Monitoring and review arrangements to ensure obligations are fulfilled
- Arbitration and termination provisions
- Legal jurisdiction under which any disputes would be resolved
- Legal obligations, including consumer rights, data protection and anti-bribery legislation
- Confidentiality
- Termination
- Financial Provisions including commission

All contracts will include a probationary period and a break clause.

### **Agent training and management**

Once selected, an agent will be provided with materials and training to promote the College and invited to submit students' applications to the College. The College will provide agents with up to date information through bespoke agent communications and relevant training. This includes emails, face-to-face training and visits, digital engagement, and opportunities to engage with admissions and relevant academic departments.

The agent's work will be monitored throughout the duration of their agreement and may be terminated at any time if the agent is found to be in breach of the terms of the contract.

Agent's performance will be reviewed at regular points throughout the year by the College, with emphasis on:

- Quality, volume and diversity of applications and enrolments
- Quality of student counselling
- Professionalism in dealing with the College and prospective students
- Quality of any recruitment and marketing activities undertaken jointly with the College
- Ongoing commitment to training
- Response to problems and swift resolution of issues

Student feedback on the agent will be sought and considered, along with feedback from the College's admissions, immigration and academic departments. Where there is under-performance, mitigation will be undertaken as part of the ongoing review process. At the discretion of the College, any actions that are in breach of the agent contract or likely to bring the College into disrepute will result in the immediate termination of the agent's contract.

### **Working practice**

Responsibilities of the International Education Agent include:

- That the College will be promoted in a professional and ethical manner
- That the actions of the agent shall not be harmful to the reputation or wider activities of the College in the territories in which the agent operates
- That applications submitted by the agent will be genuine and complete at the time of application
- That at all times, representatives will act with integrity
- That information given to students in representing the College is accurate and up to date
- Ensuring approval for any promotional or marketing materials using College branding
- Complying with RCA policies with relation to the Anti-Bribery Act, GDPR and PREVENT
- Assisting in complying with the College's UKVI obligations and adapt adequate measures to protect the College's interest and Student Route licence.

- Acting in the best interest of the student to ensure there is no conflict of interest and that they are able to make an informed judgement about the best educational option for them

The College's Education Agents should NEVER:

- Facilitate applications for Students who do not comply with visa regulations or suggest that a Student can use a student visa for another purpose other than full time study
- Provide Students with migration advice, unless authorized to do so
- Offer any guarantees, to prospective students as to the likelihood of their obtaining employment or leave to remain in the country of study following their completion of any of the College's programmes
- Make any financial promises to students regarding discounts or scholarships
- Make any guarantees to students regarding offers or acceptance for programmes at the College, that may conflict with our admissions policies
- Take any payment from students towards Royal College of Art tuition or deposit fee payments
- Make any false or misleading comparisons with any other education provider or their courses

Responsibilities of the Royal College of Art include:

- Ensuring each agent has a lead contact within the Engagement, Brand and Marketing team to respond to queries in a timely and professional manner
- Processing agent generated applications in line with standard processes and timelines and supporting agents with the application process where appropriate
- Providing regular information updates, training, and materials to agents in support of their work
- Including agent details on our agent webpages
- Supporting the agent with respect to supply of accurate content and materials for advertising and exhibitions
- Employing a partnership approach to working with agents to provide the best level of service to prospective students

### **Commission Process**

In order that commission can be paid in a timely and efficient manner, the agent will:

- Comply with the University's commission process, as set out in the agency contract, specifically in relation to the enrolment of recruited students
- Comply with the University's commission process, as per the annual commission instruction communicated directly to agents after enrolment each cycle

- Ensure that commission documentation is complete, accurate and submitted in the correct format
- Provide extra information as necessary to support claims where dual or multiple claims have been received for the same student
- Disclose at the earliest opportunity any errors pertaining to commission claims Review

### **March 2026**

This policy will be reviewed every two years, to ensure compliance with latest legislation and good practice. The policy will be updated as necessary by the Director of Engagement, Brand & Marketing.