

ROYAL CENTRAL

SCHOOL OF SPEECH & DRAMA

UNIVERSITY OF LONDON



CANDIDATE PACK: INDEPENDENT GOVERNOR

JANUARY 2025

Cadence
Partners 

INTRODUCTION

The Royal Central School of Speech and Drama (Central) is searching for a new Governor with auditing expertise to join its Governing Body (Board) and the Audit Committee. Governors play a crucial role in our governance and leadership; the expertise and insights provided by Governors strengthen us as an organisation and contribute to our success.

As a world-leading, internationally renowned institution, we have enjoyed great successes in our history, and continue to have much to celebrate today, despite the increasingly challenging climate in which we operate. The importance of arts education has never been clearer, not just for the industries we directly influence, but for society as a whole.

Central is exceptionally well-placed to demonstrate and emphasise this value. Amongst our recent celebrations are the results we achieved in REF 2021, which demonstrate something of a quantum leap forward for Research at Central, as 75% of our research was classified as world leading. This is both a testament to the great value and vital role of small, specialist sector and arts institutions and to the commitment, creativity, and above all the collegialities found among Central researchers across all levels – from PhD students, Early Career Researchers, to senior researchers.

You will find more information about Central, our vision, and the role itself on the following pages. We very much hope this opportunity is of interest to you, and that we might hear from you soon.



THE ROYAL CENTRAL SCHOOL OF SPEECH AND DRAMA

Elsie Fogerty founded The Central School of Speech Training and Dramatic Art at the Royal Albert Hall in 1906. Fogerty was a specialist in speech training and had a firm belief in the social importance of education. The students of her school quickly became famous for their delivery in verse-speaking competitions, their appearance in theatres, and also for their work with children in the deprived areas of London.

Central's founder was committed to advancing the study of theatre as an academic discipline. Long before the founding of the first university drama department in the UK, Fogerty argued that theatre should be studied at university and that theatre training should be awarded degrees.

This founding ethos still shapes us as an institution in the 21st century. Today, under the leadership of Josette Bushell-Mingo OBE, Central is an internationally recognised institution of the theatrical and performing arts, and an independent federal member of the University of London. Placing students at the centre of its work, Central inspires, educates and trains the performers, practitioners and change-makers of tomorrow to shape the future of theatre and performing arts across the UK and beyond. We offer a combination of world-recognised teaching and research that places us uniquely amongst the landscape of the UK's top conservatoires.

Central's students consistently achieve and excel within the profession and lead innovation and creativity within the performing arts. This reflects the specialist nature of Central's teaching staff and provision and our industry standard facilities. Central is proud of its successes and student and alumni achievements evidenced through recognition in festivals, theatres, award ceremonies and more widely through enterprise and activity in the profession and the community. Our graduates are starring in and producing television, theatre, films and festivals all around the world, from Central's President and theatre producer Sonia Friedman, theatre director Michael Grandage CBE, award-winning sound designer Gareth Fry and puppeteer Toby Olié, to Dame Judi Dench, Zoë Wanamaker, Martin Freeman, Cecilia Noble, Gael García Bernal, Rebecca Lenkiewicz, Chris Stafford, Riz Ahmed and Andrew Garfield.



STRATEGY, VISION & MISSION

OUR VISION

An arts training and culture centre that enriches and changes our world.

OUR MISSION

To inspire, educate and train the change-makers of tomorrow to shape our artistic and social world.

OUR VALUES

- Respect and Equity
- Community and Culture
- Inspire and Debate
- Innovation and Sustainability

OUR STRATEGIC PLAN

A Strategic Plan for the period 2023 - 2024 is in place ([available here](#)) and new strategic priorities are being developed for a 'transformation' period at Central, pending a full Strategic Plan for the period to 2030 which is under development. Central's ambition is to ensure that it is a place to grow, to return to, and to be inspired. Amongst our aims are to be an even more inclusive arts platform, offering a diverse choice of programmes from undergraduate to postgraduate and beyond.

The Strategic Plan is also led by self-examination, and we are constantly challenging ourselves to live up to our vision, mission, and values, centred around our belief in the human right of the arts to change our lives and the world we live in.

Central is underpinned by five key themes covering Respect and Equity, Inspire and Debate, Community and Culture, Innovation and Sustainability, and Infrastructure and Environment. It responds to the changing nature of the theatre, TV, film and performing arts post Brexit and in the Covid pandemic recovery era.

EQUALITY, DIVERSITY AND INCLUSION

Central values, embraces and is thoroughly and deeply committed to equity and inclusion. Our success as an organisation is contingent upon our diverse and inclusive student and staff body. Excellence requires diversity as this brings richness, knowledge, innovation, new understandings and skills.

We are committed to opening doors to our disciplines for new thinkers, makers and practitioners in dispersed and diverse communities and seeking to lead participation in varied but interrelated communities of interest and study. We are committed to increasing participation of those from underrepresented backgrounds in higher education. Our Access and Participation Plan set out ambitious targets for the period ahead.

We believe that the biggest risk to the theatre and performance arts, industry and specialist conservatoire training is the notion that they constitute an exclusive, rather than inclusive study and career choice. In all aspects of its governance, management, academic and operational work, Central will strive to promote, celebrate and recognise equity and inclusion.

Central is a learning organisation. We will be open and transparent in our deliberations, embed equity and inclusion in our work, culture and values and will challenge and remove any barriers to the achievement of this goal. We believe that good pedagogy, like good theatre, is fundamentally connected to global citizenship in our diverse world and we seek practically and discursively to embed equity and diversity throughout all of our teaching in order to ensure a fair basis for all students and to develop world-leading artists and thinkers.

We recognise that definitions of equity and inclusion are constantly changing and include, but are not limited to, race, gender, sex, sexual orientation, religion, class, ability, age, and nationality; considering all of these across our courses we will provide an open and inclusive environment best suited to produce 21st century leaders.

We commit to working with our community of staff, students and alumni to achieve these goals. For more information on Equality and Diversity at Central, and to read our Anti-Racism Action Plan, please visit our [website](#).



GOVERNANCE

The Governing Body is responsible for overseeing Central's activities, shaping its future direction and ensuring it is governed and managed effectively. Since 2017, our Board has been led by Chair John Willis, one of the best-known figures in the television industry. John has previously served as Chair of BAFTA, and has served in a number of high-profile roles, including as Director of Programmes at Channel 4, and Chair of One World Media.

John is supported by Independent Governors who are drawn from diverse professional backgrounds, and who each offer their invaluable expertise and support to the Board and Executive, to ensure that Central is operating at the highest possible level, achieving its strategic aims, and remaining true to its mission and values. Independent Governors make up the majority of the Governing Body; they are not members of staff and do not receive any payment for the work they do for Central.

The Governing Body has responsibility for the oversight of Central's strategic risks and is to ensure that robust arrangements are in place for the identification, evaluation and management of risks. Strategic risks are possible occurrences which would, through their impact, inhibit Central's ability to effectively deliver its organisational aims and mission. More broadly, the Board ensures compliance with the articles of association and provisions regulating Central's framework of governance.

There are several committees that report to the Governing Body; these include the Audit Committee, Finance and Estates Committee, People and Culture Committee, Remuneration Committee, and Nominations and Governance Committee. The Academic Board also reports to the Board.

The current membership of Central's Governing Body is available [here](#).

FINANCES

Information about Central's financial performance can be found [here](#).

ROLE PROFILE

Central is currently searching for an Independent Governor to join the Audit Committee and become a member of the Governing Body. We are looking for a detail-oriented professional with strong audit credentials, preferably with experience in higher education, who is passionate about the transformative power of arts education. The ideal candidate will bring robust internal and external audit expertise, with a particular emphasis on understanding comprehensive audit reporting, risk management, and organisational governance.

This role offers a unique opportunity to contribute to a world-leading performing arts institution with a rich history and a forward-looking strategic vision. The successful candidate will play a critical role in overseeing the school's financial and operational integrity, participating in board meetings, audit committee sessions, and engaging with the Central community. While the position is unremunerated, it provides reasonable expense reimbursement and the chance to support an internationally renowned institution committed to equity, inclusion, and artistic innovation.

Central is committed to diversity and inclusion, including at Executive and Board levels and, as such welcomes applications from all sectors of the community, regardless of personal characteristics or background.

Central particularly welcomes applications from female candidates and those from global majority, LGBTQIA+, and disabled communities. Central can and will make any reasonable adjustments to enable Governors to perform their duties if required.

MAIN RESPONSIBILITIES AND DUTIES OF GOVERNORS

The new Governor will:

- Join the Audit Committee as a Member.
- Join the Governing Body as Member.

All Governors will:

- a) act in the best interests of Central at all times;
- b) ensure the effective and efficient administration of Central and its resources, striving for best practice and good governance;
- c) ensure sound financial management to meet accepted standards and policies;
- d) establish the overall strategic direction of Central;
- e) approve the relevant strategy and associated implementation plans;
- f) monitor performance against agreed strategic objectives and key performance indicators;
- g) set the framework for the pay and conditions of staff;
- h) ensure that high standards of Corporate Governance are observed at all times including the identification, evaluation and management of strategic risks;
- i) ensure overall academic and financial sustainability of Central;

- j) support the work of the Principal/Chief Executive Officer; and
- k) maintain absolute confidentiality about all sensitive/confidential information received in the course of governorship at Central.

This is in addition to the general expectations of Governors in HE, which you can read more about [online](#).

ACCOUNTABILITIES

As Members of the Board, Governors are Members and Directors of the Company and Trustees of the exempt Charity with responsibility and liability for the governance and functioning of Central. They are accountable in varying degrees to a variety of stakeholders including: The Office for Students (OfS), Research England, the Charity Commission and Companies House. The Governance and Legal Services Team at Central offers support to Governors to enable them to understand and discharge their legal duties.

TIME COMMITMENT

The Governing Body usually meets four or five times a year, including specific topic meetings. Meetings are usually held in February (with this meeting usually being a full day), May, July, October and November either at Central's Swiss Cottage Campus or on Teams and often commence at 16.30. A typical length of meeting is two hours.

Governors are normally required to serve on a Governing Body Committee (Audit, Finance and Estates, People and Culture, Nominations and Governance and Remuneration).

The Audit Committee usually meets four times a year.

Papers for meetings are usually circulated one week in advance. Governors are expected to set aside one to two days per month preparation time to review documentation in advance of Board and Committee meetings. We request that our Governors engage with the Central community in a number of ways, more than just attending Board and Committee meetings. We want you to be a visible part of the community. Governors are required to attend annual induction/development events and ad hoc 'away-days' to consider strategy, as well as attending the annual Graduation Ceremony, alumni and donor events and other functions throughout the year.

TERM LENGTH

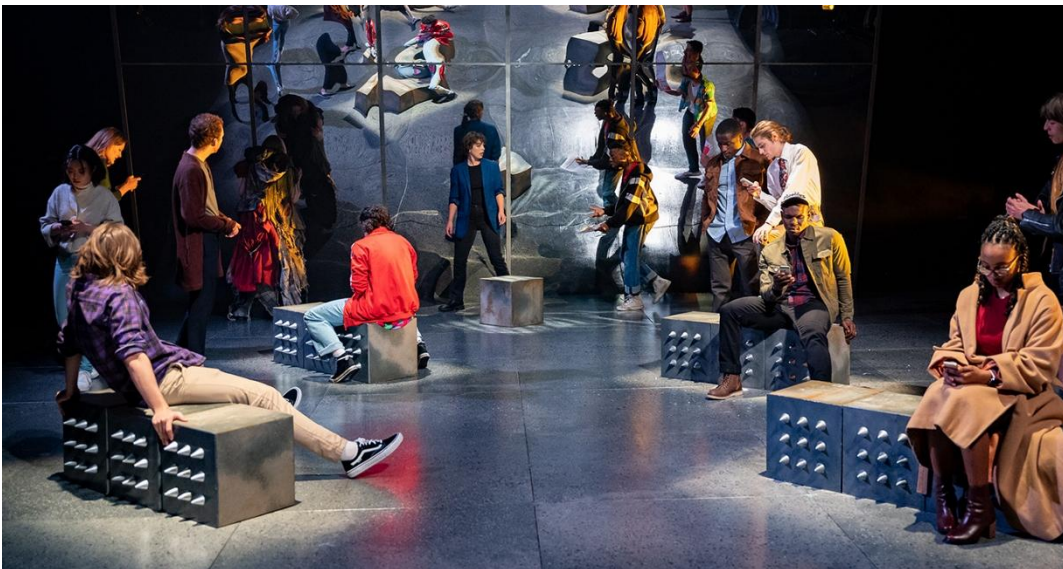
Governors may serve for a maximum of three terms of three years. Exceptionally, a Governor may be elected for a fourth term on a resolution of the majority of Governors. In the first instance the Academic Governor will serve for three years on the Board and the Audit Committee.

REMUNERATION

The post is unremunerated, but Governors may claim reimbursement of reasonable travelling and subsistence expenses incurred within the terms set out in Central's Financial Regulations.

DATA PROTECTION

Protecting your personal data is of the utmost importance to us. Any information obtained during this process is held and processed in accordance with the relevant data protection legislation. Further information, alongside Central's Data Protection policies are available at <https://www.cssd.ac.uk/About-Central/Legal-and-Policies/Data-Protection-and-Privacy>.



HOW TO APPLY

Central is being supported by Cadence Partners in this process. If you require the candidate material in an alternative format or you'd like to submit your response in a different way – such as video or BSL – please get in touch and we can support you in doing this:

cssd@cadnecepartners.co.uk.

To apply, please submit the following on the [Cadence Partners website](#):

1. A comprehensive CV which demonstrates how you match the candidate profile.
2. A cover letter demonstrating your motivations for applying, highlighting your audit expertise, understanding of higher education, and alignment with Central's mission of arts education and equity.
3. Our [Diversity Monitoring Form](#) (to be completed online) which helps us to capture important data for reporting purposes. This will not be viewed by those making decisions about your application.
4. Our [Board Declaration Form](#) (to be completed online).

TIMETABLE

Closing date: midnight, Tuesday 25 February

Final panel interviews: April (exact dates TBC)