



Royal Academy
of Engineering

Position Specification

Royal Academy of Engineering
Chief Executive Officer

June 2025



Private and Confidential

**Russell
Reynolds**
ASSOCIATES

Foreword from the President

As President of the Royal Academy of Engineering, it is my great pleasure to introduce this search for our next Chief Executive during a period of profound importance for both the Academy and society.

We live in a time of rapid, disruptive change. The geopolitical context is increasingly complex, the impacts of climate change are felt ever more acutely, and AI innovation continues its astonishing advance. In this environment, the need for engineering and technology to serve society has never been more urgent.

Our Strategy 2030, 'Engineering better lives', is our ambitious response. It is a plan for evolution, not revolution, designed to build on our considerable impact while driving forward with new priorities. These include a dedicated focus on ensuring technology truly improves lives, a significant expansion of our regional presence, and an agile, effective approach to delivering our goals.

Having recently been elected President for a five-year term, I am seeking a Chief Executive who will be a close partner in leadership. Together, alongside our Board of Trustees, our world-class Fellowship, and our dedicated staff, we will steer the Academy through its upcoming 50th anniversary and beyond. This is a moment to be bold and to deliver meaningful impact for all our beneficiaries.

We are looking for a leader who is not only a skilled strategist and an inspirational manager but also a passionate ambassador for the power of engineering. You must be a collaborative leader by instinct and share our unwavering commitment to excellence, impact, equity, and inclusion.

The next five years will be critical in defining the next 50 for the Academy. If you believe you have the vision, experience, and drive to lead us through this pivotal period, I warmly encourage you to explore this unique opportunity. It is, more than ever, time to deliver.

Sir John Lazar CBE FREng
President, Royal Academy of Engineering



Introduction

A Pivotal Moment for Engineering and Society

At a time of unprecedented global change, the Royal Academy of Engineering is seeking a visionary and dynamic Chief Executive to lead the organisation in delivering its ambitious Strategy 2030: Engineering better lives. The world is navigating a period of profound disruption, from the rapid advancement of AI and the acute impacts of climate change to an increasingly complex geopolitical landscape. Now, more than ever, engineering and technology must be in the service of society.

This is a unique opportunity for a proven leader to take the helm of the UK's national academy for engineering and technology. Working in close partnership with the newly elected President, Sir John Lazar, and the Board of Trustees, the next Chief Executive will provide the strategic leadership required to enhance the Academy's impact, ensure its financial sustainability, and uphold its reputation for excellence and integrity.

The successful candidate will lead the delivery of a strategy that is an evolution, not a revolution, building on five years of significant impact. This includes driving a new strategic goal focused on 'technology improving lives', expanding the Academy's regional presence through a dedicated 'place-based approach', and embedding a product management methodology to ensure the organisation remains agile, efficient, and effective in all it does. As the Academy approaches its 50th anniversary in 2026, this role offers the chance to define its next chapter and secure its legacy for the decades to come.

About the Royal Academy of Engineering

The Royal Academy of Engineering is a charity, a Fellowship, and the UK's National Academy, all dedicated to delivering public benefit from excellence in engineering and technology. We create and lead a community of outstanding experts and innovators to engineer better lives. Our Fellowship convenes leading businesspeople, entrepreneurs, innovators, and academics from every part of engineering and technology. Everything we do is underpinned by our core values: Progressive Leadership, Equity, Diversity & Inclusion, Excellence for Impact, Collaboration First, and Creativity & Innovation.

As the UK's national academy for engineering and technology, we bring together the most accomplished engineers, researchers, innovators and entrepreneurs to deliver public benefit and solve the toughest challenges facing society – from sustainability and digital disruption to skills and global equity.

Our new CEO will lead a talented and passionate team in delivering [Strategy 2030: Engineering Better Lives](#) – a bold vision to drive a sustainable and innovative economy, harness technology to improve lives, and build a more inclusive and future-ready engineering profession. With our 50th anniversary on the horizon, this is a defining moment for the Academy and for engineering leadership in the UK.

The Strategic Mandate: Delivering Strategy 2030

The Chief Executive's primary mandate is to lead the Executive Team in the successful delivery of [Strategy 2030](#). This strategy is focused on achieving three core goals, delivered through five flagship products: the Enterprise Hub, Research and Invention Fellowships, Engineering X, the National Engineering Policy Centre, and the Skills Centre.

The three strategic goals are:

1. **Sustainable and Innovative Economy:** Aligning sustainability drivers, innovative industries, and resilient infrastructures to drive growth and productivity that will support better lives for all. This includes enabling the creation of 25,000 high-value jobs and leveraging £10bn in investment across the UK.
2. **Technology Improving Lives:** Ensuring technology is used to meet critical human needs, support fairer societies, and break down barriers to opportunity. This involves launching a new technology adoption

programme embedded in our Regional Hubs and providing platforms for over 1,000 engineers to engage with public audiences.

3. **Engineering Community Fit for the Future:** Building a diverse and inclusive community of engineers equipped with the skills to meet future needs safely, securely, and ethically. Key ambitions include supporting the skills development of one million UK engineers and technicians and awarding at least 1,000 scholarships to talented future engineers, with a majority from underrepresented groups.



Key Responsibilities

The Chief Executive will have ultimate responsibility for the leadership, stewardship, and performance of the Academy. Key responsibilities include:

Strategic Leadership & Governance

- Lead the development and implementation of the Academy's strategy in partnership with the President and Board of Trustees.
- Ensure the Academy's governance is effective, reflects its values, and complies with all legal requirements and best practices.
- Oversee a robust risk management framework, acting as the ultimate escalation point to ensure key risks are controlled and opportunities are seized.
- Ensure the Academy's impact is measured effectively and continuously improves over time.
- Serve as Director for Royal Academy of Engineering Trading Ltd and oversee the partnership with the Queen Elizabeth Prize for Engineering Foundation.

Engagement & Ambassadorship

- Act as a key ambassador for the Academy, representing the organisation and the President at the highest levels.
- Uphold and promote the Academy's mission, standing, and interests to all audiences.
- Maintain and strengthen influential relationships with key stakeholders, including government, parliament, industry, academia, the media, and other national and international academies.
- Oversee the Academy's media presence and public profile, acting as its spokesperson where appropriate.
- Continue to improve Fellowship engagement in support of the Academy's mission.
- Maintain a strong relationship with the Trustee Board members.
- Foster strong relationships with the offices of the Academy's Patron and Royal Fellows.
- Handle highly sensitive information and manage issues related to national security.

Operational & Organisational Leadership

- Lead and inspire the Academy team, championing a values-led culture where a diverse team can thrive.
- Line manage members of the Executive and Senior Leadership Team, ensuring operational excellence across all activities.
- Ensure the Academy's finances are managed in accordance with all legislation, overseeing the preparation of the annual budget and accounts for Trustee approval.
- Lead the charge to increase unrestricted revenue through fundraising, strategic partnerships, and entrepreneurial activities.
- Oversee the management and development of the Academy's premises, including its headquarters at Prince Philip House and its growing network of regional hubs.
- Ensure that support is provided to Fellows when they are engaged in Academy business.



Candidate Profile: The Ideal Leader

We are seeking a candidate with a profound personal commitment to the values, mission, and objectives of the Academy. The ideal candidate will be passionate about the power of engineering and technology to improve society and will be a resilient, service-oriented, and diplomatic leader.

Essential Experience & Knowledge

- Substantial experience managing complex organisations in a relevant sector, with a proven track record as a senior executive.
- A strong strategic perspective, business acumen, and experience contributing to strategy development at board level.
- Proven track record of successfully leading, inspiring, and motivating senior teams.
- A sound awareness of and deep interest in engineering and technology policy, education, skills, and entrepreneurship.
- An understanding of the engineering community and the unique nature of a national academy and of the relationship between Academy employees and Fellows.
- A track record of creating organisations that are a 'great place to work'.
- An evidenced commitment to equality, diversity, and inclusion.

Desirable Experience & Knowledge

- Excellent connections in academia, government, and industry.
- A background in engineering, technology, or a related field.
- Previous experience working in or with government or policymakers.
- Experience in media work or public-facing communication.
- Knowledge of the international academic and engineering community.
- Familiarity with fundraising, campaigning, advocacy, and charity law.

Skills and Personal Attributes

- The ability to lead, develop, inspire, and motivate others.
- Excellent representational, ambassadorial, communication, and networking skills.
- Strong interpersonal skills with high emotional intelligence, enabling the creation of successful relationships with people at all levels.
- Calm under pressure, comfortable managing change, and possessing well-honed political antennae.
- Financially competent with high-level organisational and planning skills.
- A global outlook with a broad international perspective.

A Champion for Equity, Diversity, and Inclusion

Equity, diversity, and inclusion are not just priorities for the Royal Academy of Engineering; they are enshrined as a core organisational value. The next Chief Executive will be the ultimate champion of this value, responsible for driving meaningful progress both within the Academy and across the entire engineering profession.

The successful candidate will be expected to:

- **Lead by Example:** Demonstrate a deep and evidenced personal commitment to equality, diversity, and inclusion. You will be responsible for creating and sustaining an internal culture where every member of the Academy's team feels valued, can thrive, and strives for excellence.
- **Deliver Strategic Goals:** Drive the strategic goal of creating an "Engineering Community Fit for the Future", ensuring the profession increasingly reflects the society it serves. This involves creating inclusive cultures that are proven to drive engineering excellence.
- **Champion Inclusive Programmes:** Oversee and advocate for the Academy's equity, diversity, and inclusion programmes, which are designed to accelerate the adoption of effective inclusive practices within engineering

organisations. This includes supporting ambitious targets, such as awarding at least 1,000 scholarships to talented future engineers, with at least two-thirds from underrepresented groups, and supporting 2,500 placements for UK engineers from underrepresented groups.

- **Ensure Accountability:** Be accountable for fostering a well-governed organisation with the proven ability to recruit and retain high-performing diverse employees.

We are seeking a leader who sees diversity as an essential catalyst for the creativity, innovation, and excellence required to solve the world's most pressing challenges.

The Academy Fellowship

The Fellows of the Royal Academy of Engineering form the heart of the Academy. They are a distinguished community of the UK's most accomplished engineers, innovators, entrepreneurs, and academic leaders, elected in recognition of their outstanding personal contributions to engineering and technology. The Fellowship's collective expertise, networks and leadership underpin the Academy's credibility, influence, and unique ability to convene cross-sectoral dialogue that shapes policy, advances innovation, and delivers public benefit both nationally and globally.

The Chief Executive works in close partnership with the Fellowship, ensuring that Fellows remain actively engaged in advancing the Academy's mission and that their expertise is effectively mobilised to deliver Strategy 2030: Engineering Better Lives. This requires building strong, trusted relationships across the Fellowship, enabling opportunities for meaningful engagement, and ensuring that Academy activities reflect the breadth of Fellows' insights and leadership.

Location and Working Pattern

The role is based at the Academy's headquarters at Prince Philip House, London. A hybrid working pattern is in place, which is likely to require a minimum of two-three days per week in the London office, with more as needed for the role. The role requires the ability to travel as needed, both in the UK and internationally, and to work flexibly to meet the demands of the role, which will include attending events outside of standard hours.

The role reports to the [President of the Academy](#) and is responsible for the [Executive and Senior Leadership Team](#).

We are looking for a leader who can:

- Inspire a high-performing, inclusive and purpose-led culture
- Build trusted relationships across government, industry, academia and civil society
- Represent the voice of engineering on the national and international stage
- Shape strategic priorities and deliver measurable impact at scale
- Champion equity, diversity, innovation and excellence

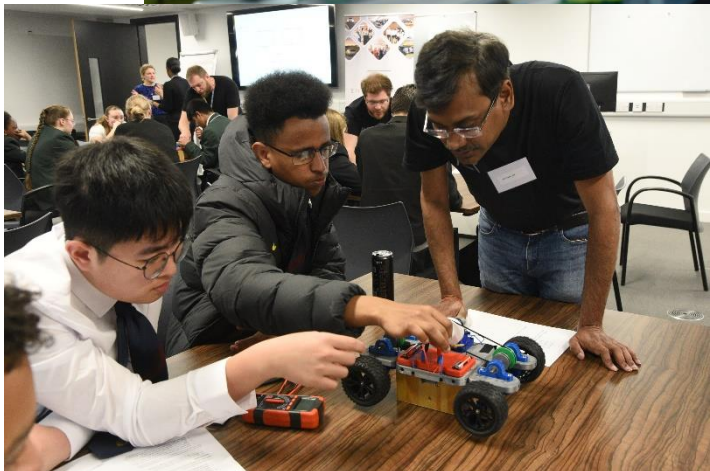
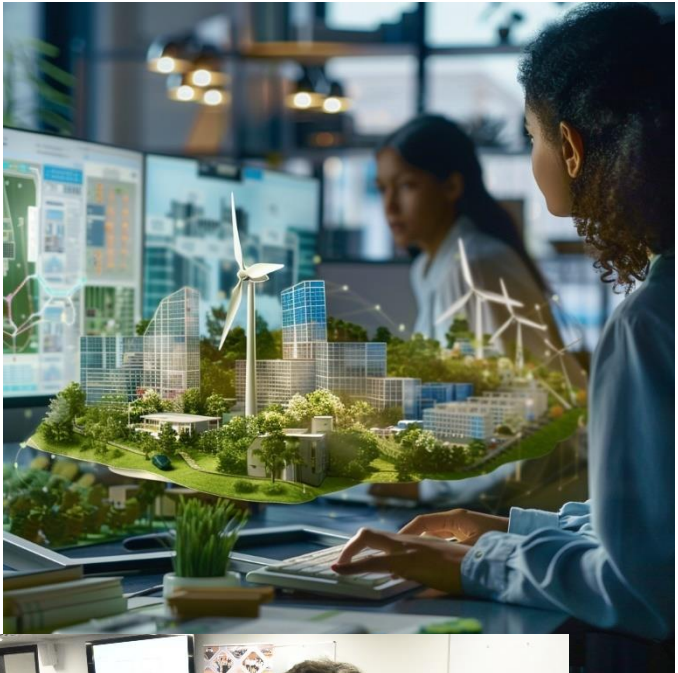
You will bring:

- Proven senior leadership in complex, high-profile organisations
- Experience shaping strategic direction and engaging diverse stakeholders
- Deep interest in the power of engineering, technology and innovation to serve society
- Exceptional communication, diplomacy and representational skills
- A personal commitment to inclusion, learning and global impact

Engineering background or policy experience is welcome but not essential. More important is your ability to connect ideas, communities and action to help create a fairer, safer and more sustainable world.

Why join us?

You will lead a globally respected Academy with a strong foundation, bold ambitions, and an extraordinary Fellowship. Together, we will champion engineering that improves lives – in the UK and around the world.



How to Apply

The recruitment process is being undertaken by Russell Reynolds Associates on behalf of the Royal Academy of Engineering. Please submit your full application by email to responses@russellreynolds.com. Please quote the role title and assignment code **P2505-541L** in the subject heading of the email. All applications will be acknowledged. The closing date for applications is **23:59 on Sunday 20th July 2025**.

Your submission should include:

- A **CV** setting out your career history, with key responsibilities and achievements. Please ensure you have provided reasons for any gaps within the last two years.
- A **Statement of Suitability** (no longer than two pages) explaining how you consider your personal skills, qualities and experience provide evidence of your suitability for the role, with particular reference to the criteria in the person specification.
- A completed **Diversity Monitoring Form** [available here](#). Please note the information you provide will help support monitoring the Royal Academy of Engineering's recruitment processes to ensure they are fair to all and allow us to attract diverse and talented candidates. The diversity data in this section is collated anonymously and will not be disclosed to anyone involved in assessing your application.

Please submit all documents so that the panel will have all the required information on which to assess your application against the criteria in the person specification.

The Selection and Recruitment Process

The panel will assess your application to select those demonstrating the best fit with the role by considering the evidence you have provided against the criteria set out in the Candidate Profile section. Failure to address any or all of these may affect your application. The timeline below indicates the dates by which each stage and the final decisions are expected to be made. All shortlisted candidates will be advised of the outcome as soon as possible thereafter.

An indicative timeline is shared below, please note this may be subject to change:

Milestone	Date
Closing Date for Applications	20 th July
<i>Presentation of prospective candidates to agree longlist</i>	<i>w/c 21st July</i>
RRA conducts in-depth interviews with longlisted candidates	28 th July – 15 th August
<i>Presentation of prospective candidates to agree shortlist</i>	<i>w/c 18th August</i>
First Round of Panel interviews	25 th August – 5 th September
Informal Conversations with relevant stakeholders	25 th August – 5 th September
Psychometric Assessments tbc	8 th September – 19 th September
Final Round of Panel Interviews	w/c 22 nd and w/c 29 th September

If you wish to speak with someone before submitting an application, please contact:
responses@russellreynolds.com.

Other Matters

Conflicts of interest and Due Diligence

Please note that due diligence searches will be undertaken on shortlisted candidates and references may be taken up prior to interview. As part of our due diligence checks, we will consider anything in the public domain related to your conduct or professional capacity. This will include us undertaking searches of previous public statements and social media, blogs or any other publicly available information. This information may be made available to the panel and they may wish to explore issues with you, should you be invited to interview.

Disability Confident Scheme for Disabled Persons

Disabled applicants who meet the essential criteria in the job specification are guaranteed an interview. Selection will be on merit. If you wish to claim a guaranteed interview under the Disability Confident Scheme, you should complete the relevant section of the monitoring form. It is not necessary to state the nature of your disability.

Further information regarding the scheme can be found at www.disabilityconfident.campaign.gov.uk/

Reasonable Adjustments

We are committed to making reasonable adjustments to make sure applicants with disabilities, physical or mental health conditions, or other needs are not substantially disadvantaged when applying.

