



From the Chief Executive

February 2019

Dear Applicant

Thank you for your interest in contributing to the success of Bishopsgate Institute. We welcome your application and will look forward to assessing your suitability for the role(s) for which you apply.

Perhaps you already know us well, as one of our regular students, performers, tutors, researchers or partners. Perhaps you know of us from a visit during Open House weekend, or you came to see *West Side Story* or perhaps you've heard of our special collections and archives. You might even dance or rehearse here every month.

In any event, there's a lot to know if you'd like to work with us so we've put some information together for you to help with your application. Please take the time to read it all because I think it will give you a good understanding of the organisation you would be joining, as well as more detail on our business development and programming priorities.

My vision for the organisation

For over 120 years, Bishopsgate Institute has been providing opportunities for people to come together to learn and discover in extraordinary spaces. The nature of those opportunities continues to evolve over time, but we remain true to the motto our founder William Rogers chose for us: *senesco non segnesco*, which loosely translates as *I grow old but I do not grow lazy*.

I see this statement of intent applying equally to the staff team, our Board and our programming. I hope it also motivates our students, participants and partners.

I see Bishopsgate Institute, therefore, as an independent and energetic creative hub where the City of London meets the East End: an incubator for talent and skills development, a place that welcomes all sorts of people to explore their subject of interest with like-minded people.

That means classes and rehearsals and workshops and social dances and study days and performances and archive research and orchestra play-throughs and talks and walks and debates and salons and concerts and new writing development and... things we probably haven't even thought of yet.

I want there to be an energy around the building as this activity goes on in our various spaces through the weekday daytimes, evenings and weekends.

We are financially independent, and I would like us to generate sufficient surplus from our activities to plough back in to the programme, enabling us to invest in new and exciting projects and ideas.

I want our profile and reputation to be an excellent and valued contributor to the cultural life of London and the world.

How we are organised

We organise our work into three areas, which are:

- Content
- Campaigns
- Delivery

Content means programming, our offer, what people can do with us. It comprises our special collections and archives service, our adult learning programme, our events, rehearsals and creative collaborations.

Campaigns means mobilising our audiences and customers to engage with us, and to get excited about what they can do with us, whether through marketing the Christmas concert, redeveloping our online presence to improve visitor experience and increase visitor numbers, or shaping our visual identity and communications to best reflect our personality and influence our audience.

Delivery means the engine room of the organisation, ensuring that we can produce high-quality events of all kinds, run the business effectively, maintain our extraordinary building and report on our performance.

You'll see that we don't have separate teams for the types of activity we run (so no separate Courses or Venue Hire teams) and we don't have Heads for each of the three areas above. This is because we have restructured to encourage collaborative working: we are a small charity with a compelling offer, and we need our people to be working together to deliver it as one offer.

Finally, as Chief Executive I retain overall responsibility for the running of the Institute, accountable to the Trustees, as well as leading on programming, policy, strategy and the direction of the Institute.

The current vacancies

To deliver our five-year business plan, we completed a comprehensive redeployment programme that concluded at the end of 2016. We have some very talented, committed and enthusiastic staff who are excited about the opportunities ahead.

There are still vacancies left to fill, for which we are seeking equally talented, committed and enthusiastic applicants to complete the team and bring us the skills, expertise and networks we need to be able to thrive.

In addition to recruiting to the vacant positions in our structure, we are also building on existing and new partnerships and connections to ensure we have a network of strategic specialist advisors that we can call on when we need them.

The challenges ahead

We live in turbulent times with a great deal of uncertainty affecting consumer behaviour, confidence and leisure choices. We have noticed the effect of this uncertainty on enrolment patterns in particular, although without any discernible trends. The income we receive from our endowment is subject to market forces, as is our venue hire business. Meanwhile, the number of researchers using our special collections and archives has increased and participant numbers for our performing arts and dance activity are increasing.

This is a challenging climate in which to take risks and invest in new projects that will not necessarily prove successful immediately, but Bishopsgate Institute intends to continue to innovate and the team working here will need to balance prudence with confidence to ensure we continue to provide our audiences with an excellent and distinctive experience.

Organisation culture

At the heart of our organisational model is a commitment to building trust, inspiring staff and supporting them to constructively support and challenge each other where necessary, while remaining accountable and taking personal responsibility.

We want our staff to create and develop a culture of proactive, customer-focused working practice, which responds to the needs of our customers, meaning we may all, at one time or another, be required to work across 7 days, evenings and weekends as our roles and projects demand. We support staff by developing systems and a framework to support this and we make sure that we plan our working patterns using fixed or variable shifts and rotas where appropriate.

It is crucial that we are ready to respond positively to both opportunities and challenges that arise. The only constant is change: to be effective while achieving our vision, we must evolve along with the world around us.

Our five-year business plan is in place, we are clear on our priorities to fulfil our charitable objects and we will ensure that staff understand the plan, engage with it and understand their key role in achieving it. It promises to be an exciting and challenging ride.

Behaviours

The competency framework included with the person specification is comprehensive and we will be testing for these as part of the recruitment process, as well as monitoring your ongoing performance once in post.

I cannot stress enough the importance of *how* we perform our jobs, as well as what we achieve. For example, although you may have solved a problem, the extent to which you have appropriately involved people, listened to others and taken on board relevant

wider challenges, circumstances or opinions will matter more to me. We need to be flexible, constructive and willing to learn and see things from others' perspectives.

Successful Candidates

During the recruitment process the panel will be looking for candidates to demonstrate they have the required skills and competencies for the role. They will also test for applicants' commitment to and enthusiasm for the vision, goals and priorities of Bishopsgate Institute, as outlined in the application pack.

The selection process will involve several components for those that are shortlisted, with practical tests and role-plays as needed for each role. There will also be a competency-based interview. All of these elements will be designed to explore the candidate's competencies, skills and potential for the role through a broad range of activities, enabling you to demonstrate your strengths and explore your areas for development with us.

Successful candidates will demonstrate they meet the person specification in its entirety. You will see from the job descriptions that there are specialist and general skills required, and you will be required to articulate how you met the requirements of both sections.

I make no secret of the fact that I am looking for a team that is up for the challenge: resilient, positive individuals who are hungry to learn, innovate and succeed, and who are demonstrably committed to our vision and priorities and to leading and engaging with their teams. This will not be "just a job".

A handwritten signature in black ink, appearing to read 'Francesca Canty', with a stylized, flowing script.

Francesca Canty