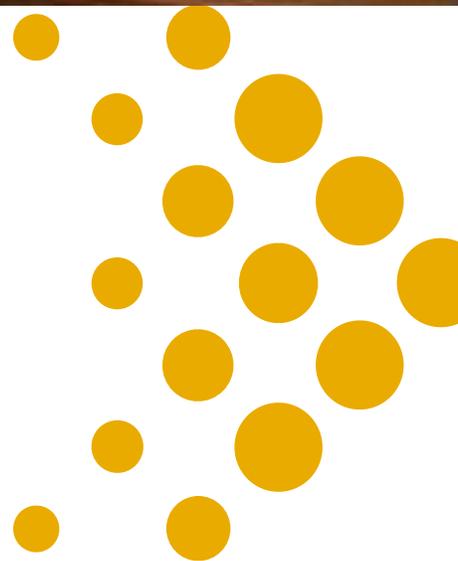




KBRS

Executive Brief

President



A message from the Board Chair, Bill Barker



Searching for a new President is a challenge. An even greater challenge is taking on such a position. As you will see from what follows, there is a strong desire to find a President who is excited by our school, who understands its unusual nature, and, as one of our alumni says, we would like to have a President who doesn't just fit into NSCAD, but helps NSCAD become more fully itself. We want our President to join us, stay with us, keep us balanced, and encourage us to keep moving forwards. So there will be many challenges in this position, but also a great opportunity to lead an exceptional art and design school. We hope you are that person.



Blood Group, Kim Morgan, permanent Installation, Dalhousie Medical School, installed 2016. Photo: Steve Farmer



About NSCAD

For nearly 140 years, NSCAD University—formerly the Nova Scotia College of Art and Design—has stood as a beacon of creativity in Atlantic Canada. NSCAD’s history is unique amongst art schools. From the 1960s onwards, NSCAD has formed an institutional DNA that is characterized by experimentation, a non-conformist spirit, and encouragement for individual direction and innovation.

Recognized for its bold vision, promotion of excellence, and dedication to the visual arts, NSCAD is more than a school: it is a sanctuary for artists, thinkers, makers, and changemakers. Today NSCAD is a center of excellence for artists, offering graduate and undergraduate degrees in fine and media arts, craft, design, art history, art education, as well as an ambitious array of Extended Studies courses. NSCAD University alumni are highly regarded professionals living in Canada and around the world, ranging from artists and craftspersons, to entrepreneurs and small business owners, to designers of modern health and environmental products.

Located in the heart of Halifax, Nova Scotia—Atlantic Canada’s largest and most vibrant city—NSCAD is an immersive environment where adventurous thinkers and makers discover their passion and identities. At NSCAD, creation and research converge in an organic way in classrooms, laboratories, and collaborative projects. From the past to the present, NSCAD continues to define what an experimental art and design institution can be.

“NSCAD has a strong sense of community. Everyone looks out for each other here. I know most of the faculty and the leadership team.” – Staff member at NSCAD

Acknowledgements

Land Acknowledgement

NSCAD University is located in Kijipuktuk, the district of Sipekne'katik, Mi'kma'ki, which since time immemorial, has been the unceded traditional territory and ancestral homelands of the Mi'kmaq Nation. We pay respect to the historic and contemporary Mi'kmaw artists who have, over millennia, created unique artforms and designs, and through generations, passed down ways of being, knowing, and doing that are valued and respected. NSCAD University is committed to forging a relationship based on reciprocity as we move forward together in a good way, based on the foundational aspirations in our collective treaties, dating back to 1725. In Nova Scotia, we recognize we are all Treaty People.

Equity, Diversity and Inclusion Statement

Equity, diversity, inclusion, and accessibility (EDIA) are core values at NSCAD University, fundamental to fostering a research, learning, and working environment where everyone feels valued and respected. We believe that an inclusive campus thrives on diverse perspectives, allowing creativity and innovation to flourish. Acknowledging the systemic barriers that many members of our community face, we are committed to continually designing, reviewing, and rebuilding policies, programs, and practices that are inclusive, equitable, and accessible to all. Guided by NSCAD's [Equity Diversity & Inclusion Targeted Action Plan](#) (TAP), we prioritize EDIA across all aspects of the institution to create a culture where every member is recognized as a valued contributor.

People's Acknowledgement

NSCAD acknowledges the historical and contemporary presence of people of African descent. We offer this People's acknowledgement in solidarity with the Indigenous people of Turtle Island in the efforts and deliberate intentions toward decolonization. African Nova Scotians have existed and persisted on the traditional land of the Mi'kmaq for more than 400 years. Their significant presence and contributions have shaped the existence of Nova Scotia. We are resilient, brave, and spiritual. This acknowledgement brings with it a call to action to reconcile the harms acted upon African Nova Scotians, a distinct People and the Mi'kmaw People."



Project of Heart, collaborative group piece, wooden tiles, eagle feathers, fabric. 2022

NSCAD Campuses

Currently, NSCAD University owns two campus sites and leases a third, all in downtown Halifax:

Fountain Campus is a National Historic Site set near the Halifax boardwalk, encompassing an entire small city block of Victorian buildings that were once an interconnected row of merchant shops and warehouses. The Anna Leonowens Gallery and Treaty Space Gallery are located here along with studios and classroom space for design, jewelry, fashion, prints, photography, art history, and the library. This old building is beloved and beautifully situated, yet it lacks accessibility, is high in maintenance cost, and will be expensive to renovate. At the street level part of the buildings are rented to local businesses.



Academy Campus occupies a large Gothic Revival brick building at the base of historic Citadel Hill, originally built in 1878 as a high school. The building, located a 12 minute walk from the Fountain campus, houses the Media Arts division, including the film program with editing suites, studio space, sound rooms, a screening room, and animation facilities.



Port Campus, located on the waterfront in a 20 minute walk from the Fountain campus, is a large historic warehouse in a long-term lease from the Halifax Port Authority. The building has been entirely repurposed specifically for art production. In addition to many first-year classes and studios, the structure houses wood and metal fabrication shops, large ceramic kilns, a sculpture studio, plastics lab, and foundry.



Campus Consolidation:

For many years NSCAD operated out of a single building or in buildings close to one another. Over time, our facilities expanded and moved to our current three locations. As the campus moved apart there has been sustained discussion on ways to reconsolidate the campus in a single location. At this point, we are not going anywhere. A main concern right now however is the condition of our principal space, the Fountain campus, which is in serious need of renovation. A renewal and expansion of our existing Port Campus is also in an advanced state of planning.



By the Numbers (2024-2025)

Our Students

- 854 undergraduate students
- 55 graduate students
- 26% international student population
- Student representation from over 24 countries
- 6% indigenous students
- 65% 2SLGBTQIA+ students
- 41% identify as gender diverse

Campus and Classrooms

- 8:1 student-faculty ratio
- 13 average class size
- 93% classes under 30 students
- 12 fabrication studios
- 3000 square foot sound stage
- 125+ student shows every year
- 50+ visiting artists, artists-in-residence, and public lectures every year
- 70+ exchange opportunities in the United States, the U.K., Norway, Portugal, Japan, Korea, and Australia

Our Alumni

- NSCAD graduates have won Governor General's Awards, Oscars, Emmys, Grammys, Junos, Polaris Prizes, Canadian Screen Awards, Sobey Art Awards, RBC Painting Awards, and Scotiabank Photography Awards
- 93% say NSCAD played an important role in their development as a person
- 91% say their NSCAD degree was a good investment
- More than 85% alumni are working in a field related to their studies
- Over 10,000 alumni live and work in 56 countries
- 50% are self-employed



Programs

Undergraduate Program Offerings

- BA, Art History (Non-studio)
- BA, Art History
- BDES, Interdisciplinary Design
- BFA, Ceramics
- BFA, Expanded Media
- BFA, Film
- BFA, Fine Arts
- BFA, Interdisciplinary Arts
- BFA, Jewellery Design & Metalsmithing
- BFA, Photography
- BFA, Textiles/Fashion

Graduate Program Offerings

- Master of Arts in Art Education
- Master of Design
- Master of Fine Arts
- Post-Baccalaureate Certificate in Design
- Visual Art Certificate for Teachers
- Visual Arts Certificate in Studio



Strategic Research Plan (2023-2028)

At NSCAD University, [research](#) is viewed as an inherently generative process rooted in theoretical inquiry and studio practice. The institution's [Strategic Research Plan](#) reflects a commitment to promoting and supporting internationally significant research and creative production. NSCAD's research philosophy fosters an environment where faculty and students engage in continuous exploration and innovation. NSCAD expands the definition of research to include broader social perspectives and community engagement.

The Strategic Research goals for 2023–2028 focus on increasing the global impact and recognition of NSCAD's research, with six themes driving leadership:

- Creating New Forms of Knowledge
- Art and Social Change
- Critical, Visual, and Cultural Literacies
- Sustainability, Adaptability, and Regeneration
- Material Process and Idea Exploration
- Pedagogy in Art and Design Education

NSCAD supports interdisciplinary collaboration through research centres, institutes, networks, and clusters, seeking Canada Research Chairs to complement its priorities. The Strategic Research Plan outlines ambitions that align with the central aim of being a university governed by excellence and social purpose, collectively emphasizing the transformative power of academic research and studio practice in the realm of art and design education. The commitment to interdisciplinary collaboration, global impact, and societal change underscores the shared mission to push the boundaries of knowledge and contribute to a better, more just world.



Position Profile – Mandate

Appointed by and reporting to the Board of Governors, the President of NSCAD University serves as the institution’s chief executive officer, providing strategic leadership to a respected and innovative art and design university.

The President will be a perceptive and imaginative leader—someone who takes the time to understand the university’s past, present, and future, and who can inspire a shared vision across its diverse communities. The President will champion the value of art and art education, and will advocate for NSCAD in public, private, and community sectors, both nationally and internationally.

As NSCAD’s senior leader, the President will guide day-to-day operations with clarity and care, working with faculty, staff, students, and partners to support the University’s mission and long-term sustainability. The President will foster a culture of collaboration, creativity, and thoughtful risk-taking.

The President will understand the unusual administrative structure of a small university, which depends heavily on teamwork and shared responsibilities and less on a top-down management style. The NSCAD administrative structure is eloquently described in the exit interview of our recent Provost and Interim President Jana Macalik which can be viewed [here](#).

An engaged artist, designer, or scholar, the President will be an active presence in the creative and academic life of the school—someone students and faculty look to for both leadership and companionship in their work.

As the University’s primary ambassador, the President will speak compellingly to many audiences—government, donors, Indigenous communities, alumni, prospective students, and the public—about what makes NSCAD exceptional.

“The President should be a connector to the world – having their ear to the ground on the contemporary art world internationally and bringing international recognition.” – NSCAD Alumnus



Position Profile – Priorities

The new President will be tasked with addressing multiple priority areas:

- Strengthening the institution’s financial situation by developing a vision for a sustainable financial future despite funding challenges across the post-secondary landscape.
- Managing and reinforcing relations between NSCAD and provincial and federal governments.
- Garnering support for new campus development from external supporters, including private donors and government, by implementing effective fundraising practices and strengthening supports in this area.
- Fostering a culture of trust and transparency amongst the NSCAD community.
- Advocating for the value of art and design education and increasing student enrolment at a time when other disciplines are viewed by some as more attractive and sustainable fields for investment.
- Encouraging innovative direction that generates internal energy and engages external partners.

“We need someone who is physically present, meeting with faculty, staff, students; visit studio classes – someone who has a genuine interest in fostering relationships with our community.” – Faculty member at NSCAD

Qualities of an Ideal Candidate

Here are some of the qualities emphasized by our community members—students, faculty, staff, senior leaders, and alumni—during the extensive surveys and focus-group discussions conducted as part of the Presidential Search.

1. A Thoughtful Listener and Visionary Thinker

“I just don’t want another president who’s all about business plans. We need someone who actually gets what this place is about—someone with imagination.”

“NSCAD runs on creativity, and we need a leader who believes in art as a way of being, not just a thing you do.”

“You can’t lead a place like this without understanding its soul. NSCAD has deep roots—cultural, artistic, historical. We want someone who respects that, but who also has a real sense of where we could go next.”

“Vision means being able to see what’s ahead even when it’s not clear—and having the guts to lead anyway. We need someone who can bring our academic mission and our financial reality together.

“A good leader makes you want to get involved. They bring energy and compassion, and they help people see what’s possible. That kind of inspiration really matters during times of change.”

2. A Capable and Collaborative Administrator

“This job takes someone who can zoom out and see the big picture, but also handle the day-to-day stuff—budgets, policies, governance.”

“One thing that makes NSCAD unique is its small size—and that can be a real strength, but only if the president is hands-on. We need someone who doesn’t just talk about ideas but actually gets things done.”

“Yes, they need financial skills. But it’s not just about balancing numbers—it’s about understanding what those numbers mean for people and programs.”

“A good leader makes people feel like they belong and can grow. The next president needs to actually talk to us—and I don’t mean just town halls. I mean real, ongoing conversation with students, faculty, staff, alumni, everyone. That takes time and effort—getting to know people, listening, and building trust beyond the usual meetings.”

“We’re a diverse community, and our identities are tied up in the work we make. We want someone who gets that—someone who truly understands what inclusion and accessibility mean, especially in a school like this.”

Qualities of an Ideal Candidate Cont...

3. An Engaged Artist, Designer, Scholar, and Educator

“The way teaching happens here is different. It’s intense, it’s personal, it’s creative. I want a president who sees that as something to celebrate and be part of, not stand apart from.”

“It makes a big difference if they’ve worked in a creative field—artist, designer, whatever. Having a terminal degree like an MFA or PhD helps. But more than that, I want someone who understands the mix of academic and artistic excellence we aim for here.”

“It’s important the president understands how faculty work really happens—research, teaching, service. They should protect academic freedom and help us stay relevant.”

“Creative leadership doesn’t always look the same. The right person might come from a non-traditional background. What matters is that they’ve led teams with care and creativity, and know how to handle complexity.”

“They don’t have to be perfect—I’d just love to see someone who’s curious and real, who shows up with openness and wants to grow alongside us.”

4. An Articulate and Approachable Ambassador

“This job’s about relationships. Government, donors, alumni, community partners—we need someone who knows how to build connections and keep them strong over time.”

“Senate isn’t just a hoop to jump through. The president must understand and respect our bicameral governance structure.”

“We’re in a pretty specific spot—Atlantic Canada, with all the history and culture that comes with that. The next president has to understand this place and NSCAD’s role in it.”

“NSCAD is unique, even within the landscape of postsecondary art and design education. Our president should not treat us like just another art school.”

“We’re not looking for someone to just fit in here—we’re looking for someone who helps NSCAD grow into its best self.”

Ideal Candidate Profile

Experience and Qualifications

What follows is a list of experiences and qualifications that NSCAD community members are hoping to find in an ideal candidate for the President position. The Search Committee understands that no single candidate may embody these qualities exhaustively and evenly. Thus, it is possible that a candidate is at the beginning of a career that shows strong promise for the kind of leadership we propose.

- Relevant higher education with a terminal degree (i.e., MFA or PhD).
- A passionate, deep understanding of visual arts, the unique challenges of art and design institutions, and the domestic and international contexts of art and design.
- Experience in the creative process, either in art, design, or other relevant fields would be considered a further asset.
- Successful senior leadership experience in the arts sector. A combination of relevant experience from a non-traditional arts background could be considered.
- Experience in or a willingness to learn about challenges related to small, specialized institutions, such as enrolment management, budgetary constraints, advancement and external relations, and student recruitment.
- Familiarity with the Canadian and Atlantic Canadian cultural and educational ecosystems, including an awareness of NSCAD's role within them. Candidates should demonstrate their commitment to meaningful engagement with the communities, histories, and institutions that shape this context.
- Experience in fundraising and/or alumni relations would be considered an asset.
- Experience in fostering and maintaining relationships and partnerships with internal and external communities, business, government, and other institutions locally, nationally, and internationally, as well as expertise in advocating for post-secondary education in the arts.
- An understanding or experience of working with a board, especially in terms of decision making.
- Strong understanding of and demonstrated commitment to principles of equity, diversity, inclusion, and accessibility, perhaps with a track record of successfully stewarding these principles into action.

“The new President needs to exhibit NSCAD’s values and understand what makes NSCAD unique/different.” – Student at NSCAD

Ideal Candidate Profile Cont...

Competencies & Personal Attributes

Strategic Leadership

You are an empowering leader who articulates a clear vision, identifies future goals and challenges your leadership team to constantly improve and grow. An approachable, collegial and passionate leader, you create an environment that enables people to develop and achieve their goals. You think holistically, supporting the Senate as an integral part of the bicameral governance of NSCAD, and articulate to faculty, staff, students, and alumni the decisions being made to advance the academic mission, the student experience, and overall success of NSCAD. You are financially astute and approach fiscal and risk management from a disciplined perspective, ensuring sound decision-making, and effective and efficient resource allocation in accordance with NSCAD's strategic direction and long-term financial sustainability.

Collaborative Relationship Builder and Champion

You have a highly collaborative style, excellent communication skills, and the ability to inspire faculty, staff, alumni, and students. You value relationships within, across, and outside the University and actively build and maintain relationships that support the University's goals. You have demonstrated skills in engaging in meaningful consultation and working toward consensus. Externally, you are community-minded and build and foster partnerships that connect the University with community, government, corporate, and academic partners. Internally, you allocate time and effort to understanding and meeting the needs of internal and external stakeholders and are a compelling advocate who proudly champions NSCAD to all stakeholders. As an active and visible spokesperson, you are comfortable being a pillar of NSCAD, as well as effectively navigating the political environment at the local, regional, provincial, and federal levels.

Innovative and Transformation Leadership

You lead with a spirit of collaboration and have a proven ability to lead through times of transformation. You envision possibilities and mobilize people to realize them. You are energized by diverse ideas, thoughts, and perspectives, and have a demonstrated ability to inspire others to excel. You have the courage to support innovative thinking across NSCAD and are able to foster and lead within a culture that is nimble in how it adapts and grows. You are optimistic and can effectively invite and engage others in pursuing possibilities. You value openness, accountability, and risk-taking and are committed to building trust and collegiality within NSCAD.

Commitment to Student Success

You have a passion for enabling students to learn, grow, and develop, and can authentically connect with students. You embrace and champion NSCAD's culture of inclusivity and its student-focused values. You respect active student engagement and foster a culture within which all student voices are encouraged and heard. As a visible leader, you actively participate in student life on campus and encourage students to become leaders as local and global citizens. You are driven to employ current best practice to foster an environment in which students thrive.

Ideal Candidate Profile Cont...

Competencies & Personal Attributes

Commitment to Arts Education & Academic Excellence

You understand and are committed to quality and innovation in teaching, learning, and research in visual arts and design. You respect the role of faculty in teaching, research, and service and participate in recruiting and retaining high-quality faculty. You understand and respect the role of the University and its purpose in society and are committed to academic freedom and collegial processes.

Authentic and Inclusive Leadership

You are a transparent, ethical leader with strong integrity. You are genuine, thoughtful, and inclusive, and lead by example with a collaborative approach. You have a strong commitment to increasing accessibility, equity and diversity with the ability to promote an inclusive climate wherein every member of the community feels validated and accepted. You consistently apply a sense of fairness and commitment to considering and including a broad range of perspectives, world views, and knowledges. You believe in the value of community within a post-secondary context and have the ability to foster and enable a culture of community at NSCAD.

Business & Financial Acumen

You have a broad knowledge of organizational finance and have a natural ability to understand financial data when making decisions. You have knowledge of the balance of academic and business operations in higher education and are able to navigate nuanced situations with finesse. You can quickly synthesize patterns and relationships between historical, legal, cultural, and relational contexts to effectively lead and offer guidance. You can make timely decisions based on complex information, due to your ability to quickly process key pieces of information. You apply critical financial concepts and practices to establish and maintain realistic budgets. You use comprehensive financial and operational data to monitor overall institutional status and make strategically aligned decisions. You know how to achieve positive results, both through formal channels and informal networks.



Discover Halifax: A City Where Creativity Meets the Coast

Located on the edge of the Atlantic, Halifax is more than just a picturesque port city—it's a thriving cultural capital, alive with creative energy, historic charm, and a spirit of innovation. It is one of the fastest growing cities in Canada.

As the centre of Atlantic Canada's arts and culture scene, Halifax offers an inspiring backdrop for a creative leader to live, work, and thrive. Home to artists, musicians, filmmakers, designers, and storytellers, the city supports galleries and experimental theatre, acclaimed festivals, and public art. There are six universities. It boasts a flourishing music scene and a deep commitment to community-based arts.

Beyond the arts, Halifax is a city of balance where natural beauty and urban life co-exist. Ocean views, fresh sea air, and nearby wilderness trails offer a counterpoint to the city's energetic pace. Its culinary scene, driven by local chefs, craft brewers, farmers etc., is celebrated across Canada. With a growing, diverse population, vibrant universities, and a culture of inclusion, Halifax is increasingly seen as one of the most livable cities in the world and is an attractive destination for professionals seeking balance between work and life.

Artistic institutions of note: [Visual Arts NS](#), [Art Gallery of Nova Scotia](#), [Nocturne Halifax](#), [Public Art](#), [Prismatic Festival](#), [Dalhousie Arts Centre](#), [Saint Mary's University Art Gallery](#), [Dalhousie Art Gallery](#), [Mount Saint Vincent University Art Gallery](#), [Eyelevel Gallery](#), [The Khyber Center for the Arts](#), [The Blue Building Gallery](#), [Hermes Gallery](#)

Becoming a Candidate

The following is a list of the steps that we anticipate in this executive search. We would also like to bring to your attention several key issues we would recommend you consider as you navigate the search process.

Applications can be submitted online at:
<https://www.kbrs.ca/Career/17430852248230000008uoy>

Interview with KBRs

As we receive the applications of interested candidates, we compare them against the key selection criteria set by the Search Committee. We arrange to speak with those candidates whose experience and qualifications are closest to the ideal candidate profile.

In your initial interview with KBRs, we will seek to understand more about your background, qualifications, experience, and interest in the position.

As you move forward in the search process, to ensure you are seriously interested in the position, we will ask you to consider:

- **Terms of an appointment** including compensation and benefits.
- **Relocation** including housing, schools, relocation assistance and other matters of importance to you. If a physical move will be unacceptable to you, please determine that at this stage.
- **Alignment** of this role and organization to your personal objectives and preferences. If you have questions that you would need to have answered before deciding to pursue this role, please let us know. If appropriate, we will attempt to arrange a conversation between you and our client so you can make a well-informed decision.
- If you are an **international candidate or foreign worker**, in addition to applying for this position,

you may want to explore the Government of Canada's website to learn more about [Working in Canada at this link](#).

After considering these factors, in fairness to everyone concerned, please do not proceed further with this process if you are unlikely to accept the position if it is offered to you. We will ask our client to extend the same courtesy to you.

Search Committee Interviews

The Search Committee will consider all candidates and invite a small group to move forward. Typically, this next step is an interview with the Search Committee and facilitated by a lead from KBRs.

If there is a desire to move forward with your candidacy after the initial interview with the Search Committee, you will be invited for further conversations with the Search Committee and University community. The format and nature of these conversations will allow you to learn more about NSCAD and the University community and begin to set the conditions for successful integration of the next President. The Committee commits to respecting the confidentiality of your interest throughout this process.

Shortly after these conversations, if both you and the Search Committee wish to proceed, we will work with you and NSCAD to create mutually acceptable terms of employment subject to the Committee's satisfaction with background and reference checks.

Becoming a Candidate Cont...

Resume Accuracy/Background Checks

If you progress to the interview stage, you will be asked to provide information to allow our client to conduct a thorough background check, including reference checks and verification of your education, designations, and awards. We will seek your permission to perform these verifications before we proceed. Should you decide not to allow verification of your background, credit or criminal history, our client will be informed, and they will decide how to proceed with your candidacy.

Reference Checks

Reference conversations will take place should you advance past the initial Search Committee interview. You will be asked to provide references who represent 360-degree working relationships you have had for the past several years, whether supervisors, peers, or subordinates, as determined by NSCAD. KBRs's policy is to present to our client a minimum of three to six references before an offer is made.

Privacy and Confidentiality

KBRs respects the privacy and confidentiality of personal information provided by candidates for our search assignments. The above information will be in accordance with the Personal Information Protection and Electronic Documents legislation. A copy of our Privacy Policy is available for your review on our website at:

<https://www.kbrs.ca/privacy-policy>.

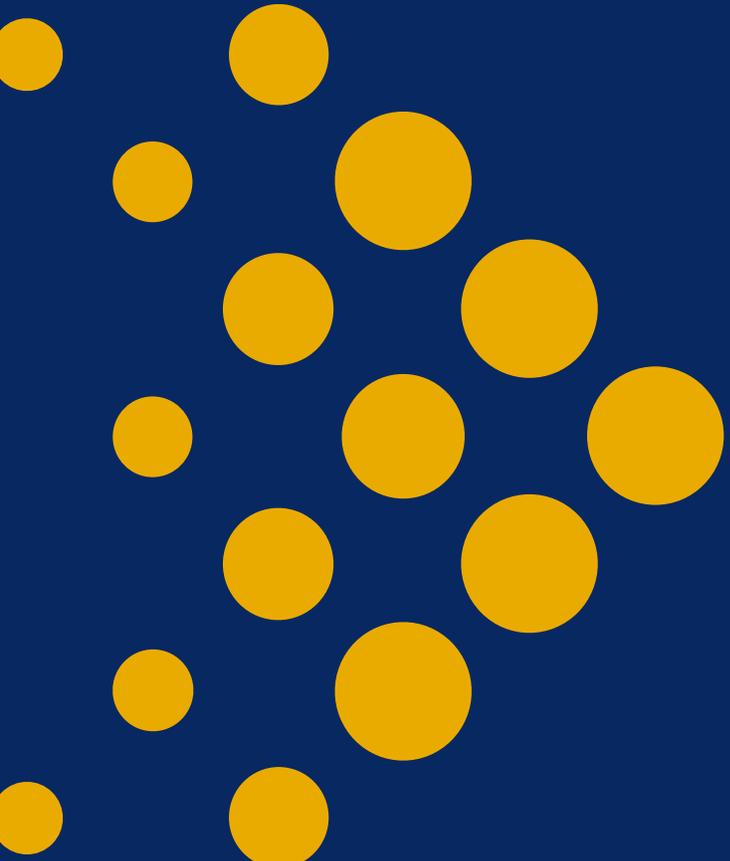
Offer Etiquette

We ask that you honour two standards of professionalism if you choose to become a candidate in this process:

- If an offer is extended to you, you commit to holding the details in confidence (with the exception of discussing it within the confidential circle of your immediate family) and agree that you will not discuss the offer with your present employer.
- If you say you will accept the offer our client can count on your word, otherwise please withdraw as a candidate. We want our client to avoid the substantial loss of time and opportunity cost that would accompany a reversal of your decision, as you would want to avoid handing in your resignation and then having our client cancel your offer.

Experiencing feelings of self-doubt when making a career change are common and should be prepared for. If either of these standards of professionalism are unacceptable, please let us know before becoming a candidate.

If you require an accommodation during any phase of the recruitment process, please inform KBRs.



Contact Us in Confidence



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