

# RESEARCH LIBRARIES NETWORK

## Funders' Group

### Memorandum of Understanding

1. The fifteen sponsors of the Research Libraries Network (RLN) working jointly as the **RLN Funders' Group** are pleased to announce their Memorandum of Understanding (MoU).
2. The establishment of the RLN reflects the sponsors' joint commitment to promoting world class research across the UK. Focusing on information infrastructure and dissemination, it is consistent with their shared goals of supporting research innovation and collaboration, recognising the crucial links between research and enterprise which are of benefit to the entire UK community.
3. The RLN will be set up in the course of the academic year 2004-05 for a set period of three years in the first instance. A statement of the mission and scope of the RLN and terms of reference for the Funders' Group and Advisory Board are set out in the following annexes. The establishment of the RLN will be supported and led by the RLN Executive Unit. The RLN Executive Unit will be accountable to the Funders Group (see Annex B for terms of reference), and strategically advised by the Advisory Board (see Appendix C).
4. The RLN will provide unified and focussed strategic leadership to create a cohesive national framework, or network, of the existing interdependent information providers. It will promote the development of comprehensive sustainable approaches to help meet the developing information needs of professional researchers and to provide fast-track access nationwide to cutting-edge supporting technologies.
5. The MoU affirms existing collaborative relationships between the UK higher education funding bodies and the national libraries, and establishes the basis on which they will work together as the RLN Funders' Group. The group comprises representatives of each of the seven sponsoring bodies listed below:
  - Higher Education Funding Council for England (HEFCE)
  - Scottish Higher Education Funding Council (SHEFC)
  - Higher Education Funding Council for Wales (HEFCW)
  - Department for Employment and Learning (DEL), Northern Ireland
  - The British Library
  - National Library of Scotland
  - National Library of Wales
  - Research Councils UK

**RLN Funders' Group members, as signatories to the Funders' Group Memorandum of Understanding**

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**Sir Howard Newby**

Chief Executive

Higher Education Funding Council for England

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**Roger McClure**

Chief Executive

Scottish Higher Education Funding Council

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**Professor Philip Gummett**

Chief Executive

Higher Education Funding Council for Wales

.....

**Dr Linda Bradley**

Head of Higher Education Research

Department for Employment and Learning, Northern Ireland

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**Lynne Brindley**

Chief Executive

The British Library

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**Martyn Wade**

National Librarian

National Library of Scotland

.....

**Andrew Green**

Librarian

National Library of Wales

.....

**Professor Geoffrey Crossick**

CEO, Arts and Humanities Research Board (AHRB)

(Research Councils UK representative for RLN Funders' group)

.....  
**Professor John Wood**

CEO, Council for the Central Laboratory of the Research Councils (CCLRC)  
(Research Councils UK representative for RLN Funders' group)

.....  
**Professor Julia Goodfellow**

CEO, Biotechnology and Biological Sciences Research Council (BBSRC)

.....  
**Professor John O'Reilly**

CEO, Engineering and Physical Sciences Research Council (EPSRC)

.....  
**Professor Ian Diamond**

CEO, Economic and Social Research Council (ESRC)

.....  
**Professor Colin Blakemore**

CEO, Medical Research Council (MRC)

.....  
**Professor John Lawton**

CEO, Natural Environment Research Council (NERC)

.....  
**Professor Ian Halliday**

CEO, Particle Physics and Astronomy Research Council (PPARC)

## RESEARCH LIBRARIES NETWORK

### Statement of Mission and Scope

1. The Research Libraries Network (RLN) will be set up in the academic year 2004-05 for a fixed term of three years in the first instance. The initial term will end on 31 July 2007. The RLN will be led by an executive unit, with responsibility for a baseline budget and individual project budgets of up to £3 million over the period. The executive unit will be based within the British Library and will take guidance from an Advisory Board regarding the strategic direction of the Network. The RLN executive unit will be accountable to the Funders' Group.
2. The continuation of the Network beyond the initial three year period, and the establishment of a permanent executive board, will be dependent on the establishment of a long term sustainability framework during the implementation period, and on the outcomes of an external evaluation to be conducted in the second year of operation.

### Mission

3. The Research Libraries Network (RLN) will lead and co-ordinate new developments in the collaborative provision of research information for the benefit of researchers in UK higher education.
4. The key objectives of the RLN will be:
  - a. To give strategic leadership to the provision of research information in the UK, engaging both providers and users in the formation and delivery of a comprehensive change programme driven by the requirements of researchers in all disciplines and underpinned by increasingly close and effective collaboration.
  - b. To lead and co-ordinate action to propose and specify solutions to researcher needs, including both developing existing forms of provision and identifying and developing new technology-enabled solutions.
  - c. To act as a high level advocate for research information ensuring that researchers' developing needs inform policy making at the very highest levels of government in the UK and internationally giving the UK a powerful, unified voice in international debates on the development of research information technology.

### Scope

5. The RLN will deliver an integrated programme of action on a number of fronts:
  - Strategic leadership: to ensure that the provision of research information moves forward within a strong shared strategic framework.
  - Discovery: to bring forward developed proposals for better arrangements for researchers to find out what information sources relevant to their work are available, where these are and how they may have access to them. It is now both possible and

desirable for these arrangements to cover, seamlessly, both hard copy and electronic material.

- Access to hard copy materials: the aggregate UK collection of primary and printed research materials is at present among the best in the world in its coverage. Concerted action and national leadership are required to sustain this, to improve the efficiency with which the collection is managed, and to make it easier for all researchers to have effective access to all of the material that it contains.
- Access to electronic materials: to take early action to ensure that UK researchers get the information services that they need, and that we retain our place at the leading edge of international development in this field. Some action to manage the creation and supply of online published materials is required, but the main emphasis should be on ensuring that the full range of outputs and data that researchers will continue to produce are shared and retained in the most effective way and fully exploiting new technologies.
- Sustainability: to ensure that we build a national research information resource that is sustainable, and secures researchers' continuing access to materials, over the long term, and to consider how the network can be maintained after the initial three years.
- Meeting researchers' needs: the national research effort is an essential engine for economic growth and social cohesion. In the present context, researchers are properly treated as a distinct group with particular shared needs. The RLN executive unit will deliver a programme of action which is planned in collaboration with the research community, and tailored to their needs, but which also interacts at all points with parallel activity on a broader stage to meet the full information needs of the wider community.
- Scholarly communications: to support the development of new platforms and promoting debate within the academic community on the implications of electronic tools and the internet for the communication and formal publication of research outcomes and for peer review and recognition systems.

## RESEARCH LIBRARIES NETWORK

### Funders' Group Terms of Reference

The Research Libraries Network (RLN) Funders' Group consists of one senior officer of each of the UK HE funding bodies, the British Library and the National Libraries of Scotland and Wales and two representatives from Research Councils UK. Each member has sufficient authority, or direct access to sufficient authority, to commit their own organisations to action and to the use of financial or other resources in respect of the RLN scheme. The Funders' Group operates on the basis of mutual trust, equality of status and a shared responsibility for the RLN as a whole.

The RLN Funders' Group:

1. Approves and oversees the objectives and activities of the RLN.
2. Approves the Memorandum of Understanding between the Funding Bodies in connection with the RLN, and any significant changes thereto.
3. Approves and oversees the Funding Agreement with the British Library for delivery of the RLN administrative service on behalf of the funding bodies.
4. Through the Advisory Board, receives and considers reports from the RLN executive unit on progress against the objectives of the RLN.
5. Provides advice to the Chief Executives of the RLN sponsors on RLN related issues, including funding issues and general policy advice.
6. Authorises and monitors activity within the agreed existing budget resources and timetables in respect of RLN activities.
7. Reviews and agrees proposed significant new activities within the agreed existing budget resources and timetables, including draft terms of reference for working groups.
8. Oversees and considers administrative and spending reviews.
9. Receives and considers information concerning significant issues which stand adversely to affect RLN activity.
10. Ensures that the RLN is evaluated.

### Administrative arrangements

1. The Chair of the Funders' Group will normally be the HEFCE representative.
2. The Funders' Group will be serviced by a HEFCE officer.
3. The Director of the RLN executive will usually attend meetings of the Funders' Group.
4. Quorum shall be four full members including full members or alternates from HEFCE and the British Library.
5. Interests should be declared in advance of discussions. The Chair will decide on a case by case basis whether members with conflicts of interest should be asked to withdraw from the meeting.
6. Where a member cannot attend, the member may send an 'alternate' to Funders' Group meetings.
7. The Funders' Group may allow observers to attend meetings at its own discretion.
8. The Funders' Group will normally meet twice each year – including one joint meeting with the Advisory Board – and otherwise as appropriate.
9. Meetings and decisions may be actual or virtual in nature (i.e. by videoconference or email).

## RESEARCH LIBRARIES NETWORK

### Advisory Board Terms of Reference

The Advisory Board will comprise a chair and six members representing the UK higher education research and information management communities. Two observers, one representing the UK HE Funding Bodies, and one from the National Libraries, will also attend.

The Advisory Board:

1. Provides the strategic direction of the RLN within the overall framework of objectives set by the Funders' Group
2. Provides recommendations to the Funders' Group on proposed new projects and feasibility studies.
3. Receives and considers reports on progress from the RLN executive unit .
4. May be invited by the Funders' Group or the RLN Executive Unit to comment on matters of interest arising between scheduled meetings.

#### Administrative arrangements

1. The Advisory Board will normally meet up to four times per year (one meeting to be held jointly with the Funders' Group).
2. The Advisory Board will be serviced by an RLN officer.
3. The Director of the RLN will usually attend meetings of the Advisory Board.
4. Quorum shall be four full members, and must include the Chair. Alternates are not permitted.
5. Additional observers may be invited to attend meetings at the discretion of the chair and members.
6. Interests should be declared in advance of discussion. The Chair will decide on a case by case basis whether members with conflicts of interest should be asked to withdraw from the meeting.
7. Meetings and decisions may be actual or virtual in nature (i.e. by videoconference or email).

## RESEARCH LIBRARIES NETWORK

### Summary of Financial arrangements

#### RLN budget

1. A total budget of £2,979,471 has been allocated to the RLN by the Funders Group for the initial three year period.

2. The RLN executive unit, accountable to the Funders' Group, will be responsible for the baseline budget, as detailed below. The Funders' Group may release additional funds for feasibility studies and new projects periodically, having regard to advice from the Advisory Board. Individual project budgets will subsequently be managed by the RLN executive unit. The funders' group and the executive unit will agree an expenditure profile for each year's overall budget, at the start of each year. This profile may be subject to change depending on actual activity.

Academic / Project Year	1	2	3	Total 3 year costs
RLN Set up costs	£48,200	£3,756	£4,082	£56,038
RLN Annual running costs	£324,300	£356,730	£392,403	£1,073,433
<b>Baseline budget for initial RLN work programme</b>	<b>£372,500</b>	<b>£360,486</b>	<b>£396,485</b>	<b>£1,129,471</b>
Feasibility studies	£400,000	£300,000	£150,000	£850,000
Order of costs for new projects	£0	£500,000	£500,000	£1,000,000
<b>Total additional funding</b>	<b>£400,000</b>	<b>£800,000</b>	<b>£650,000</b>	<b>£1,850,000</b>
<b>Headline costs</b>	<b>£772,500</b>	<b>£1,160,486</b>	<b>£1,046,485</b>	<b>£2,979,471</b>

#### Sponsors' contributions

3. The four higher education funding bodies will fund the core activities of the RLN in accordance with their established contributions formula, as set out below. The Research Councils will each contribute £10,000 per year for the initial three-year period – these funds will be paid directly to the British Library.

#### Set-up and running costs

Academic / project year		1	2	3	3 year Total
HEFCE	81%	£301,725	£291,994	£321,153	£914,872
SHEFC	12%	£44,700	£43,258	£47,578	£135,537
HEFCW	5%	£18,625	£18,024	£19,824	£56,474
DEL	2%	£7,450	£7,210	£7,930	£22,589
<b>Baseline budget total</b>		<b>£372,500</b>	<b>£360,486</b>	<b>£396,485</b>	<b>£1,129,471</b>

## Feasibility studies and projects

	Academic / project year	1	2	3	3 year Total
<i>Research Councils</i>		£80,000	£80,000	£80,000	£240,000
HEFCE	81%	£259,200	£583,200	£461,700	£1,304,100
SHEFC	12%	£38,400	£86,400	£68,400	£193,200
HEFCW	5%	£16,000	£36,000	£28,500	£80,500
DEL	2%	£6,400	£14,400	£11,400	£32,200
<i>Funding bodies total</i>	100%	£320,000	£720,000	£570,000	£1,610,000
<b>Total additional funding</b>		<b>£400,000</b>	<b>£800,000</b>	<b>£650,000</b>	<b>£1,850,000</b>

4. HEFCE will remit funds to the British Library on a monthly basis, according to the expenditure profile, and up to a total of 90 per cent of the yearly allocations. The remaining 10 per cent of each year's allocation will be released on receipt of a satisfactory report on spend and work completed, to be approved by the Funders' Group as a whole.

HEFCE will invoice the other funding councils for 90% of their annual contribution during the year, and the remaining 10% on final release of funds. The 90% contribution will be invoiced in two equal parts in March and September. Should the national libraries of Scotland and Wales contribute to core costs, these funds will be counted within the percentage contributions of SHEFC and HEFCW respectively.

Before payments begin, the funders' group will need evidence that work has begun (a copy of a contract or other documentation).

5.0 The contribution by the British Library will comprise accommodation for the RLN executive unit (up to 6 full time staff) including responsibility for staff recruitment and employment infrastructure. The approximate market value of this contribution is set out below.

year	1	2	3	3 year Total
Accommodation	£25,000	£27,500	£30,250	£82,750
Heat, light and power	£5,000	£5,500	£6,050	£16,550
Cleaning and maintenance	£8,000	£8,800	£9,680	£26,480
Staff supervision & management	£6,150	£6,350	£6,600	£19,100
Central administration	£14,500	£15,200	£16,000	£45,700
<b>Total BL Contribution</b>	<b>£58,650</b>	<b>£63,350</b>	<b>£68,580</b>	<b>£190,580</b>