

## Consultative Groups - Terms of reference

### Rationale and purpose

1. The second of the six major aims enounced in the Research Information Network's Strategic Plan is "to ensure that the research community contributes to and collaborates in a programme of action tailored to its needs." On this basis, the RIN must give itself the means of engaging in a dialogue with the research community, whose interests and needs in relation to research information it seeks to represent.
2. As part of this task, the Research Information Network (RIN) has established four Consultative Groups. The first three each cover a broad subject area, as follows:

- **Arts, Humanities and Social Sciences (AHS)**
- **Life Sciences, Biology and Medicine (LBM)**
- **Physical Sciences, Technology and Engineering (PTE)**

The fourth Group, covering **Librarianship and Information Science (LIS)**, is cross-cutting and its remit covers all of the three broad subject areas.

4. The Groups are set up in the first instance to run until the end of the RIN's initial period of operation, in June 2008.
5. The main purpose of the Groups is:
  - to help build bridges between different sectors of the research community on the one hand and the library and information community on the other;
  - in the light of the rapidly-evolving nature of the research information environment, to provide an informed user perspective on the priority areas and issues to be addressed in developing better information services for researchers;
  - to provide a forum through which active researchers can engage with others in seeking to develop enhanced information services; and
  - to advise on the development of the RIN's programme of work, in the context of the framework set out by the Strategic Plan.

One particular challenge for the Consultative Groups is to help the RIN identify and engage with active researchers who are developing research methodologies that reflect the new opportunities of the information age – and furthermore, who do not just represent their own immediate sectoral interests.

### Scope

6. The range of current and emerging information sources, providers and types that constitutes the focus of activity of the Consultative Groups reflects the RIN's wide remit. It includes published books and serials; manuscripts; archival holdings; museum collections; grey literature; sounds and images; and datasets produced and held in a wide range of formats by researchers and many other individuals and organizations. Bodies involved in producing, collecting and

making this material available extend across the UK and overseas and include researchers themselves, libraries, archives, data centres, and other organizations both public and private.

7. The current and prospective RIN activity that forms the environment for Consultative Groups' discussions includes areas such as search and resource discovery; access to resources; the scholarly communications process; digitisation and digital content; archiving and curation; e-research and other relevant technical applications; and virtual research communities and environments. These areas are relevant to all four Consultative Groups, but for the LIS Group, there is an additional focus on derived and more specialist developments such as cataloguing, collaborative collection management and collaborative storage.
8. The RIN may provide limited funding for such networking, events or other activities, suggested and agreed by the Consultative Groups, as are relevant to the pursuit of its strategic aims. This funding is discretionary; it is drawn from an overall sum determined by the RIN Director from within the RIN budget as approved by the RIN Funders' Group.

### **Membership**

9. The membership of the Consultative Groups is not fixed, and may vary according to circumstances and needs. However, for the sake of avoiding unwieldiness, membership should not under normal circumstances exceed fifteen individuals.
10. Each of the Consultative Groups is chaired by a member of the RIN Advisory Board. Group members are appointed by the Advisory Board, which may delegate its authority to the relevant Group chair. Appointments are normally made in the first instance until June 2008.
11. Membership of the AHS, LBM and PTE Groups is drawn from the research communities within each of the three broad subject areas. In addition, each group includes a subject librarian or other information services professional who can provide specialist input on current services and developments.
12. Membership of the LIS group is drawn from the library and information science community, and includes both professional service providers and academics.

### **Contact and resources**

13. Each of the Consultative Groups meets up to three times a year, according to the level of business. The Groups are expected to interface and work together on common themes or undertakings whenever appropriate. As much as possible of the Groups' activity is conducted virtually.
14. For secretariat purposes, the Groups are supported by the RIN Executive Team. Travel and subsistence costs are met by the RIN.

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