

## Terms of reference: RIN Research Communications Group

### Rationale and purpose

1. The scholarly communications process involves a continuum of closely linked but distinct activities, from the funding and conduct of research itself to the provision of long-term access and preservation services in libraries and related bodies.
2. The RIN has been set up as an organisation to lead and co-ordinate new developments in the collaborative provision of information services for the research community in the UK. Its role is to bring together all those involved in the provision of such services, and to build effective relationships between them and the research community. Hence it has an important part to play in working with others to build more effective scholarly communications.
3. On that basis, the RIN has established the Group is to bring together representatives of the key players from different communities involved in the scholarly communications process, to consider ways in which a better, shared understanding might be developed of all that is involved in that process. Importantly, this should assist in the aim of developing of more effective public policy in the UK.
4. The major purposes of the Group are:
  - To provide a recognisable collaborative environment in which the key players can propose and initiate practical activities aimed at furthering this shared understanding. Such activities may take the form for instance of reports, surveys, guidance, workshops/conferences or policy initiatives, on the understanding that they are agreed, commissioned and overseen collectively by the whole Group. This collaborative approach is crucial, to ensure that the key players are all associated with the outputs of the Group's activities, which thereby secure credibility across the various communities.
  - To define and oversee a process for undertaking this type of activity.
  - To provide an authoritative, collective advocacy voice when presenting views to policy-makers, such as Government, and to the other various communities represented on the Group.
  - To provide a forum for the different players to engage in dialogue and build bridges in areas of common concern.

### Scope

5. The Group's remit covers the entirety of the scholarly communications process. This may be said to involve a range of activities that fall within a continuum of seven broad functions that flow roughly in sequence:
  - the pursuit of research aimed at generating information outputs communicating new knowledge and understanding;
  - identifying and protecting intellectual property rights;
  - assuring the quality of research outputs;

- presenting, publishing and disseminating research outputs digitally, orally, in print and other forms;
  - providing access to outputs for researchers and others who may have an interest in them;
  - assessing the usage and impact of outputs;
  - preserving digital, printed and other outputs, so that those of long-term value are accessible for the indefinite future.
6. The key players whose interests are most closely concerned by these functions include:
- researchers as producers and users of research information;
  - funders of research;
  - publishers;
  - librarians and other providers of information.

The composition of the Group, set out below, reflects the representation of these interests.

### **Membership**

7. The membership of the Group is not fixed, and may vary according to circumstances and needs. However, at the minimum, it consists of the following 23 individuals:
- the Director of the RIN, to act as Chair;
  - four active researchers to represent the research community, one from each of the following areas: arts and humanities; social sciences; life sciences; physical sciences;
  - two representatives from the Research Councils;
  - one representative from a not-for-profit research funder;
  - one representative from a commercial research funder;
  - one representative from Universities UK;
  - two representatives from Government, one each from the Office of Science and Innovation and the Department of Trade and Industry;
  - four representatives from the publishing industry, including at least one from the learned society sector;
  - four representatives from the librarian community, including one from the British Library;
  - one representative from the JISC;
  - one individual principally involved in the management of research data;
  - one individual from the RIN Executive Team, to act as Secretary.
8. Nominations to the Group may be made from within the respective communities. The membership may be expanded subject to agreement by the Group, but for the sake of avoiding unwieldiness, it should not exceed 26.
9. The Group may set up working groups or expert panels to oversee given activities, for instance commissioned projects; such groups or panels should normally be chaired by a member of the Group, and report to the Group.

**Meetings**

10. The Group meets up to three times a year, according to the level of business; as much business as possible should be conducted virtually.
11. The life-term of the Group is open-ended, but is subject to periodic review by the Group in the light of its progress.

**Resources**

12. The Group does not have a fixed budget to meet the cost of the activities that it initiates. However, the RIN sets aside a proportion of its own annual budget to support the work of the Group, in the anticipation that members may be able to commit appropriate level of funding, on behalf of the organisations that they represent, for given activities.
13. The RIN provides secretariat and administrative support for the Group.