

Member of the Forum on Historical Manuscripts and Academic Research Candidate Briefing Pack

About the Forum on Historical Manuscripts and Academic Research

The Forum on Historical Manuscripts and Academic Research is a subcommittee of the [Advisory Council on National Records and Archives](#) and is chaired by the [Master of the Rolls](#). It was set up in May 2010 to provide a means through which recommendations can be made to the Advisory Council about activity relating specifically to historical manuscripts (independent archives) and a place for discussion about academic research issues.

We are looking for committed and enthusiastic new members to join this group of experts to consult on and discuss current issues faced by private archives and researchers. Over the past two years the Forum has considered such key strategic matters as funding, diversity and inclusion, the ever-changing digital landscape, and manorial documents, sector leadership, as well as current and imminent threats to archive provision across the country. The Forum is a crucial advisory body, and welcomes applications from those invested in the success of the independent archival landscape.

The Forum considers and provides advice to the Secretary of State and the Historical Manuscripts Commissioner on matters relating to manuscripts, records and archives, other than public records, and particularly:

- the location, collection, care, custody, preservation, acquisition, sale and use in all formats of such documents
- the compilation and dissemination of information about them
- any questions affecting such documents as may be referred for its consideration, including issues relating to the statutory duties of the Master of the Rolls in respect of manorial and tithe documents, and the making of recommendations to appropriate Ministers on the allocation of archives and manuscripts accepted for the nation in lieu of tax
- other issues that would formerly have come within the terms of reference of the Royal Commission on Historical Manuscripts as set out in the Royal Warrant

The Forum provides an open, independent and authoritative advisory voice to The National Archives, to support research and academic and archival liaison.

Overall, the Forum allows the Advisory Council and The National Archives to formally clarify and strengthen their role relating to historical manuscripts and independent archives, as well as academic research.

For more information about the Forum, its work, please find a link to their website: [Forum on Historical Manuscripts and Academic Research - The National Archives](#)

Membership

Members are appointed by the Secretary of State based on the skills and experience relevant to the work of the Forum. There is provision for three independent members, with the recruitment exercise for these being carried out by The National Archives. Membership comprises experts in academic research and/or knowledge and experience of independent archives. Five members of the Advisory Council also sit on the Forum. The Chief Executive of The National Archives is a member of the Forum, in an ex officio capacity as the [Historical Manuscripts Commissioner](#).

Role of Forum members

All members are appointed on a personal basis and are not expected to speak as representatives of special interest bodies, groups, or institutions. Once appointed, members may be approached by individuals or bodies wishing them to present particular issues or problems to the Forum. They are free to raise issues at meetings or to ask the Forum Secretary to place matters on the agenda, either on their own initiative or in response to such commissions, but they should make clear to the Forum whether they are expressing their own views or those of some other individual or body.

Members must understand that some information they receive is in strict confidence and that they must treat marked papers and related discussions as confidential. Advice on particular issues is available to members from the Forum's Secretary.

Role and Person Specification

Job purpose

The Forum is a crucial mechanism which allows the Advisory Council on National Records and Archives and The National Archives to formally clarify and strengthen their role relating to historical manuscripts and independent archives, as well as academic research. The forum considers and provides advice to the Secretary of State, through the Council, on matters relating to manuscripts, records and archives, other than the public records.

Role and responsibilities:

- Playing a full role in assessing all strategy and policy papers, and in communicating your perspective to the Forum
- Welcoming and considering the views of fellow Forum members
- Making recommendations to the Forum
- Participating at meetings
- Reading and responding to papers prior to meetings
- Influencing the decisions for the development of historical manuscripts and academic research
- Preparing and presenting papers on an occasional basis when invited by the Secretary to do so
- Supporting the archival and research departments at The National Archives

Essential skills and experience

All candidates should meet the following core skills:

- Ability to weigh up the balance of arguments
- Ability to engage in and facilitate strategic thinking
- Ability to work with, negotiate with and influence key opinion formers
- Ability to be confidential and to work with information of a restricted nature

Specialist knowledge

All candidates should demonstrate some combination of the following specialist knowledge:

- Experience in digital archiving with a focus on the use of digital archiving, and projects using digital technologies.
- An understanding of the research use of digital technologies and computational approaches.
- Experience of custodianship of an independent collection of national significance
- Understanding of the needs, requirements and obligations of independent archive holders

- Commitment to the maintenance and preservation of archive collections in the national interest
- Providing an independent and authoritative voice to advise on academic and research-related issues

Personal Qualities

- Drive and determination
- Independence
- Objectivity
- Discretion

Essential Information

Title:

Member of the Forum on Historical Manuscripts and Academic Research

Reports to:

Chair of the Forum on Historical Manuscripts and Academic Research, Sir Geoffrey Vos, Master of the Rolls and to the Deputy Chair of the Forum who chairs meetings on behalf of the Master of the Rolls

Remuneration:

The post is remunerated at the standard day rate, equivalent to £193 per meeting. Actual reasonable and other expenses will be met in accordance with current policy for Non-Departmental Public Bodies and the workload of the Forum.

Locations:

Meetings are normally held in Kew, with hybrid facilities available to those who require them.

Term:

Four years, with a possibility of reappointment at the end of the term, in line with a successful performance assessment.

Time Commitment:

Three meetings annually, typically of half a day each
Preparation/reading of papers before meetings
Responding to online out of committee items as required, around 3-6 items per year, at roughly 1 hour each.

Conflicts of interest

All candidates will be asked to disclose any actual, potential or perceived conflicts of interest. These will be discussed with the candidate to establish whether and what action is needed to avoid a conflict or the perception of a conflict, taking account of advice received from the Governance team as appropriate.

Terms of Appointment

An offer of appointment will be made once all candidates have been interviewed, and will be subject to satisfactory completion of eligibility checks, including security. If you are offered an appointment, you will receive a detailed summary of your main terms and conditions.

How to apply

To apply, please send:

- a CV of no more than two sides of A4;
- a supporting statement of not more than two sides of A4, setting out how you meet the criteria (NB: make sure you refer to the contents listed in the personal specification).

Completed applications should be emailed to:

applicationstna@nationalarchives.gov.uk - please put "Forum" in the subject line to arrive no later than: Midnight 4 July.

The interview date for this post is the 19 July 2023. Once the deadline for applications has passed we will write to all applicants by 12 July 2023 to let them know if they are being invited for interview.

For queries in relation to the Forum, further information on the role or questions regarding the appointment process, please contact either:

- Isabel Saunders, Senior Governance Coordinator and Advisory Council Secretariat, on 020 3908 1768 or email Isabel.Saunders@nationalarchives.gov.uk

If you have any accessibility requirements for either the application or interview stage, then please do get in touch to discuss, so that we can make the necessary accommodations.

Equal Opportunities

The Forum is committed to equal opportunities for all. We welcome people from all backgrounds to apply so that the group can represent the community it serves. We would particularly like to encourage applicants currently underrepresented in the archive sector, including those who identify as LGBT+, are from black, Asian or other minority ethnic cultural backgrounds, those who are neurodivergent, and those with hidden or visible disabilities. Applicants with accessibility needs are welcome to contact us to discuss the accommodations they require.

Eligibility

To avoid possible disappointment at a later stage, we recommend that you check you are eligible before applying:

Nationality requirements

This job is broadly open to the following groups:

- UK nationals

- nationals of Commonwealth countries who have the right to work in the UK
 - nationals of the Republic of Ireland
 - nationals from the EU, EEA or Switzerland with settled or pre-settled status or who apply for either status by the deadline of the [European Union Settlement Scheme \(EUSS\) \(opens in a new window\)](#)
 - relevant EU, EEA, Swiss or Turkish nationals working in the Civil Service
 - relevant EU, EEA, Swiss or Turkish nationals who have built up the right to work in the Civil Service
 - certain family members of the relevant EU, EEA, Swiss or Turkish nationals
- [Further information on nationality requirements \(opens in a new window\)](#)