

## Memorandum of Understanding (MoU) between The National Archives and Jisc

### 1. Introduction

1.1 This MoU establishes a framework for co-operation between The National Archives (hereon TNA) and Jisc. It sets out the role of each organisation and explains how they will work together to achieve their shared and common goals.

1.2 Its aims are to:

- Facilitate discussion on matters of common interest, particularly by sharing knowledge, information, expertise and best practice;
- Set out the basis on which the organisations will cooperate in respect to achieving their corporate aims and responsibilities;
- Provide a framework for co-operation in identifying shared strategic aims and ambitions.

1.3 The MoU is published on both organisations' websites. It will be reviewed after two years and more frequently if required by developments in TNA's and Jisc's respective organisations and among their stakeholders.

1.4 The MoU is not legally binding and is a non-contractual agreement between the two organisations.

### 2 Overview of Jisc's role and responsibilities

Jisc's vision is for the UK to be the most digitally advanced higher and further education and research nation in the world. Its mission is to enable people in higher education, further education and skills in the UK to perform at the forefront of international practice by exploiting fully the possibilities of modern digital empowerment, content and connectivity. To achieve this vision, each day Jisc will continue both to power teaching, learning and research and inspire its digital transformation.

Jisc will achieve the vision in 5 key ways:

1. By continuing to develop our Janet network, the foremost national research and education network in the world;
2. By focusing our products on the areas that make the most difference and offering solutions tailored to the unique challenges of the education and research sectors;
3. By making membership of Jisc meaningful through two-way relationships with individual members and the HE, FE and skills sectors;
4. By continuing to build a strong, financially sustainable, position;
5. By operating to high standards of efficiency and effectiveness.

In relation to libraries, special collections and archives, Jisc will ensure that UK researchers, teachers and learners have excellent access to rich and wide ranging content via sustainable and convenient discovery mechanisms and high quality data. The services and other resources that Jisc provide will deliver benefits to universities

and colleges in three ways. Firstly, they will enhance the capability of libraries, archives and special collections to manage their collections more efficiently and effectively. Secondly, they will allow researchers, teachers and learners to more readily find and access a greater variety of materials that will enhance their work and shape new forms of scholarship. And thirdly, they will make a tangible contribution to the overall quality of data that makes its way into the discovery data ecosystem, through the promotion of more standardised data formats and by fostering good data creation practices.

### 3 Overview of The National Archives' roles and responsibilities

[The National Archives](#) is one of the world's most valuable resources for research and we are an independent research organisation in our own right. As the official archive and publisher for the UK government, and England and Wales, we are the guardian of some of the UK's most iconic national documents, dating back over 1,000 years. Our role is to collect and secure the future of the government record, both digital and physical, to preserve it for generations to come, and to make it as accessible and available as possible. We bring together the skills and specialisms needed to conserve some of the oldest historic documents as well as leading digital archive practices to manage and preserve government information past, present and future. We are the leadership body for the archives sector in England and work with over 2,500 archives.

In 2015, we launched our four year, audience-based strategy, [Archives Inspire](#). *Archives Inspire* recognises the academic community as one of The National Archives' four key audiences, alongside the public, government, and wider archives sector. It recognises the need for us to continually refine our offer to our academic audience and reinvigorate our ability to deliver ground breaking inter-disciplinary research, while continuing to build on our strengths as leaders and supporters of the archives sector through the development and launch of a new strategic vision, [Archives Unlocked](#). These ambitions come at a time that The National Archives, and all of our audiences, are facing new opportunities and challenges posed by digital technology, which has created the need for a comprehensive programme of digital research as outlined by our [Digital Research Roadmap](#) and [Digital Strategy](#).

### 4. General cooperation

4.1. TNA and Jisc recognise that they have complementary expertise and overlapping interests, especially in relation to providing valued and effective digital services and producing high-quality, inter-disciplinary research to help face the collective digital challenge. As a result of these synergies, TNA and Jisc will endeavour to cooperate and work together on a broad range of issues. They will share knowledge, expertise, best practice and intelligence in relation to matters of mutual interest, and if there is overlap in a particular area, they will proactively consider formal collaboration.

4.2. TNA and Jisc are committed to the principle of good communication with each other, especially when one organisation's work may have some bearing on the responsibilities or remit of the other organisation. Both TNA and Jisc will seek to alert

each other as soon as practical to relevant developments within their respective sectors and resources, especially when pertaining to Discovery and Archives Hub.

4.3. Senior colleagues from TNA and Jisc will meet on a biannual basis to discuss matters of mutual interest and the operation of this MoU. These meetings will be underpinned by regular liaison between designated officials on a quarterly basis or as and when required.

## **5. Supporting and enhancing discoverability**

5.1 TNA and Jisc have been at the forefront of enhancing users' discovery of archival collections through their respective development of Discovery and Archives Hub. Both of these resources provide a valuable service to a diverse range of users, enabling them to navigate, identify, and utilise a massive array of archival material from across the UK and beyond. Discovery and Archives Hub are complementary systems and inhabit a central space within the UK's discovery/catalogue infrastructure. Both TNA and Jisc are committed to working together to enhance both systems and to explore the interoperability of data between them to improve the user experience and to highlight the interconnectivity between collections.

5.2 TNA and Jisc are committed to engaging with members of the archive profession and users of archives, particularly those working within a Higher Education environment, to explore ways of enhancing both Discovery and Archives Hub in order to avoid the duplication of effort and to ensure that the relative strengths of each are identified and disseminated.

## **6. Developing the digital skills of archivists and other content managers**

6.1 TNA and Jisc will proactively work to support capacity-building of digital skills for all those managing archives and collections. By identifying skills gaps and areas for development, TNA and Jisc will collaborate to overcome these through the provision of advice, guidance and training. Where it is appropriate, and feasible to do so, Jisc will support TNA to implement the action plan of the Government's strategic vision for the Archives Sector, Archives Unlocked. The skills in question include the acquisition, description, presentation, discoverability and preservation of digital collections; and are predicated on the widespread use of agreed shared standards and the broad adoption of models of good practice.

6.2 TNA and Jisc agree to openly and proactively encourage the undertaking and dissemination of research into key cross-sector trends, developments and opportunities to their joint and respective audiences.

## **7. Mutual stakeholder engagement**

7.1 TNA and Jisc will collaborate to provide quality networking and training opportunities for their shared stakeholders within the further and higher education sectors, archive sector, and wider research communities, which include the members of the [Higher Education Archives Programme](#) (HEAP).

## 8. Developing the digital research skills of the archive and collection user

8.1 TNA and Jisc agree to explore ways of enhancing the digital skills of users and increasing their research capability through raising awareness of the possibilities of digital research techniques (for both analogue and digital collections); and by familiarising them with established and emerging techniques for describing content.

## 9. Identifying joint research agendas

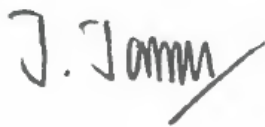
9.1. TNA and Jisc will work with one another, shared stakeholders, and members of the Higher Education Archives Programme, to explore the potential for joint research initiatives to help inform and address shared digital challenges. These should provide tangible outputs from the relationship, be in support of both organisations' interests, and be of use to the wider archive sector.

## 10. Exclusions

10.1. This MoU only relates to joint initiatives as agreed and detailed above or in the associated relationship 'action plan'. The signing of this MoU does not inhibit TNA's involvement in projects funded by Jisc, either outright or in partnership, or TNA's ability to receive funding from Jisc in its own right. This MoU does not provide TNA any advantage or disadvantage when applying to Jisc for funding, for which TNA will be subject to the same terms, conditions, and application process as any other applicant.

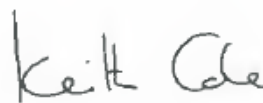
## Agreement

Jisc and TNA agree to enter into the spirit and word of this MoU and to review this after two years or at a moment required by developments.



Chief Executive and Keeper

On behalf of The National Archives



Executive Director, Digital Resources

On behalf of Jisc