

## JISC Services Strategy

### ***Introduction***

1. The JISC's primary mission is to provide world-class leadership in the innovative use of Information and Communications Technology to support education and research. It proposes to deliver its mission through:
  - innovative and sustainable ICT infrastructure, services and practice that support institutions in meeting their missions;
  - promoting the development, uptake and effective use of ICT to support learning and teaching;
  - promoting the development, uptake and effective use of ICT to support research;
  - promoting the development, uptake and effective use of ICT to support the management of institutions;
  - developing and implementing a programme to support institutions' engagement with the wider community;
  - continuing to improve its own working practices.
2. the first of these aims covers a large proportion of JISC's work in the delivery of national infrastructure and services that support a wide range of communities within institutions. Including the JANET funding, this accounts for a substantial proportion of JISC's core budget.

### ***Services Portfolio***

3. the JISC will define and maintain a Services Portfolio to support its mission, its communities and the requirements of its funding bodies.
4. the JISC will ensure that its Services Portfolio addresses all aspects of its mission and that their functions include an appropriate mix of Development, Infrastructure, Content and Advisory Services, linked to the appropriate JISC Themes, sub-committees and groups within the Executive.
5. the JISC will review and develop this Services Strategy to direct the purposes and operation of its Services Portfolio.
6. a primary indicator for the value of any JISC Service will be the extent to which it furthers the JISC mission, its strategies for delivering its mission and the needs of the JISC community.
7. when considering the maintenance and development of its Services portfolio, the JISC will seek to ensure that the portfolio:
  - continues to be *innovative*;
  - continues to support *sustainable* innovation across the sector;
  - is *itself* sustainable;
  - is scaleable to the demands of the JISC community;
  - represents demonstrable value for money to JISC's funders.

### ***User Engagement***

8. the requirements of users in the JISC community will be captured and act as one of the primary drivers in decision-making about its Services Portfolio. The JISC will solicit feedback from the user community in a number of ways including pro-active approaches through customer satisfaction surveys and other market-intelligence-gathering methods.

9. the JISC will seek to ensure that Services which are (or become) commodities of use and value across the community are supported (at least in part) by their communities of users rather than entirely from JISC core funding;
10. the JISC will ensure that its Services Portfolio is an exemplar of standards and best practices such that a JISC-supported Service is both a provider of services to the community and also a beacon and reference model for other service-providers.

## ***Principles of core Service Funding***

11. the JISC will seek sustainability models and exit strategies for its Services in order to ensure that core funding continues to be applied to its primary mission for innovation.
12. the JISC will set in place a review cycle for its core services budget, moving mature services that have become commodities towards sustainable business models, thereby releasing resources to invest in the establishment of new services.
13. the JISC will facilitate through seed funding the establishment of services in partnership with suitable agencies and providers where JISC is not the appropriate long-term funding source for the service.
14. the JISC will ensure that terms of reference and funding horizons for JISC Services are clear, well-understood and provide an appropriate balance between the JISC's need to be able to review and adapt its Portfolio as strategic priorities change and its users' needs for Services which are both reliable and persistent.
15. the JISC will enhance the sustainability of its Portfolio by seeking to build relationships with service providers which are manageable and scaled to provide flexibility without losing the benefits of embedding activities in the community and taking advantage of specialisms in the most appropriate places. Over time it is expected that this approach will lead to relationships with fewer, larger service providers.

## ***Embedding and service-provider autonomy***

16. the JISC will act as a commissioning agent for Services to be provided by others rather than as a service provider in its own right.
17. so far as possible, the JISC will seek to embed Services within the sector or sectors it serves via partnership arrangements with Institutions of Higher and Further Education or companies limited by guarantee operating not-for-profit in a manner consistent with HEFCE best-practice for Related Bodies (i.e. within the sector).
18. the JISC will treat its Service Providers as experts in their fields, will respect their expertise and value them as partners in the JISC mission, providing them with an appropriate degree of autonomy to manage their operations as they see fit, consistent with delivering the JISC aspirations for Service outcomes.
19. where JISC service providers sub-contract their Service obligations, the JISC will encourage them where possible to approach their subcontractors in a manner consistent with the aspirations of this strategy.

## ***Service outcomes***

20. the JISC will operate service-independent Quality Assurance, Monitoring, Evaluation and Reporting processes to provide its Funding Bodies and User Community with assurance that public funds are well-used for appropriate outcomes.
21. the JISC will establish monitoring and reporting mechanisms for its Services and service providers which are proportionate to the scale of operations with the appropriate balance between the obligation of the service provider to fulfill JISC aspirations and the need for the service provider to have a degree of autonomy and flexibility in the way it manages its operations.
22. a balance will be struck between quantitative and qualitative performance measurement with outcomes expressed in non-judgmental terms consistent with the JISC collegiate, collaborative ethos.
23. where a service provider operates internal service monitoring and reporting processes for operational

reasons, the JISC will seek to ensure that its own monitoring and reporting processes do not place an unreasonable additional burden upon the service provider without compromising its requirement for independently-verified service outcomes.

24. whilst seeking views from its community on the value and effectiveness of its Services the JISC will also treat its service providers as an important communications channel to its community, taking the views of its service providers into account when reviewing strategy and planning activities including new Services or enhancements to existing Services.
25. where performance standards are not met, the JISC will seek to establish remedial actions in the first instance through a collegiate approach, resorting to contract-enforcement methods only when collegiate approaches have failed to resolve the problem(s).
26. except in the case of commercial contracts or procurement, withholding of funds from service providers will be a last resort when all other approaches have failed.
27. where JISC service providers sub-contract their Service obligations, the JISC will encourage them to apply the same principles to determination of Service outcomes as it operates through this strategy.