

HIGHER EDUCATION ACT 2004

EXPLANATORY NOTES

COMMENTARY ON SECTIONS AND SCHEDULES

Part 1 – Research in Arts and Humanities

23. Research in the arts and humanities is at the time of enactment partly funded by the Arts and Humanities Research Board (AHRB). This is a company limited by guarantee which has charitable status, and receives its funding through the Higher Education Funding Council for England, the Higher Education Funding Council for Wales, the Scottish Higher Education Funding Council, and the Department for Employment and Learning in Northern Ireland.
24. Research in the sciences and social sciences is at the time of enactment partly funded by seven research councils established by Royal Charter. These research councils receive money from the Office of Science and Technology under the Science and Technology Act 1965. That Act also contains various other provisions relating to the existing research councils, including requirements to keep accounts and records, and to provide reports to the Secretary of State.
25. The intention of the Act is to put arts and humanities research on the same footing as research in the sciences and social sciences, and so a new Arts and Humanities Research Council (AHRC) is to be established by Royal Charter. This Council will take over the funding of research in the arts and humanities that is currently carried out by the AHRB. Part 1 of the Act contains provisions relating to the AHRC which are similar to those in the Science and Technology Act 1965 relating to the existing research councils.
26. [Section 2](#) provides for the transfer of the property, rights, and liabilities of the AHRB to the AHRC.
27. [Section 3](#) authorises the Secretary of State to fund the AHRC. This funding will be provided through the Office of Science and Technology, as is the case for the existing research councils.
28. [Section 7](#) makes the AHRC a reserved matter in respect of Northern Ireland. It is intended that the AHRC should be a reserved matter in respect of Scotland as well. This is to be achieved by an Order in Council under section 30 of the Scotland Act 1998. As regards Wales, functions in respect of the AHRC are not to be exercisable by the National Assembly. As a result, the United Kingdom government will remain exclusively responsible for the AHRC.
29. [Section 10](#) gives the Secretary of State the power directly to fund arts and humanities research, in addition to that which may be funded by the AHRC itself. Corresponding power is provided for the National Assembly for Wales, the Scottish Ministers, and the relevant department in Northern Ireland, in relation to Wales, Scotland, and Northern Ireland respectively.