# British Academy response to the UK Government consultation on Copyright and Artificial Intelligence

10<sup>th</sup> March 2025

## Background

In December 2024, the Intellectual Property Office, the Department for Science, Innovation and Technology and the Department for Culture, Media and Sport initiated a consultation on Copyright and Artificial Intelligence.

The British Academy is the UK's national academy for the humanities and social sciences, funded by the UK government and a range of charities to promote the SHAPE disciplines and the institutions that support them. The humanities and social sciences make a rich and unique contribution to our society. However, we recognise that the environment in which research is produced is changing with the development of advanced computing, particularly the use of foundational large language models (LLMs) that underpin generative AI applications.

## Key messages

The British Academy is keen to contribute to public understanding of these new applications. We can contribute our members' expert knowledge and expertise—which extends from the Creative Arts through all of humanities, social sciences and management,

while also including subjects such as Archaeology and Geography that combine SHAPE and STEM methodologies  to help develop a regulatory environment that will promote the benefits of AI for all. This requires an intellectual property rights environment (legislation and enforcement) that on the one hand encourages the best research, the best education and the right kinds of competition amongst key actors and, on the other hand, ensures proper and fair rewards for creativity.

However, we are concerned that the current consultation on copyright and AI does not identify the most important issues that face the university sector, the creative industries, and the research and development environment more generally. In our view the key issues are the following:

- Removing obstacles to improving the quality and quantity of top quality scientific research and education for the leading-edge UK university sector, while also recognising the specific imperatives of the humanities, social sciences and cultural industries;

- Improving and clarifying the licensing environment. This must include transparency, so that access to quality content for R&D becomes easier for all engaged in scientific, educational and creative work with appropriate recognition, consistent with open access principles.

- Improving revenues of primary creators as well as, where appropriate, recognising the moral rights of creators to support the UK's world-leading arts and creative industries.

Addressing these issues is not straightforward. Doing so will necessarily engage questions of copyright, but also many wider issues. The British Academy is uniquely placed to bring together leading researchers in the SHAPE disciplines to address these questions. We call upon the government to engage with the British Academy and similar institutions to develop this wider conversation.