

The National Library of Scotland: Supporting Scotland's College Network

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The National Library of Scotland might not historically have been your first port of call when beginning new research but I'm here to tell you why it should be. With free access to around 30 million physical and electronic items in our collections, there is no other resource in Scotland like us. From material relating to hairdressing, fashion, the legal profession, computing, business, environmental studies, engineering, construction and more, we've got something for everyone.

Our resources are particularly valuable for researchers at FE institutions. At a time when colleges are stretched, the National Library continues to expand thanks to legal deposit and investment in electronic resources. We are the only Scottish library with legal deposit status, meaning we can claim a copy of everything published in the UK and Ireland. The National Library receives nearly 7000 items per week and spends more than £400,000 a year on subscriptions to journals, e-books, and other forms of electronic media that are available free to members. While people are welcome to visit our sites in Edinburgh and Glasgow, the majority of our electronic resources can be accessed remotely providing you have a Scottish address^[1].

These are a few of our highlighted remote access e-resources:

Accessing these resources is easy; visit <https://auth.nls.uk/join/> and click on "join the National Library of Scotland". Once you have registered and created a password, you are ready to browse our collections at home and on-site. If you'd like to visit and consult our print materials or onsite e-Resources, you can pick up a Library card on your first visit.

Our print and manuscript collections are unrivalled in Scotland. Our collections range from academic works, to popular titles like the *Beano*, to special interest publications like *Car Mechanics*. We hold archives of relevance to those teaching vocational courses, including the Macadam Collection, an archive of over 1600 cookbooks, as well as the Stevenson collection, an archive of materials from Robert Stevenson's civil engineering firm who constructed the famous Bellrock Lighthouse. These archives can be consulted at our Edinburgh site. Much of our archival material has been digitised by the Library and is freely available for staff to use in class, even if you are not a registered member of the National Library of

Scotland. Browse our collection of digitised materials at <https://digital.nls.uk/gallery/>.

We offer unparalleled access to screen archives in Scotland via our website and at Kelvin Hall. The Moving Image Archive allows users to watch all aspects of Scottish life on camera from the last century, with full-length films and short clips available to view at www.nls.uk. Visitors to Kelvin Hall can also access our full range of digital material on site.

Our extensive maps collection is sector-leading in terms of digital accessibility. Our maps website, <https://maps.nls.uk>, offers remote access to over 200,000 high-resolution maps of Scotland and the world. From ordnance survey to specialised soil maps, land utilisation maps, and even bathymetrical surveys, our digital maps collection is a rich research tool directly applicable to research and learning in a wealth of fields. While we invest heavily in our digital presence, our map collection consists of around two million items that researchers are encouraged to explore in person at our maps reading room in Edinburgh on an appointment basis.

This should give you a flavour of the free resources available to members of the National Library of Scotland. Should you have any questions about our resources we offer a free enquiry service for help and advice. Email us at enquiries@nls.uk, phone on 0131 623 3820, or use our Ask a Librarian chat service, www.nls.uk/chat, afternoons from 2–6pm Monday to Thursday, and 2–4pm on Fridays and Saturdays. For full information on opening hours, please visit our website www.nls.uk.

[1] A limited number of subscription databases do not offer access to those who register with the National Library as affiliated with an academic institution.