

# Supporting the Concordat: The Research Council Perspective

*The Concordat: Sharing Best Practice – 29 June 2010*

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# Overview



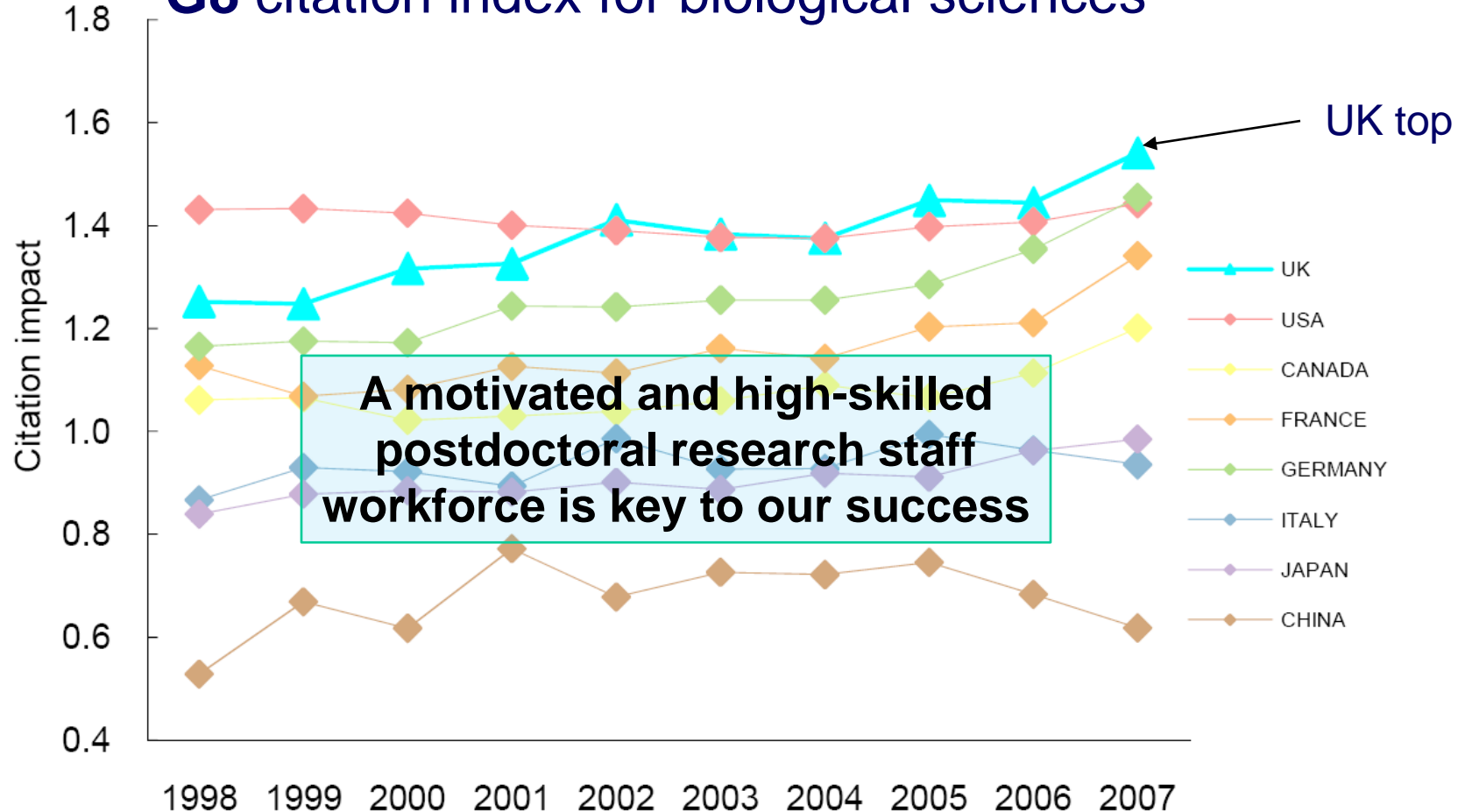
- BBSRC and the importance of postdoctoral researchers for BBSRC's Strategy
- The Concordat agenda supports the Research Councils' *Excellence with Impact* Agenda
- Postdoctoral researchers need to feel supported in moving out of academia and feel confident about their career progression ... whilst also being valued for their vital contribution to UK research in their current role.



BBSRC: the leading UK public funder of bioscience research that:

- ★ underpins directly or indirectly key economic sectors such as:
  - Biopharmaceuticals, food and drink, agriculture, industrial biotechnology
  
- ★ has wide impact on social well being, informing policy development in crucial areas such as:
  - healthcare, food security, sustainable agriculture and land use, renewable energy

## G8 citation index for biological sciences



## The Age of Bioscience

**Driven by new tools  
and technologies**

*....never before have  
researchers been able to  
address such a breadth and  
depth of biological  
questions....*



# Knowledge exchange, innovation and skills



## Maximising the impact of our science and skilled people

.... It is particularly important that **early-career researchers** develop a broad range of skills. We will drive culture change in the employment of postdoctoral researchers to support their career development and movement between sectors.



Through RCUK, BBSRC contributed to the development of the **Concordat to Support the Career Development of Researchers**, in partnership with universities, Funding Councils and other major UK research funders ([www.researchconcordat.ac.uk](http://www.researchconcordat.ac.uk))

BBSRC is also an active supporter of the **Vitae** programme to provide early career researchers with the transferable skills required for a career in academic research and in other areas of employment ([www.vitae.ac.uk](http://www.vitae.ac.uk))

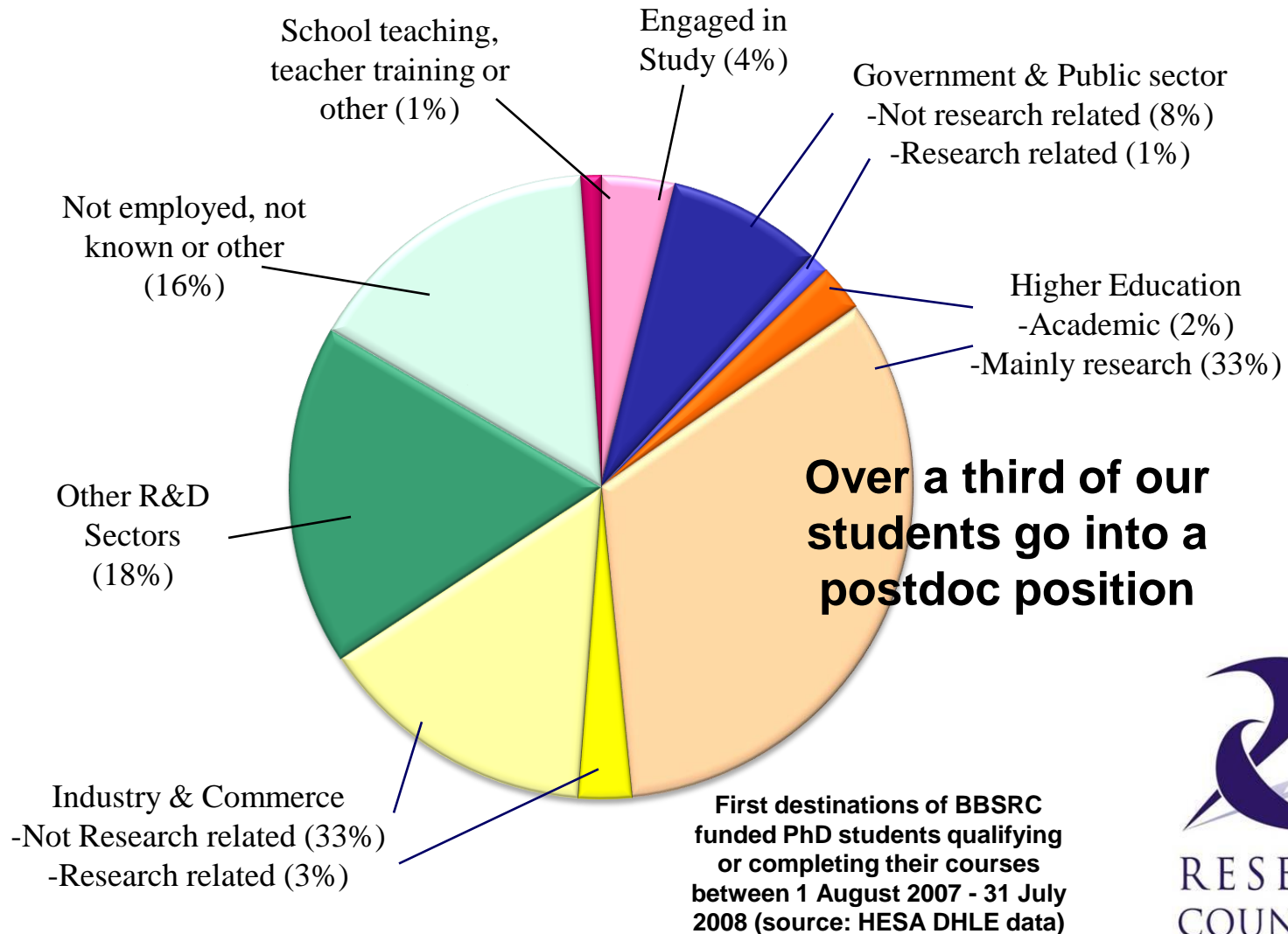
# BBSRC's *Excellence with Impact* award



- ❖ Scheme runs from **2008 – 2011**
- ❖ **20 departments** are involved
- Rewards university departments that recognise economic and social impact alongside excellent research
  - *most significant culture change*
  - *the best delivery of impact*

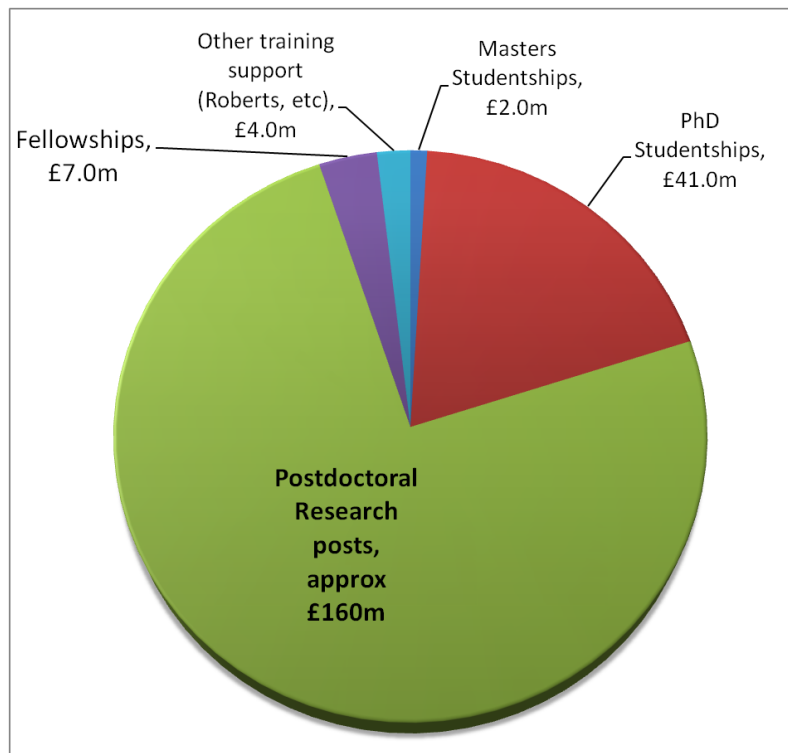


# Destinations of BBSRC funded PhD students



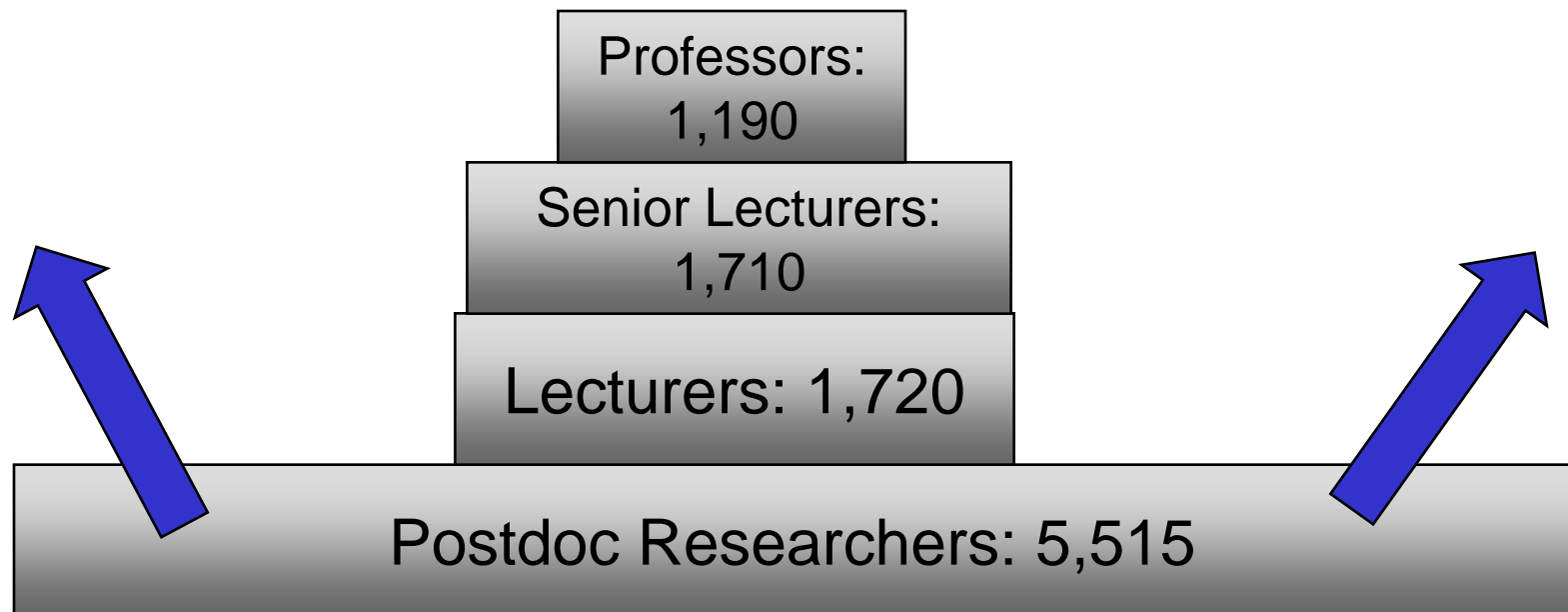
# Training highly-skilled scientists

Postdoctoral researchers: our investment here is three times the size of our investment in studentships and fellowships combined



## BBSRC Investment in People 09/10

- Career pyramid in HE Biosciences



From: HESA, Resources 07-08 (Biosciences Cost Centre)

# Grants as investments in people



- In 2007 BBSRC introduced a new assessment criterion for its responsive mode grants
- “BBSRC is making changes to enhance career development for postdoctoral researchers by requiring our grant awarding committees to consider applications formally in terms of the long-term investment in people, as well as the quality and timeliness of the science itself.”

Professor Julia Goodfellow (then Chief Executive,  
in BBSRC Business January 2007)



# Other BBSRC Opportunities



- **Commercialisation training for PhD and post-doctoral researchers.** Teams of 4 or 5 create a business plan based on hypothetical science and compete in front of a Panel of investors.

## **BBSRC's Next Generation Conference**

- **Careers Conference for BBSRC PhD students and postdoctoral researchers**
- 18-19 November 2010 in Manchester
- <http://www.bbsrc.ac.uk/media/events/101118-next-generation-conference.aspx>



# RCUK Impact Agenda – and career development for research staff



- The *Concordat* and emphasis on the career development of research staff now links very clearly to the RCUK ‘Excellence with Impact’ agenda:
- Postdoctoral researchers can play a key role in the ‘pathways to impact’ which Research Councils want to see in every grant proposal



## From Je-S Guidance: **Impact Summary**

- The Impact Summary should address the following two questions:
  - Who will benefit from this research?
  - How will they benefit from this research?
- In addressing these questions, principal investigators should consider:
  - What **research and professional skills** will staff working on the project develop which they could apply in all employment sectors?

## From Je-S Guidance: ‘**Pathways to Impact**’ statement

- A longer statement detailing the activities which will help develop potential economic and societal impacts from a research grant.
  - What will be done to ensure that potential beneficiaries have the opportunity to engage with this research?
- Principal investigators should consider:
  - **Postdoctoral researchers** and PhD students who may be involved in activities in addition to research.

## From Je-S Guidance: **Impact Requirements FAQs**

- **Question: Can activities to support researcher career development be regarded as pathways to potential economic and societal impacts?**

**Answer: Yes** ... It is recognised that many of the impacts from research funding arise from the movement of skilled people between academia and other sectors, and from the ability of researchers to engage with different sectors. Therefore activities which aim to develop the transferable skills of researchers, as detailed in Principle 3 of the ***Concordat to Support the Career Development of Researchers***, are valid ways to help create potential impact.



# RCUK Impact Agenda – and career development for research staff



- Full details on 'Pathways to Impact' on the RCUK Website at:

<http://www.rcuk.ac.uk/pathwaystoimpact>



# Discussion



Questions or comments?

