

University of Edinburgh

INSTITUTIONAL RESPONSE TO THE ROBERTS AGENDA

- **structures - oversight - strategy -
implementation**
- **pre- and post- 2008**
- **scenario planning**
- **discussion**

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STRUCTURES

- **University of Edinburgh - 3 Colleges, 21 Schools (Graduate Schools)**
- **Support departments - transkills, Researcher Development Programme (HR), Careers Service**

OVERSIGHT

- **Roberts Agenda overseen by University Management and Steering Groups**
- **Chair: Vice Principal for Research Training**
Membership: PhDs, RS, PIs, support staff
- **Coordination and reporting**



ORIGINAL STRATEGY

To offer high quality support and training that is open to all postgraduate research students and research staff (irrespective of their funding source) and is a valued and expected part of their experience at Edinburgh.

- **to expand central programmes**
- **to enhance existing programmes**
- **to develop new courses/resources**
- **to develop infrastructure/systems**

UNCERTAINTIES AND RISKS 03 - 07

- security of funding?
- amount of funding?

RESPONSE:

- conservative spending plans - resulting in a reserve
- identification of priorities
- reserve set aside for exit strategy

EXIT STRATEGY TO 07 / 08

- cover fixed term commitments (staff employed on Roberts)
- 1 year run-down for core programmes - embedding and legacy

IMPLEMENTATION

- **2003/04** - develop strategy, central programmes filling gaps in provision
- **2004/05** - major expansion of central programmes, proposals invited
- **2005/06** - piloting bespoke Graduate School courses, RS mentoring
- **2006/07** - Graduate School programme expansion, Researcher-Led fund

September 2006 and 2007

Shortlisted for Times Higher Award ‘Outstanding Support for Early Career Researchers’



CHANGES IN 2007 / 08

- **University Review of Roberts strategy**
 - **what worked**
 - **what wasn't working**
 - **reassessment of priorities**
 - **development of new strategy**
- **Roberts funding level and mechanism to continue through CSR period to 2010/11**

NEW STRATEGY FROM 2007 / 08

ANNUAL FUNDING:

- **core services (60%)**
- **devolved local activities (35%)**
- **researcher-led activity (5%)**

RESERVE:

- **infrastructure (e.g. PDP, e-learning)**
- **development projects (e.g. new course, refine course)**
- **transition/exit plan beyond 2010/11**



SCENARIO PLANNING 2008

- sudden drop in funding between now and 2010/11
- from 2011 planning for:
 - no change in funding mechanism
 - end of ring fencing (to distributed funding)
 - decrease in funding level
 - new requirements from - researchers - supervisors/PIs - funders

SUSTAINING CHANGE

- **promote Roberts Agenda by raising awareness and expectations amongst PGRs, RS, PIs, etc**
- **transferring ownership by engaging all stakeholders in developing and reviewing Uni strategy**
- **build impact by embedding skills awareness + training into PhD + RS experience – induction, milestones, review + appraisal, career planning**
- **provide resources + impetus for major acceleration of local activity – both School level and researcher-led**



SUSTAINING CHANGE

- **engage more directly with research staff through Research Staff Societies - tailoring to local needs - aids ownership + embedding**
- **development of University policies to underpin the Roberts agenda – Code of Practice for the Management of Research Staff**
- **building PGR + RS support into University strategy – new University Strategic Plan**
- **promoting national initiatives - Concordat**



OUTCOMES OF OUR APPROACH

- **increased understanding and involvement in strategy aids embedding**
- **establishment of funding mechanisms allowing flexible response to possible scenarios (e.g. devolving funding to Schools will now prepare the ground should there be a change from ring fenced to distributed funding)**
- **researcher-led funds enhance ownership (and may be attracted to other sources of funding)**
- **empowering researchers**
- **underpinning by University policy**

DISCUSSION QUESTIONS

- **How are you achieving embedding in your institution?**
- **What are the challenges you are facing as you approach 2011?**
- **In terms of overall sustainability of the Roberts Agenda, what are the key questions for the sector?**