

Dr Iain Cameron

Head of Research Careers



Tel: 01793 444038

Fax: 01793 444562

iain.cameron@rcuk.ac.uk

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



RESEARCH CAREERS



A strategy for success

Roberts' Recommendation 4.2

Recommendation 4.2: PhD training elements

Despite the welcome current moves by the Funding Councils to improve the quality of PhD training, institutions are not adapting quickly enough to the needs of industry or the expectations of potential students. The Review therefore believes that the training elements of a PhD – particularly training in transferable skills – need to be strengthened considerably. In particular, the Review recommends that HEFCE and the Research Councils, as major funders of PhD students, should make all funding related to PhD students conditional on students' training meeting stringent minimum standards. These minimum standards should include the provision of at least two weeks' dedicated training a year, principally in transferable skills, for which additional funding should be provided and over which the student should be given some control. There should be no requirement on the student to choose training at their host institution. The minimum standards should also include the requirement that HEIs – and other organisations in which PhD students work – reward good supervision of PhD students, and ensure that these principles are reflected in their human resources strategies and staff appraisal processes.

Furthermore, in order to assure employers of the quality of PhD students, as part of these standards the Review recommends that institutions should introduce or tighten their procedures for the transfer of students to the PhD. In particular, the Review believes that HEIs must encourage PhD projects that test or develop the creativity prized by employers.

...institutions are not adapting quickly enough to the needs of industry or the expectations of students.

Government Response: To encourage universities to address the skills acquired by PhD students and to ensure they are relevant to business...

Roberts Recommendation 5.3

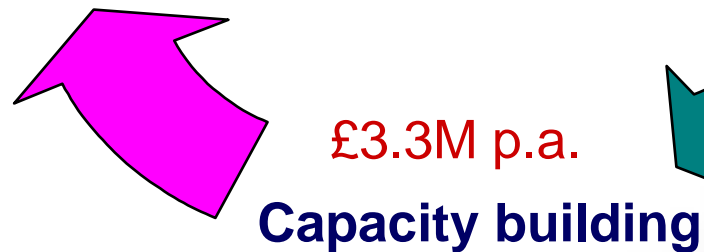
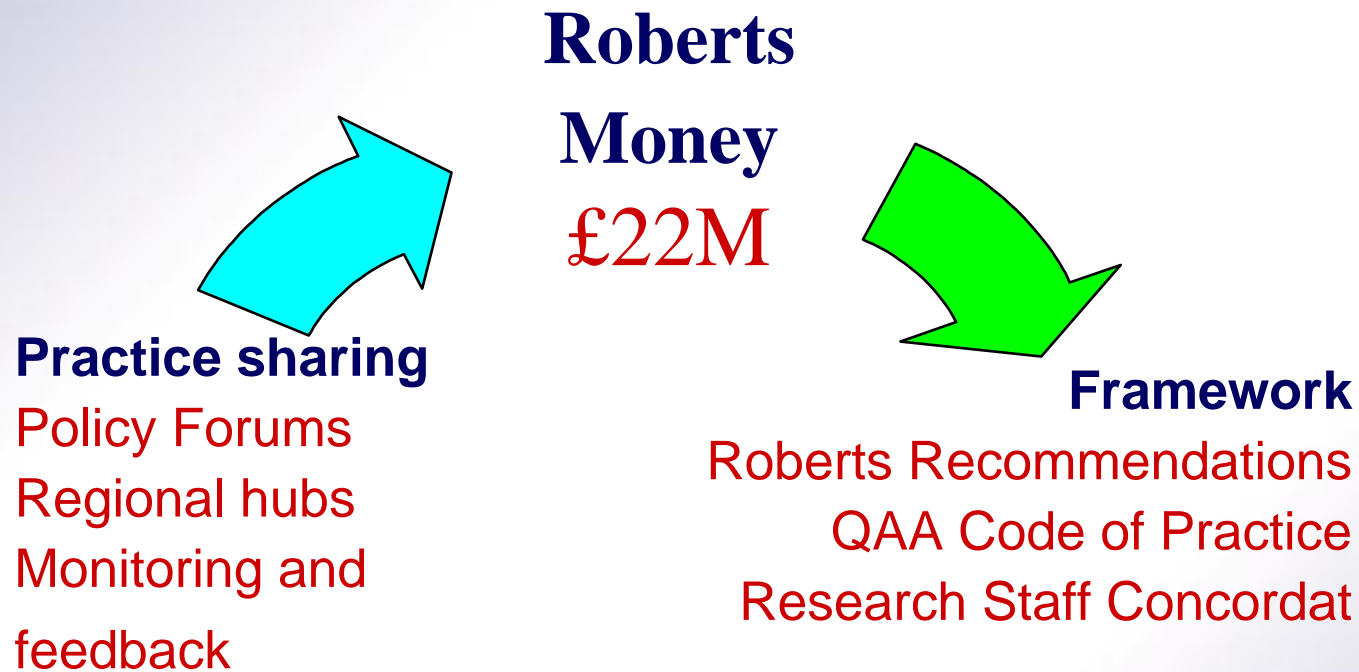
Recommendation 5.3: A vision for postdoctoral researchers

It is important for postdoctoral researchers to be able to develop individual career paths, reflecting the different career destinations – Industrial, Academic and Research Associate – open to them, and that funding arrangements reflect the development of these career paths. The Review believes that enabling the individual to establish a clear career path, and a development plan to take them along it, is critical to improving the attractiveness of postdoctoral research. The Review therefore recommends that HEIs take responsibility for ensuring that all their postdoctoral researchers have a clear career development plan and have access to appropriate training opportunities – for example, of at least two weeks per year. The Review further recommends that all relevant funding from HEFCE and the Research Councils be made conditional on HEIs implementing these recommendations.

It is important for researchers to be able to develop individual career paths reflecting the different career destinations open to them...

Government response:
[government funding] will help ensure that researchers are prepared for future careers in academy or industry.

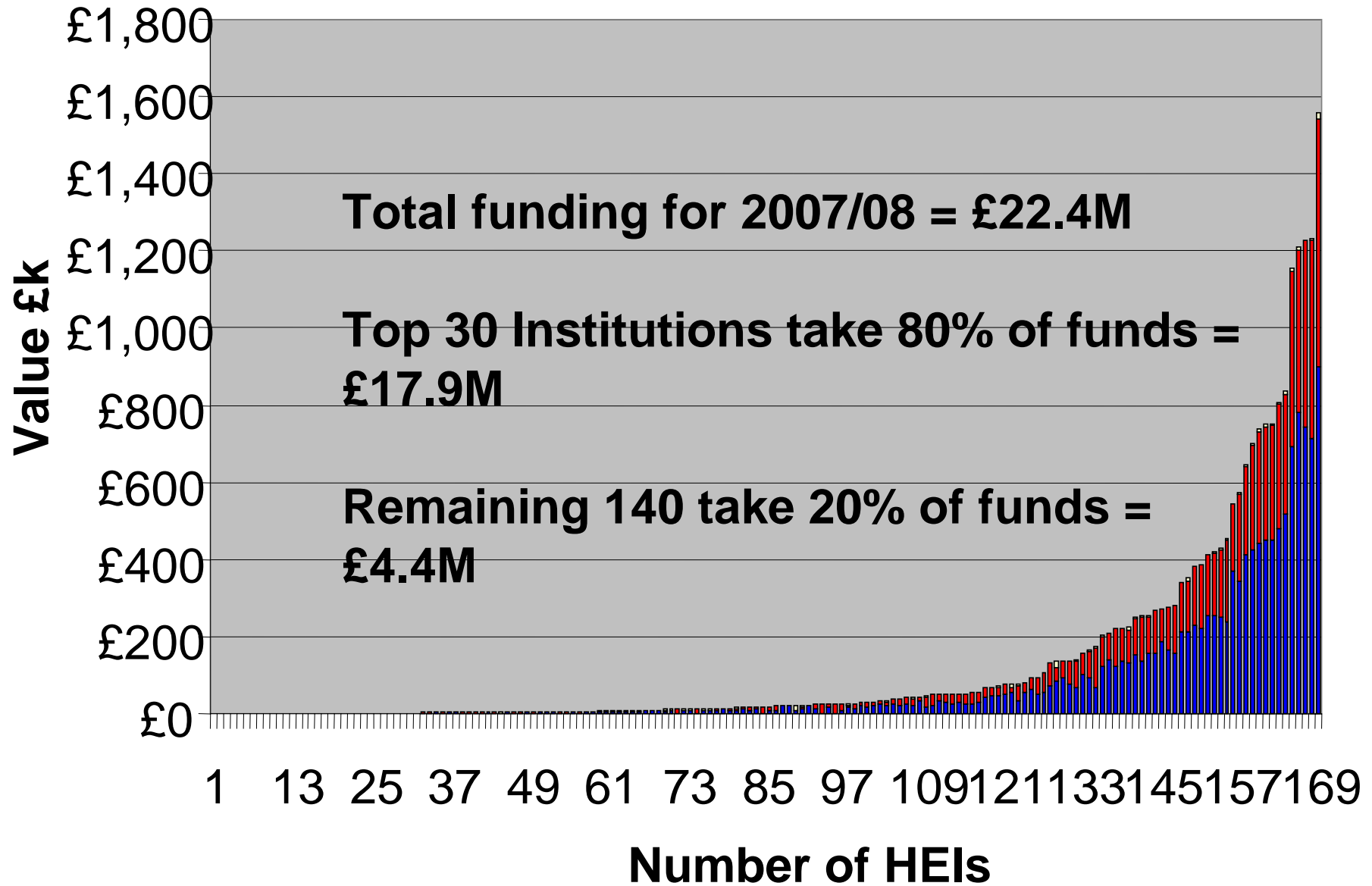
A virtuous circle for researcher training



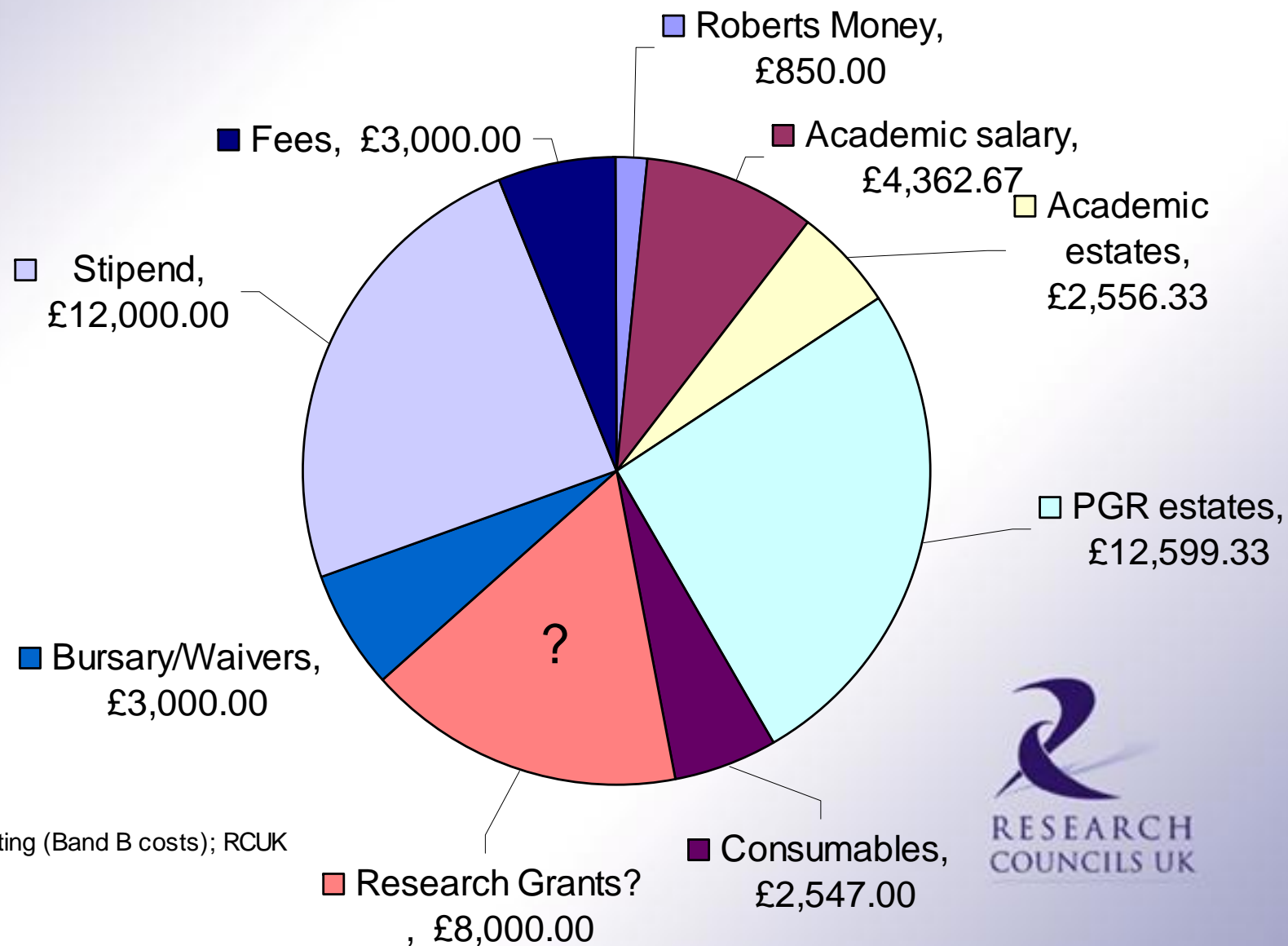
Incorporating the UK GRAD Programme and UKHERD



RCUK Roberts Skills Payments 2007-08



PGR Annual Cost



Sources: JM Consulting (Band B costs); RCUK payments
2005/06 costs



Future Funding

- Earmarking secure until 2011 – RCUK strategy
- Factors affecting future funding:
 - Possible change of government
 - Tighter funding environment - flat cash
 - Progress towards sustainability
 - Demonstration of impact

Evidence of Impact

- **Embedding** skills into researcher training?
- Improved **Employability** of researchers?
- Research outcomes improved?
- Research careers more attractive?

Measured by:

- Annual RCUK reporting
- Rugby Team Evaluation Framework

