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Research Careers and Diversity



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RESEARCH CAREERS



A strategy for success

The Sustainability of Graduate Research Skills Training post-2010/2011

- Background
- Range of skills
- Looking forward
 - Evolution: not full stop

Background

“The product that the PhD researcher creates is not the thesis – vital though that is to their subject area through the creation of original knowledge – no, the product of their study is the development of themselves”

Gareth Roberts



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...

The Research Councils are committed to enhancing the quality and output of the UK research base through training the next generation of world-class researchers.



Expectations (2002)

- a) Research skills and techniques
- b) Research environment
- c) Research management
- d) Personal effectiveness
- e) Communication Skills
- f) Networking and teamworking
- g) Career Management

Transferable skills

- Transferable to a range of employment destinations
- About personal development rather than acquiring knowledge
- Not for development to enable current research project (or one similar)

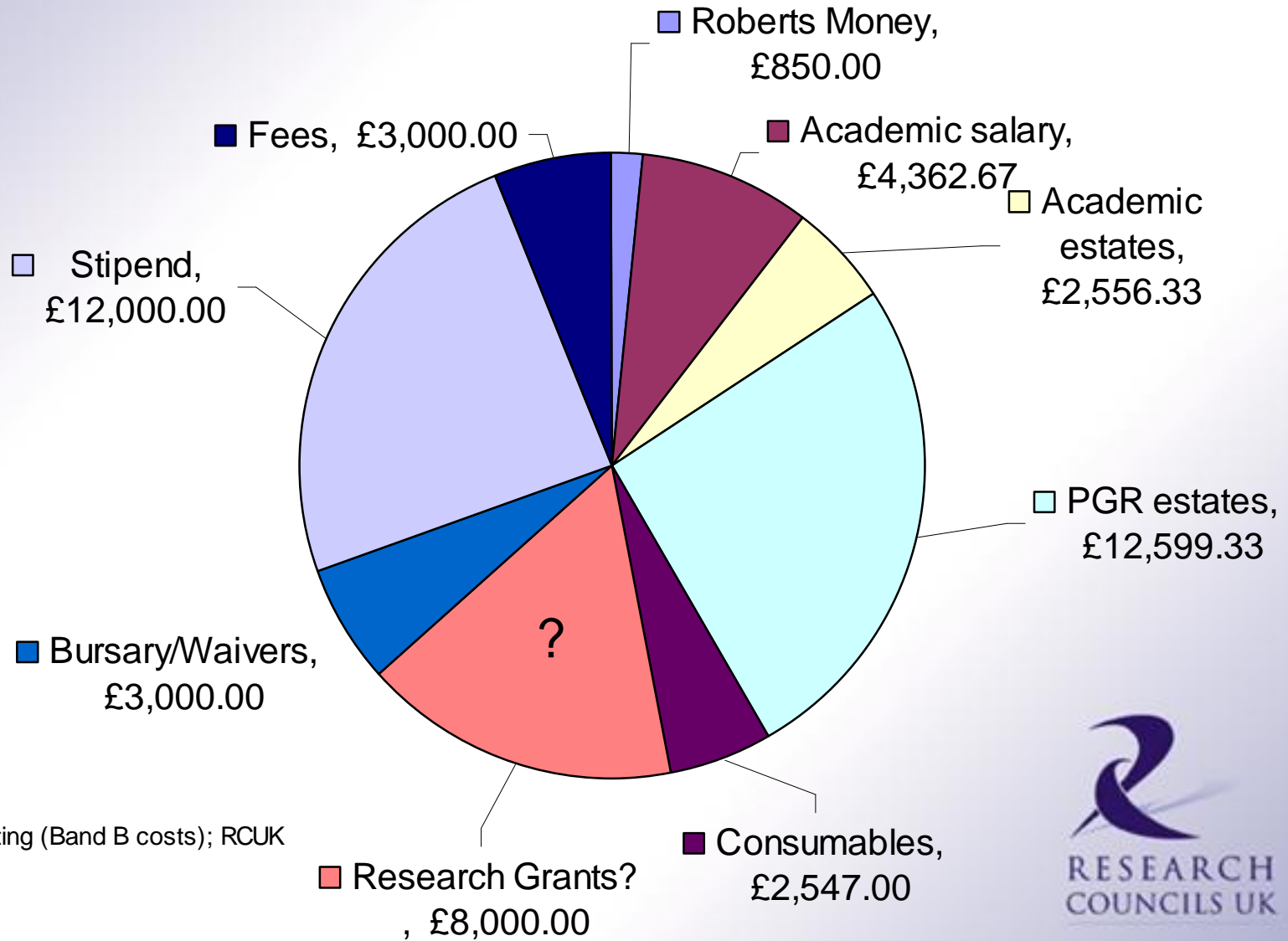
Roberts' Payments

- Around two weeks training a year, principally in transferable skills, to enhance employability of doctoral graduates and career planning of research staff.
 - Based on £800 for each researcher a year
 - Notification in Summer (July)
 - Single, co-ordinated route for monitoring

Frequently Asked Questions

- What is covered by Roberts payments?
 - Conference attendance **x**
 - Research skills **x**
 - Hobbies **x**
- Who is it for?
 - RC funded research students and researchers **p**
 - Academic/lecturing staff **x**

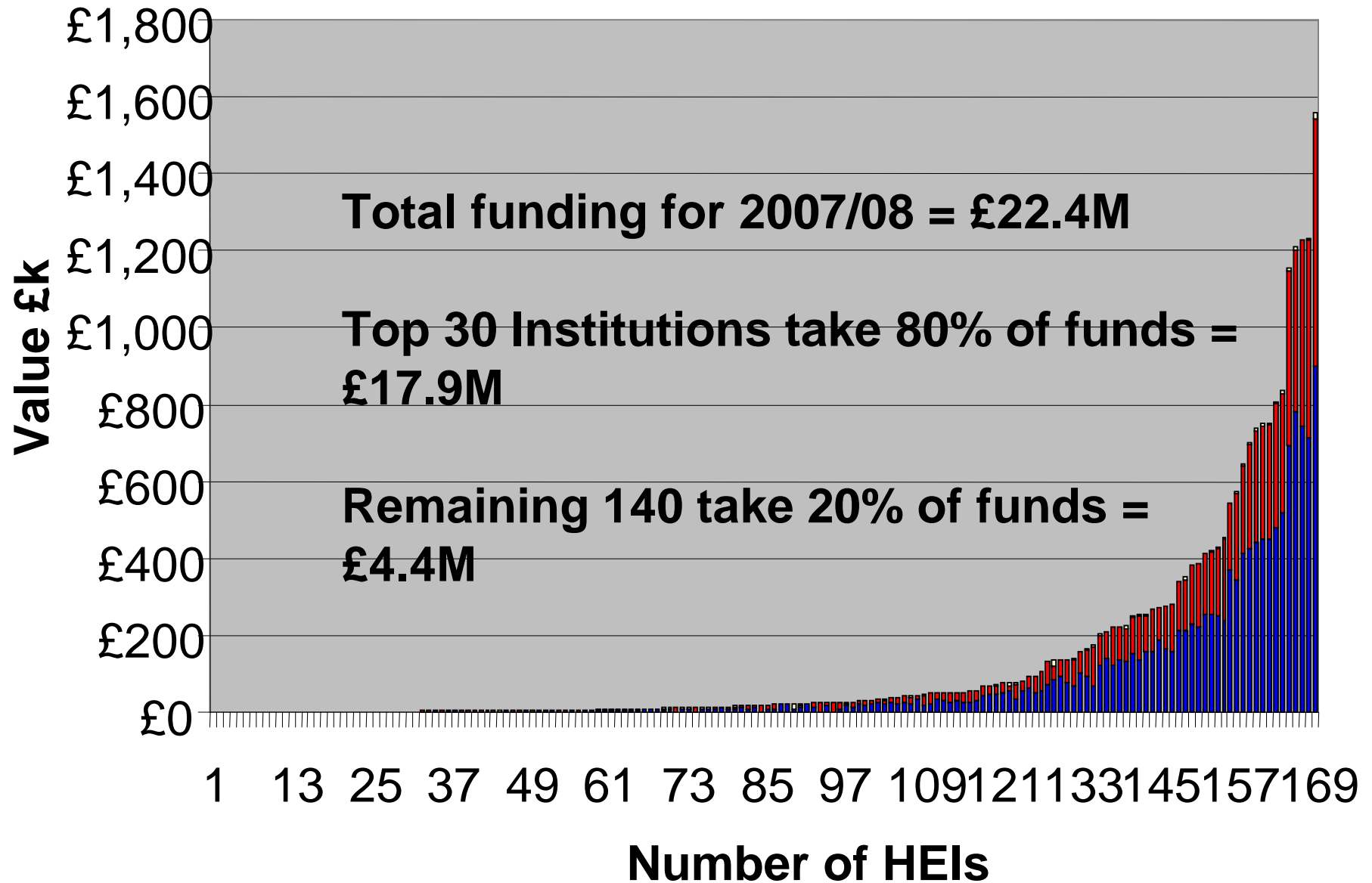
PGR Annual Cost



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



RCUK Roberts Skills Payments 2007-08

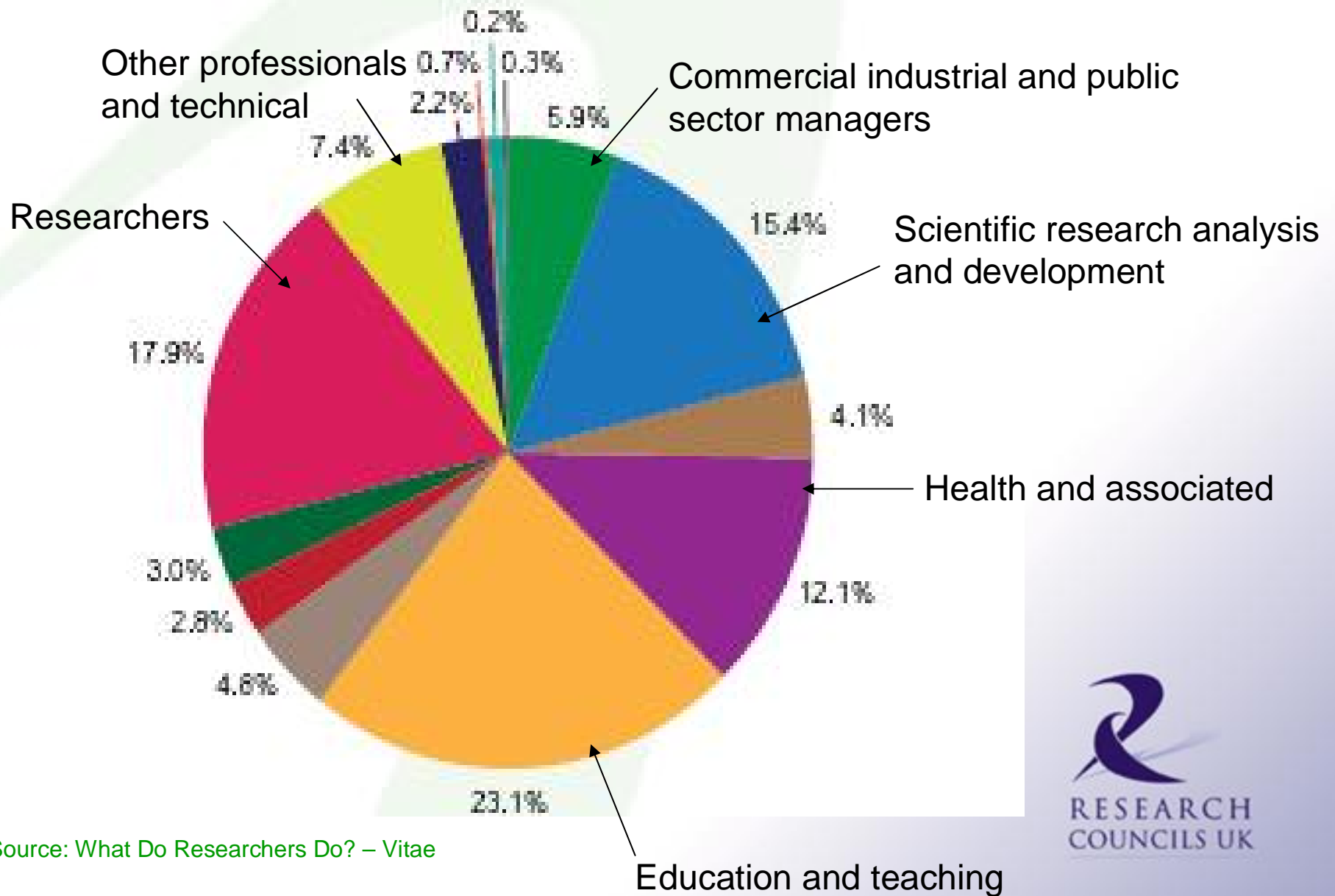


RCUK EXPECTATIONS FOR SOCIO-ECONOMIC IMPACT

- publish results widely: both academic, user and public audiences
- exploit results to secure social and economic return to the UK
- manage collaboration professionally
- **staff and students develop skills matched to the demands of their future career paths**
- curation, management and exploitation of data for future use
- work in partnership with RCUK



Doctoral Graduates' Destinations



Source: What Do Researchers Do? – Vitae



Current position

- Commitment for ring-fenced funding is to 2010/11
- How embedded are letter and spirit of Roberts recommendations 4.2 and 5.3?
- Is it similar for both postgraduate researchers and research staff?
- How can we ensure we build on progress to date?

Post 2011: Evolution not full stop

To achieve

- Maximising benefits and impact
- Influencing/culture change
- Value for money

Foundations/Infrastructure

- University strategies for development of researchers
- Implementation of those strategies
- Quality of programmes
- Effective use of funds by research organisations
 - Sharing practices

Reactions and Learning

- Uptake and responses to programmes
 - Researchers
 - Supervisors
- How researchers, supervisors and employers input
- Illustrations of reactions and learning

Outputs

- Expectations, attitudes and culture change
 - Researchers
 - Research leaders
 - Research organisations
 - Employers
- Ownership/Responsiveness

Outcomes and Impact

- Better research?
- Employability and career development
- Attractiveness of research careers
- Economic/social/cultural impact of researchers

Scenarios

- Consider PGR and research staff development funding similarly
- Consider PGR and RS differently
- What would be implications of, say:
 - Delivering funding for PGR development in fees?
 - Funding for research staff development in research grants?

Scenarios cont'd

- Monitoring
 - Similar to current arrangements
 - Included in funding assurance process only
 - Other? Fit with Concordat?
- Where does (or should) this fit with Full Economic Costing?

Questions!

- We become accustomed to the higher education sector driving much development, but:
 - is it some, most or all the HE sector?
 - institutional ownership?
 - research leaders' ownership?
- Does monitoring have a role in what happens?

Questions 2

- Has there been any measurement (quantitative or qualitative) to work out whether research outcomes are improved?
- Does anyone use the researcher development programme in promotional or recruitment material? Why/Why not?

Questions 3

- How to embed a broader range of development and experience in PGR programmes?
 - Does separate funding help or hinder?
- Who do we need to influence and how might we best do it? Eg other funders? Your research committee? The supervisor down the corridor?

Questions 4

- If we were to ask your institution whether the funding for researcher development should be put into increasing researcher numbers, what would they say?
- Would it depend on who we asked within the institution?
- How do we arrive at a balanced view?

Questions 5

- How do we maximise value for money
 - gearing/leverage
- What are the risks associated with particular scenarios?
- Are these the right questions?