

# Dr Iain Cameron

## Head of Research Careers



Tel: 01793 444038

Fax: 01793 444562

[iain.cameron@rcuk.ac.uk](mailto:iain.cameron@rcuk.ac.uk)

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



RESEARCH CAREERS



A strategy for success



**UK Research Councils fund around £2.8 billion of world-leading research annually**

**The seven Councils work together in all areas of Science & Engineering and the Arts & Humanities**





## RCUK investments in research staff and research training:

- 15,500 Doctoral students
- 10,000 Research staff in Universities
- 4000 Research staff in RC Institutes
- 2000 Research fellows



Arts & Humanities  
Research Council



EPSRC

Engineering and Physical Sciences  
Research Council



Science & Technology  
Facilities Council



**”RCUK investment in attracting, training and managing the next generation of world-class researchers will make a major contribution to improving the quantity, quality and impact of research to the benefit of UK society and the economy.“**

*RCUK Research Careers Strategy - 2006*



# Some Contexts

## The Department will work to:

- Sustain and develop a world-class research base
- Maximise the exploitation of the research base to support innovation across all sectors of the economy
- Raise and widen participation in Higher Education
- Raise participation and attainment by young people and adults in post-16 education and learning
- Tackle the skills gap amongst adults, particularly equipping people with basic literacy and numeracy
- Increase the supply of people in science, technology, engineering and mathematics (STEM)

# Skills Agenda Key Drivers

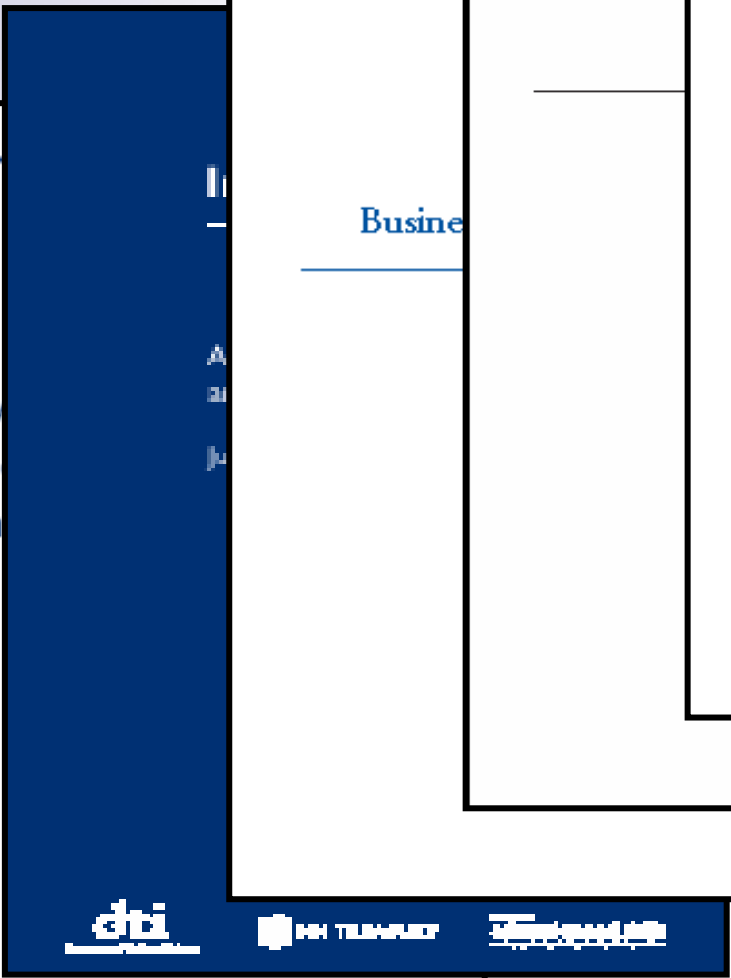
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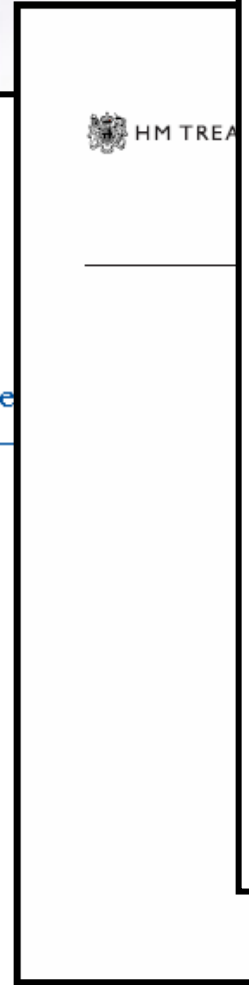


Business



April 2002

HM TREASURY



December 2003

investment



July 2004

LEITCH  
Review of Skills

Prosperity for all  
in the global economy  
- world class skills

Final Report

December 2006



# The contribution from the Roberts Report since 2002

- Enhanced skills and career development training
- Minimum standards for Research Degree Programmes
- Code of Practice for Degree programmes
- Enhanced salaries and stipends
- New career routes - Academic Fellowships



# QAA: Code of Practice



**Code of practice for the assurance of academic quality and standards in higher education**

**Section 1: Postgraduate research programmes - September 2004**

**Code incorporates Research Councils Joint Skills Statement**

<http://www.qaa.ac.uk/academicinfrastructure/codeOfPractice/>



# *The Research Councils' Strategy has three main aims:*



> Attract the most creative minds into research.



> Encourage researchers to get the training they need.



> Help research organisations manage their staff and develop their careers.

## *The Research Councils also aim to:*



> Encourage people from all groups of society to take up research careers.



> Enhance the international reputation of UK research training.

# Leitch Review of Skills - December 2006

- *“In the 21st Century, our natural resource is our people – and their potential is both untapped and vast. Skills will unlock that talent. The prize for this country will be enormous – higher productivity, the creation of wealth and social justice. The alternative? Without increased skills, we would condemn ourselves to a lingering decline in competitiveness, diminishing economic growth and a bleaker future for all.*

# The Roberts Skills Money



# 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

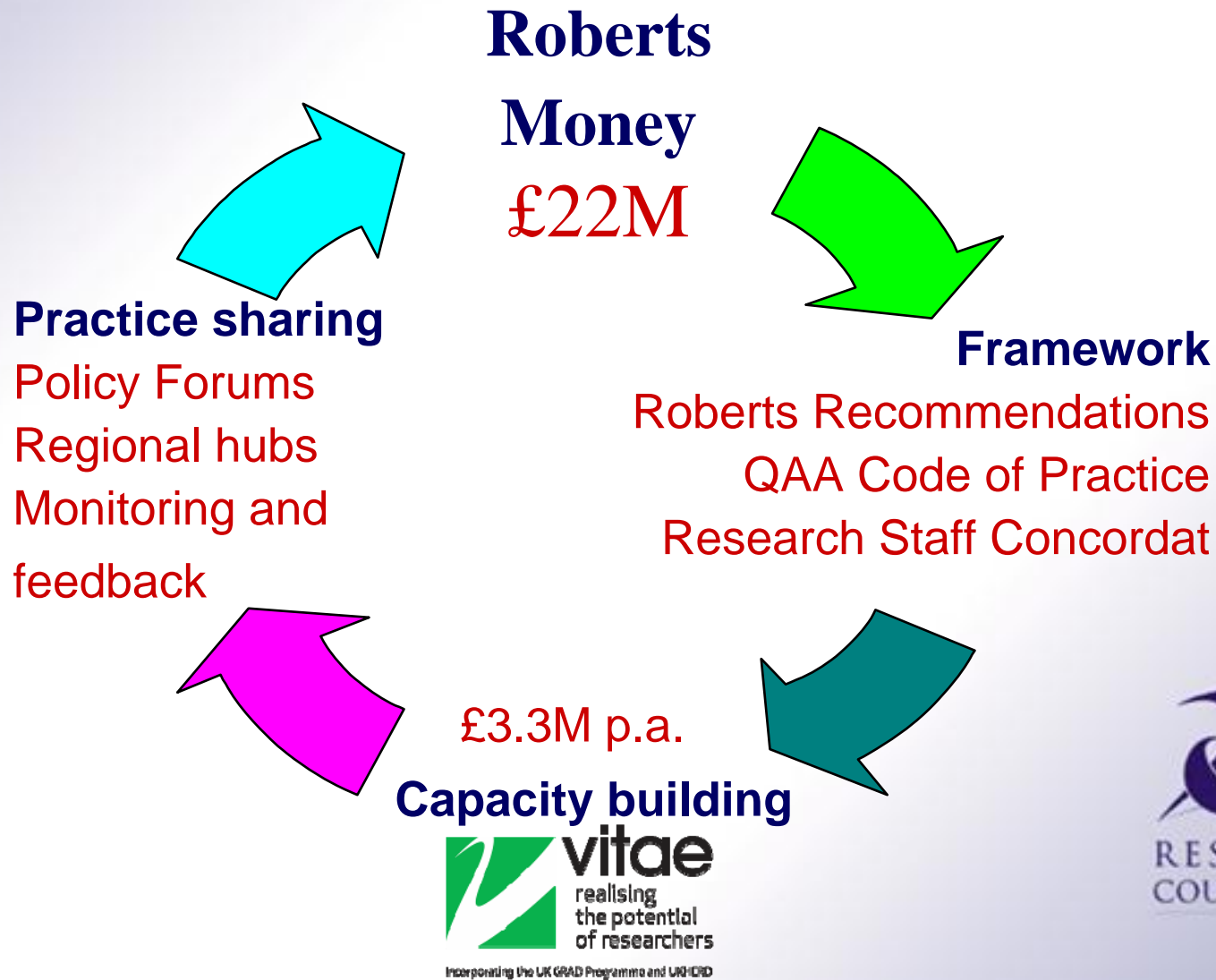
## Recommendation 5.3: A vision for postdoctoral researchers

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



# Transferable skills training – so far

- **Finance**

- Roberts Money £13.4M in 2007/08 for Doctoral Students (£850 per head)
- Also £8.8M in 2007/08 for Career Development of Research Staff

- **Framework**

- QAA Code of Practice and Funding Council minimum standards

- **Capacity building**

- Vitae Programme: developing the HEIs capacity
  - (Nationally and regional hubs)

- **Sharing practice**

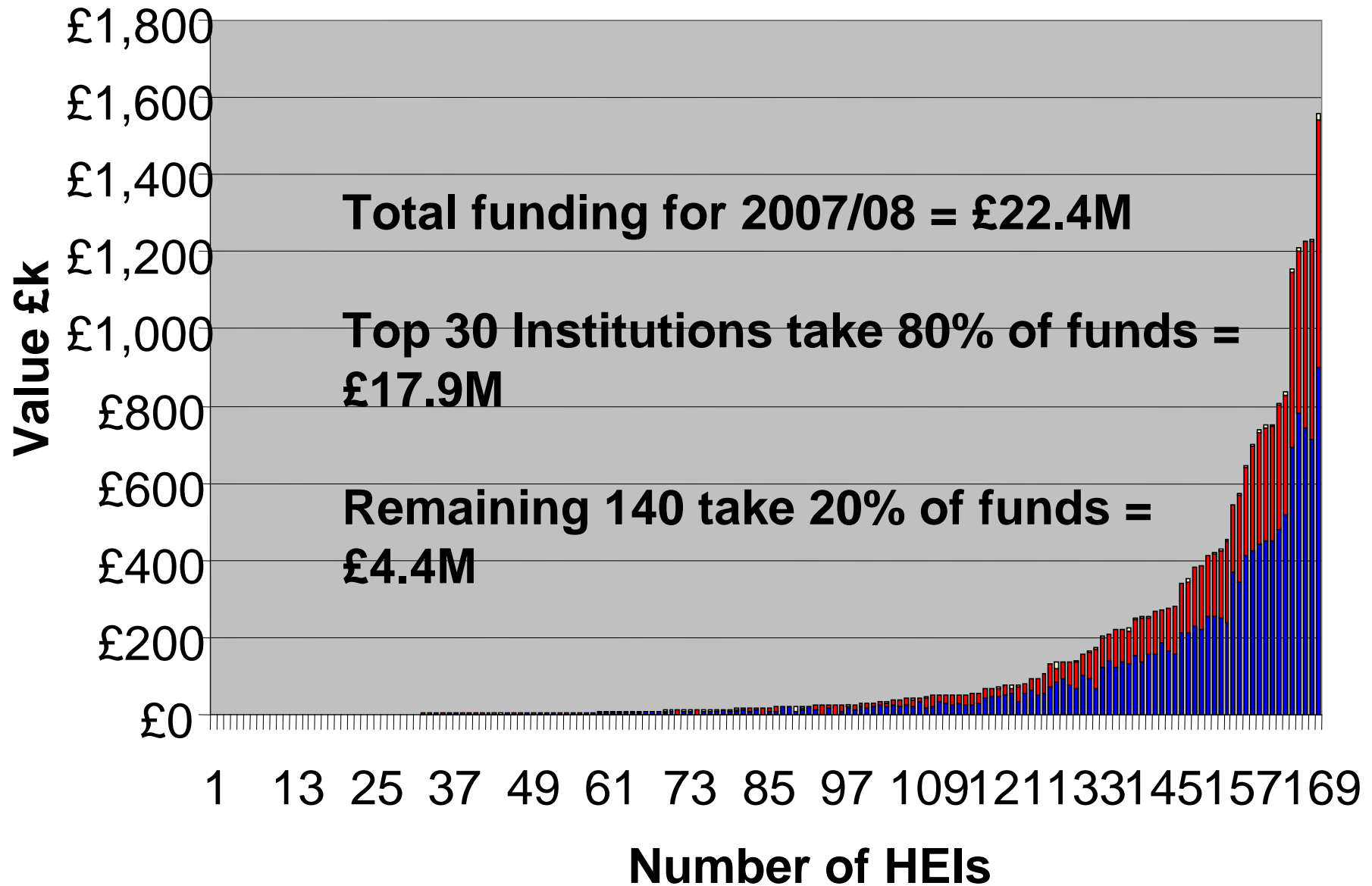
- Monitoring strategy is aimed at sharing good practice
  - (Policy forums annual reporting etc.)



# What is Roberts Money for?

- Transferable skills
- JSS sections (d) to (g)
  - X Research Skills
  - X Research environment

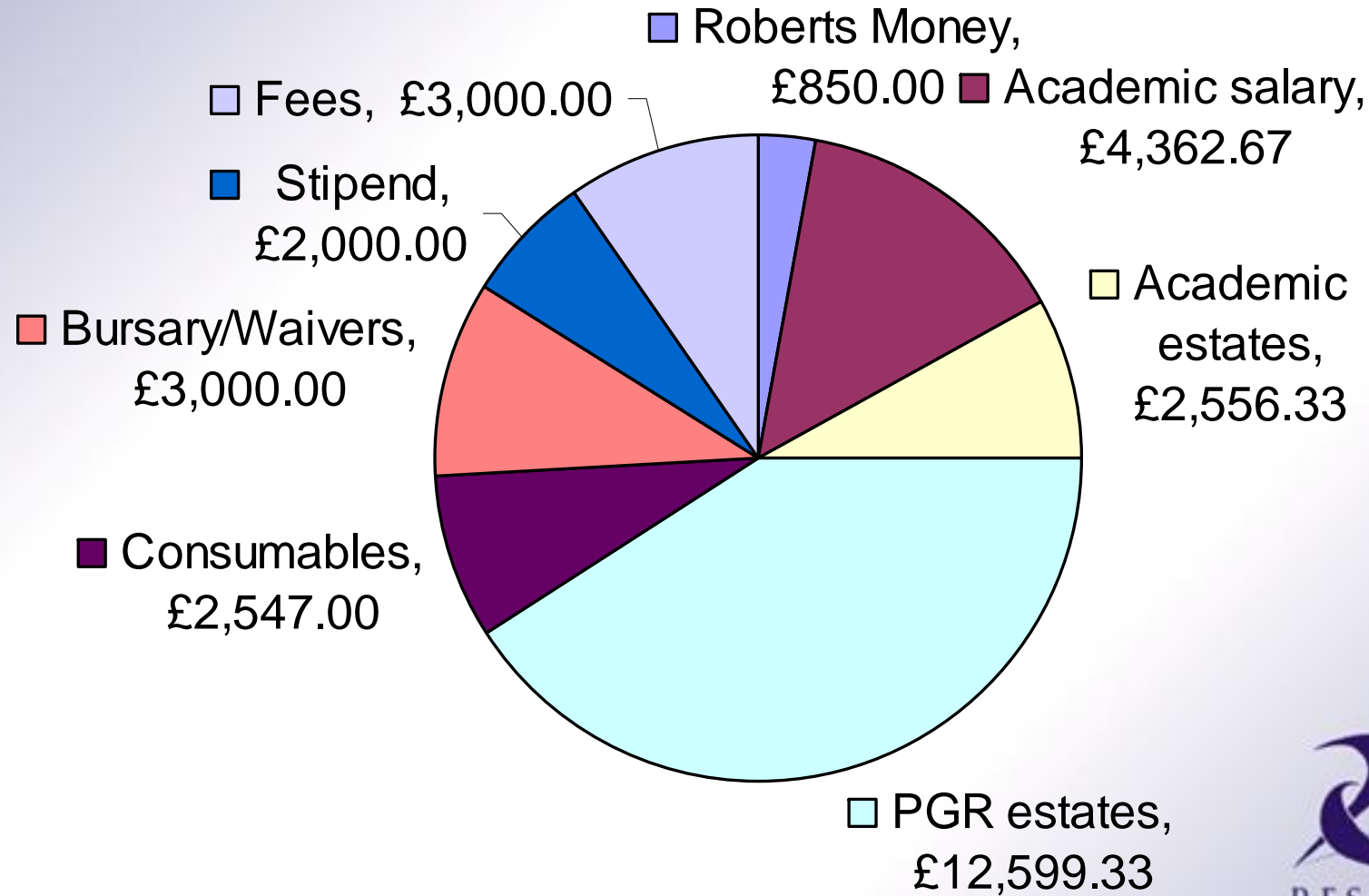
# RCUK Roberts Skills Payments 2007-08



# PhD Funding/costs

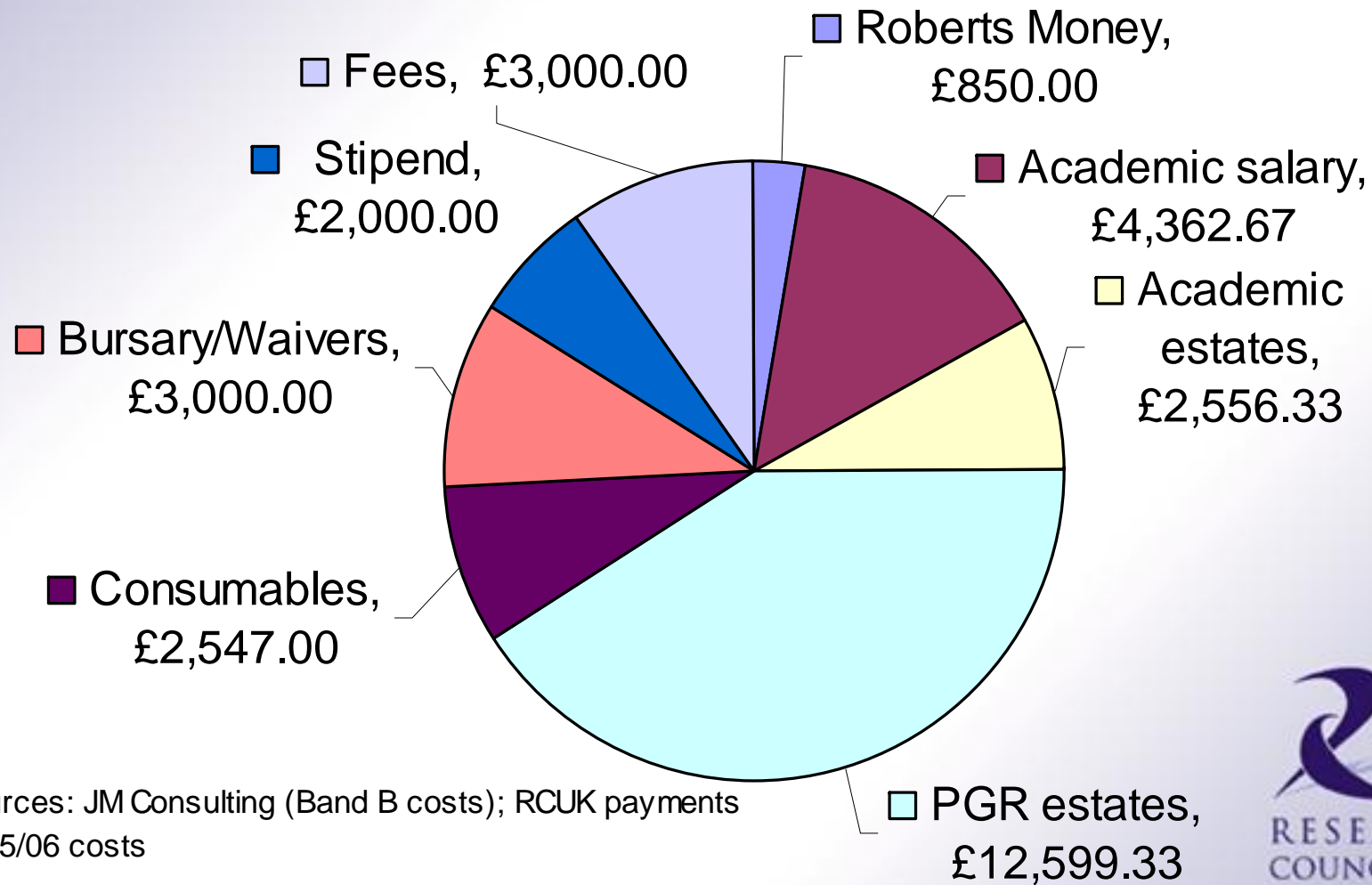
- JM Consulting report in 2006
- Sources of funds:
  - FCs - Supervision and teaching costs
  - RC/sponsors – Stipends, Fees, RTSG
  - RCs – Roberts funding
  - ? Research Grant resources

# PGR Annual cost



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

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

# Vitae: Database of Practice topics

- 1. Interpersonal skills development**
- 2. Induction, review and reflective processes**
- 3. Generic research skills development**
- 4. Wider preparation for academic practice**
- 5. Enterprise and innovation related practices**
- 6. Internships, placements and consultancy projects**
- 7. Knowledge transfer and outreach activities**
- 8. Career management / developing employability**
- 9. Evaluation, feedback mechanisms and research relating to skills and career development**
- 10. Strategic and management approach to practice**

# Current/Future Priorities

- Embedding transferable skills into the PhD
- Developing Career Skills through the Concordat
- Evaluating the impact of the Roberts' agenda
- Creating the conditions for sustainability of the agenda (financial and organisational)