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PUBLICATION OF AND ACCESS TO UK RESEARCH OUTPUTS

Provisional RCUK view

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Who are the Research Councils?

- Main public investors in fundamental research in the UK

- Public funding mainly via the Science Budget:-
  £2.4 billion to the Research Councils in 05/06

- Non-Departmental Public Bodies established by Royal Charter

- Accountable to Parliament, via the Office of Science and Technology

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The Research Councils:

- Arts and Humanities Research Council (AHRC)

- Biotechnology and Biological Sciences Research Council (BBSRC)

- Council for the Central Laboratory of the Research Councils (CCLRC)

- Economic and Social Research Council (ESRC)

- Engineering and Physical Sciences Research Council (EPSRC)

- Medical Research Council (MRC)

- Natural Environment Research Council (NERC)

- Particle Physics and Astronomy Research Council (PPARC)

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Research Council Budgets (2005-06)

Science Budget Investment in Research Councils 2005-06

- PPARC £294M 12%
- AHRC £81M 3%
- BBSRC £336M 14%
- NERC £338M 14%
- CCLRC £167M 7%
- MRC £479M 20%
- ESRC £123M 5%
- EPSRC £468M 25%
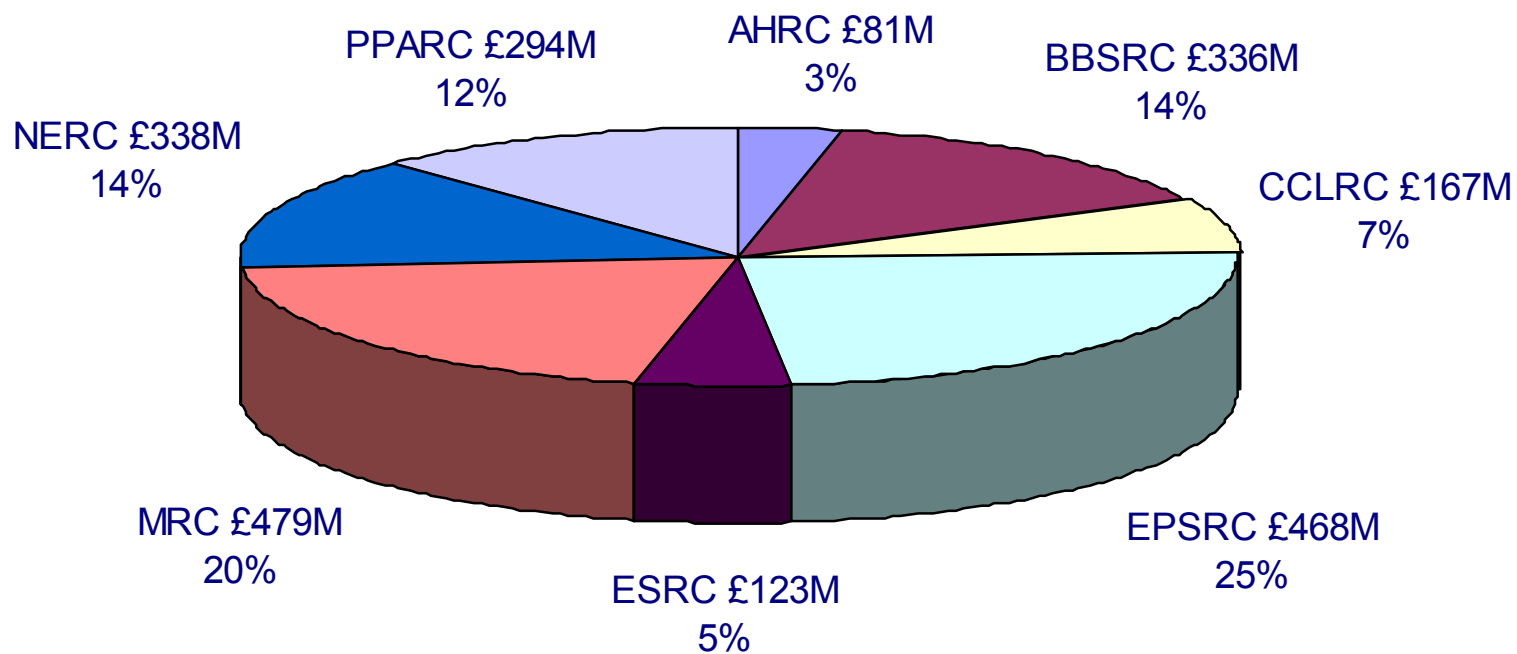
Research Council roles

- Specific Missions

- Common objectives of grant awarding Councils:

  - support basic, strategic and applied research
  - support postgraduate training
  - advance knowledge and technology and provide
    services and trained scientists and engineers to contribute to the
    economic competitiveness, the   effectiveness of public
    services and policy, and quality of life
  - science and society activities

- CCLRC - management and development of
  large facilities

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Mission Statement:

RCUK's mission is to optimise the ways that Research Councils work together to deliver their goals, to enhance the overall performance and impact of UK research, training and knowledge transfer and to be recognised by academia, business and government for excellence in research sponsorship.

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What is Research Councils UK?

- RCUK is a strategic partnership between the seven UK Research Councils and the AHRB

- RCUK operates UK-wide and its interests run across all the sciences and social sciences, engineering, technology and the arts and humanities

- Through RCUK, the Research Councils are working together to enhance the overall impact and effectiveness of their research, training and knowledge transfer activities

- The public accountability of individual Councils is unchanged by RCUK

RCUK believes that research outputs, including publications:

- are an integral part of the research process

- raise challenges that are common to all Research Councils

So, even though research communities are not homogeneous, there is justification for a common approach

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Why have the Research Councils developed a view?

Increasing awareness that the development of Internet technologies providing access to a range of distributed information resources has enabled new possibilities for the delivery of research publications.

So, the agenda is driven largely by technological developments

As public funders, Research Councils have a responsibility to exploit the opportunities which these technologies afford

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Other background for the development of RCUK's view:

- Gathering worldwide momentum in favour of new approaches to dissemination of research outputs:
  - ➤ Bethesda and Berlin Declarations
  - ➤ Stance taken by major funders, e.g. Wellcome Trust

- Political and media interest in the UK, notably prompted by the S&T Select Committee inquiry

- Increasing inability for research libraries to meet subscription costs

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What is RCUK doing now?

Formulation of RCUK view, reaching its final stages:
• overseen by cross-Research Council group, chaired initially by Michael Jubb, Deputy CEO of the then AHRB
• internal discussions within Research Councils
• consultation with key stakeholders since mid-2004 – including universities, publishers, librarians, Govt, etc

RCUK position expected to be finalised this summer

Important to get consensus between the eight organisations that make up RCUK – this takes time!

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Approach to defining the RCUK view:

- setting out of fundamental principles
- consideration of broad policy areas intended to frame
  a practical Research Council approach:

  - ➢ communication, access and availability
  - ➢ quality assurance
  - ➢ cost-effectiveness
  - ➢ long-term preservation
  - ➢ the situation of learned societies

- RCUK position will need to evolve because it deals with
a dynamic and rapidly changing environment – review by
2008

Fundamental principles

①

Ideas and knowledge derived from publicly-funded research must be made available and accessible for public use, interrogation and scrutiny as widely, rapidly and effectively as practicable

Fundamental principles

②

Effective mechanisms must be in place to ensure that published research outputs are subject to rigorous quality assurance, through peer review

Fundamental principles

③

Models and mechanisms for access to research results must be both efficient and cost-effective in the use of public funds

Fundamental principles

④

Outputs from current and future research must be preserved and remain accessible not only for the next few years but for future generations

Nature of the position statement

• The statement is intended as a broad, scene-setting framework.

• It is deliberately not set out as a detailed workplan.

• Detailed guidance and good practice will follow – its elaboration will involve interaction and joint working with key stakeholders.

Communication, access and availability

RCUK wants the research community to get the most out of the benefits of digitisation for improving access to research outputs. RCUK believes that e-print repositories have a great potential in support of this process:

- distributed networking
- interoperability of repositories
- metadata harvesting – OAI-PMH compliance
- improving search capacity – new initiatives (scholar.google)
- linkage between research outputs and data
- increased visibility and impact of deposited material

Communication, access and availability

Much work remains to be done on developing interoperability and appropriate standards

Role for JISC and initiatives such as FAIR programme and SHERPA.

Cultural barriers in the research community also to be overcome

Nevertheless, e-print repositories are worthy of encouragement

How is this best achieved?

Communication, access and availability

Key conclusions of the provisional RCUK view:
• the development of e-print repositories cannot be encouraged by persuasion alone
• consequently, RCUK wishes to make deposit in e-print repositories a condition of the grant award

• this requirement is subject to caveats to address the legitimate concerns of the publishing industry

• time lag between publication and deposit is left open

• preference expressed for institutional repositories, but subject-based repositories are perfectly acceptable – impact of PubMed Central on biomedical research

Communication, access and availability

Other key point is issue of the terms under which publishers allow (or not) authors to deposit in e-print repositories:

- copyright arrangements
- exclusive and non-exclusive licenses (possibly more relevant than copyright)

Need for dialogue between RCUK, publishers, JISC and other interested parties

Quality assurance

Whatever the medium for publishing research outputs, rigorous peer review must remain the guarantor of quality

E-print repositories must carry an absolutely clear indication of what material has been peer reviewed – crucial distinction between pre-prints and post prints.

RCUK will engage in discussions with relevant stakeholders to agree a common standard for such an indication.
- 'kite-mark'? no view on this yet

Cost effectiveness

E-print repositories

- set-up costs are relatively low (servers, software)
- running costs represent the main outlay (staff support)

  ➢ difficult to quantify – could represent one or more FTE equivalent posts – uncertainties need to be addressed

  ➢ repository management can be seen part and parcel of the changing function and responsibilities of libraries – it need not be an additional burden as librarians shed some traditional roles and practices

  ➢ librarian community is keen

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Cost effectiveness

Open access journals

Research Councils will not discriminate against author pays model – compliance with Government's level playing field

- Author charges to be covered in grants

- Costs to be met in the context Research Councils' contribution to Full Economic Costs – so will meet the same standards of cost-effectiveness as other overheads

- Any shift towards author pays model is likely to be slow – RCUK not expecting major resource implications in short term

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Long-term preservation

Important distinction between:

- making published material quickly and easily available, free of charge – main purpose of e-print repositories

- long-term preservation and curation – which needn't necessarily be open access

These two purposes are distinct but overlapping

Long-term preservation

E-print repositories may have a role to play in long-term preservation of published material, but they are unlikely to be more than part of the solution

Key questions:

- to what extent should long-term preservation and curation be managed centrally?
- what role for the British Library and similar institutions?
- what relationship between the British Library and a decentralised /distributed network of repositories?

Long-term preservation

Need for dialogue with the British Library and other professionals in the field to promote archiving and curation best practice

CCLRC is to establish a data archiving and curation facility and will apply the standards and protocols recommended by the National Digital Curation Centre, of which it is a partner

Role of newly-established Research Libraries Network

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Learned societies

Learned societies are key stakeholders in the research community

Important to maintain a dialogue to address the opportunities presented by evolving models of communicating research outputs, and to address the concerns of societies who may feel threatened by these developments

In conclusion…

- RCUK view will conform to the four key principles

- significant focus on the role and possible development of e-print repositories

- no discrimination against author pays publishing model

- consideration of relationship between the need to access and the need to preserve

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