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UUK perspective on the European Research Area

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Universities UK is ...

... the major representative body
and membership organisation for
the higher education sector and its
members are the executive heads
of UK universities

Within it are the England and Northern Ireland Council,
Universities Scotland and Higher Education Wales



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Universities UK's vision and mission

Our vision is ...

... of an autonomous university sector in the United Kingdom that, through excellence in teaching, research and knowledge exploitation, raises aspirations, has an international reputation for innovation, and contributes to the wider economy and society





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Universities UK mission

Our mission is ...

*... to be the essential voice
and the best support for a
vibrant, successful and
diverse university sector, to
influence and create policy
for higher education, and to
provide an environment
where the interests of our
sector can flourish*





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Research policy at UUK

- Research policy- deal with issues relating to the funding and management of research.
- Led by the UUK Research Policy Committee (RPC) chaired by Professor Eric Thomas, Vice Chancellor, University of Bristol.
- Promote, develop evidence and make the case for university based research at national, EU and international levels.
- Strong European dimension. Work closely with UK sector Europe Unit on European issues to coordinate UK positions and lobby EU institutions and actors.



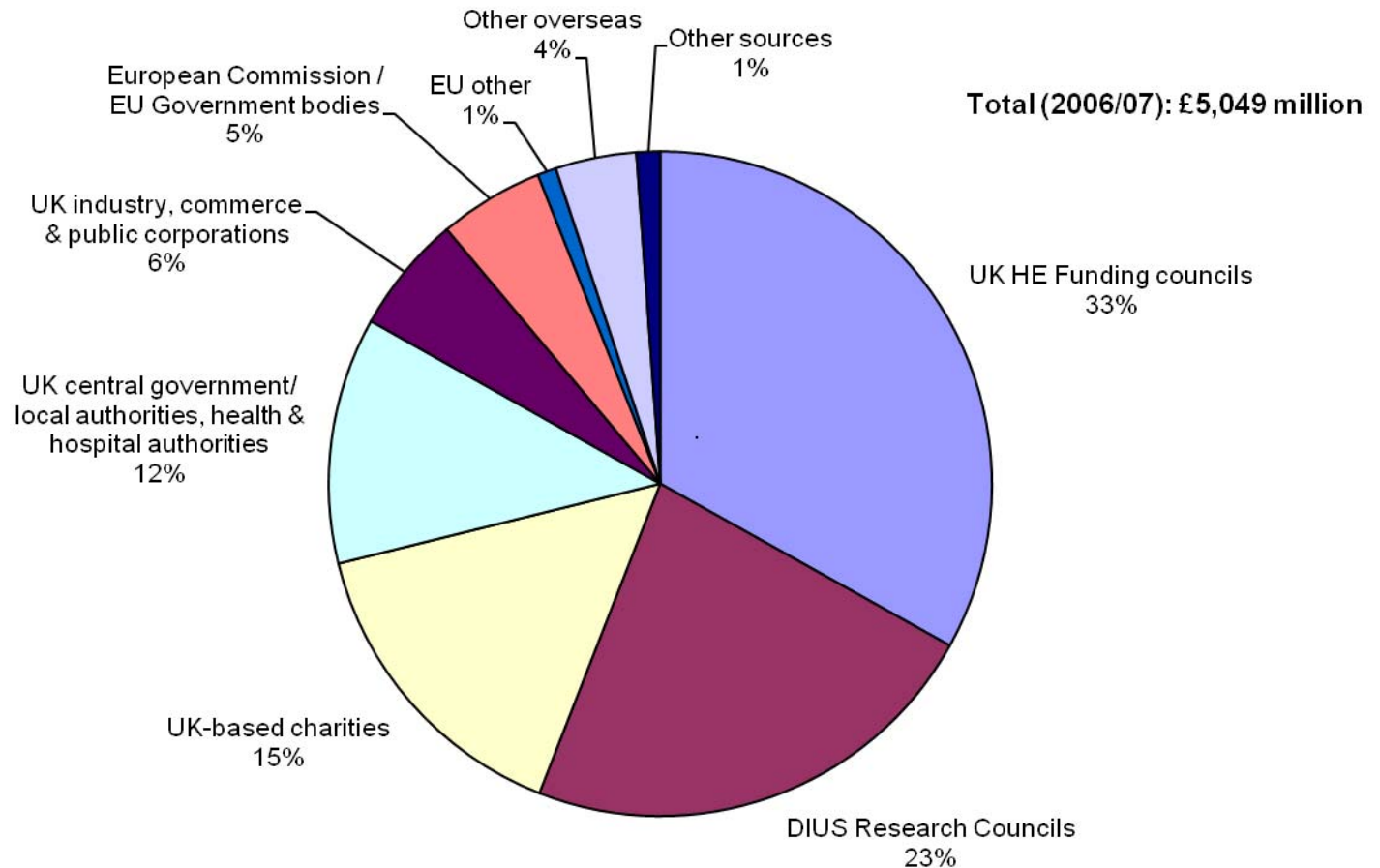
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UK research base in context

- 171 Universities and colleges.
- Most research in the UK is undertaken in universities- central to delivering government objectives for knowledge economy and driving competitiveness.
- c£5billion total research funding (income) in UK HEIs 2006/07
- Diverse system- c60% of total research funding comes from UK government or EU sources. The rest comes from UK based charities, business, or overseas.
- 'Dual support' system for supporting research- supports autonomy and dynamism in the research base.

Research income for UK HEIs

Research Income at UK higher education institutions, 2006/07

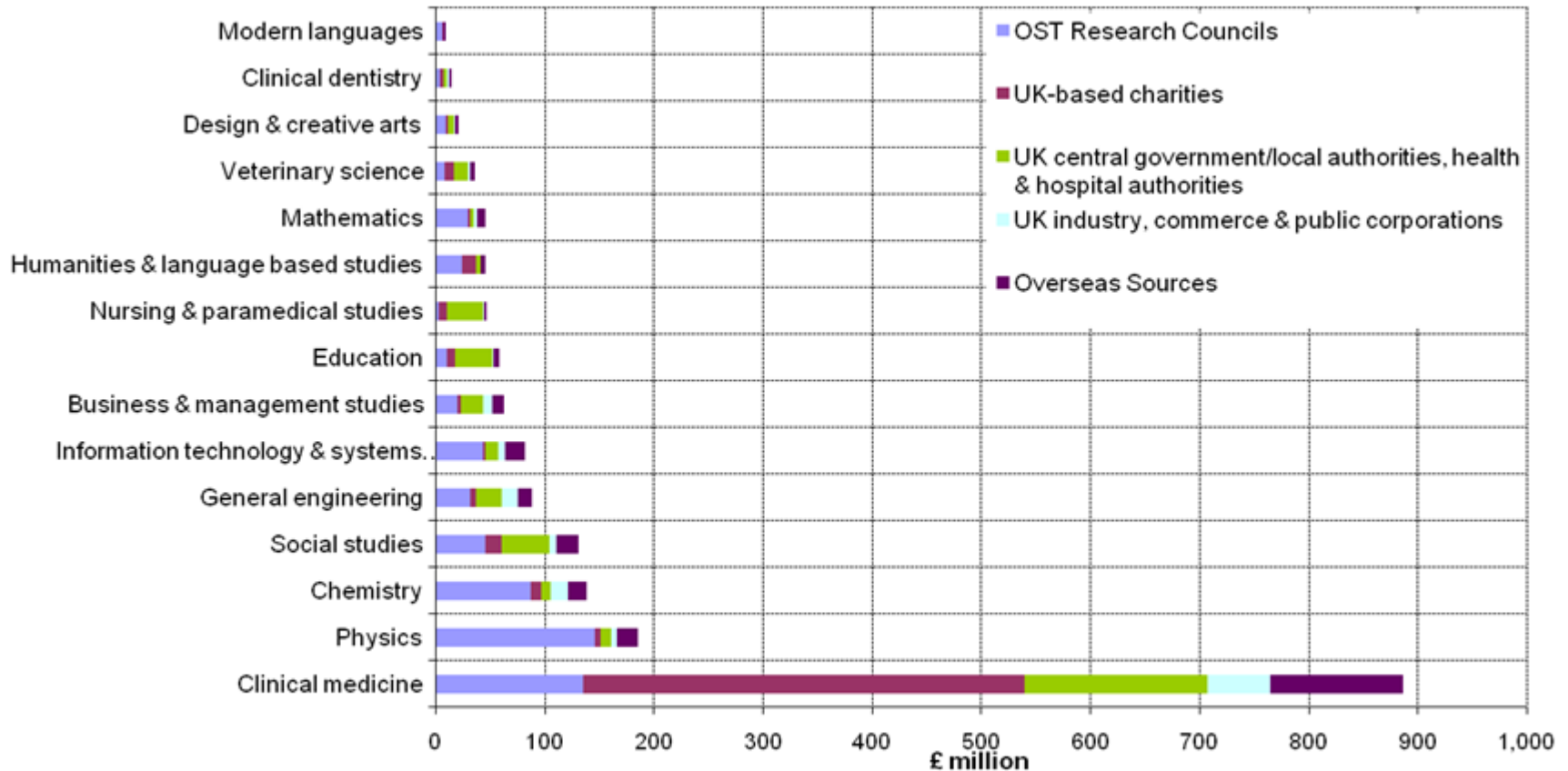




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Research income for UK HEIs

Research grants and contracts income by source for selected subjects, 2005/06





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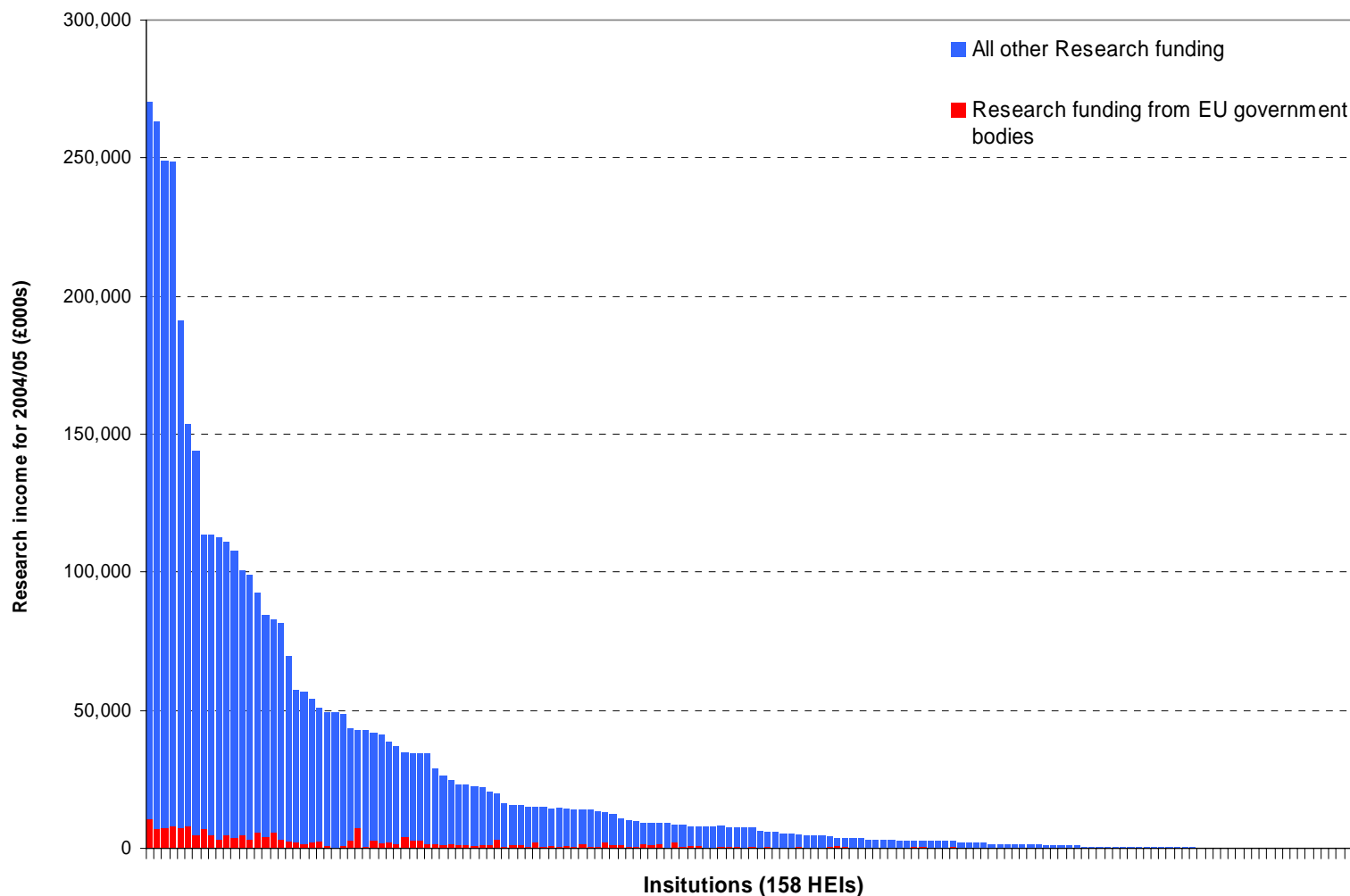
European research policy and funding

- See EU dimension as extremely important. Promote and encourage engagement in EU funding and policy development.
- UK higher education institutions actively engaged in European programmes.
- In FP6 UK made up 55.4% of all HEI participation (Germany 31%, France 19%).
- Trend continues for FP7.

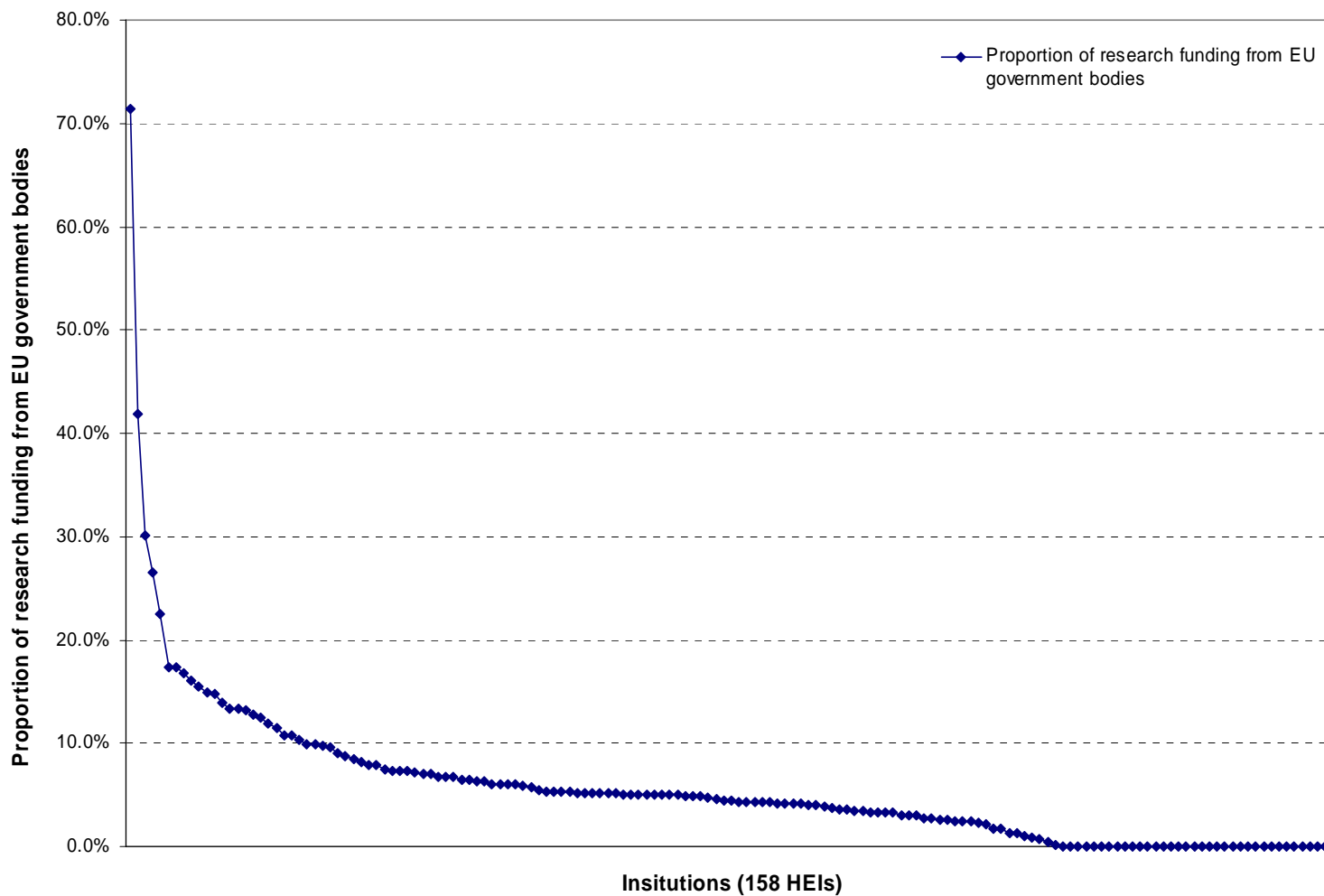


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Role of EU funding- proportions of EU funding in UK HEI research base



Role of EU funding- proportions of EU funding in UK HEI research base



Benefits of participation- distinctive role of Framework Programme funding

- Enables UK academics to experience and benefit from a broader perspective on their research.
- Creates access to up-to-date knowledge and techniques.
- Enhances the free exchange of ideas across EU.
- Creates opportunities to make new contacts/develop new areas.
- Key role in building UK research capability.
- Enhances diversity of research funding in UK HEIs.
- Can enhance career development for research staff.
- Creates opportunities to work with the best in the field.
- Creates opportunities for collaboration with business/industry.



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Engagement in wider EU research policy development- ERA

- UUK responded in full to ERA Green Paper:
 - Welcome the creation of ERA. Important agenda in context of global competition. Broadly accepted analysis of situation and need for action.
 - EU's institutions and member states need to make research and innovation a bigger priority than it is today.
 - Stress that universities are at heart of 'knowledge triangle' because of their unique status (teaching, research & innovation).
 - Emphasise that higher education institutions (HEIs) are important drivers of economic and social prosperity; both through producing and acting as a magnet for knowledge and talent.
 - Emphasise links between ERA and EHEA (e.g. Bologna 3rd cycle)
 - Stress the need to enhance and strengthen research and innovation efforts within Europe, and not to reinvent or plan a system at the European level.



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Engagement in wider EU research policy development

- UUK ERA response cont...
 - Stress the need for new initiatives and proposals to be based on sound evidence and impact assessments.
 - Strengthening and professionalising the management of research across Europe; a key priority which goes hand in hand with greater autonomy (linked to discussion on modernisation of universities).
 - More emphasis on ERC and supporting excellence at European level.
 - Diversity of EU HEIs a strength.
 - More emphasis needed on implementation, rather than concept.



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Engagement- Implementation of ERA vision & taking forward the 'Ljubljana process' in the UK

- Charter and Code/mobility- liaising with European Commission to implement through UK Research Careers Concordat. Good progress.
- Work with UK govt to develop UK action plan in response to 'Better careers more mobility'.
- EIIIT- working to help shape the agenda. Support evolving role as 'beacon' for innovation (developing evidence, promoting good practice).
- Framework Programme (FP8)- starting to refine thinking, key priorities for us will be:
 - Enhanced budget
 - Sustainable funding for universities
 - Greater investment for ERC
 - Simplified processes
- Joint programming- supportive, but UK thinking is in early stages. Need to understand longer term implications (balance 'grand



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Full costing, reform in the UK- drivers

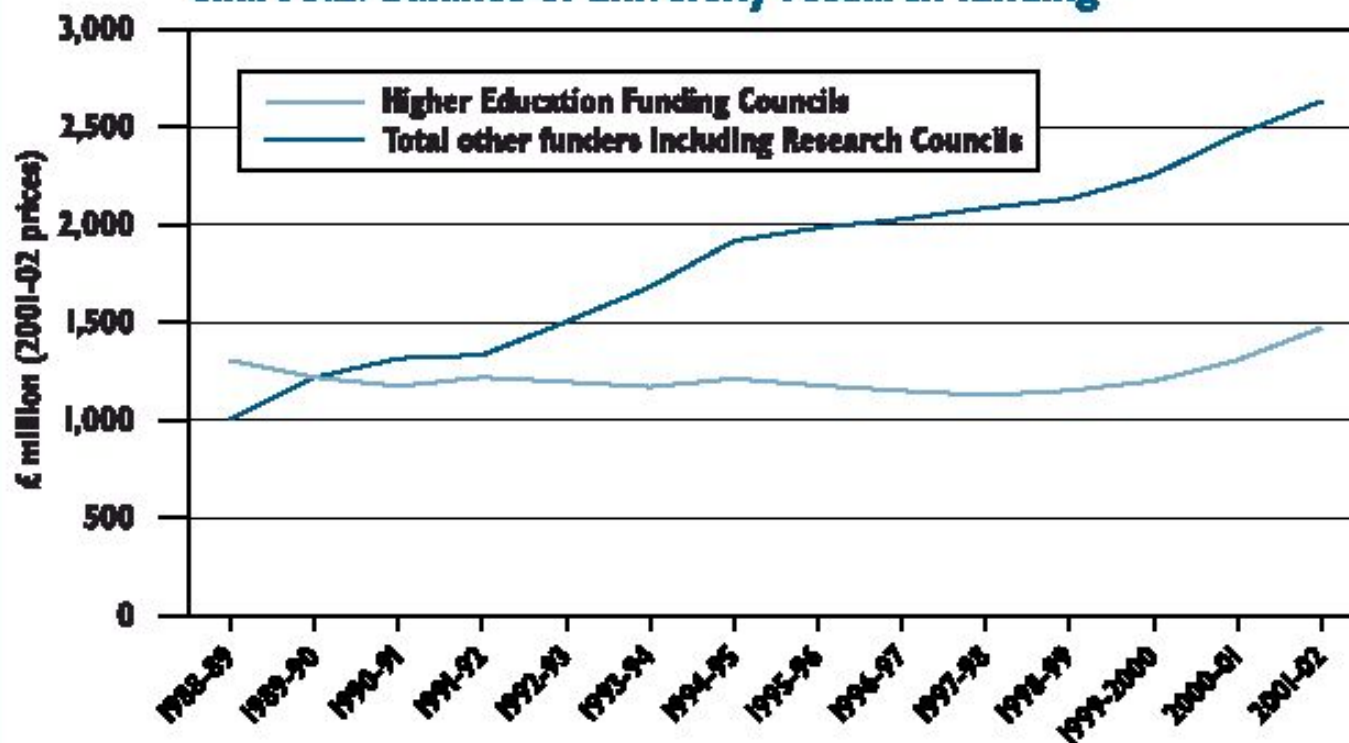
- Drivers to increase volume e.g. through the RAE, government economic policy, expansion of university sector etc.
- Absence of robust cost data led many institutions to underestimate the costs of research and other projects. Therefore, historically much research had been undertaken at below cost.
- Led to a situation where universities' infrastructure suffers and research base becomes 'unsustainable'.



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Full costing, reform in the UK-drivers

Chart 3.2: Balance of university research funding



Source: Office of Science and Technology



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Full costing- working towards sustainability

- 2002 & 2004 government spending reviews award more money to research in universities- both capital and recurrent.
- Principle to invest in research, but without building volume, so as to secure sustainability.
- Universities developed Transparent Approach to Costing (TRAC) to understand their costs at institutional level to help understand and manage sustainability.
- Full economic costing introduced at project level across all universities. From July 2005 all institutions are using TRAC to calculate the full economic costs (FEC) at project level to set price for grants from government and other funders.



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Full costing- working towards sustainability

- Institutional sustainability a condition of additional investment- embodied in the Financial Memorandum between universities and their funding councils...
- 5 elements to managing sustainability:
 - Establish and recognise the FEC of research
 - Manage the research activity strategically
 - Secure better prices for research
 - Improve project management and cost recovery
 - Invest in research infrastructure
- Must be done as part of long term strategy for the institution.



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Full costing and EU policy and funding

- Worked to help ensure that full costing on agenda of EU institutions and funders.
- Engaged in discussions with EUA and Commission (welcome recent EUA report and Commission Expert Group).
- Key objective to ensure sustainability of university based research.
- Encouraged discussion on how FP7 could be used to incentivise funding reform to move towards full costing.
- Adapted UK TRAC to meet requirements for FP7, which has now been agreed by Commission for use with 'simplified method' in FP7 (although very bureaucratic and currently seeking to reduce this).



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Questions?

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