

Research Excellence Grant and Research Postgraduate Grant responses

Date / time response submitted	12/01/2022 15:00
In what capacity are you submitting your response?	Organisation
Your organisation (if applicable)	Cancer research UK
Your full name	Sarah Cook
Telephone	7818597323
Email	sarah.cook@cancer.org.uk
Overarching issues	
Q1. If it were necessary, what would be the implications of delaying implementation of REF 2021 results and changes to REG until AY 2023-24?	
Q2. Should SFC seek to limit downward changes in REG experienced by individual universities post REF2021 and, if so, what should be the scope of any adjustments made?	
Q3. You are invited to comment in your answers throughout the document on opportunities for and barriers to advancing equality and achieving inclusion. Overarching comments related to the aims of the public sector duty in the context of this review should be made here.	
Q4. How important (or otherwise) is it that the Scottish approach to underpinning research funding is in step with the rest of the UK? What elements of consistency (or distinctiveness) in SFC's approach influence Scottish HEIs' research competitiveness?	
Q5. In the changing research landscape, is the balance of funding between SFC's underpinning support for research and underpinning support for	

PGR training & environment optimal?	
Research Excellence Grant	
Q6. Views are sought on the principles proposed for REG and on whether the proposals within this paper are consistent with the principles.	
Q7. What are your views on whether the current quality weightings for 3* and 4* REF scores are fit for purpose?	
Q8. What are your views on aligning the proportions of REGa allocated and the proportions of REF score elements?	
Q9. We would welcome your views on the balance between the elements of the REG formula. Within the income-driven elements, we welcome your views on whether we have included the correct income sources.	<p>Cancer Research UK (CRUK) is the largest independent funder of cancer research in the world. In 2020/21, we spent Â£421 million on new and ongoing research into the prevention, diagnosis and treatment of cancer - Â£30m of which was spent in Scotland.</p> <p>We support research into over 200 types of cancer, and our long-term investment in state-of-the-art facilities has helped to create a thriving network of research at 90 laboratories and institutions in more than 40 towns and cities across the UK supporting the work of over 4,000 scientists, doctors and nurses. The impact of our research has been transformative, with cancer survival doubling in the UK over the past 40 years. Our ambition is to see 3 in 4 people survive their cancer by 2034.</p> <p>Cancer Research UK welcomes the opportunity to respond to the Scottish Funding Council's consultation on the proposed changes to the Research Excellence Grant. We respond here to question 9 of that consultation that sets out the proposed increase to the Research Excellence Grant(c) element of REG from 11% to 15%.</p> <p>Summary</p> <p>Medical research charities contribute to the vibrant and diverse research ecosystem in Scotland. In 2018, the UKCRC estimated that charities funded 42% of all publicly funded medical research in Scotland - investing Â£122m1.</p> <p>Over the past five years, CRUK has spent over Â£188m on research funding in Scotland across 7</p>

universities including Aberdeen, Dundee, Edinburgh, Glasgow, Paisley, St Andrews and Stirling. We currently fund 100 PhD students and have 136 active awards in Scotland that are held by Principal Investigators.

Medical research charities, such as CRUK, typically pay for the direct costs of research and therefore universities in receipt of charity funding rely on the REGc to cover the indirect costs of research to sustain university infrastructure and joint facilities.

CRUK strongly supports and welcomes the relative increase to REGc from 11% to 15%. This increase is a positive step in supporting universities meet the full economic costs of research funded by medical research charities without reducing the amount of important, lifesaving research that charities can fund in Scotland.

The value of charity funding for a diverse R&D ecosystem

One of the key strengths of the UK's life sciences sector is its diverse research base - a combination of public, private and charitable funding sources, which supports innovation by fostering a network of expertise and enabling a wide range of projects. This creates a high-quality, globally competitive medical research environment and serves as a magnet for international talent and investment.

However, it also creates operational complexity and a lack of understanding of how everything fits together, leading to division between the different components of the ecosystem.

Universities are an integral part of the UK's science base, bringing together academic expertise and research funders to produce ground-breaking research that promotes innovation-led economic growth. Charities work in partnership with universities to deliver high-quality research. For instance, 93% of medical research charity grants go to universities, to fund life-saving clinical trials like the CRUK funded study looking at using MRI scans to detect breast cancer early in high-risk women.

Charity funding makes vital contributions to the UK's R&D base due to their focus on strong patient relationships and insight - this cannot simply be replaced by other funders.

Charities fund research and broker vital collaborations that represent what is important for patients as

well as addressing areas of unmet need like rare diseases.

Charities contribute to a vibrant and productive R&D ecosystem by investing in early-stage, high-risk research that contributes to downstream discoveries and direct impacts for patients. In 2018, the UKCRC estimated that charities funded 42% of all publicly funded health and medical research in Scotland - investing Â£122m1.

In addition to this, charities make significant contributions to the UK's skills pipeline - in 2018, the Association of Medical Research Charities (AMRC) estimated their members funded the salaries of 17,000 researchers across universities, the NHS and other bodies in all parts of the UK.

CRUK funding in Scotland

Over the past five years, CRUK has spent over Â£188m on research funding in Scotland, across 7 university research centres including Aberdeen, Dundee, Edinburgh, Glasgow, Paisley, St Andrews and Stirling, contributing to Scotland's vibrant and productive life sciences sector. We currently fund 100 PhD students and have 136 active awards in Scotland that are held by Principal Investigators.

In 2020/21, CRUK spent Â£30m on cancer research in Scotland - Â£19m in Glasgow, Â£9m in Edinburgh and Â£2m in Dundee. Scotland is home to the CRUK Edinburgh Centre and CRUK Glasgow Centre, as well as the prestigious CRUK Beatson Institute in Glasgow. Our researchers in these locations have expertise across a broad range of research areas and cancer types, including bowel and pancreatic cancer. Our scientists in Edinburgh also have expertise in brain tumour research and many are part of the CRUK Brain Tumour Centre of Excellence - a joint initiative between the University of Edinburgh and University College London.

Through the pioneering work of our researchers and doctors in Scotland, we're determined to make a difference to people with cancer in the region and beyond.

The impact of Scotland's past research

CRUK's Edinburgh Centre ran the pivotal breast cancer clinical trial that led to global marketing authorisation of the drug lapatinib. Lapatinib is a treatment for advanced breast cancer that have large

amounts of a protein called HER2. Researchers are also looking at using it to treat other types of cancer.

We developed new treatments for the most common type of brain tumour. Our scientists in Glasgow first manufactured the brain cancer drug, temozolomide, into capsule form. As a result, thousands of people now benefit from treatment with this drug worldwide.

Research happening right now in Scotland

In Glasgow, we're looking for molecular clues to detect pancreatic cancer earlier.

The symptoms of pancreatic cancer can be easily mistaken for other less serious conditions at first, meaning that it's typically diagnosed when the disease is at an advanced stage when there are very limited treatment options.

At the CRUK Beatson Institute, we are looking for molecular clues or 'markers' in blood samples that could be used to detect early pancreatic cancer. This research could identify new tests that could help doctors find pancreatic cancer earlier when more treatment options are available, ultimately helping more people to survive.

Why the Research Excellence Grant in Scotland is crucial to charity investment

The Research Excellent Grant (REG) is funding given by the Scottish Funding Council to universities in Scotland to contribute to the full economic costs of research. It is divided up into 3 parts based on the type of research income it is intended to top-up and is based on the results of the Research Excellence Framework (REF). For the Academic Year 2021/22 the SFC gave Â£242.9m through the REG.

The REGc component of the REG exists to top up the amount of funding received from charity funders, so that these grants cover more of the FEC (approximately equivalent to that which Research Councils will pay). UK universities receive around 12-14% of their research funding from UK charities with other funding coming from Government sources including Research Councils and Scottish Funding Council, industry and the EU.

The amount of REGc each HEI receives is a proportion of the overall REG it receives and CRUK strongly

	<p>supports the proposal to increase REGc from 11% to 15%.</p> <p>Charities are independent from government and have the unique position of leveraging the generous donations from the public and philanthropists to support research for public benefit that will improve health and wellbeing.</p> <p>When medical research charities fund research in universities, they typically agree to cover the direct costs of research, that which are essential for the project to run (e.g., researcher salaries, project materials and resources, and research equipment), but do not typically cover the indirect costs (e.g., estates, shared IT and administration) as Government funding is intended to support sustainable research infrastructure in universities.</p> <p>Data collected by CRUK shows that over the past 5 years, CRUK has covered 66% of the FEC of research in universities in Scotland. Current data from UK universities suggests that sector-wide grants from research charities covered 57.4% of the FEC of research in 2019-2020. Charities and universities in receipt of charity funding therefore rely on the REGc component of REG to uplift charity funded research to meet more of the FEC and enable universities to cover more of the total cost of research.</p> <p>CRUK appreciates that recovery of costs for universities is essential for making university research sustainable. However, if charities were expected to pay a higher percentage of the FEC, they would subsequently end up funding less research and thus provide fewer benefits for the patient populations they serve.</p> <p>The REGc is therefore an important recognition of the value of charity research, and CRUK is encouraged by the proposed uplift that further exemplifies this appreciation.</p> <p>References: 1 https://hrcsonline.net/reports/analysis-reports/uk-health-research-analysis-2018/ 2 https://www.amrc.org.uk/Handlers/Download.ashx?IDMF=0573087c-3e73-40af-9389-bb7975ba3880</p>
Research Postgraduate Grant	
Q10. Are the proposed principles for RPG	

appropriate and consistent with the purpose of the grant and the changing PGR landscape?	
Q11a. We are seeking views on the purpose of RPG and its future role in supporting Scottish institutions to respond – individually and collaboratively – to the changing landscape.	
Q11b. We are seeking views on taking forward increased accountability for RPG, for example by linking to shared objectives or outcomes, and how SFC and the sector could work in partnership to achieve this.	
Q12a. We are seeking views on how the RPG could play an increased role in improving participation of underrepresented groups within Scotland’s PGR community, particularly within specific research areas where under-representation is most extreme.	
Q12b. We are seeking views on how SFC’s focus on widening access and participation could be supported by RPG in the postgraduate research student context.	
Other comments	
Q13. Please make any other comments relevant to this consultation.	
Publication of responses	
We may publish a summary of the consultation responses and, in some cases, the responses themselves. Published responses may be attributed to an organisation where this information has been provided but will not contain personal data. When providing a response in an individual capacity, published responses will be anonymised. Please confirm whether or not you	Publish information and excerpts from this survey response INCLUDING the organisation name.

agree to your response being included in any potential publication.	
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