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Preparing for Changing Funding Streams:

The impact of Roberts' Funding in 1994 Group institutions

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What this talk will cover

- Why funding is needed
- Nature and purpose of Roberts' Funding
- Purpose of study
- 1994 Group Institutions
- Methodology
- Findings
- Conclusions

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Universities need funding to:

- Support student stipends（fees and maintenance） and research expenses
- Support skills training and career development opportunities
- Support associated academic and administrative structures / systems

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Roberts' Funding

- Established as part of Govt. response to Sir Gareth Roberts influential SET for Success review
  - Motivated by need to secure strong future supply of engineers and scientists in the UK
- Allocated around £20m per year for Career Development and Transferable Skills Training of PGRs and Post-Docs
- From 2004, Roberts' funding distributed as a 'ring-fenced' payment to UK universities
- Total level of funding depends on number of RC funded students (year 1) and post-docs (RA1)

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1994 Group study

- To examine the use and impact of Roberts' Funding on skills training and career development opportunities for PGRs and Post-Docs across 1994 Group institutions

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The 1994 Group

- Established in 1994, the Group brings together 18 internationally renowned, research intensive universities
  - Bath
  - Birkbeck
  - Durham
  - UEA
  - Essex
  - Exeter
  - Goldsmiths
  - Royal Holloway
  - Lancaster
  - Leicester
  - Loughborough
  - Queen Mary
  - Reading
  - St Andrews
  - SOAS
  - Surrey
  - Sussex
  - York

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Methodology

- Study carried out in Summer 2008 by research team at St Andrews
- Questionnaire sent to (and received from) all 18 1994 Group Universities
- Seven also provided their most recent annual Roberts' Summary Report

The 1994 Group Early Career Researcher population

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- Combined community of nearly 17,000 PGRs and nearly 5,000 Post-Docs
- Almost half scientists & engineers (60% at Post-Doc level), and one-third social scientists. Present in all institutions
- Arts & Humanities and Medicine & Health make up smaller proportion and less evenly distributed

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Funding received

- Group receives total of nearly £4m annually
- Comes from all 7 RCs, but almost half from EPSRC
- Funding received for 4500 PGRs / Post-Docs (ie 20% of total population)
- Majority of Universities manage the funding centrally. Majority spent on:
  - staff salaries (eg trainers, coordinators, administrators, careers advisors, enterprise specialists – total of 79 posts)
  - external trainers
  - course provision
- Senior managers involved in management of funding

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Leverage

- As a result of Roberts' Funding, institutions have invested, sometimes considerable, amounts of their own financial and other resources to support skills training and early career development, eg in terms of
  - Expansion of training provision
  - Employment of new support staff
  - Development of Graduate Schools
- Important use of QR funding

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Impacts

- Major new skills development programmes & coordinated training activities in all 1994 Group Univs.
  - Cover all areas of Joint Skills Statement
  - Some aimed at engaging particular cohorts
- New forms of postdoctoral provision
  - Skills courses & workshops, career coaching & planning, mentoring, participation in accredited training programmes
- Supporting supervisors' / PIs' understanding of, and engagement with, skills agenda

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Engagement

- At least 9000 PGRs and Post-Docs in 1994 Group univs benefited from Roberts' training in past year
  - Represents 42% of total PGR / Post-Doc community
  - Includes non RCUK funded UK / Europe and International
- Engagement levels higher for PGRs than Post-Docs, and for first year PGRs than those in subsequent years
- Attendance at specific sessions is mostly optional but Univs working hard to promote and encourage attendance and to fulfil obligations to RCUK

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Additional Enhancements

- Improved intra- and inter- institutional collaborative working
  - E.g. shared provision of generic training, networking events, interdisciplinary workshops
- Improved induction
- New systems for personal development planning
- Improved mentoring
- Improved systems for soliciting student feedback and record keeping

Knowledge Transfer & Employer Engagement

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- Funding used to enhance skills development in different aspects of Knowledge Transfer
  - E.g. commercialisation, entrepreneurship, business skills training
- Some examples of facilitating knowledge / skills in outreach & public policy engagement
- Increased opportunities for researchers to engage with external employers and access researcher-specific career advice and support

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Conclusions （1）

- Marked improvement in training / support of PGRs / Post-docs as a result of Roberts' funding.
- Funding is encouraging and helping universities to develop innovative approaches, projects, and collaborations to enhance skills training and career development, improve awareness of, and skills, in KT, and facilitate better employer engagement
- PGRs and Post-Docs better integrated into overall research environment / structures

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Conclusions （2）

- As a result of provision of funding, institutions have also invested, sometimes considerable, amounts of their own financial and other resources to support skills training and development
- But there is still more to do; many excellent innovations are still being put in place or at an early conceptual stage
- Clear need for ring-fenced Roberts' funding to continue - for the benefit of our early career population, wider UK research community, and other employers