FUTURE CHALLENGES FROM AN EPSRC POINT OF VIEW

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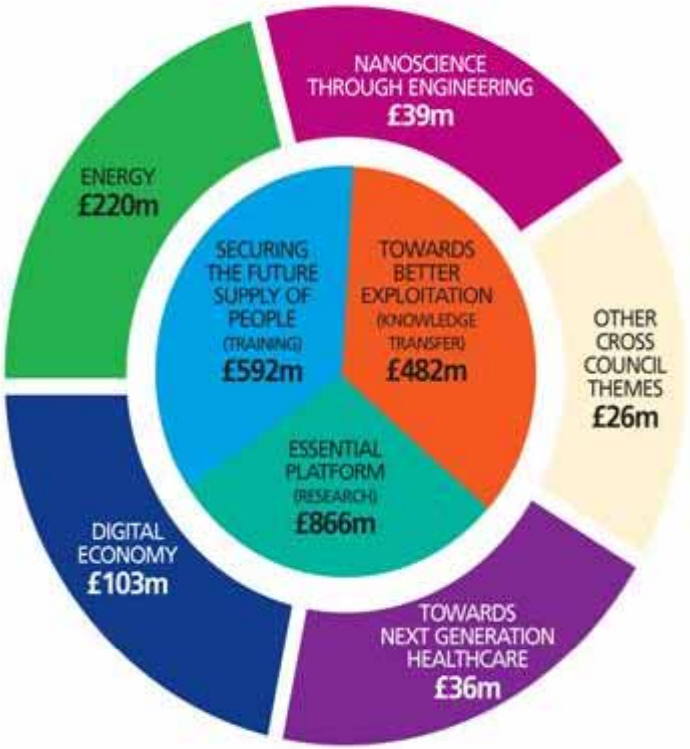
Engineering and Physical Sciences Research Council

1994 Group: Research Issues

08-11



→ **Then**

- Tighter Financial Environment
- Tougher Global Competition
- Crowded Landscape
- BIS/government focus
- H.E. Framework
- RAE → REF

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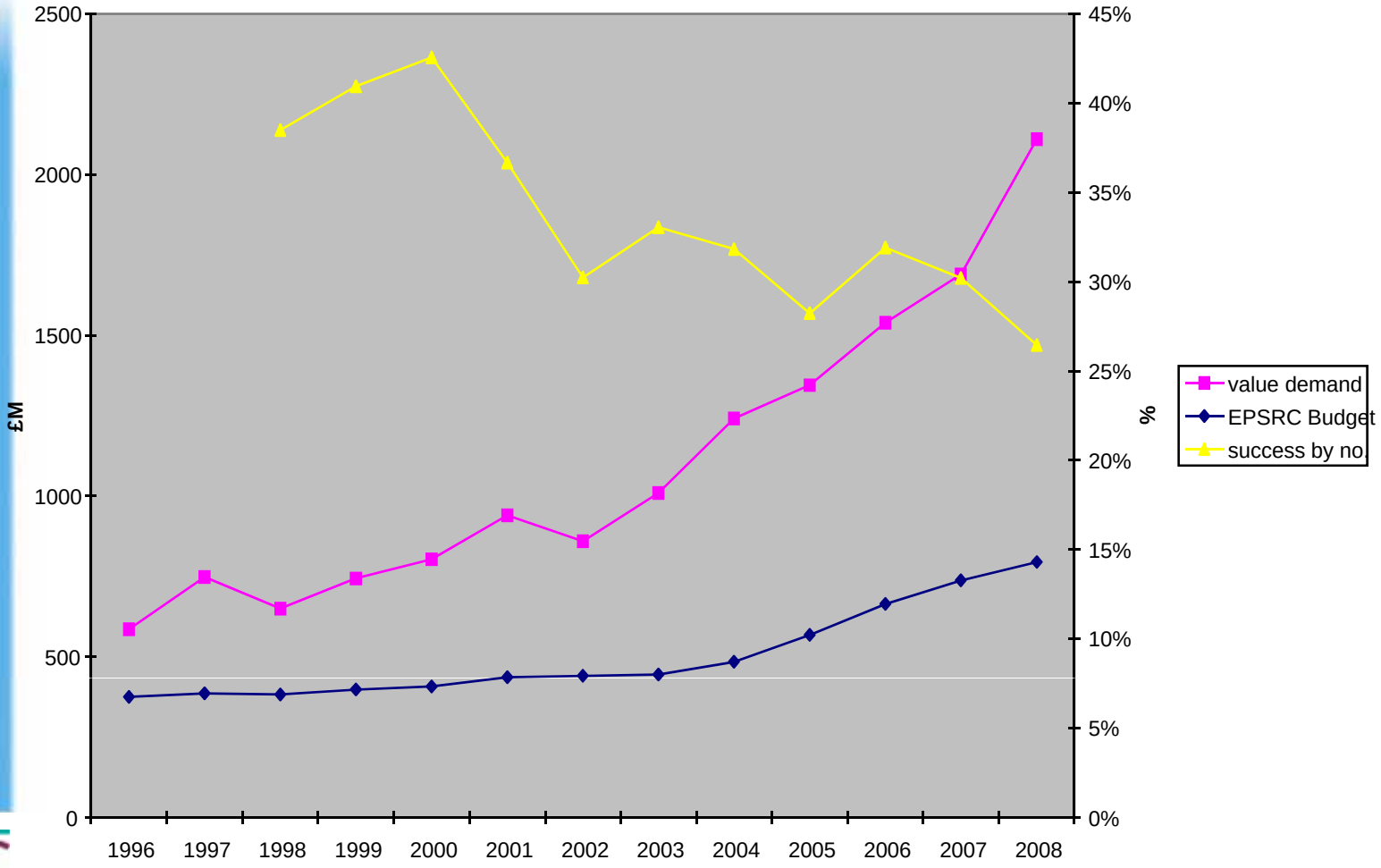
Demand Management Context 1: Rising Cost, Rising Volume…



2004 – 75% Referees response rate
2009 – 55% Referees response rate

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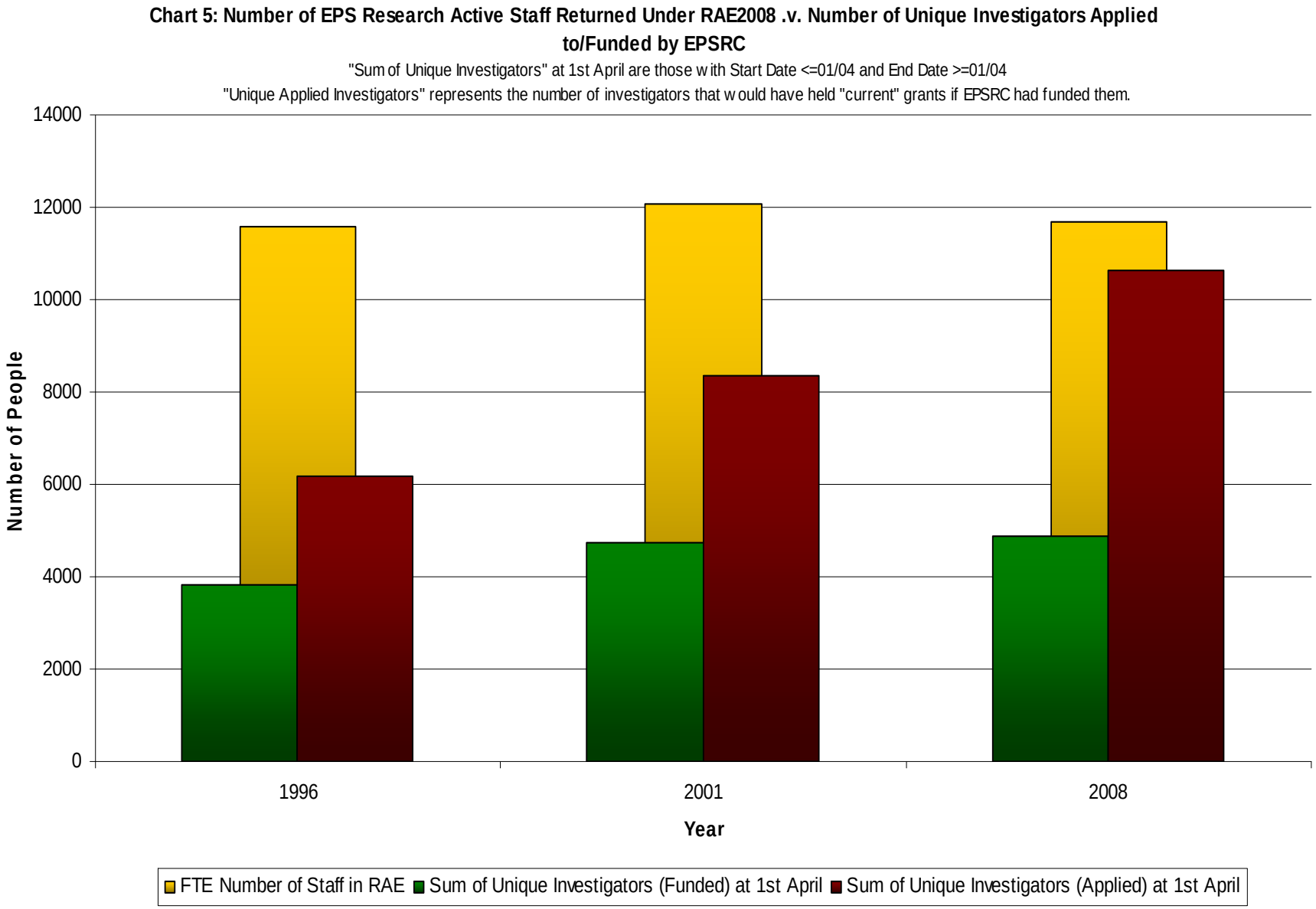
Demand Management Context 2: Rising number of applicants…



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Demand Management

- No resubmission
- From April 2010 identified applicants will be limited to 1 proposal a year
- Lists of <5 proposals discounted
- Will make more data public
- What can institutions do to help manage demand?
- Additional measures – Ideas?

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Challenges and Issues for Research

Table 2.1: PSA target metrics for the UK research base

Research field	World ranking	Trend 96-05	Highlights
Bioscience	2	↔	• UK increasing overall citation and highly cited share.
Business	2	↑	• UK very high on citation "productivity".
Clinical	2	↑	• Agile research base – second in seven out of ten broad research disciplines
Environmental sciences	2	↔	
Humanities	2	↔	
Pre-clinical	2	↔	
Social sciences	3	↑	
Mathematics	4	↔	
Physical sciences	4	↑	
Engineering	4	↔	

- Observation

  EPSRC funding 900 departments
  55% <£1M; >33% <500k

  50% of DTA funds in 10 universities

  85 universities hold project studentships (but 50% in 10 institutions)

- Challenge

  International context and Drayson

- Stop Press

  EPSRC Publishing Landscapes:

  - How can we work together on this?

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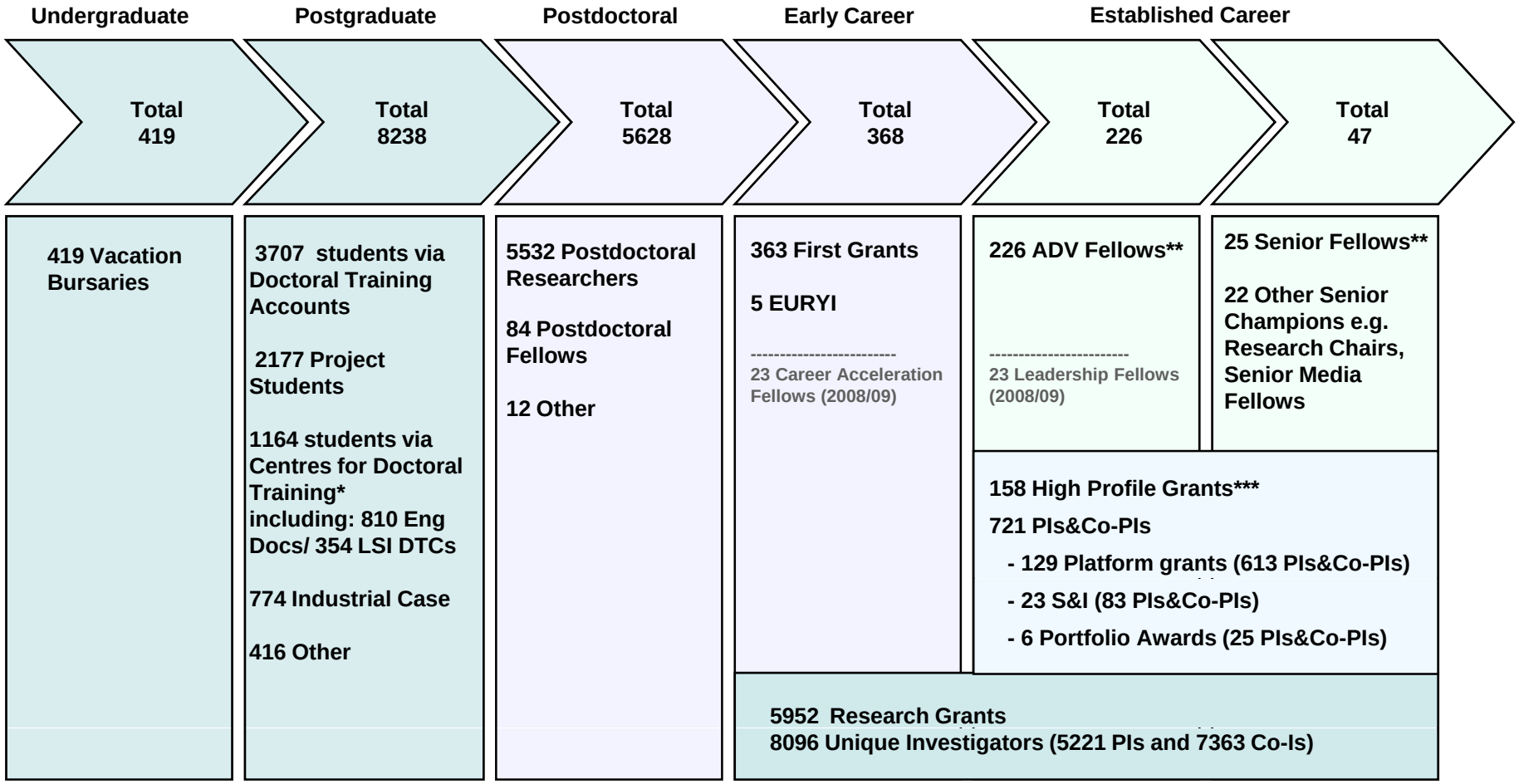
People - Number Supported Across the Career Path - Current Portfolio 2008



KEY FOCUS THIS YEAR

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Key Issues

- How do we get the best people, with the best training, carrying out research on the most important topics?!

- Should we (and/or the Universities) be supporting more PhD students via the centre type approach? What is the right balance? - £280M invested this year

- How can we all make best strategic use of the Doctoral Training Grant Studentships?

- How do international students best support EPSRC's objectives? Is there a correct balance between home and overseas students?

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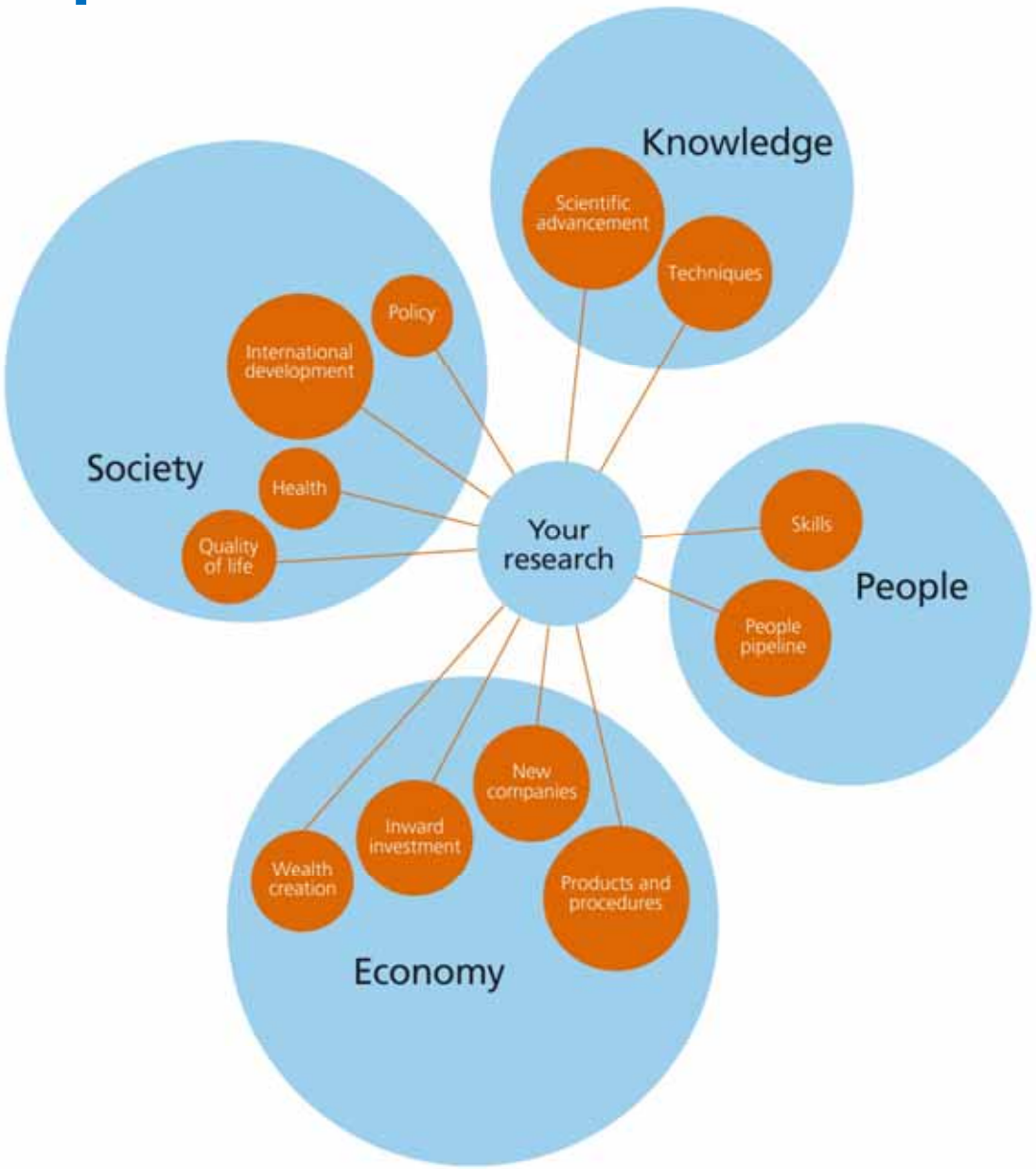
Impact what is it?



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Looking ahead what are your views?

- What sort of support is most important at the early stage of careers – EPSRC v. Institutions support

- What are the likely pressures on your income streams which could influence your support of people?

- Given demographic trends how will we encourage brightest people to do research?

- Have you identified any gaps in capability for research or user led activities?

- How can we all really up our game in achieving and demonstrating impact from EPSRC's portfolio?

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End of Presentation

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Knowledge Transfer Accounts

Call issued July 6 2008

Open meeting held on 9 July, all potential applicants invited

46 FAQs answered and published on EPSRC website by end July

Eight pages of additional guidance emailed to all potential applicants with the call document

Scoring system sent to applicants 3 September (used unchanged in panel guidance)

Panel ‘indicators’ document developed 22 October and sent to applicants 29 October (used unchanged in panel guidance)

Applications received 5 November

Generic and (where there was any) specific feedback sent to applicants 20 January; responses returned to EPSRC by 29 January for panel meeting 18-19 February. Normal conflicts of interest procedures used at panel

Full funding decisions emailed on 16 March, on web 19 March including panel details (standard one-month delay.) All requests for feedback responded to by end April 2009

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