

# THE FESTIVAL OF HIGHER EDUCATION

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UNIVERSITY  
OF LONDON

# Everything you wanted to know about research but were too afraid to ask

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# Ground Rules

- There are no stupid questions and usually the stupid ones lead to the best debates
- This session depends on you asking lots of questions
- Please don't worry about your question being tangential or your own hobby horse
- If Stephen or I don't know the answer then it must be a very good question but we'll come back
- Use this as a space to think, reflect, and come back and write something for Wonkhe
- Research and innovation policy is sprawling, interesting, and with lots of overlaps. Feel free to get lost.



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# What actually is research

## What do we mean by research and innovation?

Research is the discovery and creation of new knowledge and ideas. Universities undertake many different types of research, from cutting-edge activity that leads to new discoveries and breakthroughs, to equally important foundational research, which provides evidence and understanding of complex topics.

Innovation is how universities share their knowledge, research, and facilities to help develop new ideas and products, peoples' skills and new or emerging businesses, as well as support for industry and public services.

Together, university research and innovation are making life-changing discoveries, attracting billions in investment across the UK, and creating the jobs and businesses of now and for the future. But for this to continue, UK universities need a long-term, sustainable commitment from government.

**Why does university research matter?- UUK**



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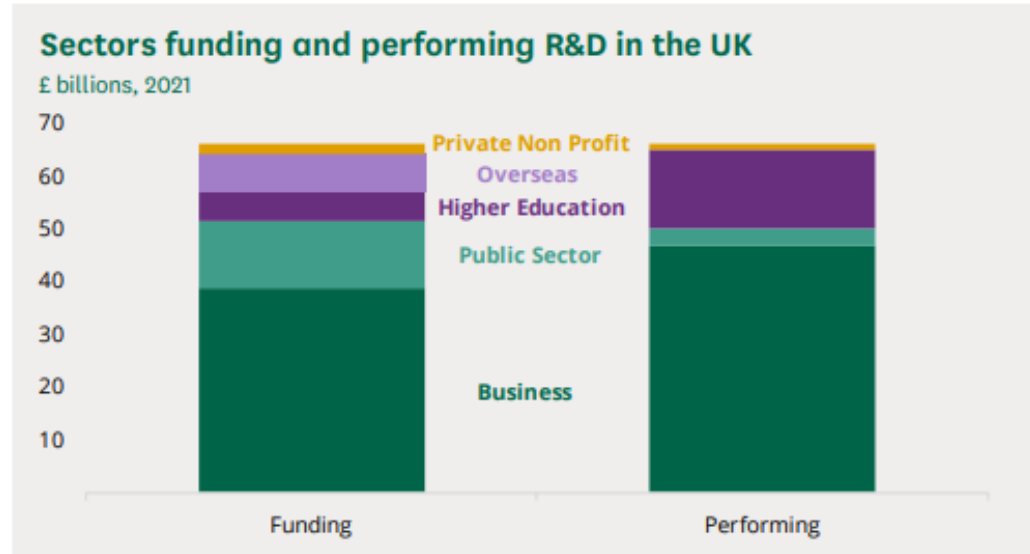
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# Total R&D Funding

In total, businesses funded 59% (£38.7 billion) of all R&D performed in the UK.



Note: Public sector includes UK and devolved governments, UKRI and higher education funding councils.

Source: ONS, [UK gross domestic expenditure on research and development, 2021](#), table 1



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# Finance



**Arts and Humanities Research Council**

UKRI AHRC funds outstanding original research across the whole range of the arts and humanities.



**Biotechnology and Biological Sciences Research Council**

UKRI BBSRC invests to push back the frontiers of biology and deliver a healthy, prosperous and sustainable future.



**Economic and Social Research Council**

UKRI ESRC is the UK's largest funder of economic, social, behavioural and human data science.



**Engineering and Physical Sciences Research Council**

UKRI EPSRC creates knowledge in engineering and physical sciences for UK capability to benefit society and the economy.



**Innovate UK**

UKRI Innovate UK is the UK's national innovation agency supporting business-led innovation in all sectors, technologies and UK regions.



**Medical Research Council**

UKRI MRC funds research at the forefront of science to prevent illness, develop therapies and improve human health.



**Natural Environment Research Council**

UKRI NERC is the driving force of investment in environmental science.



**Research England**

UKRI Research England funds and engages with English higher education providers, to create and sustain the conditions for a healthy and dynamic research and knowledge exchange system in the higher education sector.



**Science and Technology Facilities Council**

UKRI STFC supports research in astronomy, physics, space science and operates world-class research facilities for the UK.

## Our nine councils, delivering together

Our nine councils work together in innovative ways to deliver an ambitious agenda, drawing on our great depth and breadth of expertise and the enormous diversity of our portfolio.

Through our councils we maintain and champion the creativity and vibrancy of disciplines and sector-specific priorities and communities. Our councils shape and deliver both sectoral and domain-specific support.

Whether through research council grants, quality-related block grants from Research England, or grants and wider support for innovative businesses from Innovate UK, we work with our stakeholders to understand the opportunities and requirements of all the different parts of the research and innovation landscape, maintaining the health, breadth and depth of the system.

[Read about our councils' current priorities in their delivery plans](#)

## How we receive funding

As part of the government's Spending Review we submit an overview on how we plan to spend money to DSIT, which considers this within the department's overall spending plan that goes on to HM Treasury.

The recommendations from HM Treasury goes to the Cabinet (including the Prime Minister and Chancellor) which decides how to allocate funding to government departments in line with government priorities. In addition to the Spending Reviews, the Treasury also designates research and innovation funding in the annual Budget, and sometimes in the Spring Statement or other ad hoc announcements.

In addition to the funding allocated directly to us from DSIT, UKRI also manages programmes on behalf of the department and delivers additional funding for other government departments.



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# Finance

## How investment is balanced between project-specific and strategic institutional funding

The Higher Education and Research Act 2017 sets out a commitment to maintain the balance of funding across the UK's dual support system for universities, which has been in place for over a century.

UKRI is asked to advise The Department of Business, Energy and Industrial Strategy (BEIS) on the appropriate balance of funding, known as the dual support funding ratio. It bases its recommendation on evidence and analysis across all relevant funding streams. The level of project-specific to strategic institutional funding can vary year on year.

BEIS allocate the other nations' governments their share of funding using the Barnett formula.

In the financial year 2021 to 2022, the ratio of Research England to research council funding was set at 64 pence to the pound. Specifically with respect to competitive project grant awards, £2.3 billion was awarded by research councils to English universities, while £2.1 billion was allocated by Research England.



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# What are some of the big themes



Independent Review of the  
UK's Research, Development  
and Innovation  
Organisational Landscape  
Final Report and Recommendations

March 2023

# REF 2029

Research Excellence Framework



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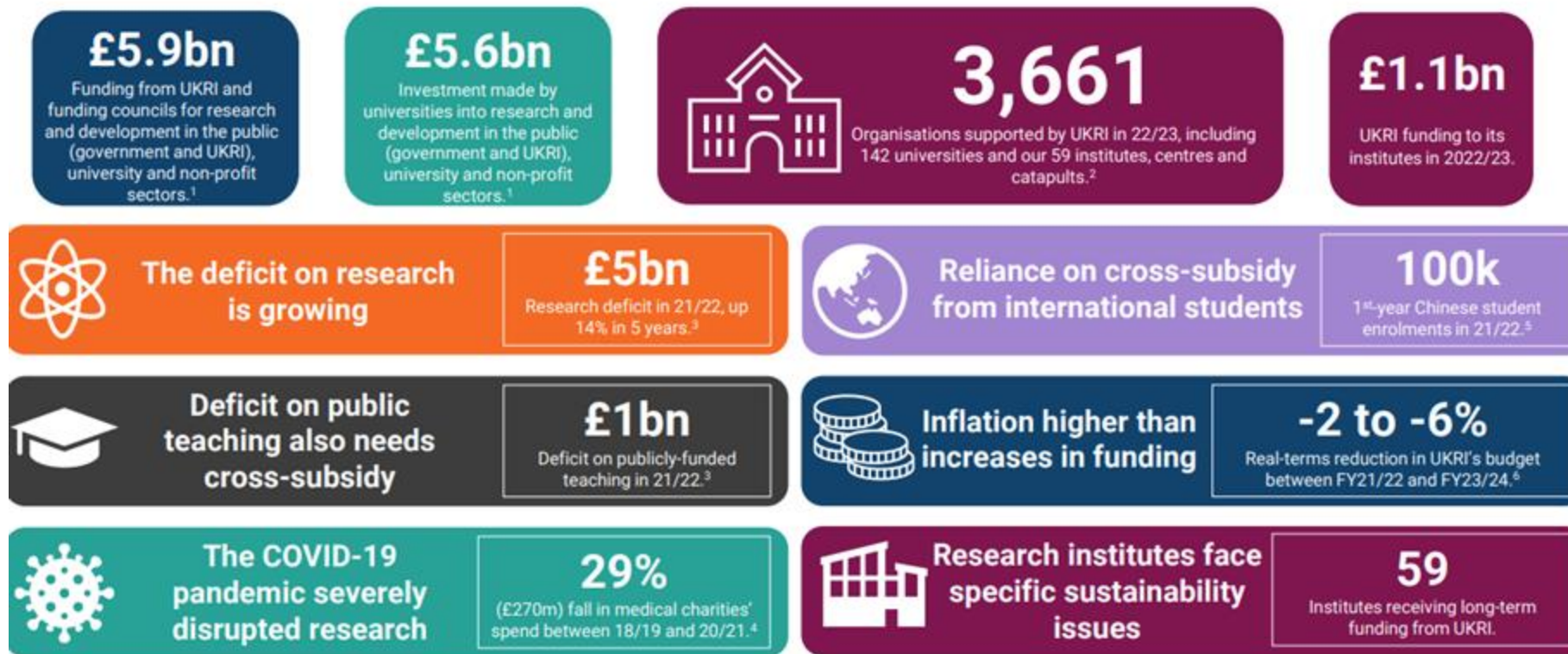
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# What are some of the big challenges- UKRI Data Pack on Financial Sustainability



# Questions



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