



University and College Union

‘Further, higher, better’

**Submission to the government’s
second Comprehensive Spending
Review**

Section 13

13 Research infrastructure

The bulk of spending since 2002 on research infrastructure has been on capital items for science.

Science research infrastructure

The report by JM Consulting for the Office of Science and Technology (OST), 'Study of Science Research Infrastructure' (December 2001), said that £2.7bn (at 2001 prices) was needed as remedial investment in generic institutional infrastructure in science research in UK higher education institutions. A further £0.5bn was needed to upgrade research facilities to the level of the well-found laboratory which an external sponsor might expect to find in place, and an additional £1bn was needed to provide advanced equipment and facilities, making a total of £4.2bn needed in research infrastructure investment.

Analysis of expenditure on science research infrastructure expenditure since 2002 by the OST and the higher education funding bodies shows around £2.8bn in public spending on this area. A further £225m was provided by the Wellcome Trust in SRIF round 1, making a total investment of £3.1bn in science infrastructure.⁴⁹ According to this analysis, there is an approximate shortfall of £1.1bn on the amount of research infrastructure investment needed, as well as the additional cost of inflation.

Research infrastructure funding

		SRIF via Science Budget, UK-wide	HEFCE: JIF & SRIF funding <small>50 51 52 53</small>	HEFCW <small>54 55 56 57</small>	SHEFC <small>58 59 60 61</small>	DELNI: SRIF
		£m	£m	£m	£m	£m
JIF ⁶²	1999-00		50	3.2	3	
	2000-1		100	8.2	5	
	2001-2		150	10.8	10	
SRIF1 ⁶³	2002-3	125	150	10.8	10	
	2003-4	250	150	10.8	10	
SRIF2	2004-5	297	200	10.8	15	19.4
	2005-6	300	200	10.8	15	
SRIF3	2006-7	300	200	10.8	15	
	2007-8	300	203	10.8	15	
	Total since 2002	1572	1103	64.8	80	

JIF: Joint Infrastructure Fund; SRIF: Science Research Investment Fund; HEFCE: Higher Education Funding Council for England; HEFCW: Higher Education Funding Council for Wales; SHEFC: Scottish Higher Education Funding Council; DELNI: Department for Lifelong Learning Northern Ireland.

Comment

We welcome the major steps which have been taken over the past decade to invest in research infrastructure in UK higher education. But we call on the government to work with the sector to meet the outstanding needs for investment in research infrastructure. Without this additional expenditure, UK higher education institutions will be trying to maintain a world-class research base with buildings which are unfit for purpose, with growing health and safety risks due to ageing structures and equipment, and with poor facilities which will not attract the cadre of researchers the sector badly needs.