

Supporting Research in Universities

AMRC welcomes the Government's commitment to public good research and the additional resources for universities announced in the 2004 Spending Review. The new charity research support fund will underpin public good research and is an explicit recognition of the importance of the partnerships between charities and HEIs in supporting a wide range of medical and health research.

The *Science and Innovation Investment Framework 2004-2014* sets out the criteria identifying what research funding will be eligible in the new scheme. These criteria include that the research should be for the public good, that the funder should have a published research strategy and that the research should be competitively assessed to be of high quality. It is expected that funding from all AMRC member charities will be eligible for the additional funding.

AMRC supports the principle that universities should aim for a sustainable research base. This will require all institutions to have an understanding of the full costs of their research activity and to be transparent in the way they account for these costs.

Research in UK HEIs is funded from a variety of sources, with different levels of resource, priorities, objectives and histories. Charities differ from the research councils and from industry in the way they fund research. They are independent from government and their purpose is to support research for public benefit that will improve human health and wellbeing. Charities have to take into account their own research priorities and the needs and opportunities of their areas of interest. In response, they have developed many different funding schemes that provide both short- and long-term support for people, research units and centres, for capital including major equipment and buildings, and short-term research proposals. For the most part, charities respond to research proposals and plans put forward by institutions themselves and will not seek to own the intellectual property arising from the research. Although many charities are disease specific, they rarely commission or direct the research they fund in universities but support university employees to pursue research that they themselves have proposed. AMRC would therefore expect HEIs to take these issues into account when pricing the research funded by charities.

The coming two or three years will be a period of change and adjustment for both HEIs and research funders. AMRC will be working with its member charities and research institutions to understand better how charity funding partnerships can be placed on a sustainable footing across the range of research activity and types of research institutions. These discussions will be based upon the following principles:

- AMRC charities remain committed to supporting research in UK HEIs;
- AMRC believes that government is primarily responsible for provision of the UK biomedical science base;
- Where it is within their charitable objects and appropriate for them to do so, AMRC encourages its member charities to contribute towards a sustainable science base in HEIs through the support of longer term funding for people and facilities;
- HEIs should understand the full economic costs of proposed research facilities or activities when seeking financial support from charities;
- Charities will not normally meet the full economic costs of the research they are supporting, especially for responsive mode funding;
- HEIs will be expected to contribute resources from QR, including the charitable support fund, in order to meet the full costs of research in partnership with charities;
- Charities will not contribute a percentage overhead towards general university infrastructure;
- Charities are unlikely to respond positively to demands to fund research activity on the basis of a fixed percentage of research costs (as is proposed for research councils);
- AMRC will work with member charities and HEIs to develop new models of partnership funding that will enable charities of all sizes to develop their commitment to research in a sustainable way.