



June 2026

Science Council statement on cuts to science funding

The Science Council and its member bodies, which collectively bring together and support more than 330,000 scientists across the UK, are concerned by the Government and UKRI changes to funding for elements of science research and development. These changes appear to have been made with limited notice and without meaningful consultation with the scientific community.

To date, proposed real-terms funding reductions are falling on scientific infrastructure, affecting disciplines such as astronomy, physics, chemistry and meteorology. Additionally, we are concerned about impacts on curiosity-driven research, which is critical and underpins progress across different sciences. Decisions that weaken these two foundations risk significant long-term consequences for the UK's research capability, innovation capacity, and international standing and will affect an entire generation of current and future researchers.

The Science Council and its member bodies are asking the Government to:

- **Adopt a measured and transparent approach to changes in science funding**, ensuring that decisions are informed by robust evidence and clear long-term objectives.
- **Consult proactively with the scientific community and its representative bodies** before implementing significant changes to research, development and innovation funding, to fully understand potential impacts and reduce unintended consequences.
- **Recognise the critical importance of continuity and stability in science funding**, particularly for infrastructure and for foundational and curiosity-driven research that delivers long-term value.
- **Improve communication and engagement with the research community** in advance of funding announcements, providing clarity on rationale, timelines and anticipated impacts.
- **Acknowledge the long-term implications of current funding decisions** for the UK's research capacity, skills pipeline and international competitiveness.

Research, development and innovation are proven drivers of productivity, economic growth and improved living standards, delivering benefits to individuals, communities and the wider economy across the UK. Long-term, stable investment in research and development is central to sustained economic growth and supports the Government's objectives of creating high-skilled jobs, addressing societal challenges such as climate change, and delivering on the ambitions of the UK's Modern Industrial Strategy.

Curiosity-driven research plays a vital role in generating transformative ideas and breakthroughs, often leading to applications and industries that could not have been foreseen at the outset. This form of research is essential to maintaining a healthy, resilient and adaptable research base.

Science Council, c/o Fora Space, 71 Central Street, London EC1V 8AB
T: 020 3434 2020 E: enquiries@sciencecouncil.org
www.sciencecouncil.org

At present, it is unclear how UK research will be managed and monitored following these changes, or how critical scientific capability will be safeguarded over the medium to long-term.

The Science Council recognises the fiscal and strategic pressures facing public investment decisions. However, abrupt or insufficiently consulted changes to science funding risk undermining confidence, disrupting research careers, and weakening the long-term impact of public investment.

The Science Council and its member bodies stand ready to work constructively with UKRI and the Government to support a strong, sustainable and globally competitive UK science system.

Institute of Materials, Minerals & Mining

Institute of Biomedical Science

Royal Astronomical Society

Geological Society of London

Royal Meteorological Society

Institute of Mathematics and its Applications

Nuclear Institute

Institute of Marine Engineering, Science & Technology

Chartered Association of Sports and Exercise Sciences

Association for Science Education

Institution of Environmental Sciences

Chartered Institute of Water and Environmental Management

Association of Anatomical Pathology Technology

Institute of Corrosion

Institution of Chemical Engineers

Institute of Science and Technology

Operational Research Society

Institute of Physics and Engineering in Medicine

Association for Laboratory Medicine

Royal Society of Biology

Institute of Physics

Institute of Food Science & Technology

Society for Natural Sciences

Royal Society of Chemistry

British Society of Soil Science

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