

## Balancing Capability

The past 18 months have been a busy time for the Balancing Capability project, with numerous engagement activities including meetings, workshops and discussions with our academic communities, learned societies, advisory teams, networks and EPSRC Council. We have also completed an extensive evidence gathering process and maintained continuous dialogue with our stakeholders.

All of this activity has been to ensure our investments are targeted in the most appropriate and effective ways that enable the research community to deliver excellent science and ensures new research opportunities are able to flourish.

**On 15th February 2017 we will be publishing the outcomes of the Balancing Capability activity on our website.** Each research area has its own strategy articulated through a rationale, which has been developed as a result of engagement activities with our stakeholders, evidence analysis and strategic advice. In addition to the research area rationales we will also be publishing the full list of evidence received through the 'Call for Evidence' activity, the process followed for the project and the individual engagement activities by each EPSRC Theme. Senior Managers will also communicate the process and outcomes of the project through videos available on the EPSRC website.

### Balancing; An evolving process

Managing our portfolio is an evolving process and we are continually reviewing our research areas to ensure the EPSRC portfolio aligns with areas of UK strength and national importance, and maintain the UK's international research standing. Our research areas are our 'building blocks' for delivering the new outcomes

framework of our Delivery Plan. We set out our strategic trajectories for each research area in the Delivery Plan period of 2011-2015 during the Shaping Capability strategy. The Balancing Capability project considered the lessons learned from the process and during the next Delivery Plan period (2016-2020) we will ensure that our research area strategies support our future aspirations.

Managing our portfolio enables us to respond to changes from both community-led and from strategic level research. We remain committed to supporting excellent research across our portfolio with a balance of 60 per cent community driven research and 40 per cent by strategic intervention.

Community-led change arises from the research community (eg the first decade of research on graphene was almost entirely community-led from within physics research). Strategic change tends to be led from outside of the research community, often focusing on rapidly creating or expanding a capability to secure a UK competitive position (eg in Quantum Technology).

**If you have any concerns or questions regarding the Balancing Capability Strategy, please contact your EPSRC Portfolio Manager.**



For more information:  
<https://www.epsrc.ac.uk/research/ourportfolio/>

## Research Fish

Robust data about the outcomes and impact of our investments is essential to EPSRC. It informs the development of our strategy and enables our Council to make the strongest possible case to government for continued substantial public investment in science and engineering.

Outcomes include (but are not limited to):

- Publications
- Leveraged further funding
- Commercially valuable intellectual property
- Creation of new business/employment
- Influences on public policy
- New products/processes/methods
- Training of future research leaders

EPSRC (and each of the other UK Research Councils) uses **researchfish®** to collect summary records from principal investigators describing the outputs, outcomes and impacts arising from our grants.



Records can be added at any time after a grant starts, and must normally be brought up to date at least annually during specified 'submission periods'.

**The current submission period closes at 4pm on Thursday 16th March 2017.**

Students supported through EPSRC training grants are also expected to report their outcomes using **researchfish®**. Further details about **researchfish®** and how the UK Research Councils use data collected by the system is available in the research outcomes section of the RCUK website.



For more information:  
<http://www.rcuk.ac.uk/research/researchoutcomes/>

## CDT Mid-Term Review

In 2013/14, EPSRC funded 115 Centres for Doctoral Training (CDT) with the aim to deliver 'a balanced skills portfolio to avoid systemic skills shortages in the UK and increase the satisfaction of both students and their employers' (EPSRC Strategic Plan 2010). It is EPSRC practice to monitor and evaluate its key investments and the sheer scale of CDT investments (£506 million in the 2013 Call plus over £450 million leveraged from users) raises the awareness and the expectations from others, particularly Government.

Individual CDTs that were funded through the 2013 exercise received evaluation requests in the Autumn 2016, which were returned to EPSRC in January 2017. All evaluation documents are currently being analysed and evaluated, and we expect the review to be published in June 2017.

The EPSRC monitoring and evaluation framework provides a basic framework for the monitoring and evaluation of all Centres for Doctoral Training throughout their lifetime, from the start of the training grants to their end point with EPSRC funding.

The purpose of monitoring and evaluating the Centres for Doctoral Training is to assess:

- the progress of the individual centres – to understand where CDTs are doing well but also to highlight where CDTs are struggling or failing
- the status of the landscape, raising our knowledge of the portfolio and shaping our priorities
- outputs from CDTs, with highlights and case studies
- models that work and best practice across key criteria
- the demand (from all angles, including students and users)
- the assurance that the leverage promised for individual CDTs has been realised
- evidence to make the case for continued support

## Diversity and inclusion barriers in Information and Communication Technologies research

What are the barriers faced by some minority groups in pursuing an ICT research career? Working with partners the British Computer Society, NMI and the UK Computing Research Committee, EPSRC has commissioned the Employment Research Institute Edinburgh Napier University to complete a study considering this and other diversity based questions via an online survey.

Currently, approximately 25 per cent of the ICT student population, and 18 per cent of the research staff in computer sciences and electronic and electrical engineering, are women.

The aim of the Underrepresented Groups in ICT research study is to investigate why certain groups, such as women, are underrepresented within the ICT research community, and understand the challenges and barriers faced by these groups. This study will present a national picture, making it easier to identify the challenges and the potential appropriate interventions.



Academic staff and postgraduates are asked to complete the online survey [www.research.net/r/diversityICT](http://www.research.net/r/diversityICT) by Tuesday 28th February 2017.

## Latest EPSRC Blog

Find out what some of our researchers new year's resolutions are in the **EPSRC guest blog**.

Also, if you missed this year's Christmas Lectures by the Royal Institution, don't despair! There's another chance to watch Professor Saiful Islam present '**Supercharged – Fuelling the Future**' online.

If you would like to write for the EPSRC guest blog contact: [pressoffice@epsrc.ac.uk](mailto:pressoffice@epsrc.ac.uk).



## Industrial Strategy and Industrial Strategy Challenge Fund

The Government has published a Green Paper on the UK's new Industrial Strategy and is inviting contributions via the CitizenSpace online consultation platform: <https://beisgovuk.citizenspace.com/strategy/industrial-strategy>. With Science, Research and Innovation noted as one of the ten pillars of the Industrial Strategy we encourage you to participate.

The Industrial Strategy Challenge Fund (ISCF), announced by the Prime Minister at the 2016 CBI Annual Conference, is one of the key programmes within the Industrial Strategy and some of you may have taken part in the workshops that have been running across the UK over recent weeks. These workshops,

hosted by Innovate UK, Knowledge Transfer Network and the Research Councils were designed to gather input on how this cross-disciplinary fund can best support UK industries and our world-leading science base in some of the greatest societal challenges of our time. For further information and for those unable to attend, a video of the plenary session from the workshops is available here: <https://www.youtube.com/watch?v=RF6HZJApEGM>; outlining current thinking on the ISCF and the nature of the input being sought.

Stay up to date by following the BEIS, Research Councils UK, Innovate UK and KTN Twitter feeds, using the hashtags #ISCFChallenges and #IndustrialStrategy.

