



THE UNIVERSITY *of* EDINBURGH

## *Media statement*

Issued Friday 6 March 2015

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### **Statement in response to SFC funding announcement**

The Principal of the University of Edinburgh, Professor Sir Timothy O'Shea said:

"The University of Edinburgh is now 4th in the UK for Research Excellence. The real world impact of that research on business, health and society is evident across the breadth of our activities.

The decision to reduce funding for world-leading research in the University of Edinburgh by £8m next year with further cuts rising to a total of £14m/year will cause Scotland to lose an important competitive advantage that delivers jobs and opportunities for our communities and businesses.

We are a small country which has achieved extraordinary innovation and international impact from research. Now is not the time to reduce investment in Scotland's future jobs and prospects."

#### **Background Information:**

Higher Education research in Scotland is a key driver of the Scottish economy; is recognised as internationally outstanding and respected for its quality and its innovative and collaborative nature.

The University of Edinburgh is now 4th in the UK for Research Excellence. The overall strength of Scottish research, and our tradition of university collaboration, is clearly evident in the UK research assessment process; with the University of Edinburgh submitting more research collaborations than any other in the UK.

The real world impact of that research is evident across the breadth of our activities. This ranges from the innovative contributions to health of Bioquarter spinout companies, such as Roslin Cells and Edinburgh Molecular Imaging, to research underpinning the reform of youth justice policy in Scotland and our expertise in supercomputing which transforms business and healthcare by developing new ways to extract useful information from huge datasets.

Our contribution to the Scottish economy was independently estimated, in 2012, at £1.2bn in Gross Value Added (GVA) and our activities supported almost 23,000 full-time-equivalent jobs. Every £100 invested in research by the Scottish Government provides the foundation from which University of Edinburgh researchers win another £216 in competitive research funding from Charities, EU, Industry and UK Research Council sources; more than trebling the value of the initial investment. The Scottish Government's brand new Economic Strategy underlines this point by stressing the need to "continue to support the high-impact, world-class research of Scotland's universities".

It was therefore particularly unexpected that the increase in the University of Edinburgh's

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research performance has resulted in a cut to Edinburgh's research funding of £8m next year (including the removal of the £5m global excellence initiative) with further cuts rising to a total of £14m/year. Stable funding is vitally important in enabling long-term research. A strong research base also requires an environment in which research is respected and valued and where government, businesses and our universities work in partnership to grow our economy and improve our health and society.

Since devolution successive Scottish Governments have invested in University research and this strategy has yielded great dividends for Scotland. This new move to fund world-leading research at a lower rate is very short sighted and will cause Scotland to start losing an important competitive advantage which currently delivers a wide range of jobs and opportunities for our communities and businesses. It will put universities like Edinburgh at a disadvantage compared with similar institutions in England with which we compete for research grants and the most innovative research staff. It will also undermine the strong incentives we have had to collaborate across Scottish universities.

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