# PURPOSE

To critically assess what constitutes reasonable balance in England’s dual support system in order to provide advice and evidence to inform future funding decisions.

## BACKGROUND

The role of UKRI includes advice to Ministers on the balance between the dual support funding streams.

UKRI needs to take an evidence-based approach, and is therefore undertaking work to analyse and understand what constitutes reasonable balance, and the impact that any changes to the balance could have on the sector. UKRI will continuously build its evidence, responding to new challenges, opportunities and wider changes in the sector to provide the best advice on future funding decisions.

## SCOPE

The principle of the dual support system is enshrined in the Higher Education Research Act 2017. This programme will not therefore consider alternative models.

This initial programme of work will focus on the interactions between research council funding and Research England formula-funding streams including:

- Mainstream quality-related research (QR) including London weighting
- QR Research Degree Programme (RDP) supervision
- QR charity support fund
- QR business research element
- QR funding for National Research Libraries
- HEI Research Capital England
- Higher Education Research Capital (HERC) England

This programme does not concern the balance of funding across disciplines but activities will be cognisant of this and other factors, such as place, in their delivery.

Whilst the focus of this work will be on the English dual support system, UKRI will engage closely with the devolved administrations and funding bodies, sharing our evidence as it develops.

## STRUCTURE

The Balanced Funding programme will be delivered through the completion of five objectives:

**Objective A:** To critically assess and strengthen the evidence base on the case for dual support.

**Objective B:** To identify and develop indicators that can signal shifts away from reasonable balance.

**Objective C:** To review and assess the basis on which England’s dual support consequentials are calculated.

**Objective D:** To consider the potential impact of changes to the balance of dual support

**Objective E:** To consider the potential impact of wider changes to HEI funding on what constitutes reasonable balance, in particular in ensuring sustainability

The information prepared within Objectives A-E will be drawn together to define “reasonable balance” and inform the UKRI response to the 2019 Spending Review, and develop a longer term investment decision-making framework for dual support.

## HOW

A detailed literature review was completed in May 2018 to critically assess the full current body of evidence, identify potential data sources for additional analysis and key evidence gaps.

Building on this review, each workstream includes a number of analytical projects, evaluation and evidence-gathering activities to achieve its stated objective.

These projects will be delivered by staff across UKRI where resource is available or delivered by external experts. Projects will be delivered in parallel to ensure collaboration, flow of information, and responsiveness between workstreams.

## FEEDBACK & INPUT

UKRI is keen to ensure its evidence base is robust and that stakeholders in the dual support system can feed into this programme.

There will be several opportunities across the workstreams for research organisations (ROs) to input into the programme, notably:

- Objective A – Research organisation case studies exploring the use of dual support funding and its outputs.
- Objective D – Evidence gathering exercise concerning the use of formula funding and the decision-making behind this use, and exploration of RO decision-making across a range of dual support funding scenarios.

In addition, UKRI will undertake a programme of external engagement to share information and collect more general feedback relevant to dual support.

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**WHO**

A working group comprising representatives from UKRI Strategy, Research England, the research councils, HEFCW, SFC & the NI Assembly is responsible for assessing progress and making recommendations based on findings.

The working group is chaired by David Sweeney (Research England) as the UKRI Executive Chair lead for the balanced funding work strand.

Progress of the programme is periodically fed through and reviewed by the UKRI Executive Committee and UKRI Board. In addition the working group regularly engages with relevant committees within its representative bodies.

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