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Innovation & Skills

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Dear Dr Rohn,

Thank you for your letter of 5 June and your kind words on my appointment as the new Minister for Universities and Science.

Our Manifesto outlines our plans to make the UK the best place in the world to do science. We have made a commitment to invest £1.1 billion in science capital, rising with inflation every year until 2021 to a total of £6.9 billion, including £2.9 billion on Grand Challenges.

You will understand that this is against the background of deficit reduction and the many other competing claims on the Government purse. Further decisions on funding are to be taken during the Spending Review this year, when we will examine how best to make robust investments in science and research to bring economic growth.

In serving the best interests of UK science, inputs besides those of Government are also important, such as private sector investment and collaboration both among researchers and between researchers and business.

You rightly celebrate the fact that the UK punches above its weight in terms of output. Certainly any comparison with international investment in science needs to take into account the efficiency and strength of our research base – not just citations, but the extent to which we attract R&D investment from other countries and the way in which non-R&D funding such as on software and design benefit UK science.

Finally, I must thank you for the examples you have provided that illustrate the breadth and depth of UK science. In my meetings and visits I continue to learn what a precious resource our science and scientists are.

Yours sincerely,

JO JOHNSON MP