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CaSE PR 07/02

### **Cutting science budgets sends out wrong signal**

Campaign for Science & Engineering (CaSE) today criticized the Government for its announcement of cuts to the budgets of the Research Councils.

"This is exactly the opposite of what the Government says it wants," said Dr Peter Cotgreave, Director of CaSE, "The amounts of money involved may be relatively small parts of the overall science budget, but the Government is not going to create the conditions for the dynamic, knowledge-driven economy it is striving for by reducing the nation's capacity to perform science and engineering research".

"Yesterday, there was an announcement that £33million that had been allocated to science but not yet spent was being reabsorbed into the budget of the Department of Trade & Industry. That is less than one per cent of the total science budget, which appears to mean that the people who manage science funding had got their sums almost exactly right. Instead of penalizing the science base, the Trade Secretary should be investing in it – there is no shortage of excellent projects into which this money would be invested.

"Then today, we learn that the Research Councils will actually be losing a total of £68 million, and they are warning that researchers at the bench will suffer. This is completely unexpected and out of line with everything we have been promised by the Government.

"If I was Malcolm Wicks, just a few weeks into my new job as Science Minister, I would be furious with Trade Secretary Alistair Darling for raiding my budget like this, apparently to bail out some completely unrelated problem in the DTI.

*"If Alistair Darling was as committed to the economic and social importance of science as Gordon Brown and Tony Blair claim to be, he would not be making these cuts."*

ENDS