

Mark Williams (Ceredigion) (LD): Despite the Minister's professed support for research funding, is he aware of the potential cuts to the physics funding of the Science and Technology Facilities Council, which will amount to 25 per cent. over three years, and the detrimental effect that that will have on such institutes in Aberystwyth? Will he continue his dialogue with the Department for Innovation, Universities and Skills and his colleagues at the STFC in order to find us some alternative funding?

Huw Irranca-Davies: My right hon. Friend the Secretary of State and I will always continue such discussions, but I am sure that the hon. Gentleman will welcome the fact that in the 2005-06 academic year, for the very first time, Welsh universities accounted for 11 per cent. of UK-wide income from collaborative research, outperforming six of the nine English regional development agency regions. Wales is doing very well in research, but it must do more, and we will continue to support Wales as it drives forward in the knowledge economy.