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### **Rail industry forges stronger links with academia in new research partnership**

The rail industry is finding new ways to get more all-round value out of its research by collaborating with universities and other academic research organisations. The new academic year sees the Rail Research UK Association (RRUK-A) - a partnership between the British rail industry and UK universities – open for membership.

RRUK-A aims to bring together those who can use and fund railway research with those who do it. RSSB is funding this new partnership in its role of managing research on behalf of the rail industry.

RSSB's Director of Policy, Research and Risk, Anson Jack, says: 'The railways have to address many challenges to play their part in 21st century mobility and there is a significant role that research can play in achieving it. The academic science base has much to offer towards finding solutions to meet the country's needs in a way that can deliver long term value-for-money. Many of today's researchers are tomorrow's engineers and managers. We are looking forward to further developing relationships to achieve that goal.'

RRUK-A will provide a focus for research institutions who undertake R&D that could be of benefit to the railways and for the railway industry to access academic research capabilities. It will provide a forum for targeted knowledge exchange between universities and the industry, including the organisation of focussed workshops and seminars, as well as wider networking opportunities.

Professor William Powrie, Southampton University, says: 'We welcome the opportunity to strengthen what is already a good relationship with the rail industry. Research Councils are increasingly requiring industrial support for funding applications and through RRUK-A, researchers will have a good opportunity to better understand



industry's issues and challenges, make or develop contacts and gain support for their research.'

RSSB's Anson Jack also described the benefits of investing in research in the current economic climate: 'The overall case for research is compelling but the industry wants to make sure it is exploiting appropriate funding sources for the benefit of its long term objectives. The benefit to industry of having RSSB manage R&D on its behalf is that the work will provides both value-for-money and contributes to the industry's objectives of better business performance and cutting out unnecessary cost.

'To secure this value, research relies on an initial outlay of funding to do the work, so some of the focus has to be on maximising the benefit we get out of that outlay - and RRUk-A will support this aim.'

All UK research institutes eligible for Research Council funding are invited to become members. Individual researchers can be registered through their institution's membership. For further details on membership, go to [www.rruka.org.uk](http://www.rruka.org.uk).

**-Ends-**

For media enquiries, please contact the RSSB press office, on 020 3142 5331/ 5332 or email [pressoffice@rssb.co.uk](mailto:pressoffice@rssb.co.uk) or visit the website on [www.rssb.co.uk](http://www.rssb.co.uk)

For more details about RRUk-A membership:

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## Notes to editors:

1. Working with our partners RSSB's purpose is to help the industry to:
  - Continuously improve the level of safety in the rail industry
  - Drive out unnecessary cost
  - Improve business performance
2. RRUk-A builds on the foundation of RRUk, which was a virtual research centre funded by the EPSRC from 2003 to 2010 and comprised specific research groups from a limited number of universities. Funding was available for research focussing on particular subjects at those universities for a fixed time and is now complete. RRUk-A is new and is open to all universities. The funding available for RRUk-A is for the central function only - it does not include funding for research projects.
3. The funding to support RRUk-A has been set aside by RSSB for at least three years from its 2009/10 DfT Grant. This is now held in RSSB reserves so the funding is already in place for the future.
4. RSSB provides the R&D capability to industry to develop new knowledge to support industry action and decision making across a range of issues, in response to the data, information and analysis it gleans. It is funded primarily by Department for Transport. Research is generally proposed by RSSB members (major rail industry stakeholders such as Network Rail and train operating companies), and it can be undertaken in any area that supports the improved performance of the GB railway system. It focuses on industry-wide research that no individual company or sector of the industry can address on its own. RSSB is an efficient means of delivering the programme under one roof, saving the industry money.