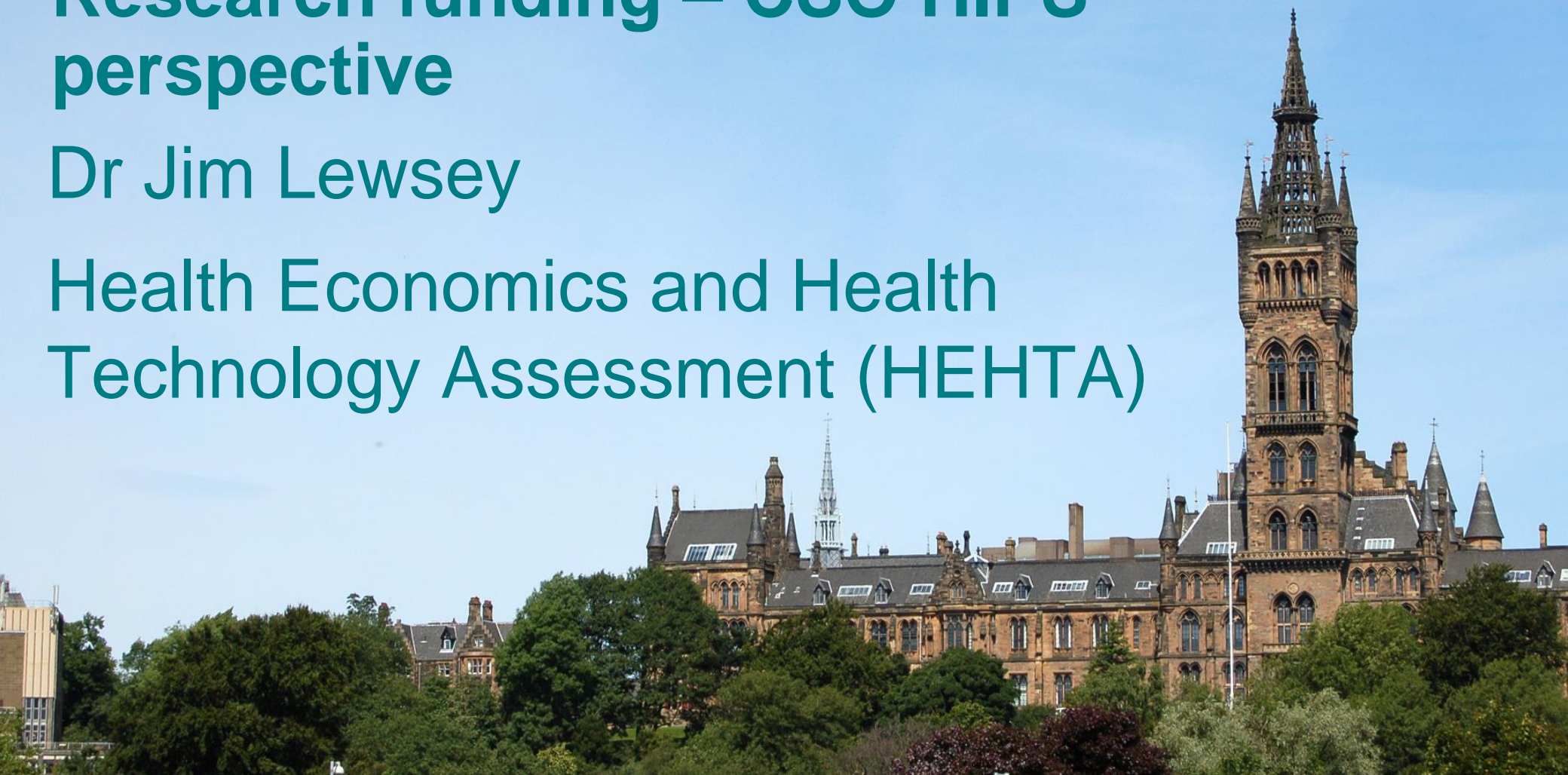# Research funding – CSO HIPS perspective

Dr Jim Lewsey

Health Economics and Health Technology Assessment (HEHTA)

- Chief Scientist Office (CSO), Scotland (vision: to support and increase the level of high-quality health research in Scotland)

- Researcher initiated grant schemes (limit £300k)

- Health Improvement, Protection and Services Research Committee (considers applications aimed at improving/protecting population health; improving the quality, safety, effectiveness of healthcare in Scotland)

- "Applications must demonstrate the relevance and importance of the research and its potential for significant impact on health in Scotland."

- Outline application (limit of 4 pages of A4, without changing format of the template form; indicative project costs required)

- Before CSO HIPS shortlisting meeting the outline applications are scored by a sub-set of committee members

- Full application (8 pages for 'case for support'; full economic costing; provide details of 10 referees (at least 5 outside Scotland))

- At CSO HIPS main meeting, 3 committee members summarise the full application, the referee reports and give their own opinion

- In my experience, the process is fair

- Focus on the science, not the applicant

- Get internal peer review

- Cost up appropriately (and involve your research office early)

- Make your application easy to read (break-up the text where possible, well formatted tables, throw in a diagram) and stick to the rules

- Have you answered the "so what?" question?

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- Is the "direction of travel" clear?

- Be clear that the planned research is feasible (beware of being over-optimistic and identifying pitfalls that could kill your study)

- Use the key references

- If you can name referees, identify people you think will be critical friends

- In responding to referee comments, don't be afraid to stand your ground if important (but concede minor points even if you disagree)

- Luck is involved so don't be too hard on yourself or disappointed if unsuccessful

- You learn a lot when writing a grant application (management skills (time, people), writing skills (being succinct, plain English summaries), scientific skills)