



Press Release:

A World of Talent: International Staff at UK Universities & the Future Migration System

25 October 2018, London: Three out of every 10 academics working in UK Universities are of international origin. In a university system that is globally recognised for its excellence, these international staff bring with them essential knowledge and critical skills. [A World of Talent: International Staff at UK Universities & the Future Migration System](#), the latest report from the [Campaign for Social Sciences](#), examines the number and distribution of international staff at UK universities with a special focus on the social sciences.

[Professor Shamit Saggar](#) CBE FAcSS, Chair of the [Campaign for Social Science](#) says: “The excellence of the UK university system brings benefits – financial, social and intellectual– to the UK. This report on post-Brexit visas shows that the social sciences depend on recruiting staff from outside the UK, both from the EU and beyond. This brings cutting edge knowledge and know-how, skills that are in short supply in the UK such as data skills, and valuable understanding of other societies and markets. The report shows the extent of this interdependence in our world-class social sciences, and makes the case for a flexible and streamlined visa system that will allow UK universities to recruit staff to maintain our continued excellence.”

A World of Talent focuses primarily on analysis of the current levels of international academic staff at UK universities by discipline and region. **Notably, 61% of academic staff in economics are of international origin, as are 54% in finance, 46% in development studies, and 43% in politics.** Overall, 14 out of 31 social science disciplines have more than 30% of their regular academic staff holding international passports. The report demonstrates that international origin staff play a substantial and vital role in the teaching and research of social sciences in UK higher education.

[Dr Ashley Lenihan](#), Senior Policy Adviser at the Campaign for Social Science and the author of the report says, “This report shows just how important it is for the government to create a post-Brexit migration and visa system that will allow UK universities to continue to recruit the skills and knowledge they need from abroad if the UK is to maintain a world class higher education system. Crucially, it shows that in the social sciences — and indeed across all disciplines, all academic contract types, and all regions — there are significant levels of international-origin staff in UK universities. This is not just an issue for STEM or for London-based universities. Any future migration system will therefore need to be open to skilled workers, without caps on their numbers, and without disciplinary constraints.”

A World of Talent makes it clear that universities in all UK regions will be affected by any substantial changes in their ability to recruit talent and skills from abroad. **It discusses the implications of its findings for a post-Brexit migration and visa system and acknowledges that no broad subject area is immune to the risk of losing high-quality academic staff of international origin.** In light of this revelation, *A World of Talent* proposes solutions to ensure that the excellence of UK universities is maintained.

Some key statistics from *A World of Talent*:

- 30% of all regular academic staff with a known nationality at UK universities in 2016/17 are of international origin
- The proportion of international academic staff, while greatest overall in STEM at 33%, is also substantially high in the social sciences at 29%
- In 10 out of 12 UK regions, international citizens make up over 30% of permanent academic social science staff – ranging up to 46% in London and the South East, and 48% in Northern Ireland
- The levels of international-origin staff on fixed-term contracts are higher than those on open-ended or permanent contracts among academic social science staff at Russell Group universities in two thirds of UK regions
- 67% of fixed-term staff in economics, 54% in development studies, and 51% in politics are of international origin

For these and many more interesting facts by discipline and region, download the complete report [*A World of Talent: International Staff at UK Universities & the Future Migration System*](#)

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About the Campaign for Social Science:

The Academy of Social Sciences' Campaign for Social Science was launched to raise the profile of social science in the public, media and Parliament. Its activities include lobbying government, organising events, promoting social sciences in the media and monitoring the health of academia in the UK.

