



**Joint Sector Statement in support of MIGRATION ADVISORY COMMITTEE (MAC)
CALL FOR EVIDENCE ON THE REVIEW OF TIER 2 submitted by:**

Campaign for Science and Engineering, Institute of Food Research, John Innes Centre, Research Councils UK, Royal Society of Biology, The Academy of Medical Sciences, The British Academy, The Francis Crick Institute, The Genome Analysis Centre, The Royal Academy of Engineering, The Royal Society, The Russell Group, The Sainsbury Laboratory, The Wellcome Trust, Universities and Colleges Employers Association, Universities UK, University Alliance, University of Cambridge, University of Oxford and Wellcome Trust Sanger Institute.

The above organisations wish to ensure that the UK remains one of the best places in the world to do research, innovate and grow a business through:

- continued long-term investment in world-class research and innovation;
- realising the full potential of the UK research and innovation eco-system;
- developing the right skills, leadership and infrastructure to fuel a sustainable economy and high quality jobs;
- demonstrating the effectiveness of UK research, training and innovation activities, which contribute to the delivery of the Government's objectives for science and innovation, as part of the global research base.

Excellent research is a critical asset for the UK, providing a key advantage that can support the future of the economy. The UK's strong research base is vital in pushing back the frontiers of human knowledge, supporting the wealth and welfare of the nation, tackling current and future challenges and contributing to the cultural richness of the UK. The quality of UK research is high, the UK has 1% of the global population and only 3% of global funding for research yet produces 16% of the world's most highly cited papers. UK research is referenced in 11% of patent applications worldwide¹. Almost half of research articles published by UK researchers have international co-authors. Four of the world's top 10 universities are in the UK².

World-class research plays a key role in economic and productivity growth through creating new businesses, improving the performance of existing businesses, delivering highly skilled people to the labour market, and attracting investment from global businesses.³ The wider research base enables researchers, businesses and partners to create knowledge and innovation for society, industry, Government and the third sector.

¹ https://www.gov.uk/government/uploads/system/uploads/attachment_data/file/263729/bis-13-1297-international-comparative-performance-of-the-UK-research-base-2013.pdf

² QS World University Rankings 2014/15 (2015) <http://www.topuniversities.com/university-rankings/world-university-rankings/>

³ <https://www.gov.uk/government/publications/fixing-the-foundations-creating-a-more-prosperous-nation>

At a time of tight control over public spending, this Government has acknowledged the importance of supporting our world-class science and research base, with the Chancellor stating his continued personal backing for science.

It is essential that the Government's immigration policy complements other areas of government policy to support science and growth. The research base must be able to attract and retain the best international talent in order to sustain scientific research at a world-class standard, increase strategic research skills and capacity across the UK and continue to create long-term economic benefits.

The UK research base invests heavily in early-career researchers (PhD students as well as post-doctoral fellows), for example through specialist technician development programmes, post-doctoral training programmes and initiatives aimed at helping more advanced post-doctoral researchers transition to independent leadership. This investment develops the home-grown skills pipeline and develops future leaders, but the system also needs excellent researchers from abroad to remain world leading.

Researchers are internationally mobile and are crucial to the rapid exchange of practical scientific information and know-how across the world. International researchers who spend time in the UK might play a key role in the day-to-day practical training of UK graduate students (NQF levels 7 & 8). Many will move on from the UK and go on to become Principal Investigators in their own world-class laboratories or industry leaders. The networks they form while in the UK ensure that UK research groups remain at the forefront of their disciplines, and UK resources and reagents are used, boosting exports. UK researchers also benefit from the time they spend overseas; 72% of UK-based researchers spend time at non-UK institutions⁴.

As well as academic researchers, skilled technicians are crucial to the operation and knowledge transfer capacity of UK R&D groups in academia and in industry. Often these skilled workers, required to accompany the introduction of an advanced technology are technical experts below PhD level. Creating barriers to the UK's access to these skilled workers could prevent the research base from realising its full potential.

Conclusion

It is the group's collective view that any fundamental changes made to the Tier 2 route should reflect the overall strategic objectives of the UK Government to ensure the UK remains a world-leading place to both develop research, as part of the global research ecosystem, and reap the economic, health and social benefits that this can bring to the UK. As a collective group we are keen to work with MAC and the Home Office to progress any future proposals.

Note - The collective view is supported by detailed individual organisation responses to the consultation questions, we refer you to our individual submissions, through which we are able to provide different and more detailed sources of evidence.

⁴ https://www.gov.uk/government/uploads/system/uploads/attachment_data/file/263729/bis-13-1297-international-comparative-performance-of-the-UK-research-base-2013.pdf, Chapter 3.