

Response from the Royal Statistical Society (RSS) to CaSE call for evidence on impact of immigration on UK science and engineering

We welcome's CaSE' investigation of the impact of immigration for UK Science and Engineering, and representation of this to the Migration Advisory Committee. We are well aware of research that highlights skills shortages in data science and statistics, and would emphasise that government policy on migration must not harm on-going efforts to maintain and improve UK competitiveness, including the strength of our statistics and data science.

Research by Nesta in association with RSS and Creative Skillset suggests that skills shortages are a pressing issue for the UK's data industries.¹ Industry experts support training and professional development, but research with them also highlights that overseas recruitment is crucial to competitiveness.² With regard to the science base in higher education, anecdotally we find that recruitment to senior posts in academic statistics can be difficult, and our *Data Manifesto* highlights that [we need statistics across our research base](#).^{3,4} In higher education, quantitative skills training to support data analytics and data science are increasingly being taken up, with initiatives such as Q-step in the social sciences, and Centres for Doctoral Training that focus on data analytics.⁵ We are calling for research councils to put approaches to statistics, information and data at the heart of our research base. UK policy on skilled migration should act as an enabler rather than a barrier to this.

It's important to understand whether proposed changes to Tier 2 migration are appropriate in light of these major concerns. We would be glad to discuss further insights to it with CaSE in future.

Submitted by RSS' Policy and Research Manager, 14 August 2015

¹ <http://www.statslife.org.uk/news/1640-uk-businesses-warn-a-data-skills-shortage-could-block-potential-of-big-data>

² <http://www.statslife.org.uk/files/model-workers-report.pdf>

³ <http://www.statslife.org.uk/features/1599-the-future-academic-statistic-a-q-a-with-kevin-mcconway>

⁴ http://www.rss.org.uk/RSS/Influencing_Change/Data_manifesto/Investment_in_research_science_and_innovation/RSS/Influencing_Change/Data_democracy_sub/Investment_in_research_science_and_innovation.aspx

⁵ http://www.rss.org.uk/RSS/Influencing_Change/Data_manifesto/Investment_in_research_science_and_innovation/RSS/Influencing_Change/Data_democracy_sub/Investment_in_research_science_and_innovation.aspx