

Senate Standing Committee on Economics
ANSWERS TO QUESTIONS ON NOTICE
Industry, Innovation, Science, Research and Tertiary Education Portfolio
Additional Estimates Hearing 2011-12
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AGENCY/DEPARTMENT: DEPARTMENT OF INDUSTRY, INNOVATION, SCIENCE, RESEARCH AND TERTIARY EDUCATION

TOPIC: Academics migrating to, and leaving, Australia

REFERENCE: Written Question – Senator Mason

QUESTION No.: AI-196

What data is collected and available on migration to (and emigration from) Australia, by academics, scientists and researchers and how does the Department work with other federal agencies and Departments (including DIAC) in relation to these issues?

ANSWER

The Department performs studies, surveys and reports that assist universities in their workforce planning and strategies. For example, *The Australian academic profession in transition* study conducted in 2010 across 19 universities and 5,525 academics explored core motivating factors for academics to remain in Australian higher education and factors that may lead to the consideration of other career options.

The Australian academic profession in transition study concluded that ‘younger academics are much more likely to have considered moving to an overseas institution or moving out of higher education altogether, and also to have taken concrete action towards doing so’. However, research suggests that more academics arrive than depart the country. Over the 15 years to 2008, Australia has benefited from a net increase of 8,200 academics. The mobility of academics, especially amongst those early in their career, is vitally important for innovation and the diffusion of knowledge in what is a highly skilled and knowledge intensive occupation.

The Department does not collect migration information directly but regularly liaises with the Department of Immigration and Citizenship (DIAC) on these matters. DIAC maintains a data collection by occupation for all of the skilled migration categories - temporary employer sponsored (subclass 457), permanent employer sponsored and permanent state/territory nominated, permanent family sponsored and permanent independent.

Visiting academics, scientists and researchers may appear across a range of temporary visa types, including:

- Visiting academic visa (sub-class 419);
- Distinguished talent visa (both offshore [sub-class 124] and onshore [sub-class 858])
- University lecturers is the 6th most common occupation to receive (generic) employer sponsored visas (sub-class 457) in the period 1 July 2011 to 31 Jan 2012.

Data on temporary migration are available at:

<http://www.immi.gov.au/media/statistics/statistical-info/temp-entrants/subclass-457.htm>.

Academics, scientists and researchers would also be eligible for permanent migration via employer sponsored, state/territory nominated, family sponsored and independent skilled migration. The Department liaises with the Department of Education, Employment and Workplace Relations (DEEWR) in relation to the composition of the Skilled Occupation List (managed by Skills Australia) to ensure the list remains relevant to Australia's current skill needs, including academics, scientists and researchers. The Department also liaises with DIAC to specifically monitor trends in Australia's research workforce.

Data on the permanent migration program are reported by occupation, including university lecturers and a range of technical and engineering-related roles under which different scientists and researchers may fit. These data are available at:

<http://www.immi.gov.au/media/statistics/statistical-info/visa-grants/>.

There is limited information about academics, scientists and researchers who leave Australia on a long-term or permanent basis. The Australian Bureau of Statistics publishes information on overseas arrivals and departures, obtained from incoming and outgoing passenger cards. The level of detail obtained from this data is not sufficient to enable detailed analysis of research workforce trends.