

# Recruitment Survey summary

August 2019

This survey was designed by the Policy & Evidence Team at the Royal Society of Chemistry to gain insight into the experiences and opinions of the chemical sciences community on the availability of specialist skills and possible changes to the UK immigration system. The goal was to collect information that could guide and inform RSC policy work and be used as evidence in government consultations.<sup>1</sup>

## Executive Summary

### Recruitment of specialist skills

- 78% of UK employers in the chemical sciences who responded to the survey said they found it difficult to recruit the right talent, compared to 69% of their non-UK counterparts. Just 51% of UK employers said it had become more difficult in the last 12 months, compared to 31% for non-UK employers.
- 47% of UK employers said they were pessimistic about meeting their organisations recruitment needs over the next 3 years (28% for non-UK employers). UK employers expressed concerns over Brexit, their ability to recruit staff from abroad as well as not being able to find recruits with suitable experience, qualifications or skills.
- Roles that UK employers struggled to recruit for were academic research staff, researcher/ practising chemists, managers and technicians/ assistant scientists.
- 78% of UK employers said that they hire from the EU, and 50% said that they hire from the rest of the world (outside of the EU). All sectors recruit skilled staff from both the UK and abroad, with Academia more likely to recruit from the rest of the world than Industry.

### Recruiting from abroad

- 54% of UK employers in the chemical sciences said that it typically takes more than 2 months for them to recruit an applicant that requires a visa. These employers had experience recruiting through the UK immigration visa system in the last 5 years.
- Even with proposed changes to the UK visa system, which will require EU/EEA/Swiss citizens to go through a similar visa process to those currently used for workers from the rest of the world, 46% of UK employers indicated that they would continue to hire from abroad. This is despite some employers' concerns over having to consider less suitable candidates for roles as well as the extra time and financial costs users of the new system would incur.
- The majority of the UK employers felt that new fees (87%) and new administration (80%) for applicants from the EU/EEA will have a negative effect on UK science and innovation. Many felt that the introduction of a new salary threshold (62%) would also have a negative effect.

<sup>1</sup> The survey was sent to 27,719 people within the chemical sciences community and 1,992 people responded (response rate: 6.3%). There were 1,737 completed surveys responses and 255 partial responses meaning the completion rate was 87%. Partial responses were not used in the analysis here. Those who had no experience in recruiting skilled specialists were filtered out.

## Tables and graphs

### Recruitment of specialist skills

'78% of UK employers in the chemical sciences who responded to the survey said they found it difficult to recruit the right talent, compared to 69% of their non-UK counterparts. Just 51% of UK employers said it had become more difficult in the last 12 months, compared to 31% for non-UK employers.'

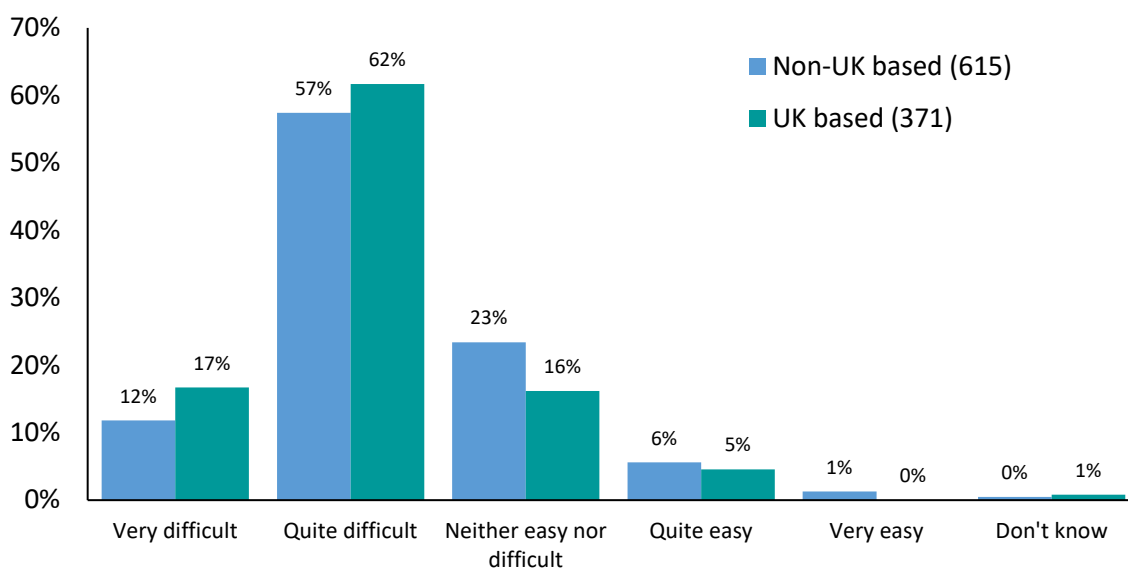


Figure 1. A bar chart showing how easy or difficult employers said it is to recruit for skilled scientific roles. The percentage values are calculated using the total number of responses to this question within that respondent category (UK or non-UK based), as shown in the key.

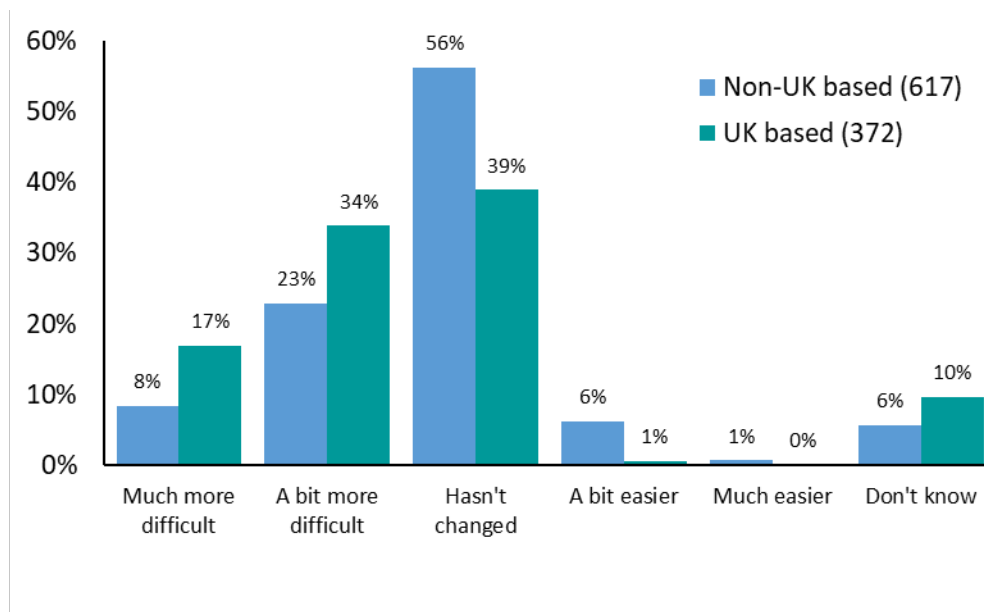


Figure 2. A bar chart showing what changes employers felt there had been in the difficulty of the recruitment process over the last 12 months. The percentage values are calculated using the total number of responses to this question within that respondent category (UK or non-UK based), as shown in the key.

*'47% of UK employers said they were pessimistic about meeting their organisations recruitment needs over the next 3 years (28% for non-UK employers). UK employers expressed concerns over Brexit, their ability to recruit staff from abroad as well as not being able to find recruits with suitable experience, qualifications or skills.'*

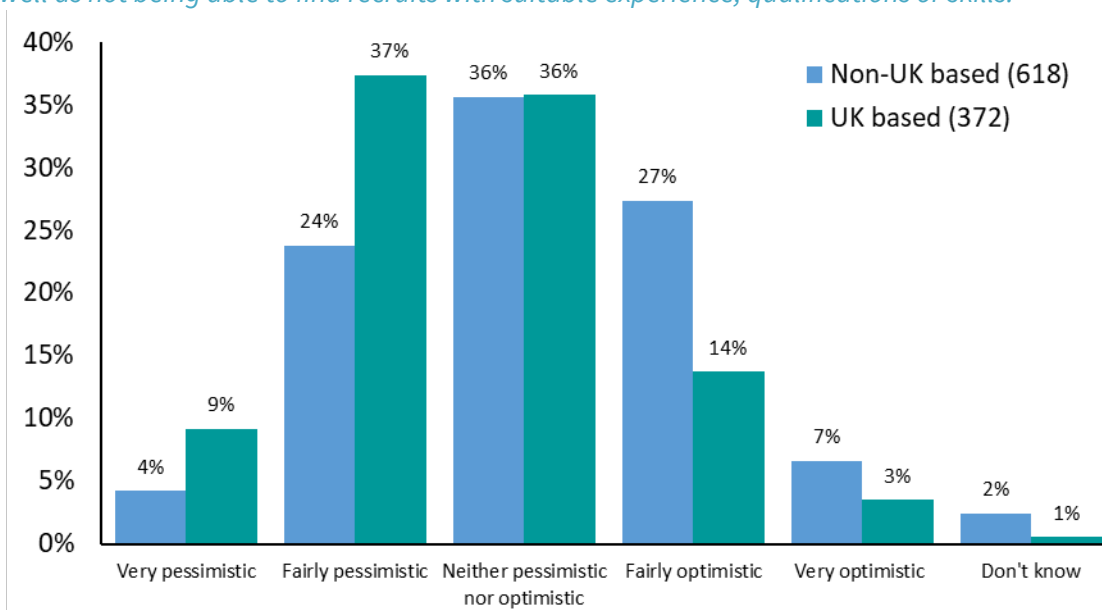


Figure 3. A bar chart showing how optimistic or pessimistic employers felt for filling roles over the next 3 years. The percentage values are calculated using the total number of responses to this question within that respondent category (UK or non-UK based), as shown in the key.

Employers who indicated that felt either pessimistic or optimistic about recruiting the right skills over the next 3 years were given the option to comment on why. The key results are discussed here and full tables of results are available upon request.

Of the respondents who commented on why they felt pessimistic (167 UK based and 149 non-UK based):

- 39% of UK based employers mentioned Brexit.
- 36% of UK employers expressed concerns about being able to recruit from abroad, with 6% specifically mentioning Europe. In contrast, just 8% of non-UK based employers said they were worried about being able to recruit from abroad.
- 20% of non-UK based employers were pessimistic about recruiting because of worries over budgets or funding, whereas this figure was just 10% for UK employers.

*'Roles that UK employers struggled to recruit for were academic research staff, researcher/practising chemists, managers and technicians/ assistant scientists.'*

	Academia		Industry		Other sectors	
	Non-UK based (501)	UK based (132)	Non-UK based (69)	UK based (177)	Non-UK based (38)	UK based (48)
Academic contract staff (research focus)	50%	66%	4%	4%	18%	0%
Academic contract staff (teaching focus)	12%	18%	1%	1%	5%	2%
Academic staff (research focus)	38%	42%	3%	1%	11%	0%
Academic staff (teaching focus)	19%	22%	3%	1%	3%	7%
Consultant	1%	1%	10%	9%	13%	11%

Further education teacher	5%	2%	1%	1%	5%	7%
Head of department / faculty	5%	17%	13%	5%	0%	7%
Manager	4%	8%	33%	30%	13%	9%
Primary or secondary teacher	1%	2%	0%	0%	11%	32%
Research / practising chemist	17%	11%	26%	46%	29%	27%
Senior manager	2%	8%	9%	16%	5%	7%
Senior research / practising chemist	6%	8%	26%	42%	13%	20%
Technician / assistant scientist	18%	21%	28%	35%	18%	36%
Vocational training	2%	3%	4%	4%	3%	2%
Sales staff	1%	0%	10%	5%	3%	2%
Project managers	3%	2%	17%	18%	5%	14%
None	5%	3%	7%	6%	3%	11%
Other STEM roles	0%	0%	3%	5%	3%	9%
PhD students / interns	4%	7%	1%	1%	3%	0%
Other	0.2%	0%	4%	2%	0%	5%

Table 1. A table depicting for which roles employers said they have trouble recruiting. The percentage values are calculated using the total number of responses to this question within that respondent category (that sector and either UK or non-UK based), which is shown in brackets.

‘78% of UK employers said that they hire from the EU, and 50% said that they hire from the rest of the world (outside of the EU). All sectors recruit skilled staff from both the UK and abroad, with Academia more likely to recruit from the rest of the world than Industry.’

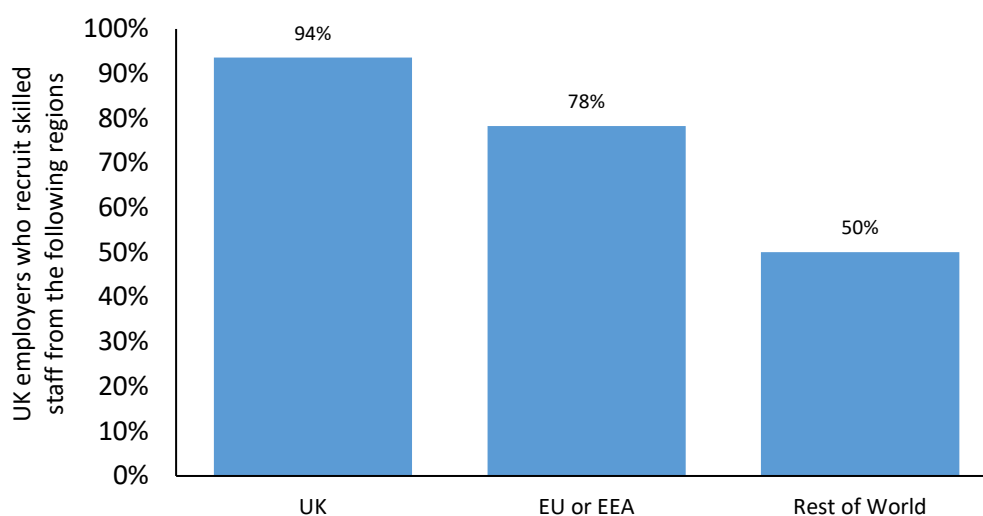


Figure 4. A bar chart depicting from where in the world UK employers recruit staff with scientific skills/ backgrounds. The percentage values were calculated using the number of respondents to the question from that region, which is shown in the key. Respondents were not limited in choice selection, hence the total exceeds 100%.

## Recruitment from abroad

'54% of UK employers in the chemical sciences said that it typically takes more than 2 months for them to recruit an applicant that requires a visa. These employers had experience recruiting through the UK immigration visa system in the last 5 years.'

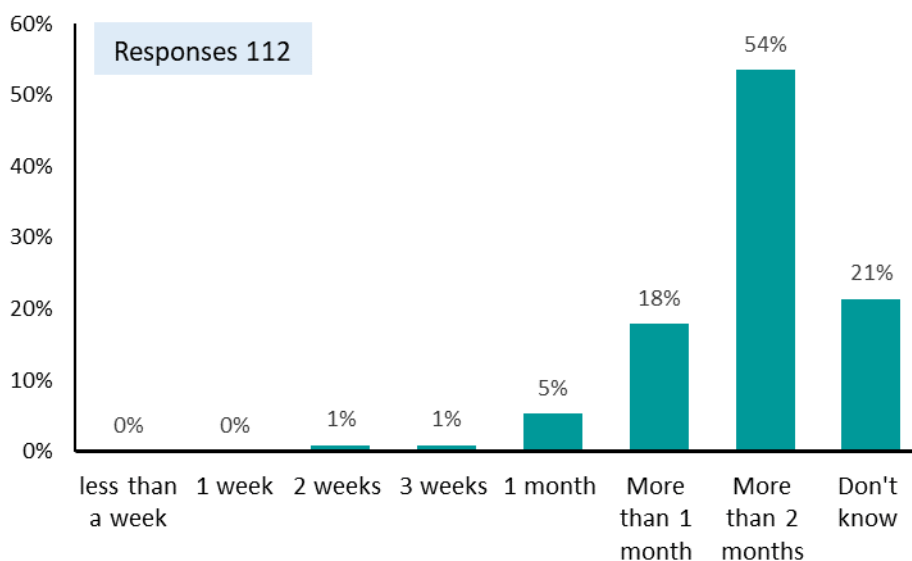


Figure 5. A bar chart of the time it typically takes UK employers to acquire a visa for new recruits to their organisation. The percentage values are calculated using the number of respondents to the question, which is shown in the key.

'Even with proposed changes to the UK visa system, which will require EU/EEA/Swiss citizens to go through a similar visa process to those currently used for workers from the rest of the world, 46% of UK employers indicated that they would continue to hire from abroad. This is despite some employers' concerns over having to consider less suitable candidates for roles as well as the extra time and financial costs users of the new system would incur.'

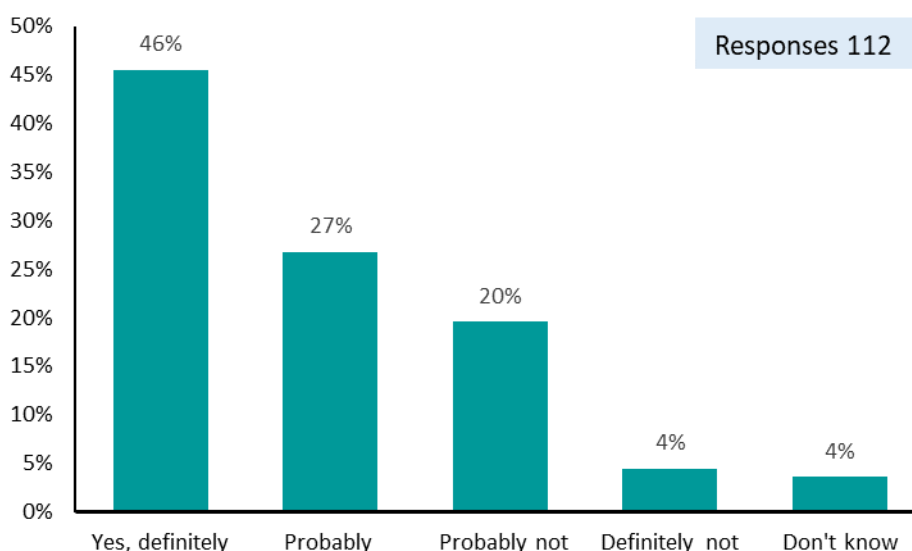


Figure 6. A bar chart showing the response of UK employers to the question of whether they would continue to hire from overseas under the proposed new immigration system. The percentage values are calculated using the number of respondents to the question, which is shown in the key.

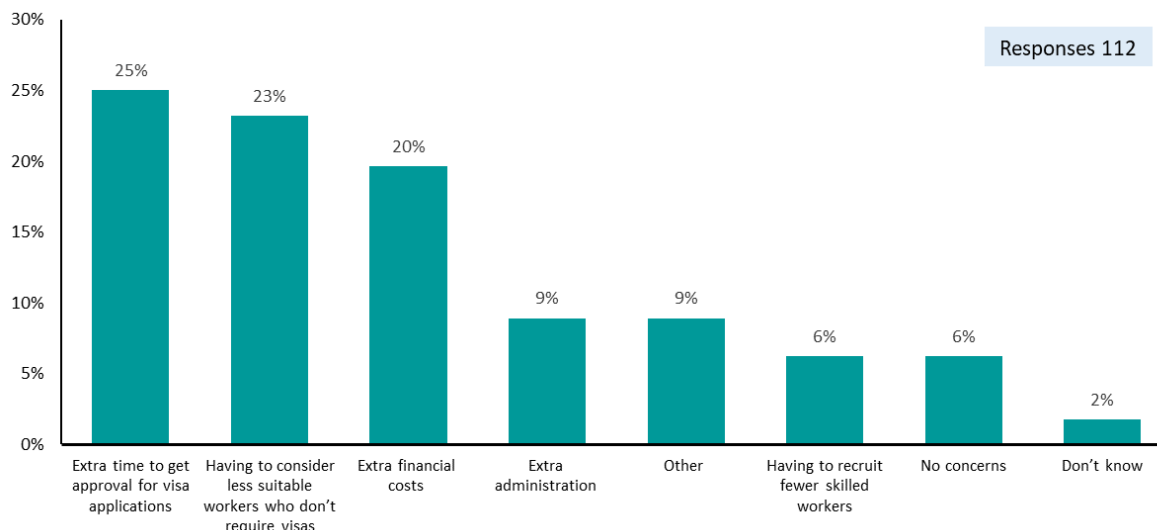


Figure 7. A bar chart showing the key concerns of UK employers around the proposed new immigration system. The percentage values are calculated using the number of responses to the question (112). Respondents were asked to select just one option.

'The majority of the UK employers felt that new fees (87%) and new administration (80%) for applicants from the EU/EEA will have a negative effect on UK science and innovation. Many felt that the introduction of a new salary threshold (62%) would also have a negative effect.'

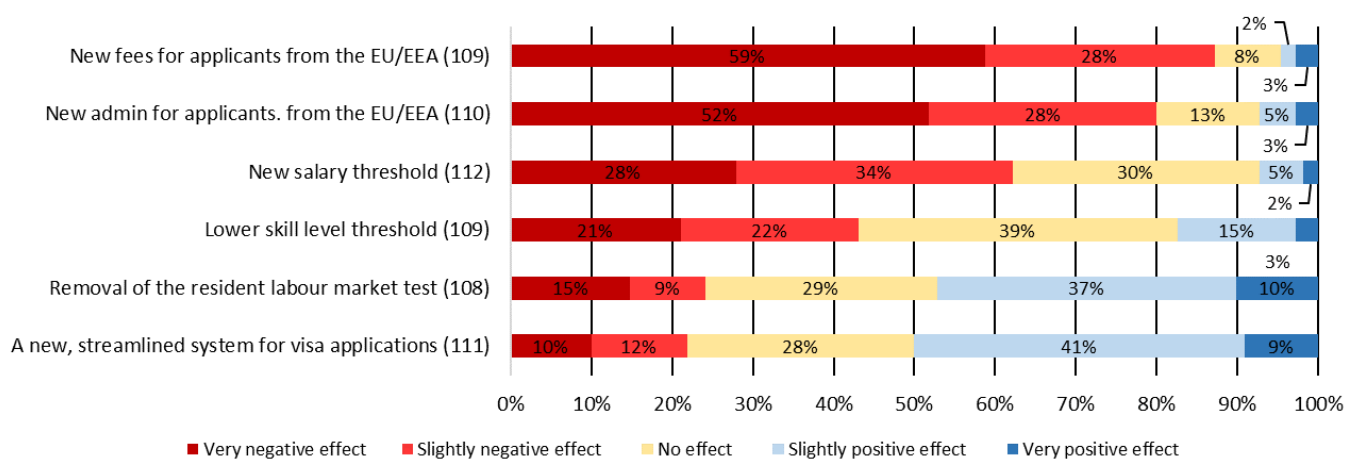


Figure 8. A chart depicting the responses from UK employers to the question of what effect each of the outlined changes would have on UK science and innovation. The percentage values for each statement are calculated using the number of responses to that statement, which is shown in brackets.