EXPERIENCES OF MOBILITY DIFFER BETWEEN GROUPS

The postdoctoral period is important for mobility yet receives less focus in literature than PhDs.

38% of UK researchers move to take a postdoctoral position in another country following their PhD studies.

43% of postdocs cite that the availability of research funding is a particularly important barrier to mobility for early-career researchers.

A key driver of mobility for postdocs is career progression, and personal circumstances are generally considered to be less of a barrier for this group than for more senior researchers.

Graduates from elsewhere in the EU are even more likely than UK nationals to move overseas after graduation, and there is also the indication that international postdoctoral mobility is becoming more common.

Women are less internationally mobile than men, facing greater personal barriers.

Male researchers are more likely to be mobile than female researchers.

Childcare arrangements are important factors in mobility decisions, especially for women.

When they do move, women report greater benefits from mobility.

Elite scientists are drawn to research excellence.

Funding is less of a barrier for this group.

Elite scientists are drawn to strong institutions who already have excellent researchers.

The US and UK are key destinations for elite scientists.

More senior scientists may better maintain collaborative links with their country of origin and may be better able to benefit from networking benefits as well as gains in terms of academic performance.

Adapted from International mobility of researchers: A review of the literature by Susan Guthrie, Catherine Lichten, Jennie Corbett and Steven Wooding, RR-1991/1-RS, 2017, available at www.rand.org/t/RR1991. RAND Europe is an independent not-for-profit research institute that helps to improve policy and decision making through research and analysis.
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