

Academic staff in UK physics departments



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This briefing outlines a short set of statistics on staff in physics departments in UK universities categorised into all academic staff¹, postdoctoral research staff² and professors³ from the 2015–16 academic year. The data is broken down by gender and domicile, and compared between nations of the UK⁴ and with other subjects.

Some of the principal points are detailed below:

- 26% of all academic staff in UK physics departments are from non-UK EU countries and 18% are from non-EU countries. A total of 44% are from outside the UK
- In Scotland, 30% of all academic staff in physics departments are from EU countries. This is higher than England (25%) and Wales (24%). For all subjects, the average is 16%
- 18% of professors in UK physics departments are from the EU and 10% are from outside the EU
- Less than 40% of postdoctoral research staff are from the UK: 31% are from non-UK EU countries and 30% are from outside the EU
- Across all subjects, 50% of postdoctoral research staff are from the UK, 27% from non-UK EU countries, and 23% from outside the EU
- 82% of all academic staff in physics are male, 18% are female. For postdoctoral research staff, 79% are male and 21% are female

¹ "All academic staff" are identified from HESA data using contract levels F1, IO, JO and K0, where the "academic contract" option is selected.

² Our identification of postdoctoral research staff is a proxy – by marking levels k0, and "fixed term" for terms of employment and "academic contract" on the academic employment marker. Those on "teaching only" or "neither teaching nor research" contracts were removed. The definitions can be seen on the HESA website at [hesa.ac.uk/support/definitions/staff](https://www.hesa.ac.uk/support/definitions/staff).

³ Professors are identified from HESA data by selecting the "F1 Professor" contract level and selecting "academic contract" on the academic employment marker.

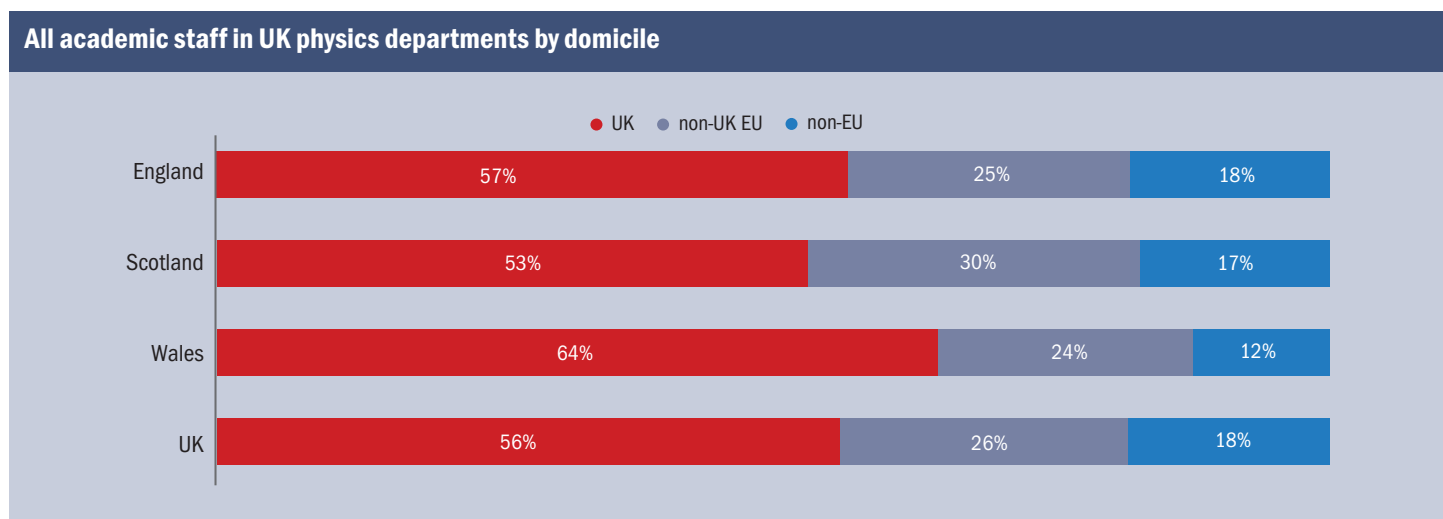
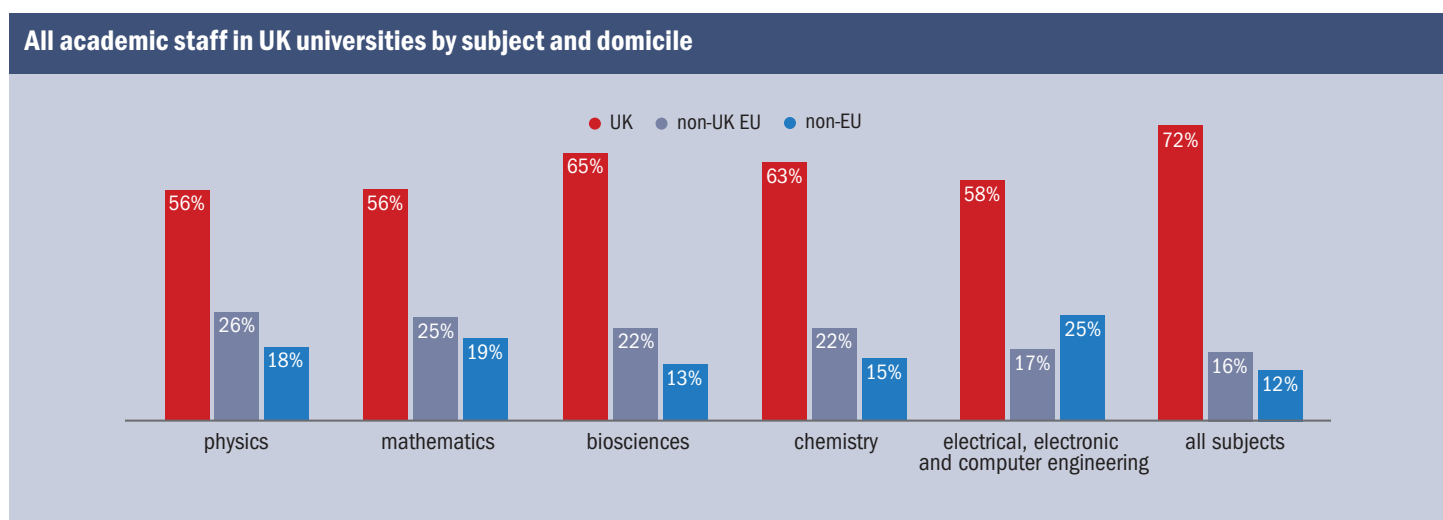
⁴ Although UK statistics include Northern Ireland, statistics about Northern Ireland cannot be published alone in accordance with HESA's rounding and suppression policy, which can be viewed at [hesa.ac.uk/about/regulation/data-protection/rounding-and-suppression-anonymise-statistics](https://www.hesa.ac.uk/about/regulation/data-protection/rounding-and-suppression-anonymise-statistics).



All academic staff

In the 2015–16 academic year, there were 4,070 academic staff in UK physics departments.⁵ More than a quarter (26%) of all academic staff in UK physics departments are from other EU countries – this is the same as mathematics but higher than other STEM subjects and the average for all subjects, which is 16%. Physics also has a higher proportion of academic staff members from outside the EU (18%) than the average for all subjects, which is 12%.

Physics departments in Scotland have a larger proportion of academic staff from outside the UK than those in England and Wales, as shown in the chart below.

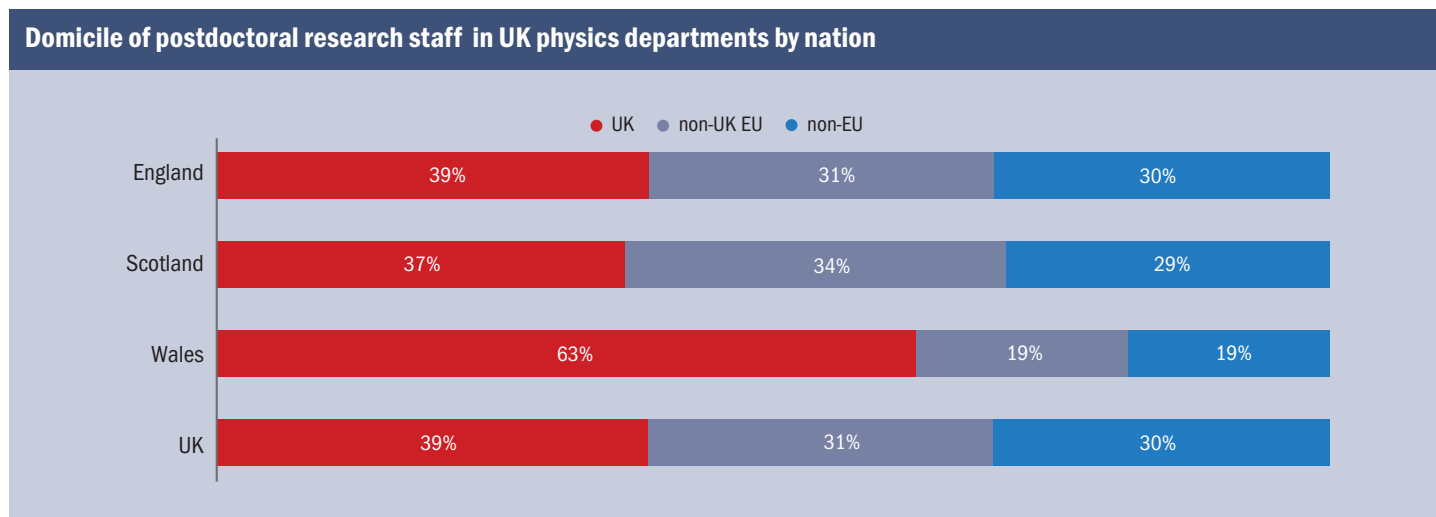


⁵ All numbers are rounded to intervals of 5 as per HESA's rounding and suppression policy.

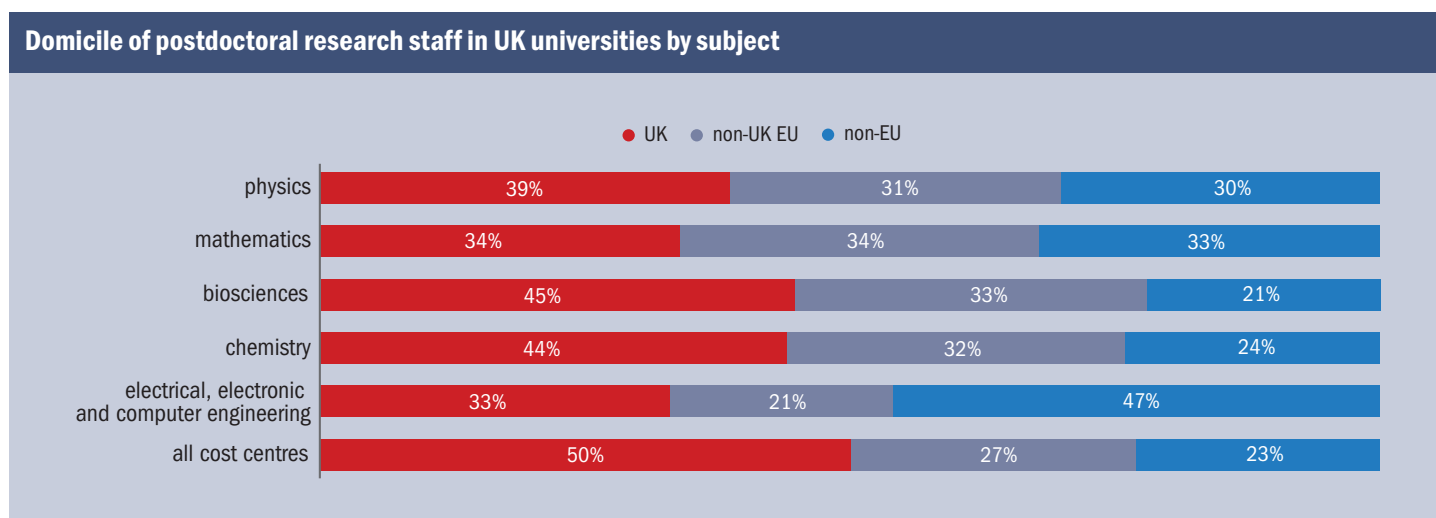


Postdoctoral research staff

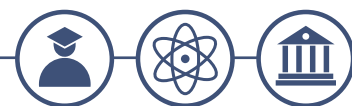
There were 1,110 postdoctoral research staff working in UK physics departments in 2015–16. More than half of them were from outside the UK but there is variation between the nations of the UK as shown in the chart below.⁶



When comparing the domicile of postdoctoral research staff to other subjects, there is a higher proportion of staff from EU countries other than the UK in physics than for all subjects, which is also the case for most of the other STEM subjects. The exception is electrical, electronic and computing engineering, where a smaller proportion of postdoctoral research staff are from non-UK EU countries but almost half (47%) of all staff in this subject are from outside the EU.

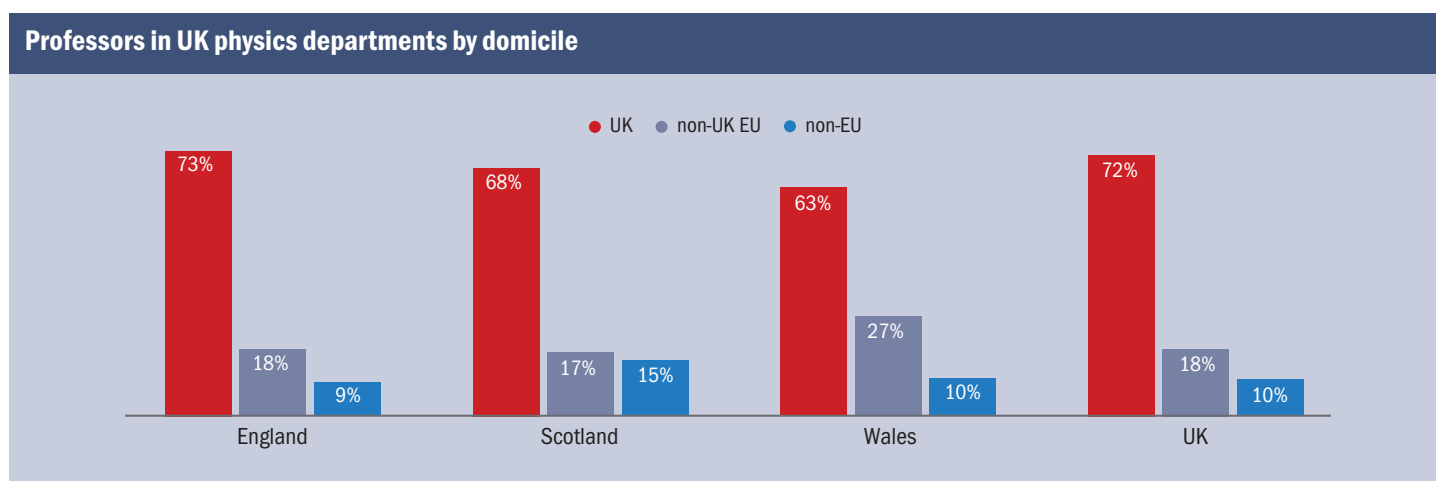


⁶ In some instances percentages do not sum to 100% due to rounding.



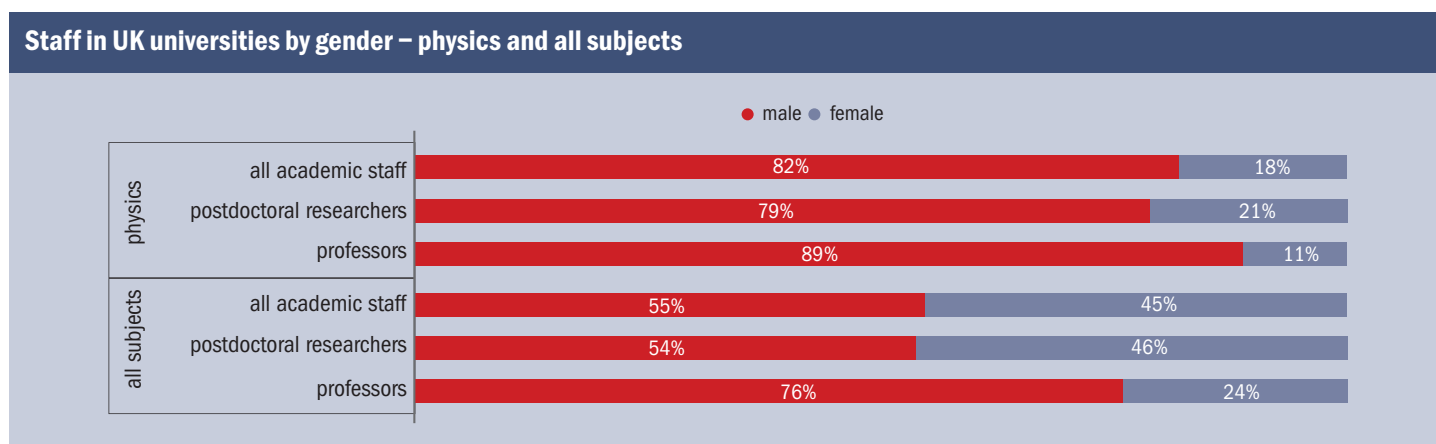
Professors

There are 805 professors in UK physics departments – 28% of them are from outside the UK, as shown in the chart below. Across the UK nations the highest proportion of non-UK professors are seen in Wales, although Wales has a smaller total number than in England or Scotland. Physics departments in the UK have a larger proportion of non-UK EU professors (18%) than all subjects at UK universities (13%).



Gender

The gender split is wider for professors than for all academic staff in physics and for all subjects as a whole, as shown in the chart below. The gender split in physics for postdoctoral researchers is similar to undergraduate, master’s and PhD students.⁷



⁷ Refer to the recent IOP Data Brief “Students and graduates in UK physics departments”, July 2017.

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