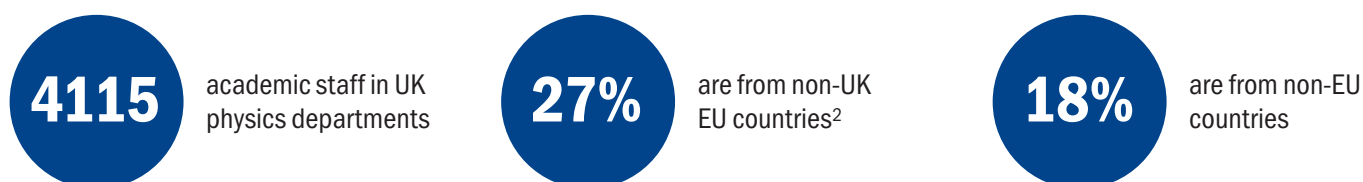


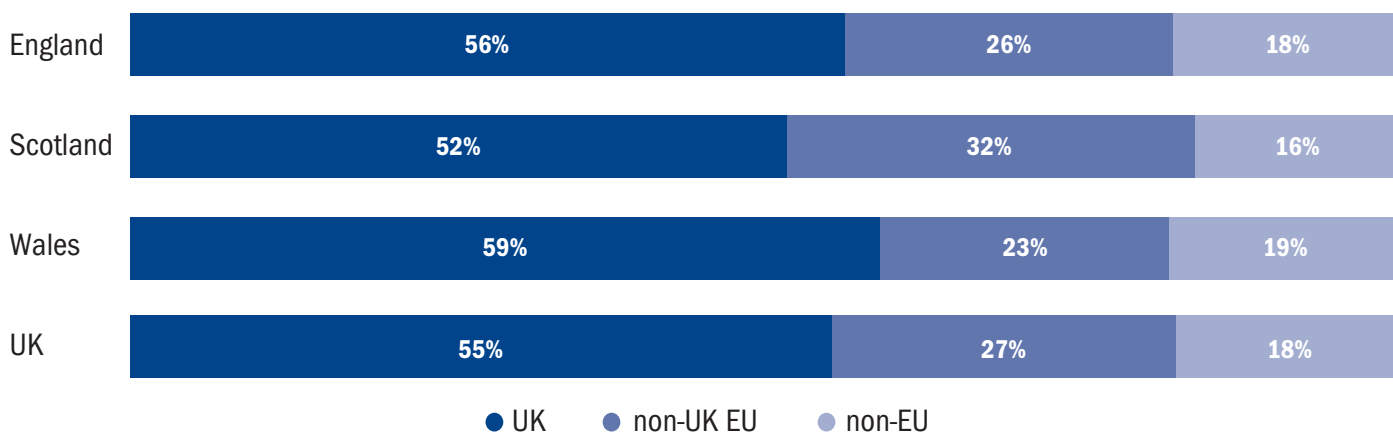
# Staff and students in UK physics departments



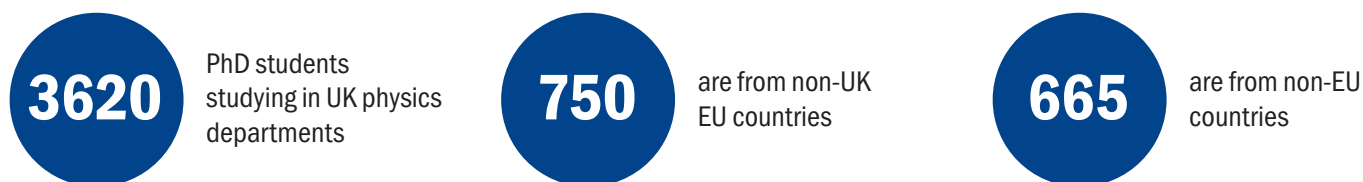
The strength of UK physics and the benefits that it brings to the nation are built on the skills of the people who work in it. This briefing outlines a set of statistics on staff and students in physics departments in UK universities in the 2016–2017 academic year.<sup>1</sup>



## Academic staff in UK physics departments by nation of university and nationality<sup>3</sup>



## Early-career physicists

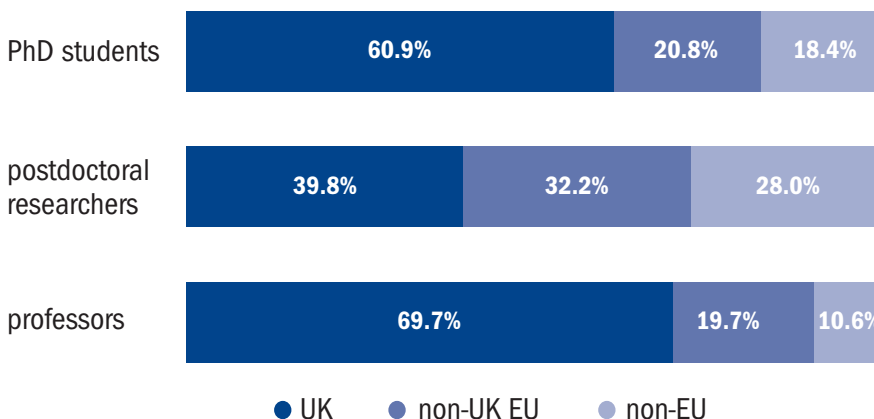


There is a significant increase in the proportion of physicists from non-UK EU countries and non-EU countries from PhD level to postdoctoral researcher level. Mobility is particularly important at the postdoctoral researcher stage<sup>4</sup> in physics. More than half of students move institution between their PhD and their first postdoctoral position (although not necessarily abroad) according to research conducted by the National Academies.<sup>5</sup>



“ Almost a third of physics postdoctoral researchers are from non-UK EU countries. More than half are from outside of the UK.

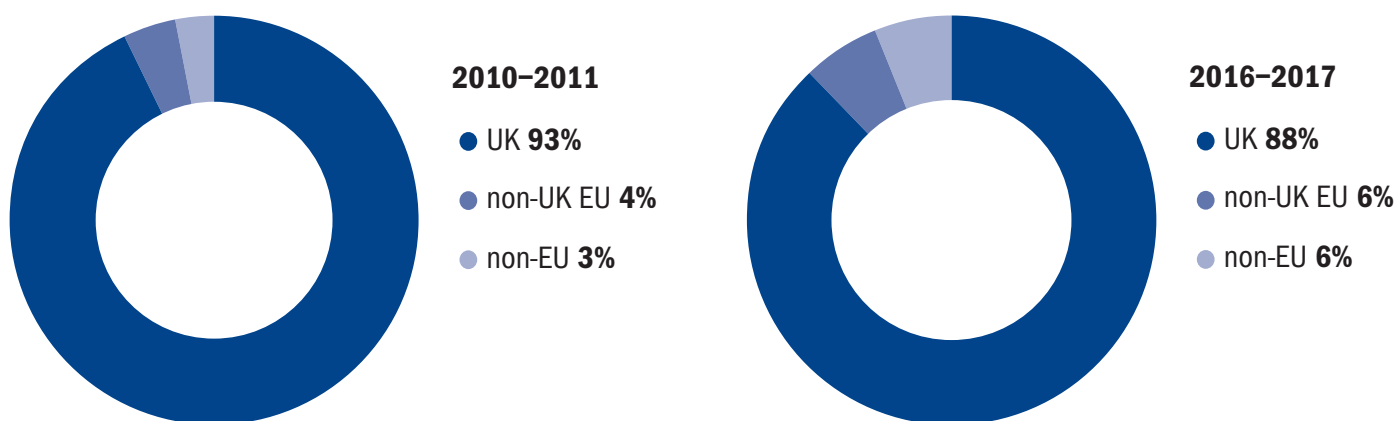
**Physicists in UK universities by role and domicile or nationality<sup>6</sup>**



**Undergraduate students**

The majority of undergraduate physics students are UK domiciled, but the proportion of students from non-UK EU and non-EU countries has risen over the last seven years.

**Undergraduate students in UK physics by domicile**



<sup>1</sup> Data comes from the Higher Education Statistics Agency (HESA). Percentages may not sum to 100 due to rounding.  
<sup>2</sup> HESA counts staff with dual nationality as “UK”.  
<sup>3</sup> 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://hesa.ac.uk/about/regulation/data-protection/rounding-and-suppression-anonymise-statistics)  
<sup>4</sup> 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://hesa.ac.uk/support/definitions/staff)  
<sup>5</sup> The UK National Academies, 2017. The role of international collaboration and mobility in research. [royalsociety.org/topics-policy/projects/international-researcher-mobility/role-of-international-collaboration-mobility-in-research/](https://royalsociety.org/topics-policy/projects/international-researcher-mobility/role-of-international-collaboration-mobility-in-research/)  
<sup>6</sup> Data shows “domicile” for PhD students; “nationality” for postdoctoral researchers and professors.