

# Attracting Researchers to Ireland: the Impact of the Scientific Visa



An Roinn Post, Fiontar agus Nuálaíochta  
Department of Jobs, Enterprise and Innovation



The European Commissioner for Research, Innovation and Science, Ms. Máire Geoghegan Quinn launched this report at the Irish Presidency conference on Researcher Careers and Mobility held at Dublin Castle on Tuesday May 14th.

Speaking at the launch Commissioner Geoghegan-Quinn said, *"The publication demonstrates the remarkable success of Ireland's participation in the Scientific Visa after opting voluntarily to implement the Third Country Directive in 2007. As many as one quarter of researchers using the scheme said they would definitely not have come to Ireland if this fast track immigration were not in place. So it really is a crucial initiative."*

Minister for Research and Innovation Sean Sherlock TD commended the scheme saying: *"The openness of Ireland's research and innovation system is greatly boosted by this initiative. I hope that the scheme will continue to expand and I hope to see its take-up, especially by our innovative export sector, increase further in the coming years."*

# Contents

Introduction	2
EURAXESS Ireland	3
Implementation of the Third Country Directive in Ireland (2007 -2013)	4
EURAXESS and the Hosting Agreement in Ireland	6
Researchers and Institutions	10
The benefits of the Hosting Agreements scheme	14
Conclusions	20



# Introduction

From the experience in Ireland, it is clear that Europe's scientific visa and the EURAXESS services can solve most of the problems regarding entry of foreign researchers into European research institutions and companies. Fast-track immigration is an important consideration for internationally mobile researchers and helps to attract the best global talent to Europe. What has been learnt from the Irish experience is that immigration issues are a critical part of the decision by researchers to move to Ireland.

Ireland, like the United Kingdom and Denmark, was not obliged to introduce the scientific visa under the 2005 European Union (EU) directive. However it was recognised that the visa would help to attract non-EU researchers to the country and for that reason the Irish government decided to implement the Directive known as the Hosting Agreement Scheme. The scheme, which offers a free and fast track service, has been successfully operating in Ireland since 2007 and is open to higher education institutions and the private sector. The scheme is operated by the EURAXESS Ireland office based in the Irish Universities Association and is supported by the Department of Jobs, Enterprise and Innovation. Visas are issued rapidly and work permits are not required. Researchers' families can accompany them immediately and use public schooling. Family members have access to the job market and the researchers can stay on to look for a job after their contract ends.

The commitment of the Department of Jobs, Enterprise and Innovation (DJEI) and Irish Naturalisation and Immigration Service (INIS) has been critical in implementing successfully the Third Country Directive/Hosting Agreement scheme in Ireland.

Over the last six years 1,750 researchers have come to Ireland under this scheme. There are over 42 organisations using the fast track scheme including universities, institutes of technology, research institutions and companies. Although the seven universities host over 80% of all the non-EU researchers, an increasing amount of private companies are accessing the scheme.

In total, there are researchers from 80 different countries. The majority of researchers come from India, China and the United States; together they account for 50% of the total. Almost one third of the researchers had already left their home country before coming to Ireland. Most were PhD students based in Europe and some in the US and Canada. Most of the researchers found employment in ICT/computer and life sciences; 27% and 26% respectively across Irish research institutions. A significant share of researchers work in the engineering sector (23%), while physics and chemistry attracted 17% and 15% respectively. More than 60% are PhD graduates who are not yet fully independent researchers.

In March 2013, the EURAXESS Ireland office conducted a survey of researchers who have used the fast track scheme. Over 300 researchers (245 present and 57 past users of the scheme) responded to a series of detailed questions evaluating their own experiences with the scheme. The data shown in this report are based on this survey in addition to the facts and figures gathered by the EURAXESS Ireland office over the last 6 years of the day-to-day management of the Hosting Agreement scheme.

# EURAXESS Ireland

This report was prepared by the EURAXESS Ireland team and was launched at the EU Presidency Conference on Researcher Careers and Mobility in May 2013. Based at the Irish Universities Association, EURAXESS Ireland has been providing free advice and guidance to researchers moving to or from Ireland to develop their research career since 2004. EURAXESS Ireland is jointly funded by the IUA and the Department of Jobs, Enterprise and Innovation (DJEI). It is a member of the EURAXESS European Services Network (euraxess.eu) which has more than 200 centres located in 40 European countries.

The EURAXESS Ireland help-desk provides free advice and tailored assistance to mobile researchers and their families on administrative, working and cultural matters including immigration, residency and work permits, schooling, language courses and other practical information to guide them before and upon their arrival in Ireland. The EURAXESS Ireland portal – euraxess.ie – provides practical support to researchers and their families and also assists Higher Education Institutions, companies and research active organisations hiring researchers and searching for funding opportunities.



EURAXESS Ireland Team: Jennifer Cleary, Conor O'Carroll and Magda Wislocka.



EURAXESS Ireland Team with Minister Sean Sherlock TD and European Commissioner for Research and Innovation Mairé Geoghegan-Quinn

# Implementation of the Third Country Directive in Ireland (2007 -2013)

In 2007, Ireland voluntarily opted into the fast track researcher visa scheme (Hosting Agreement) implementing the European Council Directive<sup>1</sup> on a specific procedure for admitting nationals from outside the European Economic Area<sup>2</sup> (non-EEA) for the purposes of scientific research. This scheme enables approved research active organisations to recruit researchers from outside the EEA to carry out research in Ireland without a need of a work permit. This mechanism facilitates researchers and their dependents (spouses and children) for the duration of their contract and allows for an immediate family reunification.

The Hosting Agreement scheme is a very straightforward procedure for the institutions and researchers alike. Research organisations, both public and private, apply to the Department of Jobs, Enterprise and Innovation (the Office of Science Technology and Innovation) for accreditation. Once approved, organisations can employ non-EEA researchers on Hosting Agreements. EURAXESS Ireland, based in the Irish Universities Association (IUA), is the government appointed central processing house for Hosting Agreements. The office plays a key role in the official accreditation and immigration process ensuring a smooth operation for the scheme.

The Irish immigration system requires that non-EEA nationals register to obtain the appropriate permission to remain in the Country. Although researchers on Hosting Agreements do not need a work permit, they are not exempt from requiring an Irish entry visa and annual registration with the immigration services.<sup>3</sup> The support of EURAXESS Ireland ensures that these necessary formalities are sorted quickly and in a friendly manner.

A highly secure online database with details of all Hosting Agreement holders and their family members has been developed and maintained by EURAXESS Ireland. The database can be accessed by Irish immigration authorities worldwide for verification purposes.

*The involvement of the Irish Universities Association has been critically important in making the researchers system a success. It gives the immigration service a single point of contact for the day to day management of the system and the IUA's detailed understanding of the research environment gives us the confidence that only reputable institutions and researchers can participate.*

Kevin O'Sullivan, Director Irish Naturalisation and Immigration Service,  
Department of Justice, Equality and Law Reform



- 1 European Council Directive 2005/71/EC (OJ L 289, 3.11.2005)
- 2 The European Economic Area (EEA) comprises the 27 countries of the European Union (EU), Iceland, Liechtenstein and Norway
- 3 INIS - Irish Naturalisation & Immigration Service <http://www.inis.gov.ie>

*I find this database very helpful when we have a Hosting Agreement visa application here to check that the application is genuine and the Hosting Agreement document is not falsified. It does decrease the processing time due to the fact that if we had any suspicion about a case, rather than contacting the Irish college directly and waiting for a reply, which may take a few days, we can check the database instead.*

Anne Roche, Embassy of Ireland, Beijing

*The Hosting Agreement extranet is very useful here, particularly given the time difference in confirming the applicants' details with Dublin.*

Amy O'Brien, Consulate General of Ireland Shanghai Centre

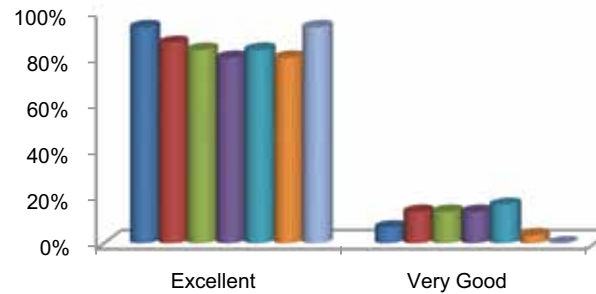


# EURAXESS and the Hosting Agreement in Ireland

EURAXESS Ireland provides information and practical assistance to Irish research institutions at all stages of their accreditation procedure, and later with processing of agreements for their non-EEA employees. The office has established an excellent reputation for dealing with a wide variety of immigration issues that researchers and their families encounter in Ireland, as well as for assisting the accredited institutions with the Hosting Agreement procedure (Chart 1). This assistance includes regular meetings organised by EURAXESS Ireland for the whole network of institutions engaged in the Hosting Agreement: these meetings are key for the good coordination of the process and for maintaining a high quality service.

Chart 1

As an institution accredited for the Hosting Agreement scheme please rate the service of the EURAXESS office regarding processing your Hosting Agreements and queries (n=30)



- Quality of the support and information
- Response time to queries/Calls/Emails
- Practical information on accreditation system/processing of hosting agreements
- Quality of follow-up from the office
- Assistance with visa/immigration queries
- Professionalism & Competence
- Hosting Agreements Processing time



The level of satisfaction of the accredited organisations is illustrated by the following testimonials:

*The 'Euraxess' Ireland Office could not be more helpful in supporting my role of employing and bringing to Ireland top class research talent. Their assistance is invaluable to our institution as an employer of researchers and to the researchers themselves in terms of direct support.*

Gareth Yore, DCU

*All interactions with the Euraxess Ireland Office have been excellent. Magda has made the Hosting Agreement Process as smooth as possible and provides quality customer service on top of that. I would like to thank EURAXESS Ireland on behalf of NUI Maynooth for all of their help throughout the years.*

Deirdre Boyle, NUIM

*The introduction of the Hosting Agreement Scheme has made a huge difference to the Institute and how we can now employ employees who would formally had to go through the work permit process. The staff in the EURAXESS office has been extremely helpful in the whole process.*

Linda Flanagan, Limerick IOT

*The EURAXESS staff has been consummately professional and empathetic in understanding uncertainty around the process. Having come from the Work Permit application process I was constantly waiting for 'things' to go wrong; but nothing did. Magda was there, at every step, guiding my steps to ensure success.*

Norma Mulligan, Avego

*EURAXESS Ireland staff was such a fantastic help to me when getting accreditation and when setting up individual agreements. A daunting task was made so much easier with their assistance and friendly manner.*

Gillian Quigley, OncoMark

*We have had a very positive experience with EURAXESS. From our initial enquiry as to what could be done through to supporting our Researcher through the process we found that it was a personal, professional service. All questions were answered in a timely and clear manner. Follow up to make sure we all understood and patience when the same question got asked a number of time. We are very grateful for the support of EURAXESS and their team for their knowledge and professionalism.*

Mary McNally, Fujitsu

*Prior to being in a position to avail of Hosting Agreements we could spend an inordinate amount of time trying to deal with VISAS etc. While we found the Department helpful there is no comparison in being able to contact the EURAXESS office. The area we were recruiting for was the Digital Humanities Observatory and at that time there was no specialist in this area in Ireland. Being in a position to offer a Hosting Agreement made the process all the more attractive. On one occasion I had a major problem which I was very concerned about - but they sorted it in a very professional and speedy manner.*

Róisín Quigley, Royal Irish Academy

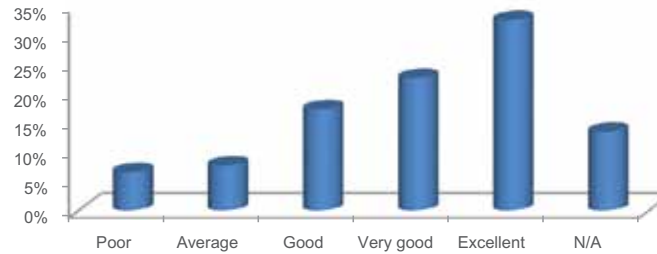


# EURAXESS and the Hosting Agreement in Ireland

Researchers can rely on both their employers and EURAXESS Ireland when they look for help with their Hosting Agreements. The latest survey (March 2013) shows that they are very satisfied with the quality of service they receive. Chart 2 shows that 70 % of the respondents rated the assistance level very highly and most of them evaluated its quality as excellent.

Chart 2

As a researcher please rate the quality of assistance you received from your institution(s) or the EURAXESS Ireland with queries regarding your Hosting Agreement (n=261)



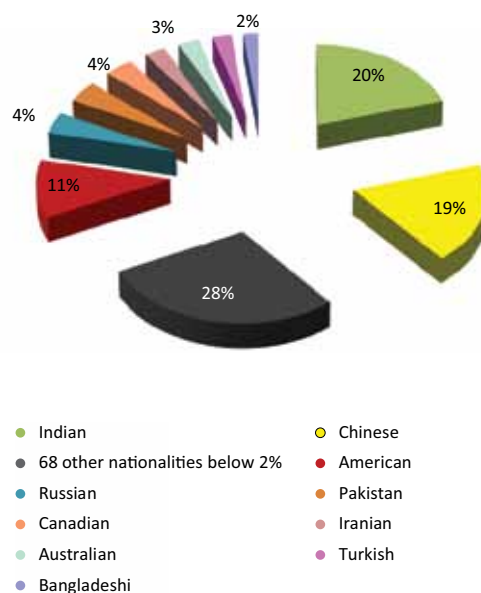


## Researchers and Institutions

As evident from Chart 3, Chinese and Indian nationals make up 40 % of the researchers on Hosting Agreements. The second largest group is made up of US citizens (11 %) followed by Canadian, Russian and Pakistani researchers who account for a total of 12 % researchers on Hosting Agreements in Ireland. The remaining 50 % of non-EEA researchers come from 75 different nations. Most researchers resided outside Ireland at the time they applied for their jobs on Hosting Agreements in Ireland; 15 % of them came here from the US, 12 % from India, 9 % from China while 8 % of the researchers were in the UK immediately before taking up their post at research institutions in Ireland (Chart 4). A total of 40 % of the Hosting Agreement candidates were already living in Ireland when they applied for their research posts at Irish institutions. Most of these (60 %) held PhDs obtained at Irish universities (Chart 5). The others studied in Ireland for their MSc or were employed in the Irish R&D sector (12 and 13 percent respectively). A similar share (14 %) were either on visitor visas, or had student or intern status directly before they were employed as researchers on Hosting Agreements in Ireland (Chart 5).

**Chart 3**

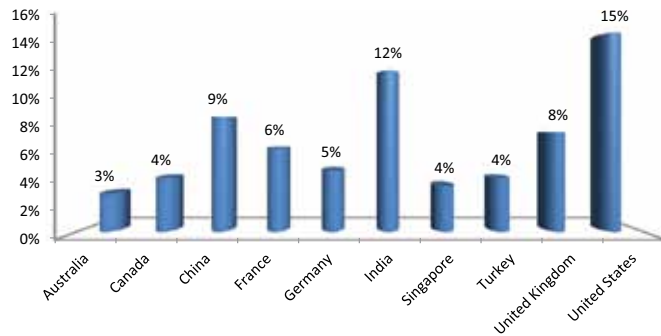
Breakdown by nationality of non-EEA researchers issued with Hosting Agreements in Ireland since the introduction of the Scheme in 2007 (as of March 2013)<sup>4</sup> (n=302)



4 Note that there was a strong correlation between the distribution of nationalities in the survey sample and that from the EURAXESS database of all researchers, showing that the survey sample is representative.

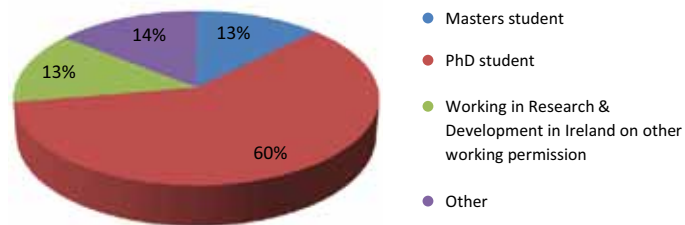
**Chart 4**

Country of residence of researchers who were not already in Ireland immediately before taking up a research post on a Hosting Agreement (n=171)



**Chart 5**

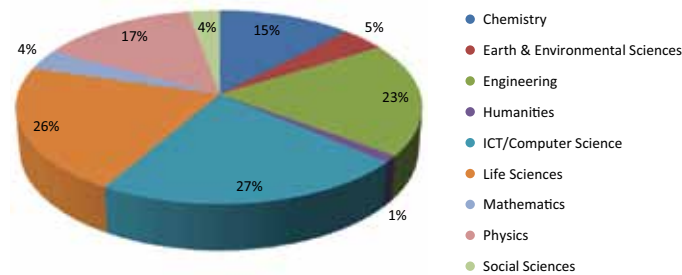
Career stage of non-EEA nationals who were already in Ireland prior to their employment on a Hosting Agreement (n= 112)



As evident from Chart 6 most non-EEA researchers found employment in ICT/Computer science and life science (27 and 26 % respectively) across Irish research institutions. A significant share of researchers on Hosting Agreements work in the engineering sector (23 %), while physics and chemistry attracted 17 and 15 % of the non EEA researchers respectively. The smallest numbers of non-EEA nationals were employed in mathematics and social science (4 %) whilst none of the survey respondents indicated that they were working in economic science (EURAXESS survey of March 2013).

**Chart 6**

Research field of researchers on Hosting Agreements in Ireland (n=284)



## Researchers and Institutions

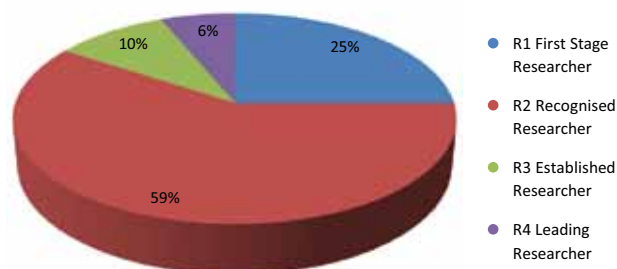
All 7 universities, 11 Institutes of Technology, 10 other research institutions and 14 industrial organisations (e.g. IBM, Fujitsu, Ericsson) use the scheme to recruit non-EEA nationals for their research projects. The number of researchers working in Ireland on Hosting Agreements varied from 500 in 2012 to 550 in the first quarter of 2013. This marks an increase of on average 100 researchers or 23% since 2011. The vast majority of non-EEA researchers on Hosting Agreements are employees of the seven universities in Ireland. However, University College Dublin, Trinity College Dublin, NUI Galway, Dublin City University and University College Cork have the highest share of the researchers from outside the EEA (a total of 1,380 or 80% contracts processed). IBM employs over 50% of the highly skilled researchers working in the industrial sector under the scheme (as of March 2013). Although employees on Hosting Agreements account for up to 20% of research staff at the accredited institutions in Ireland this number increases up to 40 % for some organisations accredited for the scheme.

Most non-EEA nationals were qualified to PhD level or had more than 4 years of experience past primary degree (Recognised Researcher R2)<sup>5</sup> while on the scheme (Chart 7). The second largest cohort at 25% were researchers with less than 4 years of experience past the primary degree (First Stage Researchers R1). More experienced researchers (Established and Leading Researchers R3 & R4) accounted for 16% of the Hosting Agreement holders according to the survey of March 2013. The survey respondents were asked for details of their present career after they were exempt

from the Irish Hosting Agreement immigration scheme. The responses show that 90 % of the previous Hosting Agreement holders continue their career in R&D while 96 percent of them are currently working in the academic sector.

Chart 7

Stage of career of researchers on Hosting Agreements in Ireland using the European Framework for Research Careers classification (n=284)<sup>5</sup>



<sup>5</sup> For classification purposes the European Framework for Research Careers (EFRC) has been applied, [http://ec.europa.eu/euraxess/pdf/research\\_policies/Towards\\_a\\_European\\_Framework\\_for\\_Research\\_Careers\\_final.pdf](http://ec.europa.eu/euraxess/pdf/research_policies/Towards_a_European_Framework_for_Research_Careers_final.pdf)



# The benefits of the Hosting Agreements scheme

The survey of March 2013 revealed that a significant number (23%) of researchers using the scheme would definitely not have come to Ireland had the Hosting Agreement scheme not been in place (Chart 8). For 53% of the respondents the fast track immigration facility was a major part of the decision to come to Ireland and without it researchers may have decided not to choose Ireland for the next step in their research career. Only 25% of the researchers surveyed would have come to Ireland regardless of the immigration process.

Researchers on Hosting Agreements can avail of a range of benefits from the immigration and employment perspective. These include:

- Fast track immigration
- Exemption from a work permit
- Possibility to remain and work in Ireland without a working permission after 2 years on a Hosting Agreement
- Spousal / dependent work Permit
- Immediate family reunification
- Employment as a researcher in industry on a Hosting Agreement
- Employment as an academic<sup>6</sup> on a Hosting Agreement

The scheme has proved more advantageous than the work permit procedure, which governed the entry of non-EEA nationals into Ireland for research purposes before the Hosting Agreement system was launched here in 2007. The accreditation process and processing of Hosting

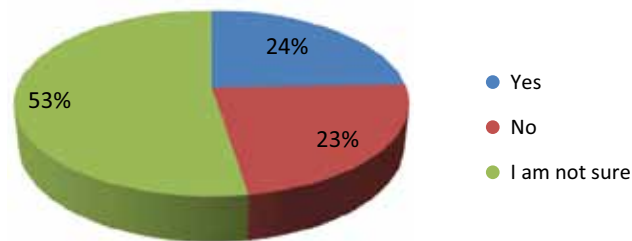
Agreements operated by EURAXESS Ireland is free for the research institutions eligible for the scheme.

Academics significantly engaged in research as well as highly skilled researchers recruited by private companies can avail of the Hosting Agreement procedure in Ireland. There are currently 30 highly skilled non-European researchers employed under the scheme by private enterprises in Ireland (as of March 2013). This number shows a growing trend with more companies obtaining accreditation for the scheme.

Researchers who have been employed under the Hosting Agreement scheme for 2 years can remain and work in the country in any area without needing to apply for additional permission to work. The Irish immigration services can offer options to researchers following expiration of their Hosting Agreement contract to stay in the country for a period of time to seek further employment opportunities in Ireland.

**Chart 8**

Would you have come to/ remained in Ireland if the Hosting Agreement scheme was not in place (n=261)



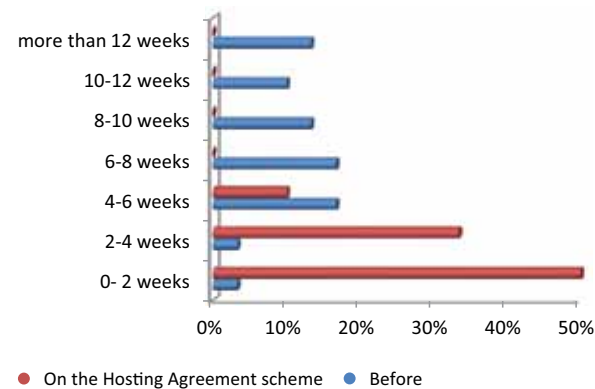
<sup>6</sup> For the purposes of the Hosting Agreement scheme, an "academic" is defined as a person employed as a lecturer at a Higher Education Institution significantly engaged in research activities.



One of the most highly appreciated benefits of the scheme is a significant reduction of the length of the visa immigration process for non-EEA employees on Hosting Agreements. The immigration formalities to recruit researchers on the Hosting Agreement scheme now take up to a maximum of 2 weeks for 50% of the institutions using the scheme and from 2 to 4 weeks for 33% of them (EURAXESS Ireland survey of March 2013). This is a huge improvement as the time needed for the visa and work permit/ green card arrangements took from 6 to 8 weeks for the majority of the institutions before they began employing researchers on Hosting Agreements. Some institutions reported 3 months or more for their researchers' visa formalities (Chart 9).

**Chart 9**

Duration of the immigration procedure to employ visa required researchers in Ireland on the work permit /green card system before 2007 and now on the Hosting Agreement scheme (n=30)



Spouses and children of researchers on Hosting Agreements can travel to Ireland immediately and there is no waiting time for family reunification. A total of 740 researchers have availed of this opportunity to date and there are currently 330 families on Hosting Agreements in Ireland. An additional benefit that the family members of researchers can avail of is open access to the job market in Ireland (administered through the Spousal/Dependent work permit scheme). Dependents of the researchers can apply for an employment permit in respect of most occupations on full or part time contracts.

All the benefits available to the Hosting Agreements holders seem to be very important for the non-EEA researchers coming to Ireland to pursue their professional career (Chart 10). Over 50% of the respondents of the March 2013 survey valued the fast track visa process as very important and they are fully aware that the procedure is quick and easy (chart 11). Although an exemption from any working permission after 2 years on a Hosting Agreement and immediate family reunification appeared to be significant pulling factors for the researchers, 80 % of the survey respondents did not know such benefits were available to them (Chart 11). The researchers are generally not very aware about the existence of the Hosting Agreement scheme before they apply for their research posts in Ireland (Chart 12). Irish research institutions accredited for the scheme play a significant role in raising awareness of the scientific visa procedure among the applicants from overseas (Chart 13)

# The benefits of the Hosting Agreements scheme

Opinions gathered by the EURAXESS Ireland office show the high impact of the fast tracking visa scheme in attracting foreign researchers to Ireland:

*I came over to Ireland about 1 and a half years ago to start a job at IBM's Dublin campus. Before that I had lived in the US for about 12 years. It was in the process of getting a visa where I first got to know about EURAXESS and the hosting agreement. I applied for the visa and I could not believe it when I got it in just 4 days. I arrived in Dublin in the January of 2010 and I really appreciated the very efficient and no-hassle processing of my hosting agreement. EURAXESS Ireland have also been a big help in arranging hosting agreements for other non-EU researchers that we wish to recruit to work on important projects at IBM in Dublin. So thank you EURAXESS and thank you everyone who is helping people like me succeed at IBM.*

Shoukat Ali, Pakistani (now American) researcher, IBM

*The Hosting Agreement scheme was a key factor in our deciding to move to Ireland as a family. The fast tracking of immigration procedure and access to employment for my spouse was very important considerations in moving to Ireland.*

New Zealand researcher, United Technologies Research Centre Ireland, Ltd.

*The Hosting Agreement is one of the reasons why employers can easily recruit talent outside Ireland for research capacity. The scheme did help me in my employment.*

Indian researcher, Athlone Institute of Technology

*People at EURAXESS Ireland were very helpful during the application and when I was in Ireland. I had to return to my home country in the 3rd week of my agreement because of my father's illness. And the people really helped me a lot to get my re-entry visa as quickly as possible so that I could see my father for the last time. I really appreciated that. Thanks again.*

Turkish researcher, Daithi O'Murchu Marine Research Station

*It may have been difficult for me to survive in Ireland without the benefits that I got with my Hosting Agreement, especially regarding the family reunification.*

Pakistani researcher, TCD

*I didn't realise the Hosting Agreement existed when I organised to come here, but now realising how difficult it would be without it I would not stay.*

Australian researcher, UCD

*Once I realised I needed a Hosting Agreement, the rest of the visa process went very smoothly.*

American researcher, TCD

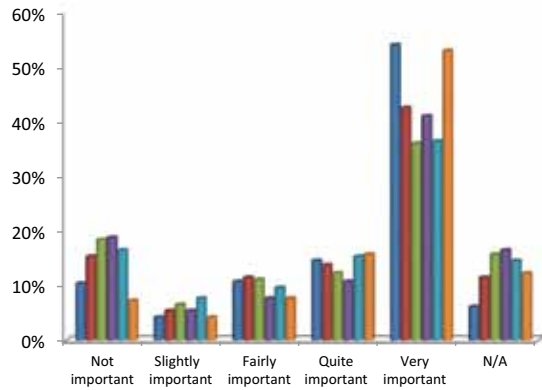
*It definitely made it a lot easier and I am more likely to stay because of this system.*

New Zealand researcher, UCC



Chart 10

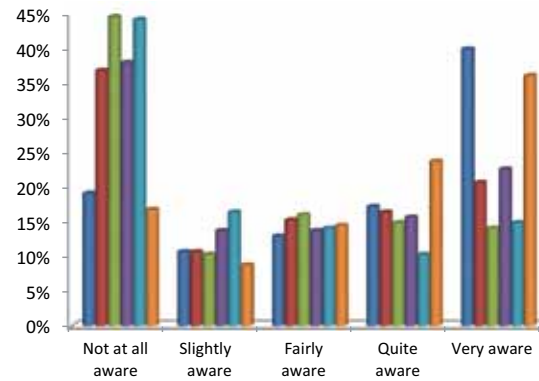
How important were the following benefits of the Hosting Agreement scheme to you when deciding whether or not to proceed with your research career in Ireland? (n= 261)



- Fast track immigration process
- Exemption from any working permission after 2 years on a Hosting Agreement
- Spousal/dependant work permit
- Immediate family reunification
- Employment as a researcher in industry on the Hosting Agreement
- Employment as an academic on the Hosting Agreement

Chart 11

To what extent are you aware of the benefits of the Irish Hosting Agreement scheme for you and your family members? (n=261)



- Fast track immigration process
- Exemption from any working permission after 2 years on a Hosting Agreement
- Spousal/dependant work permit
- Immediate family reunification
- Employment as a researcher in industry on the Hosting Agreement
- Employment as an academic on the Hosting Agreement

# The benefits of the Hosting Agreements scheme

Chart 12

Did you know about the researcher fast tracking visa scheme (Hosting Agreement) before you applied for a job as a researcher in Ireland? (n= 280)

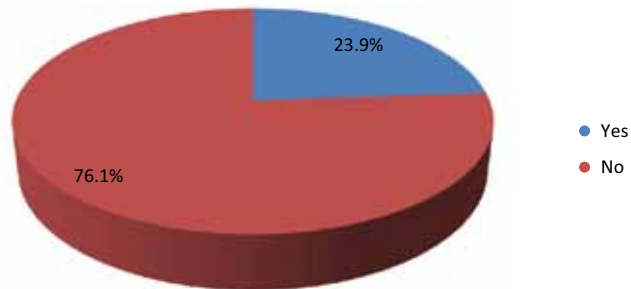
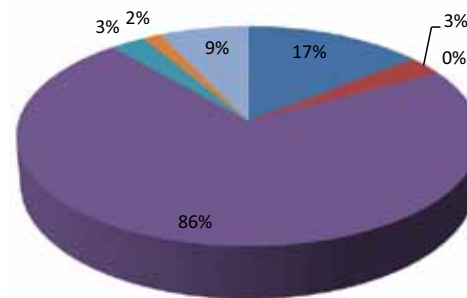


Chart 13

Where did you find out about the Irish Hosting Agreement scheme? (n=58)



- EURAXESS Ireland website,
- Website of other Irish institution (please specify)
- EURAXESS Service Centre/helpdesk
- My employer/colleagues in an Irish institution
- My employer/colleagues in another country
- Don't remember
- Other (please specify)



## Conclusions

Ireland's participation in the scientific visa through the Hosting Agreement scheme has greatly improved the recruitment process and the immigration procedures for foreign researchers. The key factors in attracting big groups of skillful researchers from abroad to the Irish public and private sector are the range of benefits available to the Hosting Agreement holders and their family members. Although non-EEA nationals based in Ireland must still face certain immigration obstacles, especially when they travel abroad, (the biggest issues are related to visa costs, re-entry visas or regular immigration registration fees) the fast tracking visa system plays its role in boosting the Country's position as an international centre for research.

- Over the last six years the Hosting Agreement scheme contributed to bringing over 1,700 highly talented researchers in ICT/Computer, Life sciences and Engineering by the Irish universities and other research institutions in Ireland. This number represents 10 to 30% of all researchers employed by the Irish universities and for 40 to 100% for certain companies.
- The main countries contributing to the Irish research effort are India, China and the USA (50% of the total).
- 23% of researchers would definitely not have come to Ireland if the scheme were not in place. Another 53% said they may not have decided not to choose Ireland for the next step in their research career without this opportunity.
- Over 60% of the researchers employed on Hosting Agreements resided outside Ireland prior to taking up their posts at Irish institutions (in USA, India, China, and UK).

- Almost 60% of researchers on Hosting Agreements were at Recognised Researcher career stage (PhD holders or equivalent who are not yet fully independent).
- The immigration/employment benefits for the scheme are very important for the vast majority of the Hosting Agreement holders.
- The time needed for the visa/immigration formalities to recruit non EEA researchers have considerably decreased (to 2 weeks or less from 8 weeks or more on average).
- The immigration situation of non EEA researchers coming to Ireland for research purposes has improved (no need for employment permission after 2 years on a Hosting Agreement, immediate family reunification).

The fact that fast track immigration was a key part of the decision to come to Ireland for so many researchers cannot be over-emphasized. It is often assumed that only the quality of the research facilities and people are the deciding factor when deciding to move to another country. This shows clearly that immigration is a key part of the decision making process. If it were not for the fast track immigration scheme then 23% and probably more would have chosen a different destination than Ireland.

Looking to the future, it will become more challenging to attract and retain researchers in Ireland. This survey shows conclusively that one must think beyond purely research related issues in order to attract people. Fast-track immigration is an important consideration for internationally mobile scientists and helps to attract the best global talent to Ireland. We now know that facilitating non-EU researchers can be a critical part of their decision to come to Ireland. It is good to know that by adopting the scientific visa, Ireland has become a more attractive location for researchers.



For further information:  
**[www.euraxess.ie](http://www.euraxess.ie)**