

# naturejobs

**THE CAREERS  
MAGAZINE FOR  
SCIENTISTS**

**W**ith insufficient homegrown talent entering key disciplines such as engineering and the physical sciences, the United States has long relied on foreign graduates to make up its PhD shortfall. But since the terrorist attacks of 11 September 2001, the number of international students enrolling in US graduate programmes has dropped dramatically. As a result, numerous initiatives have been launched in a bid to attract students back to the country. And, according to a report issued by the US Council of Graduate Schools, these efforts are at last beginning to bear fruit.

The report shows that, compared with last year, 2006 has seen an 11% increase in applications from foreign graduates and a 12% increase in the number of positions being offered (see [www.cgsnet.com](http://www.cgsnet.com)). But the key figure — how many students actually enrol — will not be available until October.

The year-on-year decline in enrolment was the result of several factors, many of which are linked to US policy. The tightening of security in the wake of the terrorist attacks caused significant problems for foreign students trying to get visas. Even those who already had visas faced considerable difficulties re-entering the United States from their home countries. The fresh focus on defence-related research has also meant that the US budget for basic research and development has remained relatively flat — or has even declined for some disciplines — making the country less attractive. At the same time, other nations including Britain and Canada have actively wooed foreign graduate students.

But, as the new report explains, these issues have spurred US universities into action: 79% of admissions offices surveyed said that they had implemented at least one new practice to entice foreign graduate students to their institution. These initiatives include dedicated staff for recruiting and assisting the students, special funding schemes and international collaborations. If the US labour market is to avoid losing its competitive edge in science, then the decline in enrolments must be reversed. The latest statistics may provide a glimmer of hope, but there's still a lot of work to be done.

**Paul Smaglik, *Naturejobs* editor**

## CONTACTS

**Publisher:** Ben Crowe  
**Editor:** Paul Smaglik  
**Assistant Editor:** Gene Russo

**US Head Office, New York**  
75 Varick Street, 9th Floor,  
New York, NY 10013-1917  
Tel: +1 800 989 7718  
Fax: +1 800 989 7103  
e-mail: [naturejobs@natureny.com](mailto:naturejobs@natureny.com)

**US Sales Manager/Corporations:**  
Peter Bless  
Classified Sales Representatives  
Tel: +1 800 989 7718  
**East USA/Canada:** Andrew Bennie  
**NIH/Maryland/New York/  
Pennsylvania:** Shelley Cohen

**San Francisco Office**  
Classified Sales Representative:

Michaela Bjorkman  
West USA/West Corp. Canada  
225 Bush Street, Suite 1453  
San Francisco, CA 94104  
Tel: +1 415 781 3803  
Fax: +1 415 781 3805  
e-mail: [m.bjorkman@naturesf.com](mailto:m.bjorkman@naturesf.com)

**European Head Office, London**  
The Macmillan Building,  
4 Crinan Street, London N1 9XW, UK  
Tel: +44 (0) 20 7843 4961  
Fax: +44 (0) 20 7843 4996  
e-mail: [naturejobs@nature.com](mailto:naturejobs@nature.com)

**European Sales Manager:**  
Andy Douglas (4975)  
**Advertising Production Manager:**  
Stephen Russell  
To send materials use London  
address above.  
Tel: +44 (0) 20 7843 4816

Fax: +44 (0) 20 7843 4996  
e-mail: [naturejobs@nature.com](mailto:naturejobs@nature.com)  
**Naturejobs web development:**  
Tom Hancock  
**Naturejobs online production:**  
Catherine Alexander

**European Satellite Office**  
Patrick Phelan  
e-mail: [p.phelan@nature.com](mailto:p.phelan@nature.com)

**Japan Head Office, Tokyo**  
Chiyoda Building,  
2-37 Ichigayatamachi,  
Shinjuku-ku,  
Tokyo 162-0843  
Tel: +81 3 3267 8751  
Fax: +81 3 3267 8746

**Asia-Pacific Sales Manager:**  
Ayako Watanabe  
e-mail: [a.watanabe@natureasia.com](mailto:a.watanabe@natureasia.com)