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# naturejobs

## Attractive information

The US scientific workforce is in trouble. Fewer citizens are taking up science as a career, and scientists from outside the country don't seem keen to make up the deficit. In the past, the United States turned to foreign nationals to fuel its research and development reserves. But since the terrorist attacks of 2001, restrictive visa and travel policies have made it hard for the country to attract the international talent it needs. Meanwhile, other countries are expanding their R&D infrastructures and getting more aggressive about recruiting talent that once considered the United States its first port of call.

*Policy Implications of International Graduate Students and Postdoctoral Scholars in the United States*, a new report from the National Academy of Sciences, offers some possible solutions ([www.nas.edu](http://www.nas.edu)). These are broadly divided into three categories: better career advice and training; more data on the international scientific workforce; and better services to foreign scientists, including less restrictive visa and immigration policies.

Better career information would help both foreign and domestic scientists. The report calls for research

institutions to provide more data about the jobs secured by recent graduates and trainees. It also encourages them to discuss employment opportunities outside academia and the odds of succeeding within the system.

To help young researchers make that crucial step from trainee to working scientist, the US government should provide more transition grants, the report says — perhaps even funding scientists to pursue careers away from the lab bench. Training programmes should also explicitly mention other options outside academia and give young scientists the skills to pursue them.

All of these are great ideas that address the career needs of young scientists everywhere — not just in the United States. And if the United States doesn't adapt some or all of them, it's a sure thing that other countries will.



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