

# naturejobs

**JOBS OF  
THE WEEK**

**W**hat attracts researchers to a specific country or institution? The fame of its researchers, its prestige, the cutting-edge nature of its work and facilities, and the amenities in the surrounding area are clearly factors. But salary also plays a part in the decision.

Globalization has begun to melt away the financial, cultural and infrastructure obstacles that used to keep scientists confined to a handful of research hotspots. Yet salaries are still noticeably higher in a select group of countries, according to a report by the European Commission. After adjustment for the cost of living, the average remuneration of Austria, Australia, Israel, Japan, Switzerland, the Netherlands and Luxembourg are all on a par with that of the United States, at €56,000–62,000 (US\$83,000–92,000). In India, the average living cost-adjusted income for a researcher is €45,207, close to the overall average for the European Union, at €41,500. China, however, falls well below other countries, with an average cost-adjusted researcher salary of just €13,760.

Of course there are some caveats. Salaries vary widely between sectors and fields. A November report from the US Commission on Professionals in Science and Technology notes that this past summer, the country's highest average science or engineering salary for bachelor's graduates went to chemical-engineering graduates, who were offered an average of \$59,361. This is a stark contrast with the \$34,953 offered to life-sciences graduates or the \$41,506 for chemistry graduates.

And more complicated still, countries vary with respect to how quickly salaries rise. The study by the European Commission ranked EU countries' researcher salaries at different career stages, and showed that the rankings dip and rise depending on the amount of experience. The United Kingdom, for example, ranks thirteenth in the 0–4 years of experience window, but rises to ninth for those with 5–7 years of experience and to seventh for the 8–10 years window. When contemplating careers, scientists need to consider not just the field, but also the region and the flux in salary over time.

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