



The Scottish  
Government

**Fresh Talent:  
Working in Scotland Scheme  
an evidence review**

**Europe and External Affairs**



social  
research

**FRESH TALENT: WORKING IN SCOTLAND  
SCHEME  
AN EVIDENCE REVIEW**

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## **1. EXECUTIVE SUMMARY**

1.1 The Fresh Talent: Working in Scotland Scheme (FTWiSS) has been a very innovative piece of policy making. Negotiated within the context of devolution in the UK, it represented a policy solution tailored to particular Scottish needs and over 8000 international students have gone on the scheme since its introduction in 2005.

1.2 The scheme has now been mainstreamed within the UK Government's immigration system through the International Graduate Scheme, although a degree of flexibility remains because in Scotland it applies to HNDs (Chapter 2).

1.3 In an international context, FTWiSS stands out in the ongoing policy trend among Governments around the world to persuade and influence international graduates to stay on once they have graduated (Chapter 2).

1.4 Evidence shows that FTWiSS has been an effective means of attracting prospective international students to consider Scotland as a place to study (Chapters 4, 5 and 6). FTWiSS has acted as an incentive, showing prospective international students how they can benefit from studying in Scotland compared to other places. Universities, in particular, have used the scheme to communicate their institutions and courses (Chapter 7). However, the potential of FTWiSS has yet to be maximised and there remains considerable scope to build up recognition and awareness of the quality of Scotland's education system around the world.

1.5 While many of the individuals who go onto FTWiSS are able to find employment, there are concerns about the type of jobs available for them and whether they meet their expectations and chosen career paths (Chapter 8). The report suggests that steps might be taken to provide ongoing support and advice to international graduates once they are on FTWiSS to better manage expectations, raise employer awareness and share intelligence on the Scottish labour market (Chapter 9).

1.6 When it comes to deciding whether to stay on after the 2 year FTWiSS period, many on the scheme who had a positive experience of living in Scotland were interested in staying in the short to medium term (over 3 years) (Chapter 10 and 11). However, this was dependent on a range of factors, eg employment and the ease with which they could get on to another UK work permit/residency scheme. Some individuals on FTWiSS felt more could be done to provide advice and support during the 2 years, to address some of the difficulties and barriers to living and staying on in Scotland.

1.7 Given the Scottish Government's increased focus on sustainable economic growth and the contribution that population change can play in this, the need for a more explicit set of aims, objectives and targets, alongside improved monitoring and evaluation, for this policy area is important (Chapter 11).

1.8 The report highlights a number of policy lessons from the FTWiSS experience, including the opportunity to bring different partners together, eg employers and universities, in helping to persuade international graduates to stay on in Scotland.

1.9 Overall, the report argues that the FTWiSS model has much to be learned from and, despite the decision to mainstream the scheme across the UK, there is scope to revise and refocus efforts to open up new opportunities in this area.

## **2. THE FRESH TALENT INITIATIVE - AN OVERVIEW**

2.1 The Fresh Talent initiative (FTI) was launched in 2004 in the context of growing concerns about the demographic challenge facing Scotland (low fertility and an ageing, declining population) and skills shortages in the Scottish economy. The FTI therefore looked to address this by presenting and promoting Scotland as an attractive location to live, work, study and do business.<sup>1</sup>

2.2 The FTI focused attention on communicating Scotland abroad; establishing and running the Relocation Advisory Service, an advice centre for those interested in moving to or staying on in Scotland; and activities targeted at particular groups, eg universities and international students. An overview and assessment of the FTI and its different strands was published in 2006 and concluded that the rationale for the initiative remained sound.<sup>2</sup>

### **Fresh Talent: Working in Scotland Scheme**

2.3 One of the most high profile activities within the FTI is the Fresh Talent: Working in Scotland Scheme (hereafter referred to as FTWiSS), which was launched in 2005 and entitled international graduates from Scottish universities to live and work in Scotland for 2 years without the need of a work permit.

2.4 In terms of process, the scheme is managed by the Home Office because Immigration is the responsibility of the UK Government as specified under Schedule 5 of the Scotland Act 1998. To qualify, applicants need to have graduated from a Scottish university or college on a Higher National Diploma (HND), degree, Masters or PhD course, and have resided in Scotland for an appropriate period during their studies. The applicant, and any dependents with them, must be able to show that they can maintain themselves without applying for public funds.

2.5 Applicants can seek entry to the scheme either while they are in Scotland following completion of their studies, if they still have extant leave to remain as a student, or from outwith the UK for up to 12 months following completion of their studies. Students are entitled to apply to bring their spouse or, if unmarried, their partner, and/or any children under the age of 18. The fee is £335 for postal applications and £500 for applications made in person at a Public Enquiry Office.<sup>3</sup>

### **The Objectives of FTWiSS**

2.6 Because FTWiSS was never articulated in terms of targets and performance indicators – in some senses this was actively avoided – it is difficult to make an assessment of its overall impact. However, for the purposes of this paper, the scheme's focus on international students outwith the European Economic Area (EEA) is thought about in 3 parts:

- Attracting students to study in Scotland
- Enabling graduates to stay on after graduation to work and live in Scotland
- Enhancing students' experience of Scotland as a place to live and work

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<sup>1</sup> New Scots: attracting fresh talent to meet the challenge of growth, Scottish Executive, 2004

<sup>2</sup> Progress Report on the Fresh Talent Initiative, Scottish Executive, 2006

<sup>3</sup> More information on the application process for FTWiSS can be found at [www.scotlandistheplace.com](http://www.scotlandistheplace.com)

2.7 FTWiSS should not be considered in isolation as other strands within the FTI, like Scottish Networks International and the Challenge Fund, look to complement and supplement its objectives. However, for the purposes of this paper, attention will be focused on the effectiveness of FTWiSS and opportunities for development in the future.

### **The Future of FTWiSS**

2.8 In March 2007, the Home Office announced that FTWiSS would be extended to cover students who graduate with post-graduate diplomas or certificates. Within that, the Home Office also launched a new International Graduate Scheme (IGS) which gave international graduates from a UK institution a one year leave to remain.<sup>4</sup> FTWiSS and IGS were both subsumed into the new Points-based system for managed migration in June 2008.

2.9 Under the Points-based migration system, FTWiSS was replaced by the new Post-Study category. As far as Scotland is concerned this amounted to a change of name rather than a change of substance. The criteria for graduates from Scottish institutions applying for the Post-study category are the same as the criteria for FTWiSS. This new category within Tier One is open to all UK graduates with an appropriate degree, post-graduate certificate or post-graduate diploma and in effect the scheme arrangements are being extended to the whole of the UK. The only difference between Scotland and the rest of the UK is that those qualifying with an HND from a Scottish institution are eligible whereas graduates with the equivalent qualifications in other parts of the UK are not eligible.

2.10 In Scotland, a new Scottish Government was created in 2007 and it has placed an emphasis on increasing sustainable economic growth. Its Government Economic Strategy highlights the importance of skills and learning as well as population growth in achieving this. Population growth is seen as key to the Scottish Government's ambition of sustainable economic growth and recent analysis into the GDP growth differential between Scotland and the UK suggests that nearly half of the gap is due to the UK population growing at a higher rate than in Scotland.<sup>5</sup>

2.11 In relation to powers reserved by the UK Government, like immigration, the Scottish Government intends to ensure that Scotland's needs are effectively represented at a UK Government level and aims to seek greater responsibility over migration policy.<sup>6</sup> The Scottish National Party's 2007 Scottish parliamentary election manifesto raised the idea of a Scottish Green Card.<sup>7</sup>

### **The UK Government's Points Based Immigration System**

2.12 During 2008, the UK government is implementing a new managed migration system for non-European migrants wishing to come to the UK to work, study and train. It will be broken into 5 tiers, each of which will have different conditions, entitlements and entry requirements. International students will have to apply under Tier 4 to study in the UK and, if looking to stay in the UK beyond graduation, can apply for Tier 1:post study as a highly

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<sup>4</sup> [Changes to SEGS and FTWiSS, Borders and Immigration Services Press Release, March 2007](#)

<sup>5</sup> McLaren & Harris, *Measuring Growth of the Scottish Economy*, Centre for Public Policy for Regions, Working Paper No.10, August 2007. The authors calculate that over the period 1995-2005 the growth differential between Scotland and the UK was 0.87% per annum. They estimate that differences in population growth accounted for an average differential of 0.42% per annum, leaving a 0.45% differential to be explained by other factors.

<sup>6</sup> [Government Economic Strategy, The Scottish Government, 2007](#)

<sup>7</sup> The Scottish National Party, 2007 Scottish Parliamentary Election Manifesto, p 22, 2007



skilled migrant. Tier 1 does not require sponsorship. Application through any other Tier would require sponsorship from an employer or educational institution.<sup>8</sup>

2.13 In order to assess the levels of skill shortages across the UK that might be addressed through migration, the UK Government has set up the Migration Advisory Committee (MAC). It is currently undertaking a review of skills shortages across the UK in order to produce a robust list that can be used to help inform a managed migration policy. The shortage list will refer only to jobs that are referred to as Tier 2 (jobs regarded as skilled). These lists will comprise occupations where, in the MAC's view, there are shortages that justify enabling employers to bring migrants in more easily. Scotland is expected to have a separate list reflecting its own individual pressures.<sup>9</sup>

### **Policies Towards International Graduates**

2.14 As the International Centre for Migration Policy Development pointed out recently in its "Comparative Study on Policies Towards Foreign Graduates", "policies to retain foreign graduates have become a standard instrument in selection systems for highly qualified migrants".<sup>10</sup> Not only do international students bring benefits to the academic sector in terms of tuition fees and capacity, they have also come to be viewed as a source of highly-skilled, accessible migration. Academics have also noted the change in approach towards international students: John Salt and Jane Millar have started to write about a "new paradigm in the mobility of international students", with global employers taking an increasing interest in what universities and governments are doing.<sup>11</sup>

2.15 Much of this debate is a result of the highly competitive, global environment with numerous countries using their education and immigration systems to attract and retain international graduates. For instance, the number of students studying overseas has increased dramatically in recent years, with large numbers going to study in the UK, USA and Germany.<sup>12</sup>

2.16 Policies are being developed to help international graduates stay and work in the hope that this will contribute to economic growth. In 2003-04, international students brought around £128 million through tuition fees alone to Scotland and increasing effort is focusing on the extent to which these benefits can be extended and enhanced beyond graduation.<sup>13</sup> Policy interventions include: extending rights to work part and full time whilst studying; a wider range of options to stay after graduation, eg extra points for graduating from a national university or more accessible residency rights for highly skilled migrants; and a special residency permit for the purpose of finding a job for a certain period after graduation.<sup>14</sup>

2.17 This debate should be seen in a wider context. Concerns have been raised on numerous occasions about the impact on sending countries, as they "lose" their best brains to the countries that are already economically strong. However, debate around this issue is

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<sup>8</sup> <http://workpermit.com/uk>

<sup>9</sup> <http://www.bia.homeoffice.gov.uk/aboutus/workingwithus/indbodies/mac/>

<sup>10</sup> Suter B and Jandl M, Comparative Study on Policies Towards Foreign Graduates, ICMPD, p7, 2006

<sup>11</sup> Salt J and Millar J, University College London, part of chapter on Migration Policy Developments in OECD Countries, Organisation of Economic Co-operation and Development, International Migration Outlook 2008 (forthcoming)

<sup>12</sup> [Education at a Glance 2006, Organisation for Economic Co-operation and Development, 2007](#)

<sup>13</sup> Lenton P, Global Value, British Council, 2007

<sup>14</sup> Suter B and Jandl M, Comparative Study on Policies Towards Foreign Graduates, ICMPD, 2006

moving beyond the two-dimensional analysis of brain-drain and brain-gain, to exploring the possibilities of a brain circulation whereby benefits can be thought about in terms of the sending and receiving countries and, as can often be the case, many international students do return to their country of origin. The i-graduate survey showed that only 5% of international students surveyed intended to stay on in Scotland indefinitely, although 17% indicated an interest in using Fresh Talent to stay on in the short-term.<sup>15</sup>

2.18 Brain drain is also an issue for countries that might be conceived as net-receivers of international students, like Scotland. Historically Scotland has been classed as a net-emigrant country, with more people leaving than coming; this has not only led to responses such as the FTI, but efforts to engage with its diaspora too, in the hope that some ex-pats may decide to return. Countries such as Taiwan have been highlighted as tapping into the benefits of brain circulation and credited with reversing their historical brain drain situation.<sup>16</sup>

2.19 The impact of these policies, particularly in terms of their ability to influence international students' decisions to stay on and work and live after graduation, is key. However, data is not collected consistently on retention rates.<sup>17</sup> Little has been done to undertake longitudinal research of the kind that would allow for the evaluation of particular measures and policies and the assessment of their impact on the experiences of international students. The New Zealand and Australian governments have completed research of the pathways of international students, to gain a sense of both: i) the stages at which an international student might be making certain decisions about their future; and ii) how likely different groups within the cohorts they tracked were to stay on after graduation.<sup>18</sup>

2.20 Much of the activity set out here is focused around the immigration systems and what they can do to influence international students, but, in many ways, these are enabling instruments which provide the framework around which individuals can make decisions. There are a whole range of other activities – eg marketing and communication, information sharing, support services and networks - that have a significant part to play too in ensuring that people decide to study in a certain location/institution, that their experience is an enjoyable one and, if they decide to stay on, that they feel they are able to progress and develop in doing so.

2.21 Looking ahead, policy discussion and thinking may begin to turn to focus more on the subtleties of attracting and retaining international students. For instance, John Salt and Jane Millar have highlighted the potential for universities and industry to form partnerships that reflect the internationalisation of education and business in ways that could benefit the international (and domestic) students alike as they make the transition from study to work.<sup>19</sup>

### **The Student Population Studying at Scottish Higher and Further Education Institutions**

2.22 In 2006-07, there were nearly 43,000 non-EU students studying at Higher Education establishments in Scotland. This constitutes a reasonable proportion of all students – over an

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<sup>15</sup> Archer W, Tracking the college and university graduate experience in Scotland, i-graduate survey, British Council Scotland, p13, 2006

<sup>16</sup> Legrain P, Immigrants: Your Country Needs Them, p94, Little, Brown, 2007

<sup>17</sup> Suter B and Jandl M, Comparative Study on Policies Towards Foreign Graduates, ICMPD, 2006

<sup>18</sup> Merwood, P, International Students: Studying and Staying On in New Zealand, New Zealand Government, 2007 and Study Pathways of International Students in Australia, Australian Government, 2005

<sup>19</sup> Salt J and Millar J, University College London, Experience in the UK, University College London, paper presented at Leverhulme Programme on Mobility of International Labour Markets, UCL, 15-16 May 2008

eighth – and the number of international students has been increasing in recent years (see Annex A). Between 2005-06 and 2006-07 alone the number of students rose by nearly 3,500 (see Annex B).

2.23 This change can be explained, in part, by a surge in the number of students from China studying at Scottish Higher Education institutions - but from wholly outside the UK. In this single year there was an increase of 3,000 students: from just under 1,000 to nearly 4,000.

2.24 Lessons can be learned from tracking this group in order to understand the drivers of this sudden increase and this paper explores some of the factors relating to FTWiSS. In particular, the speed with which change can occur is worth noting and it is important that thought is given to what happens to these students who engage with Scotland. Student numbers are large enough to make an impact on Scotland's economy, but this is only true if an increase occurs repeatedly over a number of years. Having policies in place that focus on international students so that they can make a telling contribution and increase the number of people working in Scotland is crucial. Lessons from FT:WiSS can play an important role here.

### **3. METHODOLOGY**

#### **Monitoring and Evaluation data**

3.1 A range of sources are available that relate directly and indirectly to FTWiSS. Qualitative and quantitative research as well as basic monitoring information on the FTWiSS applicants has been collated and brought together for the first time in order to formulate an evaluation of the scheme.

3.2 Numerous pieces of research have been carried out and commissioned by the devolved government in Scotland in relation to the Fresh Talent Initiative as a whole and, where appropriate, findings relating to FTWiSS have been drawn out.

3.3 The quality and volume of the research available is weighted towards the processes involved in setting up and delivering FTWiSS and gaining a sense of its effectiveness in attracting people onto the scheme. Efforts have been made to try and track those on FTWiSS and gain some sense of outcomes, particularly as those who were first to apply are reaching the end of their 2 years, but this has not been systematic.

3.4 Further research is required if questions relating to the destinations and outcomes of the individuals on the scheme are to be fully understood and analysed in the long-term.

#### **Data from FTWiSS application forms**

3.5 Data on the name, address at time of application, date of birth, and nationality of all successful applicants has been collected by the Home Office since the introduction of the scheme in June 2005. By April 2008, 8181 individuals had been granted FTWiSS leave, 7268 in country and 913 at visa offices overseas.

#### **FTWiSS Monitoring questionnaire**

3.6 About 2 months after the start of their leave all successful FTWiSS applicants are contacted by letter by the Scottish Government's Relocation Advisory Service (RAS) and asked to complete an online monitoring questionnaire about their experiences, perceptions and intentions as an FTWiSS applicant. It is not compulsory that individuals reply to the questionnaires or answer all the questions.

3.7 Monitoring questionnaire data is presented in three waves. Wave 1 covers the 705 responses received between June 2005 and September 2006. After this, the online version of the questionnaire was replaced with a word document on the website due to technical problems. New FTWiSS applicants continued to be sent letters directing them to the website to complete the questionnaire, where they were then asked to print out the word version of the questionnaire and return it by post. Unsurprisingly, given the effort required to do this, very few responses were received during the following seven months and these are not presented here.

3.8 In June 2007 the online questionnaire was made available again. Articles were placed on the Relocation Advisory Service website and in the monthly RAS e-newsletter, requesting everyone on the scheme to fill in the questionnaire, even if they had already done so in the past. As a result, 162 new responses and 14 questionnaires from people who had previously replied were received. Due to the small numbers, the follow-up responses were not analysed. The findings from the new responses are presented as wave 2.

3.9 In October 2007, a revised version of the questionnaire as well as a new follow-up questionnaire was placed on the website. The 201 responses received to date<sup>20</sup> are presented as wave 3. Fewer than 10 responses have been received for the follow up questionnaire and therefore findings are not included in this report.

3.10 The monitoring questionnaire mainly consists of quantitative questions, most of them precoded, about the respondents' personal characteristics, place of residence, education, employment and plans for the future, as well as their perceptions of Scotland.

3.11 The questionnaire also included a small qualitative element. Respondents were given the opportunity to comment on any issue relating to FTWiSS or Scotland at the end of the questionnaire. 424 written comments were received. In addition to this, respondents who felt that they were not in suitable employment were specifically prompted to comment in their own words on why they thought this was. 390 comments on this topic were received.

### **Borders and Immigration analysis of visa applications of FTWiSS**

3.12 The Border and Immigration undertook analysis of FTWiSS statistics for applications made in country (both at Public Enquiry Offices and postal applications) between the introduction of the scheme in July 2005 and 31<sup>st</sup> August 2005, looking at the proportion of people that had applied for other visa and whether they were resident in Scotland at the time of doing so.

### **Customer and Website User Surveys of Relocation Advisory Service**

3.13 The Relocation Advisory Service (RAS) is the operational arm of the Scottish Government's FTI. It was set up in October 2004, initially for a pilot period of 3 years, but was extended to the end of October 2008. Its main aim is to provide information and advice to people looking to relocate to Scotland and, up to February 2008, had dealt with some 18,000 customers.

3.14 RAS has been evaluated over 2 phases. The first evaluation, which was published in 2006, included an online survey with customers as well as qualitative interviews with customers and partners.<sup>21</sup> The second phase evaluation was published in May 2008 and has been used to inform this paper, eg the online survey of customers and qualitative interviews. The evaluation data includes important insights into the number and type of enquiries being made about FTWiSS.<sup>22</sup>

### **Qualitative research with Individuals on FTWiSS for 2 years**

3.15 In July 2007, twelve depth interviews with individuals coming towards the end of the FTWiSS leave or having completed their leave were conducted to investigate in detail individuals' personal experiences of being on FTWiSS. The research had the following objectives:

- To better understand the impacts of FTWiSS for the individuals coming to the end of the scheme

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<sup>20</sup> 9 June 2008

<sup>21</sup> Binnie I et al, Phase 1 Evaluation of the Relocation Advisory Service, Scottish Government, 2006

<sup>22</sup> Murray L et al, Phase 2 Evaluation of the Relocation Advisory Service, Scottish Government, 2008

- To explore how individuals have used the 2 year FTWiSS “window” and their reflections on the scheme.
- To identify common themes and factors that individuals coming to the end of their FTWiSS feel have contributed to any changes in their life/circumstances over the period.

3.16 Eleven interview participants were recruited via letter from those that had completed the FTWiSS monitoring survey sent out to everyone joining the scheme and had agreed to take part in further research. Only those resident in Edinburgh at the time of completing the survey were contacted. In addition, one participant was recruited via another interviewee. Most interviews were conducted face to face in Scottish Government offices, and two were conducted by telephone. Interviews lasted between 35 minutes and 1 hour 30 minutes.

3.17 Interviewees came from a range of countries in North America, Africa, Eastern Europe, South Asia and South East Asia, had studied a variety of subjects at university and were employed in a range of industries. All had studied in Edinburgh and all but one had undertaken postgraduate study. Most participants lived in Edinburgh at the time of interview, while one had returned to their country of origin and one had moved to London.

3.18 With the participant’s permission, interviews were tape recorded to facilitate analysis. Verbatim transcripts were produced and analysed using the analytical framework presented in Annex C while taking care to record issues not covered in the framework.

3.19 The findings reflect the range and diversity of views and experiences of people taking part in the study, but it is important to remember that this is qualitative research and is not designed to be statistically representative and that therefore the findings do not reflect the extent to which issues and experiences exist among people on FTWiSS as a whole.

### **Research About Scotland in China and USA**

3.20 Research undertaken to support the development and monitoring of Scotland’s engagement with China and the USA included qualitative research that covered perceptions of Fresh Talent and, in particular, FTWiSS. Research components in China were: semi-structured interviews with university staff and overseas study agents and focus groups with final year students. In Scotland, interviews with Chinese students studying at Scottish universities and university staff responsible for overseas students were conducted. Research in the USA involved focus groups with students and semi-structured interviews with academics.<sup>23</sup>

### **Experience of People Who Have Relocated to Scotland**

3.21 This qualitative research was published in 2006 and looked to inform the development of the Fresh Talent Initiative by exploring why people choose to relocate to Scotland - including returning Scots, people from the rest of the UK and people from outwith the UK. Within that, it explored the factors that have helped people to relocate to Scotland, in particular support with accessing employment opportunities and settling into Scottish life, including understanding the positive experiences and/or barriers encountered. FTWiSS had only just been introduced when the fieldwork for this research was carried out, but it offers an important initial insight into the reactions and attitudes to the scheme. The research involved

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<sup>23</sup> Braunholtz S et al, Scotland's International Engagement: Research in China, USA and Germany - research findings, Scottish Government, 2007

semi-structured interviews with: individuals from organisations in contact with in-migrants and with in-migrants in three sub-groups of entrepreneurs, employees and post graduates. It also involved follow-up focus groups with in-migrants.<sup>24</sup>

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<sup>24</sup> MacLeod P et al, Experience of People Who Relocate to Scotland, Scottish Government, 2006

## 4. THE PROFILE OF PEOPLE ON FTWiSS

### Data on FTWiSS Applicants

4.1 By April 2008, 8181 individuals had gained FTWiSS status. The following section looks to pull together the evidence about the characteristics of those applying in terms of gender, age, nationality, and level of education. Some data is also available in relation to the number of dependents those on FTWiSS have and where they have stayed whilst living in Scotland. The data available on those applying for FTWiSS is drawn from 2 main sources - application form data, and monitoring questionnaires - neither of which allow for a comprehensive, representative profile.

### Gender

4.2 Around 60% of respondents to the FTWiSS monitoring questionnaire were male (see Table 1).

**Table 1: Gender**

	Wave 1	Wave 2	Wave 3
	%	%	%
Female	39	38	36
Male	61	62	62
Decline to answer	/	/	2
<b>Total</b>	<b>100</b>	<b>100</b>	<b>100</b>

Base: All monitoring questionnaire respondents (wave 1: 705, wave 2: 162, wave 3: 201)

Source: FTWiSS monitoring questionnaire

### Age

4.3 As Table 2 shows, the large majority of individuals on the Working in Scotland Scheme are young, with almost half of all applicants having been born after 1980, and 83% after 1975.

**Table 2: Year of birth**

	%
1970 or earlier	5
1971-1975	11
1976-1980	33
1981-1985	49
1986 or later	3
	<b>100</b>

Base: all individuals on FTWiSS June 2005 – April 2008 with usable data (8169)

Source: FTWiSS application form data

### Nationality

4.4 In terms of nationality, one third of people on FTWiSS are of Indian nationality. A further quarter come from China, and just over one in ten are Nigerian (see Table 3).



**Table 3: Top 10 Nationalities**

	%
India	34
China	26
Nigeria	12
Pakistan	5
United States of America	5
Malaysia	3
Ghana	2
Taiwan	1
Zimbabwe	1
Canada	1

Base: all individuals on FTWiSS June 2005 – April 2008 with usable data (8155)

Source: FTWiSS application form data

**Dependents**

4.5 As Table 4 shows, a very large majority of successful FTWiSS applicants did not bring dependants to Scotland.

**Table 4: Number of dependants**

	%
None	92
One	5
Two	2
Three or more	2

Base: All individuals on FTWiSS May 2007 – April 2008 where information supplied (3283)

Source: FTWiSS application form data

**Education**

4.6 Looking at education, 69% of successful FTWiSS applicants studied to postgraduate level, most on taught postgraduate degree courses such as MScs. Almost one in five applied on the basis of an undergraduate degree, and 10% held an HND as their highest qualification (see Table 5).

**Table 5: Level of qualification**

	%
HND	5
Undergraduate degree	11
Postgraduate diploma	7
Taught postgraduate degree	75
Research postgraduate	2

Base: All individuals on FTWiSS May 2007 – April 2008 where information supplied (3241)

Source: FTWiSS application form data

**Education Institution and Place of Residence**

4.7 As Table 6 shows, most individuals on FTWiSS studied at universities in Scotland's four biggest cities, Glasgow, Aberdeen, Edinburgh and Dundee, and data from the monitoring questionnaire suggests that the majority of individuals continue to live in these places (Table 7).

**Table 6: Educational establishment attended – all with more than 10 people**

	%
Robert Gordon University	15.0
Napier University	10.7
University of Glasgow	4.1
Glasgow Caledonian University	9.3
University of Aberdeen	8.8
University of Strathclyde	5.3
University of Edinburgh	8.0
Heriot Watt University	4.5
University of Dundee	4.3
University of Abertay	3.2
University of Stirling	6.7
Queen Margaret University	2.4
Glasgow College of Nautical Studies	1.6
Paisley College/University of Paisley	2.0
University of St Andrews	1.3
Glasgow School of Art	0.4

Base: All individuals on FTWiSS May 2007 – April 2008 where information provided (3182)

Source: FTWiSS application form data

**Table 7: Place of residence**

	Wave 1	Wave 2	Wave 3
	%	%	%
Aberdeen	24	25	21
Glasgow	22	32	32
Edinburgh	22	17	17
Dundee	10	5	6
Midlothian	9	10	12
Stirling	2	*	*
East Lothian	2	*	3
Perth and Kinross	1	*	*
Fife	1	*	3
Renfrewshire	1	*	*
Aberdeenshire	/	/	*
North Lanarkshire	/	/	*
South Ayrshire	/	/	*

Base: Monitoring questionnaire respondents who answered question (wave 1: 705, wave 2: 162; wave 3: 186)

Source: FTWiSS monitoring questionnaire

### Other Sources

4.8 Other sources which comment on the profile of people interested in applying for FTWiSS include the Phase 1 Evaluation of the RAS (2006). In its assessment of queries to the RAS it found that people already living in Scotland or the UK were the most likely to enquire about FTWiSS and that they “tended to be young, with a higher level of education, good English, and students”.<sup>25</sup>

<sup>25</sup> Binnie I, Phase 1 Evaluation of the Relocation Advisory Service, p 28, Scottish Government, 2006

## 5. FTWiSS - ATTRACTING PEOPLE TO SCOTLAND

### The FTWiSS Invitation

5.1 This section is concerned with the “front-end” of FTWiSS. It considers how people came to find out about the scheme, what attracted them to it and their experiences of the application process. In terms of policy effectiveness, a number of important issues are raised about the communication of the scheme, what it says about Scotland and the impact it has had on people’s attitudes and perceptions of Scotland.

### The Decision to Come to Scotland – the Role of Place

5.2 It could be argued that the strength and nature of Scotland’s reputation alone is enough to attract people here to study, work and live, particularly when one considers its wealth of universities. This section considers this argument and explores perceptions of and attitudes towards Scotland as a great place to study. The FTI and FTWiSS look to use and strengthen this message about Scotland. Chapter 6 contains a case study exploring what influence FTWiSS has had on Scotland’s international image.

5.3 Evidence about the role of “place” and the influence it holds in forming someone’s opinion and whether they should, for instance, go and live and work in a particular part of the world is uneven. Perhaps the best known advocate for the importance of place is Richard Florida, whose writings argue that a successful knowledge economy is dependent on places being able to attract and retain creative pools of talent.<sup>26</sup> Other academics in this field have emphasised the need to see this debate in a wider context relating to the role of culture and the economy and the extent to which place can be thought about and utilised as a driver of economic growth.<sup>27</sup>

5.4 In its widest sense, FTI does recognise the importance of place and reputation. As a largely promotional intervention, aimed at communicating Scotland and, where possible, facilitating the channels of attraction for potential migrants, its purpose is based on making a proposition about Scotland as a great *place* to live, work, study, visit and do business. Being able to draw on Scotland’s reputation in relation to these 5 dimensions is key to FTI; in the case of FTWiSS, this stretches across those dimensions.

5.5 Reputation is another area, like the role of place in the knowledge economy, that is attracting a great deal of attention. One of the leading writers in the area, Simon Anholt, argues that how a country is thought about and understood is critical because every country is competing for its share of the “world’s consumers, tourists, investors, students, entrepreneurs, international sporting and cultural events and for the attention and respect of the international media, of other governments and the people of other countries”.<sup>28</sup>

### Scotland’s International Image

5.6 Research about Scotland’s image, or reputation, internationally has told a reasonably consistent story. For people who have not given a lot of thought to Scotland or have not visited the country, basic perceptions tend to cluster around images of rural landscapes with mountains, mist and castles. These are linked to general ideas of Scotland as a traditional

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<sup>26</sup> Florida R, *The Rise of the Creative Class*, 2002

<sup>27</sup> Rogerson R et al, *Fresh Talent Progress Report*, Scottish Government, 2006

<sup>28</sup> Anholt S, *Competitive Identity*, Palgrave Macmillan, 2007

country, proud of its distinctive character, eg kilts, tartan and bagpipes.<sup>29</sup> Moreover, as research in the USA illustrated, even those who have some awareness of Scotland and/or who have visited the place, the traditional perceptions remain strong. In saying that, this group were different in that they were also able to identify other aspects of Scotland, linked to a more modern, contemporary appreciation of the country, eg cities and industry.<sup>30</sup>

5.7 Whether it matters that many people think *instinctively* about Scotland in “traditional” terms continues to be widely debated. At one extreme, concerns have been raised about the way such strong and simple images can lead to stereotypical exaggeration and negative interpretation. For instance, qualitative research with young people in the USA thinking about studying abroad led to widespread uproar and miscommunication in the UK media<sup>31</sup> when some of the young people highlighted the character “Grounds Keeper Willie” from the TV show the Simpsons as their idea of Scottish people.<sup>32</sup>

5.8 More worrying perhaps was the view that such strong ideas of Scotland can in some ways act as a barrier to certain propositions, such as Scotland as a place to study and learn. As one student from New York taking part in research in the USA said:

*“I’d say It (Scotland) was a good place to live and retire as opposed to Florida. Working I think of here. Relaxing and chilling out and looking at the sheep on the hills...”*<sup>33</sup>

5.9 The fact that Scotland, as a small country, does have such a strong, distinctive image, however much based on reality, could be seen as a strength with which more could be done. For instance, the USA research alludes to a possible link between how familiar people are with Scotland and how favourable they are about the country.<sup>34</sup> Getting people to visit Scotland, which may involve emphasising some of the more traditional imagery, can play an important part in helping people from abroad to gain a lived understanding and become more familiar with modern life in Scotland, eg its many universities.

### **Communicating Scotland Internationally**

5.10 The fundamental message within FTWiSS is linked to the idea of Scotland’s longstanding commitment to educational values. It is unclear whether this reputation on its own is strong enough to persuade and influence people to choose Scotland as a place to study. A lot of the research about the FTI has touched on the strength of Scotland’s reputation as a place. The findings from this, discussed below, allows for a basic exploration of how reputation – ie the “pull” of a place – can inform people’s ideas, attitudes and opinions about a place. How people perceive Scotland and, from that, formulate a sense of whether it would be a great place to migrate to is therefore an important question.

5.11 Higher Education is seen to be one of Scotland’s main strengths, because of its historic commitment to education and the reputation of its universities for “educational

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<sup>29</sup> Muncie S et al, Points of Entry Evaluation 2006 and 2007; Muncie S et al, Evaluation of the Scottish-led Programme of Events at Tartan Week 2007; Evaluation of Scotland in the Netherlands, SQW Ltd, 2005, Scottish Government

<sup>30</sup> MacLeod P et al, USA Strategy Research, 2007

<sup>31</sup> [Riddoch, L, "Tartan Types" in The Guardian, 21st September 2007](#)

<sup>32</sup> MacLeod P et al, USA Strategy Research, p12, 2007

<sup>33</sup> MacLeod et al, USA Strategy Research, p45, 2007

<sup>34</sup> MacLeod P et al, USA Strategy, p19, 2007

excellence“.<sup>35</sup> However, evidence from the USA and China indicates that awareness of Scotland, in general, is low and that, even amongst academics and students, more could be done to develop the profile of Scottish education. Applying this to the attraction of international students, it could be argued that Scotland faces 3 principal challenges: raising awareness of Scotland amongst particular groups; building a dialogue that highlights the inherent qualities within the Scottish education system; and finding ways of influencing the decisions of relevant audiences, ie academics and students (and their parents), in selecting Scotland as a place to learn and study.

### **People Who Move to Scotland**

5.12 The role of place in attracting people to live, work or study is complex and it is likely that different factors will come into play as individuals make decisions to move from one place to another. For instance, qualitative research with 55 people who had moved to Scotland over a 10 year period found that economic motives were the main reasons for coming to Scotland. In this group there was a difference in how people experienced Scotland, depending on their attitude and views about the country. Those who had moved with strong ideas and notions of Scotland as a place, eg tranquil and idyllic, seemed to be more disappointed with their experience than those who came because of work opportunities alone, who seemed to have more realistic expectations.<sup>36</sup> Generally, for participants in this research from overseas, the decision to come to Scotland was made *after* they had decided to come to the UK.<sup>37</sup>

### **International Students Who Come to Scotland**

5.13 Evidence is available which indicates that for postgraduate students, some have come to Scotland because of its reputation for quality education and universities.<sup>38</sup> Academics in certain countries, like Germany, also have a general awareness of the Scottish education system and what its strengths are.<sup>39</sup>

5.14 For international students generally however, there are a number of specific issues relating to the institution and learning environment, over and above the “location” of the university, that play an important part in their decision making. Evidence indicates that the reputation of the specific institution, courses on offer, research capacity and the academics working there are the kinds of things students want to know about and are the factors that will influence their decision.<sup>40</sup>

5.15 This is reflected in the research with FTWiSS participants as they reached the end of their two years. The key factor in the decision to study in Edinburgh was the reputation of the university and the structure and content of the courses on offer. Interestingly, few participants had made a conscious decision to come to Scotland as such. Generally, interviewees had either decided to come to the UK to study, and then had narrowed their choice down to Edinburgh, or had selected Edinburgh directly by looking at universities worldwide with a good reputation in their field of study.

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<sup>35</sup> [Ambitions of a Celtic Economy, Scottish Government, 2007](#)

<sup>36</sup> MacLeod P et al, Experience of People Who Relocate to Scotland, Scottish Government, 2006

<sup>37</sup> MacLeod P et al, Experience of People Who Relocate to Scotland, p18, Scottish Government, 2006

<sup>38</sup> MacLeod P et al, Experience of People Who Relocate to Scotland, p18, Scottish Government, 2006

<sup>39</sup> Frazer M et al, Research to Support Scotland's Strategy for Stronger Engagement with Germany, Scottish Government, 2007

<sup>40</sup> Frazer M et al, Research to Support Scotland's Strategy for Stronger Engagement with Germany, p80, Scottish Government, 2007

5.16 Other influences on the decision were the fact that classes were in English, the ‘way of life’ in the UK, and in one case, the career development of the participant’s spouse. A number of interviewees had also visited Edinburgh in the past and were attracted by the city.

5.17 It must be remembered that all interviewees had started their study before FTWiSS was introduced. Therefore, this research can tell us nothing about the role of FTWiSS in attracting students to Scotland, although research elsewhere highlights the effectiveness of FTWiSS in this role (Chapter 7).

### **Overall Awareness of Scotland as a Place to Study**

5.18 Awareness of Scotland’s reputation for high quality education is not universal and ongoing information, promotion and dialogue is therefore essential. In China for instance, academic research participants did not necessarily view Scottish education as being of a high quality, while in the USA the stereotypes of Scotland as a rural, quiet place did not necessarily match-up with students’ aspirations for studying abroad.<sup>41</sup>

5.19 Scotland may well need a leg-up in terms of communication and incentives, to stand out in the crowd. If international students have a variety of countries around the world to choose from and when they think specifically about the UK are not exposed to the distinctive Scottish element and are naturally drawn to the London-based and Oxbridge universities, then Scotland must think creatively.

5.20 The findings from the research suggests that it is important that ways are continually developed to communicate Scotland’s strengths to prospective students, both at a national level - eg high quality education as a Scottish “value” - and at the institutional, university level. These things should not be seen as mutually exclusive because, as the research in China, USA and Germany indicates, the students in these countries all have different levels of awareness with regards Scotland, but when it comes to thinking about studying abroad they are all looking for a good quality experience. To make that decision, they want both a general awareness and a detailed picture of what is on offer in Scotland and, as the case study in Chapter 6, they want to know what incentives are on offer to choose Scotland over other places, inside and outside of the UK.

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<sup>41</sup> Braunholtz S, Scotland’s International Engagement: Research in China, USA and Germany - research findings, Scottish Government, 2007

## 6. COMMUNICATING SCOTLAND - A CASE STUDY OF FTWiSS

6.1 The case study is about the effectiveness of FTWiSS as a communication tool. It looks at how FTWiSS has been communicated through “message platforms” around the world and compares it to other themes and ideas of Scotland, eg as a place to do business. It concludes by reflecting on the opportunity to learn from the FTWiSS experience when developing future message platforms about Scotland internationally.

### **Message Platforms – Scotland as a Place to Live, Work, Study, Do Business and Visit**

6.2 Qualitative research was carried out with a range of audiences in China and the USA with a view to testing particular message platforms about Scotland. The research looked to explore responses to marketing materials, packaged as message platforms, designed by Scotland's International Image team to promote and position Scotland abroad. These message platforms - made up of themes, images and supporting facts about Scotland - were tested in a mixture of in-depth interviews and focus groups with students and academics. In relation to these particular groups, individuals were specifically introduced to and prompted on FTWiSS as part of communication materials around Scotland as a great place to study.

6.3 In the USA, qualitative research with academics led a number of participants to wonder why they had not heard of FTWiSS before and many stressed how important it was for them to know about it and for students to be told.<sup>42</sup> Both the student and academic focus groups and interviews showed that FTWiSS was a motivational incentive about Scotland which could act as a way of bringing the marketing materials and message platforms to life. Instead of just telling people that Scotland was a great place to live, work and study, FTWiSS gave people a reason to believe that this was true and, perhaps more importantly, understand how coming to Scotland to learn could help them achieve their aspirations and goals.

6.4 That is not to say that the communication materials and process did not matter. The research on the message platforms in both China and the USA illustrated how important the right communication tools, used by the right people and targeted at particular groups, were in raising awareness of Scotland and FTWiSS.<sup>43</sup> For instance, students in China suggested that they wanted to hear and see more practical information and not just be shown an image of Scotland and told it has great universities: they asked for the “names of famous universities” and institutions’ “research achievements”.<sup>44</sup> This, working alongside the FTWiSS incentive, would be an important part of the decision making process for them.

6.5 Compared to the influence of FTWiSS, many of the other message platforms tested - which included themes, images and facts about Scotland as a place to do business and to live and work - could be described as *incomplete*. Many of them were too general or did not inspire or give target groups, like business people, enough of a reason to act on any interest in, or awareness of, Scotland they might have. Even for those who knew Scotland and were generally positive about it as a place, their awareness did not seem to inform their behaviour or affect any prospective notion of using Scotland as a business location, or seeing it as the kind of place where you could live and work.<sup>45</sup>

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<sup>42</sup> MacLeod P et al, USA Strategy Communications Research, p65, Scottish Government, 2007

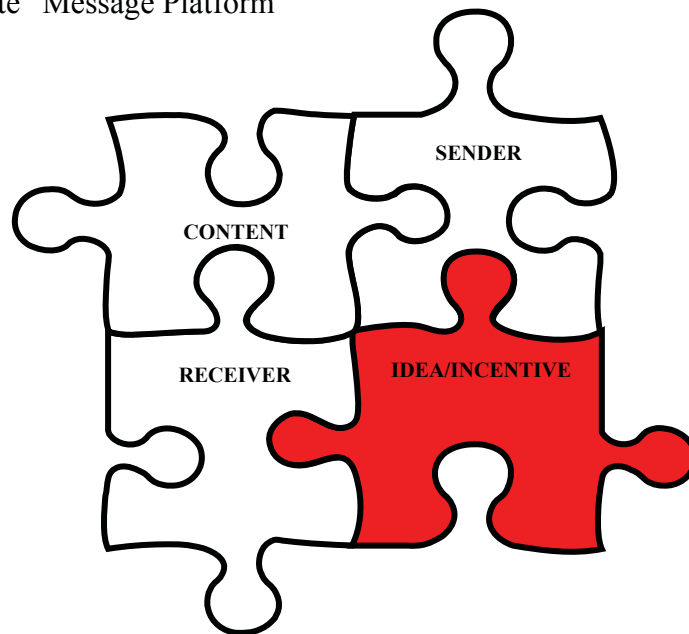
<sup>43</sup> Frazer M et al, Scotland's International Image: Message Platforms Research Findings, Scottish Government, 2007

<sup>44</sup> Brauholtz S et al, Scotland's International Engagement and the China Strategy - perceptions of marketing materials, p12, Scottish Government, 2007

<sup>45</sup> MacLeod P et al, USA Strategy Communications Research, Scottish Government, 2007

## FTWiSS: a *Complete* Message Platform

Figure 1: A “Complete” Message Platform



6.6 The FTWiSS proposition appeared to influence people to see Scotland in a different light and make them more open to the idea of studying in the country. As Figure 1 illustrates, the FTWiSS acted as an “incentive”, allowing people to get a complete picture of what Scotland had to offer them. While the message platforms being tested in China, Germany and the USA offered “content” based around images, facts and statements about Scotland that could be used by particular “senders”, eg a university representative, to be communicated to target audiences/“receivers”, such as overseas students, the evidence suggested that these 3 aspects alone might not be enough. While the information and communication on offer could give people a different way of thinking about Scotland, it did not necessarily make them any more likely to “engage” with Scotland. The FTWiSS proposition therefore acted as an incentive and a way of entering into a dialogue with prospective students about the benefits *to them* of studying in Scotland.

6.7 Message platforms, effectively designed and moulded to target audiences, are essential in letting other people find out about a place and are one small way of managing reputation and brand. But as the FTWiSS example shows, without substance, ie an “idea/incentive”, the message platform remains incomplete. People need an incentive, an idea, a reason to change and/or act on their perceptions of a place; and, in the case of FTWiSS, it performs as an incentive which appears to offer the individual something that will benefit them personally.

### **Competitive Identity and Public Diplomacy**

6.8 This analysis lends itself to the concept of Competitive Identity, developed by Simon Anholt, which sets out how important it is for a country, in its attempt to implement a nation brand strategy, not to **tell** people what they should think about a place on the basis of empty sloganeering. Ideas and the effective implementation of those ideas are absolutely critical.<sup>46</sup>

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<sup>46</sup> Competitive Identity, Simon Anholt, Palgrave Macmillan, 2007



This was a warning which came through for Scotland in relation to past attempts to claim itself as the “best small country in the world”, a notion that did not resonate well.<sup>47</sup>

6.9 Equally, in public diplomacy terms, FTWiSS could be seen as an example of effective *mutuality*.<sup>48</sup> Theories of public diplomacy have increasingly been looking to detail the process of influence between nations, particularly at the individual level, and the need for: a “shift of focus to communicating rather than selling results from the desire to achieve a genuinely balanced relationship emphasising mutuality and mutual understanding”.<sup>49</sup> Those representing Scotland, whether that be on behalf of government or a university etc, can therefore use FTWiSS to open up a dialogue about Scotland and what it has to offer others; possibly change attitudes and perceptions; and influence decisions made by others about Scotland.

6.10 In saying all of this, the effective implementation of FTWiSS does not stop with the approval of a student’s application. It is a scheme which expects international graduates to look for and find work in Scotland and, at the end of the 2 years, either decide to stay on or, if they leave, at the very least take away a lifelong affinity of Scotland with them. It could be argued that it is this stage which is the “real” impact, or the desired outcome, of FTWiSS and shows whether it has been a success or not (this will be discussed further in Chapter 10).

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<sup>47</sup> Frazer M et al, Scotland's International Image: Message Platforms Research Findings, Scottish Government, 2007

<sup>48</sup> Martin R and Wadham-Smith N, Mutuality, trust and cultural relations, Counterpoint, British Council, 2004

<sup>49</sup> Fisher A and Brockerhoff A, Options for Influence, p9, Counterpoint, British Council, 2008

## 7. THE DECISION TO APPLY FOR FTWiSS

7.1 The role of FTWiSS in decision making can be thought about in three ways in influencing: 1) the decision to come and study in Scotland; 2) the decision to go on to FTWiSS after graduation; 3) and the decision to stay on in Scotland after the scheme has finished. Much of the policy effort around FTWiSS has been focused on creating and facilitating the channels through which overseas students might apply for and take up FTWiSS. This Chapter considers the evidence available on the first 2 points listed above. Point 3 will be discussed in greater detail in Chapter 10.

### Coming to Scotland

7.2 A variety of evidence sources confirm the positive impact (and still untapped potential) of FTWiSS in influencing international students as they make a decision about where to study abroad. There is a resounding message that FTWiSS acts as a clear **incentive** for international students, helping them to understand what it is they **personally** will get out of taking the time to study and learn at a Scottish university or college (see Chapter 6).

7.3 The message it sends out is very clear. For instance, research with students in the USA resulted in the following observation about FTWiSS:

“It feels like they are really going to invest in you...they are going to take me there and make sure that I am taken care of. I don’t see any other countries doing that.” (Student focus group, California)<sup>50</sup>

7.4 Other students interviewed as part of this research referred to it as a “real opportunity”.<sup>51</sup> This is confirmed in research undertaken in China also, with academics and prospective international students all interested by Fresh Talent and, even where awareness of Scottish education was low, there was a view that FTWiSS was a “very positive selling point in terms of overseas marketing”.<sup>52</sup> The scheme therefore acts as an effective hook, drawing people towards Scotland as they think about a suitable study location abroad.

7.5 For those international students already studying in Scotland, research shows that FTWiSS played a part in the decision making process. Qualitative research with 30 Chinese students studying in Scotland found that “Fresh Talent was repeatedly mentioned by this group, with several citing this as one of the main reasons they came to Scotland”.<sup>53</sup>

7.6 Moreover, once the Chinese students had arrived in Scotland to study, they reported “very positive experiences and spoke highly of the Scottish education system and the country more generally”.<sup>54</sup> Deciding to come to Scotland because, at least in part, of FTWiSS gave the students the opportunity to experience the country firsthand. This is an important point, especially when the research in China and the USA showed that awareness of Scotland - and the reputation of Scottish education in particular - can be low.

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<sup>50</sup> MacLeod P et al, USA Strategy Communications Research, p64, Scottish Government, 2007

<sup>51</sup> Binnie I et al, Phase 1 Evaluation of the Relocation Advisory Service, p47, Scottish Executive, 2006

<sup>52</sup> Brauholtz et al, Scotland’s International Engagement and the China Strategy, p32, Scottish Government, 2007

<sup>53</sup> Brauholtz S et al, Scotland’s International Engagement and the China Strategy, p20, Scottish Government, 2007

<sup>54</sup> Brauholtz S et al, Scotland’s International Engagement and the China Strategy, p20, Scottish Government, 2007

7.7 Research undertaken shortly after FTWiSS was introduced in 2005 with students who stated that their main reason for selecting Scotland was the good reputation of higher education in the UK and the reputation of specific colleges or academic courses, showed they had a high level of interest in FTWiSS. It found that “the scheme was seen as a way by which they could start their careers in a country where there are good job prospects, without the need for a work permit”.<sup>55</sup> The scheme was also referred to as a “pull” factor: in one case it influenced the choice of which university to go to, once the decision had been taken to come to the UK.<sup>56</sup>

7.8 The Phase 1 evaluation of the Relocation Advisory Service examined the reasons why customers were willing to consider moving to or staying in Scotland. FTWiSS was cited as one of the main reasons for considering Scotland by those who believed that they were “certain” to come or stay.<sup>57</sup>

7.9 Amongst those working in Higher and Further Education in Scotland, FTWiSS is broadly recognised as a major communication tool which makes Scotland stand out from the rest and gives students “not just a valuable opportunity to undertake work experience, but pay off some of the debts they incurred studying here before returning home”.<sup>58</sup> Many felt the scheme gives them a competitive advantage over their English counterparts and think that it has had some impact on student uptake at their respective institutions.<sup>59</sup> A recent British Council report on the financial benefits of increasing numbers of international students referred to the FTI as a “catalyst”.<sup>60</sup>

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<sup>55</sup> Binnie I et al, Phase 1 Evaluation of the Relocation Advisory Service, p31, Scottish Government, 2006

<sup>56</sup> MacLeod P et al, People Who Relocate to Scotland, p19, Scottish Government, 2006

<sup>57</sup> Binnie I et al, Phase 1 Evaluation of the Relocation Advisory Service, p25, Scottish Government, 2006

<sup>58</sup> Brauholtz S et al, Scotland’s International Engagement and the China Strategy, p32, Scottish Government, 2007

<sup>59</sup> Brauholtz S et al, Scotland’s International Engagement and the China Strategy, p32, Scottish Government, 2007

<sup>60</sup> Lenton P, Global Value, p16, British Council, 2007

## **Applying for FTWiSS After Graduation**

7.10 FTWiSS appears to work well in encouraging people to stay in Scotland after graduation. Most of the interviewees in the research with those approaching the end of their 2 years on the scheme said they had not considered staying on until they had heard of the scheme. Overall, the Fresh Talent scheme was seen in a very positive light as an opportunity to experience life in a different country outside education and to gain work experience to complement university study:

I considered [returning to home country or moving elsewhere] but when it came down to it I just really loved Scotland and living there for just one year wasn't enough for me and I wanted to see what it would be like to work there outside the educational context.

The work experience combined with my masters here would look a lot better on my CV when I went back to [home country] and possibly could make the difference in getting a position or not.

7.11 For those interviewees that had intended to stay in Scotland after graduation anyway, FTWiSS was seen as a more 'straightforward' way of gaining leave than other routes while also allowing for greater flexibility:

I wanted to keep my options open when I finished my degree, so I wasn't tied to the company. When [FTWiSS] came out I thought I might as well do it because when you're on a work permit you're basically bound to stay on [with that employer] because they applied for that visa for you, but if I had not liked it I could have walked away at any time.

It was easier than having to go through the normal visa process. I already had a [part time] contract [with current employer], but I wanted to increase to 35 hours, so it was easier just to do Fresh Talent rather than go through the Home Office because then the job would have had to have been re-advertised, the process would have been longer. So the Fresh Talent was just a quick and easy way of just extending the amount of hours I could work.

7.12 Many features of the FTWiSS suggest that it has successfully influenced people to consider coming to study in Scotland or to stay on after graduation. This Chapter goes on to look at the lessons learned so far from this experience and asks what more could be done to maximise its potential.

## **Sources of information about FTWiSS**

7.13 Information on FTWiSS has been made available in a variety of ways. Communications had to be effectively targeted to the different needs and demands that come with each "phase" for the individuals on the scheme: 1) to find out about the scheme; 2) apply to go onto FTWiSS; and 3) seek out advice and support once they were part of the scheme. As has been shown in Chapters 5 and 6, FTWiSS has been used as a means of telling people about Scotland and entering into a dialogue with them about the benefits of coming to Scotland to learn, live and work. The first point above is covered below, while point 2 is looked at in Chapter 7 and point 3 is explored in Chapter 10.

## **Finding Out About FTWiSS**

7.14 Again, focusing on findings from research with those coming to the end of their FTWiSS period, most people found out about the FTWiSS programme from their universities, from press reports when the scheme was launched, or from friends. The Home

Office and scotlandistheplace website were used to find out further details, and there was a consensus that these websites provided all the information needed for a successful application.

7.15 However, it was felt that the websites were unclear about both the aim of the scheme and the possibilities and expectations for transition onto other immigration schemes after the two years. Many participants said that it was important that this information be provided from the beginning:

Well the thing I would like to now know and that I would have liked to have known then is how easy is it going to be to get a work permit, because that has been described to me as something that is very difficult to do in the past. But there's been this sort of ambiguity about you *may* be able to stay past the two years.

The information should be more clear, advising from the beginning that it will not be easy, because the reality that the transition from the scheme to another one is difficult.

7.16 More than one interviewee also noted that the scotlandistheplace website was too promotional in language and contained too much text with little factual information, making it difficult to find the relevant information. For example, one participant argued that:

Information on the website should be more user friendly and written in a clearer language, not trying to sell something, but for people to get the information they want and to understand what actually is written there.

7.17 Looking across the other available evidence, there were a number of indications about the availability of and demand for information about FTWiSS, many of a similar nature to those identified above. In 2005-06 FTWiSS was the main reason that students contacted the RAS for information and advice and a more recent evaluation of the RAS has shown that enquiries about the scheme remain high.<sup>61</sup> The evaluation of RAS suggests that there are 3 main sources of information for students to find out about FTWiSS: via their student and careers advisors at universities and college; the Scotland is the Place website; and contacting the RAS directly.<sup>62</sup>

7.18 There was some evidence of RAS customers and stakeholders wanting more detailed information on the website and the need to ensure that information available on FTWiSS in other important places, such as the UK Home Office web pages, were up-to-date and accurate.<sup>63</sup>

### **Universities as a Source of Information**

7.19 Staff working in Scottish universities and colleges have formed strong relations with government staff working on FTWiSS to the extent that international student and careers advisors are generally thought to be able to help most of their students apply. Universities and colleges, recognising the very positive selling point FTWiSS offers them, use it to promote their institutions abroad.<sup>64</sup> However, they also highlighted a lack of resources to fully utilise

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<sup>61</sup> Binnie I, Phase 1 Evaluation of the Relocation Advisory Service, p 58, Scottish Government, 2006

<sup>62</sup> Murray L et al, Phase 2 Evaluation of the Relocation Advisory Service, Scottish Government, 2008

<sup>63</sup> Murray L et al, Phase 2 Evaluation of the Relocation Advisory Service, Scottish Government, 2008

<sup>64</sup> Braunholtz S et al, Scotland's International Engagement and the China Strategy, p32, Scottish Government, 2007

the marketing potential and a few respondents “expressed concerns that Fresh Talent is not being promoted as effectively as it might be due to the fact that key promotional agents such as the British Council have a UK wide remit” and therefore cannot focus on Scotland alone.<sup>65</sup> UK Immigration officers were also observed by staff to have a low awareness of FTWiSS.

### **Employers as a Source of Information**

7.20 The second phase evaluation of the RAS highlighted both the lack of awareness amongst businesses and recruitment agencies about FTI, 82% had never heard of it, and the feeling amongst RAS customers that businesses did not have enough of an awareness.<sup>66</sup> This suggests that, despite efforts to brief about and raise awareness of FTWiSS amongst employers, more may need to be done. The lack of awareness also has a knock-on effect for those on FTWiSS who have to explain what the scheme means to employers (this is discussed further in Chapter 9).

### **Applying to the Home Office for FTWiSS - the extension to visa process**

7.21 Gaining the flexibility within the UK immigration system for international graduates from Scottish universities and colleges was seen as a major policy success for the devolved Scottish administration at the time. The FTWiSS process was managed by the UK Government Departments and all those applying therefore had to go through a standard procedure in order to get their application and extension verified. In some respects, the application process set the tone for people’s experience of being on the scheme.

### **Applying In Person or By Post**

7.22 In the qualitative research with those who have been on the scheme for around 2 years, most participants had chosen to travel to Glasgow to get their visa face to face in order to keep their passports with them:

I thought it was very expensive but I didn’t want to give up my passport, I had a friend who did that and she didn’t get her passport back for 17 weeks. I thought I’m a foreign national in this country, if I want to leave, I need my passport. I did not feel comfortable putting it in the Royal Mail and sending it somewhere to an office where it could get lost under some paperwork.

7.23 These interviewees were very happy with their experiences of the visa process:

It was great, it didn’t take more than an hour.

Couldn’t have been any easier, took literally three minutes, incredibly easy.

7.24 Those that had applied by post had a more mixed experience. More than one interviewee experienced delays in receiving their visa, in one case because their passport had been lost in the post for several weeks. The period of being without a passport was experienced as very stressful and there was a feeling that not enough care was taken with crucial documents like passports and degree certificates:

It took a full two months to get the response back. And there was no dialogue in between when I submitted the paper work and my passport to when I got it back, it was a full two

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<sup>65</sup> Braunholtz S et al, Scotland’s International Engagement and the China Strategy, p33, Scottish Government, 2007

<sup>66</sup> Murray L et al, Phase 2 Evaluation of the Relocation Advisory Service, Scottish Government, 2008

months, I didn't get a letter saying that they received it. So it was a very horrible time for me here because I couldn't legally work and I couldn't go anywhere either because I didn't have my passport.

The thing that upset me was that [the passport] did just come through the letterbox, it didn't have to be signed for, it wasn't registered.

### **The Cost**

7.25 All participants argued that the cost of the visa was very high, to the extent where it would prevent people from applying. Several interviewees knew people who had either been unable or unwilling to pay the fee and had therefore left Scotland after graduation.

The only difficulty was, I just finished my degree and it was quite a large fee, financially that was a bit of a crunch, I actually borrowed the money from my partner because I didn't have it, I was still looking for a job and cash flow was getting pretty low.

I think that [the fees] are quite prohibitive to some people. At the time I lived with all the international students and one of the girls I lived with definitely didn't apply for it because of the cost. And I'm not quite sure, unless you're making quite a bit of money it ends up being worth it, I don't think it necessarily pays for itself. I know that this would definitely limit some people.

### **Awareness Amongst UK Government Officials**

7.26 Another problem with the FTWiSS visa identified by participants was the lack of awareness of the visa among immigration officials. More than one interviewee had been questioned at border control, and this appeared to be a problem particularly when entering the UK through England:

If we travel we go back home and we come through Gatwick or Luton, people still question my visa, they don't understand what it is, I'm stopped and interrogated all the time. People go: 'What is this visa? Why do you have it? I don't understand it, what is this?' A lot of people who work at the border control or immigration have no idea what my visa is.

7.27 The extension to visa process is clearly an aspect of the scheme that in some sense tests for the first time the commitment and expectations created by the FTWiSS message. The need to take an interest in these elements of the application process is an important, initial, part of making an individual's time on FTWiSS a positive one.

## 8. GAINING EMPLOYMENT ON FTWiSS

8.1 In many ways employment can be thought of as key to the success of FTWiSS. For the individual on the scheme, however, it is not only about finding work, but finding work that is linked to their chosen career path and reflects their qualifications and experience. Whether those on FTWiSS have realistic expectations of the labour market in Scotland and the opportunities available to graduates is another key factor in determining how able they are to find work. Part of this is trying to understand the support made available to these individuals once they are on the scheme and making an assessment of the level and type of service that might be expected in terms of support finding employment.

### **Finding a Job in Scotland**

8.2 All interviewees in the qualitative research with those on the scheme for about 2 years had started looking for employment either before or as soon as they had received their visa. The experiences of finding suitable work differed significantly between individuals. Some participants had worked part-time at an appropriate level while at university, and were able to join the companies they were working for full time after graduation. Interviewees who were not in this situation took between six weeks and one year to find employment at a level and salary appropriate to their qualification and in a sector they were interested in. One participant found that:

Getting a job was very very easy, there was a lot of work available.

8.3 However, most participants agreed that it is very difficult to find suitable employment in Scotland. One interviewee was unable to find professional work and continued working in a casual customer service job after 18 months, despite being headhunted twice by firms from other countries. The lack of employment opportunities was particularly obvious in comparison to other places:

In Scotland, even when I was temping I wasn't really getting much work and as soon as I moved to London, I was getting steady work all the time.

It really wears on you thinking if I moved back, if I moved to [city in home country] there's thousands of jobs in my chosen field there, I'm sure I could find something.

8.4 Some participants argued that Scottish companies were looking for individuals with very specialised experience and that it was difficult to find 'general' employment in Scotland. It was also thought that educational qualifications were not valued as much as they are elsewhere.

There are a lot of jobs in Scotland, but the requirement in Scotland is for very specialised work, not general roles.

I had just paid a lot of money for my Masters and it seemed to open no doors.

8.5 Several participants felt that employers often acted unprofessionally, e.g. not acknowledging receipt of applications, not giving feedback.

I sent out so many applications and I was really frustrated by the application process, because you send out applications and you don't get any reply, you don't even get a recognition of



receipt of your application, and that's very different from in my own country. In Scotland it was not like that, I didn't get many recognitions of receipts at all. And I would call places to follow up and people wouldn't know what was where, [they'd say] 'We've already hired for that job, why are you calling us?' I found that incredibly incredibly frustrating.

On the job front, the system that is in place can be very frustrating. I attended an interview and during the interview I realised I wasn't the type of person they were looking for, so I expected the person to tell me I wasn't qualified but they told me it went very well. So the feedback I was given wasn't the right feedback, they just said something to get rid of me.

8.6 The interview participants who had these negative experiences felt that they would have benefited from more support and guidance about the Scottish labour market. One interviewee argued that what would have helped her could have been something as simple as:

somebody who I could have talked to, maybe somebody associated with Fresh Talent, who could have told me how getting a job in Scotland works, because not even getting recognition that my application was received, that was so alien to what I was used to, I just felt ignored. If somebody could have told me that that was how it was supposed to be, so you shouldn't feel bad if you don't hear back or you hear back three months later. It would have made me feel a lot better if somebody could have just told me 'That's how things work in Scotland you should do this because there is a cultural difference there'.

### Types of Jobs

8.7 Data from the monitoring questionnaire shows that just under three quarters of respondents were employed or self-employed during wave 1, 87% during wave 2 and 74% during wave 3 (see Table 8). However, it appears that a very large proportion of respondents are not in the type of jobs they would like to be in, with around four in ten respondents stating that their employment is not linked to their career choice, and more than half saying that it is not appropriate to their level of education (see Tables 9 and 10). The precise figures from wave 1 and 2 should be treated with caution due to inaccuracies in questionnaire design and data entry<sup>67</sup>, but the overall trend appears to be consistent with other research, as well as the qualitative comments collected in the monitoring questionnaire.

**Table 8: Employment status**

	Wave 1	Wave 2	Wave 3
	%	%	%
Employee	71	83	74
Self employed	3	4	*
Unemployed	20	9	22
Inactive	2	1	/
Student	1	1	3
Other	3	2	/
<b>Total</b>	<b>100</b>	<b>100</b>	<b>100</b>

Base: All respondents who answered question (wave 1: 689, wave 2: 162; wave 3: 198)

Source: FTWiSS monitoring questionnaire

<sup>67</sup> A larger number of individuals answered questions about their employment than said that they are employed.

**Table 9 Whether employment is linked to career choice**

	Wave 1	Wave 2	Wave 3
	%	%	%
Yes	51	55	67
No	46	39	29
I haven't yet chosen a career	1	3	4
don't know	2	3	/
<b>Total</b>	<b>100</b>	<b>100</b>	<b>100</b>

Base: All respondents who answered question (wave 1: 539, wave 2: 146; wave 3: 147)

Source: FTWiSS monitoring questionnaire

**Table 10 Whether employment is appropriate to level of educational qualification**

	Wave 1	Wave 2	Wave 3
	%	%	%
Yes	47	48	52
No	53	50	48
Don't know	/	3	/
<b>Total</b>	<b>100</b>	<b>100</b>	<b>100</b>

Base: All respondents who answered question (wave 1: 531, wave 2: 147; wave 3: 147)

Source: FTWiSS monitoring questionnaire

### Barriers to Finding the Right Job

8.8 Respondents who felt that they were not in suitable employment were given the opportunity to comment in their own words on why they thought this was. Analysis of the written comments showed that most were working low skill jobs as a stopgap while applying for more suitable positions, although some were also using unskilled work as a means to gaining experience in their chosen sector with a view to moving to more senior positions.

8.9 The comments identified a number of barriers to finding work at the right level and in the right sector. Key among these is the lack of graduate level opportunities in Scotland, particularly in certain sectors, which means that there is a lot of competition for any available positions and employers have high expectations in terms of work experience and qualifications. A number of people who commented acknowledged that they were lacking experience and were trying to address this, although there was a feeling that skilled work placements were almost as difficult to secure as permanent work. Of course, these barriers are likely to be similar to those experienced by any Scottish graduate, whether international or not.

8.10 However, comments also identified some barriers that were specific to international students. Many respondents did have work experience gained outside the UK, but found that employers were only interested in UK experience. A larger issue mentioned by most of the people who commented was that employers are unwilling to employ people who do not have permanent residency. This issue is discussed further in Chapter 9.

8.11 Research in 2005, at the start of the FTWiSS, picked up from an early stage the problems some of those on the scheme have finding suitable employment and the "frustrations" associated with this.<sup>68</sup> Although there is no definitive number to show how many of those on FTWiSS have found employment, it is clear that some have experienced

<sup>68</sup> MacLeod P et al, People Who Relocate to Scotland, p72, Scottish Government, 2006

difficulties. Part of this is related to the expectations of those on FTWiSS and a view that after graduation they should not only be able to find work, but find a job that is “aligned to their career path”.<sup>69</sup>

### **Experience of All Graduates in Scotland Finding Employment**

8.12 Higher education statistics indicate that of all graduates surveyed from Scottish institutions 57% had obtained employment (permanent and temporary) 6 months after graduation and, of that group, 64% were working as professionals, associate professionals or technical staff. The unemployment rate of those surveyed was 5%.<sup>70</sup> One would not expect those on FTWiSS to have similar experiences, but further analysis of the survey data could lead to a better understanding of the experiences of particular groups of graduates seeking work. It may be that more is required to help overseas graduates understand the Scottish labour market and the pattern of graduate employment in Scotland.

### **Employment as a Successful Outcome of FTWiSS**

8.13 Qualitative research with staff at Scottish universities and colleges suggests that there is a consensus that “the true measure of FTWiSS will be the extent to which it meets students’ expectations in terms of providing opportunities”.<sup>71</sup> This point links to a wider view of what FTWiSS is looking to achieve in terms of outcomes: there is the issue of whether those on FTWiSS find employment; the extent to which their 2 years on FTWiSS is a positive experience; and whether they look to stay on in Scotland after their 2 years is complete. Success in relation to FTWiSS can be thought about in numerous ways, eg the economic contribution of international students and graduates, but its impact on the individuals on the scheme, a key part of which is to do with them finding jobs, is crucial.

### **Coping with Difficulties Finding Employment**

8.14 Being able to cope with any associated difficulties and challenges linked to finding work as an international graduate is an important issue. Individuals on FTWiSS may have high expectations, by virtue of being on the scheme, and may be disappointed by any initial setbacks in finding employment. In the worst case scenarios, those on FTWiSS may leave Scotland to find work elsewhere in the face of difficulties and there is no reliable estimate as to how many might have done this in the last two years. In responding to evidence which suggests some individuals are facing problems in finding work, there may be scope to explore and identify possible areas where some level of support may be usefully provided to those on the scheme.

### **Individual Solutions**

8.15 Most participants in the qualitative research with those on FTWiSS for around 2 years who said that they struggled to find work after graduating responded by widening their search, either geographically or in terms of what jobs they were applying for:

After the first couple when you don’t hear back you think maybe I shouldn’t be so choosy, maybe I should apply for just about anything.

8.16 One interviewee had returned to university in order to make themselves more employable in Scotland:

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<sup>69</sup> MacLeod P et al, People Who Relocate to Scotland, p2, Scottish Government, 2006

<sup>70</sup> [Higher Education Graduates, Scottish Government Statistics, 2007](#)

<sup>71</sup> Braunholtz S et al, Scotland’s International Engagement and the China Strategy, p33, Scottish Government, 2007

I talked to my mum and she said I think you need to go back to uni, find out what Scotland really needs, and concentrate on that subject.

8.17 Another response to not finding work was to leave Scotland. One interviewee had moved to London after several months of unsuccessful job hunting, after having been advised by their university that it was legal to do so on an FTWiSS visa:

I was told at the international office that what I had been issued was a UK residence permit. I certainly wasn't trying to come here [London] and work illegally, I checked into everything before I moved, and I would have moved earlier had I known it was an option.

8.18 Another participant stated that had they not found secure employment at the appropriate level, they would almost certainly have left Scotland:

There is no way I would have stayed in Scotland photocopying for two years. I was 24 at the time and it would have been better for me to go back to [home country] and start a real career, instead of making photocopies in Scotland and having that be on my CV.

8.19 It appears that it is common for individuals to leave Scotland after not finding suitable work for an extended period, as most interviewees had friends who had done so:

A lot of my friends they stayed here looking for work, and couldn't find anything so after a few months they applied for the normal work permit, and moved to London.

One person I know, Fresh Talent, very good education, but he ended up working in a bar because he couldn't find employment, so he left, so I think it's a common thing.

Every single one of my friends was in the exact same situation [of struggling to find work]. And in the end, two of my friends ended up moving to London.

8.20 The one interviewee who had stayed in Scotland despite not finding suitable work for 18 months had done so for personal reasons:

What is keeping me here is my wife studying, other than that I would have relocated, not necessarily to [home country], but because I've had other offers outside Scotland.

### **Relocation Advisory Service**

8.21 One option available to those individuals on FTWiSS who are trying to find work is to contact the Relocation Advisory Service. Evaluations of its service indicate that the majority of direct enquiries it receives are "work related" (help finding work or queries about work permits and visas).<sup>72</sup> While the evaluations identified the volume of enquiries relating to the application process of FTWiSS there was no indication of the proportion of calls taken from people on FTWiSS trying to find employment. It may be that some of those asking for help finding work were on FTWiSS. Whilst RAS could act as a useful service for those on FTWiSS - and there is nothing stopping them from using it - this could be seen as another illustration of the focus and attention given to the application-side of FTWiSS, whereas the same cannot be said for the support available once individuals are on the scheme.

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<sup>72</sup> Binnie I et al, Phase 1 Evaluation of the Relocation Advisory Service, p 7, Scottish Executive, 2006

### Other Possible Forms of Support

8.22 In the FTWiSS monitoring report, respondents who were not in a job related to their career choice were asked what would help them. The most common responses were training (which is assumed to cover work experience as well as academic study), availability of jobs, and careers advice (see Table 11).

**Table 11: If job not linked to career choice, what would help obtain a job that was?**

	Wave 1	Wave 2
	%	%
Further training	44	31
Availability of jobs	27	37
Career advice	19	15
Suitable accommodation	*	5
English language classes	*	/
Jobs for your partner	*	/
Other	7	12
<b>Total</b>	<b>100</b>	<b>100</b>

Base: All respondents who answered question (wave 1: 268, wave 2: 65)

Note: To date, only 42 responses have been received in wave 3

Source: FTWiSS monitoring questionnaire

8.23 The written qualitative comments collected through the monitoring questionnaire identify three key areas where respondents feel that further support should be provided to help them find suitable work. First, many graduates recognise that they lack the work experience employers require, and are therefore looking for tailored careers advice and ‘work experience’ programmes to help them to find work at the appropriate level. Of course, it needs to be remembered that it is not only international graduate that would benefit from such support. Second, there is agreement that government should work with employers to raise awareness of FTWiSS and prevent the situation where people on FTWiSS are often automatically excluded at the first round despite having relevant qualifications and work experience. Third, and related, many respondents felt that the scheme should either be extended beyond the two years or that there should be a more straightforward route into another immigration category, to allow both employers and employees to plan for the long term.

## **9. EMPLOYERS' AWARENESS OF FTWiSS**

9.1 In policy terms, employers were always seen as playing an important role in making FTWiSS work. Not only were employers well placed to benefit from highly educated and skilled graduates already on FTWiSS in the labour market, they could be pro-active in encouraging students or applicants that might contact them to apply for the scheme.

### **Employers and the Fresh Talent Initiative**

9.2 Employers have been consistently identified as a weak link in the FTI chain and this applies to FTWiSS as well. The Fresh Talent Progress report highlighted difficulties in making employers aware of the scheme and getting them to consider the potential benefits of employing migrant workers.<sup>73</sup> For employers in the UK, especially those looking to hire highly-skilled workers, many still rely on the domestic labour market to fill vacancies rather than actively look abroad.<sup>74</sup>

9.3 Research has consistently shown that awareness of FTWiSS is much higher and more developed in academia than it is amongst businesses and employers and the most recent study carried out on this topic in 2007 confirmed this. The second phase evaluation of the Relocation Advisory Service found that amongst those they surveyed who were responsible for recruitment in recruitment agencies and businesses in Scotland, awareness of FTWiSS was low. This was recognised by RAS customers and key partners as well. The report warns that a lack of understanding amongst employers means that they may continue to be put off hiring migrants because they see work permits as too complicated and this could have implications for those on FTWiSS who may be turned down for job opportunities. It goes on to make a series of recommendations about how FTWiSS might be better marketed to employers and use RAS as a way of actively helping employers with work permits and visa applications.<sup>75</sup>

### **Links Between Employers and Academia**

9.4 Given the issue of resourcing a widespread marketing campaign or enabling the RAS to take on the capacity to cope with an increased level of enquiries from employers, it may be that something more targeted is required. As was mentioned earlier, John Salt and Jane Miller have highlighted the potential scope for universities and employers to work more closely to identify opportunities for graduates; this sort of model may offer a more sophisticated approach. If FTWiSS is known about and used by universities to get students to come to Scotland to study, then there could be a natural synergy with employers who are interested in hiring students after they have graduated. The opportunity to use FTWiSS to stimulate universities and employers to work in new ways could see the scheme more effectively meet the expectations of the graduates on it.

### **Employers' Recognition of FTWiSS**

9.5 A major barrier to finding employment particular to people on FTWiSS was that most employers were not aware of the FTWiSS scheme or had little or the wrong understanding of what the visa was, and were therefore reluctant to even consider candidates on FTWiSS. Participants in the research with those nearing the end of their 2 years reported being repeatedly asked to explain their immigration status in interviews and having to try and

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<sup>73</sup> Rogerson R et al, Fresh Talent Progress Report, p9, Scottish Government, 2006

<sup>74</sup> Dench S et al, Employers' Use of Migrant Labour, p38, Home Office, 2006

<sup>75</sup> Murray L et al, Phase 2 Evaluation of the Relocation Advisory Service, Scottish Government, 2008

convince potential employers that they were eligible, and felt that this should not be necessary:

Trying to explain what Fresh Talent is not easy, somebody like me explaining it to the employer is going to look like I'm just trying to cook up some story about the kind of visa I have. It would be better if they heard it from the organisers at the Scottish Executive.

I had to convince the people in my temp agency that I was allowed to work full time permanently because they kept only giving me temp placements and I kept saying to them 'No, No, I can work a real job, a full time, permanent job'.

9.6 Interviewees felt that there was a gap between the rhetoric ('Scotland wants you') and employers indifference. There was a feeling that the then Scottish Executive could have focused its attention on making employers aware of the programme, rather than just targeting potential applicants:

I think because it's a new scheme employers are not aware. I think the problem is with information between most employers and the scheme. The main thing is education, there should be more communication between Fresh Talent and especially the main big organisations, because Fresh Talent is not recognised by most organisations, that has been my personal experience.

I have to say while the Scottish Executive has done a good job in bringing the Fresh Talent scheme about, some work is still to be done and that work is letting organisations or employers know what the Fresh Talent visa is all about. More information should be sent to employers, because the information you guys are giving out at the moment is mainly for us [individuals on FTWiSS]. If there's any network through which employers get informed about employing foreigners, that should be used, so its not always news to them.

9.7 Some interviewees also felt that employers were reluctant to employ people on FTWiSS because they were unsure about whether they could retain them after the two year visa ran out. They argued that employers needed to know more about the options for transition to other schemes:

If agents and employers in Scotland knew more about this visa and what's gonna happen after it expires, that I have an option to switch to other programmes, they would be more willing to consider me seriously. Because you see if a big company is going to employ me, it's going to take them a year at least before I start giving them profit, so two years on Fresh Talent and then unknown is not enough.

9.8 The qualitative comments collected from the monitoring questionnaire confirm the findings from the qualitative research. Many respondents stated that in their experience employers would only consider job applicants on the Highly Skilled Migrants programme or with indefinite leave to remain and would reject individuals on FTWiSS out of hand because of the perceived difficulty of applying for a work permit after the two years and the uncertainty about whether it would be granted. Although this evidence cannot claim to be representative of the wider FTWiSS population, it is clear that more could be done to involve and engage employers.

## 10. RETENTION: STAYING ON IN SCOTLAND AFTER FTWiSS

10.1 Whether individuals actually try and stay in Scotland once their FTWiSS 2 year period has come to the end, could be seen as the ultimate successful outcome. As the report has shown, there are a number of successful outcomes to be derived from the scheme, but recent events in Scotland highlight the Scottish Government's increased focus and determination to invite migrants to play a part in growing Scotland's economy. The Scottish Government Economic Strategy contains a population target which sets a far more explicit direction for policies such as Fresh Talent than was previously the case. Success in relation to the population target is not only about getting people to come to Scotland, but actually getting them to *stay*. Retention therefore becomes a critical factor and this section reviews the success of FTWiSS in achieving this.

### Experience of life in Scotland

10.2 Living in Scotland, for those on FTWiSS or international graduates who intend to go onto FTWiSS, is a generally positive experience. For example, Chinese students studying in Scotland, many of whom were influenced to come to Scotland because of FTWiSS, were positive about Scotland's education system, which they described as being "free thinking" in terms of its structure; the friendly people and welcoming atmosphere; and the physical and cultural environment.<sup>76</sup> Scotland also performs well on the International Student Barometer and the same themes emerge as are listed above.<sup>77</sup>

10.3 This general warmth about and high satisfaction with living in Scotland is borne out in other research with international students and other people from overseas who have relocated to Scotland.<sup>78</sup> Satisfaction with the lifestyle has been identified as being a factor in the decision people might make about staying on in the long-term, but is "not a strong enough factor on its own to retain people".<sup>79</sup> Many of those taking part in the qualitative research on relocating to Scotland both enjoyed the process of moving around the world and were also keen to build their career, which often meant going to the place where the right job could be found. Their commitment to Scotland was therefore fluid, despite enjoying the lifestyle.

### Positive Aspects of Living in Scotland

10.4 The majority of participants in the qualitative research with those on FTWiSS for about 2 years felt very positive about their life in Scotland. In particular, people enjoyed the cultural life in Edinburgh, both modern and traditional:

I love Edinburgh. It's just my favourite city in the world, there's just so many things to do. I love that the galleries are free, I love that the Royal Botanic garden is free, you can just spend a lovely day there in the sunshine. The festival is a huge draw for me, I love theatre so this is my idea of heaven. I love the fact that I live within 10 minutes walking distance of the city centre (...) Overall, I think it's a great place to live, restaurants, I love the quality of restaurants, nightlife is great if you're into that .

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<sup>76</sup> Braunholtz S et al, Scotland's International Engagement and the China Strategy, p33, Scottish Government, 2007

<sup>77</sup> Archer W, Tracking the college and university experience in Scotland: what do international students think?, i-graduate, 2006

<sup>78</sup> MacLeod P et al, Experience of People Who Relocate to Scotland, Scottish Government, 2006

<sup>79</sup> MacLeod et al, Experience of People Who Relocate to Scotland, p68, Scottish Government, 2006



There are a few international, I really enjoy the Indian community in Edinburgh, the different Indian festivals and they're quite open anyone can go to them, I enjoy that, the mixing aspect.

10.5 Interviewees also appreciated the possibility to visit areas of unspoiled nature and historic sites, and that they are relatively easily from Edinburgh:

The nature is quite nice when you go up to the north and you can be completely in the middle of nowhere just you and the midges.

But there is so much to do, especially here in Edinburgh, my weekends have been absolutely busy, I've been driving around Scotland seeing things as a tourist, you like some places so you keep going back again and again, in Scotland there's plenty to do.

I love Scottish culture, I loved the history that surrounded me, in Edinburgh and travelling through the Highlands, I loved the bagpipe music. (...) Everywhere I went it was absolutely gorgeous, I was really taken with the history which probably lots of Americans are taken with the history throughout the UK, the castles everywhere. I also thought it was so green and just lush and beautiful and I just thought it was a fantastic place to live.

### **Negative Aspects of Living in Scotland**

10.6 Negative aspects mentioned were the weather, the cost of living and the low salaries compared to the same jobs in other western countries. It was highlighted that it was more difficult to have a high standard of living on Scottish salaries than elsewhere.

In your day to day life you spend so much on food, which is costing at least 5 or 6 times what we pay back in [home country], that's a big shock.

It seems to me that the wages don't match up with what you have to spend. I look at jobs that pay really low wages and I think 'Oh my god, how can anyone survive on that?' I'm barely getting by on what I'm paid, and it's not much, but it's better than some. The wages just seem, compared to what I made in [home country], and I was not in a well paid job [there], but I'm having a harder time getting a good quality of living with my salary here versus what I had then. Things are more expensive here in general. And I find it harder to get by day by day.

10.7 Another issue that was mentioned by several interviewees was the drinking culture and the related violence:

Sometimes I do feel like the drinking culture and behaviour in the city at night time can be a little scary, especially if you're on your own.

What I don't like about Scotland has to be the drinking culture. For me it is still, not a shock, but it's just amazing to go out on a Friday night and seeing the individuals that have had so much to drink in such a short amount of time and then just everything that spins off off that. That for me is quite shocking.

I don't feel very safe late at night walking the streets, there's always people getting into fights, and you hear about stabbing, rapes and so on.

### **The Scottish People**

10.8 Experiences of the Scottish people differed between interviewees. Most interviewees felt accepted in Scotland, had found Scottish people to be extremely approachable and easy going and considered Scotland to be very friendly country, particularly in comparison to other countries or regions they had lived in:

I loved the Scottish people and culture, I found Scottish people to be very friendly, everywhere I went, compared to [people from home region] which is my base of comparison, where people are not friendly. In Scotland people smile at you and say hello when you walk into a store and ask you how your day was, especially in the Highlands. The job that I had I interacted with a lot of people at different levels, and people were very friendly.

It's a quiet and friendly place to live, its one of the best places you could ever live and feel secure. I mean the place is safe, you don't have to bother about security. I think the people too are nice, because I've been to London on a few occasions and I asked people directions and its horrible, even before you've asked they tell you I don't know, but in Scotland its different, people have the time and sometimes can walk you up to a certain point and are friendly.

Scotland has this, its got a nice mix, a lot of the things I enjoy about from the United States and a lot of things I enjoy from the Continent coming together so it has a nice culture it has a the atmosphere is nice, laid back and relaxed, the people are open to change and differences.

10.9 However, a small number of participants felt that Scottish people were reluctant to engage with outsiders, and some had experienced negative attitudes due to their nationality, and in one case, racism. These individuals described Scotland as a closed and somewhat backward-looking society, again in comparison to other countries or places.

Basically, I've made an effort [to meet neighbours] and I think it is important that you, which other people don't do, it happens all over the UK, people don't mix about, they like to keep within their house, when they come home that is it, they shut off the world.

I don't feel accepted at all [by Scottish people] I get a lot of criticism about my country and obviously not things that I've done or have any control over, its something that's been quite difficult for me to deal with. And I don't get it at all from any of my international friends, but its something that my Scottish friends and work colleagues bring up quite regularly.

10.10 Another issue that was perceived negatively by several participant was the class system, and the importance it plays in people's everyday lives and the influence it has on their life chances:

I was very amazed at the class difference, how you have the bankers around the centre and maybe the people who have a wealthy sort of background but also then you go out to the fringes and its like a completely different world and that for me was the big shock I wouldn't have expected that.

### **Recommending Scotland**

10.11 Interviewees' overall positive experience was reflected by the fact that most would recommend or already had recommended Scotland to friends and family, both as a place to visit and to study or work:

I'd definitely recommend Scotland to other people. I have said to people you know if you're looking at doing something, for example I have a friend whose younger brother wants to study and he's looking at studying either in the United States or in Scotland and I've said you know universities-wise Edinburgh or even Scotland in general is quite good place to come. So he's considering that.

I recommend Scotland to everyone that I meet. Its such a fantastic place to visit or spend a few months, I'm trying to convince my little brother to study abroad there, I honestly recommend it to everyone I know, especially touring through the Highlands.

### Scotland as a Place to Live, Study and Work

10.12 Responses from the monitoring questionnaire show that respondents saw Scotland in a very positive light, with around 90% of respondents describing Scotland as a good place to live and study (see Tables 12 and 13). Unsurprisingly, given the problems in finding suitable employment experienced by many individuals on FTWiSS, perceptions of Scotland as a place to work were slightly less positive with around three quarters of respondents seeing Scotland as attractive in this respect (see Table 14).

**Table 12 Perceptions of Scotland as a place to live**

	Wave 1	Wave 2	Wave 3
	%	%	%
Very attractive	59	60	60
Fairly attractive	34	32	28
Neither attractive nor unattractive	5	6	8
Fairly unattractive	1	*	3
Very unattractive	*	*	*
Don't know	*	/	*
<b>Total</b>	<b>100</b>	<b>100</b>	<b>100</b>

Base: All respondents who answered question (wave 1: 701, wave 2: 162, wave 3: 201)

Source: FTWiSS monitoring questionnaire

**Table 13 Perceptions of Scotland as a place to study**

	Wave 1	Wave 2	Wave 3
	%	%	%
Very attractive	60	59	56
Fairly attractive	35	35	33
Neither attractive or unattractive	4	4	9
Fairly unattractive	*	*	*
Very unattractive	*	*	*
Don't know	*	*	*
<b>Total</b>	<b>100</b>	<b>100</b>	<b>100</b>

Base: All respondents who answered question (wave 1: 702, wave 2: 162, wave 3: 201)

Source: FTWiSS monitoring questionnaire

**Table 14 Perceptions of Scotland as a place to work**

	Wave 1	Wave 2	Wave 3
	%	%	%
Very attractive	41	41	38
Fairly attractive	35	35	33
Neither attractive or unattractive	15	12	9
Fairly unattractive	5	9	10
Very unattractive	2	4	6
Don't know	2	/	3
<b>Total</b>	<b>100</b>	<b>100</b>	<b>100</b>

Base: All respondents who answered question (wave 1: 701, wave 2: 162, wave 3: 201)

Source: FTWiSS monitoring questionnaire

10.13 FTWiSS seems to have played an important role in raising awareness of Scotland; it has given a large number of students the opportunity to experience Scotland first hand and, for the very most part, this has led to these individuals feeling an affinity, to varying degrees,

with the country. Whether they go on to live in Scotland, move home or settle somewhere else, they have become ambassadors who are willing to speak positively about what Scotland has to offer.

### Plans for the future

10.14 One possible positive outcome for FTWiSS is the individual deciding to stay on past their 2 year extension to visa. While there are other possible outcomes, such as the individual taking away a good impression of Scotland which may lead them to recommend it to someone else as a place to live and work in the future, encouraging people to stay for longer is very important. Again, there are distinctions to be made between the role and influence of FTWiSS in encouraging: international students to come to Scotland; international graduates to stay on after graduation using FTWiSS; and people staying on in Scotland at the end of the 2 years.

### Staying on In the Short, Medium and Long Term

10.15 Chapter 4 and 5 have already shown how effective FTWiSS can be at attracting students to study in Scotland and there is some evidence that FTWiSS increases the likelihood of an international student staying on after graduation. The i-graduate survey shows that 17% of those surveyed about their future intentions reported that they intended staying on using FTWiSS or equivalent, compared to 13% in England and Wales.<sup>80</sup>

10.16 Looking at the research with those on FTWiSS for around 2 years, of those participants that were still living in Scotland, most intended to stay on after the end of their FTWiSS leave and most intended to stay in the medium term (for the next 5 or 6 years) before returning home or moving elsewhere, although a few would consider settling in Scotland.

10.17 Other sources linked to what happens at the end of the 2 years indicates that a good proportion of individuals are actively pursuing a longer stay in Scotland. Analysis of FTWiSS statistics for applications made between June and August 2007 conducted by the Border and Immigration Agency showed that 44% of applicants had remained in Scotland at the end of the two years leave, and a further 12% remained in the UK outside Scotland.

10.18 Data from the monitoring questionnaire also shows a significant group saying that their intentions towards staying in Scotland stretch beyond the 2 years set by the scheme. Most respondents plan to stay in Scotland for more than 3 years, although a very significant minority said they expected to stay for a shorter time (Table 15).

**Table 15 Expected length of stay in Scotland**

	Wave 1	Wave 2	Wave 3
	%	%	%
Up to 1 year	11	13	17
1 - 3 years	35	32	34
More than 3 years	54	55	49
<b>Total</b>	<b>100</b>	<b>100</b>	<b>100</b>

Base: All respondents who answered question (wave 1: 654, wave 2: 152, wave 3: 155)  
Source: FTWiSS monitoring questionnaire

<sup>80</sup> Archer W, Tracking the college and university experience in Scotland: what do international students think?, i-graduate, 2006

### **The Decision to Stay**

10.19 The final decision on whether to stay or not appeared to depend mainly on whether their employment and immigration conditions were right. Several individuals stated that all things being equal, they would want to live in Scotland, but were keen to point out that they were not ‘desperate’ that they would move away if their career was better furthered elsewhere.

All things being equal, I would prefer Scotland, if I get two offers one from Scotland and one from say London with comparable salaries and other benefits, and comparable roles, then I would stay in Scotland.

10.20 Given the fact that FTWiSS does only last 2 years, a number of the research reports have stressed the need to do more to maximise the scheme or explore ways of extending the scheme further. This reflects some of the evidence that a longer period of time or a clearer sense of the different options available at the end of FTWiSS could better facilitate the experience for those on the scheme. For instance, the Phase 2 evaluation of RAS recommends considering a more active approach to matching international graduates, or people thinking of moving to Scotland, with jobs in particular industrial sectors.<sup>81</sup> And research from 2006 on the Experience of People who Relocate to Scotland suggests expanding the FTWiSS scheme to all individuals who have graduated from Scottish universities in the last 10 years.<sup>82</sup> Both of these ideas link to the notion that, in order to affect people’s thinking about staying on in Scotland, efforts must be, at least equally, concentrated on people once they have come on to the scheme or staying in touch with them if they decide to leave straight after graduation.

### **Barriers to remaining in Scotland**

10.21 Frustrations in finding suitable employment in many ways might be thought of as one of the major barriers to staying on in Scotland (see Chapter 10). However, employment is not the only potential barrier because a whole range of factors to do with the individual and their background, as well as the country they have moved to and the community they end up living in, can influence the likelihood of people deciding to stay on. From the decision to actually move to a place to eventually feeling a sense of belonging in a place can be a long and complex process.<sup>83</sup>

### **Moving on to Other Residency Schemes**

10.22 Most taking part in the qualitative research with those on FTWiSS for around 2 years who said that wanted to stay on in Scotland after their visa expired were unsure about whether it was possible to stay. The majority of participants did not qualify for the Highly Skilled Migrant Programme (HSMP), and were therefore reliant on their employers to apply for a work permit for them. While many employers were happy to do so, several were unable or unwilling to go through the process of applying for a work permit, partly because they were unsure of how likely they were to be successful:

I don’t think convincing an employer to apply for a work permit for you, even one you have been working for for a long time is easy, because it’s a lot of work for them. I’ve been with the same employer for two almost two years and they’re not willing to do it because of the

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<sup>81</sup> Murray L, Phase 2 evaluation of the Relocation Advisory Service, Scottish Government, 2008

<sup>82</sup> MacLeod P et al, Experience of People who Relocate to Scotland, p74, Scottish Government, 2006

<sup>83</sup> Macleod P et al, Experience of People Who Relocate to Scotland, p38, Scottish Government, 2006

paperwork involved, and they're not willing to do it for something that is questionable whether they will get it or not.

10.23 There generally was a lot of confusion about changing immigration status, with many interviewees having been given conflicting and, in some cases, wrong, advice. There appeared to be a lack of written 'facts' about immigration in particular:

When you get your visa, they should give you a booklet with all the information you need collected together. We cannot just listen to people, we need to see it.

10.24 One participant was self-employed and therefore highly unlikely to be able to remain despite having built up a thriving business. This person felt that had he been given realistic advice at the beginning of this FTWiSS leave that work permits need to be applied for by an employer rather than the person wishing to stay in Scotland he would have sought employment rather than becoming self-employed.

### **The Cost of Living**

10.25 Research undertaken with people living, working and studying in Scotland also identifies a few common features. The high cost of living and finding suitable accommodation are two issues that are raised by international students and those thinking about coming to study in Scotland.<sup>84</sup> Specific difficulties, such as problems opening bank accounts and other practical day-to-day functions, have been identified too.<sup>85</sup> In some respects, many of the aspects of moving to Scotland and deciding to stay are generic and could be applied to a lot of countries. However, for international students and those on FTWiSS, there are particular features around the cost of living and finding suitable employment which are "Scottish" issues.

### **Providing Support to Those Already on FTWiSS**

10.26 The services offered by RAS have often been put forward as one possible avenue for enquiry for those who need some level of support either coming to Scotland or, in the case of those already on FTWiSS, staying on in Scotland. However, the service is not pro-active in that it is not responsible for checking-in with those on FTWiSS to see how they are getting on or whether they have managed to find work, nor is any other body responsible for doing so. The RAS service itself is not resourced to offer intensive, tailored support and it may be that, given the high expectations of some of those on FTWiSS, this is not enough to deal with the frustrations of adjusting to life in a different country or finding suitable employment. There does appear to be a demand for a level of support to those on FTWiSS once they have successfully applied to the scheme, other than monitoring their progress.

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<sup>84</sup> Archer W, Tracking the college and university experience in Scotland: what do international students think?, i-graduate, 2006

<sup>85</sup> MacLeod P et al, Experience of People Who Relocate to Scotland, Scottish Government, 2006

## 11. THE AIMS AND OBJECTIVES OF FTWiSS

11.1 Given that there are no set targets or performance indicators for the scheme, it is difficult to make an overall assessment of whether FTWiSS has met its aims. The nature of FTWiSS, as the evidence base indicates, suggests that it is effective as a way of attracting people to study in Scotland and, within that, creating an expectation/impression that suitable employment opportunities exist in Scotland for graduates.

### Expectations of FTWiSS

11.2 Research carried out at the time when FTWiSS was launched highlighted concerns amongst International Student Advisors about the expectation created around FTWiSS that work is available in Scotland and that international graduates will be able to find work aligned to their chosen career path. As Chapter 5 illustrates, however, much of the effort around FTWiSS has been focused at attracting international students meaning that, in delivery terms, “success” has been thought about more in volume rather than getting people on FTWiSS into appropriate employment. The risk is that, as discussed in Chapter 10, those “invited” to come to Scotland through FTWiSS end up in some sense “disillusioned” by their experience, especially if they had come to Scotland believing that appropriate work would be available.<sup>86</sup>

### Long Term Aims of FTWiSS

11.3 Turning to issues to do with what happens after the 2 year FTWiSS extension ends, several interviewees taking part in the qualitative research with those on FTWiSS for around 2 years pointed out that the longer term aims and objectives of FTWiSS appeared not to have been developed and planned fully and were not communicated clearly:

I don't know how well the programme has been thought through, it comes to an end and I don't know if they expect you to leave, or if in having this programme they expect you to try and get another type of visa, its not very clear on how you can transition.

I think the purpose of the Fresh Talent scheme is to let qualified people stay in Scotland, and then you have this two year period, which is a bit short, and there is no clear explanation, its not mentioned explicitly, look we want people to stay and there are means for them to stay after these two years.

There's this ambiguity about you *may* be able to stay past the two years. And that's something I've always wondered about and that I still wonder about. Because the thing is, I remember reading about the Fresh Talent scheme and it seemed like the idea behind it was to get people to stay indefinitely and build their lives here. So knowing that and then having this ambiguity about after two years you *might* be able to stay, that's the thing that would be nice to know.

11.4 Many also highlighted the contradiction between the supposed aim of the Fresh Talent policy and the reality of changing immigration status to be able to remain in Scotland. They argued that if the aim of the policy was to attract skilled people to settle in Scotland in the medium to long term, more would need to be done to facilitate the transition onto work permits or the HSMP. One participant pointed out that currently, a person on FTWiSS had as much of a chance of staying in the country as a visitor or somebody on a working

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<sup>86</sup> MacLeod P et al, Experience of People Who Relocate to Scotland, p41, Scottish Government, 2006

holidaymakers visa. Interviewees felt that despite having made a contribution to the Scottish economy and society, no effort was made to retain them:

I was allowed to plant something and just when it started to grow, someone is cutting it, that is not right, I should be given the possibility to extend my stay here.

Basically we are here, we are highly qualified and we benefit this country, and a bit more stability in this respect so I'd be able to plan say 10 years in advance would be good.

### **The Overall Purpose of FTWiSS**

11.5 Interviewees argued that if, on the other hand, the policy aim of Fresh Talent was merely to allow graduates to gain work experience for two years, this should be made clearer at the start of the two years. Most participants felt that an expectation had been created at the beginning of the scheme that efforts would be taken to encourage individuals to stay after the two years, e.g. support for changing immigration status, which added to the sense of disappointment at the lack of options available. However, interviewees did understand the difficulty in providing the necessary support in Scotland when immigration is controlled by the UK Home Office.



## **12. THE BENEFITS OF FTWiSS**

12.1 Overall, FTWiSS was seen in a positive light as a great opportunity by most interviewees taking part in qualitative research at the end of their FTWiSS time, regardless of whether they were intending to remain in Scotland or not. For those participants that had found suitable work in a field that they were interested in and appropriate to their qualification, career development and progression was a key benefit of having joined the scheme.

### **A Personal Opportunity**

12.2 A more widely applicable benefit was the wider life experience, cultural knowledge and personal development gained from living in a country other than one's own. Interviewees particularly highlighted the difference between living somewhere as a student and as a working person, which was seen to allow for a fuller experience:

When you're doing the MSc you don't get to experience the culture itself, it's very busy and you have to look into so many courses, so one of the things I got from the Fresh Talent scheme was a look into the culture because I was socialising more with work people and with friends, I had more time to do that.

It was a real confidence booster for me to be living in a foreign country on my own, not in the context of education, because that's cheating a little, you're given your own social community, you're given a place to live, to be able to live in a foreign country without all this ready made support has been a real boost to my confidence, it's been a fantastic life experience that I wouldn't trade for anything.

### **Advocating for Scotland**

12.3 As well as recommending Scotland in general, some interviewees had also recommended FTWiSS to friends and family, reflecting their positive experiences:

I've recommended it to my younger cousins who are looking for options for study abroad. My younger cousin, I was trying to convince him to come over here because he is trying to finish his studies and then do work and possibly settle down so I told him it's a good opportunity because you get two years after you finish, and in England you get one year.

12.4 These findings are in line with the qualitative comments received from the monitoring questionnaire, where most respondents said that they were grateful for the opportunity to work in Scotland and saw FTWiSS as a good programme despite the problems. Many respondents also stated that they had recommended Scotland to friends and family because of FTWiSS.

## 13. CONCLUSIONS AND POLICY IMPLICATIONS

13.1 FTWiSS has been a very innovative piece of policy making. Negotiated within the context of devolution in the UK, it identified a clear rationale for government intervention and pulled together the necessary mechanisms, legislative and administrative, to deliver a policy tailored to Scottish requirements within a very short time scale. This should not be underestimated and the creativity and determination required, at all levels, deserves recognition. The fact that it also strays into the constitutional boundaries of the Scotland Act *and* looks to address issues related with immigration, a subject not often thought about objectively, makes its success, in policy making terms, all the more commendable.

13.2 It has now been announced that the scheme will be extended across the UK, although the Scottish version will extend to HNDs. This could be looked on as a positive reflection on the scheme, in that it was deemed successful enough to be rolled-out elsewhere. However, in Scottish terms alone, it means that, to some extent, Scotland has lost a competitive advantage and may need to explore other avenues.

13.3 That is not to say that the FTWiSS model has served its function and should be abandoned. As this paper has explored, the scheme could be developed and expanded in a number of ways, many of which do not necessarily require further legislative flexibilities from the UK Government. In the spirit of seeing FTWiSS as a pilot and a policy still in its infancy, the potential to reshape and refocus the scheme so that it works even better in some areas and opens up new possibilities in others, is significant. The same creativity and effort that got it up and running should be applied once again to make this happen.

13.4 FTWiSS has managed to attract over 8,000 students to stay on in Scotland after graduation in less than 3 years. Because no target was ever placed on the number of people it aimed to attract, it is difficult to assess whether the scheme has been a success *in these terms*. Having a more explicit sense of what FTWiSS is for and how success will be measured remains essential.

13.5 The research has clearly shown that, at the front-end, FTWiSS has been used effectively as a way of getting people to study in Scotland. There is no way of saying for sure how many international students have come to Scotland to study *because* of FTWiSS - the number of non-European students increased by over 3,000 between 2005-06 and 06-07.<sup>87</sup> When thinking about the numbers on FTWiSS, however, at least some recognition should be given to international student in-flows in light of the research showing that academics and students alike are very open to FTWiSS.

13.6 It is around the “attraction” of international students that the FTWiSS scheme appears to have operated most effectively. Picked up and used by Scottish universities to promote their institutions and courses, clear synergies have grown out of the scheme allowing for Scotland to be communicated and thought about as a great place to study, live and work. If anything, the opportunity to *maximise* the FTWiSS message has yet to be fully realised and considerable scope remains to build up recognition and awareness about the scheme with target audiences in particular countries around the world.

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<sup>87</sup> [Higher Education Graduates, Scottish Government Statistics, 2007](#)

13.7 As the case study illustrates, what was being offered was not just marketing communications using images, facts and statements about Scotland and its world class education system; FTWiSS acted as an incentive for the individual, showing them why Scotland would be a good place to go to university and what the *individual* would get out of coming to Scotland. This has important policy lessons over and above FTWiSS for public diplomacy and marketing overseas. When trying to engage with people and show them interesting things about Scotland, something genuinely new, innovative and different has to be on offer.

13.8 The picture of success becomes much less apparent for FTWiSS once people have come to study in Scotland, applied and got onto the scheme. The statistics are not reliable enough to make a firm conclusion about what those on FTWiSS have done with their 2 years and what happens to them afterwards. What data is available indicates that some have experienced similar experiences to other graduates who stay in Scotland to find work: that is most find work straight away, but not necessarily the kinds of job they want that match their chosen career path.

13.9 This could be seen as disappointing in so far as the research suggests that difficulty finding suitable employment has been consistently raised throughout the research in and around this subject. Moreover, by virtue of the fact that FTWiSS makes an active invitation to people to come here to live and work for 2 years, an expectation is immediately created with those applying about the kind of job market they will be looking for work in. Whether an obligation exists on the part of government to try and find these international graduates employment when no such support is on offer to domestic graduates is debatable.

13.10 What the research does indicate is that a greater concentration within FTWiSS could be focused on what happens *after people get onto the scheme*. The qualitative research with those coming to the end of their 2 years indicates that, while many got a lot of positives out of their experiences of living in Scotland and are grateful for that, some form of active support during the 2 years could lead to better, more consistent outcomes.

13.11 Part of this could involve an improved monitoring system, allowing for better data capture as well as tailored support services for individuals on the scheme, even if that is just to see how they are settling into life in Scotland. With a population target now set by the Scottish Government, efforts to try and encourage people to stay on, even after the 2 years of their FTWiSS is over has increased considerably.

13.12 Lastly, the opportunity to explore ways of bringing different partners together to deliver a better FTWiSS experience remains considerable. While universities in Scotland appear to have wholeheartedly embraced the FTWiSS and its potential as a way of persuading international students to study in Scotland, this dialogue could be extended to look at the outcomes for those on the scheme. One obvious connection brought out in the paper lies with the kinds of employers whose interests clearly crossover with both the universities and the students.

13.13 Overall, FTWiSS has been a very successfully policy experiment and has exceptional potential to be scaled-up. Learning the lessons from its initial 3 year phase, the scheme could be revised so that its performance is driven primarily by the outcomes of the individuals on the scheme, rather than the volume of people on the scheme and the number of overseas graduates coming to study in Scotland.

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## 15. ANNEX A

### Students in higher education at Scottish HEIs & colleges by domicile and location of study:

2006-07

	Total	HEIs		colleges
		At least some study in UK	Study wholly outside UK	All students to colleges
<b>Total</b>	<b>293,970</b>	<b>223,890</b>	<b>20,630</b>	<b>49,460</b>
<b>UK domiciles</b>				
Scotland	207,585	160,335	65	47,185
England	21,795	21,280	90	445
Wales	675	655	0	20
Northern Ireland	5,075	5,000	0	75
Other UK <sup>1</sup>	205	200	0	0
UK unknown <sup>2</sup>	540	275	270	0
<b>Total UK</b>	<b>235,875</b>	<b>187,720</b>	<b>430</b>	<b>47,725</b>
<b>Overseas domiciles</b>				
EU excluding UK <sup>3</sup>	14,155	12,265	1,505	300
Non EU Europe	1,925	1,240	650	35
Non European	42,015	22,690	18,045	1310
<b>Total Overseas</b>	<b>58,095</b>	<b>36,165</b>	<b>20,200</b>	<b>1735</b>
<b>Top 10 overseas countries</b>				
1. China, Peoples Republic of (includes Hong Kong)	9,320	5,485	3,835	0
2. United States of America	4,335	3,325	1,015	0
3. India (Also Sikkim)	3,765	3,145	615	0
4. Republic of Ireland	3,165	3,035	95	35
5. Malaysia	3,110	955	2,160	0
6. Germany	2,135	1,775	330	35
7. Canada	2,045	860	1,190	0
8. Greece	1,760	1,290	470	5
9. France	1,645	1,530	60	50
10. Nigeria	1,490	1,280	210	0

Sources: Higher Education Statistics Agency (HESA) & Scottish Funding Council (SFC).

All numbers are rounded up or down to the nearest 5. Numbers may not sum to totals exactly due to rounding.

1. Other UK includes those domiciled in the Channel Islands and the Isle of Man.
2. UK unknown represents those domiciled within the UK but whose region of domicile within the UK is unknown.
3. EU data includes accession countries which joined in May 2004 in academic year 2004-05 onwards and excludes accession countries which joined in January 2007 (Bulgaria and Romania).

## 16. ANNEX B

### Entrants to higher education at Scottish institutions, by domicile: 1999-00 to 2006-07

	Total all domiciles	Scotland	England	Wales	Northern Ireland	Other UK <sup>1</sup>	UK unknown <sup>2</sup>	Total UK	EU <sup>3</sup>	Non EU Europe	Non European
<b>Total</b>											
1999-00	133,060	111,565	6,975	205	1,920	60	65	120,795	4,355	680	7,230
2000-01	133,680	112,970	6,775	205	1,830	60	25	121,865	4,585	810	6,415
2001-02	141,445	117,010	7,270	235	1,870	65	105	126,560	4,775	900	9,215
2002-03	134,820	109,615	6,665	240	1,975	70	335	118,900	5,110	860	9,950
2003-04	138,520	111,755	6,920	250	1,790	85	210	121,010	5,550	900	11,065
2004-05	138,645	109,510	6,955	230	1,660	55	130	118,540	6,205	675	13,225
2005-06	142,190	109,360	7,665	250	1,645	85	90	119,090	6,615	685	15,800
2006-07	146,700	109,700	7,570	250	1,630	80	235	119,460	7,425	805	19,010

Sources: Higher Education Statistics Agency (HESA) & Scottish Funding Council (SFC).

All numbers are rounded up or down to the nearest 5. Numbers may not sum to totals exactly due to rounding.

1. Other UK includes those domiciled in the Channel Islands and the Isle of Man.

2. UK unknown represents those domiciled within the UK but whose region of domicile within the UK is unknown.

3. EU data includes accession countries which joined in May 2004 in academic year 2004-05 onwards and excludes accession countries which joined in January 2007 (Bulgaria and Romania).

17. ANNEX C  
FTWiSS QUALITATIVE RESEARCH – ANALYTICAL FRAMEWORK  
Fresh Talent: Working in Scotland research study  
analytical framework

1. Participants' background and personal characteristics
  - Nationality
  - Dependents & family
  - Whether english is first language
  - Details of study in scotland
  - Details of previous study
  - Details of previous employment
  - Length of time have been in Scotland
  - Start of FTWiSS leave
2. The decision to go on FTWiSS
  - Sources of information
  - Reasons for decision to go on FTWiSS
  - Influence of FTWiSS on decision to remain in Scotland
  - other options did they have/were they considering
  - Understanding of the nature and role of FTWiSS at start time of decision
  - expectations of what it would do for them
3. Process of getting FTWiSS leave
  - Type of application – abroad in country, place
  - Good parts
  - Bad parts
4. Personal experience of their time on FTWiSS
  - Experience of looking for work
    - Expectations
    - Barriers
    - Sources of support
  - Work/employment (Job 1, 2, etc)
    - Type of job
    - Reason for taking job
    - Satisfaction
    - Reason for leaving
  - Any periods while not in work
    - Type of activity – internship, volunteering, holiday, looking for job etc.
    - Reason for these
  - aspects of life in Scotland
    - social – friends, family, relationships
    - cost of living
    - public services
    - area related aspects
    - language



- Scottish people & culture
- For each of these, positive and barriers
- Key barriers and hurdles to staying in Scotland
- Ways of coping with difficulties
  - Support sought
  - Leaving, moving etc.
- Impact of individuals' background on their experience of Scotland
- Impacts of individuals' expectation on experience of Scotland
- Change in experience over time – key points/factors
  - 1<sup>st</sup> 6 months, 2<sup>nd</sup> six months etc
  - key events & factors that change experience

5. Perceptions of Scotland as a country

6. Intentions for the future – Impacts of FTWiSS

- Intentions of staying in Scotland
  - If yes, what migration routes
- Other ways of engaging with Scotland
- Acting as an advocate for Scotland
- How has FTWiSS helped them in whatever their plans are
  - career
  - personal experience

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