



Recruitment in the electronics sector and the immigration cap

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Executive Summary

The UK Electronics Alliance suggests that the Immigration Cap is harming recruitment at companies in the UK, increasing un-filled vacancies and resulting in jobs being located overseas. We call on Government to take the following actions:

- To review the list of technical occupations in advanced manufacturing on the Tier 2 list to identify where the immigration cap is causing genuine recruitment problems
- To review immigration cap quotas on a regular basis to ensure that the availability of overseas talent for those jobs is reduced in line with the increase in the supply of comparably qualified home grown talent
- To coordinate this approach with a review of and an improvement in the consultation process between advanced manufacturing and education policy makers
- To provide clearer information and guidance on the application process, especially to SMEs
- To introduce provisions for SMEs who do not benefit from the inter-company transfer rule.

UK electronics is an important enabler for advanced manufacturing

While, according to ONS statistics, UK electronics employs 143,000 people in over 10,000 businesses with a combined annual turnover of £22.1bn, an analysis conducted recently by the National Microelectronics Institute (NMI) shows that UK electronics employs 500,000 people in 25,000 businesses, which have a combined turnover of £30bn, contributing 2.5% of the UK's GDP. The NMI analysis counted businesses and institutions whose activities and products are either, the creation, reproduction, supply and maintenance of electronic systems.

At the same time, the workforce in UK electronics is ageing – 8% of the workforce are aged 60 or over, while 6.9% of employers report vacancies that are hard to fill or remain vacant due to skills shortages. 21% report skills gaps in their businesses.

'The Plan for Growth' stated that the UK is weak in vital intermediate technical skills and that businesses regularly report difficulties in recruiting graduates with suitable skills

The problems in UK electronics chime with those cited in 'The Plan for Growth', which was published in March of this year, which stated that 'the UK is weak in the vital intermediate technical skills that are increasingly important as jobs become more highly skilled and technological change accelerates'.

It also stated that 'businesses regularly report difficulties in recruiting graduates with suitable skills. Reform is necessary to make the system more responsive to students and employers and to ensure that it is financially sustainable in the long-term. The result of these trends is that the education system is not giving young people the skills that businesses need. This skills shortage is particularly acute in the manufacturing sector. In a recent survey 20 per cent of manufacturers reported skills gaps, while 31 per cent of high tech manufacturing firms had recruited people from outside the UK owing to a lack of suitably qualified people from within the UK.

Manufacturing is making a significant contribution to the recovery of the UK economy

There is strong evidence that manufacturing is making a significant contribution to the recovery of the UK economy. Last year, UK manufacturing grew 3.6%. The UKEA quarterly survey, which monitors trends in UK electronics, shows that the number of staff employed in electronics has continued to grow from its low point in July 2009 and is set to increase further.

The picture in UK electronics is therefore one of a growing sector with significant recruitment problems, which need to be addressed as a priority, not only to maintain its current growth but also to address the need to replace its ageing workforce in the longer term.

It was against this background that the UK Electronics Alliance conducted an on-line survey to gauge the potential impact of the immigration cap on UK electronics companies.

Responses were markedly polarised between those in favour of and those opposed to the immigration cap. 38.8% of respondents stated that they had no problems finding suitable candidates within the EEA while 46.2% stating that they often have to recruit non EEA candidates to fill positions or that they could not compete or expand without non EEA candidates.

Over 90% of respondents to our survey stated that the new immigration cap will make recruitment more difficult

48% of respondents to the survey have recruited non EEA staff in the last twelve months and, of those, more than half stated that they have real difficulty recruiting technical staff and that their companies could not compete or expand without non EEA candidates. Over 90% of those respondents also said that the new immigration cap will make recruitment either somewhat or much more difficult. Problems in finding appropriately qualified and skilled candidates are particularly felt in high end, high value research and development such as is in embedded software development.

Three issues were consistently cited by many respondents:

There needs to be an urgent review of technical occupations in advanced manufacturing on the Tier 2 list

Concern regarding educational standards of UK candidates compared with non EEA candidates: It will clearly take time to increase the flow of suitably qualified home grown candidates coming into UK manufacturing and specifically into UK electronics. Our survey appears to show that the introduction of the immigration cap will not necessarily lead to the employment of more EEA candidates. Rather, it could lead to delay or cancellation of some work, a loss of competitiveness and perhaps even moving some work off-shore. It seems that the Government has put the cart before the horse in introducing these new measures before addressing the issues that are creating this situation in the first place and seem at odds with the Government's initiatives to enable the growth of UK manufacturing.

Immigration cap quotas need to be reviewed on a regular basis to ensure that the availability of overseas talent for those jobs is reduced in line with the increase in the supply of comparably qualified home grown talent

We suggest that there needs to be an urgent review of technical occupations in advanced manufacturing on the Tier 2 list to identify where the immigration cap is causing genuine recruitment problems. The UK Electronics Alliance would be very willing to help with this process on behalf of UK electronics. In addition, immigration cap quotas need to be reviewed on a regular basis to ensure that the availability of overseas talent for those jobs is reduced in line with the increase in the supply of comparably qualified home grown talent, as the education system is better able to give young people the skills that businesses need. This approach needs to be coordinated with a review of and an improvement in the consultation process between advanced manufacturing and education policy makers.

More needs to be done in terms of providing clear information and guidance, especially to SMEs

Difficulties experienced with the process of employing non EEA candidates: There are some issues with the application process that we believe need to be addressed. Many respondents cited confusion over the process and the potential costs of applying, which suggests that more needs to be done in terms of providing clear information and guidance, especially to SMEs. While the concessions on inter-company transfers are helpful, these are clearly of little help to SMEs. As SMEs account for over 90% of the businesses in UK electronics, this is particularly damaging to our sector. Some special provision therefore needs to be made to remove this particular handicap for SMEs. We suggest that concessions similar to inter-company transfers need to be introduced to help SMEs in advanced manufacturing. UK recognition of overseas qualification also appears to be an issue and one that needs to be reviewed.

Provisions for SMEs who do not benefit from the inter-company transfer rule, need to be introduced

There is a real danger that skilled jobs in advanced manufacturing will be off-shored

Off-shoring work in order to circumvent the difficulties of recruiting non EEA staff: Although not an option to all businesses, there is evidence that some companies are off-shoring part of their activity in order to circumvent the immigration cap. Clearly, the consequential loss of skilled jobs is at odds with the Government's aspiration to increase the supply of private sector jobs.

In summary, from the perspective of UK electronics, there appears to be little economic sense in the current immigration cap, which places further barriers in the way of, in many cases, much needed skilled and talented people coming to the UK who will contribute to our economy, especially when it seems that those same skills and talents are difficult to impossible to find in the EEA and when the immigration cap appears to pose significant threats to the growth of UK manufacturing, and certainly UK electronics.

About the survey

In response to anecdotal concerns received from some Alliance members regarding the implementation of an immigration cap of 21,700 for non-EEA workers for the year from April 2011, a decrease of 6,300 compared to 2009, the Alliance conducted an online survey, during the period 18th March to 21st April 2011, asking the following questions:

1. What problems have you encountered when recruiting technical staff in the last 12 months?
2. What percentage of your technical staff have you needed to recruit from non EEA candidates over the last 12 months?
3. If you answered more than 0% on question 2, please type the number of non EEA candidates recruited in the last twelve months
4. If you have rejected EEA candidates in favour of non EEA candidates for a vacancy in the last twelve months, please state why (tick all that apply)
5. Thinking about the new immigration cap rules, including the Migration Advisory Committee's recommendations on the removal of some occupations from the Tier 2 list, how do you anticipate this will affect your ability to recruit technical staff, compared to your response to question 1?
6. Please add any other comments if required.

Respondents were invited to make additional comments against all questions. These comments are listed in full at Annex B.

A total of 81 individual responses were received, many of which were highly detailed and specific in describing their experiences of recruiting technical staff and their views on the potential impact of the new immigration cap on their businesses.

Summary of responses

In question 1, respondents were invited to rate the level of difficulty they have had in recruiting technical staff over the previous twelve months, within four prescribed levels.

Question 1 response summary

	All respondents		Respondents who have recruited non EEA staff in the last twelve months		Respondents who have not recruited non EEA staff in the last twelve months	
	Number responding	%age response	Number responding	%age response	Number responding	%age response
None at all, I am able to find the calibre of staff I need	31	38.8%	0	0.0%	31	73.8%
With some difficulty, I sometimes have to recruit non EEA candidates to fill some positions	13	15.0%	8	20.5%	5	11.9%
With difficulty, I often have to recruit non EEA candidates to fill positions	14	17.5%	11	28.2%	3	7.1%
With real difficulty, my company could not compete / expand without non EEA candidates	23	28.8%	20	51.3%	3	7.1%

Responses were markedly polarised. 38.8% of respondents stated that they had no problems finding suitable candidates within the EEA while 46.2% stating that they often have to recruit non EEA candidates to fill positions or that they could not compete or expand without non EEA candidates.

When the responses to this question are cross-checked with those to question 3, which shows the number of respondents who have recruited non EEA candidates in the last twelve months, not surprisingly, those respondents who have recruited non EEA candidates in the last twelve months are clearly those most dependent on being able to recruit from this group.

In question 2, respondents were asked to state the percentage of their technical staff that they had recruited from non EEA candidates over the previous twelve months. In question 3, if they had recruited any staff from non EEA candidates, they were asked to state the number recruited.

Question 2 response summary

%age of staff recruited	Number responding	%age response
0%	44	54.3%
1% to 24%	8	9.9%
25% to 49%	12	14.8%
50% to 74%	11	13.5%
75% to 100%	6	7.4%

From these responses, we are able to see that 54.3% of respondents have not recruited from non EEA candidates while 45.7% have during that period. The 37 respondents who had recruited non EEA staff during this period, recruited 206 non EEA staff, an average of nearly 6 per respondent.

In question 4, respondents were asked, if they had rejected EEA candidates in favour of non EEA candidates in the last twelve months, their reasons for doing so, selecting all reasons that apply.

Question 4 response summary

Reason for rejection	Number responding	%age response
Insufficient experience	26	44.1%
Insufficient qualifications	28	47.5%
Aptitude for the job	23	39.0%
Salary expectation	7	11.9%
Other (please state below)	21	35.6%

(Note: the %age response in this table represents the %age of respondents who selected each reason for rejection)

59 (73% of) respondents answered this question and had therefore considered recruiting from EEA candidates compared with 37 (45% of) respondents who had recruited non EEA candidates.

Of the “other” reasons cited, 10 responses were “not applicable” – either respondents had not recruited in the last twelve months or had not rejected EEA candidates.

A few cited reasons that may be candidate specific:

“Some EEA candidates had qualifications but not the understanding”

“No ability to work across multiple international business sectors, limited technical expertise”

“One EEA candidate looked good on paper but disappointed at interview”

However, three significant issues were cited, both in response to this question and at other points. These issues are summarised as follows, together with specific comments from respondents :

- Concern regarding educational standards of UK candidates compared with non EEA candidates
- Difficulties experienced with the process of employing non EEA candidates
- Off-shoring work in order to circumvent the difficulties of recruiting non EEA staff

In question 5, respondents were asked to anticipate the degree to which the new immigration cap would affect their recruitment in the future.

Question 5 response summary

	All respondents		Respondents who have recruited non EEA staff in the last twelve months		Respondents who have not recruited non EEA staff in the last twelve months	
	Number of respondents	% of respondents	Number of respondents	% of respondents	Number of respondents	% of respondents
It will make recruitment much easier	0	0.0%	0	0.0%	0	0.0%
It will make recruitment somewhat easier	4	5.0%	0	0.0%	4	9.1%
It will make no difference	34	42.5%	4	10.8%	30	68.2%
It will make recruitment somewhat more difficult	21	25.9%	16	43.2%	5	11.3%
It will make recruitment much more difficult	22	27.2%	17	45.9%	5	11.3%

47.5% of all respondents stated that the cap would make no difference or that it would even make recruitment easier while 53.1% of respondents stated that the cap would make recruitment either somewhat or much more difficult.

However, among respondents who have recruited non EEA staff in the last twelve months, 10.8% stated the cap would make no difference while 89.1% stated that the cap would make recruitment either somewhat or much more difficult. No respondents in this category thought that the immigration cap would make recruitment easier.

Annex A - The immigration cap brief

The following brief was provided to respondents invited to participate in the survey:

An immigration cap of 21,700 is to be imposed for non-EEA workers for the year from April 2011, a decrease of 6,300 compared to 2009.

Of those, 20,700 are to be Tier 2 skilled migrants entering graduate occupations with a job offer and sponsorship. The other 1,000 are people allowed in under a new "exceptional talent" route.

The former Tier 1 general route - open to highly skilled migrants without a job offer will be closed.

These limits do not apply to workers who come to the UK in an "intra-company transfer" (ICTs) with their multinational employer. However, there will be a new minimum salary of £40,000 for companies using ICTs for more than a year but staff earning at least £24,000 would still be able to stay for up to twelve months.

High-earning migrants coming, carrying salaries of £150,000pa or more are to be exempt from the annual limit on immigration.

Employers will have to apply for a UK Border Agency certificate of sponsorship for each specific job they want to fill from abroad instead of the annual allocation given to businesses at present.

The annual limit of 20,700 sponsorship certificates will be divided into 12 monthly allocations. The system will be frontloaded with 4,200 visas available in April to meet the likely demand, followed by a limit of 1,500 places each month.

Following the Government announcement in November, that it intends to raise the minimum skill level for jobs under Tier 2 from National Qualifications Framework (NQF) level 3 to graduate level, the Migration Advisory Committee published a report on 7th February recommending removal of 71 occupations from the qualifying list. These can be found in table 3.2 in this report:

<http://www.ukba.homeoffice.gov.uk/sitecontent/documents/aboutus/workingwithus/mac/analysis-of-the-pbs>

Occupations recommended for removal include electrical / electronics, laboratory and QA technicians and computer and electrical / electronics engineers.

For further information on the immigration cap, please go to:

<http://www.ukba.homeoffice.gov.uk/employers/points/quick-guides-pbs/employingmigrants/>

Annex B - Respondents' comments

The following is a list of all comments received from respondents:

1. What problems have you encountered when recruiting technical staff in the last 12 months?

No recruitment - 4/21/11 9:09PM

High level engineering skills are essential for us. - 4/12/11 1:43AM

Education standards from school leavers seem to be getting worse. - 4/11/11 8:08PM

Electrical mechanical are diminishing in the market - 4/6/11 11:40PM

We have struggled to find suitably skilled candidates from the EEA, but unfortunately do not have a Tier 2 sponsorship licence so to-date have had to rely on those individuals able to obtain Tier 1 visas. - 3/25/11 9:08PM

With limited recruitment last year, it was not a problem - 3/22/11 8:30PM

Very limited availability of candidates with actual experience in EU. - 3/21/11 7:19PM

Situation is only going to get worse. - 3/19/11 11:32PM

We have moved work outside EEA in part because of the shortage of EEA staff - 3/19/11 5:29AM

Look for relevant experience and willingness, not paperwork - 3/19/11 5:17AM

There is a sufficient supply of technical staff in UK! - 3/19/11 1:03AM

But registration is too complex, so our vacancies are unfilled - 3/18/11 10:29PM

We are the last company of our kind in Europe skilled experienced staff do not exist in many of our disciplines within the UK the industry is focussed in Asia - 3/18/11 6:50PM

There are not enough EU post-graduates in Microelectronics. - 3/18/11 5:32PM

Plenty of good candidates available - 3/18/11 4:48PM

2 technical graduate posts each required 3 recruitment/interview cycles before suitable candidates were found. - 3/18/11 4:34PM

Difficulty in finding anyone who has knowledge in our field - 3/18/11 4:23PM

Development has been significantly slowed as we were unable to find UK candidates in a timely manner and overseas candidates could not be secured work visas - 3/18/11 4:22PM

British Universities simply don't deliver the goods compared with Chinese, Indian and some other Asian institutions - 3/18/11 4:13PM

Haven't recruited - 3/18/11 3:40PM

Had difficulty but managed to eventually recruit staff from within EEA - 3/18/11 3:37PM

Actually easier to offshore to get suitably trained staff, development partners and scale-up manufacturing facilities. - 3/18/11 2:28PM

2. What percentage of your technical staff have you needed to recruit from non EEA candidates over the last 12 months?

No recruitment - 4/21/11 9:09PM

None recruited in last 12 months, but one recruited in 2008 - 4/14/11 5:58PM

Most good candidates are from the Far East. - 4/12/11 1:43AM

Wanted to employ a superbly qualified non-EEA candidate but was unable to obtain a visa - 4/11/11 8:03PM

Would have recruited more but we do not have a sponsors licence so restricted to Tier 1's. - 4/6/11 6:43PM

We have needed to recruit a significant number from non-EEA but without the sponsorship licence our activities have been curtailed - 3/25/11 9:08PM

We have EU Contracts so 3 year max and so EU candidates of a high enough calibre rarely apply. - 3/21/11 5:05PM

None needed - plenty of UK people with the brains required - 3/19/11 5:17AM

There is no need to recruit from overseas - 3/19/11 1:03AM

Would have been 20%, but don't want to register - 3/18/11 10:29PM

Only one post - 3/18/11 8:11PM

Not recruited in the last 12 months - 3/18/11 6:50PM

Britain attracts exceptional talent; this talent is easily better than anything home-grown. If we are to compete in a Global economy we cannot think like a parochial nation state!!!! - 3/18/11 4:13PM

None. Plenty of highly qualified people available from EU countries. This is only a smokescreen - 3/18/11 4:05PM

Mostly through ICT Tier 2 - 3/18/11 3:41PM

None recruited - 3/18/11 3:40PM

I would have recruited non EEA staff but for security reasons could not - 3/18/11 3:40PM

Not been able to find suitable candidates - 3/18/11 3:17PM

3. If you answered more than 0% on question 2, please type the number of non EEA candidates recruited in the last twelve months

2 - 4/21/11 8:13PM

2 - 4/21/11 7:25PM

10 - 4/19/11 7:50PM

1 - 4/15/11 4:41PM

Approx 30 - 4/12/11 4:39PM

4 - 4/12/11 1:43AM

15 - 4/6/11 11:40PM

4 - 4/6/11 6:43PM

1 - 3/28/11 9:10PM

3 (see comments above) - 3/25/11 9:08PM

1 - 3/24/11 5:27PM

2 - 3/23/11 8:09PM

8 - 3/23/11 1:16AM

4 - 3/23/11 12:07AM

13 - 3/22/11 10:57PM

2 - 3/22/11 9:43PM

2 - 3/21/11 9:25PM

2 - 3/21/11 7:19PM

25 - 3/21/11 5:29PM

2 - 3/21/11 5:05PM

Approx 6 - 3/19/11 11:32PM

15 - 3/19/11 5:29AM

6 - 3/18/11 10:39PM

6 - 3/18/11 9:21PM

1 - 3/18/11 8:11PM

4 - 3/18/11 6:32PM

4 - 3/18/11 6:11PM

Two - 3/18/11 5:32PM

3 - 3/18/11 4:44PM

12 - 3/18/11 4:37PM

In the last 12 months I have appointed 1. - 3/18/11 4:34PM

2 - 3/18/11 4:33PM

2 - 3/18/11 4:21PM

4 - 3/18/11 4:13PM

6 - 3/18/11 3:41PM

I answered 0% - 3/18/11 3:40PM

1 in my own small group only - 3/18/11 3:39PM

4. If you have rejected EEA candidates in favour of non EEA candidates for a vacancy in the last twelve months, please state why (tick all that apply)

No recruitment - 4/21/11 9:09PM

Not applicable to us - 4/12/11 3:35PM

Qualifications need to be recognised to gain work permit points - 4/6/11 11:40PM

None rejected in favour of non eea - 3/22/11 8:30PM

Some EEA candidates had qualifications but not the understanding. - 3/21/11 7:19PM

Quite the reverse - 3/19/11 1:03AM

One EEA candidate looked good on paper but disappointed at interview - 3/18/11 8:11PM

n/a - 3/18/11 6:50PM

Have not rejected EEA candidates. - 3/18/11 6:11PM

Look at the Engineering departments from the top Universities - >80% of the PhD's are non EEA. - 3/18/11 5:32PM

Not rejected - 3/18/11 5:29PM

Quality of intellect. The Post-Study and Tier one systems 'filter' the talent and the quality of applicants coming in through these routes can be extremely high - salary has nothing to do with it; it's all about talent - 3/18/11 4:13PM

Found all talent I needed in EEA/EU countries - 3/18/11 4:05PM

Required to use ICT by overseas parent Co - 3/18/11 3:41PM

N/A - 3/18/11 3:40PM

Security clearance issues - 3/18/11 3:40PM

N/A - 3/18/11 3:37PM

I have not rejected any such candidates - 3/18/11 3:01PM

No ability to work across multiple international business sectors, limited technical expertise etc etc etc - 3/18/11 2:28PM

5. Thinking about the new immigration cap rules, including the Migration Advisory Committee's recommendations on the removal of some occupations from the Tier 2 list, how do you anticipate this will affect your ability to recruit technical staff, compared to your response to question 1?

Future recruitment will be satisfied with UK candidates - 4/21/11 9:09PM

I am not very familiar with the details of the rules - 4/12/11 1:43AM

We use ICT in most cases, but salary level after 12 months is an issue - 4/6/11 11:40PM

It will help as long as the correct Engineering disciplines are exempted - 3/19/11 11:32PM

I want to employ British people in order to cut down on the cost of supporting the millions of unemployed, every little helps... - 3/19/11 5:17AM

There is not a problem with recruiting in UK - 3/19/11 1:03AM

We will have to give more training to UK candidates - 3/18/11 8:11PM

The old points system worked well - why change it. - 3/18/11 5:32PM

And it will deter bright overseas students from studying in the UK.- 3/18/11 4:34PM

We are already severely limited in terms of the specialised technical staff we can consider - this situation will get significantly worse - 3/18/11 4:22PM

This is a loony initiative from the loony xenophobic home counties set!!! - 3/18/11 4:13PM

I would close non EEA immigration completely. There is plenty of talent in EEA/EU countries to fill all needs - 3/18/11 4:05PM

The salary cap of £40K for ITC will seriously damage our operations - 3/18/11 3:41PM

6. Please add any other comments if required.

Recruitment, what recruitment? Just staying alive is enough - 4/21/11 9:09PM

It is a crazy policy driven by Daily Mail headlines rather than for the good of the country. - 4/21/11 7:25PM

This issue has never been a problem for the business. - 4/12/11 3:35PM

Restriction of immigration will restrain growth in my business which currently employs more than 250 UK staff in manufacturing/engineering. - 4/12/11 1:43AM

Countries such as China and Germany have built solid foundations for wealth based on manufacturing. Too much emphasis has been put on having a University Degree level education and not enough on apprenticeships. More State aid must be diverted directly to UK manufacturers who export, rather than wasted on UKTI and Business Link consultants. Trade associations are best placed to distribute state aid. I wouldn't mind betting that 90% of the money allocated to help business is wasted on the overheads and staffing of UKTI and Business Link. - 4/11/11 8:08PM

We have 30 employees, three of whom are non-EEA (Russia, China and Australia). We would have had a fourth (India) but we were unable to obtain a visa for him last year. - 4/11/11 8:03PM

We are now being forced to look at obtaining a Sponsors Licence which by all accounts is going to cost quite a bit in legal fees, with no guarantee at the end of the process that we will be able to recruit the most appropriate candidates. - 4/6/11 6:43PM

I am currently on my 3rd attempt to register our organisation as a sponsor for a member of staff who is working for us already and who needs to obtain a different visa. Very time consuming and costly, not to mention frustrating! - 3/28/11 9:10PM

We have now had to apply for our Tier 2 sponsorship visa given that the Tier 1 route has been effectively removed. We are particularly concerned about the additional work this will create and the additional auditing requirements this will impose. Have there been any calls to add semiconductor-specific skills to the skills shortage listing? The pool of suitable EEA candidates is shrinking very fast. - 3/25/11 9:08PM

The changes will damage the competitiveness of the UK semiconductor industry - 3/23/11 1:16AM

In our sector there is a massive skills shortage due to the lack of graduates emerging from universities with the right qualifications (electronics engineering, physics, maths, computer science). If we don't fill the jobs in the UK, they go overseas, thus costing the UK government hundreds of millions in tax revenue and making UK PLC less competitive. The immigration restrictions are THE most damaging government policy to UK PLC - even more damaging than high taxes, because if we stimulate the economy with low taxes and generate even more jobs, there won't be anyone to fill them. Note that the reduction in visas on offer is in relation to 2009, which was a recessionary year with low employment. We should be doubling or tripling the 2009 figure, not reducing it. - 3/21/11 5:29PM

Real concern that University Fees situation will make "Home" Engineering students an ever rarer commodity. BIG worry. - 3/19/11 11:32PM

It's already almost impossible for a small company to get non EU staff into UK, because of the time required to meet the regulatory requirements. - 3/19/11 5:29AM

There are millions of people in the UK that aren't working. Taking the right people - the enthusiastic, those with similar skills and training them where required is not as difficult as people make out. Why do banks pay £800 a day for a 'banking experienced' contractor when they can have someone who has coded for many many years on commercial products at half that cost? It doesn't make sense. It also doesn't make sense to go abroad and import someone - 3/19/11 5:17AM

Who instigated this survey & why? I see no problems - 3/19/11 1:03AM

This form has been completed in relation to Associates for Knowledge Transfer Partnerships - 6 out of 9 positions were filled by non EEA applicants despite all appropriate efforts to recruit EEA personnel - 3/18/11 10:39PM

We need technician staff in the £24-30k salary range, we need graduates in a "hard science". Realistically, tuition fees and student loans make it unattractive to become a graduate and then take a job in this salary band. So the result will be either a lack of sufficient qualified UK staff or salary inflation. - 3/18/11 8:11PM

We are a product development site for a large Malaysian based semiconductor package and test company. Finding skilled experienced people in our field is very difficult and getting more so as the industry shrinks to nothing in the UK and Europe as a whole. As most of the products we develop in the UK end up in volume production in one of our Asian factories we have in the past transferred for 6 month periods engineers from the product destination factory to the UK to help with the project and learn about the development, they then take responsibility for the product when it transfers to their factory. This works well for us as it allows us to expand our team in the UK rapidly for short fixed periods of time with skilled staff. I believe the changes that are being implemented will stop this from being possible and will damage our ability to both support our customers, and make product transfer considerably more difficult. It is simple for us, the better the job we do the more likely we are to succeed and remain within the UK. The longer we can remain in the UK the more UK companies we can help to develop products and get them into volume manufacturing in Asia. Volume manufacturing in Europe is dead because we all want a throw away mobile phone but we can succeed in product development. I believe these changes will make this considerably more difficult for our future. Alan Evans - Head of Engineering Unisem Europe Ltd. - 3/18/11 6:50PM

It appears that this Government has developed a policy around popular opinion as portrayed in the foreign owned tabloids. Where is the consultation, the evidence and the sound economic judgement? - 3/18/11 5:32PM

The new rules may force companies to recruit UK educated apprentices and graduate trainees which will be better for the country in the long run. You can see how these young people are being neglected with so few positions being offered. Source: Engineering Apprentice magazine - 3/18/11 5:29PM

I feel it would be better to have U.K. personnel, if they are available. - 3/18/11 4:23PM

We are likely to lose a key engineer who has built his career with the company over the last 3 years and whose loss will have a tangible and wide-reaching impact on a pioneering high-tech UK company that is trying to launch to an international market. - 3/18/11 4:22PM

Let's shut down all our borders and elect not to trade Globally anymore - it will solve all of the Government's problems. OK, we'll be confined to a diet of Potatoes and Bacon but hey, the Irish got through the famine on less :) - 3/18/11 4:13PM

This immigration issue is just a big SCAM. Plenty of talent available in EU/EEA countries. - 3/18/11 4:05PM

A hidden unilateral government control is the ability of the Border Agency to delay processing of applications and to unilaterally assign allocations of sponsorship allocations by Company, this has had a damaging impact on our business in the past year. - 3/18/11 3:41PM

I am gravely concerned about the inter-company transfer rule. It discriminates against small companies, who are unlikely to have overseas divisions. My field is so specialized, with perhaps 20-50 suitably skilled people worldwide, that I have to recruit globally. In practice I shall just not bring the staff to the UK, but run them as freelance agents in their own country. That pushes up my management costs, reduces my efficiency, reduces the cohesiveness of my company and of course denies the UK of any tax income. My staff typically are paid £60-100k as hands-on engineers. - 3/18/11 3:40PM

If the immigration cap results in a larger pool of good, home grown talent then I would see it as a good thing. However, unless the cap also applies to students this is unlikely. - 3/18/11 3:40PM

I am a University employer. Well qualified researchers almost impossible to hire. - 3/18/11 3:39PM

Salary requirement is a major extra cost. We cannot find EEA staff but non EEA staff need a minimum of £35k. If we pay this to junior staff our business will be uncompetitive. What do we do? - 3/18/11 3:17PM

Tighter immigration controls are NOT a problem in Electronics design, the ICT rules are widely used as a scam in the industry to employ foreign nationals on the cheap while deliberately passing over UK nationals. Some big companies do this, some don't. - 3/18/11 3:05PM