



Reference: FoI-58

29 July 2008

Dear Dr Tai,

I am writing in response to the request you made to BBSRC under the Freedom of Information Act 2000.

Statement of Information Requested

Would you please provide the number of postdoctoral researchers on fixed-term contracts supported by BBSRC funding, for each of the last 5 years.

Duty to Confirm or Deny

I confirm that BBSRC does not hold the information you have requested. However, BBSRC does hold some related information that may answer part of your query.

Background

The Biotechnology & Biological Sciences Research Council (BBSRC) is the UK's principal funder of basic and strategic biological research. BBSRC supports research and training in universities and research centres throughout the UK and promotes knowledge transfer from research to applications in business, industry and policy and public engagement in the biosciences. Further information about BBSRC's mission can be found on the website: <http://www.bbsrc.ac.uk/index.html>

BBSRC provides funding to scientists in UK universities and research institutions in the form of research grants, studentships and fellowships. Further information about BBSRC funding can be found on the website: <http://www.bbsrc.ac.uk/funding/index.html>

BBSRC also supports research at BBSRC-sponsored institutes, which receive core funding to support research underpinning their scientific missions and can apply for additional BBSRC research funding in competition with UK universities and other research institutions. BBSRC-sponsored institutes are not solely supported by BBSRC but also receive funding from other funders, including Government Departments, industrial contract income and international sources. Further information about the BBSRC-sponsored institutes can be found on the website: http://www.bbsrc.ac.uk/organisation/institutes/sponsored_institutes.html

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Information Requested

Would you please provide the number of postdoctoral researchers on fixed-term contracts supported by BBSRC funding, for each of the last 5 years.

BBSRC holds data on the number of postdoctoral researchers funded on BBSRC research grants but does not hold information on the types of contracts under which these researchers are employed. Information on the types of contracts under which postdoctoral researchers are employed will be held by the employing institution. You may therefore wish to direct your request to the relevant universities and research institutions.

BBSRC currently employs 151 individuals in the BBSRC-sponsored institutes on fixed-term contracts at grade 5-SPD and grade 6-PD (i.e. the senior postdoctoral researcher and postdoctoral researcher levels). Some of these researchers are supported by BBSRC research funding but some may be supported by funding from other sources (e.g. industry, Government Departments, charities, international bodies, or other bodies). BBSRC does not hold information on the sources of funding supporting these researchers – this is held locally by the institutes. You may therefore wish to direct your request to the relevant BBSRC-sponsored institutes.

BBSRC Staffing Statistics

BBSRC formally publishes information about the number of employees at BBSRC Office and BBSRC-sponsored institutes in its Annual Report and Accounts. The BBSRC Annual Report and Accounts 2007-08 is publicly available via the BBSRC website (http://www.bbsrc.ac.uk/publications/accounts/bbsrc_annual_07_08.pdf) and includes information about employees on indefinite and period appointments at the BBSRC-sponsored institutes. BBSRC also publishes annual staffing statistics: http://www.bbsrc.ac.uk/organisation/policies/position/foi/publication_scheme.html

As stated in BBSRC's Employment Code (Appendix A1.5i), BBSRC is committed to offering indefinite contracts wherever practical and the offer of fixed-term or temporary appointments is restricted to certain limited and defined circumstances: http://www.bbsrc.ac.uk/organisation/policies/employment/code/joining/a1_5/a1_5i.html

Concordat to Support the Career Development of Researchers

BBSRC contributed to the development of a new Concordat to Support the Career Development of Researchers, which sets out national expectations with regard to support and career development for postdoctoral researchers. The Concordat can be downloaded from: <http://www.researchconcordat.ac.uk/>

If you have any queries about this letter, please contact me quoting the reference number above.

Yours sincerely
Dr K Turton
Freedom of Information Officer
BBSRC

Complaints Process

If you are dissatisfied with how we have handled your request, you may register a formal complaint with the BBSRC Complaints Officer (xxxxxxxxxx.xxxxxxx@xxxxx.xx), who will conduct an internal review.

If you are not happy with the outcome of the internal review, you have the right to apply directly to the Information Commissioner, Information Commissioner's Office, Wycliffe House, Water Lane, Wilmslow, Cheshire, SK9 5AF, Tel: 01625 545700, www.informationcommissioner.gov.uk.