

# The net migration 'bounce'

March 5 2012

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New analysis by Oxford University's Migration Observatory shows that any short term cut to net-migration brought about by reductions in immigration will be partially reversed in the long term because of declining emigration. The researchers are calling this a 'bounce effect'.

In its latest [commentary](#) the [Migration](#) Observatory demonstrates how this bounce takes place by looking at short-term and longer-term impacts of reduced immigration on net migration. They say the bounce effect is an important and often overlooked issue in the net migration debate.

The commentary demonstrates that cutting immigration of groups that are numerically large, but who tend not to settle in the UK, such as

students, can lead to a dramatic short-term reduction in net migration that is partially reversed over time because of declining [emigration](#). They argue this makes overall cuts in net migration harder to achieve in the long term.

Dr. Scott Blinder, Senior Researcher at the Migration Observatory, said: "Cutting immigration for groups with low settlement rates will give strong results for a couple of years, while the immigration numbers are down and emigration is not yet affected, but it sets the stage for a rebound a few years down the line, when emigration will decline, and net migration will bounce back up."

The analysis points out that while students account for about 60% of non-EU migrant inflows, the best available Home Office data suggest that fewer than a quarter remain in the UK for five years or more. This contrasts starkly with family migrants, who represent less than 20% of non-EU migrant inflows, but 63 per cent of whom remain in the UK after five years. This means that cutting family migration by a small amount can have the same impact on net migration in the long term as cutting student migration by a larger amount.

The commentary builds on new analysis released earlier this week by the Migration Advisory Committee (MAC). The MAC report, recommended that the cap on non-EU labour migration (Tier 2) remains at 20,700. It also confirmed the Migration Observatory's [analysis](#) from June 2011 that the Government faces a profound challenge in achieving its net migration target by 2015.

The MAC report notes that "the tens of thousands target is not wholly within government control," saying, "further steps under all routes – work, study and family – may well be required if this target is to be met."

Dr. Blinder added: "While hitting the net migration target will be hard enough and requires deep cuts to immigration, the counterintuitive nature of the "bounce effect" means that keeping below the target over time will be even harder."

Provided by Oxford University

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