



Commonwealth Scholarship
Commission in the UK

Building Bridges

The Commonwealth Split-Site Doctoral Scholarship Programme 1998-2018

Full Report



The authors would like to gratefully acknowledge all the Split-site scholars and supervisors who contributed to this report. Every individual who took time out of their day to provide us with their honest thoughts, opinions, and experiences with the programme helped contribute to the quality and depth of this report. It is genuinely appreciated by the CSC, who would not have been able to do this work without you.

Thank you.

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Executive Summary

The Commonwealth Scholarship Commission in the UK has offered Scholarships and Fellowships to Commonwealth citizens since 1960 as the United Kingdom's contribution to the Commonwealth Scholarship and Fellowship Plan. Since 1998, the Commonwealth Scholarship Commission has run its Split-site scholarship programme, offering PhD scholars who are studying at universities across the Commonwealth the opportunity to conduct research at an institute in the United Kingdom for 12 months. The programme seeks to 'widen access to UK equipment and expertise for high quality doctoral candidates from low and middle income Commonwealth countries, and to contribute to UK and Commonwealth higher education and research through collaboration and partnerships.'

As of 2018, 529 scholarships have been awarded to scholars registered with PhD programmes at 185 different institutions across 27 countries of the Commonwealth, allowing them to conduct research at 116 institutions within the United Kingdom. Scholars from Sub-Saharan Africa (45%) and South Asia (42%) have received the largest proportion of these awards, with the Caribbean (8%) receiving most of the remainder. The gender proportions are effectively equal, with males receiving 51% and females 49% of the scholarships.

This report summarises the Commonwealth Scholarship Commission's review of its Split-site programme, which sought to answer a number of questions about the programme, as well as inform some wider questions of relevance about Commonwealth Scholarships in general. Specifically, the aims of the review were:

- To better understand the demographics, contexts and outcomes of those applying for and completing Split-site Scholarships
- To better understand Commonwealth Scholars' experiences both on-award and when they return home
- To identify the outcomes, impact, and the scope of the potential benefits of these particular awards to home and host supervisors and their institutions, and
- To gather evidence which allows the Commission to assess whether these scholarships are an effective use of Commission resources and contribute to the achievement of the Commission's Strategic Objectives.

Overall, the review found that the Split-site programme achieves its goals, providing doctoral scholars with international experience and unique access to equipment and expertise at UK-based universities that many would otherwise be unable to have. The programme also provides an opportunity for home and host supervisors and institutions to engage in international collaborations through doctoral research, in many instances leading to additional collaborations.

Methodology

In undertaking this review, the CSC Evaluation Team drew on a number of different methods and sources of data. These included:

- An environment scan of similar programmes
- Existing data held on Split-site applicants and recipients in the Secretariat's database
- Data from the Longitudinal Alumni surveys conducted in 2016 and 2017
- Three new surveys, designed specifically to solicit feedback on the experiences of all current and former Split-site scholars, their host supervisors, and their home supervisors

- Follow-up interviews with scholars and supervisors, and
- A focus group with host supervisors.

This data set was then analysed with appropriate methods, including descriptive and comparative statistical analysis of quantitative data, and thematic coding and analysis of qualitative data. The key findings of this review are summarised here.

Scholar Experiences with the Programme

The primary **motivations** of scholars for applying for this type of scholarship were to access knowledge, expertise, equipment, and other resources that would not otherwise be available to them at their home institution. Gaining international experience was also a significant driver of interest for scholars. Secondary reasons for applying were building partnerships and relationships, exploring future collaborations, and securing funding. The flexibility offered by the programme also appealed to scholars, allowing them to access an opportunity that they might otherwise miss out on due to personal and professional obligations.

Regarding the actual **benefits** they realised from their Split-site experience, scholars overwhelmingly indicated that the international experience and ability to access otherwise unavailable resources including knowledge and equipment were major benefits from their Split-site experience. Scholars reiterated these benefits in their free text and interview responses as well. While they were less frequently cited as motivations for applying for the scholarship, the building of partnerships and relationships, the exploration of future collaborations, and exposure to the research environment and culture in the United Kingdom were also cited as major benefits of the experience. Split-site scholars also realised improvements to their academic writing skills, communication skills, and confidence, as cited by scholars and supervisors in the survey free text and interviews.

The flexibility offered by the Commonwealth Split-site scholarship was frequently cited as a major benefit by both scholars and supervisors. Scholars are able to choose to take their visiting study period in either a single twelve-month block, or two six-month blocks. The second option enabled scholars to engage in this type of work abroad who otherwise would not be able to do so due to family, work, or other obligations that limit the amount of time they could or wanted to be away from their home. It also allowed for scholars to learn new research methods and techniques abroad, return to their home country to conduct fieldwork, and then go abroad again to conduct the analysis.

While the flexibility to choose the structure of the timing of the study period was cited as a strength of the programme, the inflexibility around the length of the study period was cited as a significant challenge by both scholars and supervisors. Specific issues that were mentioned included the fact that training scholars up on equipment took significant amounts of time, research timelines that would otherwise take more than a year had to be compressed, and additional avenues of inquiry related to and opened up by the research could not be explored. Consequently, the most frequently mentioned recommendation from scholars was that they should be allowed the opportunity to extend their study period.

Another significant **challenge** for scholars was the need to acclimatise to a new environment, both within their host institution, and the United Kingdom more generally. Adjusting to different cultural practices and expectations, both socially and professionally, was mentioned as a significant area that needed to be overcome by scholars, particularly if they had never been to the United Kingdom before. Homesickness was another significant challenge cited by scholars, which in most cases was a consequence of being away from their families and extended social support networks for long periods

of time. In some instances this was aggravated by the lack of a family allowance, or difficulty securing visas for immediate family members, both of which being areas where scholars felt more could be done by the CSC. Finally, housing was another area where scholars encountered challenges, including difficulty securing a short-term lease, unfamiliarity with what areas of their host cities were safe, and the overall cost of housing. The cost issue was also intensified in instances where scholars had to continue to pay housing costs in their home country to maintain their residence there.

However, despite these challenges all scholars rated their Split-site experience positively.

Supervisor Experiences with the Programme

Supervisors from both home and host universities said that their departments realised a number of **benefits** from participating in a Split-site scholarship. In addition to the contribution of the scholar to their departments' research outputs, the scholar helped to broaden the intercultural experience of staff and students at both universities by bringing new perspectives based on their backgrounds, travels, and experiences. The presence of Split-site scholars also helped to raise the reputation and international profile of their universities.

The Split-site scholarship was also a vehicle to build and strengthen partnerships and collaborations for institutions and supervisors. The majority of Split-site supervisors said that there were plans in place for additional work and collaborations between institutions and departments as a result of their involvement with the scholarship, with many already engaged in these activities.

Supervisors also mentioned in their free text answers and interviews that the experience personally benefitted them by expanding their subject knowledge, cultivating research relationships, and providing opportunities to develop joint publications with international collaborators. They also mentioned that Split-site scholars enabled a two-way exchange of knowledge between the universities: not only did scholars bring new knowledge and experiences back with them to their home university that was subsequently shared with others in their department, but they also introduced new knowledge and research methods to the department that hosted them.

While the benefits realised by home and host departments and supervisors were relatively similar, the **challenges** (when they occurred) were markedly different. Host supervisors most frequently cited the length of the study period in their free text responses, feeling that the amount of time it took to orient scholars and get them trained up on equipment to the point where they could work independently took up a significant portion of the study period, compressing what was already a tight research timeline. Administrative issues were also cited by host supervisors, with either the difficulty in finding the most appropriate way to register the scholar at their university, or visa issues comprising the bulk of these challenges. Coordination with the other supervisor and institution was also cited by some host supervisors, specifically the need to incorporate two sets of goals, policies, and expectations when working with the scholar. One final issue of note was the fact that in cases where the scholar was further along in their PhD programme and research project, the host supervisor felt that they did not have enough input into the research design of the project. In some cases, host supervisors felt that this was not really an issue and accepted the role that they had to play in those projects, but others felt that it would be better if the scholarship was awarded earlier in the scholar's PhD programme so that they could have a greater input in the design of the research project. Host supervisors recommended a greater emphasis on setting reasonable expectations and improving communications between supervisors and the scholar to address these last two issues.

Data sharing was also identified by some host supervisors as an issue, in that in some instances scholars were extremely protective of their research data and reluctant to share with the host supervisor or other members of the research team. They also expressed uncertainty as to how credit should be attributed in instances where they felt the home supervisor was not actively involved in the scholar's research. While this was not a common issue, host supervisors felt that some guidance around intellectual property would be fruitful.

For home supervisors, difficulties communicating was the most frequently mentioned challenge, with supervisors detailing that it was difficult to keep up to date on the progress of the scholar while they were in the United Kingdom, due to both the lower quality and frequency of conversations when the scholar was away compared to in-person discussions, and the practical challenge presented by time differences. There were also some instances where the home supervisor felt that the scholar's research project changed substantially upon arriving in the United Kingdom, and they did not have sufficient input into the changes. Home supervisors also felt that there were differences in expectations, or that the expectations that they had were not met by the Split-site experience. In some instances, this meant an inequality within the collaboration caused by host supervisors or institutions being unresponsive or otherwise indifferent towards the home supervisors and institutions, similar to the situation outlined above, or neglecting to share authorship of publications. In others, home supervisors felt that host supervisors neglected to consider or understand the departmental environment within the home institution that the scholar was coming from, which in some cases was further aggravated by an expectation that supervisors would visit each other's departments (which occasionally did happen, but is not an integral part of the programme).

Overall, the vast majority of both home and host supervisors indicated that they would be happy to be involved in another Split-site scholarship in the future.

Summary

Based on the review's findings, the Split-site programme is clearly meeting the intended goal of widening access to UK-based resources for international PhD scholars. This is evident both in the motivations cited by scholars for applying for the programme, and the benefits they realised while in the United Kingdom that they reported. The Split-site programme is also recognised as an avenue through which scholars, supervisors, and departments can initiate, foster, and grow partnerships, although this could be developed further. This could be potentially be done through clearer communication of expectations, encouragement of closer and more frequent communication between supervisors, and a strong recommendation to participants that some form of intellectual property sharing agreement is put in place as a part of the scholarship. These actions should serve to strengthen and enhance an already effective programme.

Section 1 – Introduction

The Commonwealth Scholarship Commission in the United Kingdom (CSC) has been offering Scholarships and Fellowships tenable in the United Kingdom since 1960, as part of the Commonwealth-wide Commonwealth Scholarship and Fellowship Plan (CSFP). Until the late 1990s these awards followed the traditional format of funding study or research in the United Kingdom, mostly at the postgraduate or post-doctoral level. In 1998 however, as part of wider discussions about diversifying the Commission's portfolio of activities a new programme was introduced, offering doctoral scholars from around the Commonwealth the opportunity to study in the United Kingdom for up to 12 months as part of a home-registered PhD. Twenty years later this programme is strongly embedded within the Commission's portfolio with 529 doctoral scholars having taken up Split-site scholarships, representing 27 countries, 185 different Commonwealth higher education institutions, and studying at 116 institutions across the United Kingdom.

The primary purpose of this review was to answer a number of questions specific to the Split-site programme, as well as to inform wider questions of relevance about Commonwealth Scholarships, indeed all international scholarships, in general. In particular the review is intended to enable Commissioners, stakeholders, and other audiences:

- To better understand the demographics, contexts and post-award outcomes of those applying for and completing Split-site scholarships
- To better understand the experiences of Commonwealth Split-site scholars both on-award and on their return home
- To identify the potential and actual impact of these particular awards on home and host institutions, and
- To gather evidence which allows the Commission to assess whether these awards are an effective use of Commission resources and whether they contribute to the achievement of the Commission's Strategic Objectives.

This opening section of the review describes the methodology taken by the Evaluation Team in approaching the study. The second section provides context and background to the Split-site programme, including an overview of comparable programmes within the wider international scholarship landscape. It also provides a summary of those who have held awards, their subjects of study, as well as their demographic characteristics.

The bulk of the report is contained in sections three to five, which presents an analysis of the primary research conducted by the Evaluation Team as a part of the programme review. Section three looks at themes related to the period before scholars received their scholarship, including how they came to be aware of the programme, and their motivations for applying. It also looks at the frequency and nature of the pre-existing relationships that existed between home and host institutions and supervisors.

Section four examines the 'on-award' period where the scholar was conducting research in the United Kingdom. It discusses the benefits and the challenges faced by the scholar, including their academic and research experience within their host institution, as well as their general experience living in the United Kingdom. This section also examines the benefits and challenges that the scholarship brought to the host supervisor individually, as well as the host department and institution more broadly.

Section five focuses on the period after the scholar has completed their scholarship in the United Kingdom and returned to their home institution. This again includes the benefits and challenges that

they experienced both inside and outside of their institution, as well as the benefits and challenges that involvement in the programme brought to their home supervisor and institution. This section also examines what kinds of collaborative activities occurred after the scholarship experience for the scholars, their supervisors, and their institutions, as well as any barriers to additional collaborations that they encountered.

Finally, section six summarises the findings of the study, as well as the recommendations made throughout the report for ways that the programme could be changed to improve the experience of Split-site scholars, their supervisors, and their institutions in the future.

1.1 – Methodology and Data Sources

In order to investigate the research themes outlined above, the Evaluation Team adopted a sequential mixed-methods approach that utilised a range of primary and secondary research activities. Throughout this document, the data source is always cited underneath the tables and charts.¹

The first step of the process was to conduct an extensive online search to locate any existing scholarship programmes with similar characteristics and goals in order to locate the Commonwealth Split-site programme within the international scholarship landscape. The search process looked for other active ‘sandwich’ or ‘split-site’ scholarship programmes for doctoral study that involved the student travelling internationally to another university. The next stage involved an analysis of the CSC’s own data initially taken from the CSC’s scholar database, which contains demographic data records for all applicants including gender, age, and country of origin as well as information around area of study. This data was examined for trends in gender, countries and regions of origin, and subject areas studied. Internal CSC policy documents related to the Split-site programme were also examined in order to understand the initial purpose and design of the programme when it was launched, and the changes that have been made to its administration and guiding policies in the twenty years since.

Although not featured in this report, an initial investigation into scholars’ post-scholarship activities was conducted using an aggregation of the 2016 and 2017 Longitudinal Alumni surveys, which were chosen due to the recentness of the data collection. For the purposes of this review, only respondents who were on Split-site awards and UK-based PhD awards were analysed in order to better understand potential lines of inquiry.

These activities subsequently informed the design of three cross-sectional surveys that were specifically targeted at Split-site scholars and alumni, home supervisors, and host supervisors. The questions developed for these surveys were derived from the initial analysis of the longitudinal data set, issues that had been identified as being of interest specifically for the Split-site programme by stakeholders, and broader issues that are of interest to the Commission (such as adjusting to living in a different country and reintegration upon return to home country). All three surveys were conducted from July to September of 2018.

The scholar and alumni survey (hereafter described as the scholar survey) was sent to all Split-site scholars (current and former) who had not previously indicated that they did not wish to be contacted to participate in CSC surveys, or who were not flagged as ‘unwilling’ or ‘deceased’ in their alumni contact details. Similarly, for the home and host supervisor surveys, invitations went out to all contacts

¹ Note: for the purposes of legibility, responses that received less than 5% are not labelled on 100% stacked bar charts.

who were on record as being a Split-site supervisor. Two reminder emails were sent to all respondents who had not yet completed the surveys at approximately three weeks and one week before the close of the surveys. The response rates for each survey are provided in Figure 1.1.

Figure 1.1: Survey Samples and Reponses

Survey	Original Sample	Undelivered Invitations	Reponses	Response Rate*
Scholar	382	23	172	48%
Home Supervisor	254	94	66	41%
Host Supervisor	389	97	92	32%

*Note: Survey response rate is calculated as: responses/(original sample - undelivered invitations)

The surveys included closed questions based upon a range of probable responses reflecting specific areas of research interest and programme priorities. Open-ended free-text questions were also employed to capture additional insights based on respondents' specific experiences. Each set of survey data was analysed using quantitative methods including descriptive statistics and crosstabs (where appropriate) for all closed survey questions, and qualitative thematic analysis for open-ended questions.

In addition to informing the final report, these analyses were also used to develop the themes and questions that guided the second stage of data collection, the key informant interviews. As part of all three surveys, respondents were asked whether they would be interested in participating in one-on-one interviews. In total, 127 scholars and alumni, 46 home supervisors, and 63 host supervisors expressed interest in participating in the interviews.

Interview guides for each type of respondent were derived from an initial analysis of the survey data to follow up on points of interest. For home and host supervisors, all respondents who expressed an interest in being interviewed were contacted by email to give them the opportunity to be interviewed.² Due to the large volume of scholars and alumni who expressed interest in being interviewed, this group was broken down by the stage of their scholarship (in the UK; returned to home institution but still studying, and; graduated) and a representative sample was contacted to ensure a variety of countries and a balance of genders were included in the interviews.

In total, 70 interviews were conducted: 18 with home supervisors, 26 with host supervisors, and 26 with scholars and alumni (15 with scholars, and 11 with alumni) throughout November and December 2018. Additionally, one focus group was conducted with six London-based host supervisors on 6 December at the offices of the CSC. Upon completion of this step, the interviews were transcribed using a transcription service, sent to participants for review to ensure accuracy, and then coded thematically using NVivo software. This allowed for the identification of issues particular to each target group while providing scope for triangulation across data sets to identify common themes across different institutional and country contexts.

² The one exception was London-based host supervisors, who were instead invited to participate in a focus group in order to discuss and validate the findings from other interviews in early December.

Section 2 – Programme Context

The CSC’s Split-site programme is situated within two specific contexts. More broadly, it operates within the global context of all available international scholarship programmes, particularly those that offer an experience similar to the Split-site programme. It also operates more specifically within the context of the CSC’s policy environment and suite of scholarship programmes. Consequently, it is important to understand how the Split-site programme fits into these larger landscapes.

This section looks at each of these contexts, first by examining the results of the environment scan of similarly structured international scholarship programmes, and then by summarising the policy context that the CSC Split-site programme was created in and the relevant changes that have occurred since its inception that have a bearing on the operation of the programme. Finally, this section also provides some high-level numbers on the demographic breakdowns of Split-site recipients, including by gender, home country, and subject of study.

2.1 – International Development, Higher Education, and International Scholarships

In recent years, there has been a growing consensus that the pursuit of knowledge economies is the most effective way of encouraging development in modern low and middle income countries.³ This consensus is based on human capital theory which posits that an increase in an individual’s knowledge, a form of human capital, will subsequently increase their productivity, and the productivity of others, and ultimately drive growth.⁴ For knowledge economies, higher education is essential to this process. Higher education increases the human capital of individuals through the production and dissemination of knowledge which in turn ensures that other sectors of the economy have sufficient human capital to produce knowledge-based goods.⁵ Consequently, a greater emphasis has been placed on higher education’s ability to support international development in recent years, as evidenced by the multi-faceted role higher education has in contributing towards the Sustainable Development Goals (SDGs).

Within this context, there has been an increased recognition of the role that international scholarship programmes can play in facilitating higher education’s contribution to international development. SDG Target 4.b explicitly seeks to ‘substantially expand globally the number of scholarships available ... for enrolment in higher education’.⁶ In this context, international scholarships are framed as an integral means to address a lack of access to quality education, thus facilitating higher education’s contribution to socio-economic development.⁷ To that end, international scholarships serve as a critical mechanism by which the individual gains obtained through higher education may be deployed to the benefit of wider society.⁸

Kirkland has created a framework by which international scholarships can be categorised based on the following characteristics: national interest (narrowly defined); national interest (broadly defined); merit based; development based (individually focused); and development based (society focused).⁹ While not mutually exclusive, Commonwealth Scholarships ‘conform most strongly with the final

³ World Bank, 2007.

⁴ Lucas, 1988.

⁵ Varghese, 2008: p9.

⁶ See <https://sustainabledevelopment.un.org/sdg4>

⁷ Dassin et al, 2018.

⁸ Marginson, 2007.

⁹ 2018: p153-154.

category' due to their emphasis on contributing to a developmental impact on recipients' home nations.¹⁰ In this sense, within the international scholarship landscape the CSC programme is actively contributing to the SDG agenda.

However, some observers have argued that despite these intentions, international scholarship programmes that predominantly support a south-north direction of travel are not necessarily strengthening the higher education systems of recipients' home countries.¹¹ This need not be the case. As Baxter has argued, these traditional mobility patterns can be challenged through innovative programme designs that combine the strengths of both home and host institutions, and institutionalise international collaborations between them.¹² The CSC's Split-site scholarship is an example of such a programme.

The CSC Split-site programme can be broadly defined as a short-term international mobility scheme for PhD candidates. To understand the prevalence and rationale for these types of scholarships, an environmental scan of similar international scholarship programmes was conducted looking for 'split-site' or 'sandwich' schemes targeted towards doctoral students to travel internationally. The results of this scan established that these types of programmes were not widespread. A total of 11 similar programmes were identified, as itemised in Figure 2.1 along with the CSC's programme for a grand total of 12. While the French government is responsible for almost half of the programmes listed, further research revealed that they are bilateral in nature with specific target countries, and are consequently advertised individually. Alternatively, although Brazil and Germany each run only one programme, Brazilian recipients can study in any country while recipients of the German scholarship can come from any country.

¹⁰ Kirkland, 2018: p154.

¹¹ Owens, 2017.

¹² 2018: p120-121.

Figure 2.1: List of Similar PhD Split-site Schemes

Award Country	Organisation	Scholarship	Target	Country of Study
Brazil	Ministry of Education	Science without Borders Doctorate Sandwich Abroad	Brazil	Any
France	French Embassy in Ghana	Split-cost scholarships	Ghana	France
France	French Embassy in Kenya	Sandwich doctoral scholarships	Kenya	France
France	French Embassy in Pakistan	'Sandwich PhD' fellowship program	Pakistan	France
France	French Ministry of Higher Education and Research; Baxter and Alma Ricard Foundation	French Embassy Studentships	Canada	France
France & UK	French Embassy in London and British Council	Entente Cordiale Scholarships	France & UK	France & UK
Germany	German Academic Exchange Service	DAAD Research Grants	Any	Germany
India	World Academy of Sciences and Department of Biotechnology, India	TWAS-DBT Postgraduate Fellowship Programme	Developing countries in the South	India
International	Organization for Women in Science for the Developing World	PhD Fellowships for Women Scientists	Science and Technology Lagging Countries	Developing countries in the South
Regional	Partnership for Skills in Applied Sciences, Engineering & Technology	PASET Regional Scholarship and Innovation Fund	Africa	Sub-Saharan Africa
UK	Leverhulme Trust	Leverhulme Trust Study Abroad Studentships	UK	Any excluding USA
UK	Commonwealth Scholarship Commission	Commonwealth Split-site Scholarship	ODA-eligible Commonwealth countries	UK

Figure 2.2 provides further details of these programmes, including funding type, targeted field of study (when applicable), and direction of travel. As can be seen, seven are funded by governments (including the CSC's), including one that is based on a multilateral agreement between national governments. There is one programme that is funded by a non-profit trust, one funded by private sector

contributions, and three which combine various sources of funding. Of the 12 scholarships that have been identified by the environment scan, four specify that recipients must study a subject area under the STEM umbrella.

Eight programmes also specify that the recipient must travel to the global north, with five of these being specifically a south-north direction of travel. Three involve a south-south direction of travel, while one is from the north to any destination country.

Figure 2.2: Further Information about Similar Split-site Schemes

Award Country	Scholarship	Funding type	Field of study	Direction of travel
Brazil	Science without Borders Doctorate Sandwich Abroad	Government	STEM	South-North
France	Split-cost scholarships	Various	N/A	North-North
France	Sandwich doctoral scholarships	Government	N/A	South-North
France	'Sandwich PhD' fellowship program	Government	R&D programs of all scientific and technology fields	South-North
France	French Embassy Studentships	Private sector	Any	North-North
France & UK	Entente Cordiale Scholarships	Various	Any	South-North
Germany	DAAD Research Grants	Government	N/A	North
India	TWAS-DBT Postgraduate Fellowship Programme	Various	Biotechnology	South-South
International	PhD Fellowships for Women Scientists	Government	Natural, Engineering and Information Technology sciences	South-South
Regional	PASET Regional Scholarship and Innovation Fund	Multi-lateral government	N/A	South-South
UK	Leverhulme Trust Study Abroad Studentships	Non-profit	N/A	North-any
UK	Commonwealth Split-site Scholarship	Government	N/A	South-North

Part of the purpose of the environment scan was to investigate the rationales for these types of scholarships. Five of the 11 non-CSC programmes specified a rationale in terms of the motivations and desired outcomes of their schemes. The different outcomes can be broadly grouped into five categories: capacity building of the doctoral candidate (research); capacity building of the doctoral candidate (career development); forging international networks; contributing to cooperation

between nations; and the development of institutional partnerships (see Figure 2.3). The desired outcomes of these five scholarships are also shared by the CSC Split-site programme, which is discussed further in the next subsection.

Figure 2.3: Rationales of Similar Split-site Programmes (where provided)

Scholarship	Rationale
French Embassy Studentships	Capacity building of the doctoral candidate (research)
Sandwich doctoral scholarships from the Embassy of France in Kenya	Institutional partnerships; capacity-building of the doctoral candidate (research & career development)
‘Sandwich PhD’ fellowship program in science and technology from the French Embassy in Pakistan	Institutional partnerships
Entente Cordiale Scholarships	International network; capacity-building of the doctoral candidate (career development)
Split-cost scholarships	National cooperation

2.2 – Commonwealth Split-site Scholarships: Context and Policy

Since its foundation 60 years ago, the CSC has supported over 28,000 Commonwealth Scholars and Fellows to study at UK institutions through a variety of programmes. The Split-site scholarship is one of the youngest scholarships run by the CSC. Launched in 1998, it formed part of a range of new initiatives at the time that sought to offer ‘new and experimental categories of award’ which were partly designed to widen participation in the larger Commonwealth Scholarship and Fellowship Plan (CSFP).¹³ The current rationale, as detailed in the CSC corporate plan, is ‘[t]o widen access to UK equipment and expertise for quality doctoral candidates from Commonwealth countries, and to contribute to UK and Commonwealth higher education and research through collaboration and partnerships.’¹⁴ Over twenty years, the programme has supported 529 doctoral scholars from 185 institutions across the Commonwealth, enabling them to conduct research at 116 institutions in the United Kingdom.

In its first year, a small budget was allocated to pilot the programme through a limited number of overseas institutions who had already partnered with the CSC through the Academic Staff Scholarships programme.¹⁵ Invited to nominate one doctoral student for a Split-site scholarship, the Secretariat received 20 applications out of which eight scholars were selected.¹⁶ Following this successful pilot, the number of Split-site selections remained relatively similar until a number of policy changes occurred in 2000. The Commission wrote to UK Vice-Chancellors, encouraging them to ‘target awards on those institutions where robust links [with Commonwealth universities] already exist’ and sought collaborations between home and host institutions forged through the DFID-funded Higher Education

¹³ CSC, 1997a: p1.

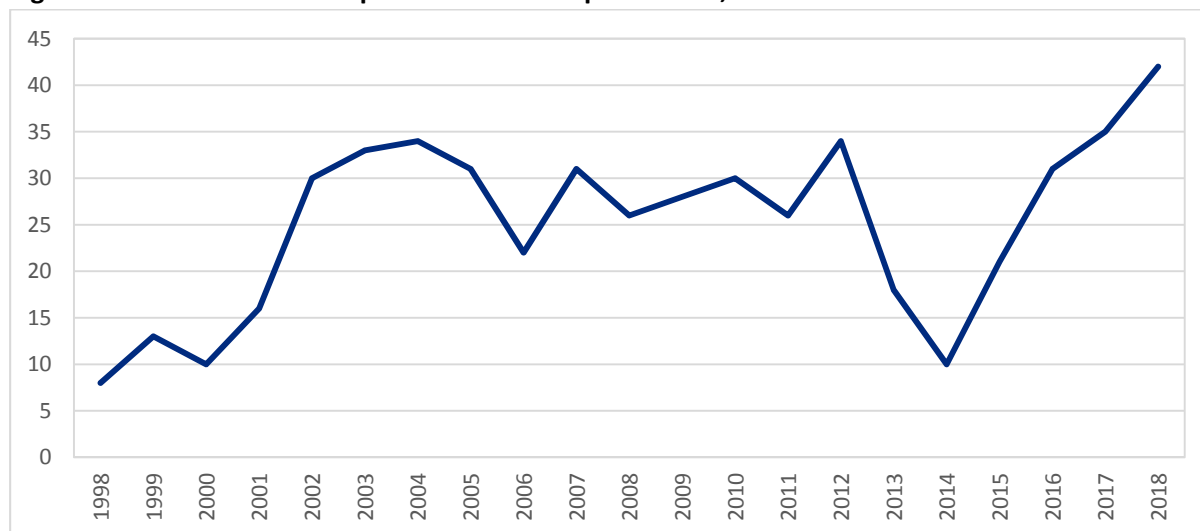
¹⁴ CSC, 2017: p24-25.

¹⁵ CSC, 1997a: p1; CSC, 1997b.

¹⁶ CSC, 1998: p5.

Links (HEL) scheme.¹⁷ This directive served to expand the range of nomination channels, and was supported by an increase in the number of selections which tripled from 10 in 2000 to 30 in 2002.

Figure 2.4: Commonwealth Split-site Scholarships Per Year, 1998-2018



n=529

Source: CSC Awards Data

As demonstrated in Figure 2.4, a target to maintain Split-site numbers at this level meant that the period between 2003 and 2007 saw the number of awards remain at an average of 30 per year.¹⁸ During this time the Commission also expanded the number of countries and universities able to nominate for awards, while also increasing the number of nominations per institution. This was done to support another key aim of the programme, which was to ‘enhance already developed links...but also to establish new links’ between Commonwealth universities in order to encourage further institutional development.¹⁹

Consequently, the programme expanded in scope over time. From 2006 onwards, the Commission agreed that nominations could now only come from an increased number of developing country institutions, rather than those in the United Kingdom. Additionally, the CSC’s partner national agencies, the organisations who nominate applicants for other CSC programmes, were invited to nominate for Split-site scholarships for the first time.²⁰ This change to the application process expanded both the number of institutions able to nominate candidates, as well as the affiliated cohort of partner institutions within the United Kingdom. This change helped to ensure that the number of Split-site scholars remained largely stable for another five years.

The application process was again changed in 2015 to what is now the current system. Applicants to the Split-site programme were no longer required to do so through other organisations, and could apply directly to the CSC through the open application system. While this change was preceded by a substantial dip in the number of scholarships granted in 2013 and 2014, the numbers have since grown to the largest that they have been during the life of the programme. Further expansion of the programme is under consideration, and will be partially informed by the contents of this report.

¹⁷ CSC, 2000.

¹⁸ CSC, 2002: p8.

¹⁹ CSC, 1999: p1.

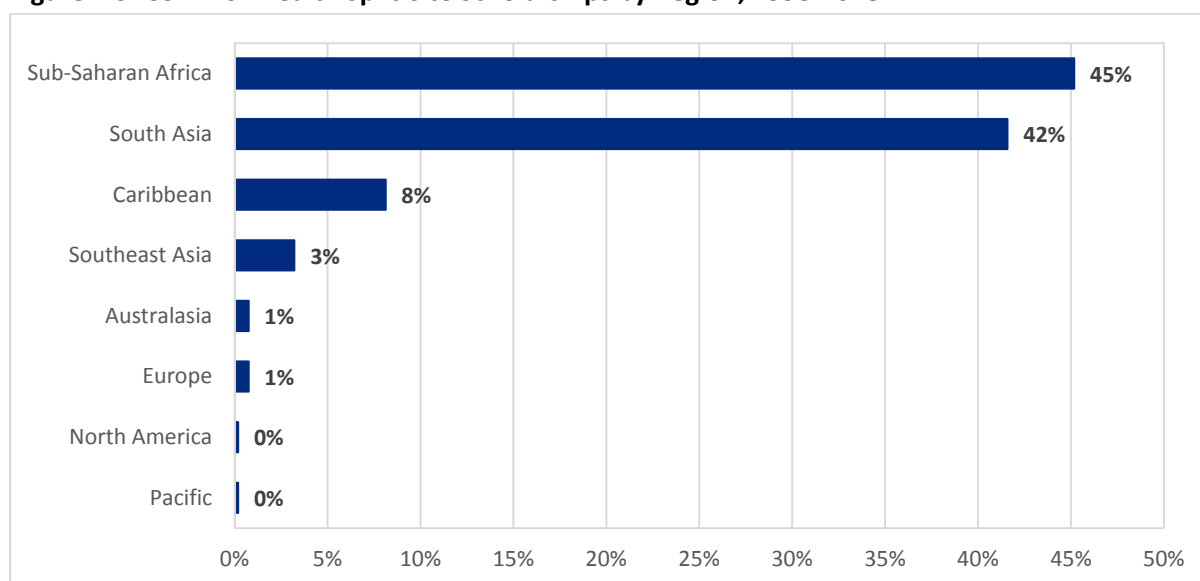
²⁰ CSC, 2006: p2; CSC, 2008: p1.

2.3 – Commonwealth Split-site Scholarships: Demographics and Disciplines

To date, 529 Split-site scholarships have been given to citizens from 27 Commonwealth countries. Of these, 99% have been funded by the Department for International Development (DFID) and were allocated to doctoral students from low and middle income Commonwealth countries. Four high income Commonwealth countries were allocated Split-site scholarships between 2003 and 2017, but represent less than 1% of the total number.²¹ These were not DFID-funded awards, but were instead funded by the Foreign & Commonwealth Office until 2008, and then by the Department for Innovation, Universities and Skills (later merged into the Department for Business, Innovation and Skills), and the Scottish Government.

Regionally, the vast majority of Split-site scholars have come from either Sub-Saharan Africa or South Asia. As can be seen in Figure 2.5, almost half (45%) of all Split-site scholars have come from Sub-Saharan Africa, just over two-fifths (42%) coming from South Asia, and a further tenth (8%) from the Caribbean. Following an early peak in award numbers in the first half-decade of the programme, the Caribbean contributed a relatively small but stable number of Scholars until 2013. However, in the last five years only two scholars have been selected from this region. By contrast, Sub-Saharan Africa and South Asia have had relatively consistent numbers throughout the lifetime of the programme.

Figure 2.5: Commonwealth Split-site Scholarships by Region, 1998-2018



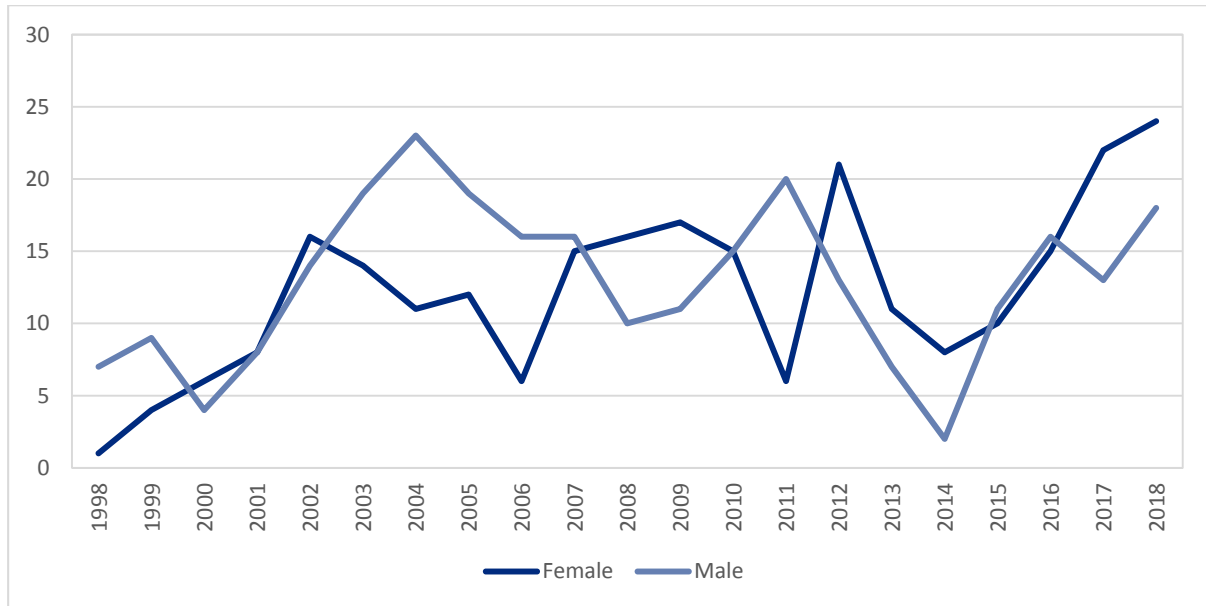
n=529

Source: CSC Awards Data

With respect to gender, females have comprised 49% of the total number of Split-site scholars since 1998. However, the gender ratio of scholars has varied significantly over time: in the first year of the programme, only one female candidate was selected (constituting one-eighth of the entire cohort) whereas in 2017 there were 22 female Split-site scholars, (comprising 63% of the total cohort for that year). The 2018 cohort saw the largest number of scholars selected in any single year (42), of which female representation stood at 57%.

²¹ Australia, Barbados, Canada, and Malta.

Figure 2.6: Commonwealth Split-site Scholarships by Gender, 1998-2018



n=529

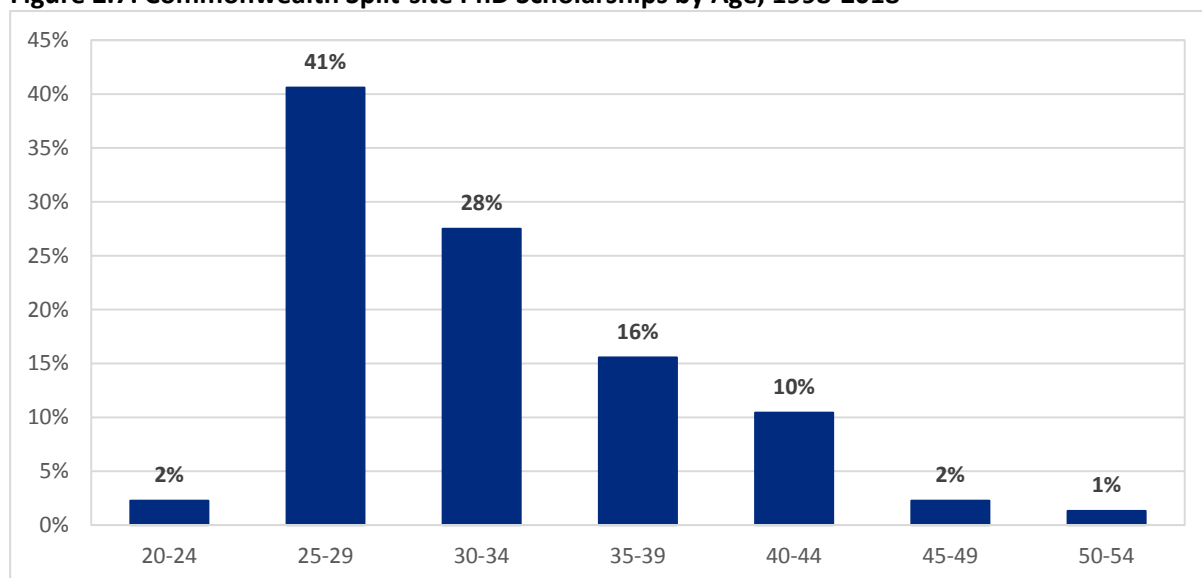
Source: CSC Awards Data

As illustrated in Figure 2.6, the first year in which females comprised the majority of selected candidates was in 2000 (60%). While this pattern mirrors the closing of the gender gap witnessed across other CSC programmes,²² the initial peak of female selections between 2000 and 2002 was then followed by a five year period during which female selections averaged only 38%. While this volatility can in part be attributed to the relatively small number of Split-site scholarships awarded each year, it still highlights the potential difficulties in maintaining even gender splits for any particular year of the programme.

Of the 529 Split-site award-holders, information relating to age is held for all but two scholars. As Figure 2.7 shows, just over two-fifths of Split-site scholars (41%) were in their late-twenties at the time of receiving their scholarship. An additional quarter (28%) of scholars were in their early thirties, while 16% were aged between 35 and 39 years old, and one-tenth (10%) of scholars were in their early forties.

²² For example, see Day et al, 2017: p18.

Figure 2.7: Commonwealth Split-site PhD Scholarships by Age, 1998-2018

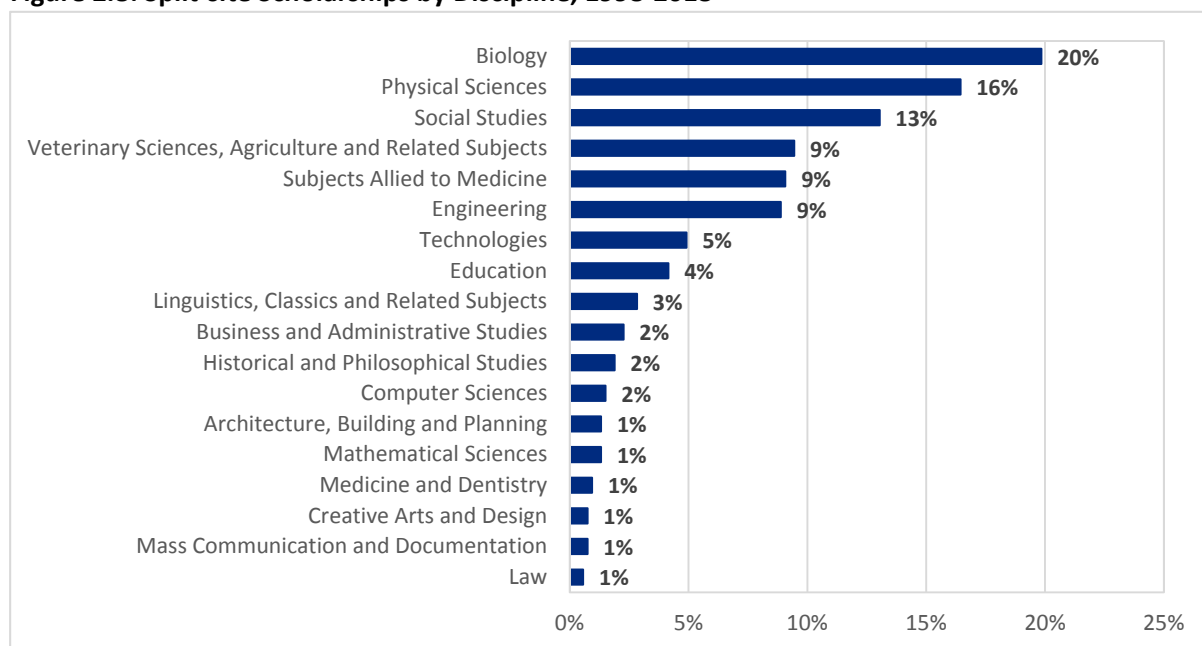


n=527

Source: CSC Awards Data

As discussed in Section 2.1, many other Split-site scholarships target specific disciplines as a part of their programmes. However, as is the case with the rest of its scholarships, the CSC’s Split-site programme does not operate any subject quotas, allowing for scholars to apply under a wide range of disciplines and subjects as long as the research has a credible application in development. The majority of Split-site scholarships have been held by scholars working in the areas of Biology (20%), the Physical Sciences (16%), and Social Studies (13%). These are followed by Veterinary Sciences, Agriculture and Related Subjects (9%), Subjects Allied to Medicine (9%), and Engineering (9%) to round out the top six.

Figure 2.8: Split-site Scholarships by Discipline, 1998-2018



n=529

Source: CSC Awards Data

When the disciplines are aggregated together in broader umbrella categorisations, it is clear that the vast majority (72%) of Split-site scholars have opted to study a STEM (Science, Technology, Engineering and Mathematics) subject. This can in part be attributed to the '[widening] access to UK equipment and expertise' policy goal of the programme discussed earlier in Section 2.2, which lends itself towards STEM subjects where research often requires capital-intensive equipment. However, there is still good representation of the Social Sciences (18%), as well as a handful of scholars who have studied the Arts and Humanities (6%) and Education (4%).

2.4 – Summary

The CSC's Split-site programme occupies a unique position within the international scholarship landscape as only one of a handful of scholarships that offer this style of study. It also overlaps with the international development landscape, particularly as part of SDG Target 4.b which seeks to expand the access of scholars in developing countries to 'technical, engineering and scientific programmes' in developed countries.²³ Indeed, while the programme's policies have evolved over its twenty years, improving access to the equipment and expertise available within the higher education landscape in the United Kingdom remains one of its core goals.

To date, 529 Split-site scholars have come from all over the Commonwealth to conduct research for their doctorate at one of 116 higher education institutions in the United Kingdom. While the number of Scholars selected per year has been relatively stable, 2018 saw the largest number of Split-site scholarships awarded during the life of the programme. The overall gender breakdown for the programme is effectively equal, however this does mask some variation that happens year over year. The majority of scholars come from either Sub-Saharan Africa or South Asia, generally during their late twenties or thirties. Most of these scholars have conducted research in a STEM subject, but a significant minority have studied the social sciences and the humanities as well. While this is not a result of any particular targeting around subject area, the stated intention of the programme to open up access to equipment and expertise in the United Kingdom does lend itself towards scholars from a STEM background, as the desire to access equipment that they otherwise would not have access to is a major motivation for scholars to apply to the programme, as is covered in the next section.

²³ See <https://sustainabledevelopment.un.org/sdg4>

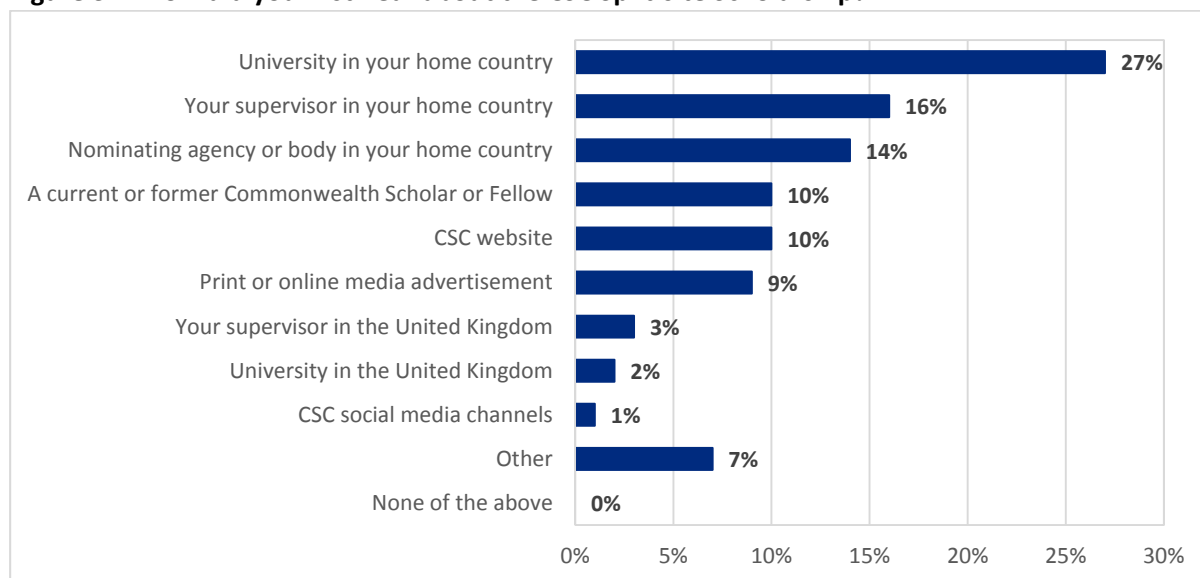
Section 3 – Pre-Scholarship

This section examines themes and areas of interest specific to the period before scholars' scholarship in the United Kingdom began. These topics include how scholars came to be aware of the Split-site programme, particularly where they initially heard about it, and their motivations for applying to the programme. This section also explores the range of pre-existing relationships that existed between scholars, supervisors, and institutions, and offers some related recommendations for CSC programme managers and administrators.

3.1 – Awareness of Split-Site Programme

Split-site scholars and alumni reported that they first learned about the scholarship from a number of different sources. In their survey responses, scholars and alumni most frequently said that they had first heard about the programme from their home university and their home supervisor, together making up almost half of the responses (see Figure 3.1). Those respondents who said that they had heard about the scholarship from their university were asked to provide additional details about specifically where they heard about the programme. Half of these respondents cited internal emails, in the form of general staff email lists, advertisements from the school administration, or internal circulations specifically about funding opportunities. Interviewees reiterated these responses, describing how their home universities would circulate notifications about available awards to staff and students either by email or through posting hard-copy notices within their departments. These notifications were sourced from either government notifications about available scholarships, or compilations of scholarships that the institution itself was aware of.

Figure 3.1: How did you first hear about the CSC Split-site Scholarship?



n=172

Source: Scholar Survey

Home supervisors cited similar sources as to where they heard about the Split-site programme during their interviews. University-related communications, both directly from the school administration and indirectly from government officials, was a common way in which home supervisors became aware of the programme. Alternatively, this does not appear to be the case for host supervisors, as only one host supervisor mentioned during their interview that they had been notified about the Split-site

programme through university-sourced communications. Consequently, this is a potential area for improvement when it comes to raising the profile and awareness of the programme.

Scholar and alumni also mentioned during their interviews that their home supervisors had passed information about the scholarship on to them based on these sources, but in some cases also because the supervisor themselves, or someone the supervisor knew, had previously received a Split-site scholarship. Previous involvement in Commonwealth Scholarships more broadly, and the success stemming from that involvement, was also specifically cited by a home supervisor as a source of awareness of the programme for themselves, their students, and for their peers. This peer-to-peer awareness also worked in the opposite direction, as another home supervisor mentioned in their interview that it was one of their colleagues who had previously been involved with Commonwealth Scholarships, who in turn brought the opportunity to their attention.

Incidentally, word of mouth was mentioned quite frequently by scholars and alumni in their interviews. In addition to hearing about the programme from their home supervisors, scholars said they had variously heard about the scholarship from their friends, colleagues, and mentors who had previously received a Commonwealth Scholarship, Split-site or otherwise. This finding was also reflected in the survey responses, where one-tenth of scholars and alumni mentioned that they had heard about the scholarship from a current or former Commonwealth Scholar or Fellow.

Alternatively, home supervisors who had been interviewed indicated that word of mouth about the Split-site programme also travelled the opposite way, mentioning that they had learned about the scholarship from their own student. In one instance, this was due to the fact that their student had already received a Commonwealth Scholarship to complete their Master's programme, and subsequently had been receiving direct communications from the CSC about other opportunities. In another instance, their student had searched online for scholarships, came across the Split-site programme, and brought it to their attention.

Indeed, both the CSC website, and print or online media advertisements, round out the top survey responses as to where scholars and alumni first heard about the scholarship. The CSC website was also specifically mentioned as a source of information about the scholarship by one-quarter of the scholars and alumni who had been interviewed, although not necessarily as the place where they had first heard about the programme. However, one interviewee did note that the language of the programme website was overly technical, serving more as a policy document rather than a general information page for the programme. This suggests that perhaps the programme information page could be better oriented towards promoting the programme, with a separate policy page to inform applicants about programme policies and requirements.

Finally, it should be noted that a number of survey respondents mentioned that they first heard about the programme from the nominating agency of their home country (14%). However, due to the switch to direct applications this is no longer necessarily a primary source of information for potential applicants.²⁴

3.2 – Motivations for Applying to Programme

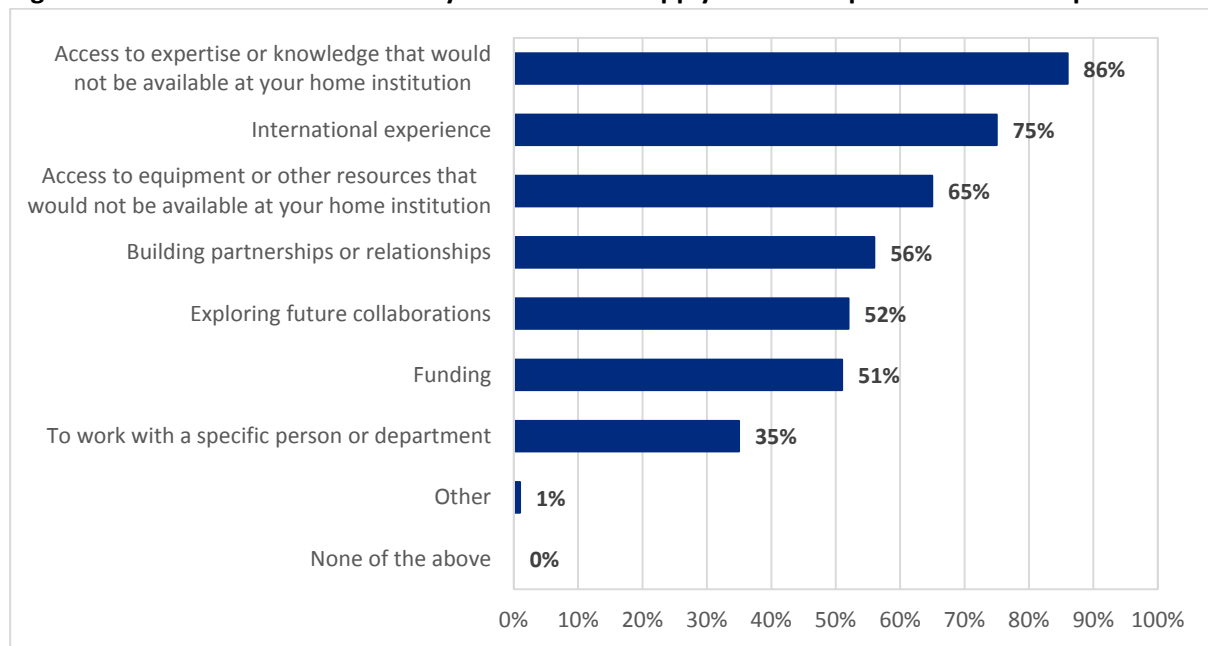
An important measure of whether the programme is effectively achieving its goals is what motivates scholars to apply for the scholarship. To this end, scholars and alumni were asked two questions in

²⁴ This option was only selected by scholars from 2011 and earlier.

their survey about what factors influenced their decision to apply for a Split-site scholarship. First, they were asked to select all motivations that were relevant for them, followed by a second question that asked them to identify a single, primary motivation for applying to the programme. The responses to these questions are shown in Figures 3.2 and 3.3 respectively.

In response to the first question, the most frequently selected option by scholars and alumni was that they wanted to ‘access expertise or knowledge that would not be available at their home institution’, which was chosen by well over four-fifths of the respondents. ‘International experience’ was also selected by a strong majority of respondents, followed by a desire to ‘access to equipment or other resources that would not be available at their home institution’, which was picked by two-thirds of respondents. Approximately half of respondents also selected ‘building partnerships or relationships’, ‘exploring future collaborations’, and ‘funding’ as factors influencing their decision to apply.

Figure 3.2: What factors influenced your decision to apply for a CSC Split-site Scholarship?

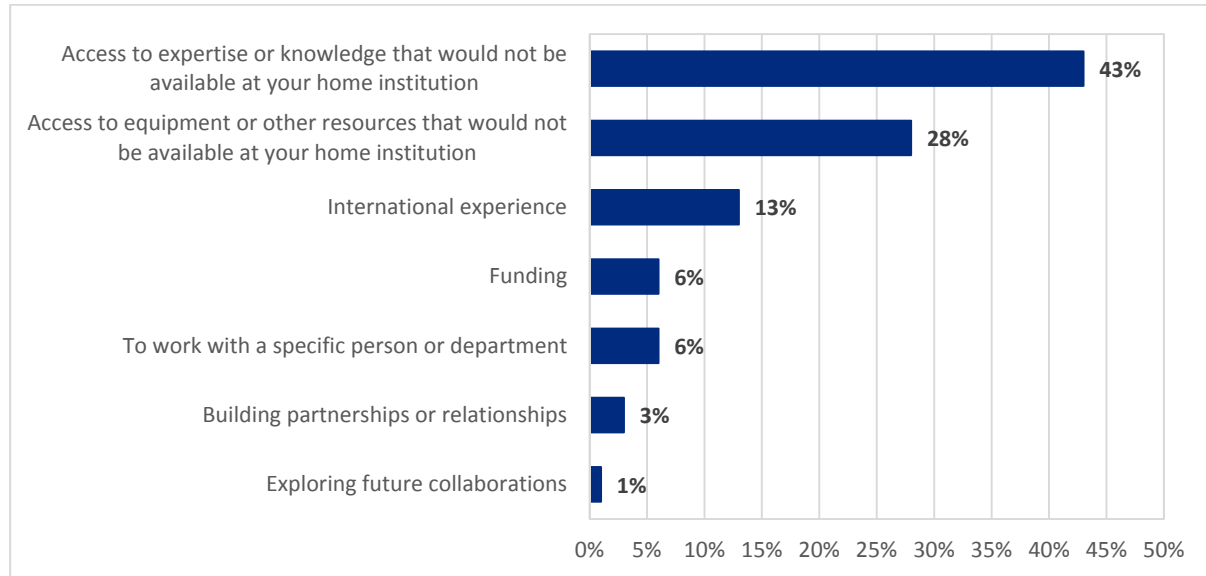


n=172

Source: Scholar Survey

With respect to scholar and alumni’s primary reasons for applying for a Split-site scholarship, once again the desire to ‘access to expertise or knowledge that would not be available at their home institution’ was the most frequently chosen answer, selected by two-fifths of respondents. However, unlike the previous question, the desire to ‘access to equipment or other resources that would not be available at their home institution’ was the second-most selected option, with just over one-quarter of respondents indicating that that was their primary reason for applying for a Split-site scholarship.

Figure 3.3: What was your primary reason for applying for a CSC Split-site Scholarship?



n=172

Source: Scholar Survey

These two reasons make up the majority of the responses to this question, with ‘international experience’ being the only other option that was chosen by more than one-tenth of the respondents. The desire to access otherwise unavailable knowledge, equipment, or resources was also frequently cited by interviewees as a motivation for applying. As Siana Nkya, a 2012 Split-site scholar elaborated in their interview, ‘In Tanzania, we were missing some of the technologies that I could apply for my PhD. Getting some time spent specifically at an institution where I could get access to this technology, and also some formal sessions of human genetics, was something useful for me.’

In addition to the motivations captured in the survey, two other significant motivations emerged from the interviews with scholars and alumni. The first of these was that they were able to apply for the scholarship despite having already begun their PhD programme at their home institution. Indeed, in some cases scholars were quite far into their programme and research at the point when they applied for the scholarship, and felt that had they been unable to access the necessary external resources to continue their work they would have either had to change the focus of their doctoral research, or alternatively, they would have had to completely restart their PhD work because they had to apply to another doctoral programme at another institution that was better able to accommodate their research focus.

The second motivation for scholars that emerged from the interviews was that the Split-site scholarship offered them the opportunity to do this kind of international research while minimising their time away from home. For some scholars, this was of value to them because they generally wanted to keep a close link to their country. As one scholar explained, ‘I think I’m a person who is very attached to home, my home country. I really didn’t want to go for a PhD programme that would take me away from my home country for a long time.’ For other scholars, this feature of the scholarship was important for them due to employment or family contexts. Scholars who were still employed while working on their PhD were able to take leave from their positions to conduct their research knowing that they would still have their job upon their return because the Split-site offered the opportunity to do so while also minimising their time away from their position. This advantage was highlighted by Karla Georges, a 2005 scholar who reported ‘I did not want to leave my job for an extended length of time because of the uncertainty of whether there would be a post for me when I

came back. The Split-site programme, it fit in very well with my native university to support junior staff to get higher degrees and they were willing to allow me to have assisted leave for one year... It was perfect.'

This was also framed as an advantage for their workplace as it served to minimise disruption to staffing, something that scholars felt was a benefit for their home institutions. This was important for maintaining institutional teaching and administrative capacity in instances where scholars were employed at universities, but also for in cases where scholars were employed at small organisations that would have been unable to continue the work they were doing had they lost an employee for an extended period of time.

The ability to minimise the amount of time spent away from their family was also mentioned by many interviewees, although the specific reasons were somewhat varied. These included ongoing care or support responsibilities for their parents, minimising the amount of time spent away from their spouses or significant others, and minimising the amount of time spent away from their children. The importance of family for motivating scholars to apply for the scholarship also presages some of the difficulties that scholars encountered during their time in the United Kingdom, which is discussed further in Section 4.2.

3.3 – Motivations for Selecting Host Institutions and Supervisors

During their interviews, scholars and alumni were asked to elaborate on what made them decide to choose the particular institution or supervisor in the United Kingdom that they studied with. Scholars reported that they had three main, if interrelated, reasons for selecting their host institution. First, scholars felt that the institution they chose had the subject expertise that they needed for the area in which they were doing their research. The ways in which scholars determined this expertise was quite varied. Some made this assessment through research, be it as a product of their initial literature review, or by specifically searching the internet for institutions that would be appropriate for their work. In other cases, scholars made this judgement through interactions with faculty from their eventual host institution at conferences or other events.

The second reason given by scholars for choosing their host institution was that the institution had specific facilities that they were interested in working with. As 2009 scholar Sameera Arshad put it, 'I found that through some references and through my investigation that some of the universities in the UK had the best equipment or the best simulations or fine element programmes, and the expertise is also available in the UK.' Scholars cited a number of specific pieces of equipment or other resources that their host institution had that they wanted to work with, including molecular diagnostic labs, real time digital simulators, and hydrogen storage facilities. In each case, the specialised equipment needed to work in their research area also went hand-in-hand with the institutional subject expertise.

These first two reasons for selecting particular institutions also regularly overlapped with the third reason cited by scholars, the desire to work with a particular host supervisor. In these cases, the scholar had identified their potential host supervisor as someone with a strong reputation in their field, and consequently someone who would be working at an institution that would have the resources that they needed to support their research. This was the case for Chinazom Previous Agbo, a Nigerian scholar who received a Split-site scholarship in 2017: 'My choice of a host university was

Split-site Profile: Sameera Arshad

Sameera Arshad is a 2009 Split-site Scholar from Pakistan. Registered at The University of Arid Agriculture, Rawalpindi, she was the first PhD student of its Wildlife Management Department. Her doctoral research focused on the assessment of birds and aircraft strike hazards and the development of systems for bird strike prevention at airports and airbases.



After completing her first year of study, Sameera spent two six-month periods at The Food and Environment Agency (FERA) in North Yorkshire, UK in order to develop the technical and practical research skills necessary to complete her research. Sameera submitted her thesis in 2014 and was awarded her doctorate in 2015.

How did you choose your UK supervisor?

I wanted to carry on my doctoral research on Aerodrome Bird Hazard Management, which is a relatively new field in Pakistan. My [home] supervisor had another area of specialization, so I started searching on my own. I read research papers and looked for people working in this area and I discovered that my UK supervisor was one of the leading scientists in this specialisation and had made many contributions in the field of birdstrike management. I decided to contact him directly and discussed my research proposal with him which he accepted. I also contacted the institution and together with my home supervisor we were able to plan this study.

What was working at the host UK institution like?

I found that The Food and Environment Agency was one of the leading institutions in the UK and had excellent facilities - a bird and feather identification lab and resources for developing detection radars, for example. We were able to run tests at different airports in the UK, including Heathrow, and then go through the results together. My supervisor had an excellent team based there and I learnt a lot working with them.

In what ways did this support your research?

I learned how these technologies are used to research habitat and ecological patterns. I studied birdstrike avoidance models and bird mortality risk analyses. FERA provided an ideal base, as it has hosted courses that were specially designed for bird control staff at airports and airbases in the UK. I applied these research models in my study and successfully completed my degree.

How have you used the skills and expertise you gained whilst in the UK?

You might be surprised to know that I am the only female specialising in this field in Pakistan. Bird and aircraft collision is a serious issue, not just in terms of health and safety but also in terms of economic loss. Now I am helping civil and military aviation authorities to manage this risk. I present seminars and workshops and also conduct surveys on Bird Hazard Management at airports to help these organisations decrease the number of bird and plane collisions and to improve passengers' safety.

based on the supervisor that was willing to supervise my entire research project; with laboratory space and all the equipment that I required for my work. Since I needed so many equipment to successfully complete my research, I had to make my selection of a host supervisor and university based on that.'

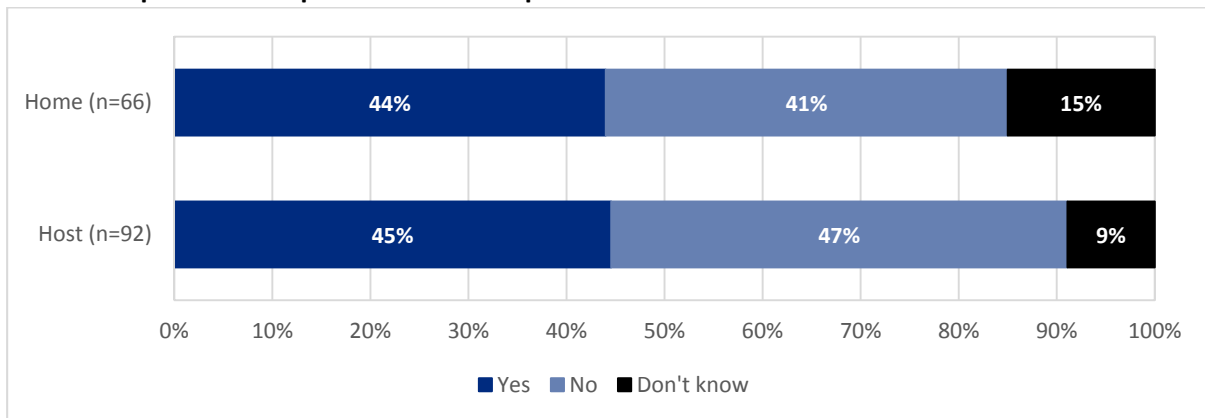
However, in some cases it was actually the host supervisor themselves that was the biggest priority for scholars rather than the institution itself. As one scholar explained, '[It was] not so much the institution, but I wanted to work with my supervisor. She is a specialist in the field and she's also been guiding students who are doing similar research already.' Indeed, for the majority of scholars who were interviewed, it was the subject expertise of the host supervisor that was the most significant reason why they chose to work with them. Similarly to how some scholars determined the best institution to work with, in some cases the expertise of their potential host supervisors were determined through internet research into the individuals with similar or complementary specialisations. As one home supervisor recalled, the process for how they determined who would be the best fit as their scholar's host supervisor was 'to look for people's profile on the internet, search for people that are working in a similar area. And then, we check out the facilities that are available in such institutions. If the facility meets our requirements, then we approach them.'

In other cases, host supervisors were approached by scholars based on the recommendations of colleagues, their home supervisor, or in many cases a direct relationship that already existed between their home supervisor and their eventual host supervisor. In some cases, this was a function of how specialised scholars' research areas were, as explained by one host supervisor, 'Once you're working in [the] particular area that we're working in ... there was a particular group that you were to work with... And it just happens again, fortuitously that the person who was in charge of that group, I had been working with before... we had been in the field, we had collected rocks and so I knew those individuals, I knew the individuals in the group. So in terms of choosing who it was, it was chosen based on pre-existing connections.' These kinds of pre-existing personal relationships between home and host supervisors is a reoccurring theme that appears repeatedly throughout this report in different contexts. Consequently, it is worth examining the frequency and character of these relationships further.

3.4 – Pre-Existing Relationships

One of the metrics used during the selection process is whether or not a pre-existing collaboration or relationship is in place between the home and host universities prior to the scholar's application for a Split-site scholarship. As discussed in Section 2.2, this has always been a requirement of the programme, however, the findings suggest that more flexibility in how this is defined might be warranted, particularly in cases where a pre-existing personal relationship exists between supervisors, but a wider and more formalised institutional relationship is absent. As can be seen in Figure 3.4, slightly less than half of home and host supervisors indicated in their survey responses that they were aware of a previous collaboration between their own institution and their opposite prior to the Split-site.

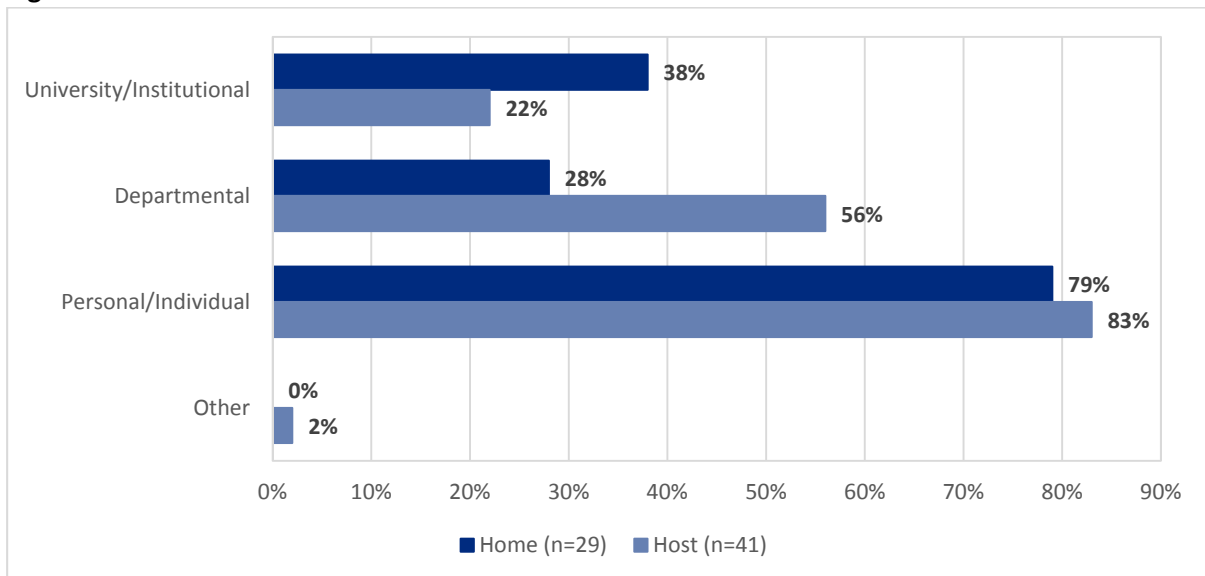
Figure 3.4: Did any previous collaboration exist between your institution and your Scholar's other institution prior to the Split-site Scholarship?



Source: Home Supervisor Survey and Host Supervisor Survey

Even for those supervisors who indicated that a previous collaboration existed, these appeared to be primarily driven by individual-level, personal collaborations more so than departmental or institutional collaborations that are the stated policy focus of the programme. Certainly, formal institutional relationships existed and overlapped with the personal relationships that existed between supervisors, however the substantial drop-off when moving from the personal level to the departmental and institutional levels is unambiguous.

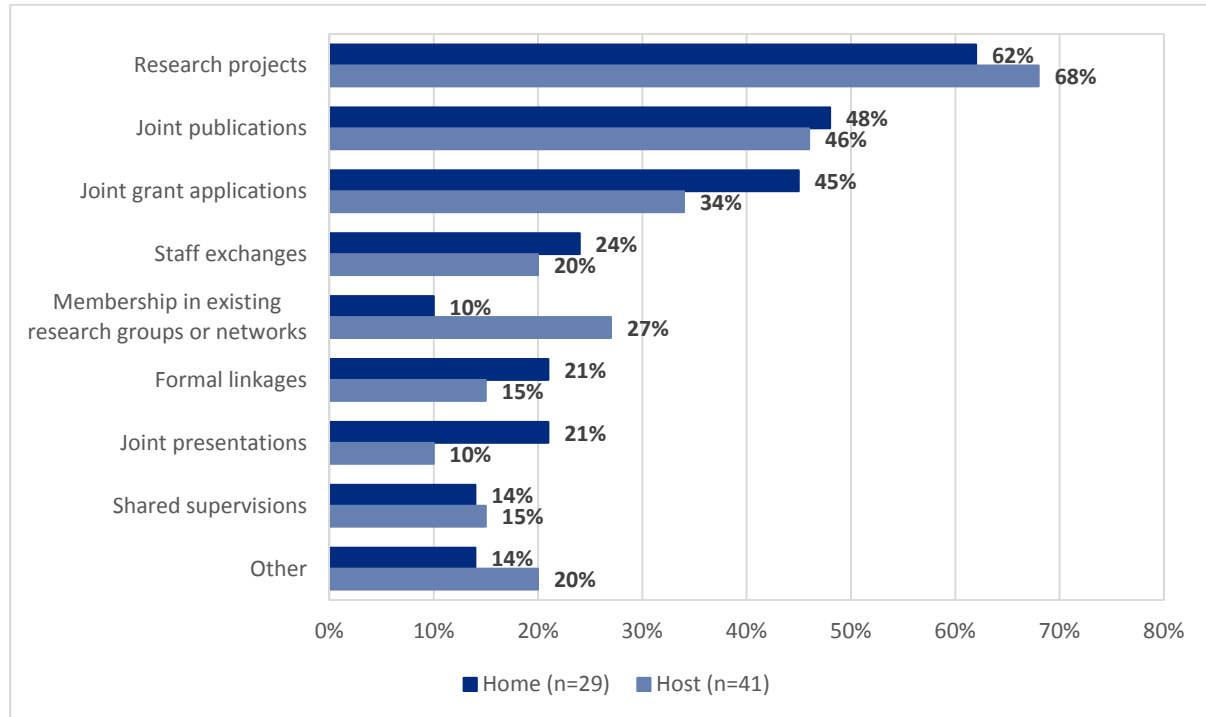
Figure 3.5: At what level was this collaboration?



Source: Home Supervisor Survey and Host Supervisor Survey

This apparent tendency towards personal collaborations is further reinforced when looking at the exact nature of the existing collaborations as reported by supervisors. Research projects, joint publications, and joint grant applications were the top three types of collaboration mentioned by home and host supervisors, all activities that tend to occur at the individual rather than the departmental or institutional level. Collaborations that occupy a more departmental or institutional level such as staff exchanges, shared supervisions, and formal linkages were mentioned by supervisors, however at much lower frequencies.

Figure 3.6: What types of collaboration occurred?



Source: Home Supervisor Survey and Host Supervisor Survey

Interviews with host supervisors provided insight into the range of personal and professional relationships that preceded their supervisory relationships with their scholars' home supervisors. For example, host supervisors had met their home-country counterparts following invitations to visit the home institution or shared mutual colleagues through whom they had been introduced. In other instances the home supervisor had previously attended the host institution in the United Kingdom, either as a research fellow or, in one instance, as the PhD student of the host supervisor themselves. In other cases, supervisors interacted in ways that fell outside of the scope of departmental or institutional cooperation, for example undertaking fieldwork together, or meeting at international conferences. In each of these instances, home and host supervisors were able to foster lasting professional links based on common research interests. In this context, it is unsurprising that many supervisors spoke of the Split-site scholarship as an opportunity to continue to 'collaborate professionally in different ways'.

This willingness to look for these opportunities is a reflection of a mutual interest and inherent trust engendered between home and host supervisors who have these pre-existing relationships. For example, where a potential Split-site was recommended by the home supervisor, then the host supervisor was often immediately assured of the quality of the proposed applicant. As described by one focus group participant, 'my relationship with the supervisor was a very longstanding one from when I was a junior lecturer. So we knew each other very well. So I'm happy not having an input into the design of the program because [the other supervisor] would never send me somebody who he didn't think was one, up to the mark, or two, didn't have a project that would dovetail with what I would do.' Similarly, one host supervisor commented in their interview on the 'shared objectives' and 'same wave length' that typified their work with colleagues at a particular home institution; in turn, the home department had appreciated the interdisciplinary approach of the host department and the way in which it sought to institute 'a cultural change in the way those universities [addressed] poverty and...their social problems'.

In some instances then, these personal relationships served as a natural precursor to more formal departmental and institutional linkages. One host supervisor recalled in their interview that their home counterpart had been able to establish a student exchange programme with the host institution; likewise, the focus group revealed an occasion where a visiting host supervisor ran a mentorship session on the UK doctoral training system with home registered students with the aim to taking an already existing collaboration forward.

For others, their personal and professional ties with home supervisors developed in the context of pre-existing departmental links. Staff and student exchange programmes were identified by several host supervisors as an especially important source through which Split-site applications emerged. As a result, many host supervisors had been able to meet their Split-site scholar prior to the start of their scholarship, either through reciprocal visits to their respective institutions or having taught or worked alongside their future students at the home institution itself. On one occasion, a visiting student was able to remain at the host institution for longer than would have otherwise been possible because of Split-site funding. To that end, the programme has offered a way to deepen departmental ties by providing the resources required to further strengthen existing exchange schemes.

This was also the case in instances where home and host departments had previously engaged in joint research collaborations. Host supervisors recalled having worked with specific departments and institutions following the awarding of external funding grants, notably by the British Council, for projects established either by departmental or more senior colleagues. Where these relationships had developed still further, more formal arrangements, such as Memorandums of Understanding (MoUs), were also likely to be in place, providing the fertile environment from which Split-site applications could emerge.

3.5 – Summary

On the whole, information about and awareness of the Split-site programme appears to be reaching appropriate audiences, as the primary motivations that scholars have for applying to the programme align with the intended purpose of the programme. However, there are opportunities to improve both the messaging and outreach of the programme. Similarly, the stated policy emphasis related to pre-existing institutional relationships is not manifesting in the selected scholars, where individual relationships between the supervisors is more frequent. However, this does not necessarily mean more emphasis needs to be placed on pre-existing institutional relationships, as the individual relationship between supervisors is a much more important driver of success as will be discussed in Sections 4 and 5. Instead, a shift in policy towards giving greater primacy to the pre-existing relationship between supervisors may be more desirable.

Awareness of the Split-site programme came from a variety of pathways, but was primarily driven by communications from scholars' home institutions and their home supervisors. The institutional communications came in a number of forms, in both digital and paper formats, but generally distributed to all (rather than directed specifically to individuals). Alternatively, only one home supervisor explicitly cited these sources as to where they learned about Split-site scholarships, although some scholars said that they learned about the programme second-hand from these sources through their home supervisor.

Home supervisors more frequently cited either their own personal experience or the experience of other colleagues with the programme (or Commonwealth Scholarships more broadly), suggesting that involvement with Commonwealth Scholarships is seen as both a positive and a beneficial experience

by those who have been involved with programmes in the past. This is also supported by word of mouth being frequently mentioned as a source of information for scholars during interviews.

One area of improvement was flagged by a scholar who had used the CSC website as a source of information about the scholarship, noting that the language of the website was quite technical. This suggests that the information on the website might be better organised by being split into an 'about this scholarship' page and another page that focuses on the specific policies related to the scholarship. Given their prominence as a source of information and the open application route for the Split-site programme, it is also worth reviewing existing promotional outreach efforts to institutions to ensure that they are reaching the widest audience of potential applicants as possible.

The primary motivations for scholars when they applied to the programme were to access both equipment and expertise that would otherwise be unavailable to them, in addition to the international experience that the programme provided. Secondary motivations included the building of partnerships and relationships, exploring future collaborations, as well as funding, however these should not be seen as significant drivers in applying to the programme, but instead as additional benefits on top of the primary motivations mentioned above.

The flexibility offered by the programme was also a significant motivation for scholars when they applied. This took a number of different forms, including the ability to apply to the programme while already involved in a PhD, and the shorter amount of time spent away from the scholar's home country (which was important to scholars for both personal and professional reasons), including the ability to split the study period into two six-month chunks. This flexibility also provided a number of scholars the opportunity to do this type of international research that they otherwise would not have been able to participate in due to other obligations.

Scholars chose the host institutions that they did due to various combinations of an institution's subject expertise, appropriate research facilities, and to work with particular supervisors. Similar reasons were also cited for the particular host supervisor that scholars chose to work with, again citing particular subject expertise and reputation, as well as associated facilities at the supervisor's institution. The overlap between these different reasons for scholar's choice of institution and supervisor is not surprising given that the presence of one of these reasons is generally dependent upon others being present as well.

The other significant influencer regarding a scholar's choice of supervisor and institution was when a pre-existing relationship existed between their home institution and their host institution, or their home supervisor and host supervisor. While these relationships appear to be present in just under half of all cases, they often have a notable effect on the Split-site experience for the scholar and their supervisors, as is discussed later in Sections 4 and 5. Although the programme policy is to prefer existing institutional relationships, the details of the existing relationships reported by supervisors demonstrate that they are primarily at the personal or individual level, most frequently in the form of joint research projects, publications, and grant applications. Based on the findings discussed later, an existing personal relationship between supervisors may actually be better for ensuring a productive Split-site experience than an existing institutional relationships where the two supervisors do not have an existing relationship. With that in mind, it may be worth considering flipping the policy emphasis to individual relationships first and institutional relationships second rather than the other way around.

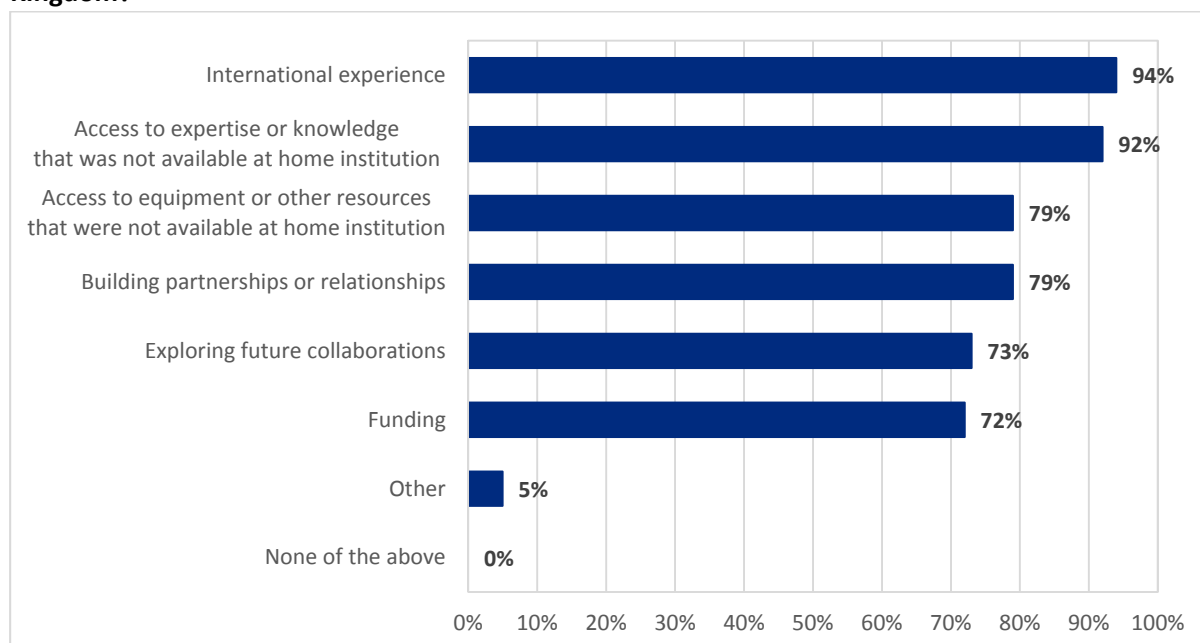
Section 4 – On-Scholarship

An important line of inquiry was what benefits and challenges scholars encountered as a direct result of their involvement in the Split-site programme. These benefits accrued to scholars both directly from their academic experiences at their host institution, as well as more broadly as a result from the time they spent in the United Kingdom. Similarly, while scholars infrequently experienced challenges as part of their time at their host institution, they were far more likely to encounter challenges outside of their host institution while in the United Kingdom. This section also examines scholars' experiences with having two supervisors, the division of responsibilities between their supervisors, how that division was determined, and the dynamic that existed between each party in the relationship. Finally, this section examines the benefits and challenges that the host supervisor and their institution experienced as a result of their involvement in the Split-site programme.

4.1 – Benefits for Scholars during Time in the UK

In their survey, scholars who had already spent time in the UK were asked what they thought the primary benefits from their time in the UK were, specifically with respect to their Split-site experience. Almost all respondents mentioned 'international experience', making it the most frequently mentioned benefit, followed closely by 'access to expertise or knowledge that was not available at [their] home institution'. 'Access to equipment or other resources that were not available at [their] home institution' and 'building partnerships or relationships' were also mentioned by four-fifths of respondents, with almost three-quarters of scholars and alumni also choosing 'exploring future collaborations' and 'funding' as benefits they realised.

Figure 4.1: What do you think are the primary benefits from your time on-award in the United Kingdom?



n=169

Source: Scholar Survey

It is instructive here to refer back to what motivations respondents indicated they had for initially applying for the Split-site scholarship as discussed in Section 3.2. For each response, respondents' rate

of selection was much higher when asked about the tangible benefits from their time on award when compared to their initial motivations. Excluding 'Other', the minimum increase was seen for the response 'access to expertise or knowledge...', which saw an increase of 6%, however as the top response to the motivations question, there was little room for growth. The remaining five options saw increases on average of 20% from motivations to benefits realised.

Scholars also re-iterated the importance of the top three benefits in their survey freetext responses, with each of these three themes mentioned by at least half of scholars and alumni. Access to equipment and resources was mentioned by three-quarters of respondents in their freetext answers about the benefits they realised from their Split-site scholarship. Examples of the types of equipment and resources mentioned by scholars included software, high-end computer facilities, library resources (including e-libraries), laboratory equipment and facilities, raw materials, and sample banks. 'The access to the equipment and resources for example, additive manufacturing system and advanced instrumentation facilities like [a] Transmission Electron microscope and high resolution scanning electron microscope and mechanical measurement techniques'. For some scholars, accessing the equipment that otherwise would have been unavailable at their home university meant that they were able to expand the scope of their research, and in some cases it made the difference between realising their PhD research and potentially not succeeding at their PhD. As one scholar reported in their survey, '[the programme provided] access to equipment and expertise, without this, my PhD research would probably not be completed at a good enough standard at [my] home institution.'

Two-thirds of scholars also mentioned that they benefited from the access to skills and knowledge that they gained from their Split-site experience. Scholars cited the learning of advanced techniques within their field, exposure to interdisciplinary approaches to their research, and the opportunity to learn from and work with top academics in their field. One scholar listed a number of examples in their survey responses, noting '[The Split-site programme] helped me to gain knowledge about the new techniques and their application in my research project. I was able to learn techniques like next generation sequencing, cell culturing, and mutant construction, which I wouldn't have learnt back home.'

Finally, just over half of scholars wrote about how the international experience and exposure that they gained from their Split-site benefitted them. This took a number of different forms for scholars, including the ability to attend conferences that they would not have been able to otherwise attend, exposure to the international research culture, and networking with other international researchers. Scholars also wrote about how the experience exposed them to people from diverse backgrounds in both personal and professional settings. Many cited this exposure as having a significant effect on their personal development, both in terms of understanding how to work in a multicultural setting, and giving them more confidence with respect to working with people. Many interviewees also specifically cited that the multicultural aspect of their experiences as a benefit of their time in the United Kingdom. Not just the exposure that they had to people of different races, nationalities and backgrounds while they were scholars, but also the support networks that they were able to create with other international students, allowing them to both receive support from, and provide support to, other students who were going through a similar experience.

The extended benefits of being in a UK-university environment were also mentioned by a number of scholars and alumni during their interviews. While in many cases, they reiterated the resource-based benefits of being able to access the broader university infrastructure, including libraries and databases, the additional training or upskilling opportunities that were offered by the university were

Split-site Profile: Ifeoma Nancy Obijiaku

Ifeoma Nancy Obijiaku is a 2016 Split-site Scholar whose research focuses on *Toxoplasma gondii* infection in animal and human populations in Benue State, Nigeria. She has been a doctoral student at Ahmadu Bello University, Nigeria since 2014 and during her third year spent 12 months at The Royal Veterinary College in London, UK.

What motivated you to apply for the Split-site scholarship?

I had already completed two years of my PhD but to continue required the use of advanced molecular technology that was not available at my university so I needed to look for support to complete the lab work. I also have a family and, at the time, I worked as well so I had to balance both. I applied for the Split-site because it offered the support for my lab work without staying away from my family for three years. Also, going to the UK with a family is a lot! It is not easy and expensive. I considered all of that and felt that the Split-site was better for me. Stay for one year and then come back.



How did you plan the length and timing of your visit to the UK?

Before I travelled, I had done my proposal defence and included corrections to improve my research. This gave me a clear-cut picture of how to proceed with the lab work in the UK. 90% of my time was spent in the lab. I discussed with all my supervisors everything that I had to do within that one year. It was enough time but, experiments often do not go the way you plan. Sometimes you have to come up with new ideas and techniques to make things work, which can take a lot of time. I had that challenge but thankfully, in the end, it worked out.

How did your home and host supervisors work together during your scholarship?

My UK supervisor took responsibility for the work I did in the UK. He was a big source of encouragement to me. Any problem I was having, he was always there to listen, and he always made time to show me new lab techniques. Whilst I was away, my home supervisors read my work and we re-designed parts of it. I found this beneficial. My supervisors all come from different departments – public health and veterinary parasitology. Based on their combined knowledge and experiences, they would all identify specific issues that others might have missed. There are benefits of working with experts from different departments. It refines and brings out the beauty of the work.

What was your experience of working at a UK university?

Working in the UK exposed me to a world-class laboratory environment. I was able to learn new techniques through hands-on experience and improve my own expertise. It was fulfilling for me that I could do things that are otherwise abstract back at home because there are no resources for practical experimentation. So it was a wonderful experience, yes, between the two universities because knowledge is unending. It's good to learn know what people do and to find ways to inculcate such knowledge if applicable within your own system.

Have you maintained contact with UK colleagues following your return home?

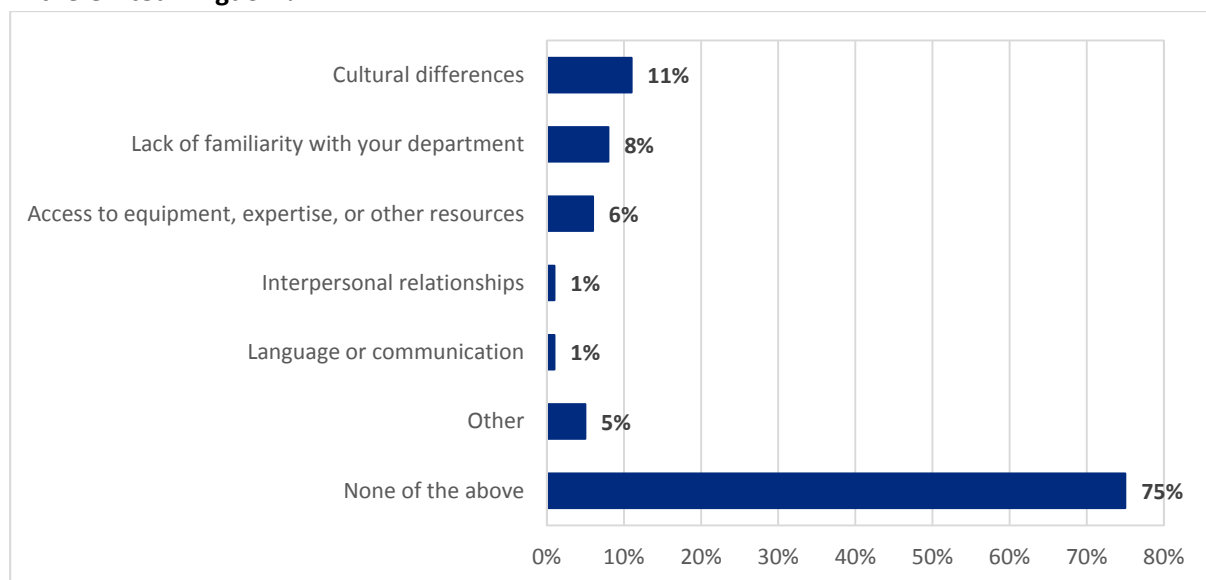
Yes, I have. My host supervisor is expecting a copy of my thesis so he can make his own comments. He has kept checking on me and finding out how I'm faring. I've also kept access to the university library services, so once in a while, when I go over my books looking for a journal or something, I'm still able to access one or two online journals. And again, I still have access to my email account. I still receive emails sent to all staff and students and so the collaborations and colleagues, the friends I made, I still contact. And then, of course, I will work on these contacts in the future.

also cited as beneficial. Exposure to the workplace culture and research environment within their host university was also flagged as a major positive for interviewees. Many scholars spoke positively about their time spent in this environment, both about the general workplace culture and the opportunity that is available for researchers. As Anita Sharma, a 2009 scholar from India noted in their interview, ‘one thing that the UK provides is that somehow university systems manage to uphold a certain research environment which is very productive, because of which you end up being much more productive in the UK than you are here. That’s not just infrastructure or so many facilities and access and libraries, I think it’s also a much more nurturing research environment, and if the student has initiative they can make a lot out of it.’

4.2 – Challenges for Scholars during Time in the UK

Scholars who had already spent some or all of their time in the United Kingdom were also asked to indicate whether they had encountered any difficulties during that time, be they at their host institution or more generally within their community. With respect to their experience at their host institution, fully three-quarters of respondents indicated that they did not encounter any difficulties during their time there. Of those who did encounter at least one difficulty, the most frequently encountered was ‘cultural differences’, which was chosen by just over one-tenth of respondents. As per their freetext response, one scholar highlighted both the challenge of adjusting to a new culture, but also the support that supervisors can provide to see them through this period. ‘In my opinion, integration in a new environment and culture is the biggest challenge which [I] faced during [the] initial months but after that due to [the] supportive nature of [my] host supervisor, I [started] feeling comfortable.’

Figure 4.2: Did you experience difficulties in any of the following areas at your host institution while in the United Kingdom?



n=169

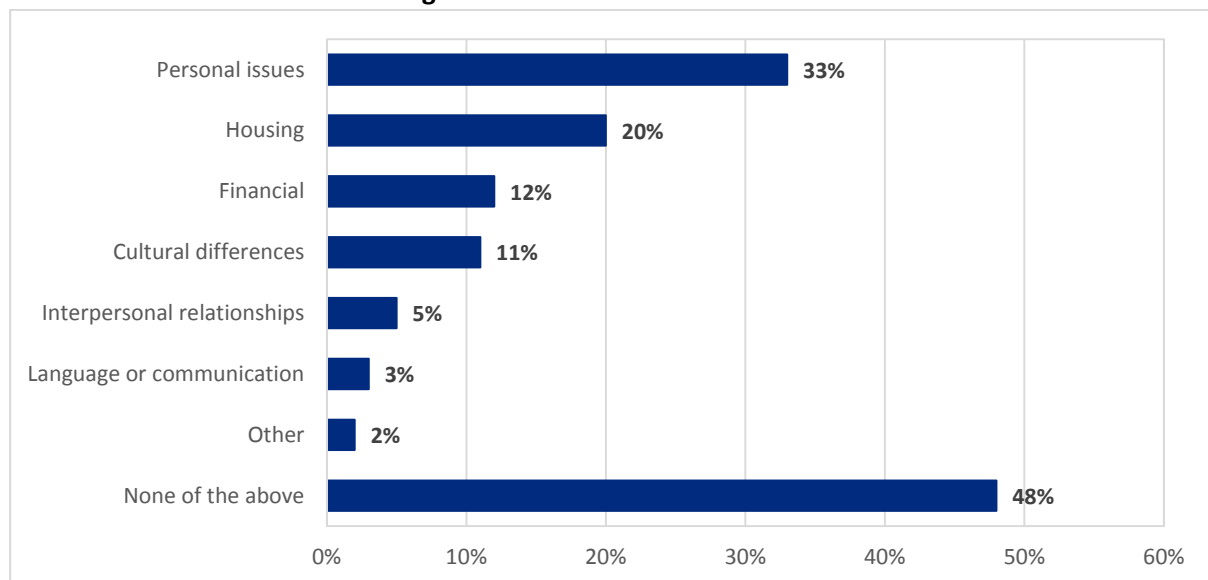
Source: Scholar Survey

This sentiment was echoed by a couple of host supervisors during their interviews, who provided examples of cultural differences that they observed during their supervision. In one instance, a supervisor found that it took their scholar some time to adjust to the degree of formalisation in lab safety protocols within the host department compared to that of scholars’ home institutions. ‘I think

initially it was probably quite a culture shock for this student, but because the way things are arranged in the labs here are much more formal probably. So initially she had to get used to particularly safety protocols and things like this, which she did, and I'd say within about a month or so she had become pretty settled.' Another supervisor felt that their scholar displayed an overtly hierarchical attitude in their interactions with other members of the department, being overly deferential to some while being overly patronising to others, which was counter to the culture of collegiality that they tried to maintain in the department.

While most scholars did not experience any difficulties within their host institution, the same cannot be said for scholars' non-academic experiences in the United Kingdom. Although just under half of respondents indicated that they did not encounter any issues, this still meant that slightly over half of respondents encountered at least one issue outside of their host institution. Personal issues such as homesickness or concerns about family was the most frequent of these issues, with one-third of respondents indicating that they experienced this issue. Housing was another area where fully one-fifth of respondents had difficulties, followed by financial difficulties and cultural differences, each of which were cited by approximately one-tenth of scholars.

Figure 4.3: Did you experience difficulties in any of the following areas outside of your host institution while in the United Kingdom?



n=169

Source: Scholar Survey

For many of the scholars who indicated that they experienced personal issues, their freetext responses elaborated that these difficulties were generally associated with being separated from their families. In instances where general homesickness was mentioned, this was often framed by the scholar as a normal difficulty that they expected as a part of their experience. However, the time away from family was explicitly cited as an 'emotional and psychological challenge' and a significant source of distress. In one instance, this problem was exacerbated when a scholar's family members planned to come and visit the scholar while they were in the United Kingdom, but had their visa applications denied. The issue of homesickness was also true not just in the general sense of scholars being away from children and spouses, but also in cases of sudden emergency or trauma within the family.

Many host supervisors also noted that their scholars experienced personal issues during their time in the United Kingdom, and largely echoed the scholar feedback discussed above. One supervisor

recalled an instance where their scholar's child became quite ill, and the extreme stress that this placed on the scholar. Another noted that the personal issues experienced by their scholar had a very real impact on the work they were able to get done while in the United Kingdom, which suggests that finding and sharing ways to support scholars who are experiencing more severe forms of these difficulties could be beneficial. For example, one supervisor felt that their scholar was partly able to cope with loneliness and homesickness by socialising with the expat community that existed in their city. Another found that their scholar effectively dealt with their homesickness by going back for a brief visit, and upon their return to the United Kingdom no longer had any issues with it.

While personal issues were the most frequently mentioned issue in scholars' survey responses, they were not mentioned nearly as often during interviews. Instead, it was housing that was most frequently cited in the interviews as a challenge for scholars during their time in the United Kingdom. While this issue was specifically mentioned by only one-quarter of those scholars and alumni who were interviewed, the scope and scale of the issue when it occurred, plus the disruption and burden it caused, was substantial, and worth exploring further. According to scholars, the primary cause of these challenges was the fact that they were trying to secure short-term housing. In instances where the scholar was looking to stay in university housing, they were beholden to the academic calendar of their host university, and if their study period did not precisely align with that calendar they were stuck trying to find even shorter-term housing either before or after the academic year. The need to find short-term housing also made scholars vulnerable to disruption or exploitation. For example, one scholar talked about their experience where an otherwise accommodating landlord asked them to vacate the property they were sharing due to the desire to host guests over the Christmas holiday. Another scholar described their experience with a letting agency that took a deposit from them for a short-term lease and then disappeared, costing the scholar £900. Because of these situations, scholars had to turn to hotels, hostels, emergency campus housing, or even their host supervisor for accommodation.

Many host supervisors also noted in their interviews that housing was an area in which they provided their scholar with non-academic support. Much of this support was focused on helping the scholar prior to their arrival, and took a number of different forms, including providing advice about local accommodation costs, writing references for the scholar, and even checking out a potential accommodation that a scholar was unsure about. Some host supervisors also noted situations where housing was distinctly not an issue for scholars, in cases where scholars made use of personal or professional connections to secure an initial place to stay prior to their arrival, and then found a more long-term solution once they were in the United Kingdom. In other instances, supervisors felt scholars were able to effectively make use of the resources provided by the host institution. However, it is critical to note that not all scholars have these opportunities and resources available to them.

Due to the severity of the issues associated with housing, when scholars were asked for any additional guidance the CSC could provide to them, or any recommendations that they might have, issues related to accommodation were specifically mentioned. Interviewees suggested that more information could be provided about what letting agencies could be trusted when searching for short-term lets. Other suggestions related to housing included the provision of more information about expected accommodation costs (both direct costs such as rent, and indirect or related costs such as council tax and transportation), and what areas of a city are considered safe, or reasonable to live in.

Outside of housing and accommodation, the initial period of adjustment following arrival was also mentioned as a short-term challenge by both scholars and host supervisors, although for most instances this was framed as a minor issue, and an inherent challenge when getting familiar with a new location. As one host supervisor said in their interview, 'I always say to my international students

that it's going to take you at least a month to adjust, and I expect that to be the case, because whatever country people are coming from things are very, very different. And it does take some time to adjust.'

Specific examples mentioned by scholars in their interviews included adjusting to the weather, getting familiarised with how to use services such as public transportation or the NHS, finding social opportunities that they were interested in, and getting oriented within their university environment. However, many interviewees indicated that they received support from their host supervisors, other students in their department, and their housemates in navigating these challenges. Many host supervisors also felt that it was a part of their role to provide this kind of support: 'So although it's non-academic, it's pastoral care. So we discuss once in a month, to see how things are going from a personal front. If there are any issues faced which can be either within the university or outside, so we can discuss if there is counselling required and so on.' These support networks also provided scholars with other benefits beyond the ability to cope with any issues they encountered, including opportunities to engage in additional social activities which helped to widen their social circles while in the United Kingdom.

Aside from the specific issues just discussed, the general absence of difficulties while in the United Kingdom was frequently mentioned by scholars and alumni during their interviews, describing what were largely positive experiences when talking about their time in the United Kingdom. The general supportiveness provided by host supervisors and others mentioned above was certainly framed in this light, and was also framed as one of the extended benefits of being in a UK-university environment.

4.3 – Supervisor Roles, Relationships, and Responsibilities

One of the most important elements of the Split-site experience is the three-way relationship that exists between the scholar, their home supervisor, and the host supervisor. There are three interrelated elements to this relationship that are critical to the overall success of the Split-site experience for the scholar. Specifically, the division of responsibilities between the two supervisors, the roles that each play over the course of their scholar's doctorate, and the degree of cooperation needed (and provided) based on these roles and divisions of responsibility.

Throughout the responses provided by scholars and supervisors to questions about supervision and relationships, 'flexibility' was a recurring theme. It was also a characteristic of the programme that respondents placed a high premium on. The ability for the parties involved to determine what the best division of responsibilities is between themselves, rather than have the CSC prescribe these roles was very much seen as a strength of the programme. However, regardless of this flexibility and the specific details, there does appear to be two broad types that the supervisory arrangements can be grouped into. The first can be described as a 'tag-team' style, where the supervisor who is based at the institution the scholar is currently at acts as the primary supervisor, while the other supervisor is less involved. The second can be framed as more of a 'co-supervisory' style where both supervisors are more actively involved regardless of where the scholar is located at the time. While these two styles of arrangement are quite different, it is important to note that they represent divisions of roles and responsibilities that were agreed upon by the supervisors as what would work best for them, the scholar, and the context in which they are all working in.

With respect to the roles played by each of the supervisors, the role played by the home supervisor was very much that of a typical supervisor over the life of the scholar's doctorate. While the scholar was at their home institution, the home supervisor provided the scholar with day-to-day supervision, as well as guidance in the design of the scholar's research, supervision of locally-based research

including fieldwork or lab work, and provision of editorial feedback on the scholar's writing. Home supervisors also retained an overarching supervisory role while the scholar was in the United Kingdom, but with varying degrees of involvement depending on the overall arrangement between the two supervisors. In instances where the tag-team approach was used, home supervisors were generally happy to let the host supervisor act as the primary supervisor during this time and receive periodic updates on the scholar's work. Alternatively, in instances where a co-supervisory arrangement was in place, they remained much more closely involved in the scholar's work while the scholar was at their host institution in the United Kingdom.

Alternatively, the role played by the host supervisor was partly influenced by the point at which they became involved in the scholar's research project. For example, in instances where host supervisors became involved with scholars who were still early on in their doctorate and even before their application for a Split-site scholarship, the host supervisor was able to contribute more fully to the conception, development, and planning of the research project in conjunction with the scholar and their home supervisor. However, for host supervisors who became involved when their scholars were further along in their doctoral programme, the opportunity for this type of involvement was minimal, and the focus was more on helping with the implementation of the scholar's research programme.

More generally, while scholars were in the United Kingdom their host supervisors took on their day-to-day supervision. This included the non-academic support that was discussed earlier, such as helping out with any problems the scholar encountered, ensuring that the scholar was comfortable at the host institution, and securing resources or otherwise advocating for the scholar. However, host supervisors also acted in a mentorship role for scholars while they were in the United Kingdom, teaching them relevant techniques associated with their project, including techniques in research methodology, the use of equipment and other lab work, and relevant analytical techniques. As Nancy Ifeoma Obijaku, who received a scholarship in 2016, described their relationship with their host supervisor, 'He supervised me throughout my laboratory research sessions to make sure I was doing all that he taught me. Any time that I encountered a challenge, he was always there to listen, and he always made time to show me how do these techniques in the lab, and thank God, I got them right most of the time. He made it his responsibility to make sure that I was comfortable and progressing in my lab work and importantly, he made sure I gained other skills that I needed as an early career researcher.' In many respects, this role is a fulfilment of one of the primary reasons why scholars came to work with their host supervisor, as discussed earlier in Sections 3.2 and 3.3.

Finally, host supervisors also played a role in highlighting other opportunities for scholars while they were in the United Kingdom, both inside and outside of the country. These other opportunities included conferences and workshops, potential avenues of publication, and professional associations that scholars could become members of. In some cases, these additional opportunities had significant long-term impacts on scholars. As 2004 scholar Emmanuel Akpabio recalled, this type of exposure was a critical development in their long-term career path: 'I can remember when he recommended me to IWRA, the International Water Resources Association, which later became a very important organisational platform for my career.'

Upon the scholar's return to their home country, the roles that host supervisors played tended to diverge depending on which style of arrangement they had with the home supervisors. For the host supervisors engaged in the tag-team style, their role tended to drop off significantly upon the departure of their scholar. In these instances, their chief responsibility over the course of the doctorate was to see the scholar through the primary research being conducted in the United Kingdom, and the completion of the scholar's time at their institution marked the end of their involvement in the research project. However, there are instances where the two supervisors had

initially arranged to have this style of supervision, but due to the host supervisor's work with the scholar their role evolved into one more akin to the co-supervisory style. For these host supervisors, and those engaged in the co-supervisory style from the start, they were more heavily involved with the scholar's work once they were back in their home country. This included commenting on the write-up, sitting on the scholar's doctoral defence panel, and even being registered as the scholar's co-supervisor.

When asked about how it was determined which responsibilities would be held by each supervisor, scholars described a wide variety of situations both in terms of how the supervisory responsibilities were planned, and how they were ultimately allocated. For some scholars the division of responsibilities between their supervisors was quite formalised, with clearly defined roles for each supervisor over the course of the doctorate. In some cases this even included an agreement for how frequently all three parties would meet to discuss the scholar's progress while in the United Kingdom, or when more formalised progress reports would be provided to both supervisors.

In other cases, this arrangement was more informal in nature. For example, one scholar divided their work up into stages, and when they were about to start a new stage they would discuss the next steps with both of their supervisors who would determine the best way to approach that stage of the process. Another scholar who described their supervisors' arrangement as 'informal' directly attributed this dynamic to the fact that there was a good pre-existing relationship between their two supervisors. Due to the fact that the supervisors have previously established working relationships and a higher level of trust in each other's abilities and priorities, they can take a more fluid approach to their scholar's supervision that might not otherwise be practical for two supervisors who do not already know each other. This can be seen as one of the areas where the dynamic between the three parties benefits from the pre-existing relationship between the supervisors.

While the supervisory relationships were generally seen to be positive experiences for all involved, there were instances where there were issues. However, these did not appear to be systemic in nature but related to specific instances of disagreement with individual supervisors. In one particular instance, a scholar had issues with their home supervisor stemming from disagreements related to publications and intellectual property, to the point where the scholar had to switch home supervisors. However, while this was a difficult period for the scholar they credited the support they received from their host supervisor and institution for seeing them through that period. In another case, the scholar felt that there was an imbalance in the amount of respect one supervisor was showing to the other, reflected in the amount of preparation they had done for an in-person meeting that had been arranged, and the way in which that supervisor presented themselves. While these are one-off cases, potentially exacerbated by individual personalities, the potential for these types of occurrences could be reduced through a clearer establishment of expectations early on in the supervisory relationship.

Scholars generally described the experience of having two supervisors as a positive one, with many distinct advantages over having a single supervisor. One advantage that scholars noted was how each supervisor brought different strengths and areas of expertise to the scholar's research project. This arrangement allowed the scholar to draw upon each of their supervisor's specialisations to produce a more robust piece of research than they would have been able to produce as a result of working with just one supervisor. As one scholar noted about the experience, 'It was great in fact because both of them had their own specialisation, expertise. So it's like inter-specialisation kind of a thing for me and I gained personally a lot of experience. It's not just the research experience that I got, it's [the] personal interactions with them regarding the future scope, the collaborations and everything. They both helped me a lot.'

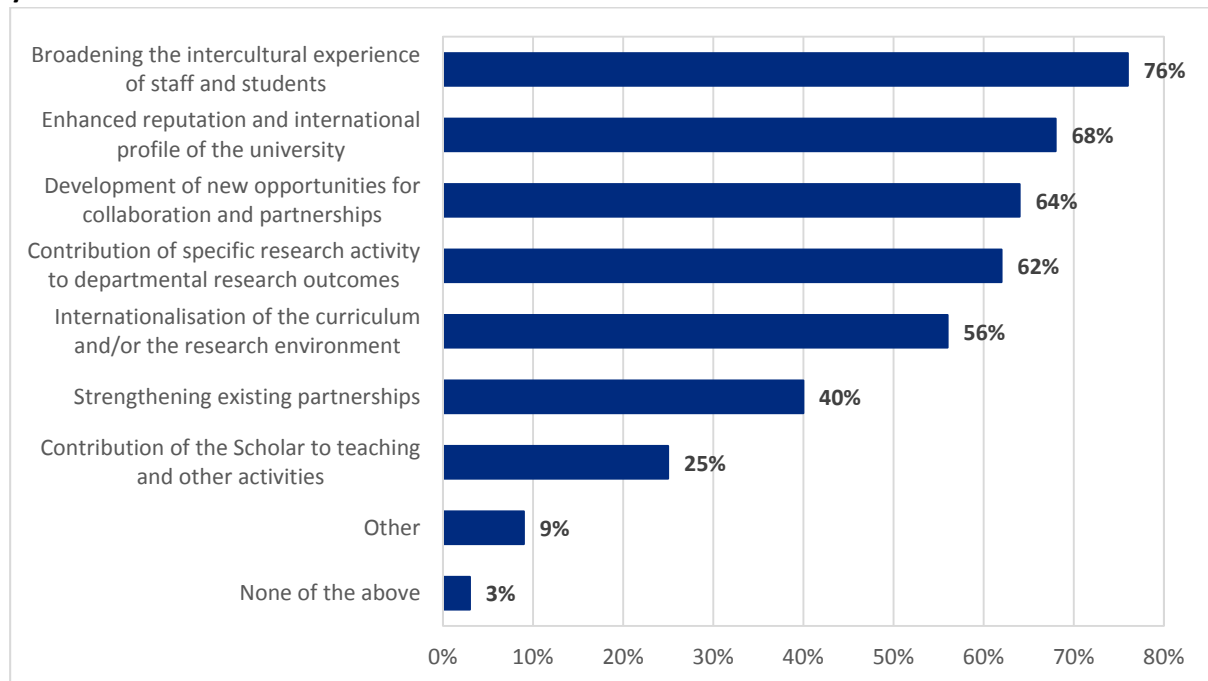
Similarly, scholars felt that having to incorporate the opinions and viewpoints of two supervisors in their work was also an advantage. Each supervisor brought different focuses and priorities to how they advised on their scholar's work, which scholars felt helped to ensure their work was not too narrowly scoped. As Kondwani Katundu, a 2017 scholar from Malawi noted 'It broadened the view on my research project because I had one supervisor who had in mind of the local impact of my research in Malawi, while my international supervisor had another perspective of it, and not confined to the box of my theory and my mind towards it. These different but complementary expert-views broadened the dimension of my research and its impact. So, it was quite incredible in the end, and I'm so grateful to have had the privilege of such a worthwhile arrangement... it was really beyond my expectation and achieved outstanding results.'

While scholars sometimes found the task of incorporating different, and sometimes conflicting, perspectives from their supervisors difficult, they still felt that they ultimately benefitted from how this process made their work stronger. Scholars also felt that in addition to its impact on their work, going through this process made them stronger as researchers and as individuals, as they had to critically assess the input of each supervisor and weigh each argument before ultimately deciding for themselves which way they wanted to proceed.

4.4 – Benefits to Host Supervisors and Institutions

In their survey, host supervisors were asked what benefits they felt their institution or department realised from hosting their scholar. The most frequently mentioned benefit was the 'broadening [of] the intercultural experience of staff and students', which was selected by three-quarters of respondents. Two-thirds of respondents said that hosting the scholar 'enhanced [the] reputation and international profile of the university', with a similar number mentioning the 'development of new opportunities for collaboration and partnerships' and the 'contribution of specific research activity to departmental research outcomes'. 'Internationalisation of the curriculum and/or the research environment' was also cited by just over half of respondents.

Figure 4.4: In your view, what benefits did your university/department realise as a result of hosting your scholar?



n=91

Source: Host Supervisor Survey

In host supervisors' freetext responses, many cited not only the benefit of having an additional research student within their department (particularly in the case of smaller departments), but also specifically commented on the quality of student that they got in the Split-site scholar. One host supervisor described their scholar as 'a really well trained student who came to our lab at a stage where there was already a strong scientific foundation. Very hard working scholar but in no way overconfident or arrogant - just the perfect team player.' Host supervisors also mentioned that their scholars provided good role models for other students within their departments. In one interview, the host supervisor explained 'I think it's important that we have more of a global community because those students, I think, well the ones that I've had, don't always come from the same kinds of privileged backgrounds, perhaps, that the British and American students come from. And they have a particular experience, I think, of perseverance and application that is quite good, I think, for the other students to see.'

Similarly, one-fifth of host supervisors specifically mentioned in their freetext responses that hosting the scholar provided awareness and learning opportunities to other staff and students about the scholar's home country that would not be otherwise available to the department. This broadly took three forms. First, supervisors felt that their departments gained insight into the social and cultural aspects of scholars' home countries and communities. As one host supervisor elaborated in their interview, 'we'd never had anybody, any student or staff member from North East India in the department before. So, she was able to give everybody quite a good insight into particularly the [specific] community that she herself was from and that she had been researching for her PhD.'

A second, but similar benefit that host supervisors mentioned was that scholars provided members of their department with a better understanding into the research environment at their home departments and institutions. As one supervisor wrote in their freetext response, 'it was an education to me on how difficult their research life is in Nigeria.' In some cases they also brought a unique skill

set developed from working in that environment to their host department's research team, helping to solve research questions in creative ways that did not solely depend on using more resources. This was highlighted by another supervisor, who wrote 'the scholar was very well-trained and energetic. He helped us to understand his background and culture. Since he came from an institution with more limited research resources, he was very good at solving problems using simpler and less expensive techniques. This was also useful for us.'

The third benefit cited by host supervisors in this vein was the increased knowledge that they gained from the scholar regarding the broader research and higher education landscape of their home countries. Host supervisors described this benefit as both a generalised learning experience, and, for some, knowledge that they were subsequently able to apply directly in their work. For this second group, the understanding and experience they gained from working with their scholar enabled them to better navigate the research landscape in the scholar's home country during future work. This was exemplified in one freetext response, where the supervisor wrote 'working with a South African-registered PhD student has been very useful in understanding first-hand the differences in PhD processes (from supervision and training through to progression and assessment) between the UK and South Africa. This experience will be valuable in working with South African researchers at all stages in future - from South African PhD applicants to [my institution] through to employment of researchers/permanent staff at a post-doctoral level.'

In their freetext responses, almost two-fifths of host supervisors cited the exchange of knowledge and skills as a significant benefit to themselves and their department. Not only did scholars themselves gain knowledge and skills from the Split-site experience, but they also passed knowledge and skills to members of their host departments. As described by one host supervisor, '[my scholar] was a great part of our research team while she was here. Together we used a useful technique I was not aware of before, and that was useful.'

Host supervisors also cited three research-specific benefits that were realised by themselves and their departments from their Split-site experience. First and foremost of these was that the experience provided an opportunity for supervisors to explore a topic or area in their field of research that they otherwise would not have been able to investigate. These included areas of interest that supervisors did not have time to investigate because it was outside of their normal research scope, as well as areas that the supervisor would never have become involved in but were exposed to through their work with their scholar.

The second research-related benefit was the ability for host supervisors to expand the scope of their research to other countries, particularly to the scholar's home country. This benefit took two forms. First, supervisors mentioned that hosting their scholar meant that they were able to do research that was relevant to either a developing country generally, or to their scholar's home country specifically. For some supervisors, this meant being able to focus on a country that was of interest professionally, but for others it was an opportunity to focus on a country that they had a personal connection to, including cases where they had immigrated to the United Kingdom from that country. Second, supervisors felt that it was extremely beneficial to be able to work with the primary data sets that had been collected in their scholar's home countries. In these instances, having a whole other set of primary data from a different country context helped to build a more robust data set which they could examine in their research. It also meant that they were not relying on less reliable secondary data when it came to that country.

The third research-related benefit was the opportunity to establish or continue international research collaborations. These included the ability to form productive research partnerships for specific

Split-site Profile: Keshavan Niranjana

Keshavan Niranjana (known as Niranjana) is the Professor of Food Bioprocessing at the University of Reading. He is also a Visiting Professor at universities in China, Malaysia and India, and a Fellow of the Institute of Food Science and Technology. Niranjana has published internationally on food processing/process engineering for health and environment and is passionately committed to food engineering education, especially to its training, research and enterprise dimensions.



Niranjana supervised two Split-site scholars in 2004 and 2015; they each spent one period of 12-months at Reading whilst registered for their doctoral studies at The Federal University of Technology in Nigeria and Banaras Hindu University in India.

What motivated you to supervise these Split-site scholars?

I think there are two things. The [home] institutions are very good so you know that the students that apply to the CSC have to be good even to gain admission to those universities. It's a natural thing to say yes when the funding and other things are in place and I was very glad to get the opportunity to work with them.

How do you think the scholars benefited from their time in the UK?

The students were well into their PhD projects and, I think, they had already completed two years. Although completing the PhD is important, we wanted to see how we could strengthen their research portfolios and add additional dimensions to their projects. For example, one of the scholars had a good research background but she had not done much writing and so I asked her to produce a critical review paper. By the end of her time in the UK, she had submitted the paper which gave her the confidence to independently communicate with the editors for subsequent papers which she co-authored.

What were the main benefits of having supervised them?

From a research point of view, they both settled well. In fact, one scholar even took an MSc student under her wings to produce a jointly co-authored paper on the development of a millet-based porridge consumed in northern India. I don't know whether they had any plans of becoming entrepreneurs, but they looked at it as an entrepreneurial project whilst studying the science and technology of packaging and UHT treatment. That scholar was very productive, and I think she really contributed to the department's research output. It was of enormous help to us that, in the space of one year, they had come up with three or four quality papers. From a technical point of view, Split-site supervision also gave me the opportunity to work on topics that I would not have otherwise researched on my own, and I don't think I would have even got funding to undertake research on those topics in the UK. So that was a big bonus.

Did the university or department benefit in any other way?

Yes. The institutions we worked with are very good but it is difficult to develop joint programmes. We needed a sponsor to formalise the relationship, a signed MoU would not have led to significant collaboration. Without proper resourcing, there is no way to make these collaborations materialise. I certainly enjoyed working with the scholars I met as a result of the Split-site programme and these were very productive partnerships.

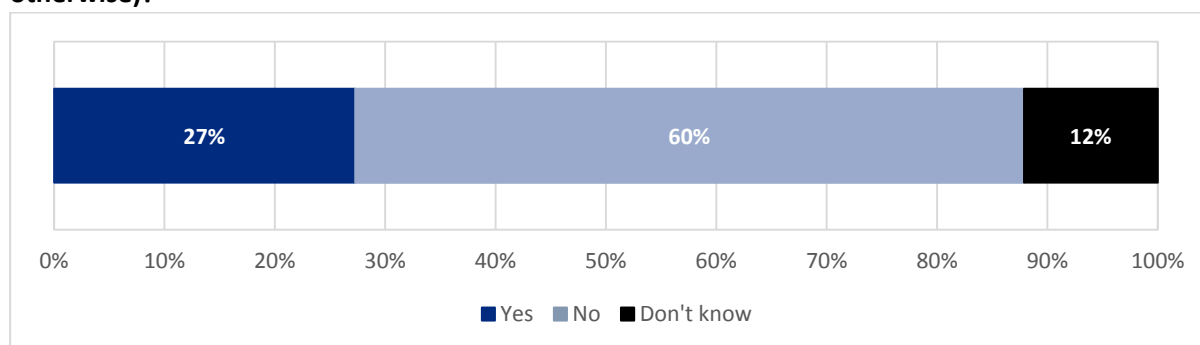
projects, as well as the development and maintenance of longer-term relationships. With respect to project-specific collaborations, host supervisors noted the abilities to share data, reagents, and other materials with each other. It was also noted that each department was able to contribute in the areas that they were strong in, allowing for a greater synergy 'based on clinical sample availability from the home institution, and access to research equipment and expertise at the host institution to address a population-specific question.' In this way, the Split-site was seen as being mutually beneficial for both parties. As one host supervisor pointed out, their Split-site experience 'facilitated joint project development that met the needs of both institutions. In single-site programmes the needs of one institution tend to dominate.' Supervisors also noted the benefit of the joint publications produced by both the scholar's specific research project, and the longer-term collaborations enabled by the Split-site experience.

The final major benefit mentioned by host supervisors was the institutional link building and strengthening that occurred due to their involvement with the Split-site programme. As shown above in Figure 4.4, two-thirds of host supervisors felt that the Split-site experience helped them to develop new opportunities for collaborations and partnerships, while two-fifths said that it helped to strengthen existing partnerships. With respect to longer-term relationships, host supervisors felt the Split-site experience opened up opportunities to pursue a variety of different collaborations, ranging from grant applications (including to the Global Challenge Research Fund), to ongoing research projects, and joint publications. In the examples provided in their freetext responses, host supervisors illustrated the deepening of ties that the programme provided: 'In terms of linkages it certainly strengthened our links with Makerere [University] to the point we are now talking about joint research proposals.' Another provided an example of just how productive the subsequent collaborations could be, noting that 'the major benefit was in establishing common research links which has led to further student exchanges for over a decade. This has led to joint grants [and] more than 30 publications.'

4.5 – Challenges to Host Supervisors and Institutions

On the whole, host supervisors felt that they and their institutions did not encounter major challenges from participating in the Split-site programme. The most frequently mentioned freetext response to the question 'what challenges do you think the Split-site programme provided to you and/or your institution' was 'none'. However, this is not to say that there were not challenges, or that some of the challenges that host supervisors encountered were not significant. For example, one area of concern that was reported by one-quarter of host supervisors was the additional costs that were incurred as a result of hosting the scholar. As one host supervisor noted, '[finding] funding to support the research programme can be a challenge. Some of these projects can be expensive in terms of laboratory and field costs.'

Figure 4.5: Did your university incur any costs as a result of hosting your scholar (unforeseen or otherwise)?



n=91

Source: Host Supervisor Survey

These costs were generally attributed by host supervisors to expenses related to lab supplies and reagents, but as some supervisors pointed out, even the cost of running the lab equipment can be quite high. As one supervisor described it, 'Every time I turn on one of my reactors, it costs £30 just [from turning] it on.' While the CSC does allow for an application for funding towards these types of bench fees, it is clear that this opportunity is not well signposted. When the topic of bench fees was discussed during the host supervisor focus group, some participants expressed surprise that this was an option, with one noting that they had virtually no money allocated towards this type of expense, with direct consequences on how much research the scholar was actually able to do. Even those host supervisors who were aware that they could apply for this type of funding indicated that they underestimated what the expected cost was for fear that they either would not receive any additional funding, or that the scholarship itself might be rescinded. When polled as to what the average expected cost would be from hosting a Split-site scholar in their labs, focus group participants agreed that it would amount to approximately £10,000. As this is a substantial amount of money to pay out-of-pocket, more effort should be made to ensure that host supervisors are aware of the opportunity for supplemental funding to cover these costs.

Another challenge mentioned by host supervisors was the length of the scholar's study period in the United Kingdom. This took a number of different forms, however they were all rooted in the constraints created by the set length of the study period. For example, some host supervisors cited the time needed to train scholars up on equipment and department protocols as problematic as it eats into the already limited amount of time they have with the scholar: 'In our lab, it takes six weeks to train them on how to use just one of the plasma reactors, you know. And so there's a lot of training to get them good enough to trust them to use it by themselves.' Similarly, some host supervisors mentioned that it takes time to develop a relationship with the scholar, which, again eats into the limited amount of time available with the scholar while they are in the United Kingdom, and consequently leaves a shortened amount of time for this relationship-building to bear fruit (although this does continue after the scholar returns to their home institution).

Another form that this challenge took was the limit that it created on the amount of research scholars could do while they were in the United Kingdom. Because scholars had only a finite amount of time at their host institution, host supervisors felt that there was a need to both manage scholar's expectations as to what they could accomplish during their time in the United Kingdom, and to keep them focused on what the primary purpose of that time was. As one host supervisor described it, 'What he...saw the experience was, is come to a world-class university, which [my institution] is, get experience in every single possible piece of apparatus he could possibly fit into a year, whether it was

relevant to his project or not, and then basically go home with all this added to his CV. So he would overdo analysing, he would go around every piece of analysis equipment in the university, and basically get trained on how to use that, even if it wasn't relevant... Occasionally, I had to say, 'Don't waste a week doing that (i.e. getting trained on a specialised piece of apparatus) because you're never going to use that in your project here. Get on with your actual project'. So it was a constant battle'.

The final set of challenges mentioned by host supervisors revolved around the issue of intellectual property. These also took multiple forms, with differing consequences for each. In some cases, the issue was more regulatory or administrative, such as when there was a need to transfer samples between institutions and borders. In these cases, the consequence could be simply the difficulty in transferring samples across borders due to the gauntlet of regulations that need to be followed when moving something that was strictly controlled, such as insects or other biological samples. This was also not just limited to bringing the samples into the United Kingdom, but even bringing samples that were collected across multiple locations into a scholar's home country. However, there were also cases where the transfer of samples had severe consequences for the ownership rights to the samples and the data derived from them. By way of example, one supervisor detailed a situation where a research group sent a set of samples to another country and as a result lost all influence over how those samples were used and any data that was generated from those samples. This was seen as a wholly unacceptable scenario, and one that should be prevented by ensuring appropriate agreements are in place when there is a need to transfer research materials from one location to another.

Having proper intellectual property arrangements in place would also help to pre-emptively prevent another challenge that could arise in instances where a scholar's research could have wider commercial or industrial applications. While none of the home or host supervisors interviewed had encountered a situation where a conflict had emerged between supervisors or their institutions over who owned what with respect to a scholar's research, this was an issue that the focus group in particular flagged as having potentially severe consequences if it is not properly addressed ahead of time. The potential for lawsuits and institutional conflict that could undo the goodwill and relationship building that existed before or as a result of the Split-site scholarship was seen as a very serious risk that could be mitigated if the right steps are taken ahead of time. Some focus group participants suggested this should already be addressed through existing Memoranda of Understanding, but in their absence the CSC could provide participants in the Split-site programme a simplified document that acts a framework agreement which spells out the contributions of each institution and the sharing of any benefits accordingly. Focus group participants were wary about the CSC mandating the use of this document, and suggested that ultimately it should be up to the participants to decide whether to make use of this document, to put in place their own agreement, or to proceed without. However, by providing this template and flagging the issue to participants, the CSC could ensure that they are at least aware of the issue and prompted to discuss it.

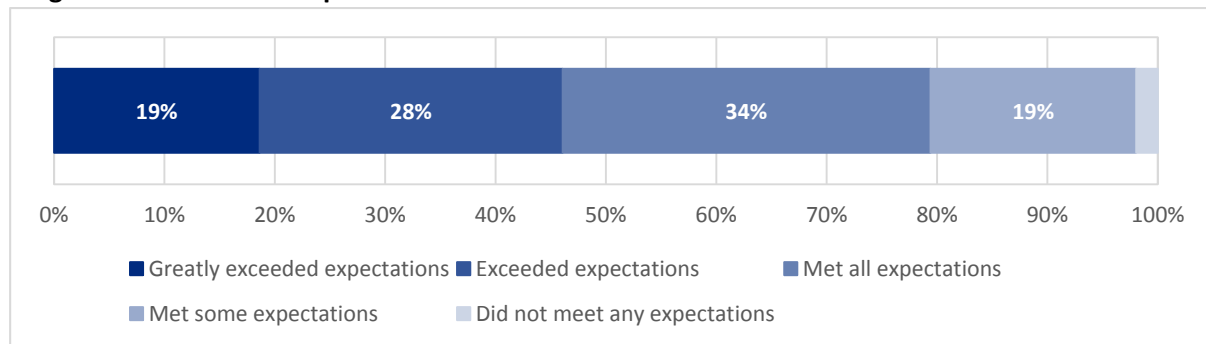
The final challenge related to intellectual property is the issue of authorship and accreditation for publications. This was an issue that some host supervisors noted led to some reluctance on the part of their scholars to share the details of their research results with them for fear of their work being appropriated by the supervisor. This was seen as a rational fear for scholars who came from home institutions or countries where this had occurred, and who did not know that that was an unacceptable practice in the United Kingdom. In one instance the host supervisor noted that this fear was not allayed until they had jointly published a paper in a major journal and the scholar's name had appeared as the first author. Again this was an area where host supervisors, and the focus group in particular, agreed that having an agreement in place would help to address these concerns. However, there was again some disagreement as to how this should take place as some focus group participants felt that this

agreement should happen organically as a part of the initial process of determining roles and responsibilities rather than something that is more formally structured or mandated by the CSC. Regardless, it was agreed that this was a topic that should be signposted to supervisors and scholars as an area that needs to be discussed in order to provide an ‘initial sense of security that this is something which will be taken care of’ rather than something that is left until it becomes an issue.

4.6 – Summary

The majority of scholars felt that their time in the United Kingdom either met or exceeded their expectations, with four-fifths of scholars indicating that that was the case. One-fifth of scholars felt that the experience only met some expectations, however none of the respondents said that their time in the UK did not meet any expectations.

Figure 4.6: Thinking back to your expectations when applying, how did your experience in the United Kingdom fit with those expectations?



n=169

Source: Scholar Survey

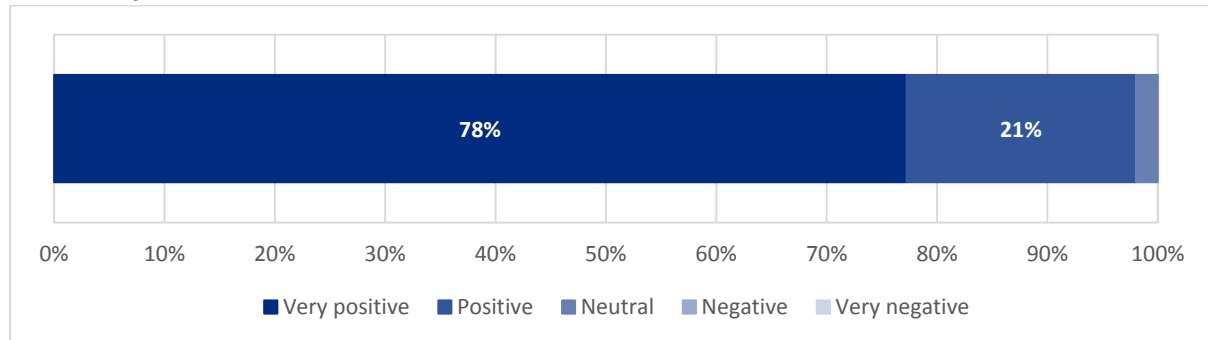
Indeed, many of the benefits that scholars derived from their time in the United Kingdom aligned with their initial motivations for applying for a Split-site scholarship. As a result of the time they spent at their host institution, scholars gained international experience, access to expertise and knowledge, and access to equipment and resources as well as the ability to build partnerships and explore future collaborations. Furthermore, scholars felt that they benefitted from an exposure to the research environment and culture that existed at universities in the United Kingdom, as well as the general supportiveness of their host supervisors and colleagues, particularly when dealing with any challenges they encountered.

Generally, these challenges would occur outside of the university environment. The primary issues encountered by scholars were personal in nature, be they homesickness or concerns about being away from their family. In some cases, this was seen by scholars as just a part of the experience of living in another country, while for others the issue was more acute. The ways in which scholars dealt with this challenge also varied, be it through support from their supervisors, socialising with their local expat community, or even a short trip home. The other major challenge scholars experienced revolved around housing. In many ways, these issues stem from the fact that scholars need to find short-let housing and are generally inexperienced when it comes to looking for housing in the United Kingdom and in some cases simply unable to look for housing until they arrive. Again, in some cases host supervisors were able to help their scholar, however scholars suggested that the CSC could provide more information about how to look for housing in the United Kingdom, including resources that could

be used to identify which letting agencies are trustworthy or to assess which neighbourhoods are safe to live in.

However, despite the challenges they encountered, and any cases where only some of their expectations were met, virtually every scholar rated their experience in the United Kingdom as either 'positive' or 'very positive', with no respondents feeling that their experience was a negative one.

Figure 4.7: Overall, how would you rate your experience in the United Kingdom while on your scholarship?

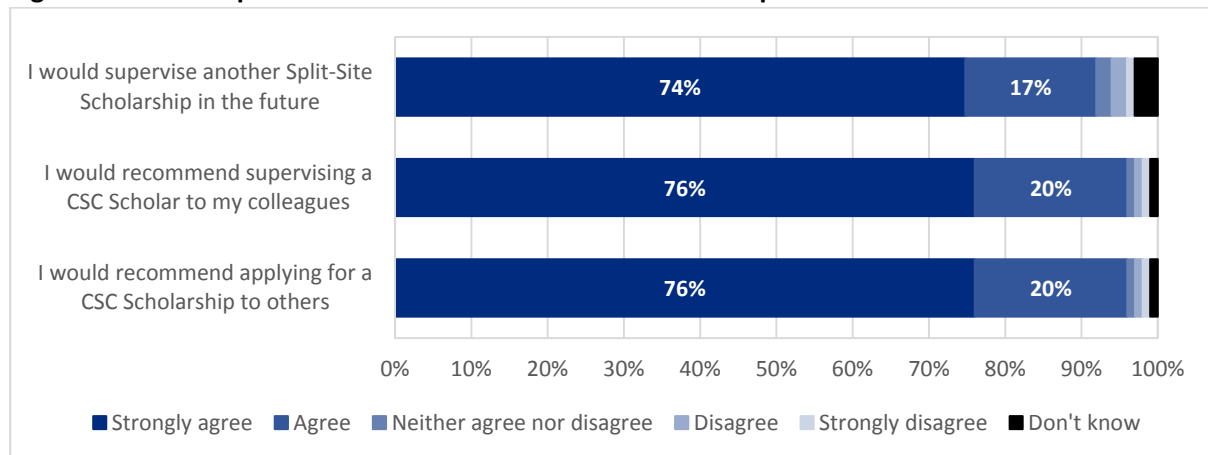


n=169

Source: Scholar Survey

Host supervisors also indicated that they had positive experiences with the Split-site programme. Over nine-tenths of home supervisors surveyed agreed that they would supervise another Split-site scholar in the future, with virtually all respondents indicating that they would recommend supervising a scholar to their colleagues or for a scholar to apply for a scholarship.

Figure 4.8: Host Supervisor Sentiment towards CSC Scholarships



n=92

Source: Host Supervisor Survey

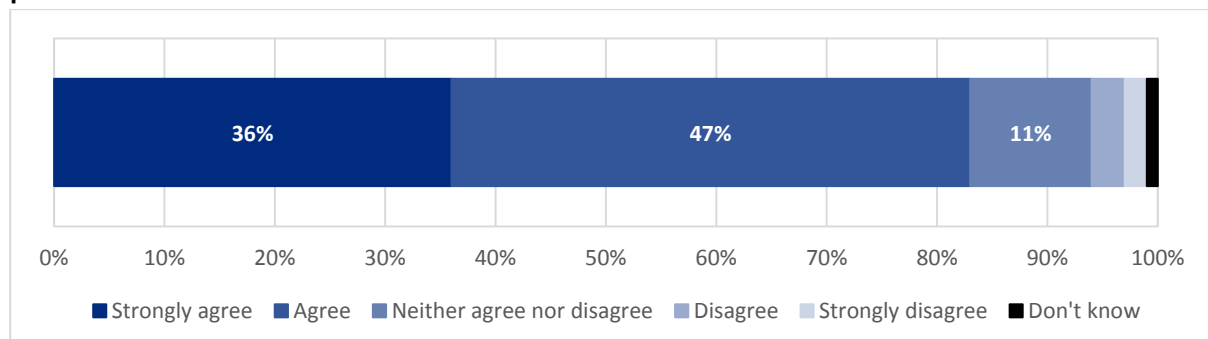
In addition to providing their department with another strong researcher, host supervisors felt that their involvement in the scholarship and the presence of the scholar benefitted both themselves and their institution by broadening the intercultural experience of their department, and by providing learning opportunities about their scholars' home departments and countries. In some cases this even meant that scholars brought with them unique skills or problem-solving abilities that were not present in the department, with some host supervisors specifically citing the two-way exchange of skills and knowledge that took place as a benefit. The Split-site programme also provided host supervisors and their departments opportunities to establish or strengthen international collaborations between

themselves and the scholar's home supervisor and department. This provided opportunities for both departments to contribute to a scholar's research from areas of strength, and provided a platform from which to look for future research partnerships between them.

Host supervisors cited three particular challenges associated with the Split-site scholarship. The restrictive length of the study period was cited as problematic due to the need to train scholars up on equipment and procedures as well as the time it takes to build a relationship with them which in practice reduces the amount of time available to spend conducting the research. Supervisors also felt that this meant that they had to be diligent about keeping their scholars on-task, and being realistic about what they could accomplish during their time in the United Kingdom. Host supervisors also flagged intellectual property as an area of concern, noting disagreements about attributions and authorship of publications but also the potentially larger issue of dispute should a piece of research be successfully commercialised. It was noted that this could be circumvented by providing a suggested template for an intellectual property agreement and by flagging this as an area that supervisors and their scholars should discuss at the start of the scholarship rather than waiting for it to become a larger issue. The final challenge that some host supervisors encountered was that of additional costs accrued as a result of hosting the scholar. This was largely associated with the material and operating costs of doing research, something which some supervisors were aware the CSC covered, but that others did not know.

This mixed awareness may help to explain why the level of agreement from host supervisors about how much information the CSC provided about scholarship policies was softer than the other areas that host supervisors were asked about in the survey.

Figure 4.9: I felt I was provided with sufficient information on the CSC's Scholarship policies and procedures



n=92

Source: Host Supervisor Survey

This suggests that a greater effort should be made to signpost policy documents and other opportunities for support, potentially in the form of an Initial Steps or Frequently Asked Questions document for new scholars and supervisors. This would also allow the opportunity to recommend that issues such as intellectual property are discussed early in the scholarship cycle rather than waiting for it to become an issue.

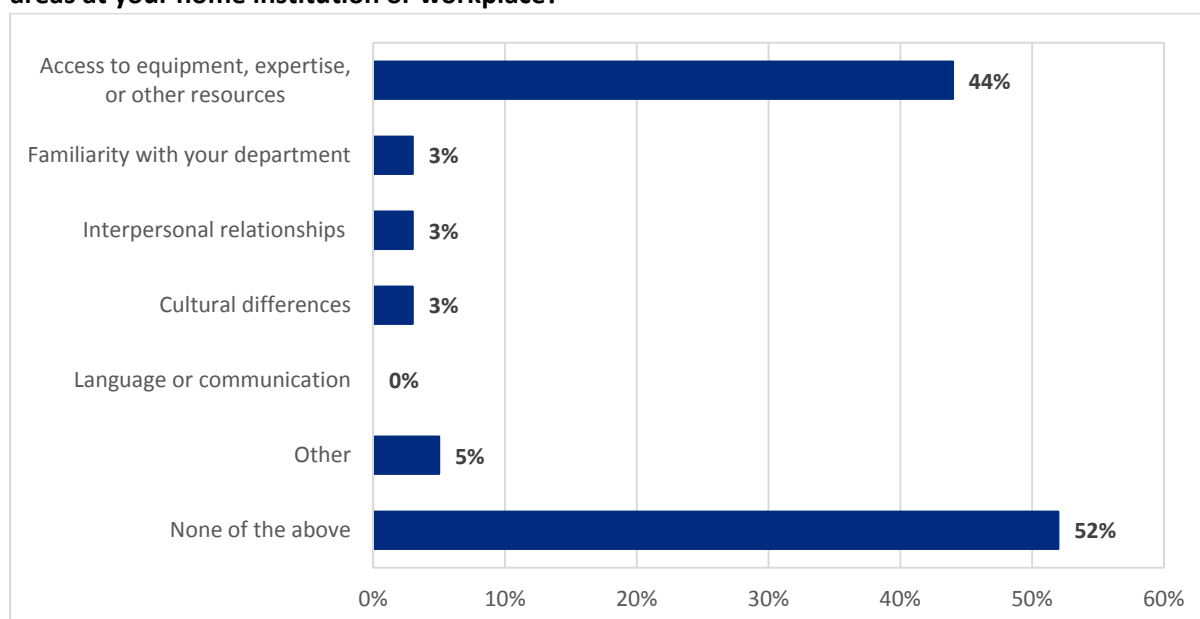
Section 5 – Post-Scholarship

The final area of focus for the review was the immediate aftermath of scholar’s Split-site experience. In particular, scholars were asked about what kind of challenges they encountered upon their return to their home institution, any expectations that were placed upon them to share what they had learned with others at their institution, and how that sharing took place. Home supervisors were also asked about the benefits and challenges that they experienced due to their involvement in the programme. Finally, all three groups of respondents were asked about the further collaborations that were planned or that had already occurred as a result of their involvement in the Split-site programme.

5.1 – Experiences upon Return

Scholars who had completed their study period in the UK were asked whether they encountered any difficulties upon their return to their home country, both within their home institution or workplace, and their lives more generally. Half of these respondents said that they had not encountered any issues upon their return to their home institution or workplace. This was also supported by scholars’ interview responses, which featured a broad agreement that they did not encounter any kind of challenges with respect to reintegrating back into their home countries and institutions once their study period had ended. However, just under half of survey respondents also indicated that they did encounter difficulties when it came to ‘accessing equipment, expertise, or other resources’.

Figure 5.1: Upon returning to your home country, did you experience any difficulties in the following areas at your home institution or workplace?

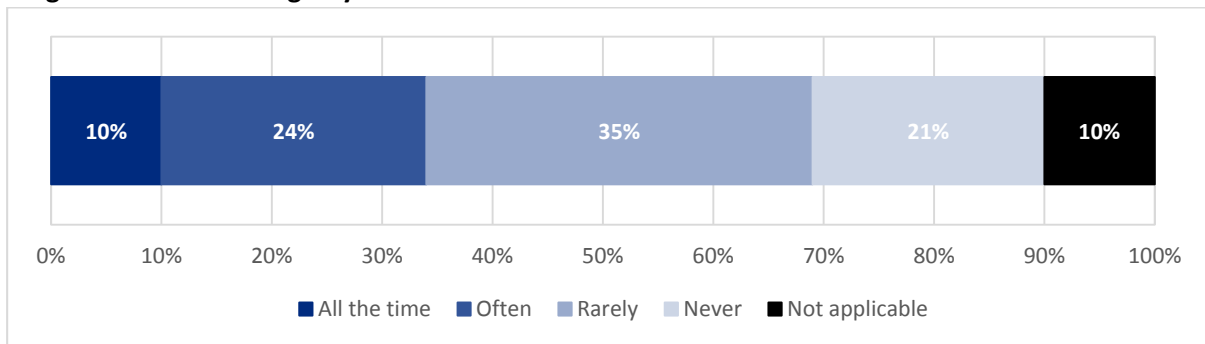


n=145

Source: Scholar Survey

While this was the only major issue cited by respondents when it came to returning to their home institution or workplace, the seriousness of this issue is reinforced by the fact that over half of respondents said that they were ‘rarely’ or ‘never’ able to access the resources that had been available to them in the UK after they had returned to their home institution.

Figure 5.2: How frequently were you able to access the resources that you had used in the United Kingdom after returning to your home institution?



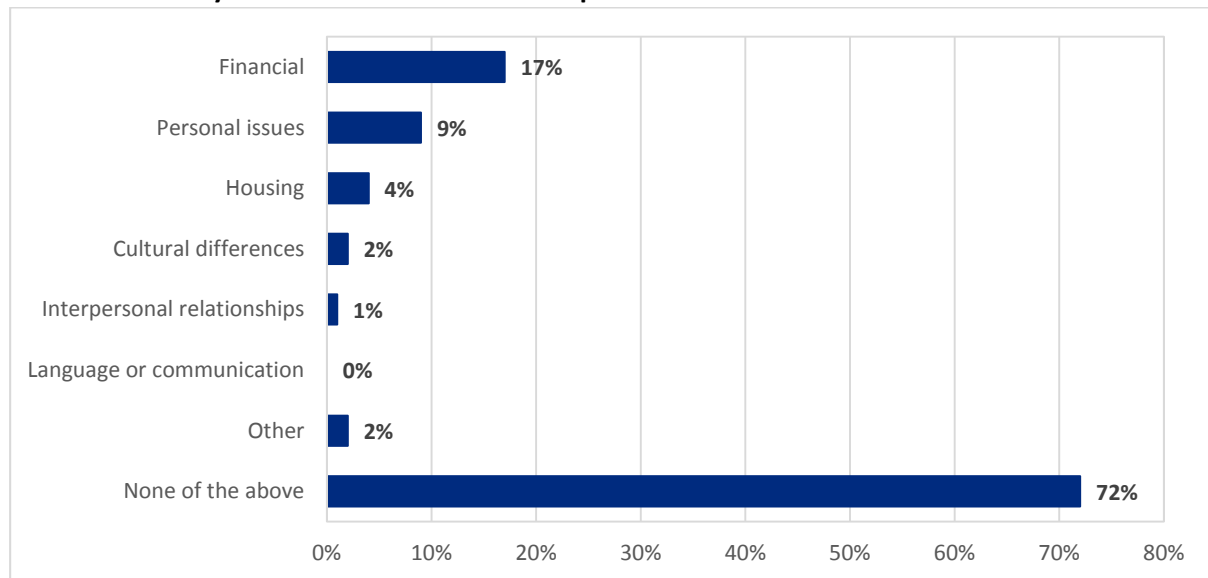
n=145

Source: Scholar Survey

While scholars did cite the more sophisticated equipment and infrastructure as examples of the resources that they missed, the thing that was most frequently mentioned was the journal databases that they had access to while at their host institution. As mentioned by Meenakshi Shukla, a Split-site scholar from 2016, ‘the biggest [thing] that I miss these days is my subscription to various online journals. I used to get free access to all the journals while in the host institution. I really miss that here because my university does not provide for such free access to online journals. There is some access, I believe, to some journals, but that’s not sufficient. That’s what I miss the most.’ This sentiment was also recognised by host supervisors, however they also recognised that there was no simple solution to this issue due to the constraints placed upon their institutions by database subscription agreements.

Returning scholars were also asked whether they encountered any difficulties outside of their home institution or workplace upon their return. Far fewer indicated that they had encountered any kind of problem, with just under three-quarters of respondents indicating that they had not encountered difficulties. However, for those scholars who did encounter difficulties, financial issues were the most frequently cited, with just under one-fifth of respondents indicating that that was the case. Unfortunately, while scholars were asked to expand upon their response to this question and provide details, none opted to do so. The issue of financial difficulties was also not mentioned by scholars during their interviews when asked about challenges they encountered upon their return to their home country.

Figure 5.3: Upon returning to your home country, did you experience any difficulties in the following areas outside of your home institution or workplace?



n=145

Source: Scholar Survey

During their interviews, some scholars expressed that they had some difficulties with adjusting to being back in their home country upon their return. This took a few different forms, both inside and outside their home institution or workplace. The most frequently mentioned issue by scholars was returning to the local research culture and infrastructure that was less organised than that they had encountered while in the United Kingdom. However, while this was a difficulty that they had to adjust to, scholars also took it upon themselves as a challenge, as one scholar noted ‘I had a moral responsibility to try to solve the problems of this area as well, and, in fact, that should be a very important objective and goal of my life and career here.’ The other areas where scholars mentioned they had difficulties adjusting back to their home country could be broadly described as environmental issues. These included adjusting back to things such as traffic conditions or the weather which were different in the United Kingdom but scholars had become acclimatised to. Ultimately this adjustment came quite quickly for scholars, but it was something that they noted as an initial challenge upon their return.

Scholars were asked in their interviews about whether they felt there were any expectations placed upon them upon their return as to sharing or teaching what they learned with other members of their department. Virtually every scholar interviewed said that they had disseminated what they learned to others upon their return. However, while a number of scholars noted that there was an expectation that they would do so, many other scholars indicated that there was no formal expectation placed upon them to engage in this type of sharing. Instead, these scholars felt personally obliged to pass on what they learned because of the opportunity that the Split-site scholarship had afforded to them. As one scholar put it in their interview, ‘I think there are responsibilities there that I should be able to share and help train others, share the experience.’

In the cases where there were more formal expectations upon returning scholars to teach or otherwise share what they had learned, they tended to be instances where they were returning to teaching positions within their home institution, either as teaching assistants or as lecturers in their own right. In cases where scholars were returning to teaching positions, they specifically made use of

Split-site Profile: Meenakshi Shukla

Meenakshi Shukla is a 2016 Split-site scholar who is completing a PhD at Banaras Hindu University in Uttar Pradesh, India. She has a keen interest in the relationship between human emotions and physical health problems and her doctoral research explores the emotional dynamics underpinning hypertension. In her third year, Meenakshi spent 12 months at the Psychology Department in King's College London. She completed her PhD in 2019.



How did you come to find out about the Split-site programme?

I had no idea about the scholarship until a government circular was distributed at my university. My supervisor said I should apply for it but that it needed a collaboration between my current and proposed [UK] institution. There was an ongoing project between my institution, the UK and Nepal through which I had already identified my UK supervisor. When I discovered the Split-site scholarship I immediately thought of working with them and so that is what happened.

Was this wider project related to your own research?

The wider project focused on the cognitive and emotional effects of childhood maltreatment whereas I work with emotional problems in hypertensive people. The populations are different but the factors we both study are similar. My UK supervisor has a lot of expertise in the area of affect-startle paradigm - an involuntary response to stimuli such as a loud noise or puff of air, which can be influenced by your emotional state. I was really fascinated by this because I wanted to check if people having elevated blood pressure and hypertension affected this type of response.

What was your experience of studying in the UK?

I had already completed my data collection and so it was the data analysis that was left – which was the perfect time to study in the UK. I had anticipated potential problems because I had never travelled anywhere apart from my home city, but the transition was very smooth. I learnt new things and it never felt difficult. I had very good friends and my colleagues were all really cooperative and the joint-supervision helped my professional and personal development because each supervisor had their own expertise, so I got to know many different views on the same subject. Also, when I was in the UK, I got a chance to participate in many conferences, workshops and seminars.

Did you share the knowledge and skills you gained whilst in the UK with colleagues?

Yes, there was an expectation that I would implement what I learnt at my home institution. For example, there were electroencephalogram (EEG) workshops where I was able to work with EEG machinery and software over five weeks – from the basics to advanced analysis. And that was really required for the wider project as well as they were collecting EEG data from participants and my institution was funded through that project to buy an EEG machine. So, when I returned I was able to use this knowledge to train my colleagues and my supervisor and to teach them how to collect the data and master the EEG instrument.

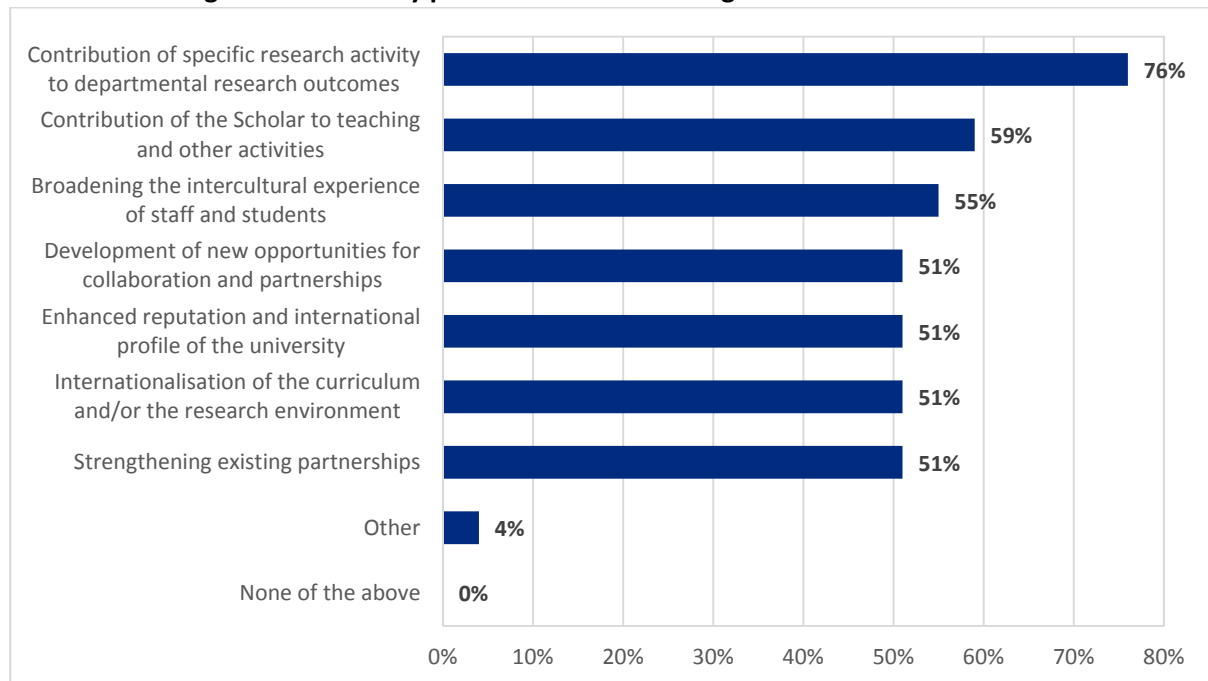
their knowledge and experiences to update what was offered on their courses. This meant not only updating course contents, but passing on to their students both the research methods and the more technical skills that they had gained. Some scholars were also expected to give seminars about what they had learned in the United Kingdom upon their return, providing an opportunity for sharing with faculty members in their department. For example, Vennela Rayavarapu, a 2016 Split-site scholar did a number of presentations about what they had learned while in the United Kingdom: 'I have given a series of lectures about archival methodology, how to conserve archival material at home. And now, my UK supervisor and I, and a lot of other people in India, we are trying to think about how to conserve archive resources better.'

However, even in cases where there was a formal expectation that scholars share what they learned with other members of their department, much of that sharing took place in informal ways. Often this was done through everyday conversations and interactions rather than more formalised teaching arenas like classes or seminars. As one scholar noted, 'those ways were much more informal, much to do with personal interaction with specific individuals, teachers, [and] friends.' Sometimes scholars' colleagues would approach them with questions, both about what they had learned, but also about the broader scholarship experience and what it was like to live in the United Kingdom. In some cases, scholars also provided advice and mentorship on how to apply for the scholarships themselves.

5.2 – Benefits to Home Supervisors and Institutions

Similarly as with host supervisors, home supervisors were asked what benefits their involvement in the Split-site programme brought to themselves and their institution, both with respect to their scholar's return to their institution and more generally. As far as the benefits seen immediately upon the scholar's return, the most frequently cited benefit was the scholar's research activity contributing to their department's research outcomes, mentioned by three-quarters of home supervisors. The scholar's contribution to teaching and other departmental activities was also chosen by approximately three-fifths of respondents, as was the broadening of the intercultural experience of their department. Finally, half of home supervisors also mentioned the development of new opportunities for collaboration and partnerships, the strengthening of existing partnerships, the enhancement of the reputation and international profile of their university, and the internationalisation of the curriculum and research environment at their institution.

Figure 5.4: In your view, what benefits did your university/department realise as a result of your scholar returning from their study period in the United Kingdom?



n=49

Source: Home Supervisor Survey

When asked to elaborate upon these benefits further in their freetext responses, home supervisors focused particularly on the collaborative benefits that they saw from the programme both in terms of the scholar’s research project itself and the opportunities for future collaborations that it created. For some home supervisors, the Split-site was seen as an opportunity to collaborate with a colleague who they already knew, with one supervisor noting that the scholarship ‘gave me the opportunity to work with a colleague through a common supervised student.’ The Split-site scholarship also provides an opportunity to broaden an existing relationship, as one home supervisor noted in a freetext response, the programme helped to ‘[enhance] an existing collaborative link, which previously had not included joint supervision of students’. Another home supervisor commented that the Split-site was something that fit naturally into a broader existing inter-departmental arrangement, noting that ‘our ongoing collaboration and joint research project made the supervision of the Split-site programme easier and coherent’.

Home supervisors also noted the potential for future collaborations that the Split-site scholarship provided to both their department and themselves. Many supervisors noted in their freetext responses that the shared Split-site supervision led to other collaborations such as additional mentorship and exchange experiences, joint publications, and joint grant applications for their departments. The personal benefits that the experience brought to the supervisors themselves was also mentioned. As one supervisor noted ‘The benefits for me as a supervisor have been very many, beginning with a professional relationship with a new colleague in the area ... writing joint papers for publication is definitely a possibility.’ Multiple supervisors also cited the increased international visibility as a personal benefit that they gained from their participation in the programme.

The skills and knowledge that scholars brought back with them was also cited as a significant benefit to their department in home supervisor’s freetext responses. Many scholars returned to their home

Split-site Profile: Moira Chimombo

Moira Chimombo is retired Professor of Education, University of Malawi, where she lectured in the area of Language Teacher Education from 1980 to 2003. She has published internationally and supervised numerous graduate students in applied linguistics, language education, and life skills education. This includes two Split-site scholars who, in 2004 and 2012, each spent one year at the universities of Sussex and St. Andrews to pursue research in early literacy development and print-media political discourse analysis.



How did you become involved in the Split-site PhD programme?

There was an ongoing joint PhD scheme between the medical school at The University of Malawi and The University of St. Andrews that expanded to include additional colleges at my institution. I had retired but was invited to assess some of the applicants in my field and because the staff knew that I would be willing to help with local supervision.

What was your motivation for doing so?

There was a scarcity of scholarship opportunities. But I also personally think the Split-site model is much better - both for causing less disruption to those with families but also for the home university. Over the years I have seen a number of people not coming back, not serving the university that has actually sent them. So, for me that was the major advantage of the Split-site programme.

How did the programme help in this regard?

Most importantly, the scholars were able to access library and research resources in the UK. But the UK study period was also valuable because otherwise the scholars wouldn't have had an opportunity to get outside of their home country. When you think about the real purpose of graduate study, it is to be innovative but if you're stuck in a rut in your own environment, it's difficult to think outside the box in order to really be innovative in your research. Ultimately, the programme gave them opportunities to be exposed to international experts and to attend conferences and present papers. And this gave them a chance to develop international contacts within their field and which provided a route to generating international publications.

In what ways did your home institution benefit?

They certainly shared the work that they had been doing. Each gave seminars where they presented their research, and these were open to both faculty and students. And I would say that in each case they've had a major impact. There's usually only one person who's a specialist in anything, in each department. When I retired it was very important to have someone to take over the courses that I had been teaching before. And in each case, they have taken over those courses. And they've gone beyond.

Are you still in touch with the scholars you supervised?

I am currently involved on the provisional council of a new university and so I'm now working with them to help in developing the new curriculum at undergraduate level. We're not looking at graduate level yet. But what is helpful is to bring their different ideas into the curriculum and trying to do something that's a bit different from the institution where they're working now.

institutions trained in research and lab techniques or on equipment that they were originally not able to learn there. Home supervisors noted three specific benefits to their department due to the new skills and knowledge scholars brought with them upon their return. First, the scholar came back as an improved researcher for the department, someone who had 'better experimental knowledge and experience' than when they had left, which added to the approaches and techniques that were available for the department to use in their research. Second, as discussed earlier in Section 5.1, the scholar was able to pass on the skills and knowledge that they had accrued over the course of their time in the United Kingdom to other members of their home department. This further added to the technical capability of their department both from a research and a teaching perspective.

The final benefit from the skills and knowledge that the scholars gained was that in some cases their home department was able to develop and construct their own equipment and resources based on the scholar's experience and in some cases prototypes that they had developed while working in the United Kingdom. As Nasar Minullah, the home supervisor for a 2013 scholar at the National University of Sciences and Technology in Pakistan noted, 'we established a hydroponic system in my lab after [my scholar's] return. She learned the technique from the host lab in UK and we improvised it here. Afterwards, many of my students are utilizing this system.' Another home supervisor mentioned that their scholar gained substantial knowledge about the making and testing of energy storage devices. In each case, the home department benefitted greatly through the ability to improve their research infrastructure based on the experience their scholar gained while in the United Kingdom.

The other benefit that home supervisors mentioned in their freetext responses was related to the research activities of the scholar, which was the most frequently selected of the fixed survey responses in Figure 5.4. Specifically, supervisors cited the improved quality of the research and related outputs due to their scholars' time in the United Kingdom. This was largely derived from scholars' ability to conduct advanced research that they otherwise would not have been able to do had they not had access to the equipment and resources that they gained from the Split-site scholarship. This in turn meant that the research contributions of the scholar helped to expand the overall scope of their department's research outputs.

5.3 – Challenges to Home Supervisors and Institutions

Home supervisors were also asked about what challenges they felt the Split-site programme presented to themselves and their institutions. Similarly to the responses from host supervisors, the most frequently mentioned response to the freetext question 'what challenges do you think the Split-site programme presented to you and/or your institution or department?' was 'none'. However, as with the experience of host supervisors this is not to say there were no challenges.

The most frequently mentioned issue for home supervisors was that maintaining communication with the scholar and their host supervisor was a challenge while the scholar was in the United Kingdom. This was mentioned by one-quarter of the home supervisors, but took on a two particular forms. The first form was largely one of practicality. Home supervisors noted complications in arranging meetings with students due to time differences, but even when they were able to arrange video or audio calls it was just not the same as having an in-person meeting. As one home supervisor described it, 'although a number of skype meetings were done between the partners, it is not as efficient as meeting in [person].' A handful of home supervisors also specifically mentioned that supervising their scholar and coordinating with the host supervisor from a distance was a challenge. As another home supervisor noted, 'monitoring the research from a distance did cause anxieties at times.'

The second, and probably most problematic issue in this area for home supervisors was that it was hard to keep up-to-date on their scholar's progress while they were away. In some cases, this was framed more as a nuisance, however for some home supervisors this was seen as a much bigger problem. This was particularly true in cases where there were changes in the scholar's research plans once they were in the United Kingdom, which, if the home supervisor was not consulted, left them feeling cut-out from the decision-making process of their scholar's doctoral research project. It also occurred in some cases where the host supervisor's specialisation was outside of the home supervisor's area of expertise, leaving the home supervisor feeling unable to contribute to the degree that they wanted to.

This second communication issue also touches on another area that home supervisors cited as a challenge, that of expectations. In the more problematic cases where home supervisors were not kept up-to-date, there appeared to be a strong disconnect between the expectations of each supervisor as to how involved each would be during their scholar's time in the United Kingdom. As discussed in Section 4.3, there are many instances where there is an agreement between supervisors that this will be the frequency or level of involvement for the home supervisor. However, there have clearly been other instances where there was either a lack of agreement, or a serious misunderstanding between supervisors as to how involved the home supervisors will be while the scholar is in the United Kingdom. While this was the experience for only a minority of home supervisors, it still represents an area that could be improved upon by providing guidance to all parties as to what needs be agreed upon at the beginning of the scholarship, particularly in instances where a personal relationship does not already exist between the supervisors. These issues, while rare, also maintain the very real, and all-to-frequent stereotype that researchers and institutions in the United Kingdom are unwilling to treat partners in non-Western countries as equals.

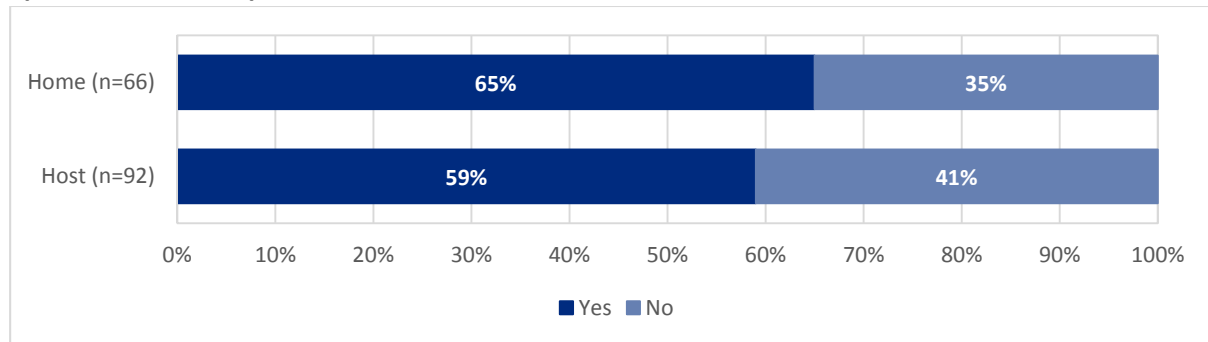
Home supervisors also had other comments with respect to expectations. One supervisor expressed disappointment that no further collaborations occurred, although this was largely because there was not a good alignment between their research area and that of the host supervisor and institution (a theme that is explored further in the next section). Other home supervisors felt that the programme should provide an opportunity for them to visit the host institution, or the host supervisor should visit the home institution. This was seen as a way to potentially cement links between supervisors and departments, to improve supervisors' understanding of the research conditions in each department, and to facilitate supervision of the scholar while they were in the United Kingdom.

Finally, a handful of home supervisors specifically noted that their scholar's absence presented their department with a challenge as the scholar was not available to fulfil their regular research and teaching duties, stretching staffing levels in their department that are already quite stretched.

5.4 – Further Collaborations

Home and host supervisors were asked whether there were any existing or planned networking or collaborative activities between their own institution and their counterpart institution in their surveys. For both types of supervisors, a majority of respondents indicated that there were indeed plans for collaborations or that existing collaborations were already in place, with two-thirds of home supervisors and three-fifths of host supervisors indicated that this was the case.

Figure 5.5: Have there been, or are you planning, any additional networking or collaborative activities between your institution and your Scholar’s [other] institution as a direct result of the Split-site Scholarship?



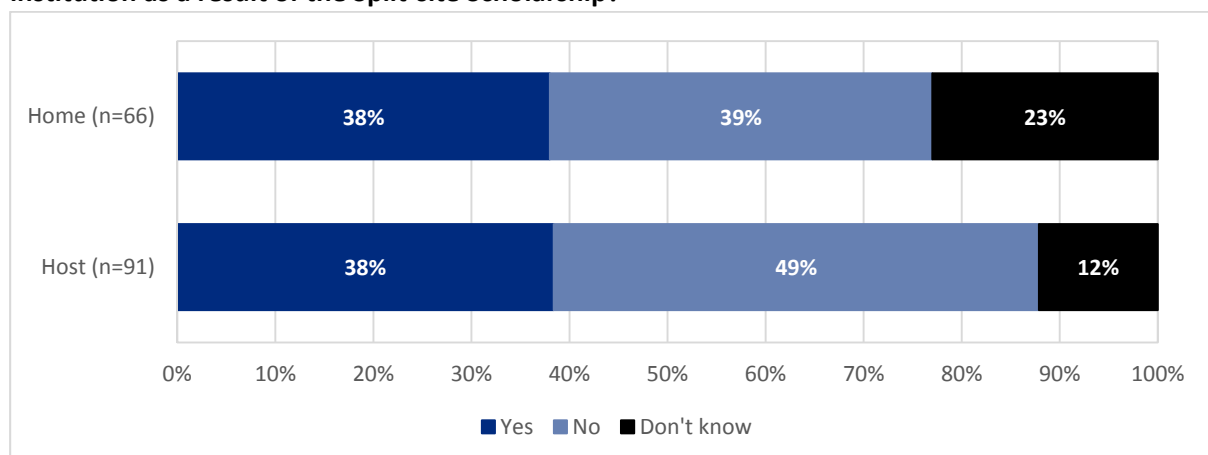
Source: Home Supervisor Survey and Host Supervisor Survey

Both types of supervisors were asked to elaborate in what types of activities they had planned, to which they provided the same responses. Joint research projects and associated grant submissions were the most frequently mentioned activity that was planned. These included imminent applications to funding sources such as the Global Challenge Research Fund, the Newton Fund, the Department for International Development, and the International Development Research Centre.

Additional joint publications were also an area of future development cited by supervisors, particularly in instances where there were already ongoing joint research projects in place. These included both journal articles and full-length books. Supervisors whose scholars had only recently finished their study period in the United Kingdom also cited plans for publications that were directly derived from their scholar’s doctoral research. Staff or student exchanges was another area mentioned where there were a number of planned activities. These frequently included the pursuit of additional joint supervisions, including additional Split-site scholarships.

In order to get a better sense of how frequently collaborations were already taking place, all supervisors were also asked to specify whether additional interactions or collaborations have already taken place a result of the Split-site scholarship. On the whole, there is a consensus among both types of supervisors that this has already happened in two-fifths of the cases.

Figure 5.6: Did any additional interactions occur between your institution and your Scholar’s [other] institution as a result of the Split-site Scholarship?



Source: Home Supervisor Survey and Host Supervisor Survey

Split-site Profile: Jaykumar Chummun

Jaykumar Chummun has worked at The University of Mauritius since 1993 and became a Senior Lecturer in 2012. He travelled to the UK to complete a Masters' degree from The University of Manchester in 1994, returning 13 years later as a Split-site scholar. His PhD focused on transforming bagasse – a natural fibre and waste product derived from sugar cane extraction – into a range of sustainably manufactured value-added goods. He obtained his doctorate in 2015.



How did you experience returning to your former university as a Split-site scholar?

The university was a kind of second home to me and was an obvious choice since I was already aware of the facilities and was acquainted with most of the academics in the Textile & Paper Department of the University of Manchester. I had already worked with my UK Supervisor in 1994 and his visits to my home institution prompted the idea of joint projects. The scholarship provided a further opportunity for collaboration.

Were there other ongoing collaborations between your home and host institutions?

There was a scheme through the British Council whereby academics from the UK visited my institution to help us develop different programmes, curriculum, etc. We were a young department at that time. The University of Manchester had a Textile Technology Department and they helped to run our programmes and that how is how the collaboration started. I also had other colleagues who had also studied at The University of Manchester. In fact, my local supervisor was a student of my UK supervisor.

Did these collaborations shape your doctoral studies? If so, how?

I received some help during the early stage of my PhD as well as while writing my proposal. It was a very new subject and I had to do a lot of work to understand the nature of turning paper into textile materials. I would send whatever I was working on to both supervisors. We agreed how the work would be carried out in the UK and the library and testing facilities that I would use. We also agreed that, after the Split-site, the rest of the work would be focused on bagasse paper. Since my local supervisor had already worked with my UK supervisor, the planning was quite easy and was very well harmonised.

Did this continue after you returned home?

Back in Mauritius, I had to submit progress reports to my home institution and these were vetted by both my home and UK supervisors. When I was in the UK, my supervisor also helped me to find a company which could turn my paper samples into yarns and I continued to use the latter after I returned home.

Have you been able to foster any new collaborations as a result of your research?

The experiences gained during my scholarship allowed me to join a team which was trying to manufacture more environmentally-friendly materials, like natural fibres from biowaste. That team has since successfully sought funding from local and overseas institutions to carry out research to extract fibres from local fibrous plants, with focus on bio-wastes such as banana trees and pineapple leaves. We are now investigating their potential in the manufacture of composites with different engineering applications and are working with local communities so that they can increase their earnings through value-added products made from local natural fibres.

Again, when asked to elaborate upon what types of collaborations had taken place as a result of the scholarship, scholars and supervisors named a similar set of activities as those being planned. Joint research projects were again the most frequently mentioned collaboration, with many of these collaborations extending beyond the original three participants in the Split-site, with scholars in particular noting that they had engaged in research collaborations with friends and colleagues that they had met during their time in the United Kingdom. In some cases, the research project was either a direct continuation of the research that the Split-site scholar was involved in, or one that was an offshoot of the original project. Supervisors also cited examples of major research collaborations such as a joint programme between India, the United Kingdom, and the European Union on electron scattering. Joint publications was another area of ongoing collaboration cited by supervisors, both based on the research conducted as a part of the Split-site, and based on new research projects. Finally, despite their absence from the planned activity responses, a few supervisors did note that a Memorandum of Understanding had been put in place between their institution and that of their counterpart.

In cases where activities were planned, but had not yet taken place, or where there were no plans for future collaborations, there were three specific reasons given by respondents. The first was that they lacked a potential research area where there was an appropriate overlap in their specialisation. In these cases, scholars and supervisors were generally interested in pursuing future collaborations, but they had yet to find an appropriate project to work on together. As one host supervisor described it in their interview, their scholar had 'moved out of my research area... unfortunately he's moved sideways to a slightly different area...but it's not the material that I work on.' Due to the highly specialised nature of this level of research, this was frequently mentioned as a barrier to further collaboration between individuals.

For those respondents who were able to find an area of research to work on together, funding often became a significant roadblock to those collaborations. One host supervisor, when asked what barriers were preventing more collaborations put it quite succinctly: 'One word; funding...finding money to keep the link going is always a challenge. That's just how it is working with any institution overseas, I think.' This issue is also reflected in the fact that many respondents had submitted grant or funding applications, but had yet to successfully win one.

The final reason given by respondents, particularly when it came to barriers to institutional collaboration, was staff turnover. Often this was because a supervisor had moved out of the position which they had held during their Split-site supervision, or a scholar did not return to a staffing position at their home institution. In some cases this was due to the retirement of a supervisor. In these cases the personal relationship still continued, with the potential for collaboration still there with the scholar or supervisor's new institution, but the lack of more mature institutional partnerships prevented further collaboration at that level.

5.5 – Summary

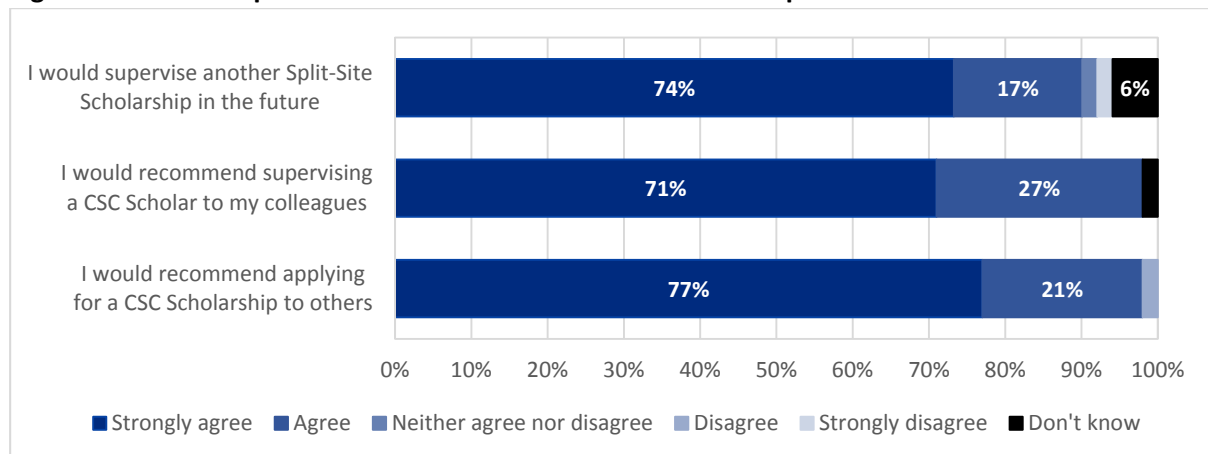
Upon scholars' return to their home institution, the most frequently cited challenge that they experienced was that they were no longer able to access the equipment and resources that had been available to them while they were in the United Kingdom. While this is understandable with respect to the lab equipment, and indeed one of the main reasons why they applied to the Split-site scholarship in the first place, the inability to access auxiliary resources such as journal databases was cited as a challenge by a number of scholars.

Scholars also made an effort to share their experiences with other students and faculty at their home institution. In some cases this was through formalised teaching such as lecturing or participating in seminars, while in others this sharing took place through informal conversations. Regardless of the form that this sharing took place, there appears to be a wide consensus among scholars that even if there is no formal obligation to teach what they learned during their scholarship to others, they felt a personal obligation to pass on what they could because they were fortunate enough to have had experience.

This dissemination of the knowledge and skills by scholars to the rest of their department was cited as one of the benefits of the programme to the home institution by home supervisors. This also meant that it was not just the presence of a specially-trained researcher that their department benefitted from, although that was seen as beneficial, but the general upskilling of the department allowing for greater capacity to conduct research. Home supervisors also felt that their scholars’ research outputs helped to contribute to the overall research profile of their department, improving the international reputation of the department and the supervisor themselves.

Home supervisors also indicated that they had positive experiences with the Split-site programme, similar to the satisfaction rates indicated by host supervisors. Over nine-tenths of home supervisors surveyed agreed that they would supervise another Split-site scholar in the future, with virtually all respondents indicating that they would recommend supervising a scholar to their colleagues or for a scholar to apply for a scholarship.

Figure 5.7: Home Supervisor sentiments towards CSC Scholarships

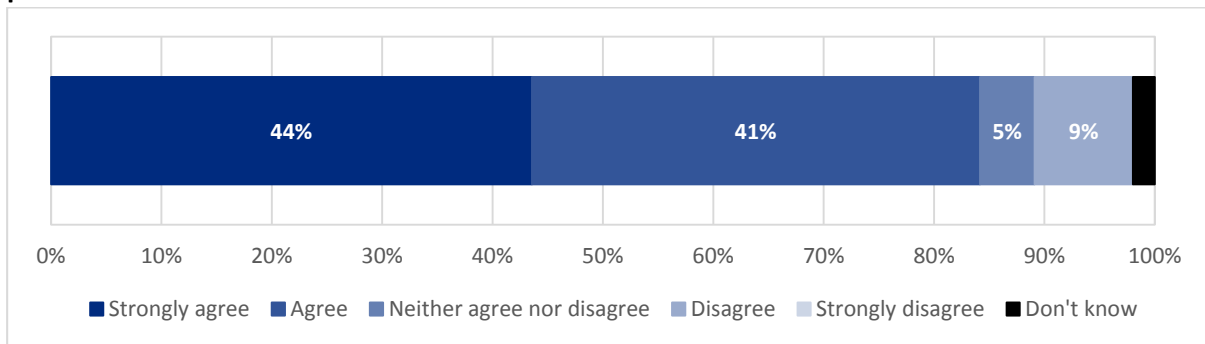


n=66

Source: Home Supervisor Survey

Home supervisors also generally indicated that they were provided with sufficient information on the CSC’s policies and procedures, with over four-fifths indicating that that was the case, although as with the case with host supervisors, the responses to this question were softer than the other questions. This again suggests that providing a light-touch guidance document could provide greater comfort for supervisors involved in a Split-site scholarship.

Figure 5.8: I felt I was provided with sufficient information on the CSC's Scholarship policies and procedures



n=66

Source: Home Supervisor Survey

The majority of home and host supervisors indicated that they were either currently engaged in additional collaborations as a result of the Split-site programme, or that they were planning future collaborations, with two-fifths of respondents indicating that these were ongoing. These collaborations took many forms, including joint grant applications, joint research projects, joint publications, staff exchanges, and Memoranda of Understanding. For those respondents who had not yet engaged in additional collaborations, or who had no plans for them, the most frequently cited reasons were a lack of an appropriate area of research, funding, or turnover of the staff who were originally involved in the Split-site scholarship.

Section 6 – Summary and Recommendations

The CSC's Split-site programme occupies a unique niche in the international scholarship landscape. It seeks to provide doctoral scholars from across the developing Commonwealth with access to equipment and expertise at higher education institutions in the United Kingdom so that they are able to conduct research that they would not otherwise be able to do at their home institutions. Based on the findings of this review, the Split-site programme meets this objective, and does so in an effective manner.

Scholars' awareness of the programme primarily comes from their home institutions and home supervisors, largely through institutional communications and the personal experience supervisors have with Commonwealth Scholarships. Communications about the programme appear to be on-point, as the motivations scholars have for applying to the programme closely align with the programme goals and their experiences in the United Kingdom. However the programme website does not necessarily provide the same type of messaging as other communications. One option would be to separate the programme page on the CSC website into a general 'about this programme' page, and a more in-depth 'policy' page which would provide greater visibility for the benefits of the programme to potential applicants. It also appears that UK-based supervisors are not being optimised as a pathway for promoting the Split-site programme to potential scholars. Consequently, **it is recommended that a greater effort is made to promote the programme to UK-based supervisors, who could provide another conduit for promoting the scholarship to others outside of the country who could benefit from the programme.**

Doctoral scholars who apply to the programme are motivated to do so precisely because they seek to continue the research they are conducting by using equipment and resources found within their host institutions in the United Kingdom and the expertise of their host supervisors which they are not able to access at their home institutions. Scholars are also motivated by the opportunity to gain international experience that helps them to develop as researchers and as individuals, as well as the possibility of establishing partnerships and relationships and developing future collaborations. Scholars targeted specific host institutions and supervisors based on varying combinations of reputation, available resources, and pre-existing relationships.

Upon arriving in the United Kingdom, Split-site scholars realise the potential benefits in spades. Almost every scholar reported that their Split-site scholarship benefitted them by giving them international experience including the ability to attend conferences, exposure to the international research culture, and the experience of being in and navigating a multicultural setting. Similarly, almost every scholar felt that they benefitted from gaining access to expertise and knowledge that was not available at their home institution learning advanced research techniques, interdisciplinary approaches, and learning from top academics in their field. A strong majority of scholars also said they benefitted from the access to equipment and resources that were not previously available to them, the ability to build partnerships or relationships, the opportunity to explore future collaborations, and the funding that the scholarship provided to them.

Host supervisors also reported a number of benefits for themselves and their department from their participation in the programme and the presence of the Split-site scholar. First and foremost was the intercultural experience that hosting the scholar brought to the other staff and students in their department. This benefit manifested itself in a number of ways including learning more about their scholar's home country, both in the social and cultural sense and with respect to the higher education and research sector. Consequently, host supervisors felt better equipped after working with their Split-site scholar to navigate that sector when they themselves were looking to do work in that

country. Host supervisors also felt that their Split-site scholars were strong researchers who, in addition to setting good examples for other students in the department, were themselves able to introduce and teach new research techniques to the host department, creating a two-way exchange of skills and knowledge that host supervisors valued. Additionally, by hosting scholars the supervisors were able to expand the scope of their research in their area of interest, through exposure to a new facet of their research, access to new data sets from other countries, or a novel overlap with another research area that they had not considered.

Home supervisors also reported a number of benefits from their participation in the programme and from the scholar's return to their institution after visiting the United Kingdom. The greatest benefit that supervisors reported to their department was the contribution of their scholar's research activity to the department's research outcomes. The ability to report on research that was done in an area that was outside of the department's normal scope or capacity was seen as a significant advantage. The ability to collaborate with another supervisor was also cited as a benefit, both in terms of the specific collaboration itself as well as the groundwork that was laid for future collaborations. Home supervisors also felt that the skills and knowledge that scholars returned with were important, particularly because scholars often felt that it was their responsibility to teach and share what they learned with others despite there not being any formal obligation to do so. In some cases this resulted in the construction of equipment and resources based on the scholars' experience, significantly expanding the research capacity of the department.

The dynamic between the two supervisors and the scholar is a critical one, and one that ultimately benefits from a pre-existing personal relationship between the two supervisors. In instances where this relationship existed, supervisors reported that they were able to take a more fluid or informal approach to the supervision, confident that they knew how the other supervisor worked, their abilities, and their priorities. These situations generally lent themselves to a co-supervisory dynamic where both supervisors were involved in the scholar's work regardless of what institution they were currently at. That being said, it is important to note that a lack of pre-existing relationship did not mean that this dynamic did not occur in instances where supervisors did not know each other beforehand. These types of personal pre-existing relationships were far more prevalent than pre-existing department- or institution-level relationships, despite a stated focus on the latter in the programme policy. **It is recommended that greater consideration is given to the former moving forward, particularly in light of the benefits that can be derived from these, and the potential for transforming them into institutional relationships as a part of the Split-site experience.**

In other cases, supervisors took turns acting as primary supervisors while the scholar was at their institution. In these cases, the other supervisor was still involved in keeping abreast of the scholar's activities, but was not as closely involved while the scholar was at the other institution. The point at which the host supervisor became involved in the research project also had an effect on how involved they were with developing the work plan and the dissertation itself. For some host supervisors this was not an issue, as they were happy to simply supervise the research as it took place, but for others they would have preferred to have been involved earlier in the research during the design phase. However, in many instances the host supervisor continued to be involved in the scholar's doctoral work after they had returned to their home institution, either acting as another supervisor or collaborating further on the research and related publications.

One of the defining features of the Split-site experience, and one that was seen by supervisors as a significant strength, was the flexibility that it offered in allowing supervisors and the scholar to establish the dynamic that worked best for them rather than be constrained by a set of rigid expectations placed on them by the CSC. While there were instances where some suggestions or light-

touch guidance might be useful, supervisors felt that it was still important that they were ultimately able to determine their working relationship with each other and the scholar. For scholars, having two supervisors could be difficult at times because of the need to integrate feedback from two different viewpoints, but they felt that this experience made their work stronger, and improved their own skills as researchers and writers. The flexibility offered by the options for timing the research visits was also cited by scholars as a significant advantage of the programme, enabling scholars who otherwise would not be able to conduct this type of international research to do so.

However, despite the general success of the programme and positive experiences for those who were involved, there were challenges reported by all parties. While scholars were in the United Kingdom, issues around housing and personal issues such as homesickness and concerns about their family were reported. In many cases the scholar was able to rely on their host supervisor for non-academic advice and support, however there were instances where the issues caused great difficulty. In the case of housing, these largely related to the need to secure short-term housing. In order to mitigate these potential difficulties, scholars suggested that the CSC could provide some information about housing in the United Kingdom, including a list of reputable letting agencies, guidance around expected living costs, and suggestions about which areas are safe to live in. **It is recommended that scholars are pointed towards where these resources already exist, be they university-based or elsewhere, during the early stages of their scholarship.** In the case of personal issues, the potential seriousness for instances where the scholar is unable to receive support from their networks or supervisor reinforces the importance of the CSC's efforts to signpost mental health resources for scholars.

There were also instances where scholars felt that the length of the study period was not quite long enough. In some cases this led to compressed research schedules, or an inability to pursue lines of inquiry that had been opened up during their research. Host supervisors also felt that the study period was at times too short, particularly due to the amount of time it took to train scholars on equipment they would be using, and the time it took to build a rapport with the scholar. Consequently, there were a number of requests that the CSC consider an option where scholars could request a short extension to their time in the United Kingdom in cases where it would be appropriate to grant it. The number of these requests suggests this is an area of policy that would benefit from a review.

Host supervisors also flagged other issues that came up while they were hosting their scholars. Many reported that they had to cover unexpected costs as a result of hosting their Split-site scholar. These costs were largely attributed to lab fees, which could be particularly expensive due to the costs associated with the reagents and operation of the lab equipment. Some host supervisors were unaware that there is an opportunity to apply to the CSC for additional funding to cover these costs, suggesting that this needs to be better communicated. This could be done through an introductory document for new scholars and supervisors that contains information around expectations and suggestions about how to get the most out of the scholarship experience. **It is recommended that an FAQ document is created that provides guidance around these issues and those outlined below for new scholars and supervisors.**

This FAQ could also include recommendations regarding frequency of communication between supervisors and scholars, particularly in instances where there are significant changes, in order to ensure supervisors are kept up to date on the status of their scholars, an issue that was flagged by some home supervisors. This could also avoid the issue of significant changes occurring to scholar's research projects while they are in the United Kingdom without the consent of the home supervisor. Home supervisors also felt that their expectations were not always met, and this type of document could also help to ensure all parties are on the same page early on in the Split-site scholarship. This FAQ could also be used as a way to flag the potential problems around intellectual property and

recommend ways to pre-emptively address the issue, helping to circumvent an area of contention. **Additionally, it is recommended that new scholars and supervisors consider some form of voluntary framework agreement around intellectual property sharing, and that the need to discuss this issue early on in the Split-site scholarship is emphasised.**

These recommendations should help address the challenges described by Split-site scholars and supervisors, further cementing the benefits that they realise, and bolstering what should be considered a successful programme.

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