

## **A Survey of Expected Versus Actual Pedagogical Challenges Experienced by International Professors**

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### **Abstract**

The international mobility of knowledge workers, as reflected in the vast numbers of international (or immigrant) scholars, help provide the intellectual infrastructure of several higher institutions of learning and research across the world. Although the large numbers involved reflect an apparent success of this phenomenon, there are hidden challenges faced by international scholars. In this study, a survey was administered to determine what international professors expected pedagogical challenges were before arriving in the United States, versus the actual experiences they faced after they began teaching in the United States. The most common pedagogical issues international professors expected to face included instructor-student communication, challenges with their own proficiency of spoken American English, and cultural differences. These three issues were also the most frequently reported pedagogical issues that they experienced, along with a sense of unpreparedness for different instructional strategies necessary for instructional success in the United States classroom. Implications for specialized support for immigrant scholars are discussed.

Keywords: international scholars, pedagogical challenges, international professors, faculty mobility, cross-cultural challenges, instructional differences

### **International Scholars among Higher Education Professionals - By the Numbers**

Globalization, and its associated worker mobility, has changed the face of the average worker, especially in cosmopolitan cities. In the last two decades or so, the number of migrants worldwide has rapidly increased. According to The United Nations International Migration Report of 2015, the formal counts of migrants reached 244 million in 2015, up from 222 million in 2010, and 173 million in 2000. A subset of this migrant group comprises international academic workers whose skills are needed in instructional and research fields in higher education.

Although the statistics are hard to find (for reasons delineated later), the following percentages of foreign-born academic workers have been reported:

- United Kingdom: 63,275 out of 204,665 academic workers (31%) during the 2016-1017 academic year.