

### Brain gain

- 1 The maxim that "If we don't get smarter, we'll get poorer" becomes increasingly germane as the UK depends ever more on the high-tech sector and high-skill individuals. The consequent importance of 5 can therefore not be emphasised enough.
- 2 In the recent past we have achieved a brain gain. But this has been jeopardised by the real-terms cuts in the past five years. The best talent — from outstanding PhD students to world-leading scientists — is highly mobile. When choosing whether to work in the UK, or in, say, the United States, Germany or Singapore, such people are influenced by comparative funding trends. If the current squeeze continues, and the funding gap with competitor nations widens, they will go elsewhere and we will lose out.
- 3 Even modest cuts could lead to a disproportionate loss of the top talent on whom scientific productivity and the international standing of our research universities depends. That is why it is crucial that the comprehensive spending review sends a signal that enables UK science to build on past successes, rather than jeopardise them.

adapted from *The Times*, 2015