

# What does internationalization, or the lack of it, mean to academic research and researchers?

by Joana Moscoso, PhD

# my own experience

Long-term (6 months to 6 years)



UMEÅ  
UNIVERSITY



Australian  
National  
University

Imperial College  
London



INSTITUTO DE INVESTIGAÇÃO  
E INOVAÇÃO EM SAÚDE  
UNIVERSIDADE DO PORTO

Short-term (1 month to 3 months)



University  
of Basel



LUDWIG-  
MAXIMILIANS-  
UNIVERSITÄT  
MÜNCHEN

Fellowships

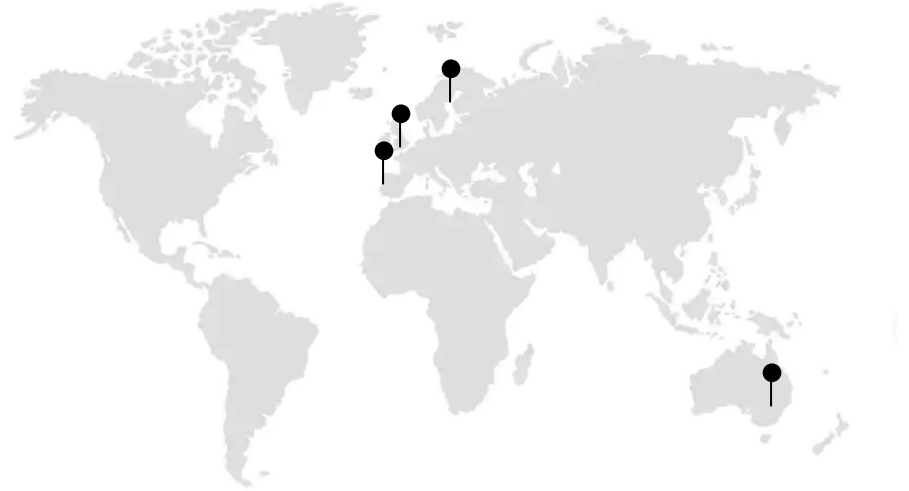
**FCT**

Fundação para a Ciência e a Tecnologia  
MINISTÉRIO DA CIÊNCIA, TECNOLOGIA E ENSINO SUPERIOR



**EMBO**

excellence in life sciences



# internationalization

# internationalization

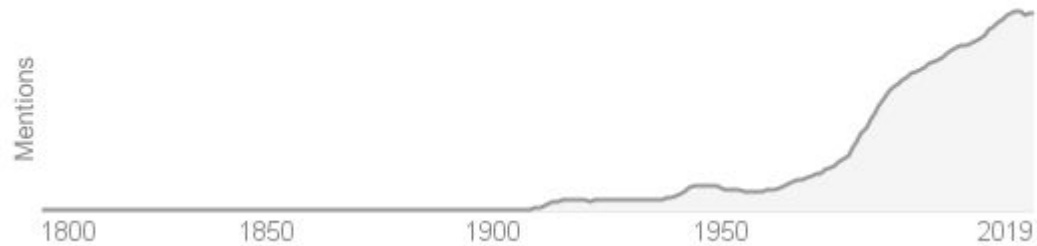
derives from the word “international”

means existing, occurring or carried on by or between different nations

# internationalization

increasingly used over time (ref. Google)

Use over time for: internationalization



# internationalization

in businesses

is the action of expanding the company/product/service to other places often described as an improvisation process strongly affected by cultural tastes, preferences and traditions

# internationalization

in marketing/branding

international means tailoring the product/service to the new market

VS

global means providing the exact same product/service to different markets





# internationalization

*in sports*

foreign athletes

geographical reach of the sport itself

visibility of the sports club/team

competitions setup

fans and sponsors

# internationalization

*in academia*

collaborations and networking

foreign/visiting researchers

perceived relevance of the field of research

visibility/prestige of the university/research institution/team

science communication setup

funding

# views

The following 8 testimonials were collected and curated by Joana Moscoso for the scope of this webinar.



**Patrick Rebuschat**

Professor of Linguistics

“...changed  
my career  
(and life)”

Internationalization...

“...has been  
of a huge  
impact”



**Alain Filloux**

Professor of Molecular Microbiology



“There are different levels in this and of course **it depends** in which lab/group you have been through. You can have internationalization but **if your training is not good that is not so useful**. Training in top labs/groups in different countries helps you approach science with different culture, that is **rigour**, **creativity** or **resilience**, and it not always exactly the same from one country to the other.”



“Each experience provided me with wonderful opportunities to **learn from my peers** and from **leading scientists in my field**. (I am very grateful to the **funders** who enabled me to study abroad as **I wouldn’t have been able to afford it otherwise...**)”

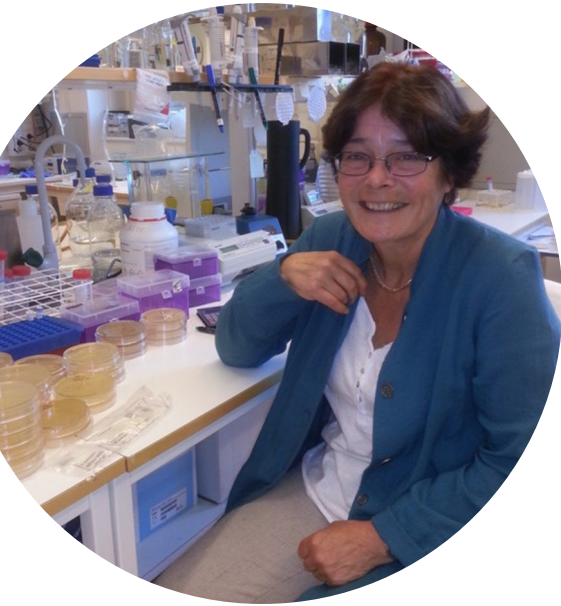


“Clearly, the **benefits were not just academic**. You realize, for example, what is really nice about your home country and what is really not so nice. How to deal with **ageing parents** is another one, which kicks in after a certain age. And **travel restrictions** due to a pandemic are really challenging when you live far away from your loved ones. But on the whole, I wouldn’t have done anything differently.”



“Beyond the science, what internationalization does is **opening your mind**, making you **more adventurous**, **less shy** and **always looking forward for new challenges**. This might not be the case when looking for **security** and **well-being** in one single place. I feel that I would be someone different if I had not done it.”





# Vicky Shingler

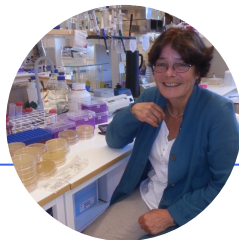
Professor in Molecular Microbiology

“Internationalization is nothing new to me”

→ Studied/Worked in UK and Sweden.



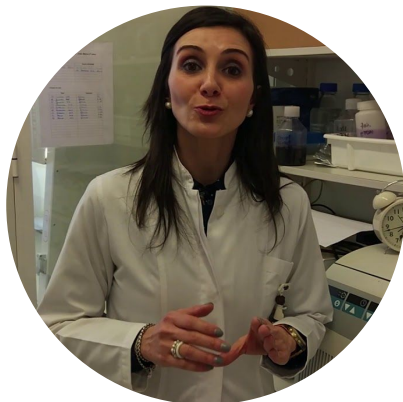
“At the time of my Ph.D. (1984), the **perceived wisdom** was that **you had to go elsewhere** to do post-doctoral work, **preferably abroad**, if you wanted to get a position in Academia in the UK. Hence, my path was set to consider a post-doc abroad. My original plan was to go to West Berlin (as it was at that time) but this morphed into going to Umeå in the North of Sweden. I arrived in January 1985, intending to stay for just one year - the rest is History! [Vicky is a Professor at Umeå University]”



“The Department had only a few international post-docs at that time, but was easy to assimilate into because **all seminars and meetings were (and still are) held in English**. This was deliberate - both as an aid to further international recruitment and to provide Swedish students and scientists with forums to **practice for international events**. Internationalization of the Department and its teaching happened fast. **Over 50% of current group leaders are non-native Swedes.**”



“Scientific work exclusively  
carried out in Portugal”



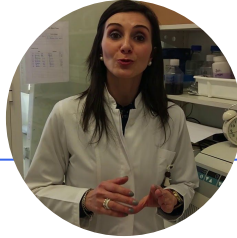
**Ana Rita Álvaro**

Researcher in Neuroscience



**Hugo Vicente Miranda**

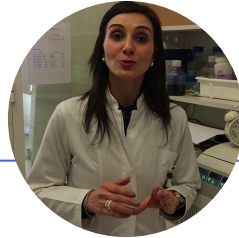
Principal Investigator in Neuroscience



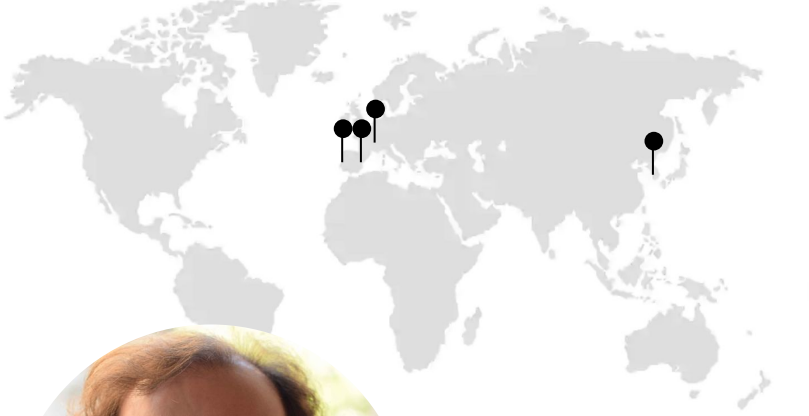
“I don’t think the lack of a stay abroad to conduct research has had a negative impact on my **career** or **scientific productivity**.  
However, I do think the experience of living and doing research abroad is **valued by funding bodies** and, in this regard, compared to others who did research abroad, I do think I am in disadvantage.”



“Having **research experience abroad is very valued**, especially by **funding bodies**. However, **you can also do great research if you don't go abroad and this research can be international too** if you have collaborations with research groups abroad or if you participate in international conferences and discuss your research internationally. I have never excluded the possibility of doing research abroad. By staying in, I've **gained much respect** by my colleagues at the institution.



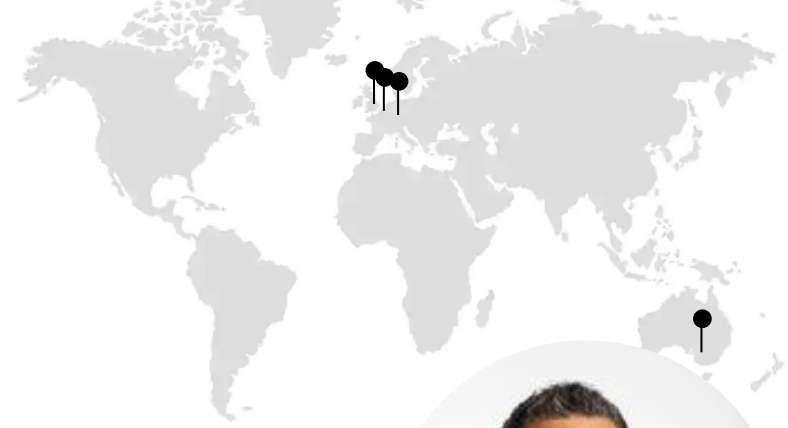
“Both my PhD and first post-doctoral work were expected to include stays abroad, namely USA and Italy, but either because the research took another turn or because I was invited for a Teaching Fellow position, **I ended up not going abroad to carry out research.** This does not mean I don’t have international experience or I don’t discuss science with international leaders in the field, as **I have been in countless international conferences** and I have **collaborated/published with authors from 11 institutions abroad.**”



“Connections  
vs  
Publications”

**Mário Ribeiro**

Researcher in Spin electronics



“Training  
without  
borders”

**Abdou Hachani**

Research Fellow in Microbiology





“Research experience abroad exposed me to changing cultural and scientific realities in which the only way to keep up was to revisit my core foundations.

It did as much for me as I was willing to embrace the differences. The **connections established** through hard work and collaborative projects were perhaps the **most important outcome for my career**, with publications being a lesser crystallization of a greater experience.”



“The internationalization of my career is the reflection of my passion for science combined with the available opportunities to pursue scientific questions. My scientific curiosity has greatly benefited from the globalization of scientific research, including **mobility between research fields, countries/continents, or labs within the same institution**. There is no one size fits all, as there is only one like yourself. **There is not one measurably successful career pathway but multiple.**”



# Gunnar Schroeder

Lecturer in Microbial Pathogenesis



“Invaluable, international network”

→ Studied/Worked in Germany, Spain, Switzerland and UK



“Studying and working in different countries and places has significantly contributed to **whom I have become as person and academic**. My ERASMUS in Spain gave me **confidence** that I will be able to find my way in different places and environments. Working in England has also allowed me to **hone my language skills**. Moving between places has also provided me with an **invaluable, international network of friends and colleagues**, which I can rely now for information, advice and collaborations. This is one of the biggest benefits, which I initially never consider.



“Studying and working in different countries has **widened my horizon in terms of approaches to learning and teaching**, but also **organisation and management of research labs, institutes and science systems.**”

In general, it improved my **intercultural competence**. Overall, I do think that everyone I have worked with **enjoyed working in international teams**, with people with different stories and values. Without doubt the different backgrounds also feed into **different ways problem-solving and work**, making the team more effective.”

<b>Mostly mentioned (5/8)</b>	<b>Excellence</b>
2nd mostly mentioned (4/8)	Impact on personal life
Then (3/8)	Funding & Personal drives
And finally (2/8)	Language & International Research



## Why I did it

Personal  
drivers

Excellence

Funding

Why it was possible

## Outcomes it had

Impact on  
personal life

Language

Networking

International  
research

**international  
research**

**vs**

**international  
researcher**

**vs**

**international  
experience**

What's the difference between the three?  
Can one exist without the others?  
How do higher education institutions are managing  
these aspects of internationalization?



chaperone

**Empowering Scientists  
in their Careers**

[www.chaperone.online](http://www.chaperone.online)