

Exile challenge

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A BRITISH researcher now based in Texas is challenging Britain's science minister, Robert Jackson, to admit that British science funding is in crisis and that this is accelerating a brain drain that could become 'a flood'. Michael Duff, now professor of physics at the Texas A&M University and a spokesman for the lobby group British Scientists Abroad, is meeting Jackson in London this week to press his points.

Duff wants to discuss the minister's response to a petition earlier this year signed by 1600 expatriate scientists, which called for a greater commitment to scientific research in Britain. 'With his letter (of reply), Mr Jackson demonstrated his profound lack of understanding of the long-term damage being done; if this is the official response of the government, the brain drain looks set to become a flood,' said Duff.

Jackson, in his letter, had dismissed many of the signatories as either being 'unqualified' (a reference to PhD students with up to five years of postgraduate training) or 'in the twilight of their career