

A network diagram consisting of numerous thin green lines connecting small, glowing yellow nodes. The nodes are scattered across the left and center of the image, with a higher density in the lower-left quadrant. The lines radiate from the nodes, creating a complex web of connections. The background is a solid dark blue or black.

UKRI BBSRC EASTBIO

Doctoral Training Partnership

Student Handbook 2023-24

Welcome to EASTBIO

EASTBIO is the East of Scotland Bioscience Doctoral Training Partnership (DTP). It was established in 2012 with funding from the UKRI Biotechnology and Biological Sciences Research Council (BBSRC), which is part of UK Research and Innovation (UKRI). Our partnership comprises the institutions along the East coast of Scotland, a key region in the UK for life sciences in terms of both academic excellence and industrial support and investment. The primary aim of EASTBIO is to deliver world-class interdisciplinary training to bioscience PhD students and to build vibrant interactive student cohorts. In addition to providing enhanced training to our students, the partnership offers outstanding opportunities for collaborative research, access to expertise and research facilities across the institutions of the East of Scotland.



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Disclaimer: Every effort has been made to ensure that the information contained within this Handbook is correct at the time of publication. EASTBIO training courses are subject to ongoing development which could necessitate cancellation of, or alteration to, the advertised courses. The EASTBIO DTP reserves the right to make changes at any time without prior notice. Should you notice any errors or inaccuracies in this Handbook or on our website, please let us know by emailing enquiries@eastscotbioldtp.ac.uk.

TBIO Annual Sympos.

2023

12 – 13 June 2023



EASTBIO academic partners



EASTBIO associate partners



Studentships

Our first cohort of 34 students started in autumn 2012, with core funding from UKRI BBSRC, coupled with additional funding from each of the EASTBIO partner institutions. This autumn we welcome our twelfth cohort of 60 students.

Research themes

The EASTBIO student projects are designed to meet key priority areas, outlined in the UKRI BBSRC strategic plan: <https://bbsrc.ukri.org/research/>

Understanding the Rules of Life

Bioscience for Sustainable Agriculture and Food – Crops and Soil

Bioscience for Sustainable Agriculture and Food – Terrestrial and Aquatic Animals (encompassing Livestock, Production Biology and Health and Aquaculture)

Bioscience for renewable resources and Clean Growth

Bioscience for an integrated understanding of Health

Welcome from the EASTBIO Management Group

Welcome to the EASTBIO Doctoral Training Partnership community. We look forward to meeting you and your supervisors as we welcome you at our Induction and Training Day in Edinburgh, on the 10th and 11th of October 2023.

EASTBIO is a partnership of five universities, Aberdeen, Dundee, Edinburgh, Stirling and St Andrews, plus the Industrial Biotechnology Innovation Centre (IBioIC), Moredun Research Institute, Scotland's Rural College (SRUC), The James Hutton Institute and associate partners Cool Farm Alliance and SULSA. Each of you will be registered in a host school or department within your university. Although you will follow the local training and assessment programme of your host institution, you are an EASTBIO PhD student, funded by UKRI BBSRC. As such, you will receive additional training, as will be introduced and as listed in this handbook under 'EASTBIO Training Programme', and will be expected to undertake a Professional Internship for PhD Students (PIPS) placement, which will provide you with an opportunity to learn valuable professional skills in the workplace

You have beaten off stiff competition to receive one of our prestigious studentships and are at the start of an exciting four-year journey through your PhD. We hope that this Handbook, our Induction Day and the EASTBIO website will help you familiarise yourselves with the aims of the partnership and our training programme. We expect that throughout your PhD each of you will take a proactive approach to your own training and development with the support of your supervisors and EASTBIO. You will be asked to complete and update your 'Professional Development Record' and we will monitor this to help ensure that you complete your PhD within four years and graduate with a set of valuable skills that will enable you to compete successfully with the best in the world in your chosen career. We have been working hard to respond to feedback from our annual student survey to ensure that our training programme remains relevant, and we can best support you through your PhD.

As a new PhD student, you will be establishing yourselves in an exciting, vibrant research environment - meeting lots of new people, possibly finding your way around in a new city, country or culture and being bombarded with information on just about everything. If any of us can assist you with settling in, please don't hesitate to contact us! You can find information on the EASTBIO management structure and contacts at the end of this Handbook and on our website: www.eastscotbiotdp.ac.uk/eastbio-contacts. There will be ample opportunity at the Induction for informal interactions between students, supervisors and the EASTBIO Management and Team members.

We wish you an excellent start to your studies,



Dr Gerben van Ooijen
on behalf of the EASTBIO Academic Management Group



EASTBIO Training Programme

The EASTBIO Training and Development Programme is designed to provide students with diverse backgrounds, skills and experiences a set of training to enhance their understanding in bioscience, biomedical, mathematical and physical sciences as well as research, professional, enterprise and transferable skills, enabling students to draw on a range of technologies, skillsets and approaches to address complex biological questions. This is combined with a set of core training events and activities and training in transferable, professional and enterprising skills, open to all our student cohorts.

During the EASTBIO PhD we expect that all of our students will develop the characteristics of a highly skilled and employable bioscience graduate and go on to be able to live, work and lead in our complex and diverse world.

Our Training Programme is aligned with the Vitae Researcher Development Framework and aims to support both your professional and personal development throughout the four years of your funded PhD. The bioscience careers of the future require individuals equipped with knowledge and cutting-edge skills that combine quantitative and interdisciplinary approaches to addressing complex biological problems, with expertise in advanced technologies. The EASTBIO training programme in Years 1 and 2 is designed to help you develop these crucial skills.

To be successful in your future career you also have to develop a range of personal skills, such as effective communication, initiative, project management skills and resilience. The EASTBIO transferable skills programme from Year 1 to 4 and the EASTBIO Annual Symposia, which student volunteers help to organise, aim to build your personal skills, your confidence and independence.

Finally, the EASTBIO Professional Internships for PhD students (PIPS) provide you with the unique opportunity to try something different from your research in the lab. The invaluable experience of working in a non-academic environment will make the transition into your professional bioscience career much easier at the end of your PhD.

The EASTBIO training programme incorporates the above training elements, including the Professional Internships for PhD students or industry-linked placements (for students doing Collaborative Projects), structured around each year of the doctoral study:

Year 1: Foundational Training

Year 2: Advanced Training

Year 3: Professional Training

Year 4: Consolidation

We aim for our training to be integrated with Equality, Diversity and Inclusion principles and values while also conforming with UKRI BBSRC strategic priorities. We encourage all and any student to contact us if you happen to have a plan of reasonable adjustments in place and specific accessibility requirements to ensure that we will support you appropriately at any event or activity that we organise centrally.

As well as the information in this Handbook and the PIPS Student Guide, you should keep an eye on your email inbox and the EASTBIO website <http://www.eastscotbiotdp.ac.uk> for further training updates, news and developments. EASTBIO circulates a monthly Newsletter highlighting training to come, as well as training, networking, EDI and other opportunities of relevance to you and resources of interest across the DTP.



Programme Structure

The EASTBIO training programme is a modular programme containing mandatory and optional elements. This allows each student to acquire mandatory core competences and also to dynamically manage your own development according to ongoing analysis of your training needs, which naturally evolve during the course of your doctoral studies.

We aim for our training to run primarily in-person in order to build a strong cohort sitting within part of a wider network of postgraduate bioscience research students and we hope that the interactions that you will establish with your fellow EASTBIO students will extend beyond your PhD. We aim for 50% of the training offered to be available online or hybrid in recognition of the challenges faced by PhD students due to the cost-of-living crisis, caring responsibilities, disability, and research commitments.

As outlined in the following figure, in Years 1 and 2 you are expected to attend a number of EASTBIO (face-to-face and online) training events and activities, some mandatory for your cohort, some optional. In this Handbook, we refer to attendance of EASTBIO events as your *training requirements, in accordance with your obligations as UKRI-funded students*. Each training/event is assigned points (usually 10 points per day-long training). Through attendance at these designated events - a mix of mandatory and optional courses - you should readily achieve **200 training points in total by the end of your second year of PhD study**. We recommend that you should aim to collect a minimum of **120 training points by the end of your first year of study**. Although there are specific mandatory EASTBIO events in Year 3 and 4, these carry no credit. For an overview, see the following Table.



Figure 1: EASTBIO training progression diagram



	Mandatory with points	Optional with points	Mandatory, no points	Optional, no points
Year 1 – minimum of 120 points	Induction - 10 Symposium - 10 Placements Q+A - 10 Set 1 Masterclasses - 10x2 Thematic Meetings - 10x4 Enterprise and Industry Skills (for CASE students only) - 10 Resilient Researcher - 10 Project Managing Your PhD - 10	Set 2 Masterclasses - 10 each Set 3 Masterclasses - 10 each L2D /SysMIC Course - 20 Coding Club - 10 External/local institution training and development (by application) - 40 max Where do you Draw the Line? - 10 Student Rep engagement - 10	Public Engagement (2 days each year) Mantra Inclusive Communication Research Integrity (via host institution) Presentation Skills (via host institution)	Other non-EASTBIO training
Year 2 minimum of 200 points total	Symposium - 10 Science Communication - 10 Thematic Meeting - 10 Enterprise and Industry Skills (for CASE students only) - 10	Set 2 Masterclasses - 10 each Set 3 Masterclasses - 10 each Advanced Bioscience Training - 40 max External/local institution training and development (by application)	PIPS or CASE Placement Public Engagement (2 days each year)	Other non-EASTBIO training
Year 3			PIPS or CASE Placement Public Engagement (2 days each year) Making the Most of your Final Year	Other non-EASTBIO Training Symposium
Year 4			Public Engagement (2 days/year)	Symposium Making the Most of Your Final Year

Note that in recognition of the time commitment and engagement of our student representatives, we will offer each student rep a bonus of 10 training points in their first year.

Foundation Masterclasses

These training sessions are designed to provide the groundwork in bioscience methods and theory and are divided into 3 sets.

Set 1 Masterclasses are mandatory for all year 1 students and are worth 10 points each. They focus on core quantitative and computational skills. These are:

- Statistics and Experimental Design (Beginner or Advanced)
- Artificial Intelligence and Machine Learning for Bio-Scientists

Set 2 Masterclasses are optional for year 1 and year 2 students and are worth 10 points each. They focus on interdisciplinary working.

Set 3 Masterclasses are optional for year 1 and year 2 students and are worth 10 points each. They focus on foundation bioscience training and primers in transformative technologies.

Transferable Skills

The acquisition and development of personal transferable, employment-related and research-oriented generic skills is an important part of your postgraduate training. These training sessions are mandatory and are allocated per year of study.

Year 1:

- Presentation skills via host institution
- Research Integrity via host institution
- Resilient Researcher (10 points)
- Enterprise and Industry Skills (for CASE students only) (10 points)
- Inclusive Communication training (0 points)
- Project Managing your PhD (10 points)
- MANTRA - a free, online non-assessed course developed by the University of Edinburgh, with guidelines to help you understand and reflect on how to manage the digital data you collect throughout your research - <https://mantra.edina.ac.uk> (0 points)

Year 2:

- Science Communication with Impact (10 points)

Year 3:

- Making the Most of Your Final Year (0 points)

Year 4:

- Making the Most of Your Final Year (optional)

Advanced Bioscience

In the second year, you are likely looking to develop further your core bioscience skills by taking optional advanced training courses suiting specific project requirements. Many courses are available locally, and as an EASTBIO student you have access to practical advanced technology training and advanced core bioscience courses at all EASTBIO partner universities. These options can be found on our website. Second year students are encouraged to take these courses and can receive 10 training points per training. They should be recorded within the Professional Development Record.

Enterprise and Industry Skills (Mandatory for CASE students)

This component of our programme supports your development of skills and experiences related to industry such as business, commercial, entrepreneurial and leadership skills. Students doing Collaborative studentships are required to take at least one of the training options offered depending on their training needs. Depending on capacity, we may open this training to other funded students.

EASTBIO partners and stakeholders IBioIC, SULSA, Cool Farm Alliance, and UoE Edinburgh Innovations have invited our Collaborative students to join their industry- and enterprise-focused training. To find more details, and to register please go to the website.

Thematic Meetings

The DTP3 Thematic Collaborative training in 2023/24 is structured around 5 key themes of strategic importance for UKRI BBSRC. This training involves 4 one-day student-led sessions across the first year of the programme, structured around five thematic areas of EASTBIO research. At the Induction (October), each group will convene to discuss and decide on likely topics and hosts for each session, with scheduling and planning to follow as a collaborative/group project. You can find further guidance for planning thematic meetings on page 22.

Thematic Groups:

- Clean Growth
- Crops and Soil
- Integrated Understanding of Health
- Livestock and Aquaculture
- Understanding the Rules of Life

First year students are required to attend 4 thematic meetings, each worth 10 points. Second year students are required to attend 1 thematic meeting, worth 10 points, attendance at further meetings is optional. Although you will join one thematic group, confirmed at the Induction, you may attend a session of a different group depending on your specific interests.

Public Engagement

BBSRC expects all PhD students to carry out two days of Public Engagement per year throughout your studies and EASTBIO will ask you to explore such opportunities and record your activities on your Training Development Record. All students are required to submit information about such activities through UKRI's nominated online system (currently Research Fish). We are not prescriptive about the type of PE you should engage in as this will depend on your own interests. Examples of suitable activities that have been reported in the past include: training/work as a STEM Ambassador, grassroot teaching, engagement with local festivals of science, engagement with local/community projects, participatory research, organisation of local mental health/wellbeing initiatives, meet-the-scientist events, science mentor schemes for schools/colleges, conservation activities, etc.

External Training

First and second year EASTBIO students may apply to receive EASTBIO training points for training and development opportunities external to the programme, either delivered by the local institution or by an external provider that are not currently accounted for in the training programme. External opportunities can fulfil a maximum of 20% of the total training point requirements; amounting to 40 points out of the 200 training points that should be aggregated by the end of the first two years of PhD study. Students in their third year are eligible to apply if they have outstanding training to complete. Please complete the EASTBIO form for each training you wish to apply for points for: <https://forms.office.com/e/W8LXbXsBsf>.

Eligible training must be at least one-day long and fulfil at least one of the stated criteria. To apply, students should (a) complete the online form and (b) provide evidence of the training by emailing bioenq@exseed.ed.ac.uk. Evidence can include: certificate of completion, 'thank you for attending' email, screenshot of online attendance, confirmation of attendance from trainer/supervisor.

Examples of eligible training include: scientific methods, advanced training, teaching or demonstrating work undertaken, non-academic work towards a specific skill development. After a review of your application form, EASTBIO will contact you to confirm the training points approval (or seek clarifications, as necessary) and we will update your Training Development Record accordingly.

L2D (Learn to Discover) /SysMIC Course

Learn to Discover and SysMIC are 2 courses delivered by academics from University College London and Birkbeck College London. EASTBIO has reserved places for 5 students on both courses, each worth £1000. They provide training in Data Science & Machine Learning for Health, Disease and Bioscience – more info to be found here: <https://learntodiscover.ai/> <https://sysmic.ac.uk/course-details/>.

We will provide an introduction to this course prior to the induction event, following which applications will open for the places.

Students will be committed to the course due to the substantial cost to EASTBIO, and will be expected to complete by September 2024, including any deadlines set by the L2D team. Upon completion, students will receive 20 training points.

Planning Your Training

We recognise that each researcher has a set of unique training needs and recommend that you consider the following:

- Reflect on your current skills to identify your strengths and areas where you feel there are gaps. The **Researcher Development Framework** that can be used for this purpose: <https://www.vitae.ac.uk/researchers-professional-development/about-the-vitae-researcher-development-framework>.
- Speak to your supervisor about your training needs, and make a plan using the 'PhD Professional Development Record' template.
- Speak to other researchers and any of EASTBIO student reps to share advice and recommendations about training.
- Look at the EASTBIO training programme and attend our mandatory programme of events.
- When picking your student-selected options, review what is available within our EASTBIO-recommended options. Also check what your School/College and wider Bioscience community provides in terms of training and support.
- Sign up to each individual training online **through the Eventbrite links on our website. Here you can also find the in-depth summaries of each training.**
- Keep track of the training you have attended using the **'PhD Professional Development Record'**, to be submitted at the end of your first and second year (end of September 2024 and 2025).

How to Register for Training

All training events will be published on our website at <http://www.eastscotbiodtp.ac.uk/training>. You should sign up for each training that you wish to attend via the link to Eventbrite on the website by the 27th of October 2023 so that we can confirm numbers with our training leads. You can then use Eventbrite to manage your training sign-ups by registering for new training, or cancelling existing registration in line with the cancellation policy below. Please use your preferred institutional email address when registering through Eventbrite as we will use this to send reminder emails and important information pertaining to the training.

Cancellation Policy

We are accountable for our programme delivery to our funder, partners and stakeholders and we are committed to optimising its benefits by robust engagement from students and supervisors. We understand the effect of multiple stressors and clashing commitments that may prevent some students from attending some of our required training but we are also committed in our DTP Agreement with the BBSRC to keeping our training relevant, ensuring good attendance levels and consolidating cohort-building activities.

You are expected to attend all mandatory EASTBIO training and any optional EASTBIO training you have registered for. If you have any concerns or need to cancel your attendance, after having first discussed with your supervisor(s), please contact EASTBIO as soon as possible. If you do not provide at **least 2 weeks notice** EASTBIO may seek to retrieve funds spent to secure training delivery (venue hire, external trainer fees, facility use fees, training licences, etc.) from your RTSG, unless in exceptional circumstances.

Professional Development Record

To make the most of the training offered by EASTBIO partner institutions and by external organisations, we require our students to keep a 'Professional Development Record'. In this document, you should record any training and development activities you have carried out. We ask that you keep updating it with specific details as you proceed through the first and the second year of your PhD. It contains evidence that will help you to reflect on how this learning supports your personal and professional development.

You can find the submit your Professional Development Record online here: <https://forms.office.com/e/nSXPPb4i88>

In particular, your 'Professional Development Record' contains important information that:

- helps you to track evidence of your professional development which you can use to review, evaluate and plan for your future success during your PhD and beyond;
- helps your local Thesis Committee Review to assess your progress at the end of each year of your PhD and progression into further years;
- EASTBIO uses to monitor attendance and your total training credit points;
- Provides us with important data needed to fulfil the EASTBIO reporting obligations to our funder UKRI BBSRC (under the EASTBIO BBSRC DTP3 Award Terms and Conditions).

Delayed submission of your 'Professional Development Record' may result in late or cancelled stipend payments.

Feedback

EASTBIO aims to respond to the needs that you, your supervisors and your potential future employers may identify. Our current training is result of strategic BBSRC requirements (i.e., thematic research priorities, computational methods, interdisciplinarity, industry-related skills), commitments and steering by the EASTBIO Management and Advisory Groups (cohort-building, supervisory engagement, horizon scanning), and feedback from current students, supervisors and academics delivering the training. We seek feedback on each individual training and event we run centrally and run an Annual Student Survey at the end of the year to collate input on student experience from the programme in its entirety. The EASTBIO Training and Development Sub-Committee (see <http://www.eastscotbiotdp.ac.uk/eastbio-dtp-committees>) that meets a minimum of 4 times each year analyses the student feedback, or any issue arising, and decides on areas of further improvement or development as part of its standard annual review practice. Some of the amendments we have implemented again this year, such as the arrangements for External Training, additional industry and transferable skills training, and the streamlining of the sign ups, resulted from the Student Annual Survey.

Through this mechanism, your views inform discussions of the programme's. If you cannot find the training you need, please let us know by contacting your student rep, a member of the Training and Development Sub-Committee or the Support Officer at enquiries@eastscotbiotdp.ac.uk.



EASTBIO Training Calendar

Please note that these dates and locations are subject to change, additional training may be added and advertised training may be swapped for a suitable alternative depending on facilitator availability. For an updated version of the training calendar, please go to the EASTBIO website. Here you can also register for each training.

Date	Type	Points	Title	Location	Lead
10-Oct-23	Event	10	Induction	Edinburgh	EASTBIO Team
11-Oct-23	Transferable Training (Y1)	10	Project Managing Your PhD	Edinburgh	Dr Jo Young
11-Oct-23	Mandatory Training	0	Inclusive Communication	Edinburgh	Kim Hartley Kean
2-Nov-23	Set 1 Masterclass	10	Statistics and Experimental Design in-person: Introductory	Dundee	Graham Horgan
15-Nov-23	Set 1 Masterclass	10	(optional) Statistics and Experimental Design in-person: Advanced	Dundee	Graham Horgan
24-Nov-23	Set 2 Masterclass	10	Primer for Mathematical Modelling for Biologists	Edinburgh	Rodrigo García
30-Oct-23 / 06-Nov-23	Transferable Training (Y1+2)	10	Where Do You Draw the Line	Online	Richard Boardman
12-Dec-23	Set 3 Masterclass	10	Advanced Imaging	Dundee	Dr Graeme Ball, Dr Marcus Bischoff, Dr Petr Walczysko, Dr Paul Appleton, Jean-Marie Burel
4-Dec-23	Set 3 Masterclass	10	Good Enough Practices in Research Computing	Online	Dr Edward Wallace
16-Jan-24	Transferable Training (Y3+4)	10	Making the Most of Your Final Year	Online	Dr Jo Young
January	Set 2 Masterclass	10	Introduction to Biology for Quantitative Scientists	Edinburgh	Dr Meriem El Karoui
January	Set 3 Masterclass	10	Primer for Advanced Omics Approaches in-person	Edinburgh	Dr Simon Tomlinson
5-Feb-24	Mandatory Training	10	Placements Q+A	Online	Maria Filippakopoulou
February	Set 3 Masterclass	10	Cool Farm Tool	Dundee/ Online	Dr Megan McKerchar
15-Feb-24	Set 2 Masterclass	10	Introduction to Biology for Chemists and Chemical Engineers	Online	Dr Mary Doherty
4-Mar-24	Transferable Training (Y2)	10	Science Communications	Dundee	Prof Jonathan Pettit

25-Mar-24	Set 3 Masterclass	10	Mapping and Modelling Your Biological Pathway	Dundee	Prof Andrew Millar
March	Set 2 Masterclass	10	Introduction to Chemistry for Biologists	Aberdeen	Dr Sergio Dall'Angelo; Dr Wael Houssen
09-Apr-24 / 16-Apr-24	Mandatory Training	10	The Resilient Researcher	Online	Skillfluence (Sharon Lennie/ Jen Allanson)
2-May-24	Set 3 Masterclass	10	Genomic Approaches	Edinburgh/ Hybrid	Nathan Medd (Ed Genomics)
May	Set 3 Masterclass	10	Primer for Synthetic Biology	Edinburgh	Dr Giovanni Stracquadiano, Dr Rennos Fragkoudis, Dr Peter Vegh
May	Set 3 Masterclass	10	Proteomics and Mass Spectrometry	Edinburgh	Kevin McLean
May	Set 3 Masterclass	10	Structural Biology and Crystallography	St Andrews	Dr Christopher Harding
3-Jun-24	Event	10	Symposium	St Andrews	EASTBIO Team
asynchronous	Additional	20	Learn to Discover/ SysMIC	Online	
asynchronous	Additional	10	Coding Club	Online	
asynchronous	Mandatory Training	0	MANTRA	Online	
tbc	Set 1 Masterclass	10	Artificial Intelligence & Machine learning for Bioscientists	Edinburgh	tbc
tbc	Supervisors	0	Neurodiversity Awareness - for supervisors only	Online	Claire Graff
tbc	Set 3 Masterclass	10	Python	tbc	tbc
tbc	Set 3 Masterclass	10	Literature review	tbc	tbc
via host institution	Additional	10	Advanced Bioscience Skills (multiple courses)	via host institution	
via host institution	Mandatory Training	0	Presentation Skills	via host institution	
via host institution	Mandatory Training	0	Public Engagement (2 days per year)	via host institution	
via host institution	Mandatory Training	0	Research Integrity	via host institution	

Thematic Meetings

EASTBIO student projects are designed around five key research themes:

1. **Understanding the rules of life**
2. **Bioscience for sustainable agriculture and food – Crops and soil**
3. **Bioscience for sustainable agriculture and food – Terrestrial and aquatic animals (this encompasses Livestock, Production Biology, and Health and aquaculture)**
4. **Bioscience for renewable resources and clean growth**
5. **Bioscience for an integrated understanding of health**

Details of which research theme you belong to will be provided prior to the Induction. Themes are assigned according to the individual PhD project description and to ensure group sizes are robust to enable cross-thematic interactions.

As outlined previously, meetings among the members of a thematic group are a mandatory element of the training programme, which primarily aims at cohort-building throughout the first year. These meetings are student-led and should take place at different partner institutions 4 times over the course of the year, ideally in alternate months – December, February, April, June. The final thematic meeting may be planned to take place following the EASTBIO symposium (5th June), to reduce travel for attendees. This may be a joint meeting across groups if there is shared interest in a topic such as industry-collaboration, science communication or big data in life sciences.

EASTBIO will provide you with details of all groups' members (names and contact emails of students and supervisors, project titles and affiliation). To enable cross-group communication, you are welcome to join individual meetings of a group other than your own if the topic is relevant or of interest to your work. The details of each thematic meeting, once confirmed by the local organisers, will be shared on the EASTBIO website.

These thematic training meetings are led by students with input and guidance from an EASTBIO supervisor. The goals of the thematic training are:

- to introduce challenges, questions and tools that are key in your theme-specific research area;
- to help you develop your critical and analytical reading skills;
- to help you develop your understanding and capacity in a given area that is considered key in the field;
- to meet other EASTBIO students and supervisors working in complementary research areas, to share expertise and establish shared ground and collaborations;
- to check in, get some support from other researchers in your group, the network of guest speakers and students from other PhD programs working in your area.

These meetings may be based on a number of formats that serve the main goals (above), for instance:

- critical evaluation of seminal papers
- group and panel discussions on key questions for the area (for example, what are the biggest unresolved challenges? what is around the corner in terms of research and transformative technology? are given research models for a particular question adequate? etc.)
- talks from invited speakers or EASTBIO supervisors, industrial representatives, etc.
- review of applied research
- visits to industry facilities or sites

Please consider inviting input from students on other doctoral training programs to join their thematic meetings, e.g., another BBSRC DTP programme to explore additional research themes in the areas of Artificial Intelligence, Machine Learning, 'Omics' Technologies and cultivating an understanding of interdisciplinary approaches.

These could include programmes such as:

- UKRI Industrial Biotechnology Innovation Centre (IBioIC) CDT - <http://www.ibioic.com/>
- Natural Environment Research Council (NERC)-funded QUADRAT DTP (Queen's University Belfast & Aberdeen Doctoral Research and Training) - <https://www.abdn.ac.uk/sbs/research/quadrat/index.php>.
- BARIToNE Collaborative Training Partnership - <https://www.dundee.ac.uk/phds/funding/baritone-collaborative-training-partnership>
- The NERC-funded Earth, Ecology and Environment Doctoral Training Partnership (E4 DTP) - <https://www.ed.ac.uk/e4-dtp>
- UKRI CDT in Biomedical AI programme (University of Edinburgh) - <http://web.inf.ed.ac.uk/cdt/biomedical-ai>
- EPSRC CDT in Data Science - <http://datascience.inf.ed.ac.uk/>
- Wellcome PhD Programme in Integrative Cell Mechanisms - <https://www.ed.ac.uk/biology/wcb/study-with-us/integrative-cell-mechanisms>
- UKRI NERC-funded IAPETUS2 DTP (University of Stirling) - <https://www.iapetus2.ac.uk/about/>

Guidance for planning and running thematic meetings:

At Induction, with support from EASTBIO and the group's Chair, each group decides on host teams of students and supervisors (to be leading each session); 4 focal topics; likely dates. Although there is considerable variety in the projects assigned to each area, groups are to try and agree on focus topics that are of interest to the majority of students and help them to expand their broader understanding of the stakes in conducting interdisciplinary, collaborative research. Sessions should primarily be run in-person but please consider hybrid provision to improve accessibility.

Before the meeting

Each session should have a nominated student-supervisor team who plan and facilitate the session with the support of the rest of the group; please ensure that there are at least 2/3 students helping in the organisation of the meeting.

Local administrators can provide support in booking rooms and ordering catering. You should

contact them in the first instance, and costs can then be invoiced by the partner institution to EASTBIO. We will need a quote for the costs in advance.

EASTBIO provides up to £16 per delegate for catering and will try to cover additional travel expenses for any guest speakers but this must be approved in advance. Students are expected to cover their travel expenses where applicable through their RTSG.

Once a session is confirmed, please notify the EASTBIO team, providing details for the website and Newsletter including a summary and schedule - ideally 1 month in advance of the meeting. Organisers are responsible for confirming sign-ups and sending reminders so do stay in touch with your group during the planning stages.

During the meeting

You should make sure to take attendance and circulate the feedback form here: <https://forms.office.com/e/xMpv2vbctF> (QR code in appendices).

The day should be scheduled with plenty of breaks and please bear in mind accessibility requirements, consider circulating resources and slides in advance.

After the meeting

Circulate any resources and the feedback form to attendees; consider that any external guest may ask for feedback on their session.

Report attendance to EASTBIO.

We also suggest that each group produces a short digital resource that highlights the learning gained from the sessions (e.g., podcast, video, poster, animation) which can be used on the EASTBIO website and social media.



Placements

To be undertaken between months 12 and 36 of your EASTBIO PhD. You will take a leave of absence to enable you to carry out your placement full-time.

Placements Q&A

To prepare you for placement, both PIPS and CASE, EASTBIO holds a specific Placements Q&A session (online, 5 February 2024) which is mandatory for first-year students, including student on Collaborative projects, and open to their supervisors. The session includes student presentations from past cohorts who have completed their placement in a variety of professional settings. Make sure that you ask as many questions about the planning, any challenges and outcomes!

PIPS Quotes from Students



“Throughout my PIPS at Public Health Scotland, I attended introductory meetings with various teams and scientists which provided a great insight into the structure and function of PHS (and the importance of such work). During these meetings I was able to learn about their area of expertise and the routes people had taken to reach their current positions. I was also given the opportunity to learn about the public health microbiology strategy for Scotland and the ‘One Health’ approach.”

David Stevenson (Dundee, 2020 cohort)



“I really enjoyed working in such a collaborative environment (SilviBio). Sometimes you were working on your own to complete an experiment but often there were experiments that took 4 or 5 people to plan and complete. I really enjoyed the group brainstorming to come up with the best experimental designs and then the working in a group to complete larger-scale experiments. I found it surprising how often I could draw on my PhD knowledge, from a completely different field to make suggestions for experimental set-ups and protocols.”

Amy Newell (Edinburgh, 2021 cohort)



“One surprising aspect of my placement – at GlaxoSmithKline, Madrid, Spain - that I particularly enjoyed was that the team was willing to talk to me entirely in Spanish! I have been learning Spanish since I undertook an Erasmus placement to Spain during my undergraduate degree so was thrilled to be able to challenge myself by talking in Spanish throughout the 3-month internship. I can definitely say that my Spanish understanding and speaking greatly improved (thanks to my very kind and patient colleagues!) and I was surprised to find that talking about science in Spanish was not as difficult as I had imagined!”

Abigail Brewer (Dundee, 2019 intake)



“One output that I am proud of is an illustration that I created to visualise the scope of different surveillance teams in the organisation, highlighting gaps and overlaps in the work. This illustration will be used to demonstrate what surveillance looks like in the organisation to senior decision-makers.”

Annis Newman (Edinburgh, 2021 cohort)



“My participation in the Venture Builder Incubator was a valuable experience that allowed me to gain practical experience in networking and building a start-up. The skills I gained during this experience will be extremely valuable in any career I choose to pursue, and I am grateful for the opportunity to be part of such a vibrant and supportive community.”

Sam Gibbon (Edinburgh, 2020 cohort)



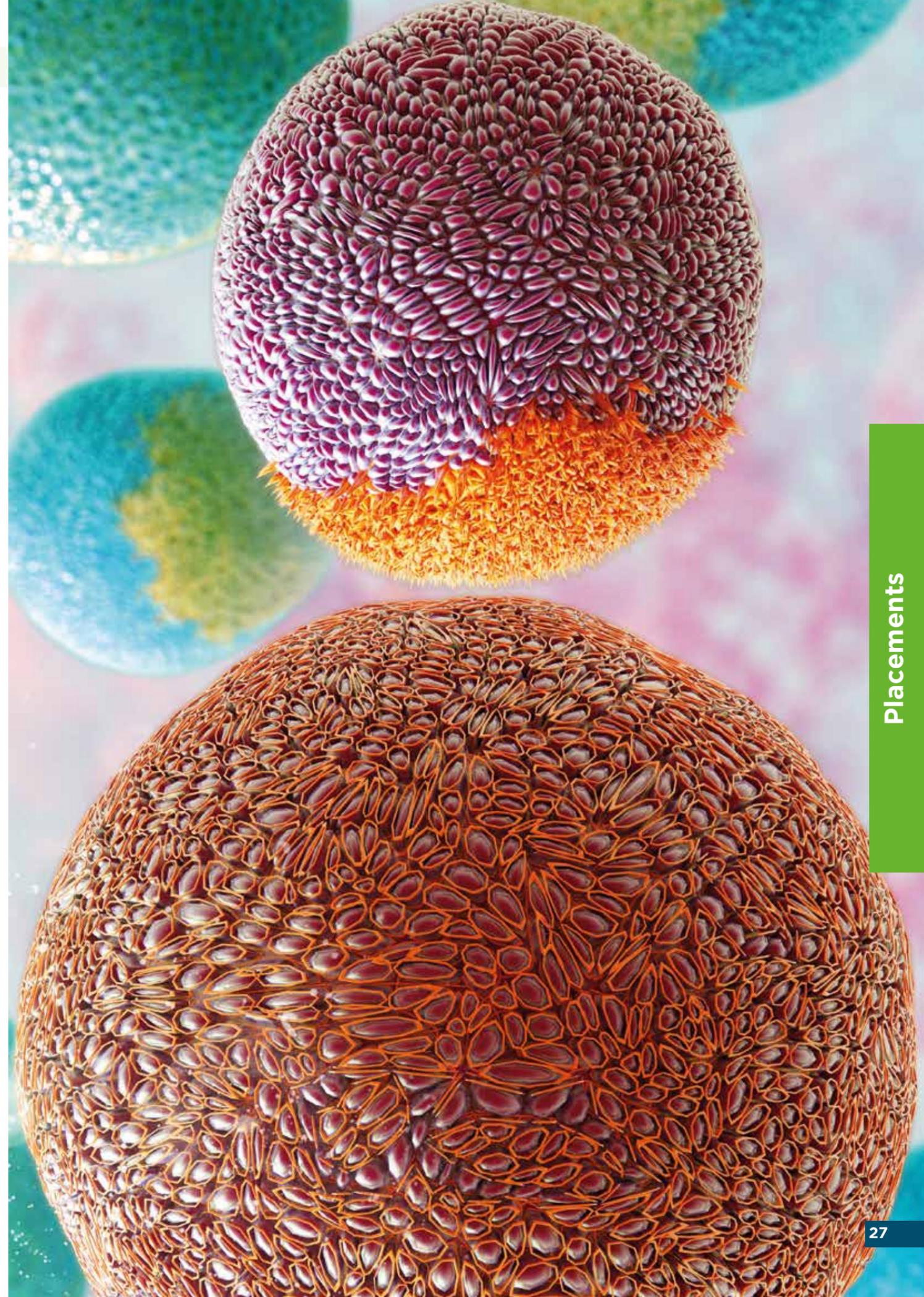
“Through my placement at Sense About Science, I expanded my view of what types of work I enjoy and what I am good at – it turns out that working on a PhD has provided me with critical thinking skills and an ability to problem-solve beyond my research area. I also got to know the ins-and-outs of a tiered small charity structure as opposed to academia or a bigger company.”

Łucja Kostrzewa (Edinburgh, 2020 cohort)



“My placement at The Habitat People gave me a more comprehensive understanding of not only the rewilding and carbon sequestration sector, but also the factors required and the challenges facing a small business.”

Eleanor Stroud (Aberdeen, 2019 cohort)



Professional Internships for PhD Students (PIPS)

The Professional Internships for PhD Students are unique to UKRI BBSRC-funded DTPs and form an essential and mandatory component of the EASTBIO PhD programme. The only exceptions to this requirement are **Collaborative students** who must spend a minimum of 3 months placement with their Collaborative industrial partner company instead. **Tier-4 visa holders** whose access to PIPS is restricted due to their visa regulations are asked to consider a number of alternative options to enable them to benefit from the placement opportunity during their programme of study; for details, see the PIPS Student Guide.

Undertaking a PIPS will expose you to a non-academic professional work environment and provide you with experience and confidence that will make the transition into the next stage of your career easier to achieve. PIPS is an excellent opportunity to explore your aspirations and try something new. Internships can be undertaken in any field or sector of non-academic activity, including biotech industry, business administration, communications, scientific publishing, project management, teaching and outreach. Current and prospective EASTBIO students value this opportunity and share their experiences via short blog reports (see <http://www.eastscotbioldtp.ac.uk/information-current-students>) and presentations at the Placements Q&A session, poster sessions at the Annual Symposia and the EASTBIO REP Induction.

The EASTBIO 'PIPS Student Guide', emailed to all students prior to the Induction, contains detailed information about PIPS, including forms, timeline and guidance for your PIPS.

PIPS funding

You will continue to receive your stipend during your placement. PIPS-related expenses, such as travel and accommodation, must be covered by your RTSG (£5,000 per year) or supported by your PIPS provider. If the PIPS host organisation is situated 50 miles or more from your term-time residence, you may also apply to EASTBIO for an additional sum of £1,000 maximum towards such costs. We ask students considering a placement abroad to be mindful of budgetary limitations.

1. What type of internship is suitable for PIPS?

PIPS is a defined project with tangible outcomes that can be carried out in any non-academic organisation, as long as it gives you a professional experience outwith your immediate research environment. This is a chance to think creatively about the types of experience you would like to gain so that PIPS will benefit your career in the long term.

The following are just a few PIPS examples:

- carrying out an applied research project in industry
- administering a research project or grant
- developing policy for a research council or a government agency
- carrying out a marketing project for a company or organisation
- communicating science to the public or younger audiences through an outreach programme
- developing or helping to develop a new product or service for a company

2. Planning your PIPS

It is important to think of the following possible constraints:

- the timing of your most important experiments
- field-work seasons you may need to work around
- resource bottle-necks in your research project
- conferences, meetings and training you may want to attend
- family commitments
- costs associated with your internship such as travel and accommodation

You may also want to complete some relevant generic skills training in preparation for PIPS, such as: CV-writing and interviewing skills; entrepreneurship; time and project management; communication skills.

3. What is expected from you with regards to PIPS?

We are confident that you will take a proactive approach in organising your placement. The following points summarise what EASTBIO expects from you:

- source a suitable PIPS project with a suitable PIPS provider
- plan the PIPS into your PhD work in collaboration with your academic supervisor(s)
- complete all the necessary paperwork and communicate them to EASTBIO, host university and/or host organisation, in accordance with milestones and deadlines set out in the 'PIPS Student Guide'
- engage with your PIPS provider in a professional manner, when you are developing your PIPS project
- carry out and complete a PIPS of suitable length and scope whilst adopting a professional behaviour in the host organisation
- present your experience to other EASTBIO students

4. Paperwork

You will be required to update the EASTBIO team at regular intervals during the PIPS process including at the planning stage, during your PIPS, and when you complete your PIPS. You can find more details about this in the PIPS Student Guide.

Industry-Linked Collaborative Studentships (aka CASE)

The EASTBIO training programme has a number of PhD studentships which are developed as partnerships between academic and non-academic organisations. These are known as Industry-linked Collaborative Studentships. This type of studentship includes a mandatory placement with the non-academic partner doing high quality Collaborative research work that is directly related to your research project in one of the areas of science relevant to BBSRC's strategic priorities. This is integral part of the PhD project of your studentship, as agreed between your academic supervisor and their non-academic partner.

At the start of your PhD, you will be introduced and have meetings with the non-academic supervisor, who will be responsible for providing you with the appropriate level of management, support, direction and training while you will be working at the non-academic partner premises. We ask your academic supervisor to share and discuss with you the original project proposal which includes details of the research collaboration, such as anticipated mutual benefits, level and type of non-academic contributions, calendar of supervisory meetings and plans for your placement at the partner institution. In line with the student feedback on their experience of Collaborative projects, we think that early communication of mutual expectations and plans is a guarantee for their efficient management over the course of the PhD.

To ensure the smooth completion of the Collaborative studentship and placement and for reporting purposes, EASTBIO will ask you to confirm the details of the agreed project and placement by sharing a signed copy of the placement agreement.

EASTBIO Industrial partner organisations

Since its inception, EASTBIO has developed a steadily increasing number & range of partnerships with organisations outwith academia in a variety of areas: bio-industry, biotechnology, energy, environment, agriculture, livestock breeding and fishing, crops, policy, data and computing. The partnership with industry covers all aspects of our DTP:

- recruitment of students and Industry-linked PhD projects
- non-academic placements (both within the PIPS scheme and the Collaborative Studentship placements)
- engagement with our Advisory Board in terms of strategic and future directions
- monitoring/engagement by the EASTBIO Industry Engagement Sub-Committee (academic and student reps membership)
- engagement of partners and stakeholders in our Training Programme, reviewed annually

Industrial partners engage with the EASTBIO programme by working closely with EASTBIO supervisors to shape PhD projects that we recruit to, contributing to the selection of candidates, and providing students with appropriate support for their PhD projects and their placements in terms of scientific and professional/business skills.

EASTBIO has developed guidelines pertaining to industrial collaboration and a process to monitor the successful delivery of both the collaborative project and the industrial placements that forms integral part of it. In line with our contractual requirements to UKRI BBSRC, we seek to ensure that students are properly supported through this part of their PhD. This process starts with the submission of the Collaborative Project to the EASTBIO programme so we expect that funded students will be aware of the mutual commitments and engagement

plans made at this early stage by the academic and non-academic supervisors. We encourage a Collaborative Welcome Pack with relevant details to be made available to recruited students: this may include key contacts in the partner institution, provisional calendar of meetings, expected contributions and available resources from the non-academic partner, expected benefits and outcomes, etc.

We contact new supervisors and their industrial partners at the start of the PhD to confirm arrangements with them, explain our requirements, invite supervisors to the Placements Q&A session and ask to review the formal agreement for the student placement before this can start. Finally, the EASTBIO Industry Engagement Sub-Committee reviews our Industry-focused training in consultation with our partners and stakeholders (IBioIC, Cool Farm Alliance, SULSA, Edinburgh Innovations, other DTPs).

For your placement, you will spend between 3 months and up to a maximum of 18 months with the non-academic partner. This can be taken in one 3-month block at any point during the PhD or a number of shorter blocks giving the flexibility to plan in sync with the partner's business priorities. An integral component of your placement training is that it provides you with a training experience unavailable at your academic institution. This should include, for example, training in project management, business strategy, intellectual property, commercialisation, and finance.

The following points summarise what EASTBIO expects from you the student:

- Prior to starting your Industrial Collaborative Studentship, and having read the Collaborative Project agreed between your supervisor and the non-academic partner, ensure that you have read and understood any formal agreement signed between the host institution and the non-academic partner. This contains essential details relevant to your Collaborative Studentship, in keeping with UKRI terms and conditions and outlining agreed Intellectual Property (IP) and publication arrangements.
- Deliver the placement project work of suitable length and scope in a professional manner and carry out the agreed training package.
- Provide updates and information about your Collaborative placement to EASTBIO when requested to allow us to fulfil our reporting obligations to the funder.

Before travelling overseas for fieldwork, internships, placements or research work

Before travelling overseas, it is essential that you and your supervisor follow these steps:

- Complete all necessary Risk Assessment Procedures as defined within the local institution you are registered with.
- Submit a Leave of Absence form within the local institution you are registered with.

Training Costs and Funding

We aim to provide all your training free of charge or at a minimal cost. Each of you will have access to the following funds (in addition to fees and stipend paid, in advance, by your BBSRC studentship) to support your training:

- **UKRI Stipend for 2023-2024 – fees and stipend levels are confirmed annual and inflation-adjusted**
- A stipend of £18,622 full-time equivalent
- Support for tuition fees of £4,712.
- **Research Training Grant (RTSG) or bench fees: £5,000 per annum** (this is **reduced to £1,500 in year 4**). This grant may be held directly by you or your supervisor, or by your department. It should be used to cover the research costs incurred by your project, additional costs related to travel and fees for training activities, conferences and other training events, including EASTBIO training and placement costs, or to purchase a laptop at the start of your programme. Unspent funds roll over onto the next academic year. Upon registering at your host institution, you should receive guidance about accessing these funds; if you have questions, please contact your local administrator (for EASTBIO contacts, see end of the Handbook).
- **Travel and conference allowance: £230 per year** to support expenses involved where training is delivered in person rather than online.
- **EASTBIO In-Vivo Skills Bursary (2023/24):** EASTBIO funding of up to **£500.00 per student per award** maximum available via application to eligible EASTBIO students who need travel support to access training in Advanced In Vivo Skills.
- **PIPS Additional Expenses:** Where your PIPS will incur significant additional costs, you can apply to our competitively allocated bursary (**up to £1,000 per award maximum**). Further details can be found in the 'PIPS Guide for Students'.
- **Disabled Students Allowance (DSA):** as a UKRI-funded student, you are entitled to additional individual support if you have a diagnosed disability and require specific adjustments or supportive measures during your programme of study. The process of requesting a DSA is student-led and commences with the student requesting an interview with their local Disability Office. The DSA is awarded on the basis of the recommendations advised by the Disability Office team via the resulting Needs Assessment report.

For questions about how to access these funds, we strongly encourage you to contact the EASTBIO officer at your local institution in the first instance (see Local Administrative Contacts, below).

Events

Induction

The EASTBIO induction is a mandatory welcome event for all new EASTBIO students and their supervisors. It is an opportunity to find out more about the DTP, ask questions, meet your peers and your supervisor. At the induction, you will be asked to start thinking about your thematic group area and potential meeting topics. This year the induction will take place on 10th October, followed by a mandatory training day on 11th October, in Edinburgh (John McIntyre Conference Centre).

Symposium

The EASTBIO Annual Symposia are student-led events that are organised by second-year student representatives from all EASTBIO partners, with help from first-year student representatives. They are supported by an alternating member of the EASTBIO academic Management Group and the EASTBIO team. The Symposia are planned each year by a different EASTBIO partner (the Symposium lead) at a different DTP location to address barriers to travel for current students.

Of the annual symposia you will be asked to attend during your PhD programme, two have a focus on bioscience research and two on societal or industrial impacts of bioscience research:

- **EASTBIO Research Symposia** – presentations given by EASTBIO students on an academic research topic (Collaborative students do not present their work at this event).
- **EASTBIO Impact Symposia** – Industry-style presentations given by EASTBIO Collaborative students only, alongside IBioIC PhD students, plus invited speakers exploring the broader impacts of science in terms of society, commerce, policy and industry.

The EASTBIO Symposia are an essential part of your training as they provide you with excellent skills development opportunities, depending on your individual contribution as a delegate or organiser/facilitator – for instance, to prepare a pitch or a poster, present, and discuss your research with the wider EASTBIO community, invite the speakers you like to meet, chair sessions, network with a variety of stakeholders and contribute to debates and interactive workshops. We aim for Symposia to have a Wellbeing/EDI theme running through them and we welcome recommendations on enhancing the diversity, inclusivity and accessibility of all sessions and activities as they are planned and delivered.

The next EASTBIO Annual Symposium with a focus on bioscience research will be hosted by the academic representative of the University of St Andrews and held in **St Andrews on the 3-4 June 2024**; please save this date on your diary. EASTBIO supervisors are expected to attend at least one of the two days and we will ask for volunteers for particular contributions. Make sure you check regularly the EASTBIO website for updates, at www.eastscotbiodtp.ac.uk/eastbio-symposia.

The Student Experience

I began my EASTBIO PhD journey in 2016, investigating the problems of soil degradation and energy deficiency experienced by subsistence farmers in rural Ethiopia. Fuel shortages had resulted in farmers burning an increased proportion of their animal dung which deprived the soil of essential carbon and nutrient inputs, weakening the already low levels of food security. The PhD was supervised by an interdisciplinary team from environmental modelling, chemical engineering, microbiology and social science backgrounds. Within that framework I was given a lot of freedom, which was an important aspect for me. After conducting detailed scoping surveys in Ethiopia, I focused my work on anaerobic digestion of cattle dung which could simultaneously provide biogas, an efficient energy source, and bioslurry, a nutrient-rich fertiliser. I assessed potential energy production, soil carbon sequestration and the effects on antibiotic resistance genes.

I was never completely fixed on doing a PhD. It was an option, but I realised the importance of finding one that I strongly resonated with if I was to dedicate four years of my life to it. This PhD could have been tailor-made for me. I wanted to work on organic waste, combining social, biological and environmental science techniques, and still be able to follow my passion for travel. I appreciated the variety of the work and that I could synthesise fieldwork, lab work, social surveys and modelling, as well as working with several different institutes. It was not however free from challenges. Despite its current trendiness, interdisciplinarity is still poorly understood. There is a frequent expectation that you should be highly specialised in each individual discipline, as if it was your only one, and a common mindset that the language and formatting standards used within a specific discipline are the correct ones. It was often a battle to ward off imposter syndrome.

I overcame the mental health challenges by throwing myself into non-academic activities. I took up daily yoga practice and became involved with a climate activist group, both of which involve compassionate, supportive communities where people do not talk about PhDs. A PhD may be a great experience, but who doesn't need to escape from it sometimes? The PIPS placement was a great opportunity for that too. In 1st year I thought it was senseless to have to work on a project which was not connected to my PhD. By the time I conducted it during 3rd year, I was extremely grateful for the change. It absolutely made sense. I worked for Scriptoria, a small sustainable development business. I learned several transferable skills relating to efficiency, accountability and monitoring, as well as technical skills to build websites and create basic animations, which I have since used to disseminate my research. In retrospect, I also appreciate the skills developed through the EASTBIO training sessions, particularly the presentation training and event organisation. These are valuable, real-life skills that can be used regardless of future career choice.

For my career choice, I stayed in academia. Before being a postgraduate student, my mind seemed so broad-ranging and flitted around to so many different aspects of tasks, my intelligence felt useless. Despite the barriers, the most empowering experience I gained was realising that my brain works in a truly interdisciplinary manner, and that solving serious problems requires a diverse range of mind sets and viewpoints to be applied. For that, I am grateful to EASTBIO's selection process, which is not based on a standard set of knowledge requirements, but on each individual's fit for the proposed project.

Dr Jennifer Wardle, School of Biological Sciences, University of Aberdeen

EDI and Support

Where to get Support

The EASTBIO programme team strongly supports you in bringing your whole self to work. We value diversity in all forms and expect all students who join our community to support and promote equality, diversity and inclusion. To find out more about the EASTBIO Equality & Diversity policy and plans, please visit our website at <http://www.eastscotbioldtp.ac.uk/equality-diversity-and-inclusion/>. The EASTBIO EDI Sub-Committee reviews our policy and plans annually.

- At any time, students can complete in person half-day awareness-building courses within any EASTBIO Institution that are aimed to raise their awareness of unconscious bias, to apply that awareness to an HEI setting and to develop ideas for research-led actions to mitigate personal, managerial and organisational bias in key people processes.
- Listening to what students have suggested, we aim to embed the EDI Statement and provision across the EASTBIO life, from recruitment to training. Concrete examples include having EDI sessions across our training events, and asking students who help co-organise events to contribute innovative ways of making sure our EDI mandate is met. We continue to work with our student reps and the EASTBIO EDI Sub-Committee to review and implement our agreed EDI goals. If you would like to be involved, please get in touch with any member of the EASTBIO EDI Sub-Committee.
- We also encourage individuals to become drivers for change by offering contributions focused on personal or community-based experiences and insights to boost the visibility of various identities, consolidate our inclusive research ethos and help to embed recognition and broad respect for those identities. EASTBIO supports such contributions in our programme and our media, printed or digital.

During the Induction Day, we will be calling for EDI student volunteers who will be joining our current EDI reps from the first- and second-year cohorts. The EDI rep role is to represent your peers to the Management Group, raise concerns and propose measures to address issues shared and discussed; we also want to hear of any suggestions to enhance the sense and practice of belonging, resilience, respect and recognition across our community. EDI reps will automatically be reserves of the EDI committee and can attend any scheduled meetings after prior discussion with the Lead Student rep.

The EASTBIO Mental Health First Aiders (MHFA) group includes EASTBIO students, supervisors and staff who have received Mental Health First Aid training in 2022 with BBSRC funding. The group of volunteers can be contacted directly via eastbio.mhfa@eastscotbioldtp.ac.uk while our Newsletters will provide information about regular meetups, signpost resources, news, and locally-held wellbeing activities shared by its members.

Mental Health and Wellbeing Drop-In Sessions

These sessions will be held online on:

- Wednesday 22nd November 2023 2-4pm
- Wednesday 24th January 2023 2-4pm
- Wednesday 1st May 2023 2-4pm

Details of how to join will be shared closer to the time. These sessions will be hosted by members of the EASTBIO MHFA group.

EDI and Wellbeing Training

Inclusive communication good practice in research (Edinburgh, 10 October):

Following student request and the positively received pilot training run in June 2023 for student reps and members of staff, EASTBIO runs a mandatory workshop on Inclusive Communication run by Communication Inclusive People. The training offered to both new students and supervisors attending the Induction covers (a) inclusive communication for researchers, who needs it and its benefits and (b) how to speak and write in a communication-inclusive way to reach more people in your research.

Where Do You Draw the Line Workshop (Online, November tbc):

'Where do you draw the line?' is a 2-hour workshop that offers departments the opportunity to learn about the factors that can create and sustain a work environment in which harassment and bullying occur, and empower participants to work collaboratively to address concerns.

The purpose of the training is to:

- define bullying and harassment and the forms it can take;
- facilitate group discussions about the behaviours participants encounter and seek to reach agreement about what is acceptable;
- provide a framework for challenging unacceptable behaviour;
- outline the support that is available;
- facilitate discussions about what the department can do to promote a positive culture.

Neurodiversity Awareness (Online, date tbc):

A 2-hour introduction and Q&A workshop to be delivered for a second year to all EASTBIO supervisors. The training is geared towards raising awareness and understanding of ND and adjusting supervisory practice in keeping with an inclusive, safe and respectful approach.

Student Support Services

The EASTBIO Management Team, our supervisors and EASTBIO team support all EASTBIO students in terms of researcher and personal development and endorse the UKRI BBSRC Duty of Care pledge as laid out in the two key documents below.

- UKRI Statement of Expectations for Postgraduate Training
www.ukri.org/files/legacy/skills/statementofexpectation-revisedseptember2016v2-pdf/
- 2019 Concordat to Support the Career Development of Researchers **Researcher-Development-Concordat_Sept2019-1.pdf**

We recognise that students will face challenges during their PhD programme. Speak to your supervisor and contact your local administrator if you think you cannot identify or access existing support measures. It is the EASTBIO team's intention to listen to your concerns and make every effort to be supportive of you in these circumstances, as well as assisting you to build resilience during your PhD.

Firstly, if you want to discuss concerns, please contact your local EASTBIO Management Group representative, who will be happy to talk with you and, if need be, help you identify further local resources. If you feel that there are circumstances impacting on your training or you need additional advice, please email any of the EASTBIO contacts.

BBSRC stipend support is currently provided for periods of sickness absence of up to 13 weeks within any 12-month period, during which you will continue receiving your full stipend. **Maternity, paternity, adoption and parental leave** entitlement is also stipulated for UKRI-funded students. For further details, see the UK Research and Innovation Training Grant Terms and Conditions at [UKRI-291020-guidance-to-training-grant-terms-and-conditions.pdf](https://www.ukri.org/publications/disabled-students-allowance-dsa-framework/).

BBSRC stipulation about Disabled students' allowance (DSA):

www.ukri.org/publications/disabled-students-allowance-dsa-framework/

We highlight below, useful information with regards to maintaining overall student wellbeing. Local disability and counselling services support can be obtained through relevant services in the institution you are based in, and there are many more services you can identify through these links.

Student wellbeing information can be found online via the following links:

<https://thewellbeingthesis.org.uk/> and <https://group.sagepub.com/wellbeing>

Support for Families:

www.abdn.ac.uk/students/support/student-advice-support-office.php#panel3599 (Aberdeen)

www.dundee.ac.uk/guides/advice-students-children (Dundee)

www.ed.ac.uk/biology/current-students/postgraduate-taught/health-wellbeing/diversity-inclusion/support-for-families and <https://www.ed.ac.uk/biology/equality-and-diversity/networks-groups-clubs/working-carers-network> (Edinburgh - CSE)

www.ed.ac.uk/roslin/working/benefits/support-for-parents-carers (Edinburgh CMVM)

www.stir.ac.uk/student-life/support-wellbeing/student-support-services/money-support/discretionary-and-assistance-funds/ (Stirling)

Hardship/Discretionary Fund:

If you are faced with significant material challenges, we advise you that your first discuss with your supervisor and local administrator who are best placed to advise you on support available for you.

www.abdn.ac.uk/students/finance/money-matters-3712.php (Aberdeen)

www.dundee.ac.uk/guides/apply-discretionary-funding (Dundee)

www.ed.ac.uk/student-funding/hardship-funding (Edinburgh)

www.st-andrews.ac.uk/pgstudents/money/financialsupport/discretionary-fund/
(St Andrews)

www.stir.ac.uk/student-life/support-wellbeing/student-support-services/money-support/
(Stirling)

Counselling Services:

www.abdn.ac.uk/infohub/support/counselling-service.php (Aberdeen)

www.dundee.ac.uk/counselling (Dundee)

www.ed.ac.uk/counselling-services (Edinburgh)

www.st-andrews.ac.uk/students/advice/counselling/ (St Andrews)

www.stir.ac.uk/student-life/support-wellbeing/student-support-services/your-mental-health-and-wellbeing/ (Stirling)

www.sruc.ac.uk/courses-training/student-support/ (SRUC)

Disability Services:

www.abdn.ac.uk/students/support/disability-services-6467.php (Aberdeen)

www.dundee.ac.uk/disabilityservices/ (Dundee)

www.ed.ac.uk/student-disability-service (Edinburgh)

www.st-andrews.ac.uk/students/advice/disabilities/ (St Andrews)

<https://www.stir.ac.uk/student-life/support-wellbeing/student-support-services/accessibility-and-inclusion/> (Stirling)

<https://www.sruc.ac.uk/courses-training/student-support/health-wellbeing/> (SRUC)

Networks of potential interest to BAME Students and allies:

BBSTEM - <https://bbstem.co.uk/>

Black Women in STEM: www.bwisnetwork.co.uk

If you need to find help and are unsure where to start, you could:

- approach your academic supervisor or a lab member you trust
- talk to a Student Advisor or Wellbeing Advisor within your local institution

- talk to one of the EASTBIO Mental Health First Aiders
- talk to the EASTBIO team or the local academic lead for EASTBIO

To report a concern or make a complaint, please use this form: <https://forms.office.com/e/rxe5LdcftM>. EASTBIO is confirming our complaint process with the EDI Sub-Committee and will notify students via the website. Read the EASTBIO Privacy Statement at www.eastscotbiotdp.ac.uk/.

EASTBIO has an alert system for students in crisis to discreetly ask for support so please approach either the DTP Manager or the Support Officer who are both Mental Health First Aiders and can speak with you confidentially; it is entirely up to you whether you want to simply speak to someone or choose to escalate a serious concern via making a complaint. You can alternatively speak to a student – either an EDI student rep or a student Mental Health First Aider.

If you believe that you or a colleague has been subjected to inappropriate behaviour, please act promptly to report the issue so that steps can be taken to address the situation immediately.

If unsure, please refer to the UKRI's position statement on bullying and harassment. Information available via the link: www.ukri.org/what-we-offer/supporting-healthy-research-and-innovation-culture/bullying-and-harassment/.



Information for Supervisors

EASTBIO is committed to transparent communication about our recruitment process and our training programme. All DTP partner institutions have agreed and signed a portfolio agreement with the BBSRC, which defines the specific training aspects of the PhD students within EASTBIO DTP. As a PhD supervisor in this scheme, the EASTBIO DTP Management Group expects that you will actively support activities within the EASTBIO training programme. We would also welcome your input on our training and suggestions for its improvement in future.

EASTBIO DTP has developed a bespoke PhD training with several training strands structured per year of study, each requiring supervisory support and pro-active input. The details of the training programme can be accessed through our website as well as this Handbook, revised annually and made available as a pdf prior to the EASTBIO Induction Day (Edinburgh, 10 October 2023).

Your support is particularly needed in Research Skills/Thematic Training. As you recall, your research project is associated with one of the five research themes of strategic importance to BBSRC. In each of the key subject areas, the students will form a smaller cohort that will meet 4 times within their first year with the aim of developing critical analysis and thinking in their area, horizon scanning, collaborative exploration of shared ground, but also project manage this training for cohort-building purposes (as we expect that they will interact in further years). At the Induction, each group will discuss and agree on topics and host groups for each of the 4 annual cohort meetings. You are asked to help students who will volunteer for these meetings (each to be hosted by a different partner institution), but also consider partaking of the session and engaging in the interactions.

A second important training strand that requires your support is the Professional Internships for PhD Students (PIPS). The students will receive strong support from the team to organize their PIPS and will require your positive discussions about choices and scheduling their internship placement.

Finally, your support is needed at **EASTBIO annual events**: the Induction Day and the EASTBIO Symposium with a focus on Life Sciences Research (St Andrews, 3-4 June 2024). The management group expects participation at these events as we would welcome personal contact with our supervisors on the programme and their feedback on EASTBIO training. There will be breakout sessions for supervisors to discuss issues that may arise in the programme at these events and throughout our annual programme.

We would also like to support you personally as you contribute to the **professional development** of your supervisees and meet our **programme expectations**. In addition to the Neurodiversity training and Q&A we piloted last year for first-year cohort supervisor, we will also run the Inclusive Communication workshop for both students and supervisors, as part of the Induction on the 10th of October. We believe that the specific training we offer, the continuation of the EASTBIO Mental Health First Aid group, and additional EDI training for students we will be running this year, contribute to a resilient and supportive research culture.

Training for EASTBIO Supervisors

Inclusive communication good practice in research (Edinburgh, 10 October):

Following student request and the positively received pilot training run in June 2023 for student reps and members of staff, EASTBIO runs a mandatory workshop on Inclusive Communication run by Communication Inclusive People. The training offered to both new students and supervisors attending the Induction covers (a) inclusive communication for researchers, who needs it and its benefits and (b) how to speak and write in a communication-inclusive way to reach more people in your research.

Neurodiversity Awareness (Online, date tbc):

A 2-hour introduction and Q&A workshop to be delivered for a second year to all EASTBIO supervisors. The training is geared towards raising awareness and understanding of ND and adjusting supervisory practice in keeping with an inclusive, safe and respectful approach.



EASTBIO Contacts

If you have any publications, scientific presentations, a new collaboration, an interesting knowledge exchange or outreach experience, please email enquiries@eastscotbiodtp.ac.uk or Tweet to [@EastbioDTP](https://twitter.com/EastbioDTP). We will be delighted to publicise your news or publication on our website.

All the people below are very happy to be contacted with any queries you have about EASTBIO, so please do get in touch!

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Student Representatives

You can find the details of the EASTBIO student representatives and how to contact them on the EASTBIO website. They are responsible for feeding back to the Management Group and subcommittees, as well as helping to facilitate cohort building, supporting the planning of the EASTBIO Symposium, and representing EASTBIO at various events throughout the year. We aim to have representatives from each partner institution, as well as EDI student reps. First year students will be invited to become student reps at the induction event.

Subcommittees

EASTBIO has recently introduced subcommittees spanning the different aspects of the DTP in order to better manage governance and decision-making in the programme. The subcommittees are as follows:

- Recruitment subcommittee
- Industry Engagement subcommittee
- Training and Development subcommittee
- Equality, Diversity & Inclusion subcommittee

You can find the details of the membership of each subcommittee online. Please reach out to them if you have anything you would like to raise with the committee.

EASTBIO online

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Twitter: <https://twitter.com/EastbioDTP>

Website: <http://www.eastscotbioldtp.ac.uk/>



Appendices

Appendix 1: Thematic Meeting Feedback Form



Appendix 2: Form links

Thematic Meetings feedback form: <https://forms.office.com/e/xMpv2vbctF>

Training feedback form: <https://forms.office.com/e/6Bab3aKmy1>

External Training and Development Points Approval Application: <https://forms.office.com/e/W8LXbXsBsf>

Complaint form: <https://forms.office.com/e/rxe5LdcftM>

Professional Development Record form: <https://forms.office.com/e/nSXPPb4i88>





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