# **EASTBIO Recruitment 2024 – Guidance for Selection Panels**

## **General information**

EASTBIO runs its annual recruitment round jointly across its nine partner institutions, assisted by different academics invited each year to serve on the selection panels across the DTP (representing different career stages and EDI-checked). Following the nomination of candidates by supervisors of projects advertised from October 2023, EASTBIO will carry out the 2024 PhD recruitment in three stages: (1) shortlisting (2) interview (3) allocation of studentships. We hope that all academics who agreed to help with our recruitment may will be available to support both the shortlisting and the interview process at the times specified above.

## **Shortlisting**

A review process run locally by each DTP partner institution, aiming to shortlist twice the number of candidates as available studentships, including 30% of international fees candidates. This will be carried out locally this year rather than centrally by EASTBIO, following recommendations by the EASTBIO Recruitment Committee; we hope that the change will streamline and simplify our recruitment for the benefit of both stakeholders and prospective applicants. Local panels as below:

* University of Aberdeen panel, chaired by Dr Sam Miller and supported by pgr-mmsn@abdn.ac.uk. ~21 (10.5 studentships)
* University of Dundee panel, chaired by Dr Edgar Huitema, supported by EASTBIOapplications@dundee.ac.uk; sls-PhDAdmin@dundee.ac.uk ~14 (~7 studentships)
* University of Edinburgh (CSE) panel, chaired by Prof Gerben van Ooijen and supported by Grad.Biol@ed.ac.uk 32 max (16 studentships, 14 Biological Sciences & 2 Chemistry)
* University of Edinburgh (CMVM) panel, chaired by Dr Jo Stevens, supported by RDSVS.PGR.Admin@ed.ac.uk ~20 (~10 studentships)
* University of St Andrews panel, chaired by Dr Thomas Otto, supported by Ms Rachel Horn rcjh1@st-andrews.ac.uk ~12 (~6 studentships)
* University of Stirling panel, chaired by Dr Andrew Desbois, supported by pgr.ioa@stir.ac.uk ~5 (~2,5 studentships)
* Scotland’s Rural College (SRUC) panel, chaired by Prof Eileen Wall, supported by Dr Andrew Desbois, supported by pg.research@sruc.ac.uk ~6 (~3 studentships)

Shortlisting process: between 9-19 January 2024 or earlier date as advised by the panel Chair.

### **Guidance**

Each panel to consist of 4 members (including the Chair) who will be given access to candidates’ applications and asked to (a) score each candidate from 1 (not fundable) to 10 (exceptional) and (b) comment on the candidates as necessary; this input is important both to help make a decision in cases of students that require special consideration or to form the basis for summary feedback for unsuccessful candidates who will request it. Score and comments to be entered on a spreadsheet provided. The purpose of the shortlisting is to assess nominated candidates based on their application materials they have provided (application form, transcripts, references, nomination form) and paying particular attention to the candidate personal statement, using two main criteria: (a) academic suitability for the project and (b) broader suitability for the EASTBIO PhD programme (50% of score for each). You are also advised to consult the EASTBIO Scoring Form so that you can see how EASTBIO understands the two criteria. Please indicate if there is a conflict of interest for any candidate.

The Panel Chair will collate and average your submitted scores and record the decision on candidates according to the average score as: to be interviewed, ranked reserves, rejected. They will also take into account information on protected characteristics for home-fees students that we are committed to support - age 30 and over; declared disability; postcode at the end of secondary education indicating low participation in higher education; first-generation in family in higher education (as well as carers or care-experienced); we also offer candidates the option of sharing on their application any circumstances that may account for lower grades or delays in their academic progression. This year we are operating a pilot ‘guaranteed interview’ scheme for nominated BAME candidates in response to our analysis of our Diversity Data (2022-2023). The Panel Chair may seek a further consultation with panel members in case of applications that require more discussion before they confirm the shortlist to the EASTBIO team.

## **Interview**

A central interview process by 6 EASTBIO panels, irrespective of thematic areas.

Interviews: Online, 5-9 February 2024

### **Guidance**

Each panel to be supported by the panel administrative team of one partner institution: 2 panels Edinburgh, 1 Aberdeen, 1 Dundee, 1 St Andrews, 1 SRUC/Stirling. Each panel will interview max 23 randomly allocated shortlisted candidates from across the DTP. Panel members are asked to score candidates from 1 to 10 on a number of criteria; see the Interview Scoring Form. Other than scores, please also leave your comments on each candidate to allow the Panel Chair to provide individual feedback on unsuccessful candidates who will request it. Please indicate if there is a conflict of interest for any candidate.

## **Allocation**

On the basis of the average scores of interviewed candidates, the EASTBIO Management Group will meet on the 20 February and will make a decision on the offer of PhD studentships for a start in autumn of 2024.

**Conflicts of interest**

UKRI defines a conflict of interest as ‘a situation in which an individual’s ability to exercise judgement or act in one role is, could be, or is seen to be impaired or otherwise influenced by their involvement in another role or relationship’. (<https://www.ukri.org/who-we-are/how-we-are-governed/conflicts-of-interests/>)

Any member of the recruitment panels (involved in shortlisting or interviews) may declare a conflict of interest or potential conflict of interest to their Panel Chair.

Chairs should report any conflicts they may have to Eastbio and other panel members.

Where a conflict of interest exists, the panel member should not be involved in scoring the candidate during shortlisting or attend or score the interview of the candidate. Where scores are averaged, Chairs should ensure to adjust scores depending on the number of panel members noting that minimum of 3 panel members should be involved in shortlisting and interviewing each candidate.