# EASTBIO PIPS scheme

# PIPS Scheme Framework for tier-4 visa funded students

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# Guidance

**General**

Following the UKRI decision in 2020 to allow recruitment of international students by DTP programmes, the EASTBIO partner institutions have proceeded to approve revised PhD programmes with integrated internships with the aim of enabling access to PIPS by tier-4 visa holders (otherwise constrained to access the full PIPS scheme). We have, consequently, updated our advice for funded international students with no access to such integrated PhD programme although, at the at the time of publicising the PIPS Guide 2024, we were still waiting to receive final confirmation of relevant arrangements from partner institutions; if you are unsure of your access, please email [placements@eastscotbiodtp.ac.uk](mailto:placements@eastscotbiodtp.ac.uk).

Funded students with international fees status and no access to a PhD programme integrated with an internship are restricted by the terms of their visa to the following work placement conditions:

* Maximum of 20 hours placement work per week during term time
* Placement to be strictly within UK
* Placement to be carried out alongside their PhD project

Under these conditions, EASTBIO DTP proposes a revised PIPS approach: students to discuss with their PhD supervisor and the local PGR advisor and – in communication with the EASTBIO DTP Manager - explore the option of a part-time placement within this limited frame before reaching a final decision. Criteria for the individual decision include: (a) the intended benefits of the amended placement for the student; (b) the implications for their PhD progress; (c) student’s own professional development needs, and (d) any personal impacts (e.g. family and caring responsibilities, health or disability management, etc.). EASTBIO will support students in their decision-making and will apply flexibility to the level required by them for the opportunity to be beneficial for the student’s personal development and career goals. All relevant EASTBIO expectations regarding the timeline, process and forms will be adjusted according to the specific circumstances of each student on a case-by-case. EASTBIO also expects that the student academic supervisor will be supportive by providing students with suitable recommendations, guidance, and advice.

## Options

In short, funded students are asked to consider the following options in order to carry out an (adjusted) EASTBIO placement, including a PIPS exemption request:

1. **Option 1 - Up to 20 hours[[1]](#footnote-1) per week during term time (per 7-day week) on a part-time basis[[2]](#footnote-2) and with the agreement of the academic supervisor (in writing)**. The project/placement will be unrelated to the student’s PhD project. No possibility to do a placement abroad as this may lead to a breach of visa regulations. Recommended minimum duration of one month; no maximum duration but, for reference, please note that the PIPS scheme is 3-month long which may not be suitable under the terms of this adjusted framework. The student should be employed (have signed an employment contract) by the host organisation even though the placement can be either paid or unpaid; the student continues to be in receipt of their PhD stipend and is also eligible to apply for the additional EASTBIO PIPS funds of a max of £1,000 (towards travel and/or accommodation). Types of work *not* allowed include free-lance, business work, self-employment, consultancy, entertainment, sports. During their placement, the student should continue meeting the reporting requirements stipulated by their visa (that is to say, demonstrating engagement with their supervisor, in writing). EASTBIO sets no restriction as to when such placement should be carried out within the PhD cycle and students can, for instance, consider doing a placement in their fourth year assuming this is not detrimental to their research schedule. EASTBIO should receive details of the placement planned by the student in advance and be kept informed of key steps during the planning. One-to-one catch-up sessions with the EASTBIO DTP Manager are advisable at this stage.
2. **Option 2 - Full-time placement with an industrial partner** – in this option, the studentship will become an industrial (Collaborative) studentship, within which visa-holding students are permitted to do a full BBSRC PIPS on the understanding that the placement is integral part of the PhD project. Terms that apply in this case can be found at <http://www.eastscotbiodtp.ac.uk/eastbio-case-studentships> and also communicated by EASTBIO. Please email [placements@eastscotbiodtp.ac.uk](mailto:placements@eastscotbiodtp.ac.uk) to request the relevant forms if you have secured a collaboration with a non-academic partner. Under this option, a placement outwith UK is permissible under the visa terms and conditions. Your academic supervisor(s) may be able to advise you the student on potential industrial collaborators who could host student placements. There is flexibility in the terms of the placements under this option, e.g. this may be a longer placement than the 3 months stipulated by the PIPS Scheme as it is dependent on the project requirements.
3. **Option 3 - Full time during vacation period/student Annual Leave, usually 8 weeks/year (in agreement with student host institution & academic supervisor)**. Given that during vacation periods there is no formal institutional monitoring or risk assessment obligation, students must agree with EASTBIO DTP Manager the terms of communication during placement in advance. Given that this option is largely a personal decision on the part of the student -- outwith the frame of the institutional obligation -- the implications must be discussed in advance of any planning with the DTP Manager and the student’s PhD supervisor(s).
4. **Option 4 - Micro-internships** (one or multiple) consisting of 2 days per week for a maximum of 8 weeks in total. For a case study of such a micro-internship (5 days) with the Scottish Government (UoE student), see <https://www.ed.ac.uk/students/careers/insights/case-studies/insights-in-person-steve>. For benefits to interns, also see this article: <https://insights.ise.org.uk/work-experience-internships/blog-5-reasons-why-more-employers-are-running-micro-placements/>
5. **Option 5 - Request** **an exemption from PIPS with a short justification** based on grounds of, for instance, limited capacity, intended but limited PIPS benefits, or negative impacts on the progress of the PhD project outweighing any rewards to the student.

Students on a tier-4 visa must submit the revised Placement form to EASTBIO with their preferred option once they reach a decision on their placement – no set deadline for this but EASTBIO will email you to remind you of the expectation to have a decision on record. Email EASTBIO if you have further questions about the above guidance or would like to receive further advice on your preferences and requirements.

Useful contacts:

* EASTBIO DTP Placements: [placements@eastscotbiodtp.ac.uk](mailto:placements@eastscotbiodtp.ac.uk)
* UoE Student Immigration service: [Contact us | The University of Edinburgh](https://www.ed.ac.uk/student-administration/immigration/contact-us)
* University of Stirling: [studentimmigration@stir.ac.uk](mailto:studentimmigration@stir.ac.uk)

# Tier-4 Visa Student Placement Form

*After reading carefully the guidance, please complete the form depending on the option you have selected for your placement and taking note of the fact that some of the sections or questions may not be directly relevant to you. In case you have selected a placement with an industrial company that relates to your PhD project, please note that your placement falls under the standard terms and conditions of the EASTBIO Collaborative Placements framework (further information to be requested from the DTP Manager at* [*placements@eastscotbiodtp.ac.uk*](mailto:placements@eastscotbiodtp.ac.uk)*). There is no set deadline but the EASTBIO team will remind you of the need to update us on the progress of your planning for your placement within a reasonable time and ideally before the start of your third year of PhD. Email the above email if you have any questions about this form.*

## Personal details

* Full name:
* Email:
* Host University:
* PhD Year:
* Academic (first) Supervisor Name:
* Academic Supervisor Email:
* PhD Project Title:

## Placement Options & Details

Which of the 5 PIPS Options, described above, have you selected? Answer the questions, below, that apply to your top choice. If you are exploring more than one options, please specify, below.

* Option \_\_\_

What type of placement project are you currently exploring? Name broad sectors and why you are interested in these areas (max 300 words):

If you were already offered a placement/contract, please confirm the following details:

1. How have you sourced this placement (e.g. via your supervisor, the local Careers Office, advertised by EASTBIO, other)?
2. Were you offered an employment contract?
3. Dates of placement (start & end) & total duration (please enter sets of dates if your placement is in blocks):
4. Placement format (tick the option that applies):
   1. In person
   2. Remote
   3. Hybrid
   4. Other – please provide details here:
5. Name of organisation:
6. Address of organisation & country:
7. Website:
8. Name and contact details of the person assigned to you during the placement (to act as your “PIPS Supervisor”):
9. Project title or Student Role title (if available):
10. Project summary (role description, max 200 words):
11. Goals of the placement (max 300 words):
12. Training – Describe any induction, training, or other activities undertaken (or to be undertaken) to prepare you for the placement (400 words):

## Expenses

Will you be paid during your placement? Please provide details below.

Will you be applying to EASTBIO for additional costs (max £1,000 for travel/accommodation; see relevant form)? Please provide separate sums applied for (separately for travel and for accommodation and total, as applicable in your case). If yes, see separate form attached, complete and submit to EASTBIO (funds must be approved prior to your placement).

## Self-reflection

In a short paragraph, please summarise the anticipated benefits from this placement, how the placement will fit around your PhD work, the relevant parameters of the placement, any built-in support, any relevant conditions or requirements (related to your project or you personally), etc. Please note that EASTBIO will ask you for a short reflection paragraph to be submitted at the end of your placement. (500 words max).

## Post-Placement

Please summarise the benefits of your placement in terms of your personal/professional development. You may wish to include: further knowledge/understanding of sector or area of work; perception of PhD in light of placement; extending or acquiring new skills and experiences; new insights, challenges or surprises; training, outputs or achievements; team work; wider long-term benefits. (500 words max)

Would you agree to present your experience of your placement to other EASTBIO students at the EASTBIO Placement event (online, early February) and other EASTBIO events and activities (e.g. the Symposia, Induction for new-starts, REP Induction for undergraduate students, etc.)?

*Thank you for completing this form and for any additional information you have shared with EASTBIO. We appreciate your engagement with the revised PIPS scheme.*

## Request for Exemption from PIPS (Option 4)

If you have selected this option after discussing it with your supervisor, please answer the following questions. EASTBIO will quickly review your request and will confirm its approval. With your consent, we would like to collate student input and share *anonymised* collated input with UKRI BBSRC during our reporting to the funder.

I understand that the EASTBIO/BBSRC PIPS Scheme offers funded students a unique opportunity to enhance student professional capacity, broaden career options, and improve graduate employability; I have read the EASTBIO PIPS Guide and attended at least one EASTBIO session that provides advice on PIPS.

* Yes
* Other; please provide details below.

Have you discussed this option with… (Ideally all should be ticked):

* Your academic supervisor(s) Y
* EASTBIO DTP Manager Y
* Local PGR advisor Y

Have you considered/explored some options before reaching a decision?

* Yes
* No
* If you selected ‘yes’, please provide some examples of steps you have taken before you decided that the option of a placement is not feasible in your case (300 words max):

What are the main reasons for your request for an exemption? Tick any that apply.

* Limited time to secure a placement.
* Negative impact on my PhD project.
* Limited benefits from a placement within the part-time frame proposed.
* Limited professional benefits within the part-time frame proposed.
* Personal circumstances hindering take-up of the option.
* Other

If you ticked ‘Other’, please consider providing some more details:

If you ticked ‘Other’, please consider providing some more details for requesting an exemption (400 words max please). Please note that we would like to have some details on record with a view to sharing these (anonymised) with UKRI BBSRC for reporting purposes.

I give my consent to EASTBIO DTP sharing my input, anonymised, with the UKRI BBSRC for reporting purposes on the PIPS Scheme

* Yes.
* No.

Your detailed response here:

Signed by student (name & signature & date):

Signed by supervisor (name & signature & date):

Form reviewed and approved by EASTBIO DTP Manager & Date:

Comments (if applicable):

Communicated to student & supervisory by EASTBIO – Signature & Date:

1. The UoE advice on this is as follows: If you are a full-time student, the University recommends that you [postgraduate taught students] *do not work more than 15 hours per week*. The University will not employ full-time postgraduate research students for more than *an average of 9 hours per week across the academic year*, and we recommend that postgraduate students apply this limit to employment outside the University. ([Working in the UK during studies | The University of Edinburgh](https://www.ed.ac.uk/student-administration/immigration/working-in-the-uk/during-studies)). [↑](#footnote-ref-1)
2. Please note the following UoE advice in terms of full-time work placements: “If you interrupt your studies to undertake a work placement or internship, you *cannot* use your Tier 4/Student visa. You will need to seek alternative immigration permission which will allow you to undertake full-time work in the UK. You will need to apply for a new Tier 4/Student visa to return to studies.” [↑](#footnote-ref-2)