PIPS Log

# General

This is a template developed by the EastBio team to assist students who do a 3-month professional internship as part of their PhD. If you think it’s useful, adjust and use it... or not!

The purpose of this template is to help you record raw experiences from your work at your placement and reflect on these as they happen; note down any learning, professional interactions, or observations of note, enabling a dynamic self-reflection. We believe that this log, or any other system you may prefer, of a live journal maintained regularly during your PIPs can help you be more aware of and shape your work practices, values and goals so that you can work towards giving a firmer direction to your future development as a researcher. You may also find this helpful to actively manage your placement and the relationships that underpin it, identify issues before they develop and seek to resolve them, seek help, develop resilience, take ownership of your PIPS, etc. In practical terms, you can use elements of this log, draw specific examples, or challenges dealt with, points & instances of personal progression for your feedback to EastBio, to draft a covering letter, a personal statement or narrative in relation to a future application (job, grant, etc.).

Stay in touch with EastBio (and/or your PhD supervisor) during your placements and never hesitate to seek support as and when needed (asking for help is an essential life skill and condition of personal growth!). Useful contacts below:

* placements@eastscotbiodtp.ac.uk (EastBio Manager and/or Support Officer)
* <https://biology.ed.ac.uk/eastbio/contact-us/eastbio-dtp-committees> (Training and Development Committee)
* edi@eastscotbiodtp.ac.uk (EDI Student reps)
* eastbio.mhfa@eastscotbiodtp.ac.uk (EastBio Mental Health group)
* <https://tinyurl.com/4s5wsvb8> (EastBio complaint form)
* If you're facing a crisis during your placement, contact Maria.Filippakopoulou@ed.ac.uk asap!

# PIPS Log Questions

# Prior to the start of your placement

You can fill in these questions from the relevant sections of your PIPS Agreement or edit these as your project is further developed. Stay aware of the overall goals (binding for you as they are for your PIPS host organisation) during your PIPs and return to them at the end of your PIPS, compare and draw some conclusions.

Project aims:

Your aims:

The PIPS host’s aims:

Other considerations:

# Month 1

You can note down your personal observations about your onboarding and consequent progress on a weekly or bi-weekly basis and aim to write a summary of achievements – a reflection piece, if you like - in the conclusion of the month. Mark any review meetings you had with the PIPS supervisor or other colleagues at the PIPS host and bring their perspectives to bear upon your diary.

## Project-related

* Did you receive induction at the PIPS host?
* Have you got ready access to facilities, equipment, resources, colleagues?
* What is your first priority?
* Do you have a clear plan to follow (with deadlines, goals, etc.)? Do you understand the context of what is being asked of you?
* Were you asked to shape the plan yourself, to comment on it, or make amendments, improvements, etc.?
* Is there anything important missing that you’d like to see acknowledged and addressed?
* Do you feel underused? Is the progress too slow in your opinion?

## Communication-related

* Who are you working with now?
* Are you meeting your PIPS supervisor regularly?
* Are you joining any specific team(s)? Do you feel part of a team and have access to the expertise held by specific teams or individuals?
* Do you know who does what or who to approach if you have specific queries that your PIPS supervisor cannot address?
* Do you feel appreciated? Are you being asked for your views on what is planned?
* If you have felt the need, have you checked in with your PhD supervisor? (This may be towards the end of your placement, but you may also benefit from their advice during the placement).

## Skills-related

* Are your skills adequate to the tasks you have to perform?
* Are you getting relevant training if the project demands skills outwith your own experience? If so, is it at the level required to give you confidence in your work?

## Wellbeing-related

* How are you feeling now?
* Have you settled in the PIPS host organisation? Has the team welcome you?
* Is there a collegial atmosphere in the PIPS host organisation?
* If you are getting support from your academic institution (schedule of adjustments, DSA support), have you access to that support during your PIPS?
* Do you feel comfortable contacting the EastBio team to check-in with them?
* Are you aware of who the EastBio student reps and Mental Health Group are and know how to contact them?
* Do you stay in touch with your PhD supervisor? Are they responsive and supportive?
* Are you away from your family/partner/close friends? If so, are you okay with the distance and able to focus on the project?
* If not, how do you manage the distance with your closest?
* Do you have a good personal support network? Can they reach you where you are?

## Logistics of PIPS

* (If your PIPS is away from your term-time location) Any comments on your travel to your PIPS host’s premises and further commuting? Is it all manageable (sensible commuting, car pool, etc.)?
* Are you happy with your accommodation?
* Are you managing financially?

## General concerns

* Is everything going well so far?
* Do you have any concerns at all? If so, how serious are they? Do they relate to the project, the PIPS host, colleagues, Health & Safety, your work relationships? Other?
* Are you able to share your concerns with your PIPS supervisor, your PhD supervisor or the EastBio team?
* Would you rather have another trusted individual to help you convey these concerns rather than risking falling out with anyone at your PIPS host organisation?
* Has anything happened since you started you didn’t expect and planned for and that has put you in a difficulty situation or that has jeopardised your placement in any way? (e.g. accident, family emergency, accommodation crisis, change in the PIPS host organisation’s status, etc.)? *If so, please speak to the EastBio Manager at placements@eastscotbiodtp.ac.uk asap. We will and aim to relieve immediate stress, liaise with your PIPS and PhD supervisors, advise on your options, provide support and a response to any acutely challenging situation that is unforeseen.*

## Reflection of Month 1

What was the best thing that’s happened to you this month? Do you have a key insight? A surprising realisation? What have you struggled with? Have you resolved this? Are you confident and excited for the next stage? Have you set your personal intention for the second month of your placement?

# Month 2

You can make weekly or biweekly notes on any of the relevant areas of your placement, as they arise (related to your project, communication, wellbeing and logistics). Aim to have enough evidence to draft a mid-point stock-taking and any interim targets agreed with your PIPS supervisor or that you have for yourself.

## Reflection of Month 2

What was the best thing that’s happened to you this month? Have you a key insight? A surprising realisation? What have you struggled with? Have you resolved this? Are you on track for the completion of the project? Have you a good overall relationship with your PIPS supervisor and colleagues? Have you seen considerable progress in your skills training, professional development opportunities, networking? Are you confident and excited for the next stage? Have you set your personal intention for the third month of your placement?

# Month 3

As your placement is drawing to a close, focus more on the successful completion of the project and attaining the goals you have set for yourself: new skills, expanded contacts and professional experience and, not least, an overall feeling of pride in your work, your resilience and confidence in your growth in the past 3 months.

Reflection of Month 3

Check the monthly summary reflection statements and look back in your notes for any strong examples, instances, or details that underpin those. Can you draw an overall conclusion on your placement? Imagine that you’re telling a good friend (or your mother!) about this. It must communicate plainly what you’ve done in this period, how and how it changed your professional outlook, if at all.

# Post-placement

Draft a 400 words paragraph about how you think the placement contributed to your personal/professional development by using examples from this log.

Rework the Month 3 Reflection after re-reading the previous months’ statements. Then go back to the aims recorded on your MOU and do a quick comparison: is there a clear alignment? Are there surprises? Was any of the key aims not met? Do you believe that your work made a difference in your PIPS organisation? Have you got informal feedback from them, or any form of encouragement? Was their feedback to you constructive and helpful for your own goals? How has the experience affected your views on your PhD? Has it perhaps made you re-confirm, challenge or reconsider your research and career plans, become/stay interested in a different sector, increased your motivation for an academic career? Do you expect longer-term benefits from having done this placement?