



Biotechnology and
Biological Sciences
Research Council



UKRI BBSRC EastBio

Training Programme 2025/26



developing academic and transferable skills

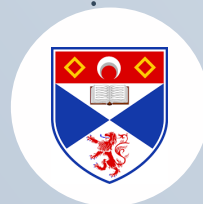


contributing to strategic life sciences research

building a positive research culture



EastBio partners



- academic partners
- training partners



EastBio Partnership

EastBio is the East of Scotland Bioscience Partnership. 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 between academic and industrial shareholders, access to expertise and research facilities across the institutions of the East of Scotland.

Website

www.ed.ac.uk/biology/eastbio

Email

enquiries@eastscotbiodtp.ac.uk

BlueSky

<https://bsky.app/profile/eastbio.bsky.social>

LinkedIn

www.linkedin.com/company/eastbio

Welcome to EastBio

Welcome to the EastBio Partnership community! We look forward to meeting you and your supervisors as we welcome you at our Induction and Training Day in Stirling, on the 8th and 9th of October 2025.

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 non-hosting partners Cool Farm Alliance, SULSA, Scottish Policy & Research Exchange (SPRE) and In2ResearchUK. Each of you will be registered in a host 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 listed in this Handbook. You will also be expected to undertake a 3-month internship, 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 the EastBio team and resources such as 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 with the support of your supervisors and EastBio. The 'Professional Development Record' you will be keeping will help to review your training needs for your academic progression and your career preparedness. We will work with you to 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.



The programme we are launching this October is funded by a new BBSRC award – the Doctoral Landscape Award - and represents best practice in training provision. We continue to review our approach and offerings on evidence from our annual programme survey to ensure that our training programme remains relevant, fit for purpose and supportive of our diverse body of students 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, processing 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, below. Having said that, you will be meeting most of us – as well as the team and your supervisor - at the Induction Day!

www.eastscotbiodtp.ac.uk/EastBio-contacts

I encourage you to make the most of the two-day Induction and the ample opportunity it provides for informal interactions with supervisors, the EastBio Management and team, as well as former students and second-year student reps.

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Dr Jamie Weir

University of Edinburgh Alumni

Jamie is an entomologist and evolutionary biologist. He completed his PhD at the University of Edinburgh's Institute for Ecology and Evolution. His thesis was awarded the John C. Marsden Medal from the Linnean Society of London, the world's oldest society devoted to the study of natural history.

The Graduate Experience I

I have always been fascinated by biodiversity. Since childhood, I wondered how and why living things vary—not just the differences between groups of animals and plants, or individual species, but within a species, and even between parents and offspring. What factors drive and shape that variation? How is that variation maintained in spite of natural selection, a force that seemingly eliminates unfit genes and homogenises difference?

When asked by a theologian what he could deduce about God, having studied nature so closely, JBS Haldane is said to have replied: “That he has an inordinate fondness for beetles.” They may all look the same to us, but something like a fifth to a quarter of all known species on Earth are beetles. The unparalleled biodiversity of the insects more generally—from species richness to ecology and life history—was a key factor in bringing me to focus on this group. To understand biological diversity and variation, we need to crack the secret of the insects’ success.

I designed and self-proposed my PhD project, working with my prospective supervisor, and was lucky enough to be offered the generous support of BBSRC’s EastBio DTP. Needless to say, my dissertation—the final product—was far from what I had initially envisioned. This is expected in any research project encompassing big themes, and running over many years. Science constantly changes. Your ideas will themselves evolve as you react to unexpected results, exchange thoughts with colleagues, or react to the latest literature. The most unexpected moments or interactions can lead to a shift of perspective, and open up a new, unexplored avenue in your research. Embrace the uncertainty—that freedom to follow the evidence, wherever it leads, is a luxury of academia.

My own ideas began to change radically early on in my PhD. We all know that as the climate warms the seasons are changing—plants are growing and flowering earlier, and animals are kick-starting their lifecycles faster after winter. But many ecologists worry that because species differ in their responses to the warmer temperatures, climate change will disrupt key links in food-webs. Insects may hatch out too early, before the plants

they eat are available. At a large scale, across an ecosystem, this could be catastrophic. Insect populations might collapse and, in turn, the species that depend on them for food.

This standard story struck me as increasingly problematic. If a pair of species were so delicately inter-dependent, why would they respond differently to climate change when global temperature fluctuations are ubiquitous throughout history? It wasn't stable or sustainable as a strategy. Very quickly, focusing on plant/insect interactions, I pivoted my work to reconsider the widely-held preconceptions in this area of ecology. Using experiments on tens of thousands of caterpillars, I found that while synchronous timing with their food-plant was important, many insects were far more resilient to mistiming than we had previously thought. The inherent unpredictability of their niche demanded such resilience and yet, in our justified concern about the impacts of climate change, the narrative of impending disaster had led us to overlook them.

Don't be afraid to ask difficult and unpopular questions—to challenge orthodoxy, and pursue the ideas that fascinate you.

Even as you are just beginning your own adventure, it's vital to think about what comes next. Do you plan to stay on in academia? How does that look? Teaching, research, or both? Tackling these questions early on will shape the choices you make over the coming three or four years, and help you get the most out of your time. If you're unsure, then explore: sign up for industry internships, and take on part-time teaching work. Don't neglect to cultivate your network of colleagues, which is often your most important research asset and a huge help for

mapping out your future career.

If you want to remain in research, it's important to make yourself as competitive as possible. There are many PhD graduates and few postdoctoral jobs—publishing is important, yes, but quality is as crucial as quantity. Think in terms of engaging narratives and ask big questions to craft compelling papers that make a mark on your field.

Academia is far from perfect, as you are about to discover. But don't let the inevitable flaws of a man-made system dull the enthusiasm that brought you here. Don't become the boring trope of the disenchanted PhD student.

Amidst the chaos, don't lose sight of the science.



EastBio Training Programme

The EastBio Training and Development Programme is aligned with the Vitae Researcher Development Framework and aims to support your researcher, professional and personal development throughout the four years of your funded PhD. During your PhD, we expect that all our students will develop the characteristics of a highly skilled and employable bioscience graduate and go on to work and lead in our complex, diverse world.

The core programme runs in Years 1 and 2, and is designed to help you develop these crucial skills. To be successful in your future career you will also be developing a range of personal skills, such as effective communication, initiative, project management skills and resilience. In Years 3 and 4, the focus is on your research so attending training is optional, although there will be cohort building and professional skills training available to you.

During Year 2 or 3 you must undertake a mandatory placement. 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 bioscience career much easier. Students on a CASE studentship will carry out a CASE placement with their industrial/non-academic partner.

We aim for our training to be integrated with Equality, Diversity and Inclusion principles and conform to UKRI BBSRC strategic priorities. We deliver our programme with a degree of flexibility in support of students with additional requirements or faced with circumstances that affect the way you engage with the programme. If you have specific requirements arising out of a disability, additional caring responsibilities, a hardship, or a plan of reasonable adjustments in place, please let us know early. This will allow us to help you explore alternative options and agree on an adjusted training plan with your supervisor.

www.ed.ac.uk/biology/eastbio/training

As well as the information in this Handbook and the Placements Guide, you should keep an eye on your mailbox and the EastBio website. We circulate a monthly Newsletter highlighting training to come, as well as research and wellbeing news and other relevant developments.



Year 1

Mandatory Training and Events

- Induction
- Symposium
- Placements Q&A
- 2x Thematic Meetings
- 1x Core Research Skills
- 1x Transferable skills
- 1x EDI and Wellbeing
- 2 Days Public engagement

Optional Training

- Life Sciences Methods
- Policy, Enterprise & Industry Skills
- External training options



Use Professional Development Record form to inform local progress meeting/end of year review.

Year 2

- Symposium
- 1x Thematic meeting
- 1x Core Research Skills
- 1x Transferable Skills
- 1x EDI and Wellbeing
- 2 Days Public Engagement

- Life Sciences Methods
- Policy, Enterprise & Industry Skills
- External training options



Use Professional Development Record form to inform local progress meeting/end of year review.

Year 3

- PIPS or CASE placement
- 2 Days Public Engagement

- Symposium
- All other training options



Complete PIPS or CASE placement to progress to year 4

Year 4

- 2 Days Public Engagement

- Symposium
- All other training options

Programme Structure

The EastBio training programme is made up of 4 broad categories, with essential and optional elements. This allows each student to acquire core competences and, also, to dynamically manage your own development according to ongoing reflection on your training needs, which naturally evolve during the course of your research. We expect that you will continue to develop your ability to think about your needs and training priorities keeping your broad career aspirations and values in sharp focus across your PhD journey.

1. Cohort Building
2. Core Research Skills
3. Life Sciences Methods
4. Professional Training

We aim for 50% of our training to run in-person in order to build a strong cohort. We will run 50% of the training remotely, in line with student feedback and in recognition of the increased challenges students face due to factors such as the cost-of-living, caring responsibilities, disability, and parallel research commitments. Many training options can also be taken via your host institution or externally. Some training events will take place every other year, and there will be ad-hoc options added.

You can find details of each training option on the EastBio website here:

www.ed.ac.uk/biology/eastbio/training



Cohort Building

We aim to build a strong EastBio community and hope that training interactions will bring your cohort together and extend beyond your PhD.

Induction

The EastBio induction is a mandatory welcome event for all new students and their supervisors.

It is an opportunity to find out more about the partnership and programme, 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 topics. This year the induction will take place on the 8th of October, followed by a mandatory training day on the 9th October, in Stirling (Stirling Court Hotel).

Symposium

The summer Annual Symposia are all-cohort events to celebrate your research and its impacts, and are organised by first and second-year student representatives from all partner institutions.

Symposia are held each year at a different location, and are supported by the EastBio team with oversight from the partner academic host.

The annual symposia alternate between a focus on bioscience research and on societal or industrial impacts of bioscience research:

- EastBio Research Symposia – presentations given by EastBio students on their research.
- EastBio Impact Symposia – Industry-style presentations given by CASE students, alongside invited speakers exploring the broader impacts of science in terms of society, commerce, policy and business.

The next EastBio Annual Symposium on life sciences research will be hosted and held at the University of Aberdeen on the 3-4 June 2026; 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.

Thematic meetings

The thematic group you will join at the Induction fits within one of the three key research themes that are of strategic importance to UKRI BBSRC:

- Healthy people, animals, and plants
- Sustainable agriculture and food systems
- A resilient bioeconomy

Prior to the Induction, we will confirm the thematic group you belong to so as to ensure robust group sizes for good interactions. You should let us know if you think that your training needs are best served within a different group than the one you are assigned to in October.

Thematic meetings are mandatory, and assist with cohort-building throughout the first year of PhD. These meetings are student-led and should take place at different partner institutions twice over the course of the year, ideally one in December and one in March. A final thematic session will take place as part of the EastBio symposium in early June, and this will be hosted by EastBio training partner SPRE.

We will provide you with details of all members in your group (names and contact emails of students and supervisors, project titles and affiliation) so that you can start planning and make decisions as a group straight away.

As you start shaping your meeting, with input and guidance from PhD supervisors, take into account what these meetings aim to achieve:

- Introduce challenges, questions and tools that are central or emergent in your theme-specific research area.
- Help you develop your critical and analytical reading skills.
- Help you develop your understanding and capacity in a given area that is considered key in the field, whether methodology, technology or outreach.
- Meet other EastBio students and supervisors working in complementary research areas, to share expertise and establish forward-looking collaborations.
- Network and get support and ideas from other students and academics in your group, from other PhD programmes, and from the network of guest speakers you will be engaging with.



EastBio is not prescriptive about these meetings – as long as they are inclusive and diverse - and we encourage you to consider a variety of formats, 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? Which research models are more adequate for a particular question? etc.)*
- Talks from invited speakers or your PhD supervisors, industrial representatives, etc.
- Review of applied research
- Visits to industry facilities or sites (subject to budget)

Depending on capacity, you may be able to open your meeting to non-EastBio researchers (check with the EastBio Support Officer first).



Guidance for planning and running thematic meetings

At Induction, with support from EastBio, each group decides on:

- The host teams of student(s) and supervisor(s) who will be leading each session
- The two focal topics
- Likely dates of each session (ideally December and March)
- Format/delivery (in-person or remotely)

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 in-person but you may consider one of the meetings to run hybrid/remotely if there are significant concerns from the majority about travel to attend an in-person meeting.

At the Induction, you will also meet student reps who can also advise you from their own experience of having delivered or attended thematic meetings!

Before the meeting

Each session should have one 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 to 3 students helping with each session. Volunteers will not only be helping with sharing the organisational burden more fairly and bring further ideas to the meeting, they will also gain useful skills in event management, leadership, team-work, decision-making and problem-solving.

Local administrators – these are the departmental officers of the institution where the thematic meeting is hosted; see details at:

[www.ed.ac.uk/biology/eastbio/
contact-us/programme-contacts](http://www.ed.ac.uk/biology/eastbio/contact-us/programme-contacts)

They can provide support in booking rooms and ordering catering. *You should contact them in the first instance, and costs can then be invoiced to EastBio.* EastBio will need a quote for the costs in advance.

As a rule of thumb, EastBio provides up to £20 per delegate for one-day 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 asap, 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/06BsC9spGY>

The day should be scheduled with plenty of breaks. Please bear in mind accessibility requirements and 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.



Core Research Skills

These training sessions should provide a grounding in research skills and methods which will be useful throughout your PhD. They cover key areas such as research ethics and using AI effectively, as well as providing tools for carrying out your research successfully.

Students are expected to attend at least **one option in year 1 and one option in year 2**. Training sessions are also open to those in year 3 and 4.

Delivered locally

You can find these training options through your local institution.

- Research Ethics
- Statistics and Experimental Design
- How to Write a Thesis

Via EastBio

These options will be open to all EastBio students, and you can register via the EastBio website.

- AI Masterclass
- Systematic Review and Mapping Methods

External options

These training sessions are run by external bodies, and may have a cost associated, often with a discount for EastBio students.

- Learn to Discover

<https://learntodiscover.ai/>

- MANTRA

<https://mantra.ed.ac.uk/>

Life Sciences Methods

These training sessions are developed as primers to provide the groundwork in bioscience methods and theory to enable students to identify further training relevant to your own needs.

Attending these courses is **optional but highly encouraged**. There may also be options run at your local institution or via external bodies, and we will advertise these when available. This includes courses that you have access to via the Doctoral Landscape Training Network (DLTN), which will be advertised via email, newsletter and on the EastBio website.

Life Sciences Methods training include:

- Genomic Approaches
- Introduction to Chemistry
- Cool Farm Tool
- Synthetic Biology
- Primer for Advanced 'Transcriptomics' Approaches
- Mapping and Modelling Your Biological Pathway
- Introduction to Biology
- Advanced Imaging
- Proteomics and Mass Spectrometry
- Structural Biology and Crystallography

Professional Training

This category aims to develop skills key to succeeding in the professional world. It includes transferable skills training, policy, enterprise and industry specific skills training, EDI and wellbeing training and public engagement.

Policy, Enterprise & Industry Skills

This component supports professional development related to industry and business such as translational, commercial, entrepreneurial and leadership skills. Our training partner Scottish Policy & Research Exchange (SPRE) also offer options relating to policy.

Training provided under this strand has been developed in collaboration with partners IBioIC, SULSA and Scottish Policy & Research Exchange (SPRE).

This training is optional but highly recommended, especially for CASE students and those with a particular interest in policy.

www.ed.ac.uk/biology/eastbio/training/enterprise-and-industry-skills

Transferable Skills

The acquisition and development of transferable skills that are related to employment is an important part of your postgraduate training. **You must take at least one option in year 1 and one option in year 2.** Training sessions are also open to those in year 3 and 4.

These include:

- Presentation Skills (via local institution)
- Science Communication
- Resilient Researcher
- Narrative CV writing

EDI and Wellbeing

This training is designed to bring your attention and awareness to equality, diversity and inclusion issues, and provide you with tools to support your wellbeing.

You must take at least one option in year 1 and one option in year 2.

Training sessions are also open to those in year 3 and 4.

Options include:

- Where Do You Draw the Line?
- Mental Health First Aid Training
- Anti-racism training

Public Engagement

BBSRC expects **all PhD students to carry out a minimum of two days of public engagement activity per year** throughout your studies. The requirement takes you out of the lab and engages your social curiosity and investment alike. We ask you to report back on your activities each year.

We encourage you to explore opportunities close to your own interests, and will also advertise opportunities via our Newsletter. Examples of activities students completed in the past include:

- Training/work as a STEM ambassador
- Grassroot teaching
- Engagement with local festivals of science
- Engagement with community projects at a local or regional level
- Participatory research
- Organisation of local mental health/wellbeing initiatives
- Meet-the-scientist events
- Science mentor schemes for schools/colleges
- Conservation activities
- Advocacy work

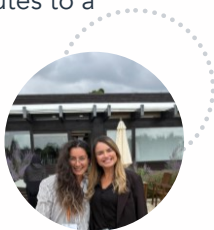
Adding value

Below are examples of EastBio student engagement and achievements

Benedict Tan (2024)

"For my first outreach day, I helped out an event for local high school pupils. I delivered a Q&A session for the Scottish Higher Chemistry syllabus, led a tour of the labs at the Edinburgh School of Chemistry, and shared insights into undergraduate and research life to encourage STEM aspirations. It was very rewarding to see many school pupils excited about the impact of scientific research and interested in pursuing STEM careers themselves. For my second outreach activity, I mentored an undergraduate during an eight-week research internship. I provided hands-on training in computational drug discovery, then guided their independent project, offering technical advice and tips on time management, organisation, and presentation of results. I also provided career mentoring, giving feedback on application materials and advising on future routes to a research Master's."

Ava Drake (2024) and Larissa Melo Chicoski (2024)



Ava and Larissa founded [NextGenAMR](#), a student-led network that aims to connect researchers from all disciplines who are working on, or simply interested in, antimicrobial resistance (AMR), whether at a professional or personal level. NextGenAMR offers a variety of opportunities to engage students, strengthen skills, and connect stakeholders. These include online meetups such as journal clubs, research discussions, and podcasts, alongside in-person workshops and public engagement events.

Outreach activities also play a role in raising awareness of AMR beyond academia.

The network aims to expand perspectives by learning across disciplines and institutions, to break out of research bubbles, and to reduce academic isolation.

In their own words, "We could really build something together, not just around AMR, but around the experience of doing a PhD. Alongside our research groups and institutions, this network gives us one more way to connect with colleagues and grow our projects in a supportive space."

Amy Newell (2021)

Working with Professor Karen Halliday at the University of Edinburgh, Amy won the prestigious SCI Early Career Award 2025 for her contributions to SCI early career programme. Amy also won the first-place prize for her talk on her PhD as an invited speaker to the SCI 2025 early career symposium and was a recipient of the SCI 2-year Scholarship (2023). Separately, Amy also won the 2nd prize for her talk at the Biochemical Society Translation UK 2025. We know Amy from her amazing work as a student rep in her first two PhD years and these latest accomplishments are a testimony to the power of engaging early on with research and industry stakeholders.

John Harvey (2024)

"At first, I was unsure which public engagement activities to pursue or if arranging them would be challenging. However, I soon found many

relevant to my research on pet food environmental impacts. I've edited Wikipedia, contributed to a New York Times article, and been interviewed by Radio 4 and Irish Newstalk radio, gaining insight into how the media interacts with scientists. These tasks are time-consuming, often require knowledge outside my core research area, and it can be surprising how little material makes it into print or on air; but it's rewarding! I've also presented a webinar and written a blog for veterinary professionals; and advised a sausage skin manufacturer on environmental impact assessment. Rather than being a burden, all these engagements have enriched my PhD journey and kept me motivated."

Emily Fields (2023)

I have really enjoyed my public engagement days (below), especially when I get to talk to students who don't know if they want to pursue science academically/as a career. Getting to teach people about what I and my colleagues do is very rewarding and it's great to hear from folks about what they think, and what they value in terms of climate solutions.

- Perth High School Career Fair February 1st 2024 -- Talking to students and parents about the James Hutton Institute and careers in science
- Plant Power Day at the Dundee Botanic Gardens May 18th 2024 -- Guiding children and the general public in DNA extraction from raspberries
- Online presentation to AP Environmental Science class in Tacoma, WA, USA about GMOs and PhD/Research careers December 10th 2024
- Potatoes in Practice August 7th 2025 --

- Poster and networking about work surrounding potato research at the James Hutton Institute with farmers and others within the potato industry

Dr Jamie C. Weir (2018)

Early recognition for the impactful research of EastBio alumnus, Dr Jamie Weir (2018 intake). EastBio is delighted to run a personal piece from Jamie in this Handbook.

Earlier this year, Jamie was awarded the Linnean Society of London's John C. Marsden Medal for 2025, for his PhD thesis "Buffering and trophic mismatch in spring-feeding forest caterpillars". The Linnean Society is the world's oldest academic society devoted to the study of natural history, and it awards the Marsden medal annually for the best PhD thesis in biology submitted to a British university.

According to the Linnean Society's press release: "Jamie's work considers a fundamental question facing ecology: how resilient are organisms to a warming climate? Focusing on woodland food-webs in spring, Jamie combined a re-appraisal of neglected, historical literature with an extremely ambitious set of experiments, captive-rearing thousands of caterpillars. Surprisingly, he found evidence suggesting that an array of 'buffering' mechanisms—such as bet-hedging strategies, or feeding on a wide range of plant species—might actually ameliorate some of the disruptive impacts of increasing temperatures."

Jamie's thesis was also runner up for the Royal Entomological Society's Alfred Russel Wallace Award for 2023, for the best thesis in entomology. The Royal Entomological Society is devoted to the understanding and development of insect science by supporting international collaboration, research and publication.



Planning Your Training

We recognise that each researcher has a set of unique training needs. The following steps may be considered as you plan your training this year:

- 01 Reflect on your current skills to identify your strengths and areas where you feel there are gaps. For this purpose, use the **Researcher Development Framework**:

www.vitae.ac.uk/researchers-professional-development/about-the-vitae-researcher-development-framework

- 02 Speak to your supervisor about your training needs and make a plan using the **PhD Professional Development Record** template. Aim to revisit your plans regularly to keep these relevant and dynamic. Add a brief statement about the impacts of your work – research and more widely – and update the statement.

- 03 Speak to other researchers – EastBio students, student reps or lab members – to share and seek further advice, resources, and ideas about training.

- 04 Check the EastBio training programme and make sure that you do not miss any mandatory events.

- 05 When picking from options, review what is available and, also, check what your own institution and wider bioscience community provides in terms of training and support.

- 06 If you notice overlaps between EastBio and local training, please contact us for advice and options.

- 07 Sign up to each individual training online through the Eventbrite links on our website. Here you can also find the summaries of each training.

- 08 Keep track of the training you have attended using the **PhD Professional Development Record**, to be completed before your local annual progress view meeting. Make sure you save a copy for your files and for reference.

The Graduate Experience II

Dr Daniela Schnitzler

University of Edinburgh Alumni.



Imagine your PhD as a mountain to climb - sometimes the path is easy, but other times you feel like you are hanging off a sheer cliff by your fingers. Sometimes you are in a group, but yet other times you might choose to take a different route, ending up on narrow and isolated paths. Even on days where all you take is one small step, you are moving closer and closer to the summit. You are challenging yourself to do something incredibly hard, but the reward is more than the satisfaction of reaching the summit - it is the view from the top. In fact, at the summit of PhD Mountain, I gained a new perspective on what scholarship means to me and realised just how many new paths had opened up in the academic landscape ahead of me.

EastBio supported my PhD, researching anxiety in a prenatal stress rat model, where I studied a number of outcomes - from central receptor changes to the gut microbiome. Aside from the reward of pursuing the scientific questions in my project and the satisfaction of gaining a wide range of technical expertise, I also discovered a surprising passion for coding. Driven primarily by the necessity to analyse the high-throughput data I had gathered, these new skills later led me along a path that saw me writing a semi-automated bio-imaging analysis pipeline. When I finally arrived at the summit with these new abilities, I saw all the avenues of exploration, exciting challenges, and opportunities that awaited me, including the postdoctoral position I am currently in!

While my EastBio PhD afforded me the opportunity to develop as a researcher, it was not without a number of difficulties including a global pandemic and physical health challenges, which ultimately also negatively impacted my mental health. Nonetheless, I found that I was able to meet these roadblocks with a resiliency I did not know I possessed. Now I am able to show myself grace for things I didn't do well, forgiving myself for the mistakes I made in order to learn. I can now see that I succeeded in my PhD by actually becoming a scholar, which is really what all that hard work was for.

Happily my PhD led me to niches of academia that encourage exploration, where deep discussions take place, and where joy and passion is found in simply learning. Nonetheless, the "publish or perish" culture, so established in academia, which encourages quantity over quality, hung like a dark cloud over the horizon and followed me into my postdoc. The frustration I experienced at feeling that research was only a means to an end, led me to founding Paperstars. This is a platform designed to be "Goodreads for Science"; anonymous ratings and reviews of published papers allow everyone to join the conversation, regardless of career stage. The platform encourages open science practices, allowing science to be evaluated on quality, not on citation-based, quantitative metrics. Alongside my postdoctoral research I am excited to see Paperstars grow!

As you start climbing your own PhD Mountain, remember that you are fully equipped to handle the challenges ahead. Your journey will likely be intellectually demanding and occasionally frustrating, but you will find that it will also be enjoyable, stimulating, satisfying, and overall something you can be incredibly proud of. Stay curious about your paths, be open to new directions, and when you finally reach the summit to enjoy the beautiful view, don't forget to take a glance back down to see how far you have come!

Professional Development Record

To help you to plan and keep track of the training offered by EastBio, partner institutions and by external organisations, we provide an online form for students to record their Professional Development Record.

In this document, you can record any training and development activities you have carried out. You may find it particularly useful to complete this form ahead of any formal progress review that is held locally (e.g. end-of-year review, progress meeting). We ask that you keep updating it with specific details as you proceed through your first and second year. You can submit your Professional Development Record via this form:

<https://forms.office.com/e/fbzMMUF2qZ>

There is no formal deadline for completing the Professional Development Record as we understand that each institution has a different timeline for their review processes.

Your Professional Development Record facilitates self-reflection on your personal and professional skills development by:

- tracking evidence of your professional development which you can use to review, evaluate and plan for your career progress
- allowing you to reflect dynamically on the impacts of your work and values as they develop over the course of your PhD
- allows your local Thesis Committee to assess your progress at the end of each year of your PhD and into further years
- helps the EastBio team to collect qualitative data needed to fulfil our reporting obligations to BBSRC

How to Register for Training

All training events will be published on our website at:

www.ed.ac.uk/biology/eastbio/training/training-overview

Sign up by:

31st October



Cancellation Policy

We are accountable for our programme delivery to our funder and partners, and monitor its impact based on factors such as attendance, cohort-building, student engagement and benefits.

We provide a degree of flexibility acknowledging the effect on students of multiple stressors and clashing work commitments. We will make sure that students who cannot attend mandatory training at default times will be offered alternative options, or the opportunity to attend at a later date.

If you have any concerns about training you are expected to do or if you need to cancel your registration, please do as soon as possible and no later than 2 weeks in advance (unless for an emergency). However, if you cancel too close to the training or without emailing us the reason, EastBio will seek to retrieve expenditure (venue hire, external trainer fees, facility use fees, training licences, etc.).

After notification, EastBio will deduct an amount proportional to the event's real cost from student RTSG in the following cases:

- No-show
- Cancellation between 1 week and 1 day before the event takes place (including Eventbrite cancellation)
- Notification of cancellation without a legitimate reason

The financial penalty depends on the specific event planned but will range between £100/day to £300 for 2-day residential events (e.g. symposia).

How to sign-up:

You should sign up for each training that you wish to attend via the link to Eventbrite on the website by the 31st of October 2025 so that we can confirm numbers with our training leads.

Managing EventBrite:

You can use Eventbrite to manage your training sign-ups by registering for new training, or cancelling existing registration in line with the cancellation policy. 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.

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 (including tuition fees and stipend paid monthly, in advance, by your BBSRC studentship) to support your training:

UKRI Stipend for 2025-2026:

Fees and stipend levels are confirmed annually and are inflation-adjusted:

- A stipend of £20,780 full-time equivalent
- Support for tuition fees of £5,006 per year

Research Training Grant (RTSG) or bench fees:

£5,000 per annum; this is reduced to £1,000 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, 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 when they can be spent for eligible costs (email us if you're unsure). Upon registering at your host institution, you should receive guidance about accessing these funds; if you have questions, please contact your local administrator (for all EastBio contacts, see end of the Handbook).

PIPS Additional Expenses:

Where your placement involves significant additional costs, you can apply to our bursary (up to £500 per award maximum for travel and/or accommodation). Further details are on the PIPS Guide. CASE students may also apply for this bursary although BBSRC expects that CASE partners will have committed to be supporting students for this type of cost too.

Disabled Students Allowance (DSA):

As a UKRI-funded student, you are entitled to additional individual support on the basis of a diagnosed disability that calls for specific adjustments or supportive measures during your programme of study. Students should request an interview with their local Disability Officer who will draft a Needs Assessment Report with advised DSA recommendations and liaise with EastBio to ensure that the measures will be implemented as soon as possible.

Feedback

Our current programme is shaped by a number of shared priorities:

- Strategic UKRI BBSRC requirements (*research priorities, computational & big data focus, interdisciplinarity, industry- and business-related skills*)
- EastBio contractual commitments and steering by the EastBio Academic Management Group and Advisory Board (*cohort-building, supervisory engagement, horizon scanning*)
- Ongoing feedback from current students, your student reps, supervisors and industrial partners

EastBio aims to respond to the needs that you, your supervisors and your potential future employers may identify.

In this context, we seek feedback on each individual training and event we run centrally and, also, an Annual Programme Survey at the end of the year. You can see the changes we have made to the programme as a result of your feedback at:

www.ed.ac.uk/biology/eastbio/you-said-we-did

You can also communicate your views of the programme by contacting your student rep(s), the EastBio Support Officer, or a member of one of the EastBio subcommittees; for details see:

www.eastscotbiodtp.ac.uk/EastBio-dtp-committees

You may also want to join the Training and Development or Industry Engagement subcommittees, whose task is to discuss the progress and delivery of the programme, any gaps, shifting priorities, issues raised, etc., and make recommendations for improvement.

Placements

PIPS Quotes from students and institutional hosts:

One key achievement from my internship, "Data-Driven Lab Automation: Identifying Opportunities Through Market and User Insights" at Singer Instruments, was developing a custom software tool that helped streamline communication between two robotic systems. The application improved accuracy and efficiency in lab workflows and highlighted my ability to build practical solutions in a real-world tech environment. This internship gave me a deeper understanding of how software, hardware, and user needs intersect in real-world innovation. Long-term, I expect it to benefit my career by strengthening my technical and collaborative skills, and by giving me the confidence to contribute to multidisciplinary projects—whether in research, product development, or tech-driven roles in industry.

Emile Mensikova (Aberdeen, 2023 cohort)

During my internship at Campervan Brewery, I worked across various aspects of the brewing process, including fermentation monitoring, cellaring, packaging, and quality control. I supported routine lab analyses such as pH measurements, gravity checks, and yeast viability counts. I also contributed to troubleshooting production issues and gained insight into how chemistry underpins brewing operations. In addition to hands-on work, I engaged with the team to understand workflow coordination, supply logistics, and the commercial side of brewery operations. I enjoyed seeing how much creativity and experimentation goes into recipe development, which challenged my assumption that brewing was purely formulaic. It was surprising to see how nuanced small process changes could be: for example, how fermentation temperature variations could affect flavour profiles. A challenge I encountered was adapting to the physical demands and fast turnaround times of production days, which required me to quickly learn new workflows and respond flexibly to changing priorities.

Isolde Marsland (Edinburgh, 2023 cohort)

For my placement at LectomeBio, I performed an end-user analysis for cell biology products developed by the company and put together a priority list and strategy for targeting the product. This involved combing the scientific literature, Scopus database, and publicly available researcher profiles across selected academic institutions for target end-users. Based on a set of criteria, a priority list of end-users was developed.

Muhammad Zaman Khan Assir (Aberdeen, 2021)

The intern has pushed the development of the diagnostic test for diabetes forward by setting up and performing Enzyme Linked Immunosorbent Assays in the lab with us, and their contribution opened new research questions and gave us another direction to the process! From our perspective, the intern took a big load of work and enabled us to reach in conclusion for our assay faster!

EpitogenX Ltd

By analysing silica in water samples and collating all silica data into one large dataset, the intern has contributed to the long-term monitoring dataset available for Loch Leven. The dataset, which is published and available to a wider scientific community, helps enhance our understanding of processes that drive temporal changes in nutrient levels and plankton communities in this shallow Scottish loch.

The UK Centre for Ecology and Hydrology

During my internship in Cali, Colombia, with Alliance Bioversity & CIAT, I gained valuable knowledge in both scientific and socio-economic aspects of the plant biotechnology field. On the scientific side, I explored various tissue culture techniques across different crops, learned about genetic transformation methods, and enhanced my skills in working with plants. I had the privilege of learning from highly experienced experts who have developed efficient methodologies by blending theoretical biology with practical intuition.

Cristina Ponce (2021)

Having completed my placement project "The Social Science of Farm Carbon Auditing" at AgreCalc, I really liked the experience of being part of a small, focused team of driven individuals. They seemed to have good integrity which I found inspiring.

Poppy Frater (2020)

General

The Professional Internships for PhD Students are unique to UKRI BBSRC-funded Partnerships and form an essential and mandatory component of the EastBio programme.

The only exception to this requirement are CASE students who must spend a minimum of 3 months placement with their industrial partner company instead. International students may be restricted in the type of placement they can consider due to visa regulations, so you are asked to consult the relevant guidance on the Placements Guide and contact us for confirmation of your options and plans.

Undertaking a placement will expose you to a non-academic 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 share their experiences via short blog reports and presentations at the Placements Q&A session and poster sessions at the Annual Symposia.

PIPS Placements Q&A

3 February 2026

Mandatory for all year 1 students (non-CASE)

Students on tier-4 visa, who are not on a PhD programme integrated with an internship and who have to do an adjusted work placement, will receive formal guidance.

All information about placements, including the comprehensive PIPS Guide, can be found at:

www.ed.ac.uk/biology/eastbio/training/placements

Placement 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 between Y1-Y3) or supported by your PIPS provider. If the PIPS host organisation is situated 50 miles or more from your term-time address, you may also apply to EastBio for an additional sum of £500 maximum towards such costs. We ask students considering a placement abroad to be mindful of budgetary limitations. EastBio will support actively students who face unanticipated challenges that jeopardise the successful completion of their placement.

PIPS Expectations

The following points summarise what EastBio expects from you:

- Source a suitable PIPS project with an eligible PIPS provider.
- Plan the PIPS into your PhD work plan, in collaboration with your academic supervisor.
- Complete all the necessary paperwork and share them with EastBio, your host university and/or host organisation, in accordance with milestones and deadlines set out in the PIPS Guide.
- Engage with your PIPS provider in a professional manner throughout your planning.
- 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.

Suitable Placements

Placements are based on 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 outside your immediate research environment. This is a chance to think creatively about the types of experience that carry long-term career benefits.

The following are just a few examples of PIPS work:

- 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

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 bottlenecks 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
- arrangements for transition into and out of your PIPS

You should consider completing some relevant generic skills training in preparation for PIPS, such as CV-writing and interviewing skills; entrepreneurship; time and project management; communication skills.

Paperwork

The Placements page on the EastBio website has all the information and forms you will need to plan your placement and submit relevant paperwork to EastBio. Although the scheme is student-led, we ask you to stay in touch with EastBio as the team can assist with advice.

<https://biology.ed.ac.uk/eastbio/training/placements>

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

- Complete all necessary risk assessment procedures as defined by your local institution and the EastBio PIPS Abroad Checklist
- Submit a Leave of Absence form to your local institution
- Tier-4 Visa students should check with their local Immigration office and EastBio before they start planning any placement abroad

CASE Studentships

EastBio supports a number of CASE studentships according to BBSRC guidelines.

These are studentships in collaboration with an industrial partner in areas such as biotechnology, energy, environment, agriculture, livestock breeding and fishing, crops, data and computing, policy and government. CASE projects are led by the PhD supervisor with a named non-academic co-supervisor, both of whom are responsible for the completion of the project and the support of the CASE student. An integral part of these studentships is a CASE placement between 3-18 months at the premises of the CASE partner. The placement (in lieu of PIPS) provides students with training not available at your research institution while also fitting with the partner's business priorities.

EastBio expectations

CASE supervisors

(academic and non-academic)

- Discuss early the CASE project with the student and agree on a workplan; review plans as necessary.
- Share a Welcome Pack, including key contacts in the partner institutions, provisional calendar of meetings, expected contributions and available resources from the CASE partner, expected benefits and outcomes, etc.
- Finalise a CASE agreement and share it with the EastBio team asap.
- Discuss and agree with the student a CASE placement with their professional requirements in focus.
- Complete a CASE placement agreement and share with the EastBio team.
- Consider attending the EastBio Induction, Placements Q&A session, and impact Symposia.

- Consider contributing to other training opportunities with an industrial or broader impacts focus.
- Liaise with the EastBio Industry Engagement Manager and subcommittee to share feedback, recommendations or concerns.

CASE Placements Q&A

2 February 2026

Mandatory for all year 1 CASE students

CASE students

- Make sure you read and understand the CASE project and any formal agreements that are drawn with the CASE partner.
- Be pro-active in discussing and agreeing with the supervisory team the PhD project plan and seek clarity about mutual expectations as early as possible; review plans as necessary.
- Be pro-active and collaborate with your CASE partner to finalise your CASE placement plans.
- Stay in contact with EastBio to share feedback, progress or concerns about your CASE project and placement.



Dr Samuel Gibbon

Centre for Medical Informatics,
The University of Edinburgh

The Graduate Experience III

My path into research wasn't straightforward. I left school at 16 and spent most of my twenties working in a mix of jobs – baggage handler at EasyJet, forklift truck driver, electrical installer, shifts in factories and warehouses. I went to university aged 25, trained as a language teacher, and that took me abroad for several years. I travelled a lot, backpacked around, and eventually came back to the UK ready to take on something different.

When I started my PhD with EastBio, I didn't have the kind of traditional academic background many of my peers did (although I had worked for a couple of years as a research assistant). In the end, my PhD project focused on developing a way to measure the paleness of the optic nerve head in retinal photographs – something I was given the freedom to pursue. The initial project I applied with didn't quite work out, but there was room to adapt and find a path forward. That flexibility, along with the support from supervisors and the EastBio network, made all the difference.

During my PhD I published several papers and built collaborations across medicine and data science. I also had two children during that time. EastBio were incredibly supportive, which meant I could balance family life with research without too much stress. For me, the PhD itself was straightforward and enjoyable – the harder part was being permanently tired from looking after young kids!

I'm now a postdoc at the Centre for Medical Informatics in Edinburgh, continuing to work at the intersection of data and health. The work feels like a natural continuation of my PhD.

Looking back, the PhD was a really positive experience. There were the usual ups and downs, but overall I found it rewarding and good fun. I also recognise that it isn't like that for everyone.

Two things made it much easier for me: first, I had a great supervisor and team who gave me almost total freedom and zero stress; second, I didn't have to collect my own data! EastBio gave me the space to follow an idea, the training to grow as a researcher, and a community that made the whole journey much richer.

To those just starting out: you'll find your own path through the PhD, and EastBio is a great environment to do it in. I hope you enjoy the process. Feel free to reach out if you want to chat, especially about juggling kids and a PhD, or the practical side of things like finances.

Equality, Diversity & Inclusion

The EastBio Management and EastBio team are committed to supporting the research and professional development of all students in line with the UKRI BBSRC Duty of Care pledge as laid out in the key documents below:

UKRI Statement of Expectations for Postgraduate Training

<https://www.ukri.org/wp-content/uploads/2024/01/UKRI-300124-StatementExpectationsDoctoralTrainingJanuary2024.pdf>

2019 Concordat to Support the Career Development of Researchers

https://researcherdevelopmentconcordat.ac.uk/wp-content/uploads/2022/01/Researcher-Development-Concordat_Sept2019-1.pdf

The UKRI EDI Policy

www.ukri.org/wp-content/uploads/2021/03/UKRI-250321-EqualityDiversityInclusionPolicy-V2.0.pdf

EastBio values diversity and inclusion in all forms and strongly supports you in bringing your whole self to work. We expect our students to be proactive advocates of respect and integrity, equality and diversity in their own practice. We not only embed these principles across the EastBio programme, from recruitment to training, but we also work with our EDI student reps, the EDI subcommittee and the Advisory Board to assess the effect of our measures and review the action plan to address key goals and priorities.

EastBio EDI Measures

- The EastBio EDI Statement describes our goals and how we set out to achieve them.
- The EastBio EDI subcommittee oversees our EDI policy, monitors & reviews progress against agreed measures, and makes recommendations to the Management Group.
- Equal opportunities policy at recruitment: we monitor diversity data of applicants and mitigate for gaps in fair representation on the basis of this evidence; we also collect feedback on recruitment by all shareholders that informs our annual process review. In the last three years, we operated a guaranteed interview scheme for home-fees BAME students.
- We support a group of EDI Student Reps from any year of study with a standard term of 2 years and work with them to assess our on-the-programme support. The EDI rep role is to represent your peers to the Management Group, raise concerns and propose measures to address issues as they arise. We offer additional training to reps after assessment of needs. We listen to your suggestions that enhance practices of belonging, resilience, respect and recognition across our community. EDI student reps sit at the subcommittees to ensure that EDI principles are embedded across the programme, from recruitment to placements to industry engagement

- We run the EastBio Mental Health First Aiders (MHFA) group consisted of students and academics who have received relevant training funded by EastBio; provide a dedicated MHFA mailbox, EDI space on the monthly Newsletter and drop-in sessions on demand.

eastbio.mhfa@eastscotbioldtp.ac.uk

- We encourage the use of tools such as the Expectations Alignment form and the CASE Welcome Survey to strengthen the student-supervisor collaboration.
- To mitigate for communication disadvantage, we recognise that students, supervisors and staff communicate differently. Following a programme audit, we have implemented Inclusive Communication measures across our guidance, process, and event planning. We monitor such measures annually and enhance our neuro-inclusion measures across the partnership programme. Examples include the Neurodiversity Awareness workshop for students and supervisors and the Personal Manual tool for those who seek support for a diagnosis and DSA.

- We encourage a number of initiatives in aid of our EDI commitment that will require proactive actions by our students and their local support teams: student-led social meetups at partner locations, student-led Women-in-STEM networks, linkage with postdoc societies and external societies and wellbeing initiatives at partner level.
- We support cross-DTP initiatives such as the BBSRC DTP LGBTQIA Network, the joint EastBio/NorthWestBio DTP EDI day, and the cross-institutional University of Nottingham network for neurodivergent students. Let us know of your connections and we'll be sure to join you!

www.ed.ac.uk/biology/eastbio/equality-diversity-inclusion



Support

Where to get support

It is important that you familiarise yourself with your statutory rights as a UKRI-funded student via:

<https://www.ukri.org/publications/policy-statement-review-of-the-training-grant-conditions/>

Key aspects of your entitlement:

- You will continue to receive stipend for periods of sick leave of up to 28 weeks within any 12-month period during your PhD; note that the max cumulative leave must not be more than 52 weeks across your funded studentship.
- Sick leave includes: pregnancy-related, antenatal appointments, fertility treatment, disability-related illness and appointments, gender reassignment.
- You can take maternity, paternity or adoption leave, both paid and unpaid.
- You can switch to part-time study at any point after discussion with your PhD supervisor and the local department. You will need to adapt your training plan, especially in the early years of the switch.
- If you submit your PhD thesis early, you may continue to receive your stipend for the quarter of the submission date (Jan-March; April-June, etc.).
- To access the Disabled Students' Allowance (DSA), contact now your local Disability team that will implement the recommendations of your Needs Assessment Report, including any financial measures agreed.

<https://www.ukri.org/publications/disabled-students-allowance-dsa-framework/>

See below for a list of the disability services of EastBio partner institutions

Aberdeen

<https://www.abdn.ac.uk/students/support/services/>

Dundee

<https://www.dundee.ac.uk/disability-services>

Edinburgh

<https://disability-learning-support-service.ed.ac.uk/students>

St Andrews

<https://www.st-andrews.ac.uk/study/support/student/>

Stirling

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

SRUC

<https://www.sruc.ac.uk/student-with-us/student-life/student-support/>

EDI Contacts

We recognise that students face various challenges during your PhD study. As you are exploring support options, be aware of the following contacts & mechanisms available to you:

- Your supervisor, local PGR advisor or local student Advisor or Administrator
- The EastBio Partnership team (Support Officer and Manager) that can advise you and escalate serious concerns to the academic lead for your institution, the Director, or the Management Group
- The EastBio EDI student reps and the EastBio Mental Health First Aid Group
- The EastBio complaint process via this form:

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

You may seek wellbeing advice confidentially from any of the above contacts. You remain in control in such discussions as any actions discussed require your explicit permission unless there is clear risk to life.

EastBio Privacy Statement:

<https://www.ed.ac.uk/biology/eastbio>

Zero tolerance to harassment or bullying, in any form! If you believe that you or a colleague has been subjected to inappropriate behaviour, act promptly to report the issue so that steps can be taken to address the situation immediately. Refer to the UKRI's position statement on bullying and harassment. Information available via this link:

<https://www.ukri.org/what-we-do/supporting-healthy-research-and-innovation-culture/bullying-and-harassment/>

Further Support

Below are some of the local services across a number of areas available to you, including external resources:

Aberdeen

<https://www.abdn.ac.uk/student-s/support/services/student-advice--support-office/>

Dundee

www.dundee.ac.uk/student-services

Edinburgh - CSE

<https://biology.ed.ac.uk/equality-and-diversity>

<https://chem.ed.ac.uk/cto/student-support>

Edinburgh – CMVM

<https://vet.ed.ac.uk/education/undergraduate/student-support-team>

Stirling

<https://www.stir.ac.uk/student-life/support-wellbeing/student-support-services/>

Hardship/Discretionary Fund:

If you are faced with significant challenges, we advise you that you first discuss with your supervisor and local administrator.

Aberdeen

<https://www.abdn.ac.uk/students/finance/>

Dundee

<https://www.dundee.ac.uk/doctoral-academy/research-funding-financial-support>

Edinburgh

www.ed.ac.uk/student-funding/hardship-funding

St Andrews

<https://www.st-andrews.ac.uk/students/money/>

Stirling

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

Counselling Services:

Aberdeen

<https://www.abdn.ac.uk/education/research/the-bounds/counselling-service/>

Dundee

<https://www.dundee.ac.uk/counselling>

Edinburgh

<https://student-counselling.ed.ac.uk/>

St Andrews

<https://www.st-andrews.ac.uk/students/support/>

Stirling

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

SRUC

www.sruc.ac.uk/courses-training/student-support/

Further support resources:

<https://www.equalityadvisoryservice.com/>

www.bwisnetwork.co.uk

<https://thewellbeingthesis.org.uk/>

www.nhs.uk/nhs-services/mental-health-services/

www.brothersinarmsscotland.co.uk/

www.mind.org.uk/need-urgent-help/using-this-tool

www.crusescotland.org.uk/

<https://www.studentsagainstdepression.org/>



Information for Supervisors

EastBio is committed to transparent communication about our governance, recruitment process, training programme and broader impacts.

Our annual programme is mapped onto the priorities and goals set out in the portfolio agreement that all partner institutions have agreed with BBSRC following successful award of the Doctoral Landscape Award 2024. Alongside other channels of information, this Handbook describes how EastBio sets out to deliver our vision and commitment to supporting the researcher and professional development of our student cohorts funded by the DLA grant. EastBio, funded continuously by BBSRC since 2012, has an excellent track record in doctoral training provision that underpins the overhauled programme that we will be launching in October 2025..

As a PhD supervisor in this scheme, the EastBio Management Group expects that you will actively support activities within the programme in support of your student and in anticipation of positive future impacts on research, industry and the society in general. At the same time, we have explored ways to support you personally as you contribute to the professional development of your supervisees and meet our programme expectations. We welcome your input within the shifting priorities around research and researcher development.

To this end, we have developed a Charter for EastBio supervisors that clarifies how we interpret our contract with the funding body, our students and supervisors. The aim of this document is to contribute to a consistent supervisory practice within the programme

by providing information on the partnership, its governance, expectations, training and impacts.

Measures we seek to enhance our support for supervisors:

- EastBio recruitment:
 - Analysis of diversity data of academics submitting projects with a view to developing evidence-based mitigations for under-represented research labs
 - Increase opportunities for interacting with the Management Group and subcommittees (recruitment briefing sessions, Q&A sessions at events, annual programme surveys)
- A number of action-based digital resources:
 - Supervisor Handbook, including information about the UKRI Training Grant Terms and Conditions
 - Student onboarding and alignment of expectations tool
 - Research networking (Research Brochure)
 - CASE Welcome Survey
- Enhanced and flexible EastBio development activities : SPRE-run Action Learning Sets; Networking opportunities at Induction & Symposia events; MH training sessions with emphasis on neuro-inclusion
- Collaborate to capture student impacts via an [Impact Survey](#)
- Initiatives to recognise academic citizenship, or contributions to inclusive research culture

EastBio Contacts

If you have a publication, a peer distinction or achievement, an interesting knowledge exchange or outreach experience, if you completed your PhD, email enquiries@eastscotbiodtp.ac.uk or tag **@eastbio on LinkedIn or BlueSky**. We are keen to celebrate your news!

All the individuals named below will be happy to be contacted.

EastBio Support Team

EastBio Partnership Support Team
enquiries@eastscotbiodtp.ac.uk

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Student Representatives

In your first year, you can volunteer to represent your host institution (either as a lead or a reserve depending on your capacity), and/or serve as an EastBio EDI facilitator.

The role of the EastBio student representative, on a 2-year term, is to convey student experiences and concerns to the Management Group or a relevant subcommittee, facilitate cohort building, lead on the annual Symposium planning, and represent EastBio at events throughout the year. We support student reps in their role by clarity about expectations and recognise their contributions via access to governance and decision-making, additional skills development opportunities.

Subcommittees

EastBio subcommittees manage the different aspects of the programme in a way that optimises decision-making, transparency and responsiveness to shifting priorities.

The EastBio subcommittees are:

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

For anything you would like to raise, reach out to any member of the subcommittees. Their contact details are online.

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Every effort has been made to ensure that the information in this Handbook was correct at the time of publication.

EastBio training courses are subject to ongoing development which could necessitate alteration or cancellation of advertised courses.

Should you notice any errors or inaccuracies in this Handbook or on our training pages, please email enquiries@eastscotbiodtp.ac.uk to let us know.