**EastBio Partnership Placements**

**2025 Guide**

Contents

[A. What is the PIPS scheme? 2](#_Toc1322188531)

[General context 3](#_Toc2109077442)

[Objective 4](#_Toc1107668486)

[EastBio expectations 4](#_Toc780603274)

[How are placements funded? 5](#_Toc1950966112)

[PIPS duration, timing, format 5](#_Toc1234209306)

[PIPS location 6](#_Toc218522888)

[Range of suitable PIPS 7](#_Toc1754155576)

[PIPS paperwork 8](#_Toc776391586)

[B. How to manage your placement 9](#_Toc186424991)

[EastBio Support 10](#_Toc598423266)

[Wellbeing support 10](#_Toc908290589)

[Wellbeing contacts 11](#_Toc1351219934)

[PIPS Stages 12](#_Toc1829291462)

[Before your PIPS 12](#_Toc1072191201)

[Next steps after your Plan approval 13](#_Toc528149058)

[During your PIPS 14](#_Toc57560638)

[After your PIPS 14](#_Toc524758575)

[PIPS guidance for overseas students 16](#_Toc1673195487)

[Options 17](#_Toc663975721)

[Guidance for Collaborative placements 20](#_Toc613227420)

[Further resources 21](#_Toc1983357628)

[Advertised Internships 22](#_Toc834951797)

[Tips on interacting with a potential PIPS host organisation 24](#_Toc1774544387)

[Appendix 27](#_Toc749394567)

[How to approach a (potential) PIPS host 28](#_Toc2114992668)

# What is the PIPS scheme?

## General context

Professional Internships for PhD Students (PIPS) is a UKRI BBSRC-funded scheme. It is a mandatory programme requirement for all BBSRC funded students. Your EastBio BBSRC studentship funds you for a total of 4 years, including the 3-month placement.

The PIPS scheme aligns with EastBio’s commitment to providing our students with support in the development of career-focused, professional and entrepreneurial skills. The scheme is open to all EastBio PhD students, including: (a) those who are carrying out a standard PhD project; (b) students on a tier-4 visa; (c) optional for collaborative studentships with a non-academic or industrial partner as they are required to do instead a placement at the premises of their partner, and (d) students associated with the EastBio training but not directly funded by EastBio (please check with your institutional administrator to make sure that your studentship provides financial support for a placement). Specific guidance for each category will be provided in this Guide.

**Definition**

PIPS refers to a 3-month (full-time equivalent) integrated student placement in a professional environment that is non-academic, during which the student works full-time on a project unrelated to their field of research (their PhD project). In other words:

* The organisation where you will carry out your placement cannot be in an academic research setting. Borderline cases (e.g. a start-up company affiliated with an academic institution), or any exceptions to the PIPS condition will be reviewed on a case-by-case basis.
* Students cannot carry out a research project in a clinical academic setting even if the field is unrelated to the student’s research; exceptions to this may be considered on a case-by-case basis under specific circumstances.
* Students must choose a placement that is not related to their field of doctoral research.

**PIPS Terminology**

* ‘PIPS’ is used alongside the terms ‘internship’ and ‘placement’ throughout the Guide. The only exception is Collaborative (or CASE) Studentships that have different conditions.
* ‘PIPS provider’ or ‘PIPS host organisation’ refers to organisations that advertise a PIPS project or a placement opportunity, are considered for a placement by students, or provide a placement and host students.
* PIPS MOU refers to the mandatory form ‘Placement Agreement’ or Memorandum of Understanding (MOU) that records the details of the specific PIPS project as agreed by all parties - the student, the PhD and the PIPS supervisors, and the EastBio representative (Partnership Manager, Industry Engagement Manager, or Support Officer); the signed document is approved by EastBio and shared with all parties, including the local administrator, prior to the start of the internship.

**PIPS Exceptions**

* All funded students are expected to carry out a placement as this is a mandatory requirement of the Training Programme and our funder. However, there may be circumstances where a revised completion plan, or even an exemption, may be necessary and will be considered as an exceptional case by EastBio and the relevant EastBio Partner Academic lead(s). The EastBio team must notify the BBSRC of cases of exemption with an account of the rationale for their consideration.
* Circumstances include, for example, a grave change in the student’s personal circumstances (related for example to their health, family, or caring responsibilities), the PhD project, the intended programme outcome, or any other significant negative impact on the capacity of the student to complete an internship within the prescribed period of the PhD.
* Concerns should be communicated as a matter of urgency to the EastBio Partnership Manager or the Industry Engagement Manager, who will discuss and review the rationale for the request for extension, exemption or revision of the PIPS requirement with the student, their PhD supervisor and the Academic lead of the student’s institution.

## Objective

Give students the opportunity to gain professional experience and skills outside of research, insights into a different operational context and a new set of contacts in a non-academic setting before graduation. The overall aim is to enhance your employability by helping you, as an early career researcher, to understand the context of your research, to get exposure to a range of career opportunities available after graduation, and to try out a professional role that is outwith your default lab/research work.

This is a great opportunity to do something practical, get a taste of something that you have been wanting to do besides research, safely discard (or reconsider) a second or third career option, test your commitment to a career in academia, explore work that albeit non-research related can have some meaningful connections with research outreach, impact or use, or, simply, get a sense of gratification by completing a meaningful project in a short period of time.

## EastBio expectations

EastBio Placements are student-led. EastBio has a clear process and resources to facilitate and monitor progress, inform and support students and supervisors, and report outcomes to the funder. Within this frame, you the student have overall responsibility to source, plan and manage your PIPS according to your career goals and skills development.

Your PhD supervisor can help you directly. After familiarising themselves with the PIPS scheme and its aims, they can, for instance, share ideas and/or relevant contacts, act as a point of contact and support during your PIPS planning, check and sign your PIPS Plan and Agreement, help you with the risk assessment for a placement abroad. We have developed a [Supervisor Handbook](https://biology.ed.ac.uk/eastbio/eastbio-handbook) that we share before the Induction Day, to make sure that supervisors receive clear information from EastBio about how to support your professional development during your PhD and across the training programme and professional placement.

The success of the PIPS scheme also reflects on the programme’s success in terms of securing further funding: to this end, we ask you and your supervisor to share information with us and BBSRC on impacts from placements, as well as by engaging with relevant sessions at Induction and Symposia events.

The continuation of your PhD funding after PhD month 37 is subject to meeting the UKRI BBSRC requirement to complete your internship before month 36. You must contact the EastBio team as soon as possible if you anticipate the need for an extension as this must be discussed and approved in advance!

# How are placements funded?

You will continue to receive your PhD stipend during the placement as normal. Students should not receive direct payment from their PIPS host while undertaking their placement, according to UKRI rules.

Standard placement costs should be covered from your annual RTSG (£5k per year in Y1-Y3).

You can apply to EastBio for additional funding of £500 maximum (for travel and/or accommodation) if your placement is abroad or over 50 miles from your term-time address. Applications must be approved before your placement and the approved additional funds will be transferred to your RTSG where you can access these as normal.

We encourage students to discuss with their PIPS host in case they can also support financially some of the travel/accommodation expenses; this is especially the case with placements abroad.

PIPS hosts must cover all consumable costs involved in the PIPS project.

**How to apply for the PIPS Hardship funding**

From 2025 onwards, EastBio will consider providing financial support to students who experience significant adverse circumstances and hardship during their 3-month placement. These may include a sudden and unexpected change of their personal or family circumstances, significant accommodation challenges, or circumstances that have a negative effect on their ability to continue their placement. Financial support will be provided should it be deemed that this will ensure the completion of the placement project. Depending on the gravity of the situation and after consultation with the student and, as necessary and appropriate, the PIPS and PhD supervisors, further appropriate options will be advised, including an interruption, postponement or cancellation of the placement itself. Details of this provision and how to apply, can be found on the [EastBio Placement Hardship Fund form](https://biology.ed.ac.uk/sites/default/files/2025-09/EastBio%20Placement%20Hardship%20Fund.docx).

# PIPS duration, timing, format

* The PIPS total time must be the equivalent of 60 working days (12 working weeks) if on a full-time basis (35 hours per week) and the agreed dates must be shown clearly on the final PIPS MOU. PIPS should be taken as a continuous 12-weeks block, but a UK-based internship may be taken in several shorter blocks (minimum 2 days per week) as long as the total number of working days is 60. For instance, you can indicate on the form submitted to EastBio for approval an agreed arrangement for, say, “2 days per week over 8 months, Tuesdays and Wednesdays weekly, making up the required total of 60 days”. Other options such as carrying out the placement at different periods in the year are possible but must be discussed and agreed explicitly with the PIPS host organisation.
* EastBio requires that PIPS takes place between months 12 and 36 of your PhD so that it leaves your fourth year free for completing your research work and writing your PhD thesis. No extension can be given to your studentship for reasons to do with completing a placement. If you have specific concerns with this condition, please contact the EastBio Manager as early as possible to discuss acceptable adjustments.
* You should tailor your placement to suit your individual constraints and to avoid disruption in your project in the case of fieldwork or seasonal variations, for example. Make sure that you explain this in your PIPS Plan so that we can review and approve plans promptly.

In summary, the format – and alternatives - of the PIPS depend on your PhD schedule and individual constraints, the capacity and requirements of the PIPS host organisation, and the type of project agreed. Any non-standard arrangement should be clearly described on the final PIPS MOU so that mutual expectations are transparent by all parties and a positive PIPS experience is ensured.

# PIPS location

* You will be expected to spend your internship working in the host organisation’s premises, although some travel to external sites and other organisations may be necessary. EastBio recognises that remote or hybrid PIPS may be, on some occasions, necessary due to circumstances related to the student’s personal circumstances (especially in case of those with a young family, additional caring responsibilities, managing ill health or a disability), the timing of the placement or the requirements of the project itself. Such remote or hybrid arrangements need to be discussed in detail and agreed between the student, the PIPS host organisation and the EastBio team and recorded on the PIPS MOU submitted for approval before the start of the placement.
* Internships could be hosted by more than one host organisation if this is considered appropriate. For example, students may wish to work on an outreach programme for a month in more than one different school. However, all different organisations will have to agree on and sign the same PIPS MOU, to be reviewed and approved by EastBio before the start of the placement.
* PIPS can be carried out abroad in line with your professional goals. However, students are advised to give this option careful thought given the additional logistical and financial requirements for this option; as described above, EastBio has limited additional funding that is competitively allocated. Students are encouraged to ask their prospective PIPS host for support with these costs or seek alternative sources of funding before committing to the PIPS project. By default, any extra costs associated with a placement abroad should be met by the PhD student (out of your RTSG) and/or the host organisation after prior agreement.
* Students on a tier-4 visa may have specific restrictions on doing a professional placement abroad. You must, first, check that you are on a PhD programme ‘integrated with an internship’ and, secondly, seek the advice of the Immigration service of your institution before making further plans. This will ensure that you can access the full PIPS scheme without breaching your visa conditions.

Before travelling overseas, it is essential that you and your PhD supervisor do the following:

* Complete all necessary Risk Assessment procedures as prescribed by the local institution you are registered with.
  + Submit a ‘Leave of Absence’ form according to the regulations of your academic institution.
  + Fill in the EastBio ‘Placement Abroad Pre-departure Checklist’and submit to EastBio prior to your PIPS starting. We will not approve your PIPS MOU without these additional steps.

# Range of suitable PIPS

The objective of PIPS is to provide you with a unique, tailored experience chosen from a wide range of workplaces. Internships should ideally be projects that are well planned and managed and can be completed within 3 months. They should provide experience at a level appropriate for a postgraduate student.During the internship you may wish to gain skills and experience in the following areas:

* Being customer-focused
* Influencing others
* Leading, developing and managing people
* Managing finances and resources
* Planning and organising
* Problem-solving and decision-making
* Pursuing professional excellence in a particular non-academic environment
* Thinking and acting strategically

Examples of different types or environments for PIPS include:

* Industry:
  + a short desk-based research project in a non-academic setting
  + review or analysis of manufacturing, processing, or production techniques
  + non-research roles, such as marketing, publishing, or sales
  + business development, or project management
* Legal companies
  + Patent-related project
* Consultancy
  + auditing projects
  + (non-academic) research projects
* Teaching – in schools, using the Researchers in Residence scheme in the University of Edinburgh (https://www.ed.ac.uk/women-make-cities/researchers-in-residence), or through other similar mechanisms found in most partner institutions
* Policy sector – developing policy or working in a related setting, such as a government department or agency, local authority, non-departmental public body, professional association, think tank, charity (with clear links to scientific activities), or research funder
* Manufacturing
* Media industry – a wide variety of roles are possible here that help students understand the wider societal context of their research. Such internships could include working in science communication roles in a charity or other roles in:
  + Press office
  + Science publishing company

**Quick check of PIPS host’s suitability**

|  |  |  |
| --- | --- | --- |
| If the answer to any of the questions below is ‘NO’, then the organisation you are considering does not meet with the BBSCR PIPS scheme criteria. | YES | NO |
| Does the PIPS you are considering fit with the ethos of the UKRI BBSRC goal “to help students understand the context of their research and to expose them to a range of opportunities available to them after they graduate”? |  |  |
| Can the PIPS host organisation provide you with the following:   * A professional environment external to the academic institution? * Mentorship/Supervision (non-academic) on a day-to-day basis? * Desk space within physical work premises external to the academic institution? Or, in case of a remote PIPS (if approved), alternative appropriate structures to support home working? * Willing to complete the PIPS MOU with necessary health and safety policy, insurance, and liability in place? * Scheduled opportunities to interact with professionals from a non-academic background. The professionals that the PhD student will work with during this internship may include scientific writers, editors, client services, team members, creative team, senior leadership team, human resources; there may be some interaction with pharmaceutical client contacts, journal editors, admin staff, etc. |  |  |
| Does the PIPS project you are considering offer opportunities to develop professional skills and gain experience appropriate for a doctoral candidate? Below are some examples:   * Being customer-focused; * Influencing others; * Leading, developing and managing people; * Managing finances and resources; * Planning and organising in a non-academic setting; * Problem-solving and decision-making in a non-academic setting; * Pursuing professional excellence in a particular non-academic environment; * Thinking and acting strategically; * Gaining commercial awareness. |  |  |
| Will I spend a total of 12 weeks (or totaling 60 days) on this placement project? |  |  |

# PIPS paperwork

**Mandatory forms:**

1. PIPS Planning form

To be completed by the end of September of your first year and submitted to EastBio for approval.

1. PIPS Memorandum of Understanding (PIPS MOU)

To be completed once the intended PIPS project and plan have been refined in close collaboration between the student, the PIPS host organisation and the PhD supervisor. It is the student’s responsibility to return the completed form, signed by all parties to [placements@eastscotbiodtp.ac.uk](http://www.eastscotbiodtp.ac.uk/eastbio-dtp-committees) for EastBio approval before the placement can begin. Students who begin their internship without previous formal approval of the PIPS MOU, shared will parties, will not be insured and PIPS cannot be retrospectively approved.

1. PIPS Feedback forms, one by the student and one by the PIPS host organisation, to be submitted once the internship is completed.
2. BBSRC frequently requests PIPS case studies or impact examples so we may contact those who have completed their PIPS separately and request a statement for sharing with the funder.

**Optional**

1. PIPS Expenses form for up to £500 for travel and/or accommodation on a competitive basis - optional;to be approved by EastBioprior to starting your placement;
2. PIPS Abroad Pre-departure Checklist (for overseas PIPS)

All the forms are reviewed annually and published on the EastBio website at https://biology.ed.ac.uk/eastbio/training/placements/information-current-students; we aim to complete all relevant guidance and forms before the EastBio Placements Q&A session (early February), open to first and second-year students.

# B. How to manage your placement

# EastBio Support

**Process**:

* Placements Q&A session run by the EastBio Manager (early February), mandatory for first-year students, open to their supervisors and optional for second-year students too – aim to share detailed information about placements, timeline, expectations, make support clear, respond to queries and concerns.
* Student presentations, part of the Placements Q&A session (early February), open to first- and second-year students, including CASE students – opportunity to interact with fellow students who have completed their placement and discuss experiences, insights and tips.
* Autumn drop-in session, with student volunteers – opportunity to get clarifications, further input, gain more confidence and finalise your PIPS plan (due end of September)
* Option to request 1:1 meeting with the EastBio team for individual support during planning
* Frequent email reminders from the EastBio team, requests for updates to monitor student progress
* EastBio will apply flexibilities if individual circumstances require it (with BBSRC approval)
* From 2025/26, EastBio will implement frequent email check-ins with students who are on their placements (proposed frequency of once a month).
* After discussion with the EastBio Manager, review and approval, funds can be made available to those who encounter considerable hardship during their PIPS.

**Resources:**

* The EastBio Placements Guide (reviewed annually)
* PIPS Q&A session slides, video recordings shared with all first-year students after the session
* Separate Guidance for Tier 4 visa-holding students
* Placement forms (PIPS Plan, MOU, expenses, feedback)
* EastBio templates & checklists: How to approach a prospective PIPS host; PIPS Log; Placement abroad checklist
* Past PIPS Experiences <https://biology.ed.ac.uk/eastbio/training/placements/past-pips-experiences> where you can see the full range of placements students have completed or filter through your own area of interest
* Separate guidance for prospective PIPS hosts, plus a project advert template.
* EastBio transferable skills training (resilience, science communication, SPRE sessions on public engagement and policy exchange), and local options we encourage you to also take before and after your placement to help you manage the transition challenges
* Dedicated PIPS & CASE sessions at the EastBio Symposia where you can get insights from other students
* We stress the importance of good communication between all parties at all stages of the planning process, and of staying in touch with the team during your PIPS to pre-empt any issues as they arise.

## Wellbeing support

Starting a placement is not unlike starting a new job so we want to help make this a positive experience throughout. Consider the following key points:

* Please engage with our process. It clarifies expectations from all partners from a very early stage.
* Consider relevant training prior to and upon return from your placement to help with transition back to your PhD project.
* Keep a daily log during your placement to record, process and self-reflect on your journey through the placement (incl. new learning, skills, contacts and achievements, areas of personal growth or any issues you may encounter along the way and how you resolved them). Use this to feed into a broad impact statement/narrative of your PIPS project.
* If not in place, request regular review meetings with your PIPS supervisor to enable adjustments on problematic processes that can be resolved by discussion. An implicit purpose of the scheme is to boost your confidence and agency.
* Remember that placements are meant to expose you to skills other than research-based so embrace such opportunities as they arise.
* Seek input from your PhD supervisor on managing the relationship with your PIPS supervisor during the placement in a professional manner, especially if there are significant differences of approach, challenges or tensions.
* If challenges arise early on in your PIPS, do not ignore them! After discussing with the EastBio team and your PhD supervisor, you can discuss alternatives, request to pause your placement, seek adjustments to the plans made - or at worst, discontinue it - to allow you to deal with the difficulty.
* Let us know of your experience and views so that we can review and improve on our support.

## Wellbeing contacts

We strongly encourage students to stay in touch with EastBio and/or your PhD supervisor at all PIPS stage and never hesitate to seek support as and when you need it. Useful contacts that you can consider depending on the nature of challenge you face are below:

* placements@eastscotbiodtp.ac.uk (checked by the EastBio Manager and/or Support Officer)
* Escalation route via the EastBio sub-committee, for instance the Training and Development Committee; details at https://biology.ed.ac.uk/eastbio/contact-us/eastbio-dtp-committees
* edi@eastscotbiodtp.ac.uk - separate email for the EDI Student reps if you prefer to discuss with a student rep rather than the professional team; they could discuss with you and convey your views to the team or the Management, with your explicit consent.
* eastbio.mhfa@eastscotbiodtp.ac.uk - separate mailbox that is accessed by the EastBio Mental Health First Aiders’ group.
* https://tinyurl.com/4s5wsvb8 - option to submit a complaint form to EastBio about your placement. This will be accessed by the EastBio Manager and/or Support Officer who will escalate to either the local academic lead or the Management Group depending on your preferences.

If you're facing a crisis during your placement, please contact Maria.Filippakopoulou@ed.ac.uk asap. It may be that some urgent action is necessary so please let us know of the circumstances so that we can help.

# PIPS Stages

## Before your PIPS

To start planning:

* Reflect on the professional skills you would like to develop during your placement. Be aware of the benefits of self-reflection as part of your daily work routine - this will help you to sharpen your intentions, optimise your plans, and set clear directions for future action. Most partner institutions will have relevant resources made available via their Careers or Employment services.
* EastBio will regularly circulate internship opportunities via the website at <https://biology.ed.ac.uk/eastbio/training/placements/current-pips-opportunities> and our monthly Newsletter. These have been pre-approved so you can contact the relevant representative asap.
* Approach your local Careers Advice Service to research ideas on organisations, environments or sectors you would like to pursue your PIPS in (industry, policy, government, NGO, legal, charity, outreach, etc.), what opportunities exist, what support there is to plan successfully.
* Network to gain useful information that will guide your choices:
  + Use your personal support networks -- your PhD supervisory team, other trusted colleagues, lab members, PGR advisors, friends or family – to seek input or recommendations they may be able to make.
  + consult the EastBio team or other PhD students who may have completed a placement and seek their input, advice or any tips. You can approach students who have completed their PIPS at the Placements Q&A session (early February), the Y2 drop-in session (early September), the EastBio annual Symposium (early June). You can also browse past PIPS experiences at <https://biology.ed.ac.uk/eastbio/training/placements/current-pips-opportunities>.
  + Book one-to-one time with your local Careers Advisor to discuss your PIPS ideas and other suitable opportunities existing at that time.
  + Search online for further options by using LinkedIn, or established Internship schemes (see further resources list, below).
* Prepare a skills-based CV which you can tailor for your PIPS applications or exploratory contacts; consider attending local training on professional skills that you are missing in preparation for a placement, such as project or time management, interview coaching, business or entrepreneurial training, pitching, leadership skills, etc.
* Identify an area/sector of interest (or two!) and a minimum of three names of host organisations per sector, in which you would like to carry out your PIPS. You may be guided by a specific professional you admire, an area of activity or a goal – all are valuable guides in your planning.
* Agree the approximate timing of your PIPS with your PhD supervisor.
* We encourage you to start planning early as it may take a while to secure an offer of an internship. By the end of your first year (end of September), you are to complete the mandatory PIPS Planning form and submit to EastBio for approval – this is a record of what you are thinking of doing for your placement. EastBio checks that this fits with the scheme’s criteria and the suitability of the host organisations on the form and will either approve the form or ask you to address any concerns identified. You are only required to resubmit your plan if there are radical changes to the main direction of your plan.
* You must have received approval of your PIPS plan by EastBio before contacting a potential PIPS host organisation on your form.

## Next steps after your Plan approval

#### Step 1 – Securing a placement offer

#### Approach the prospective host organisation by sending a formal, succinct email to introduce yourself. Consider using a template email found in the appendices. Attach your tailored CV and a brief statement to demonstrate your skills and experience, your interest (and/or experience) in the organisation and your motivation to help with a project they may be running. Be clear about what area you would like to work on, your preferred timeframe and how flexible you are. You should ensure that you explain clearly what EastBio expects of you and of the host organisation during your internship; refer them to EastBio if there are any doubts about mutual expectations. Follow up the email if you have not had a response within a week, either with another email or a phone call. If the organisation agrees, you will then need to explore a suitable internship project with them that offers an opportunity for you to develop your professional skills, the role of the designate PIPS mentor/supervisor, the format of the 3-month, etc. Placements must start after month 12 of your PhD.

* Follow our tips on [interacting with host organisations](#PIPSInteracting) at all times when liaising with the host organisation. If you have additional support requirements, EastBio can help you liaise with the host organisation to discuss the support available. Please note that whilst we can make your host organisation aware of the individual support you receive at your academic institution, we cannot guarantee that every host will be able to provide the same level of support/adjustments.
* If you have difficulties securing an internship after multiple contacts: be prepared to explore your second or third PIPS option, as recorded on your PIPS Planning form; seek advice from your PhD supervisor(s) and your local Careers Office; consider placement projects advertised through the EastBio team even if they are in a sector outwith your narrow interests; contact the EastBio team for further advice and recommendations.

#### Step 2 – Completing the PIPS Agreement

* When the scope, nature and details of the project are agreed, fill in the PIPS Agreement and make sure it is signed by all three relevant parties (yourself, the PIPS Host organisation representative and your PhD supervisor). Be aware that some of the sections need to be completed by the PIPS host directly (e.g. IP, Health & Safety, Insurance details, etc.) so you must aim to get their input early to avoid delays. Once the form is completed, submit the signed copy to [placements@eastscotbiodtp.ac.uk](http://www.e4s.co.uk/search/internship-jobs) for approval ideally at least a month before your placement is due to begin. We aim to review MOUs received within ten working days and share the confirmed copy with all parties, including the local administrative or academic lead, for their information.
* Once the PIPS Agreement is formally approved by EastBio, you can start your PIPS at the dates agreed with your PIPS provider and your PhD supervisor. You must request an Absence of Leave from your host academic institution so that you can carry out the placement full-time.
* Students who are on PIPS should not attend any training or events associated with their PhD (EastBio training included) to allow them to focus on the PIPS project fully and make the best of their 3 months on their project. It can be challenging and counterproductive to attempt to work on both the PhD and the PIPS projects at the same time. Please email EastBio if there is agreement between you and your supervisory team about a specific training (or other research-related) commitment that you need to do during your PIPS.
* Be aware of local support & resources available to you as you transition from the lab to the PIPS host organisation’s premises, and vice-versa. Part of your preparation for your placement involves exploring such support and identifying existing channels and sources of support for when you need to use it, for instance:
  1. EastBio transferable skills training (resilience, science communication, SPRE-led session on public engagement and policy exchange)
  2. project/time management, business/enterprise skills, commercialisation, specific methods you anticipate will be required, etc.
  3. training on writing a covering letter, preparing for an interview, as well as self-care, self-advocacy
  4. For instance, the University of Edinburgh has provided the following resources at [https://www.ed.ac.uk/careers/staff/making-transitions-personal.](https://www.ed.ac.uk/careers/staff/making-transitions-personal)
* Should any aspect of the agreed and approved PIPS MOU change significantly – including following an unforeseen logistical challenge, e.g. in terms of travel or accommodation - please speak to the EastBio team and your PhD supervisor immediately. Our goal is for you to get the best PIPS experience possible in line with what was agreed so any major change may indicate a bigger issue down the line. It is therefore important that you communicate openly and timely with us and/or the PhD and PIPS supervisors so that measures can be taken, including a pause to the internship, a postponement or a new agreement.
* After discussing with your PIPS supervisor, write and save a brief plan, or to-do-list for returning to your PhD project; this may include a provisional timeline with key actions, contacts, meetings and training to carry out upon your return. You may also consider whether you would like to request some annual leave to take between the end of your PIPS and the return to your PhD to allow you a smooth transition. Check with your host institution for a phased return provision.

## During your PIPS

* Seek out ways of being enterprising, helpful, using your initiative, being assertive, networking and reporting about your experience.
* Capture your PIPS experience, by keeping a learning diary, or even blogging about it. EastBio has developed a PIPS log that you can use and amend for that purpose (available at <https://biology.ed.ac.uk/eastbio/training/placements/information-current-students>). Consider any learning from your PIPS project not merely on its own merit but also in relation to your standard research work; how is it different? How does it build or interlocks with your research skills? Recording your experience dynamically through your internship not only saves you time when we will ask you to submit your PIPS feedback but also deepens the value of the experience and your capacity to self-reflect as part of your overall professional skills. Some partner institutions may require a short PIPS narrative as part of your PhD thesis. A PIPS narrative can also help you articulate the impact of your PIPS work that may prove helpful in several other types of engagement during the rest of your PhD and beyond. Recognise if something is wrong, discuss early with your PIPS Supervisor, your PhD supervisor(s) and the EastBio team to seek advice, identify ways to manage challenges and ensure that the outcome will be overall positive and to your best interests. EastBio is committed to supporting on-the-programme students and make every effort possible to ensure continuity of such support during the PIPS duration. To do so we need to know how your experience is developing and be able to intervene should things fail to go as planned.

## After your PIPS

EastBio will contact you in the final weeks of your PIPS with a reminder about the steps to complete PIPS-related requirements. This is a short outline:

* You must complete a short feedback report for EastBio on your experience (via an [online form](https://forms.office.com/e/mh5Y9uVrFK)) that includes a summary to be uploaded on the EastBio website [http://www.eastscotbiodtp.ac.uk/information-current-students](http://www.thebigchoice.com/) and broader feedback on the PIPS scheme, your support by the PIPS host organisation and the team at the different stages of planning.
  + The aim of the report is to capture information on your PIPS placement, including key outputs, outcomes and impacts from your placement, and to assess the extent to which your placement gave you the opportunity to develop further skills, make new contacts or explore a certain career pathway.
  + We share collated - and anonymised - feedback with two of the EastBio sub-committees, the Training & Development and the Industry Engagement committees to allow the EastBio Management Group to review the scheme in their annual meeting at the end of the year (usually at the Annual Symposia, early June).
  + We may also request specific impact case studies for our Annual Report to the BBSRC or separate such initiatives; we will share such cases with your explicit consent. For that purpose, we will also ask you to check with the PIPS host organisation for any confidentiality clauses that restrict public use of any outcomes resulting from your PIPS project.

In cases of serious allegations against the PIPS Host organisation involved proven risk to the student’s health and wellbeing, we may escalate to the local academic lead and/or the Management Group with a view to agreeing on an action plan that will highlight corrective actions and further review and support mechanisms. Following consultation with the professional services at the University of Edinburgh and other partner institutions, we reserve the right to use the student evidence to investigate such allegations and set up a veto mechanism for long-term placements with that provider.

* Ask your PIPS Supervisor at the host organisation to complete the short EastBio Feedback form and submit it to [placements@eastscotbiodtp.ac.uk](https://www.brightnetwork.co.uk/internships/) (via an [online form](https://forms.office.com/e/s4GJVWFXdi)). This is to enable us to gauge the overall impact of the scheme and to maintain a relationship with various PIPS providers who wish to host more students. Should there be any constructive advice to the student personally, we may pass this discreetly to the student. Should there be any major concerns, we will try to get more information from the host organisation and the student, as necessary, with a view to establishing whether there have been any gaps in the overall support, communication and review, guidance and delivery of the process for future learning.
* You are expected to give a 7/10-minute live presentation at the online EastBio Placements Q&A Session. If you are not available to attend this session, you will be asked to send the team a pre-recorded video and be approachable for any questions on your video by other students.
  + The presentation is a critical reflection on your PIPS experience, the skills you developed, and any insights on how the experience has influenced your current career aspirations. You may also share advice on the planning of your PIPS based on any learning from it.
  + Other events you may also be invited to present on your PIPS are the EastBio Annual Symposia (early June, in person), the EastBio Induction (early October, in person), other ad hoc events
* With an eye to the future, also consider the following:
  + Consider taking a refresher course on academic skills or methods, writing-up, career skills, etc. for your return to your PhD project.
  + Update your CV to reflect your recent PIPS experience.
  + Maintain and further develop your newly formed networks.
  + Explore opportunities within your PIPS host organisations for future collaboration, such as research fellowships, bids, postdoctoral positions or employment.

# PIPS guidance for overseas students

**General**

Since the UKRI 2020 decision to open doctoral partnership programmes to international students, the EastBio partner institutions have separately proceeded to approve revised PhD programmes with integrated internships. The aim was to enable full access to PIPS by tier-4 visa holders who would otherwise be constrained due to their visa regulations. We have, consequently, updated our advice for a small cohort of our funded international students with no access to such integrated PhD programme. At the at the time of publicising the PIPS Guide 2025, some partner institutions were issuing separate advice to students. If you are unsure of your access, please email [placements@eastscotbiodtp.ac.uk](https://www.prospects.ac.uk/jobs-and-work-experience/work-experience-and-internships).

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
* Part-time Placement to be strictly within UK
* Placement to be carried out alongside their PhD project

Under these conditions, EastBio proposes a revised PIPS approach that can be summarised below:

1. students must first check their visa details/restrictions by contacting their local Immigration service
2. students must then check with their local graduate school or support administrator to confirm the PhD programme they were formally matriculated in (to establish whether their programme is integrated with an internship or not)
3. students to discuss with their PhD supervisor and the local PGR advisor and explore the option of a part-time placement.
4. Students to communicate the outcome of the discussion to the EastBio Manager if they have not included them in that discussion.

We ask you to consider the following criteria before making any decision:

1. the intended benefits of the amended placement for you the student;
2. the implications for your PhD progress and plan;
3. your own professional development needs, and
4. 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 genuinely beneficial for your 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 and provide them with suitable recommendations, guidance, and advice.

## Options

After the EastBio Placements Q&A (early February), funded visa-holding students (who do not have access to a PhD Programme with Integrated Placement) are asked to consider the following options when planning 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)**. Details as follows:
   1. The project/placement will be unrelated to the student’s PhD project.
   2. No possibility to do a placement abroad as this may lead to a breach of visa regulations.
   3. 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.
   4. The student should be employed by (have signed an employment contract with) the host organisation even though the placement can be either paid or unpaid;
   5. 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).
   6. Types of work *not* allowed include free-lance, business work, self-employment, consultancy, entertainment, sports.
   7. 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).
   8. 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 and updates of the student’s plans in advance and be kept informed of key steps during the planning. One-to-one catch-up sessions with the EastBio Manager are strongly encouraged.
2. **Option 2 - Full-time placement with an industrial partner** – in this option, the EastBio PhD studentship will be converted to 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](http://www.eastscotbiodtp.ac.uk/eastbio-case-studentships). 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 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 this would relate to the project requirements. Maximum duration of a Collaborate placement is 28 months.
3. **Option 3 - 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](https://80000hours.org/job-board/). 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/](mailto:placements@eastscotbiodtp.ac.uk)
4. **Option 4 - Request** **an exemption from PIPS with a detailed justification** based on your assessment of our circumstances. These may, for instance, include limited capacity, intended but limited PIPS benefits, or negative impacts on the progress of the PhD project outweighing any rewards to the student. The EastBio Manager will first discuss this request with you and will then forward it to the academic lead of your institution for review and final decision (details of academic leads at <https://biology.ed.ac.uk/eastbio/contact-us/programme-contacts>.

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 by their second year. We advise you to take some time to make sure that any decision you will make works from you and is based on evidence and an assessment of all pros and cons. You may want to discuss this with he EastBio and we’ll check with our students regularly for updates.

Useful contacts:

* EastBio Placements mailbox: [placements@eastscotbiodtp.ac.uk](http://www.thebigchoice.com/)
* 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:placements@eastscotbiodtp.ac.uk)

# Guidance for Collaborative placements

Industry-linked Collaborative Studentships (CASE studentships) are collaborative research projects between EastBio academics and industrial/non-academic partners. These are developed through close collaboration between the two partners and in consultation with the local Industry/Business Engagement Team of the host academic institution where the academic supervisor is based at. EastBio reviews and advertises Collaborative projects and recruits students that are the best fit for the PhD project. From an early stage in the recruitment, there are clear expectations regarding: (a) the project’s alignment with the industrial challenge or opportunity it addresses; (b) the project’s outcomes, both in terms of the non-academic partner’s requirements and the recruited student’s professional development; (c) the student onboarding, frequency of meetings between the recruited student and the non-academic supervisors, type of resources & expertise provided from the industrial partner, etc., and (d) risks to successful completion and mitigating actions. Finally, the project describes the commitments of the non-academic partner in financial terms and in relation to the anticipated date and length of the student’s mandatory placement at the non-academic partner premises. Following the successful recruitment of a student to the project, the academic and non-academic partners are expected to confirm the CASE Agreement that underpins their collaboration regarding the PhD project by emailing the EastBio team a copy of the completed and signed agreement.

Students working on collaborative projects benefit from the full EastBio training programme in addition to time spent on the premises of the non-academic partner as described in the PhD project proposal and resulting CASE Agreement. We ask that students are presented with the details so that they get plenty of opportunity to shape and further develop the Collaborative project when they start their PhD.

Students on a Collaborative studentship are expected to carry out a placement at the non-academic partner of a longer duration than the PIPS -- from 3 minimum to 18 months maximum -- and on a project linked with their PhD project. The details of the project are based on initial conversations between the academic and the non-academic supervisors, captured by the advertised project, and developed with engagement from the student as soon as they join the programme. EastBio expects to receive a signed copy of the Collaborative Placement Agreement (MOU) once all the details of the project are finalised.

Although EastBio recognizes that CASE placement plans obey primarily the requirements of the project and the non-academic partner’s relevant operational processes, we still expect to see a plan in place. The expectation results from the commitments confirmed in the PhD project proposal as aligned with the UKRI BBSRC Terms and Conditions regarding collaborative studentships; reporting on the progress of these placements is part of the EastBio reporting requirements to the BBSRC. Students who complete their Collaborative Placement are expected to present on their experience at the Placements Q&A session for first-year students (early February) but also other EastBio events, particularly the Annual Impact Symposia running on alternate years (next one is scheduled for early June 2025).

Students on Collaborative studentships can apply to EastBio for additional expenses should the non-academic partner not commit financial support for the purpose of travel and accommodation. The non-academic partner is liable to cover all project costs during the placement (e.g. consumables), including in-kind support.

Although rare, students on Collaborative studentships have the option of pursuing a PIPS in addition to their CASE placement with their PhD supervisor’s agreement and on the condition that the additional time required for the placement will not impact their PhD progress negatively. Approval of plans is discussed with the EastBio Manager who consults with both the student and the PhD supervisor.

# Further resources

Information on suitable PIPS providers can be identified via several routes, primarily at your local Careers Advice Service:

* Institution of Aberdeen: <http://www.abdn.ac.uk/careers/>
* Institution of Dundee: <http://www.dundee.ac.uk/careers/>
* Institution of Edinburgh: <http://www.ed.ac.uk/schools-departments/careers>
* Institution of St Andrews: <http://www.st-andrews.ac.uk/careers/>
* Institution of Stirling: <https://www.stir.ac.uk/student-life/careers/>
* SRUC: <https://www.sruc.ac.uk/study-with-us/student-life/student-support/career-services/>
* Moredun Research Institute: <https://moredun.org.uk/careers>
* James Hutton Institute: <https://hutton.current-vacancies.com/Careers/JHI%20VSP%20-%20External-2065>

You can also explore ideas and access potential providers though your PhD supervisor(s) and local network of colleagues, fellow students (EastBio or not), lab members, and friends, via the website at [http://www.eastscotbiodtp.ac.uk/information-current-students](mailto:placements@eastscotbiodtp.ac.uk), and the Industry Engagement Committee at [http://www.eastscotbiodtp.ac.uk/EastBio-dtp-committees](http://www.eastscotbiodtp.ac.uk/information-organisations), panels with former EastBio students with careers in industry, the annual online Q&A Session (early February), and other key events (annual symposia, induction, etc.).

EastBio will regularly update PIPS opportunities submitted to us from BBSRC, our stakeholders and organisations that have hosted EastBio students in the past either via a direct email, through the website and the monthly Newsletter. Please share with us opportunities that you are aware of in partner institutions!

## Advertised Internships

The following companies collate placement vacancies and allow you to search and compare them. You may need to register on their sites to access the internship vacancies but none of these listed companies charge students for their services.

|  |  |  |
| --- | --- | --- |
| **Name of website** | **Brief description of website** | **Address of website** |
| [**Prospects**](mailto:placements@eastscotbiodtp.ac.uk) | An interface of the Prospects job search tool specifically for placement vacancies. | <https://www.prospects.ac.uk/jobs-and-work-experience/work-experience-and-internships> |
| [**Student Employment Services**](https://www.ed.ac.uk/reflection) | Dedicated placement recruitment and employing agency. | <http://www.studentemploymentservices.co.uk/> |
| **konfer** | The Konfer platform is a smart-matching innovation tool connecting universities and business. It helps users to discover and engage with experts beyond their typical reach so especially useful if searching for a placement. | <https://konfer.online/> |
| [**Fledglings**](https://www.ratemyplacement.co.uk/) | Jobsite for placements and work experience vacancies. | <http://www.fledglings.net/> |
| [**Shell Step**](mailto:studentimmigration@stir.ac.uk) | A national scheme that organises project-based work experience opportunities in SMEs. | <http://www.step.org.uk/> |
| [**RateMyPlacement**](https://www.stir.ac.uk/student-life/careers/) | Placement and internship vacancies. There are also 65,000+ reviews from students who have completed placements and internships, covering the role, organisation and social life. These are really helpful for students to read when deciding where to apply for a placement, internship, insight or virtual experience - to make sure it’s the right fit for them. | <https://www.ratemyplacement.co.uk/> |
| [**Employment4students**](http://www.fledglings.net/) | Placement and internship vacancies. | <http://www.e4s.co.uk/search/internship-jobs> |
| [**Target Jobs**](https://www.ed.ac.uk/students/careers/insights/case-studies/insights-in-person-steve) | This has work-experience/internship as a specific search criterion. | <http://targetjobs.co.uk/> |
| [**The Big Choice**](http://www.e4s.co.uk/search/internship-jobs) | This has work placement as a specific search criteria. | <http://www.thebigchoice.com/> |
| **Top Internships** | A dedicated global placement search and compare site. | [globalplacement.com/en/top-internships](https://globalplacement.com/en/top-internships) |
| **Bright Network** | Internships, industry placements. | <https://www.brightnetwork.co.uk/internships/> |
| **80.000 Hours** | Jobs tackling the world’s most pressing problems (including internships) | <https://80000hours.org/job-board/> |

Remember, all externally identified placements will need to be approved by EastBio to ensure the proposed PIPS fits with the UKRI BBSRC criteria.

The following resources may be of interest:

* “Five reasons to do an internship during your PhD program” at <https://www.nature.com/articles/d41586-019-01087-9>.
* “How to get a great internship” at <https://www.nature.com/articles/d41586-019-01361-w>
* There is a helpful set of recourses on reflection practices produced by the University of Edinburgh, available at [https://www.ed.ac.uk/reflection](http://www.st-andrews.ac.uk/careers/) (sign in may be required).

## Tips on interacting with a potential PIPS host organisation

As a student funded by UKRI BBSSRC, you are responsible for conducting yourself professionally in all your interactions with prospective or actual PIPS host organisations and for maintaining or facilitating an excellent working relationship between yourself, the PIPS host organisation and your academic institution. In reverse, please contact the EastBio team if any significant concerns about a prospective or actual PIPS host has arisen in your interactions with them. Keeping the team informed may make the difference between a smooth internship and a wasted opportunity!

If you feel that you may benefit from some advice in terms of professional conduct in the workplace, you may contact your academic institution’s Careers Service which may provide:

* one-to-one discussions with a Careers Advisor;
* preparation of a skills-based CV and a tailored covering letter;
* interview practice sessions;
* useful workshops such as ‘Finding an internship’, ‘Introduction to work-based internships’, ‘Business etiquette’, ‘Managing the transition to the Workplace’, etc.

Only begin discussions with any PIPS host organisation after:

1. You have agreed the timing of your internship with your PhD supervisor, and
2. Your PIPS Planning form has been approved by the EastBio team.

Consider using the **EastBio contact template** if you are approaching a prospective PIPS host for the first time (See Appendix).

**Benefits to the host institution**

* building collaborations with non-academic partners and external shareholders;
* linking research with policymaking, business, advocacy organisations, or the wider public;
* demonstrating the wider context of research;
* promoting the excellence of the institution to prospective students and employers alike by managing a range of fulfilling internships;
* getting further evidence of researcher development opportunities.

Here are a few pointers for meetings with potential host organisations:

**Before the meeting**, you should:

* check with your PhD supervisor(s) that your proposed PIPS internship ideas are suitable to share with the PIPS host organisation;
* reflect upon any discussions you might already have had about the scope of your internship project and how you would plan to approach it; join the meeting prepared to talk about this;
* undertake some background reading or research about the PIPS host organisation, investigate some ideas for your PIPS project, and join the meeting prepared to talk about this;
* if the meeting regards an advertised internship vacancy, read carefully through the internship vacancy specification to refresh your memory on the project that was outlined;
* make a list of questions you would like to ask your PIPS host organisation contact (prospective PIPS Supervisor) about the organisation and the internship project you will be undertaking; for this, please read the EastBio forms to familiarise yourself with what is expected of them; don’t hesitate to check with the EastBio team if anything is unclear.
* If helpful, consider also inviting a representative from the EastBio team to join and help with procedural questions or further support to you for that meeting.

**During the meeting**, you should:

* be prepared to talk about yourself, your academic interests, any previous work experience, your professional/research ambitions and your general interest in the proposed internship;
* bring along a skills-based CV for your host organisation contact/supervisor to take away;
* bring along a copy of the MoU PIPS Agreement form and agree its contents together, if appropriate at that time. The MOU sections are expected to fit with the needs of the academic institution, the PIPS host organisation and you the PhD intern, and must, therefore, be recorded, signed and approved by all parties involved;
* keep notes during the meetings to capture any ad hoc arrangements, any challenging issue or a decision to be confirmed at a later stage; we may ask you for an update on the progress so this will be helpful to have in hand;
* be prepared to ask your host organisation contact/supervisor to clarify their expectations of you; remember that mutual expectations must be made explicit and stay transparent for all involved;
* remember to ask the host organisation whether they may be able to help with any travel or accommodation costs of this placement, if applicable in this case. Explain how the funding of the PIPS work, what is mandatory for the PIPS host organisation during the placement (in-kind support and consumable costs) and what is optional (support of additional costs, e.g. travel and accommodation);
* clarify anything about the internship project you are unsure of or that seems vague, and discuss any additional training or support you’ll seek for this.
* Stress that your funder expects clear and regular communication between all parties so that the placement will be a positive and rewarding experience and any issues will be addressed appropriately.

**After the meeting**

* You will be expected to email your host organisation contact/supervisor to confirm the meeting’s main discussion points. If you have been offered an internship position, you should liaise with your host organisation supervisor to complete the final details required for the PIPS MOU.
* We advise you to send a copy of your PIPS MOU form to your PIPS host after your PhD supervisor has reviewed it and provided you with feedback. EastBio will not approve any incomplete PIPS MOU.
* **Please note**: It is not acceptable professional practice to withdraw from either preliminary or advanced negotiations with a PIPS host organisation for anything other than genuinely unforeseen circumstances.

*This guide was produced as a reference point for use by the East of Scotland Biosciences Partnership students involved in undertaking 3-month mandatory professional internships as part of their UKRI Biotechnology and Biological Sciences Research Council funded programme. The guide was produced by the EastBio team in consultation with the Institution of Edinburgh Institute for Academic Development, members of the Careers Service and the EastBio partner institutions and is reviewed each year. It adheres to the relevant sections of The UK Quality Code for Higher Education published by the QAA (qaa.ac.uk). It draws on methods of good practice within the ASET Good Practice Guide for Work-Based and Placement Learning in Higher Education (https://www.asetonline.org/).*

*This is intended as a guidance document to be used as a reference point to ensure that appropriate steps are being taken with regards to best practice and quality assurance to meet institutional responsibilities in safeguarding the student learning experience and development, as well as their safety and wellbeing.*

*Disclaimer: This Guide has been developed based upon the advice and guidance available at the time of its review; every effort has been made to ensure that the information containted within the Guide is correct at the time of web publication. Users of the guide should ensure that they are familiar with current guidance and regulations in their own institution. Should you notice any errors, inaccuracies or inconsistencies in this Guide or on our website, please let us know by emailing* [*placements@eastscotbiodtp.ac.uk*](http://www.ratemyplacement.co.uk/placement-job-search) *or* [*enquiries@eastscotbiodtp.ac.uk*](mailto:placements@eastscotbiodtp.ac.uk)*.*

# Appendix

## How to approach a (potential) PIPS host

*If you want to develop your own PIPS project by contacting an organisation for the first time (or one with which you have no personal connection), the following template may be useful to you. Please adapt as necessary after you have done some research on the organisation.*

*With your letter also provide further information (although this can be done after the initial contact and an expressed interest from the organisation):*

* *link to PIPS information for organisations: https://biology.ed.ac.uk/eastbio/training/placements/information-for-organisations*
* *Attach*
  + *the PIPS Brochure*
  + *The PIPS MOU*
  + *Your CV*

-------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------

(if in letter form) Place and full date

Dear [full name and title]

[short introduction]

I am approaching you to express my interest in taking up a short internship in your organisation as a mandatory requirement for my PhD programme.

[context of your request]

I am a PhD student at the University of [name], studying [PhD topic title or summary] under the supervisor of Dr/Professor [name], currently in my first/second year. I have full funding for 4 years by UKRI BBSRC awarded to me by the [EastBio Doctoral Training Partnership](https://biology.ed.ac.uk/eastbio), based at the University of Edinburgh. As part of my programme, I must complete a 3-month full-time professional internship on a project that is not related to my PhD project and placed in a non-academic institution. I must comply with this requirement before the end of my third year.

[personal statement - what you know about the company]

I am approaching you today because I would like to use this placement opportunity to work in the area of [specify sector, industry, policy, marketing, etc.] your organisation operates in (leads in/has an excellent track record in/produces world-leading work in, etc.], and benefit from the expertise and the knowledge your organisation represents. I am particularly interested in the work you do in [specify a specific are of interest] and have noted the inroads you have made in this area more recently [name specific examples of distinction, or interesting outcomes, reports, projects, even people].

[Personal statement - making a case for you as an intern]

I have some/considerable experience in this particular area as I have worked on [name projects or roles] between [periods, years, etc.] and I am keen to continue furthering my understanding of [name]. I am also keen to pursue a concrete project that will allow me to build on my [computational, translational, etc.] skills, engage with your [business, R&D, marketing, etc.] team(s) and your organisational goals. This can be, for instance, a project that has been in the back burner due to capacity or a pilot project for future plans, but it should be of mutual benefit. I would welcome the opportunity to go outside my comfort zone and skillset and develop further skillsets and professional experiences in the area of [name these]. I can share with you (have attached) my current CV which, together with this letter, can hopefully demonstrate that I can contribute meaningfully to your organisation’s work on [name].

[PIPS details relevant to the organisation - Some of the information may be sent in a follow-on email, to avoid over-burdening your contact with details, especially if there are not interested in an internship.]

To give you more details, I will continue receiving my stipend during the full-time placement so there is no expectation for financial contribution from your organisation. [Add, if relevant: As the company is of considerable distance from my term-time address, if the internship would be in person, I’d like to nonetheless request some financial support to allow me to cover some of the costs of the relocation and/or accommodation]. What the EastBio partnership expects from a host organisation during the placement includes:

* Support for any consumables and/or in-kind support
* A designated individual to act as ‘line manager’ or ‘supervisor’
* Desk space
* Opportunity to get training related to the project (training by definition unavailable at my academic institution)
* A signed formal agreement that includes information on IP, Health & Safety, Insurance, etc. (see a copy of the Agreement template, FYI)
* Be willing to provide a brief feedback on your experience after the completion (see form)

I am looking to go on my placement in the period between [spring to summer 2025] but I am flexible with these dates. I hope that this information is adequate; you can also check <https://biology.ed.ac.uk/eastbio/training/placements/information-for-organisations> or contact the EastBio Manager at [placements@eastscotbiodtp.ac.uk.](mailto:<placements@eastscotbiodtp.ac.uk)

I look forward to discussing a potential placement & suitable project in your organisation with you either via email or an online meeting.

Kind regards,

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)