



Biotechnology and
Biological Sciences
Research Council



UKRI BBSRC EastBio

Training Programme 2026/27



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

eastbio@ed.ac.uk

BlueSky

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

LinkedIn

www.linkedin.com/company/eastbio

Welcome to EastBio

Welcome to the EastBio community! 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 provision.

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 SULSA, Scottish Policy & Research Exchange (SPRE) and In2ResearchUK.

Your training programme is funded through a BBSRC 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. You are also expected to undertake a 3-month internship, which will provide you with an opportunity to learn valuable professional skills in the workplace. 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. 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.

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. 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. If any of us can assist you with settling in, please don't hesitate to contact us!

<https://biology.ed.ac.uk/eastbio/contact-us/programme-contacts>



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Dr Mert Unal

University of Edinburgh Alumni

The Graduate Experience I

I remember being very upset in the second year of my undergraduate degree when I had to choose a biology course as my free elective, as no other options were available. After all, I was miserable in anything biology-related during high school, and did not think of studying anything biology-related. To my surprise, that one course made me fall in love with the biological sciences, which I then chose as my major. By the time I reached to my MSc. studies, I wanted to work exclusively as a wet-lab researcher, as I almost failed an introductory coding course during my undergraduate degree. However, the course schedule arrangement forced my hand to take coding-heavy courses again during my MSc. I found out that that these seemingly unfavourable situations led to interesting results. They led me to my PhD project, focusing on the development of computational deep-learning tools for protein design for green chemistry and I loved it.

I was privileged to have an amazing supervisor and research group and participated in several collaborative projects that got published. However, I appreciate not everybody may feel that way. Feeling lost, micromanaged, or simply that you are not doing enough are common themes that can surface during a PhD journey. That is why EASTBIO offers an additional support structure where students can feel engaged, heard, and be a part of a community. Also, I could always count on EASTBIO in time of need with life matters. For instance, they were very supportive of my internship in London with generous financial aid and they helped me immensely with different types paperwork related to my studies and move for the PhD.

At the start of the programme, EASTBIO offers trainings and networking events on top of your own research. On top of that, there are also public engagement and internship requirements. Sometimes one may struggle to navigate all of them and it can feel overwhelming. At least, that is how I felt as I lived through it. But really, I now appreciate the immense benefit of these activities, with how they helped me find great friends, improve my communication skills, stay active in the EASTBIO community and maintain my mental health in so many ways. So, another case of seemingly unfavourable situations being actually advantageous. Research is not just generating data, but also learning, networking, sharing knowledge, and being an active member of the scientific community.

I would recommend to everyone to always try to see the filled side of the glass, but not like I am doing now after the end of my PhD, but rather as they live through it. A PhD is a series of ups and downs with many unforeseen events, and how you turn them into positives counts the most. I believe everything that felt like a down in the moment during my PhD made me the person I am, and helped me land my dream position, where I continue doing computational protein design. Everything can be an opportunity for a positive outcome, you just need to keep a positive attitude to see them.

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 7th of October, followed by a mandatory training day on the 8th 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, 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

The next EastBio Annual Symposium will be hosted and held at the University of Edinburgh, John McIntyre Conference Centre on the 24-25 June 2027; 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 three times 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 June.

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 focal topics
- Likely dates of each session (ideally December and March, and at the Symposium)
- 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/event tickets/venue costs and will try to cover additional travel expenses up to £150 per thematic meeting 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>

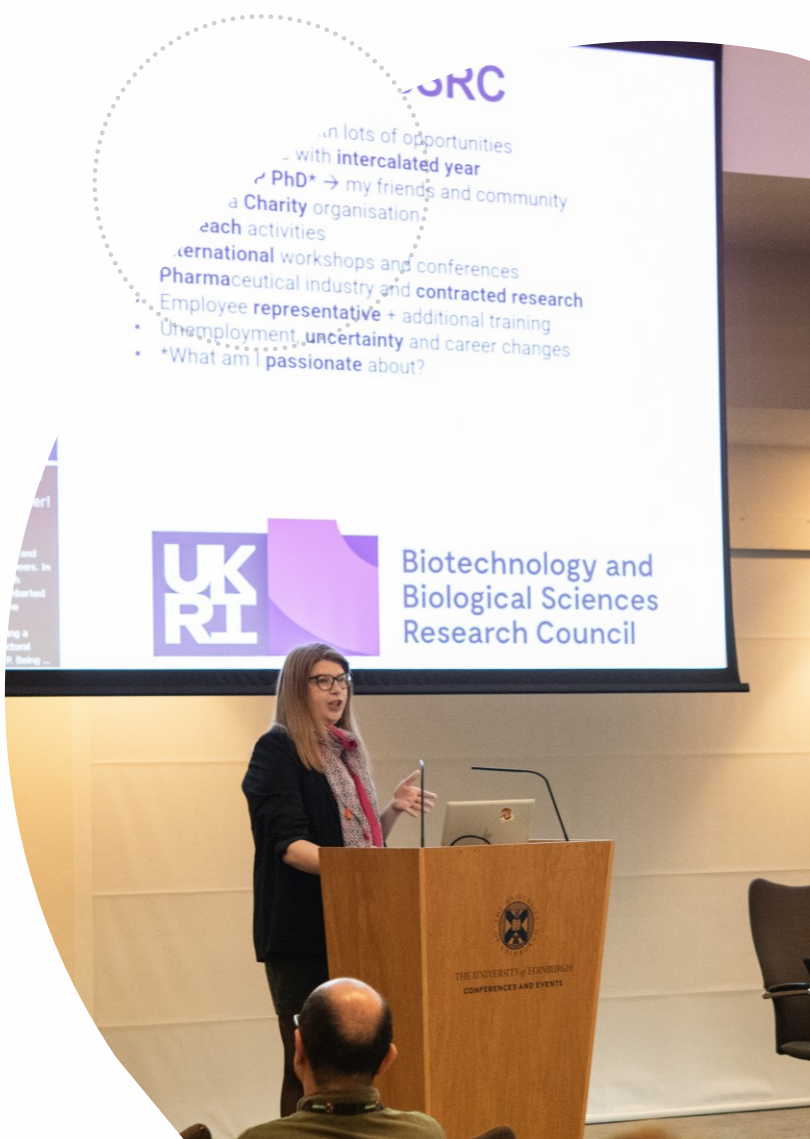
The day should be scheduled with plenty of breaks. Please bear in mind accessibility requirements and consider circulating resources and slides in advance.

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.

- ScriptIQ

<https://scriptiq.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
- 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 and impact.

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
- Conflict Resolution 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

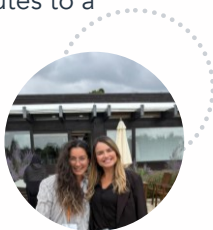
Adding value

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 Carys Redman-White

University of Edinburgh Alumna.



I've always enjoyed following my curiosity through a wide range of areas. I applied to vet school for the chance to study a wide curriculum covering my favourite things – animals – and how to treat them, with the promise of a reliable career involving cats at the end. When I intercalated in zoology for my third year, I discovered a passion for population modelling and infectious disease dynamics, and after three years in clinical practice I decided I needed to go back and do more studying (although I did find a lovely feline practice to work at part-time while I studied).

I dipped my toe back into the academic world with a masters by research in human epidemiology at Newcastle in 2020 and found myself with a highly topical project: investigating the impacts of lockdowns on infections other than COVID-19. I realised at this point that I really did want to be in research longer-term and set about finding a PhD. Luckily for me, there was an advertised EastBio project at Edinburgh on One Health modelling of antimicrobial use and resistance (AMR), and I leapt at the chance.

My supervisors allowed me the academic freedom to follow my investigations where they took me and my PhD ended up looking somewhat different from the advertised project – not an uncommon experience! I moved from statistical modelling of data to more conceptual work using mathematical modelling – EastBio's training offer, especially the SysMIC course, was invaluable for this. A turning point for me was in my first year, when my external supervisor suggested I look into a type of modelling called System Dynamics, as it was ideal for complex problems. This sent me down a rabbit hole and I found myself exploring different ideas about how to think about AMR. There were already discussions on the pitfalls of commonly-used war metaphors when talking about AMR, but how we frame AMR goes beyond language – it can also inform how we model it. What struck me is that instead of thinking of AMR as an enemy, we can view susceptibility as a natural resource that is harvested (or wasted) by means of antimicrobials. This means we can apply economic resource modelling to the problem. I took this to my supervisors and was disappointed to learn that my "novel" idea had already been published while I was in primary school, but the idea hadn't been touched for decades and there was definitely more work to be done on it. As a result, I developed a new System Dynamics model of susceptibility as a resource and simulated the system's behaviour over time.

The systems modelling skills I developed through my PhD opened up new career opportunities: around the time I was finishing my thesis, a job posting at Defra came up advertising for a Systems Research Scientist. It was an ideal opportunity to apply my systems skills across a wide range of areas that are both interesting and important to me. In my role, I get to collaborate with teams across a broad range of different fields, work with great colleagues, and have my work contribute to policy. I'm still building my coding and modelling skills, too, and have maintained my veterinary registration so that if I move within Defra, I'll have the opportunity to combine my research and veterinary skills.

Everyone's PhD experience is different, but the people around you make an enormous difference. I was lucky to have great supervisors and made some lifelong friends among my EastBio cohort, our little group supporting each other through the ups and downs of the PhD journey. I learned a lot from my mentor at my CASE internship, both domain knowledge and transferable skills. I also benefited from a supportive family and friends outside of university, which is lucky, since there was no shortage of major life events during my study. Over the course of my PhD, I moved in with my partner, got married, had a baby, and appropriately enough, had my life saved by antimicrobials.

A PhD is a research apprenticeship in which you have the luxury of exploring your interests and the opportunity to develop a whole range of new skills. PhDs open up so many opportunities within and outside of academia, and you never know where they will take you. My advice to new students is to make the most of your support networks (because it will get tough), ask past students for advice on "managing" your supervisors, seize every opportunity you can, and – as much as possible – enjoy the process of learning and exploring!

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 download an offline copy of the form here:

<https://biology.ed.ac.uk/sites/default/files/2025-11/EastBio%20DLA%20Professional%20Development%20Record.pdf.pdf>

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

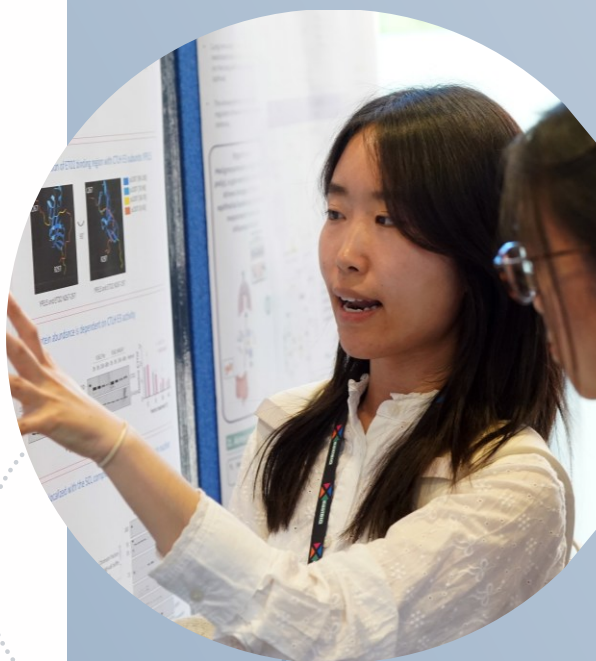
How to Register for Training

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 2026 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 £21,805 full-time equivalent
- Support for tuition fees of £5,238 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:

<https://biology.ed.ac.uk/eastbio/contact-us/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:

From this internship, I now have a much clearer view of what I want to do with my life post-PhD... I wouldn't have reached this level of clarity without the internship.

Peyton Goddard (Dundee/MRI, 2023 cohort)

This internship gave me practical, transferable skills that extend well beyond what my academic research alone could offer, and confirmed how much I value using analysis to make a meaningful difference to people's lives.

Barbara De Queiroz Monteiro Black (Edinburgh, 2023 cohort)

I built a fully functional AI tool for predicting peptide-MHC binding, which performed better in generalisability tests than existing models. The system is being prepared for academic publication and may form part of Aikium's internal predictive pipeline.

Marta Chronowska (Edinburgh, 2023 cohort)

I was given the opportunity to learn on the job while actively contributing to a project with clear global potential, which reinforced my confidence in my own capabilities.

Hope Obasi (Dundee, 2024 cohort)

Barbara's contributions greatly sped up our development cycle, allowing us to gather key evidence at much greater pace. The learning from her internship has expanded our team knowledge base and will materially impact future modelling design decisions.

Department for Work and Pensions

Poppy's work and inputs on farmer behaviour and insights into data accuracy and quality have been invaluable. Her activities will provide a tangible, lasting impact on future business goals and development.

Agrecalc Ltd

To our knowledge, the analysis that Barbora carried out is the first one of the kind in Scotland, and produced fresh insights into the makeup of the social care sector and changes over time... These findings will be used as a baseline against which the impact of future Scottish Government policies will be assessed.

Scottish Government

Within just three months, she independently designed and implemented a complete computational pipeline, significantly improving the performance of the existing tool. The pipeline was successfully validated through experimental testing, demonstrating clear gains in protein expression, and is now being adopted as a standard process within our protein engineering platform.

Etcembly Ltd

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 the PIPS requirement is for CASE students, who instead undertake a mandatory 3–18 month placement at their CASE Partner's premises, usually during Year 2 or 3. CASE students must meet with their CASE Partner by the end of their first term to establish the relationship, with further meetings taking place as the project and eventual placement develop. See page 33 for CASE expectations.

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 at the Annual Symposia.

PIPS Placements Q&A

3 February 2027

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

Completing a PIPS has had multiple benefits for me, but I feel the most important are: experiencing life and work outside of academia and in a new location, and building a large network of connections in a field I am considering for post-PhD.

Flora Caldwell

(Edinburgh 2023 Cohort)

Tripled rate of progress in high-risk R&D programme. Improved quality of R&D programme through critical discussion and input.

MiAlgae

I have used the scheme on and off for more than 5 years now, and every single time the quality of the work and the dedication of the students have been excellent.

Scottish Government

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 supervisor. 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.

All CASE students must meet with their CASE supervisor as early as possible after starting their PhD, and no later than the end of their first term (December 2026). The PhD supervisor who holds the relationship with the CASE supervisor is responsible for arranging this meeting. This should be an informal introductory meeting, giving the student and CASE supervisor an opportunity to get to know one another, discuss the PhD project in more detail, and understand what they hope to achieve through the collaboration. Further meetings should take place as the studentship develops, including to scope and plan the CASE placement when appropriate.

EastBio expectations for CASE Students

- Read and understand your CASE project and any formal agreements with the CASE supervisor.
- Meet with your CASE supervisor as early as possible and no later than the end of your first term. Your PhD supervisor is responsible for arranging this meeting.
- Use the initial meeting to get to know your CASE supervisor, the PhD project and the CASE supervisor's expectations and contributions to it, and what they hope to achieve through the collaboration.
- Discuss and agree your PhD project plan with your supervisory team and seek clarity on mutual expectations; review plans as necessary.
- Maintain regular contact with your CASE supervisor as your project develops.
- Work with your PhD and CASE supervisors to scope and finalise your 3–18 month CASE placement when appropriate.
- Escalate to your PhD supervisor and/or the EastBio team concerns around inadequate communication with your CASE supervisor.
- Stay in contact with EastBio to share progress, feedback or concerns about your CASE project or placement.

CASE Placements Q&A

2 February 2027

Mandatory for all year 1 CASE students

EastBio expectations for CASE Supervisors

PhD supervisors are responsible for liaising with CASE supervisors to ensure the following items are fulfilled

- Arrange an introductory meeting between the student and CASE supervisor as early as possible and no later than the end of the student's first term.
- Use the initial meeting for introductions, to establish the relationship, and to discuss the PhD project, including the CASE supervisor's role, expectations, research interests and aims for the collaboration.
- Discuss and agree the PhD project workplan with the student; review plans as necessary.
- Share a Welcome Pack outlining key contacts, expected contributions and available resources from the CASE supervisor, and expected benefits and outcomes.
- Finalise the CASE agreement and share it with the EastBio team as soon as possible.
- Maintain regular engagement with the student and CASE supervisor as the project develops.
- Work with the student and CASE supervisor to scope and agree the 3–18 month CASE placement when appropriate, with the student's professional development in focus.
- The PhD supervisor should attend the EastBio Induction, CASE Placements Q&A and Impact Symposia.
- We strongly advise the CASE supervisors attends the CASE Placements Q&A and the EastBio Impact Symposia.
- Consider contributing to other EastBio training opportunities with an industrial or broader impacts focus.
- Liaise with the EastBio Industry Engagement Manager to share feedback, recommendations or concerns.

CASE Placements Q&A
2 February 2027
Mandatory for all year 1 CASE students



**Dr Muhammad
Zaman Khan
Assir**

Postdoctoral
research fellow,
University of
Aberdeen

The Graduate Experience III

My path into research wasn't straightforward.

Receiving an EASTBIO Doctoral Training Partnership studentship to pursue a PhD in Neuroscience at the University of Aberdeen was a transformative moment in my career. My path into doctoral research was far from conventional. Before starting my PhD, I had already spent more than four years working as an Assistant Professor of Medicine. At that stage, I faced a difficult decision: continue along an established academic and clinical career path, with promotion to Associate Professor and the prospect of becoming a Full Professor within a few years, or return to being a student and embark on a new journey through a PhD.

I chose the latter.

It was not the easier option, but it was the right one. My decision was driven by purpose, curiosity, and a desire to continue growing as a scientist. As a clinician in Pakistan, I had been studying the molecular basis of genetic neurodevelopmental disorders. Through this work, I became fascinated by the complexity and beauty of the developing human brain and increasingly motivated to contribute to a deeper understanding of these conditions.

I joined the laboratory of Dr Eunchai Kang at the University of Aberdeen, where I found an exceptionally supportive and intellectually stimulating environment. The freedom to explore innovative ideas, coupled with strong mentorship and flexibility, created exactly the kind of setting needed to sustain motivation through the inevitable challenges of a PhD.

During my doctoral studies, I established a novel ex vivo culture platform for the developing human cortex, which we termed "cerebroids". Using this model, I investigated the cellular and molecular mechanisms by which maternal inflammation disrupts early cortical development. This work allowed me to combine my clinical background with cutting-edge experimental neuroscience, while addressing questions with direct relevance to human neurodevelopmental disorders.

Beyond the laboratory, I learned that scientific growth comes from engaging with the wider research community. Following researchers in my field through platforms such as LinkedIn helped me stay informed about emerging discoveries and often sparked new ideas for my own work. Attending scientific meetings and presenting at conferences proved equally valuable, providing opportunities to build professional networks, gain fresh perspectives, and receive constructive feedback on my research.

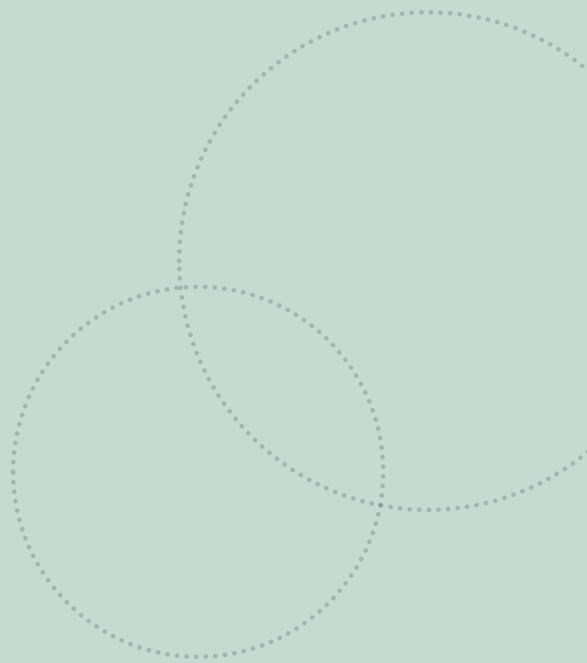
One of the distinctive strengths of EASTBIO is its cohort-based training model. Being part of a community of doctoral students created numerous opportunities to connect with peers, share experiences, and learn from researchers working across diverse disciplines. These interactions were an important source of support throughout my PhD journey.

If I could offer one piece of advice to prospective PhD students, it would be this: be bold and do not be afraid of failure. Failure is an inevitable part of research. Success is not defined by avoiding setbacks, but by learning from them, adapting your approach, and knowing when to abandon a strategy that is not working in favour of one that might. Some of the most rewarding aspects of my PhD emerged from exploring unfamiliar territory, including establishing new collaborations and expanding my work into areas such as electron microscopy.

I also learned that asking for help is a strength, not a weakness. Many of the skills and insights that shaped my research came through conversations with colleagues and peers. Equally important is investing in positive relationships within your research environment. Disagreements and challenges are unavoidable, but the ability to resolve conflicts, reset relationships, and empathise with others is essential for both professional and personal development.

Looking back, my PhD was made possible by three things: outstanding mentorship, the unwavering support of EASTBIO, and the sacrifices of my family. I was always conscious of the opportunities I had been given and the people who had made them possible. That awareness motivated me to make the most of every day I spent at the University of Aberdeen.

For anyone considering a PhD, my experience demonstrates that there is no single path into research. Whether your journey is traditional or unconventional, curiosity, resilience, and a willingness to embrace new challenges can take you further than you might imagine.



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@ed.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/terms-and-conditions-for-training-funding/>

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/support-for-disabled-students/>

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/students/support/disability/>

Stirling

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

SRUC

<https://www.sruc.ac.uk/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/students/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>

St Andrews

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

Stirling

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

SRUC

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

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/

SRUC

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



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 programme.

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 eastbio@ed.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
eastbio@ed.ac.uk

Dr Maria Filippakopoulou
EastBio Partnership Manager
maria.filippakopoulou@ed.ac.uk

Lizzie Leigh
EastBio Industry Engagement Manager
leigh@ed.ac.uk

Hazel Harrop
EastBio Partnership Support Officer
hharrop@ed.ac.uk

EastBio Associate Partners

Ally Hughes
SULSA
Alison.Hughes@glasgow.ac.uk

Kristian Wrenn
In2ScienceUK
k.wrenn@in2scienceuk.org

Dave Blackbell
SPRE
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EastBio Academic Management

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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

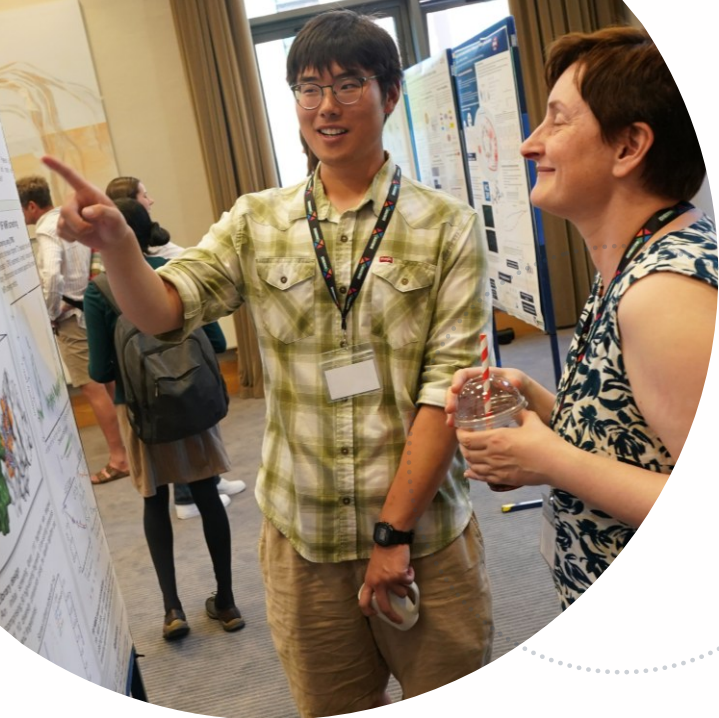
EastBio subcommittees manage the different aspects of the programme in a way that optimises decision-making, transparency and responsiveness to shifting priorities.

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.

Notes



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Produced by

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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 eastbio@ed.ac.uk to let us know.