



**Biotechnology and
Biological Sciences
Research Council**

Edinburgh, 11 June 2020

EASTBIO DTP Statement: Black Lives Matter

We wanted to write to you all to clearly express our support for the Black Lives Matter Campaign and tell you about where we are as a Doctoral Training Partnership on support for BAME students. We would like to thank two of our own students, Jade Bleau and Kiani Jeacock, for challenging us to communicate clearly our stance on this as a DTP; they have done an invaluable thing in stepping forward and we look forward to working with them and all of you as time goes on.

This email explains, first, what we are doing to improve our support for BAME students, a process we are actively developing and, secondly, points to some places where you can get support, from within the EastBio community or outside, if you are an EASTBIO student who has been affected by racism.

1) What are EASTBIO doing to improve support for BAME students in our community

The EASTBIO Equality & Diversity Action Plan was an integral part of our successful DTP3 application for funding from UKRI BBSRC for studentships from autumn 2020 onwards. The plan developed from an increased awareness of the distance we need to cover in terms of diversity and inclusion in all aspects of our programme. You can read our plan here: <http://www.eastscotbiotdp.ac.uk/equality-diversity-and-inclusion/>. We welcome and are open to feedback and suggestions on any aspect of our EDI Plan at any point from students and supervisors.

In terms of BAME student participation, we identified some initial actions we felt were important due to the low BAME student numbers in UKRI MRC and BBSRC-funded DTPs nationally, with our own DTP lower than that average. We have focused initially on improving our recruitment materials and processes for the 2020 recruitment round, as well as on getting better data about that recruitment so that we can evaluate whether there are specific aspects of our recruitment that can be improved further.

We have also identified some actions to improve the resources we provide to current students that we feel will support BAME students, as well as other minority groups within our community, better. These include better signposting of support services, stronger focus on wellbeing in supervisor and student training and events, more opportunities for students to provide anonymous feedback on the programme, and role model profiles on our website. These actions will be available from the start of the 2020-21 academic year. We feel that further detailed work needs to be done on improving BAME student recruitment and on-programme experience and for that reason Caroline Proctor, the administrative manager of the DTP, will be seconded to the University of Edinburgh Institute for Academic Development (IAD) part-time to devote focused time to this, working with colleagues at Edinburgh and beyond. Dr Jo Stevens will act as our EDI representative on our Management Group, and we will recruit an EDI-focused student rep or reps in the 2020/21 academic year.

2) Sources of support for students at this time

Firstly, if you want to discuss concerns, please do contact your local EASTBIO Management Group Contact, they will be happy to talk with you and if need be help you identify further local resources, or us: <http://www.eastscotbiodtp.ac.uk/eastbio-contacts>.

Networks of potential interest to BAME Students and allies:

BBSTEM - <https://bbstem.co.uk/> (@BLACKandSTEM)

Minorities in Stem - <https://minoritiesinstem.wordpress.com/>

Black Women in STEM: <https://www.bwisnetwork.co.uk> (@BWISNetwork)

If you wish to access Counselling services:

www.abdn.ac.uk/infohub/support/counselling-service.php (Aberdeen)

www.ed.ac.uk/counselling-services (Edinburgh)

www.dundee.ac.uk/student-services/counselling/ (Dundee)

www.st-andrews.ac.uk/staff/wellbeing/community/health/mental/counselling/ (St Andrews)

<https://www.stir.ac.uk/student-life/support-wellbeing/student-support-services/your-mental-health-and-wellbeing/> (Stirling)

https://www.sruc.ac.uk/info/120176/student_support (SRUC)

Crisis support:

Samaritans - <https://www.samaritans.org/scotland/how-we-can-help/contact-samaritan/>

We would like to take this opportunity to state our full commitment to these principles and actions and encourage all students and supervisors to get in touch if they think they have a contribution to make in this respect. We also encourage all in our community, particularly PhD supervisors, to reach out to their BAME colleagues as allies at this time.

With best wishes from all members of the EASTBIO Management Group and Administrative Team