

Student Handbook 2022

UKRI
BBSRC
EASTBIO
Doctoral Training Partnership



UK Research
and Innovation



Welcome to EASTBIO

EASTBIO is the East of Scotland Bioscience Doctoral Training Partnership (DTP). 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, access to expertise and research facilities across the institutions of the East of Scotland.

The EASTBIO academic partners



Our associate partners are



Studentships

Our first cohort of 34 students started in autumn 2012, with core funding from UKRI BBSRC, coupled with additional funding from each of the EASTBIO partner institutions. This autumn we welcome our eleventh cohort of 65 students.

Research themes

The EASTBIO student projects are designed to meet key priority areas, outlined in the UKRI BBSRC strategic plan: www.bbsrc.ac.uk/funding/priorities/priorities-index.aspx & <https://bbsrc.ukri.org/research/>.

Understanding the Rules of Life

Bioscience for Sustainable Agriculture and Food – Crops and Soil

Bioscience for Sustainable Agriculture and Food – Terrestrial and Aquatic Animals (encompassing Livestock, Production Biology and Health and Aquaculture)

Bioscience for renewable resources and Clean Growth

Bioscience for an integrated understanding of Health

Contents

Welcome from the EASTBIO Academic Management Group	6
EASTBIO Training Programme	8
1. Introduction	10
2. Overview	11
3. Summary and Requirements	12
4. Recording Professional Development	16
5. Training costs	18
6. Before travelling overseas for fieldwork, internships, placements or research work	19
7. Feedback on your Training Experience	19
8. Managing your Career	20
Year-by-year Training	22
I. Year 1 to 4 Training	23
a. Multidisciplinary Approaches and Quantitative Skills	23
b. Research Ethics and Integrity	
II. Year 1 Foundation Training	24
a. Research Skills Subject-specific Theoretical Training	25
b. Foundation Masterclasses	29
c. SysMIC	30
d. Transferable Skills	30
e. Enterprise Skills	32
III. Year 2 Advanced Bioscience Training	33
a. Advanced Bioscience Skills	33
b. Transferable Skills	35
c. Enterprise Skills	35
IV. Year 3 Professional Training for Student-Selected Development	37
a. Transferrable Skills	37
b. Enterprise Skills: Skills School	38
c. Professional Internships for PhD Students (PIPS)	39
d. Industry-Linked Collaborative Studentships	41
EASTBIO Industrial partner organisations	41
V. Year 4	43
Consolidation	43
VI. Annual Symposium	44
VII. Industry-linked Skills School	45
Supporting you and your well-being	46
Get involved!	51
EASTBIO Contacts	54
Appendix 1 - The characteristics of a highly skilled and employable bioscience graduate.	57
Appendix 2 - Guidance about what is involved in the thematic training.	59

Welcome from the EASTBIO Academic Management Group

Welcome to the EASTBIO Doctoral Training Partnership 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 this Handbook, our Induction Day and the EASTBIO website will help you familiarise yourselves with the aims of the partnership and our training programme.

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 associate partners Cool Farm Alliance and SULSA. Each of you will be registered in a host school or department within your university. Although you will follow the local training and assessment programme of your host institution, *you are an EASTBIO PhD student, funded by UKRI BBSRC* and, as such, you will receive additional training including:

- research training through participation in interactive discussion groups run across the partnership, which will provide you with insight into the key questions and challenges in your research area and will enable you to build your own collaborations with researchers working in your field across the five universities;
- enhanced training in quantitative and analytical core bioscience skills through our foundation masterclasses programme;
- access to advanced technology and core bioscience training courses across the partnership;
- specific transferable skills training with your peer cohort and PhD students from other doctoral training programmes;
- an exciting opportunity to undertake a Professional Internship for PhD Students (PIPS) training, which will provide you with an opportunity to learn valuable professional skills in the workplace;
- an understanding of science at the interface with industry; this will be cultivated via training linked to industry in order to develop your entrepreneurial spirit, alongside students from other industry-linked PhD programmes, by engaging in your collaborative placement and by working alongside industry experts during the multidisciplinary student-led Industry Skills School;
- our annual symposia – a platform for you to share your research with the EASTBIO community and to learn more about the impact of bioscience research on the world around us.

We expect that throughout your PhD each of you will take a proactive approach to your own training and development with the support of your supervisors and EASTBIO. You will be asked to complete and update your 'Professional Development Record' and we will monitor this to help 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 and being bombarded with information on just about everything. If any of us can assist you with settling in, please don't hesitate to contact us (contact details are provided at the end of this Handbook and at <http://www.eastscotbioldtp.ac.uk/eastbio-contacts>).

We look forward to meeting you and your supervisors in Stirling and welcome you to the EASTBIO programme at our Induction, on the **3rd and the 4th of October 2022**. Students are also invited to join our current student representatives and the EASTBIO DTP Manager and Support Officer for a casual online meetup on the **26th of September (13:00-14:30)**. The Induction event will be followed by a masterclass on '**Statistics and Experimental Design**' on the **4th of October**. There will be ample opportunity at the Induction for informal interactions between students, supervisors and the EASTBIO Management and Team members.

Having adopted a mixed platform for the delivery of our training events last, we plan to deliver our 2022/23 programme primarily in person. We are prepared to consider hybrid or online events for some of our training to ensure a degree of flexibility in order to meet the needs of part-time students and students with disabilities, or caring responsibilities and will ensure that training materials will be made available to students upon request.

We wish you an excellent start to your studies,



Dr Gerben van Ooijen

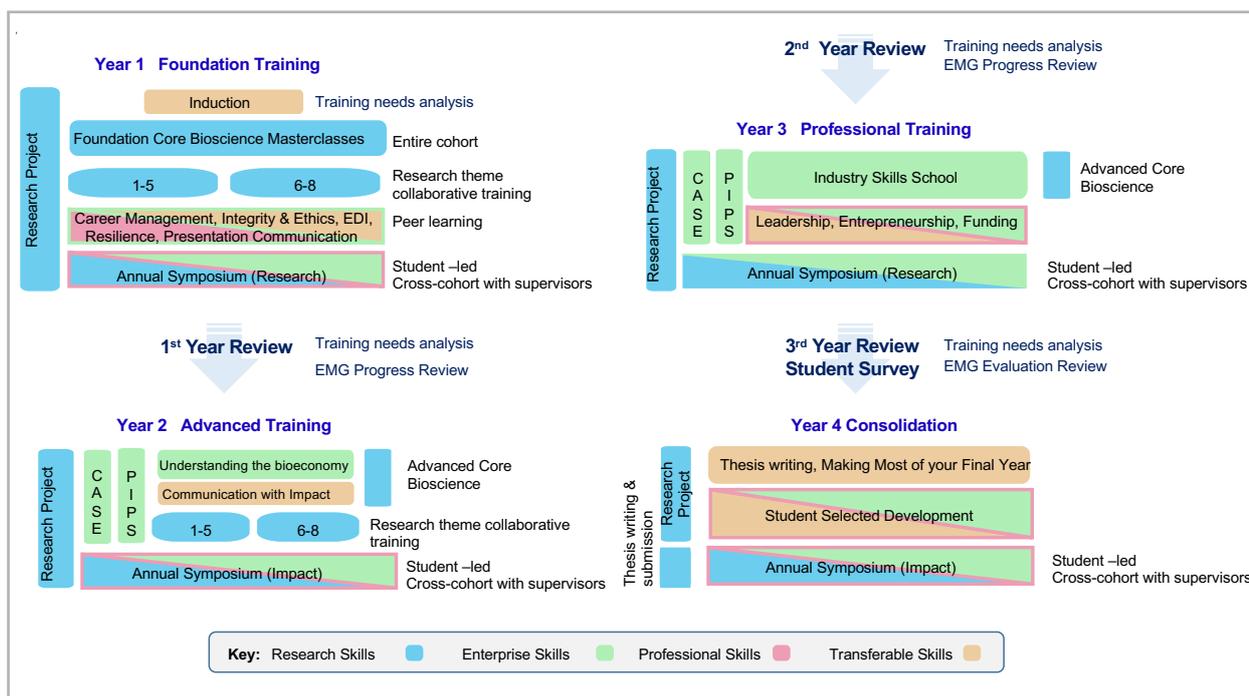
on behalf of the EASTBIO Academic Management Group

EASTBIO Training Programme

Our vision is to help develop doctoral graduates who are each equipped with the high-level contemporary skills and competencies required to tackle major societal challenges through research to advance knowledge and/or through other contributions in wider society; who are aware of these challenges and their potential to impact them; and who have the agile critical, creative and networking skills, interdisciplinary awareness, vision and resilience required to do so.

The EASTBIO Training and Development Programme is designed to equip all EASTBIO students with a broad set of skills, encompassing essential core bioscience, research, professional, enterprise and transferable skills. A concrete aim we have set for ourselves is that each EASTBIO student graduating will be in a position to produce a personal impact statement on their research demonstrating their high value whether in terms of research, industry or society more broadly.

Figure 1: Summary of the EASTBIO Training Programme skills-wise



During your EASTBIO PhD we expect that all of our students will develop the **characteristics of a highly skilled and employable bioscience graduate** listed in Appendix 1 and go on to be able to live, work and lead in our complex and diverse world.

We aim for our training to have Equality, Diversity and Inclusion principles and values embedded in all its elements while also conforming with UKRI BBSRC strategic priorities. We encourage all and any student to contact us if you happen to have a reasonable adjustments plan in place and specific accessibility requirements to ensure that we will support you appropriately at any event or activity that we organise centrally.



1. Introduction

The EASTBIO training programme is a modular Programme containing mandatory and optional elements. This allows each student to acquire mandatory core competences and also to dynamically manage your own development according to ongoing analysis of your training needs, which often change during the course of your doctoral studies.

Our training Programme is aligned with the Vitae Researcher Development Framework and aims to support both your professional and personal development throughout the four years of your PhD. As an EASTBIO PhD student, you will be part of a wider network of postgraduate bioscience research students and we hope that the interactions that you will establish with your fellow EASTBIO students will extend beyond your PhD.

The bioscience careers of the future require individuals equipped with knowledge and cutting-edge skills that combine quantitative and interdisciplinary approaches to addressing complex biological problems, with expertise in advanced technologies. The EASTBIO training programme in Years 1 and 2 is designed to help you develop these crucial skills.

To be successful in your future career you also have to develop a range of personal skills, such as effective communication, initiative and resilience. The EASTBIO transferable skills programme from Year 1 to 4 and the EASTBIO Annual Symposia, which you help to organise, aim to build your personal skills, your confidence and independence.

Finally, 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 professional bioscience career much easier at the end of your PhD.

The EASTBIO training programme incorporates the above training elements, including the Professional Internships for PhD students or industry-linked placements (for students doing Collaborative Studentships), structured around each year of the doctoral study:

Year 1: Foundational Training

Year 2: Advanced Training

Year 3: Professional Training

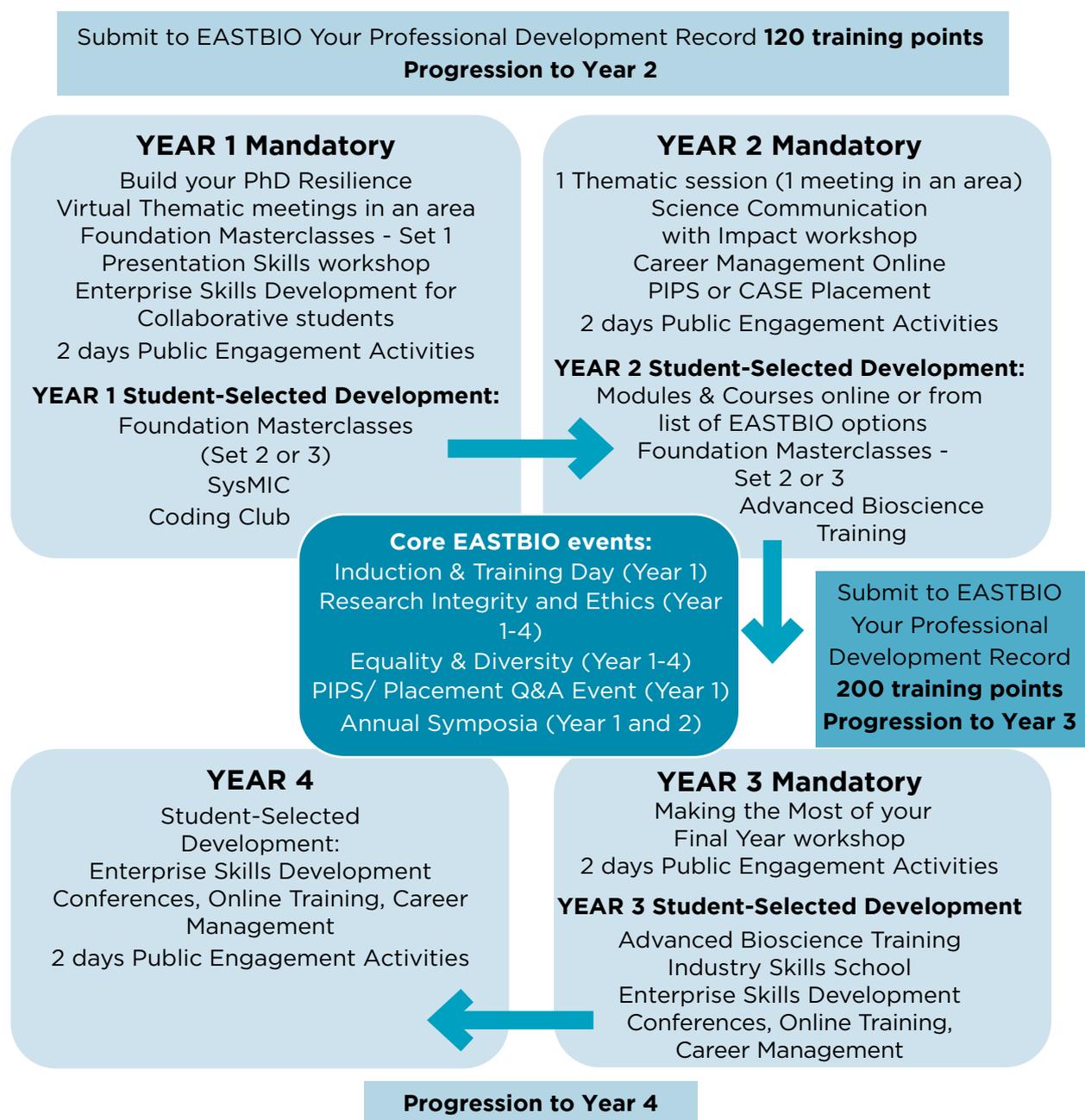
Year 4: Consolidation

As well as the information in this Handbook, you should keep an eye on your email inbox and the EASTBIO website www.eastscotbiodtp.ac.uk for further training updates <http://www.eastscotbiodtp.ac.uk/year-1-foundation-training>, news and developments. EASTBIO will circulate a monthly Newsletter highlighting training to come, as well as training, networking, EDI and other opportunities of relevance to you and resources of interest across the DTP.

2. Overview

We recognise that each of you will start the EASTBIO PhD programme with different abilities, experiences and aspirations. For this reason, we have specific minimum expectations regarding the amount of training we expect you to complete each year during the four years of the programme, including some key events and components that are mandatory for all EASTBIO PhD students.

Figure 2: EASTBIO Training Progression diagram



The training and events delivered by EASTBIO Training Programme are already moving into part online, part face-to-face delivery in order to meet the needs of part-time, disabled and students with caring responsibilities. Figure 2 and table 1 summarize the EASTBIO Training Programme in terms of mandatory components, as they run each year.

3. Summary and Requirements

As outlined in the above table, in Years 1 and 2 you are expected to attend a number of EASTBIO (face-to-face and online) training events and activities, some mandatory for your cohort, some optional. In this Handbook, we refer to attendance of EASTBIO events as your *training requirements, in accordance with your contractual obligations as UKRI-funded students*. Attendance of these designated events - a mix of mandatory and optional courses - should provide you with **200 training points in total by the end of your second year of PhD study**. We recommend that you should aim to collect **120 training points by the end of your first year of study**. Although there are specific mandatory EASTBIO events in Year 3 and 4, these carry no credit. For an overview, see the following Table.

Note that in recognition of the time investment of first- and second-year students who volunteer to become a student representative, we will add a bonus of 10 training points on their training points' total!



Table 1: EASTBIO Credit System, per year of study

	Mandatory with points	Optional with points	Mandatory, no points	Optional, no points
Year 1	Induction - 10 Research Symposium - 10 Research Integrity - 10 4 Thematic meetings - 40 Masterclasses Set 1 - 30 PIPS/Collaborative placements Q&A - 10 Presentation skills - 10 1 out of 2 Enterprise skills training - 10	Masterclasses Set 2, 3 - 10 each course SysMIC course - 20 (1 module) or 50 (2 modules) Coding Club - 10	Public Engagement (2 days/year) Mantra - https://mantra.edina.ac.uk	Other non-EASTBIO training
Total credits Y1	Actual 120 to 130/ Overall minimum 120			
Year 2	Research Symposium - 10 Build your PhD Resilience - 10 Science Communication - 10 1 Thematic meeting - 10 points	Masterclasses Set 2, 3 - 10 each course Advanced Bioscience Training - 10 each course	PIPS or Collaborative Placement Industry Symposium Public Engagement (2 days/year)	Enterprise skills training (2 options) Other non-EASTBIO training
Total credits Y1 & 2	Actual -160/ Overall minimum 200			
Year 3 Students expected to take optional courses & record these on their Professional Development Record, to be made available upon EASTBIO request.			PIPS or Collaborative Placement Public Engagement (2 days/year) Industrial Impact Symposium - Collaborative Student only Making the Most of your Final Year	Advanced Bioscience Training Industrial Impact Symposium - non Collaborative Students & open to other DTP/IBiolC students Other non-EASTBIO training
Year 4 Students expected to take optional courses & record these on their Professional Development Record, to be made available upon EASTBIO request.			Public Engagement (2 days/year)	Social Impact Symposium Making the Most of your Final Year

How do I know what training I need?

We recognise that each researcher has a set of unique training needs and recommend that you consider the following:

- Reflect on your current skills to identify your strengths and areas where you feel there are gaps. Figure 3 shows the **Researcher Development Framework** that can be used for this purpose:
<https://www.vitae.ac.uk/researchers-professional-development/about-the-vitae-researcher-development-framework>.
- Speak to your supervisor about your training needs.
- Speak to other researchers to share advice and recommendations about training.
- Look at the EASTBIO training programme and attend our mandatory programme of events.
- When picking your student-selected options, review what is available within our EASTBIO-recommended options. Also check what your School/College and wider Bioscience community provides in terms of training and support.
- Complete and submit your individual online **'Training Sign-up' form** and keep track using the **'PhD Professional Development Record'**.

What happens if I miss a training event?

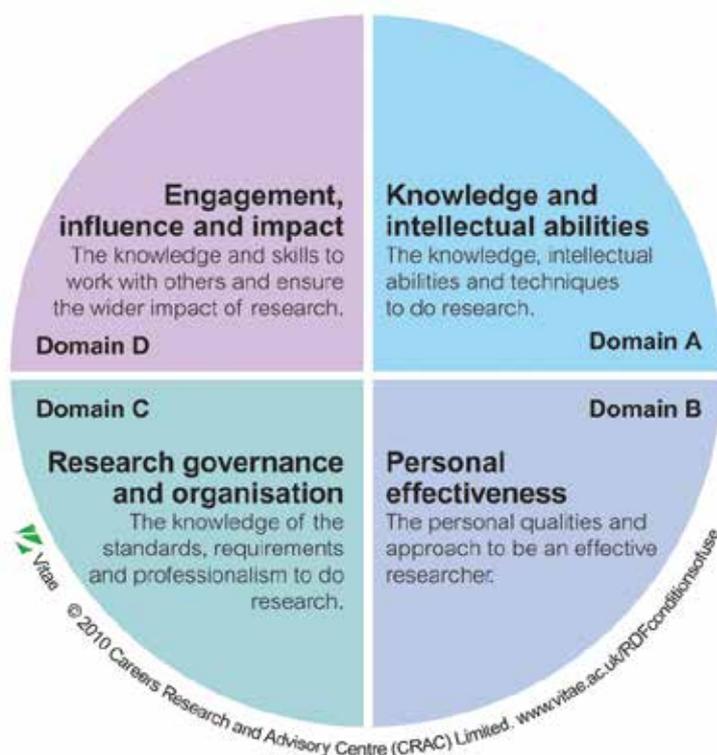
EASTBIO will reintroduce our Cancellation Policy (see below) that was removed in the aftermath of the pandemic restrictions (see paragraph below). If you have a sensible reason to keep you from attending a training and have notified EASTBIO about this in advance, we will offer you the option of taking the training the following time it will run. This depends on the availability of training and on the constraints of the deadline you will have for completing said training.

Cancellation Policy:

You are expected to attend all mandatory EASTBIO training and any student-selected optional EASTBIO training you have registered for. If you have any concerns, or you need to cancel your attendance at specific events or activities, after having first discussed with your supervisor(s), please contact EASTBIO as soon as possible. We will make sure that students who cannot attend mandatory training will be offered alternative options, or, where possible, the opportunity to attend the same training the next time it will run (usually the following year). However, should there be no timely or reasonable communication from you about a cancellation, EASTBIO may seek to retrieve funds spent to secure training (venue hire, external trainer fees, facility use fees, training licences, etc.).

We are accountable for our programme delivery to our funders, partners and stakeholders and we wish to optimise its effects and benefits by as full a student engagement as possible. We understand the effect of multiple stressors and clashing commitments that may prevent our students from attending some of our required training but we are also committed to keeping our training relevant, ensuring robust attendance and consolidating cohort-building activities. Therefore, by decision of the EASTBIO DTP Management Group, we advise that student failure to attend EASTBIO mandatory training *without proper notification as to the reasons for it*, communicated to supervisor(s) and the EASTBIO Support Officer **may entail a financial penalty** to recover costs incurred by EASTBIO DTP and partner institutions.

Figure 3: Vitae Researcher Development Framework



To help us deliver our EASTBIO DTP-wide training, we ask all first-year students to complete and return two forms:

1. **An online 'Training Sign-up' form**, circulated after the Induction (3-4 October 2022) to be submitted by the end of October. It contains a list of all training options and details. The form is important as it acts as a provisional registration form and allows the EASTBIO team to confirm the details required for the smooth delivery of the training.
2. **A 'PhD Professional Development Record' form**, submitted at two points: first, by the **30th of September 2023** and, secondly, by the 30 September 2024. The completed and/or updated form signed by both the student and the supervisor is emailed to the enquiries@eastscotbiotdp.ac.uk. You are, in effect, submitting the same 'PhD Professional Development Record', updated to capture any training you have completed between the start of your PhD and the Year 2 deadline. The Record concerns all EASTBIO-based training, plus any optional self-selected training you attended (provided by EASTBIO, at your local University, with other DTPs or CDTs or by external bioscience organisations). Although you will receive reminders close to the two deadlines, *it is your sole responsibility to ensure that your Records are submitted on time.*

Part-time students are expected to agree, with their supervisor's help and support, an individualised plan with amended deadlines for submitting development forms, attending training, completing PIPS, industry-linked placement, etc. This can be discussed with the EASTBIO academic representative for your local institution (contacts details at the end of the Handbook or on the EASTBIO website).

Please note that progression to the second, third and fourth year of your PhD depends on whether you have fulfilled the EASTBIO training requirements, as explained above. **Extensions must be discussed with the EASTBIO academic representative for your local institution** (contact details at the end of the Handbook or on the EASTBIO website) **after a formal request is submitted by email to enquiries@eastscotbiotdp.ac.uk.**

4. Recording Professional Development

To make the most of the training offered by EASTBIO partner institutions and by Bioscience-related organisations, we require our students to keep a 'Professional Development Record'. In this documents, you should record any training and development activities you have carried out. We ask that you keep updating it with specific details as you proceed through the first and the second year of your PhD. It contains evidence that will help you to reflect on how this learning supports your personal and professional development.

In particular, your 'Professional Development Record' contains important information that:

- helps you to track evidence of your professional development which you can use to review, evaluate and plan for your future success during your PhD and beyond;
- helps your local Thesis Committee Review to assess your progress at the end of each year of your PhD;
- EASTBIO uses to monitor attendance and your total training credit points; information also used by your Thesis Committee Review to confirm progression into PhD year 2 and 3;
- Provides us with important data needed to fulfil the EASTBIO reporting obligations to our funder UKRI BBSRC (under the EASTBIO BBSRC DTP3 Award Terms and Conditions).

Delayed submission of your 'Professional Development Record' may result in late or cancelled stipend payments.



Table 2: The 'EASTBIO Professional Development Record' submitted by students at month 12 and 24 to track progress and necessary for BBSRC reporting

PROFESSIONAL DEVELOPMENT RECORD Student Name: Cohort Year: Date Updated:				
Year 1				
Name of Training Event (use the drop down menu)	Date training was completed & timings	Mandatory / Optional EASTBIO event or other (use the drop-down menu)	Training details, e.g. title, mode of delivery, name of training lead & affiliation, location, manner of student engagement, assessment format, etc.	EASTBIO Points Awarded (as applicable; email EASTBIO if you are unsure)
Student Signature:		Training points at the end of Year 1 must total 120 points		
Supervisor Signature:		Please submit in PhD month 12 to enquiries@eastscotbiodtp.ac.uk		
Date:				
Year 2				
Student Signature:		Training points at the end of Year 2 must total 200 points		
Supervisor Signature:		Please submit in PhD month 24 to enquiries@eastscotbiodtp.ac.uk		
Date:				

5. Training costs

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

- **Research Training Grant (RTSG) or bench fees: £5,000 per annum** (this is **reduced to £1,500 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, including 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. Upon registering at your host institution, you should receive guidance about accessing these funds; if you have questions, please contact your local administrator (for EASTBIO contacts, see end of the Handbook).
- **Travel and conference allowance: £230 per year** to support expenses involved where training is delivered in person rather than online.
- **EASTBIO In-Vivo Skills Travel Bursary (2022/23)**: EASTBIO funding of up to **£500.00 per student per award maximum** available via application to eligible EASTBIO students who need travel support to access training in Advanced In Vivo Skills.
- **PIPS Additional Expenses**: Where your PIPS will incur significant additional costs, you can apply to our competitively allocated small bursary competition (**up to £1,000 per award maximum**). Further details can be found in the 'PIPS Guide for Students' which is emailed directly to students after the Placements Q&A event (1-2 February 2023) or upon request.
- **Disabled Students Allowance (DSA)**: as a UKRI-funded student, you are entitled to additional individual support if you have a diagnosed disability and require a number of specific adjustments during your programme of study. The process to request a DSA is student-led and commences with the student contacting and arranging for an interview with their local Disability Office. The DSA is awarded on the basis of the resulting student Needs Assessment report that recommends specific measures and associated costs as advised by the Disability Office team.

For questions about how to access these funds, we strongly encourage you to contact the EASTBIO Administrator at your local institution in the first instance (see Local Administrative Contacts, below).

6. Before travelling overseas for fieldwork, internships, placements or research work

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

- Complete all necessary **Risk Assessment Procedures** as defined within the local institution you are registered with.
- Submit a **'Leave of Absence'** form within the local institution you are registered with.

7. Feedback on your training experience

EASTBIO aims to respond to the needs that you, your supervisors and your potential future employers may identify. Our current training is result of both strategic requirements communicated by UKRI BBSRC and feedback from our shareholders, primarily students, supervisors and academics delivering the training, as well as our Advisory Board and local institutional contacts. We will ask you for feedback on existing training and for input on developing our training further. Please respond to these requests; your opinion is very important to us and helps improve the training components of the programme.

Additionally, first- and second-year student reps are invited to the EASTBIO Management Group meeting at the end of the first year to hear directly from them as part of the standard overall review of the Training Programme. Through that mechanism, your views are conveyed anonymously to inform these discussions and provide continuity across student cohorts. If you cannot find the training you need, please let us know by contacting your local EASTBIO administrator, the academic representative, or enquiries@eastscotbiodtp.ac.uk.



8. Managing your Career

Career management includes being able to research, plan and take informed decisions in relation to your career. This is relevant to all stages of your career, whether you are developing in your current role, preparing for promotion or seeking new career options. To help you with taking the next step in your professional career, the Careers Service in your local institution can advise and support you to explore jobs and future career options. They can also offer help with creating an effective CV, preparing applications and interviews. We encourage you to engage with your local Graduate School, Doctoral College, PGR and postdoc societies to be informed of and able to benefit from relevant opportunities as they arise throughout your studies. EASTBIO will forward to students UKRI BBSRC notifications of relevant opportunities and activities around strategic engagement and networking that may of interest to you. Working with your supervisors, we aim to encourage you to engage with UKRI BBSRC as an important element of your skills portfolio.

There are also many excellent online communities which you can join that are relevant to progress your career interest. For instance, the 'Career Management for Early Career Academic Researchers' online training course runs at least once per year. You can sign up anytime for it in your PhD. The resource is available free of charge via the link: <https://www.futurelearn.com/courses/career-management>.

EQUATE Scotland works across Scotland and across sectors to deliver training and support for women at each stage of their career and provide opportunities for women students to make valuable links with industry via their student's network and Career hub. Information available via the link: <https://equatescotland.org.uk/>.

We encourage you to undertake part of your **continuing professional development virtually** at a time that suits your busy PhD schedule. Additional resources to help with maintaining a healthy work life can be found on LinkedIn Learning.

- **LinkedIn Learning** is an online skills development service offering an extensive library of high quality video courses in business, creative and technical skills. Users have access to 15,000 courses and 250,000 videos. It is also possible to highlight the skills you are interested such as 'Leadership', 'Training and Development', 'Project Management', 'Communication', 'Time Management' and explore topic areas of interest such as 'Supporting your Mental Health' etc. We encourage our students to search topic areas of interest in preparation for PIPS / placement and employment.

To get started you will have to create a free account via the link: www.linkedin.com/learning and use Sign in > enter your email (University) > log in with university credentials when prompted.



Year-by-year Training

I. Year 1 to 4 Training

a. Multidisciplinary Approaches and Quantitative skills

Conducting cutting-edge bioscience research in the twenty-first century requires you to develop a broad understanding of multidisciplinary approaches that are used for addressing complex biological problems, as well as strong quantitative skills to analyse the vast datasets that are the output of contemporary bioscience research. EASTBIO wishes to enable all our students to be curious and think outside the box by promoting interdisciplinary collaboration; we have developed our doctoral training programme so that it is conducive to a culture of entrepreneurship. In its current form, the programme is the result of a holistic approach that encompasses, on the one hand, the UKRI research vision and, on the other, a reflection process informed by input from all stakeholders (students, supervisors, Management and Advisory Groups).

The EASTBIO training will enable you to build the foundation of your multidisciplinary and quantitative skillset in Year 1 and develop it further in subsequent years. To connect to interdisciplinary approaches students are encouraged to link up with members of the Scottish Graduate School of Social Science DTP (<https://www.sgsss.ac.uk/>) or other doctoral programmes (for suggestions, see below) to deliver plenary talks at our events.

b. Research Ethics and Integrity

Research Integrity training underpins excellent research, and is at the heart of what constitutes good research practice. All researchers share the responsibility with their institutions to uphold research standards, ethics and integrity and need to be proactive in this respect. It is important to educate yourself on your responsibilities and best practice, and be aware of what constitutes misconduct to avoid pitfalls.

EASTBIO asks you to take a **Research Integrity training course**, covering topics such as introduction to research integrity and responsible ethical conduct of research; ethical approval and practice; plagiarism and recycling of text and research outputs; authorship; collaborative research and data management and integrity; peer review and publication ethics. The course is offered locally by the majority of our partner institutions. Please approach your local administrative contacts if you are unsure about how to access the course.

To learn more, the **Global Research Ethics and Integrity online optional course** (requires institutional login) is a joint project of members of Universitas 21, which seeks to engage postgraduate students in considerations of ethical issues in a global context. To arrange registration please email EASTBIO.

II. Year 1 Foundation Training

Starting out is exciting, but can be daunting too as there seems to be so much to do! Here are some things to consider:

- Understand your expectations, those of your supervisor and of the host institution. Look at the Code of Practice for Supervisors and Research Students, read information available through your School and College, speak to your supervisor.
- Understand the milestones - what are you working towards and make a plan. Remember to include time to relax and do activities outside your research.
- Start your networks with peers and other researchers. Find out what is available and attend relevant events.
- Take time to ensure you are confident with the basics, e.g. do you know how to use the library? Do you know about reference managers?
- Breathe! Think of the first stage as a starting point in a much bigger project - you are not expected to have all the answers from day one!

In the first year of the EASTBIO PhD, we expect you to establish the foundation upon which you will build the development of your skills in subsequent years. The EASTBIO Training is normally launched with the **Induction Day**, where all new students and supervisors come together for an informal day of briefings and introductions to the main elements of our programme (thematic, masterclasses, placements), followed by a Training Day. This year's Induction includes an informal meet up (online, **26 September 2022, 13:00-14:30**) for students and current student reps, and an in-person Induction Day scheduled to take place in **Stirling (Stirling Court Hotel, on campus)** on the **3 October**, involving a variety of activities: team-building and informal Q&A sessions, short introductions by the EASTBIO academic representatives to different aspects of our programme, combined with break-out thematic group discussions. Induction completes with a half-day advanced Foundation Masterclass on



'Statistics & Experimental Design' on the 4 October. This year, following student feedback, we offer the Masterclass in two parts, with an introductory online session on the 22 September 2022, 9:10-13:00. Details about these events will be circulated to students and supervisors in the early part of September 2022.

Most training events in Year 1 are mandatory and attendance at these events carries training points: the **Thematic Training group meetings** (Research skills), the **Masterclasses** (Bioscience skills), plus three separate workshops on '**Presentation Skills**' (at the student's host institution), '**PIPS and Collaborative Project Placement Q&A Event**' and '**Build Your PhD Resilience**' workshop (Transferable skills). This may sound like a lot of training, but based on our past experience, we are sure that you will enjoy interacting with experts & peers from different universities and research fields, meeting frequently with your fellow EASTBIO students from across the partnership and building your own research and support network. At the core of our programme is cohort-building, and the programme is devised so that it offers multiple opportunities for students based at different institutions to interact across locations and year of study throughout the year. We are strong believers in the numerous benefits arising when students leave their host labs to interact with others from their cohorts, in terms of research understanding, research culture and cultivation of forward looking.

All EASTBIO Collaborative students are required to complete specific **Enterprise Skills Development** training at key stages of the programme. This programme is developed in association with our industrial partners and we will update students directly with details for their training calendar.

a. Thematic (subject-specific) Training

EASTBIO student projects are designed around five key research themes:

1. Understanding the rules of life
2. Bioscience for sustainable agriculture and food – Crops and soil
3. Bioscience for sustainable agriculture and food – Terrestrial and aquatic animals (this encompasses Livestock, Production Biology, and Health and aquaculture)
4. Bioscience for renewable resources and clean growth
5. Bioscience for an integrated understanding of health

Details of which research theme you belong to will be provided prior to the Induction. Themes are assigned according to the individual PhD project description and to ensure group sizes are robust to enable cross-thematic interactions. EASTBIO will provide you with details of all groups' members (students' and supervisors' names and contact emails, project titles and affiliations). To enable cross-group communication, you are welcome to join individual meetings of a group other than your own if the topic is relevant or of interest to your work.

These thematic training meetings are led by students with input and guidance from an EASTBIO supervisor. The thematic groups provide a dynamic, often provocative environment for researcher development at many levels. Importantly, they provide a forum for peer-to-peer and peer-to-PI exploration of the broad research area most closely related to each student's interests, and therefore play an important role in promoting rigorous creative and innovative thinking amongst cohort groups. They also offer networking opportunities that foster new collaborative interactions between students and PIs from different partner institutions, with the potential to drive research innovation.

The goals of the thematic training component of your PhD are:

- to introduce challenges, questions and tools that are key in your theme-specific research area;
- to help you develop your critical and analytical reading skills;
- to help you develop your understanding and capacity in a given area that is considered key in the field;
- to meet other EASTBIO students and supervisors working in complementary research areas, to share expertise and establish shared ground and collaborations;
- to check in, get some support from other researchers in your group, the network of guest speakers and students from other PhD programs working in your area.

During your first year, you should take part in a minimum of 4 thematic meetings (approximately a total of 20 hours) and, in your second year, you will join at least one of the meetings taking place with the new first-year cohort. Each meeting is organised by the thematic group and 2 or 3 student volunteers who offer to lead on the planning and host the meeting. Thematic meetings start from December 2022 and are held every other month at a different partner institution: scheduling begins at the Induction. These meetings may be based on a number of formats that serve the main goals (above), 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 in terms of research and transformative technology? are given research models for a particular question adequate?, etc.);
- talks from invited speakers or EASTBIO supervisors, industrial representatives, etc.;
- review of applied research;
- visits to industry facilities or sites.

Consider inviting input from guest speakers to connect to hot research topics, interdisciplinary approaches, areas of applied research and global perspectives. Students also have the option to arrange to invite facility managers within the EASTBIO partners and industry to learn about areas of interest. EASTBIO is not prescriptive about how the meetings are structured but we insist that each is decided collectively by your thematic group. Organisers should focus on participants' engagement, interaction and inclusivity in student research priorities. EASTBIO hopes that student interactions from thematic meetings will carry forward to later years.

On Induction Day (3 October), an EASTBIO Management Group academic representative will chair each break-out session to explain how the thematic groups will run and help you and your supervisors plan for them. We hope that EASTBIO student reps, who are invited to attend our Induction, can offer their insights into planning. Thematic group members collectively agree on the dates the future meetings should be set and on how you will engage, share knowledge, store meeting documents, etc. You will be invited to volunteer to become the meetings' facilitator for your group's first meeting. When you share out the jobs, check that everyone does something and no one's overloaded!

This year, in response to student feedback, we'd like to propose two changes in the format of the thematic training:

- a) one out of the 4 meetings to be joint across all groups with a focus on the impact of research; logistical support for this by the EASTBIO team.
- b) Each group to work together to produce one concrete outcome from their meetings, in the form of a podcast, a YouTube video, a filmed conversation or another resource that can be publicised on the EASTBIO website. The resource, agreed upon by the whole group, will highlight, illustrate or showcase the work done in the group and the understanding and insights, or skills gained from it.

Detailed information about what else is involved in the thematic training meetings is given in **Appendix 2**. At the end of each meeting you can leave your individual feedback anonymously via the Thematic Training Student Evaluation Form (online form, see Appendix 2). EASTBIO will also ask the student organisers to draft a group report per meeting to complete the feedback from various perspectives.

As suggested above, students are encouraged collectively as a group to talk through and agree topics explored. Although this process begins at the Induction, we strongly advise students to **initiate a follow up meeting** in the second half of October to enable group members to engage with the planning and contribute to plans shaped within each group; this will help to finalise plans which, although discussed at the Induction, need further elaboration and pre-empt some.

Please consider inviting input from students on other doctoral training programs to join their thematic meetings, e.g. another BBSRC DTP programme to explore additional research themes in the areas of Artificial Intelligence, Machine Learning, 'Omics' Technologies and cultivating an understanding of interdisciplinary approaches research themes 6 to 8, see figure 1, above. Another possibility could be to arrange to invite cell and molecular biologists from the Wellcome PhD Programme in Integrative Cell Mechanisms who are researching the application of quantitative methods to understand the inner workings of distinct cell types in different settings.

These will include programmes such as

- UKRI Industrial Biotechnology Innovation Centre (IBioIC) CDT - <http://www.ibioic.com/>
- Natural Environment Research Council (NERC)-funded QUADRAT DTP (Queen's University Belfast & Aberdeen Doctoral Research and Training) - <https://www.abdn.ac.uk/sbs/research/quadrat/index.php>.
- MRC DTP (University of Dundee) - <https://www.dundee.ac.uk/study/pgr/dtp/mrc-dtp/>.
- BARIToNE Collaborative Training Partnership - [BARIToNE Collaborative Training Partnership | University of Dundee](#).
- The NERC-funded Earth, Ecology and Environment Doctoral Training Partnership (E4 DTP) (led by the School of GeoSciences, University of Edinburgh) - [E4 Doctoral Training Partnership | The University of Edinburgh](#).
- UKRI CDT in Biomedical AI programme (University of Edinburgh) - <http://web.inf.ed.ac.uk/cdt/biomedical-ai>
- EPSRC CDT in Data Science (University of Edinburgh) - <http://datascience.inf.ed.ac.uk/>
- Wellcome PhD Programme in Integrative Cell Mechanisms (University of Edinburgh) - <https://www.wcb.ed.ac.uk/iCmPhD>).
- UKRI NERC-funded IAPETUS2 DTP (University of Stirling) - <https://www.iapetus2.ac.uk/about/>

In order for learning to be successful, it is imperative that you put any new-found knowledge and skills to use as soon as possible.

If you have questions about the individual feedback or the group reports, email enquiries@eastscotbioldtp.ac.uk. EASTBIO is looking forward to hearing your feedback on how your thematic meetings have gone (forms shown in Appendix 2 will be accessible online; details to be sent to students after the Induction Day).



b. Foundation Masterclasses

First-year students must complete a number of day-long **mandatory foundation masterclasses** as shown below, details on the lists below. All EASTBIO students can also choose to attend any relevant courses offered in **Set 2** and **Set 3 as part of their required optional foundation masterclasses**, either in year 1 or year 2. We will run all optional masterclasses shown below that will have a minimum of advance 10 sign ups. Summaries for all masterclasses can be found on our website, at <http://www.eastscotbioldtp.ac.uk/foundation-masterclasses>. Details and updates to be circulated via the monthly EASTBIO Newsletter. Every effort has been made to confirm the details of all training prior to the publication of this Handbook; in the event, a list containing confirmed Training details will be provided on the online **Training Sign-up form** that we will ask you to complete by the end of October.

Mandatory foundation masterclasses, in Year 1

- Research Integrity training, accessible via your host institution. Please contact your local administrator if you are unsure of details.

Set 1, Mandatory Quantitative and Computational Skills masterclasses, in Year 1

- Statistics and Experimental Design (online introduction, 22 September 2022, 9:00-13:00 & in person Training Day, Stirling, 4 October 2021, 9:00-13:00)
- Introduction to MATLAB (details TBC)
- Artificial Intelligence & Machine Learning for Bio-scientists (Edinburgh, 7 November 2022, 10:15-15:40)
- MANTRA - a free, online non-assessed course developed by the University of Edinburgh, with guidelines to help you understand and reflect on how to manage the digital data you collect throughout your research <https://mantra.edina.ac.uk>

Masterclasses Set 2 and Set 3 is part of student-selected training options

Set 2, Optional Interdisciplinary Working masterclasses, in Year 1 or 2

- Introduction to Biology for Quantitative Scientists (details TBC)
- Primer for Mathematical Modelling for Biologists (details TBC)
- Introduction to Biology for Chemists and Chemical Engineers (1 March 2023, 10:00-15:30)
- Introduction to Chemistry for Biologists (Dundee, 10 March 2023, 10:00-16:00)

Set 3, Optional Primers in Transformative Technologies masterclasses, in Year 1 or 2

- Good enough practices in research computing (online, 6 December 2022, 10:00-13:00)
- Primer for Synthetic Biology (details TBC)
- Advanced Imaging, including Super-resolution microscopy and image analysis (Dundee, 22 November 2022, 9:45-16:00)
- The Cool Farm Tool (details TBC)
- Structural Biology and Crystallography (details TBC)
- Primer for Advanced 'Omics' Approaches (1 June 2023, 10:00-14:00)
- Introduction to Proteomics and Mass Spectrometry (Edinburgh, details TBC)
- Mapping and Modelling your Biological Pathway (Dundee, 16 May 2023)
- Advanced Approaches to Genome Manipulation and Modification (Edinburgh, 16 January 2023)
- Coding Club, online at <http://www.codingclub.co.uk/>



c. SysMIC: Systems training in Maths, Informatics and Computational Biology

SysMIC is an outstanding online course, which provides extensive training in mathematics, statistics and computational methods used in life sciences. It is delivered by scientists from University College London, The Open University and the University of Edinburgh.

In October, EASTBIO will circulate information and invite applications by first-year students for a limited number of funded access to module I and (optionally) module II of SysMIC worth £1,500/module, awarded on a competitive basis. If you are successful, you are expected to complete module I **within your first year of study** (by the end of September 2023), gaining 20 points. If, optionally, you wish to also complete module II, you will be awarded 50 points in total for the two modules. Module I starts in November and March each year. To get a clear sense of the time commitment involved and the personal development benefits obtained, we encourage you to speak to other EASTBIO students who have previously completed the course (details available upon request). Please note that failure to complete the course may carry a financial sanction.

To find out more, visit: <https://sysmic.ac.uk/> and www.eastscotbiodtp.ac.uk/sysmic-course.

d. Transferable Skills

To be competitive in your future career, it is vital that you engage with training beyond the essentials needed for your own research. As the knowledge economy expands, employers expect advanced professional skills in addition to excellent qualifications. Therefore, the acquisition and development of personal transferable, employment-related and research-oriented generic skills is an important part of your postgraduate training.

These skills, which complement your academic research and enhance your employability prospects, will give you a competitive edge both now and in future. You will be undertaking

some of this training locally, at your host institution, and we expect you to plan and record this training in your 'Professional Development Record'. As EASTBIO aspires to train the future leaders in bioscience research, to enable you to develop as such, we provide both a specific transferable skills programme in Years 1 to 4 of your PhD and the opportunities to apply these skills by contributing to the organisation of key EASTBIO events, such as the Symposia and the Industry Skills School.

- **EASTBIO Build Your PhD Resilience workshop** (in early September 2023)
Doing a PhD is a challenging, yet a worthwhile and rewarding process. EASTBIO helps you to make the most of your PhD by providing a space for reflection, thoughtful engagement and mutual support-building your capacity to manage stress and create success during your PhD and beyond. At the end of your first-year, by which time you will have sampled the life and challenges of a junior researcher, you are invited to attend this mandatory workshop '**The Resilient Researcher**', which aims to boost your confidence by helping you to identify your strengths and areas for development.
- **EASTBIO PIPS - Placement Q&A Session** (online, 1-2 February 2023)
EASTBIO will hold a mandatory Q&A session for all first-year students, open to your supervisors too, to help you understand the scheme and the requirements around it, and start preparing for your mandatory 3-month placement to take place by the end of your third year of study. See Section IV for more details about PIPS and bear in mind that the deadline for submitting your PIPS Planning Sheet is the end of September 2023. For any PIPS-related queries, email placements@eastscotbioldtp.ac.uk.
- **Early-stage recommended workshops to choose from** (available via your local Institution), including, but not limited to the following: Presentation Skills, Prepare for Doctoral Success, How to be an Effective Researcher, Seven Secrets of a Highly Successful Research Student, Practical Project Management, Good Practice in Research Data Management, Time Management and Speed Reading, Working across Disciplines.

Laurine Brouck
(Edinburgh,
2019 intake) who
completed her
placement with
the Association
of the British
Pharmaceutical
Industry (ABPI)



e. Enterprise Skills

The UK bioscience industry offers a diverse range of employment opportunities that require researchers to display the necessary skills and experience in order to successfully transition from academia into industry and other bioscience-related non-research careers. To achieve this vision, the EASTBIO enterprise skills training component of our programme supports your development by exposing students wishing to gain knowledge, skills and experience of industry to business, commercial, entrepreneurial and leadership skills.

EASTBIO **students doing Collaborative studentships** are required to register to attend the following foundation training below:

- **The Practical Entrepreneur - Business Skills for the Future** (Industrial Biotechnology Innovation Centre <http://www.ibioic.com/>, Edinburgh-based, 3 day-long training; details TBC).

We are exploring the possibility of securing student access to the Aquatic Animal disease and Welfare training with an industrial focus, run by the partner University of Stirling. Details of this will be circulate to our Collaborative students after the Induction.

Further information will be emailed directly to students.



III. Year 2: Advanced Bioscience Training

In the second year, we expect that, as you focus on your research more, you are looking to develop further your core bioscience skills by taking optional advanced training courses suiting specific project requirements. Many courses are available locally, but as an EASTBIO student you have access to **practical advanced technology training** and **advanced core bioscience courses** at all and any EASTBIO partner universities. Information of these training opportunities is provided to students after the Induction or upon request. We strongly encourage you to make the most of these excellent training opportunities that are available to you uniquely as an EASTBIO student.

EASTBIO will not prescribe which specific training courses you should take, but we expect you to undertake a minimum of **20 hours of core bioscience training** in Year 2, plus other optional opportunities. Any training taken is to be recorded on your online 'Professional Development Record'.

We also expect you to attend **at least one of the thematic group meetings** in your second year and interact with the first-year student and supervisor cohort. During the second year, we expect Collaborative students to engage with recommended providers of optional industry career-related training.

To progress to Year 3, please ensure that you complete a minimum of 200 training points by the end of Year 2.

a. Advanced Bioscience Skills

The following courses - related to core bioscience and technology skills, including courses related to mathematics/ data analysis and multidisciplinary approaches to biological systems - belong to the student-selected development programme. These options build on the skills developed in Year 1 through the EASTBIO foundation masterclasses and are open to all first-, second- and third-year EASTBIO students. Although every effort has been made to provide details of available options before publication of the Handbook and training pages (www.eastscotbiodtp.ac.uk/year-2-advanced-training#advancedbioscience), it is the responsibility of individual students to seek out further details from the local provider based within the EASTBIO partner institutions. Courses include, but are not limited to these below:

I - Core Bioscience Skills

- **Microscopy and Imaging:**
UoA: <https://www.abdn.ac.uk/ims/facilities/microscopy-histology/index.php>
UoD: For details, please contact Paul Appleton at p.l.appleton@dundee.ac.uk
UoE: <https://www.wcb.ed.ac.uk/iCMPHD>
- **Genetic Engineering and Genome Analysis:**
UoA: <https://www.abdn.ac.uk/ims/facilities/genomics.php>
UoE: <https://genomics.ed.ac.uk/services/training>

- **Bioinformatics:**
UoA: <https://www.abdn.ac.uk/genomics/bioinformatics/training/>
UoD - For details, please contact Jim Procter, Geoff Barton, Suzanne Duce at jprocter@compbio.dundee.ac.uk
UoE: <https://genomics.ed.ac.uk/services/bioinformatics>
- **Proteomics and Protein Purification:**
UoA: <https://www.abdn.ac.uk/ims/facilities/proteomics/training.php>
UoD: For details, please contact Dougie Lamont at d.j.lamont@dundee.ac.uk
UoE: <https://ctcb.bio.ed.ac.uk/CTCB/Training.html>
- **Protein Crystallography:**
UoStA: [https://risweb.st-andrews.ac.uk/portal/en/activities/protein-crystallography-summer-school\(3e6168d9-efd4-4e20-89e5-73172b5ab724\).html](https://risweb.st-andrews.ac.uk/portal/en/activities/protein-crystallography-summer-school(3e6168d9-efd4-4e20-89e5-73172b5ab724).html)
- **Mass Spectrometry:**
UoA: <https://www.abdn.ac.uk/ims/facilities/mass-spectrometry-59.php>
UoE: For details, please contact Dr Natalie Homer at Natalie.Homer@ed.ac.uk
- **Flow Cytometry:**
UoA: [An introduction to the Iain Fraser Cytometry Centre | Blog | The School of Medicine, Medical Sciences and Nutrition | The University of Aberdeen \(abdn.ac.uk\)](#)
UoD - For details, please contact Rosie Clarke at r.z.clarke@dundee.ac.uk
UoE: <https://www.ed.ac.uk/biology/research/facilities/flow-cytometry-core-facility>

II - Mathematics and data analysis

- **Advanced Statistics and Error Analysis**
UoA: <https://www.abdn.ac.uk/pgrs/training-development/workshops-by-theme-381.php#panel387>
- **Advancing Programming in Python**
UoA: <https://www.abdn.ac.uk/genomics/bioinformatics/training/current-workshops/>
- **R/Bioconductor and Unix**
UoA: <https://www.abdn.ac.uk/genomics/bioinformatics/training/>
- **Next-Generation Sequencing, Data analyses and Mining**
UoA: <https://www.abdn.ac.uk/genomics/>
- **NVivo Qualitative Data Analysis**
UoA: <https://www.abdn.ac.uk/toolkit/systems/nvivo/> and <https://www.abdn.ac.uk/pgrs/training-development/workshops-by-theme-381.php#panel519>

III - Multidisciplinary approaches to understanding biological systems

The EASTBIO partners offer a large number of postgraduate taught MSc courses open to all EASTBIO students, addressing directly the development of multidisciplinary areas of research. These include MSc course modules in:

- Synthetic Biology
- Medicinal Chemistry
- Drug Discovery
- Chemical Biology
- Physical Techniques in Chemistry
- Innovation Driven Entrepreneurship
- Aquaculture

The research training provided by EASTBIO will supplement the training that you will receive in your research group and host department. Do take advantage of any training opportunity available to you, including optional undergraduate and MSc modules, journal clubs, seminars and conferences in your field, as well as training opportunities offered to BBSRC-funded students that you will be notified about by EASTBIO during the course of your studies. We expect all EASTBIO students to be actively involved in the research culture of their host institution and to act as EASTBIO ambassadors by widening the PhD student network across Scotland.

b. Transferable Skills

Continuing to develop a range of personal and professional transferable skills is widely recognised as a key element of the postgraduate research experience. During Year 2, you will be expected to attend the following EASTBIO training:

- **Science Communication with Impact - “Telling Tales: The Importance of Narrative in Science”** workshop by Professor Jonathan Pettitt, University of Aberdeen (Edinburgh, 13 March 2023). This training includes preparation for building your scientific narrative and an opportunity to perform!

As you are expected to actively participate and help organise the EASTBIO Annual Symposia and the Industry Skills School, EASTBIO will provide you with specific transferable skills training. This workshop focuses on developing the skills you need to communicate your research effectively to scientific and non-scientific audiences.

- The EASTBIO partners offer environments fostering a research culture which support students to consider opportunities for public engagement, science communication and raising the media profile of your research by providing various training and opportunities to promote your work. Students can also explore becoming a STEM Ambassador. More information can be found on the link: <https://www.stem.org.uk/stem-ambassadors/join-stem-ambassador-programme>.

BBSRC expects all PhD students to carry out **two days of Public Engagement per year** throughout your studies and EASTBIO will ask you to explore opportunities and record your activities on your Training Development Record. All students are required to submit information about such activities through UKRI’s nominated online system (currently **Research Fish**).

- Consider attending **middle-stage PhD workshops** available via your local Institution, among which: Presenting Made Easy, Effective Writing, Proof Reading, Personal Effectiveness, Writing and Publishing, Digital and Library Skills, Managing your Digital Footprint.

c. Enterprise Skills

EASTBIO commits to advertising relevant external industry events, aligned with core EASTBIO research/expertise at frequent intervals, such as the opportunities below:

- **University of Edinburgh collaboration with Edinburgh Innovation** offers a number of events open to students (see <https://edinburgh-innovations.ed.ac.uk/events>), bite size sessions on IP, commercialisation, networking with non-academic partners, and Engage, a new online learning programme, that provides tools and confidence to grasp commercial

opportunities and supports translation of biosciences research (courses may require institutional log-in). All interested students are encouraged to consider undertaking this as a self-selected component of their training. Further information will be emailed to students.

- **The Royal Society of Biology Industry Skills Certificate** can support a career move into industry, in addition to existing qualifications. This recognises a set of skills and knowledge gained through the participation in online and in-person training courses. Information available via the link: <https://www.rsb.org.uk/careers-and-cpd/training/industry-skills-certificate>.



IV. Year 3: Professional Training for Student-Selected Development

During the middle stage of your PhD

- It is understandable if you find this period tough. Try not to worry and take care of your physical health. Take time to reflect, review your progress and start to look forward to life after your degree. Speak to others and identify ways to ensure that you have a good work/life balance.
- Review your research plan. Ensure it is still current.
- Focus on writing. Writing is hard work and requires commitment. Identify ways in which you can prioritise writing time. Experiment with different approaches to find ones which suit you.
- Reflect on the achievements you have made and how far you have come. Examine your skills and ask yourself what have you developed and what you want to develop now?
- Focus on communication skills. Find out about different ways to communicate your research or engage with communities impacted by it, and build on your networking skills.
- Think about what next – do some career planning.

Anytime between month 12 and 36 of your PhD, you will be undertaking your 3-month **Professional Internship (PIPS)**, which you will plan and prepare for in the first year of your PhD (except for those students whose placement is linked with their non-academic or industrial placement). Therefore, Year 3 is free from mandatory EASTBIO training events. However, we expect you to share your PIPS experience with your fellow EASTBIO students, when invited to the **PIPS and Collaborative Placement Q&A event** (1 & 2 February 2023) or the **Annual Symposium on the bioscience research** (Edinburgh, 12-13 June 2023). As PIPS is a unique feature of our programme, past student experiences is a great way of finding out more about it.

a. Transferrable Skills

EASTBIO supports your transition to the final year, when you will be working to complete your PhD research and finish your thesis, by running the following transferable skills workshop for all Year 3 students (attendance mandatory with an option to do the training in your fourth year):

- **Making the most of your final year:** this event (Edinburgh, 9 December 2022; mandatory for third-year students; also open to fourth-year students) provides advice and information on how to balance your work, thesis writing and submission with interviews, grant and job applications. Usually held in autumn in Edinburgh.

All EASTBIO students are expected to broaden their horizons during their PhD by actively engaging with organisations external to EASTBIO, which offer diverse Bioscience training opportunities.

- Workshops available via your local Institution include Viva Survivor, GradSchool Plan, The Funding Landscape and Writing Your First Fellowship Applications, Thesis Writing
- BBSRC expects PhD students to carry out some teaching as part of their PhD studies. The EASTBIO partner institutions support **tutors and demonstrators teaching and marking** by offering orientation courses for new or relatively new teachers, enhanced development courses for more experienced teachers, and support for gaining teaching accreditation.
- The **Three Minute Thesis (3MT)** is an annually run research communication competition that requires doctoral researchers to compete to effectively explain their research to a non-specialist audience in three minutes with one slide. The competition enables participants to share their research and develop their presentation skills, as well as competing for a prize fund and the chance to compete in the UK and Universitas 21 competitions. The competition starts with School Level Heats, which normally take place in March. Training entitled '3 Minute Thesis Competition Preparation Workshop' is provided for anyone interested in taking part in the competition, and the University finalists are offered specialist training in presentation and voice coaching, as well as effective slide design. The final is also live web-streamed and recorded and you can view previous competitions on the University's YouTube channel.
- **League of European Research Universities (LERU)** Doctoral Summer School, Information available via the link: <https://www.leru.org/doctoral-summer-school>.

b. Enterprise Skills

Industry-linked bioscience virtual innovation hubs recommended by EASTBIO include those listed below, which offer networking events, conferences, career support, webinars and resources. Events may have a small charge associated with them, which will need to be covered by you from your RTSG. Registration details are available on the websites. Below are some indicative suggestions:

- **Industrial Biotechnology Innovation Centre (IBioIC)** training includes Scale up for Bioprocessing, Bioprocess costing, Pitching to funders. Information available via the link: <http://www.ibioic.com/>.
- **Cool Farm Alliance**, Information available via the link: <https://coolfarmtool.org/>.
- **Scottish Aquaculture Innovation Centre**, Information available via the link: <https://www.scottishaquaculture.com/>.
- **SULSA** offers access to an outstanding broad bioscience conference and events programme. Information available via the link: <https://www.sulsa.ac.uk/>.
- **Knowledge Transfer Network (KTN)** helps businesses get the best out of creativity, ideas and the latest discoveries, to strengthen the UK economy and improve people's lives. Information available via the link: <https://ktn-uk.co.uk/>.

As UKRI BBSRC-funded students, you are also encouraged to engage with BBSRC-initiated training and external professional development opportunities as an important element of your transferable and scientific skills training. These include but are not limited to the following:

- **The Biotechnology Young Entrepreneurs Scheme (YES)**, Impact Writing Competition, etc. Information available via the link <http://www.yescompetitions.co.uk/>.

c. Professional Internships for PhD Students (PIPS)

To be undertaken between months 12 and 36 of your EASTBIO PhD

The Professional Internships for PhD students are unique to BBSRC-funded DTPs and form an essential and mandatory component of the EASTBIO PhD programme. The only exceptions to this requirement are: (a) **Collaborative students** who must spend a minimum of 3 months placement with their Collaborative partner company instead and (b) **Tier-4 visa holders** who may not be able to carry out PIPS due to visa restrictions. In the past year, EASTBIO partner institutions (Aberdeen, Edinburgh and St Andrews) have proceeded to review their PhD programmes so that these can be integrated with a non-academic placement for EASTBIO student while also conforming with UKVI rules and regulations. Confirmation of access to PIPS for Tier-4 visa holders will be communicated by the DTP Manager after the Induction Day.

Undertaking a PIPS will expose you to a non-academic professional 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 value this opportunity and share their experiences via short blog reports (see <http://www.eastscotbiotdp.ac.uk/information-current-students>) and presentations at the Placements Q&A session (1-2 February 2023). You will receive guidance, advice and support while organising your EASTBIO PIPS.

To prepare you for PIPS, EASTBIO will hold a specific event which is mandatory for all first-year students: **PIPS and Collaborative Placements Q&A event** (Edinburgh, 1-2 February 2023).



Phil Butlin

(Edinburgh, 2019 intake) who completed his placement with LettUs Grow

The EASTBIO 'PIPS Student Guide', which is emailed to all students, contains detailed information about PIPS. All necessary forms and training for your PIPS will be provided by the DTP Manager (see list of EASTBIO Contacts).

1. What type of internship is suitable for PIPS?

PIPS is 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 out with your immediate research-related environment. This is a chance to think creatively about the types of experience you would like to gain so that PIPS will benefit your career in the long term. This is not a stop-gap but a valuable life experience.

The following are just a few examples:

- carrying out an applied research project in industry;
- administering a research project or grant;
- developing policy for a research council or government;
- 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.

2. 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 bottle-necks 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.

You may also want to complete some relevant generic skills training in preparation for PIPS, such as:

- CV-writing and interviewing skills; entrepreneurship; time management; communication skills.

Dagmar der Weduwen
(St Andrews, 2019 intake) who completed her placement with the Naturalis Biodiversity Center



3. What is expected from you with regards to PIPS?

We are confident that you will take a proactive approach in organising your placement. The following points summarise what EASTBIO expects from you:

- source a suitable PIPS project with a suitable PIPS provider;
- plan the PIPS into your PhD work in collaboration with your PhD supervisor(s);
- complete all the necessary paperwork (forms, agreements, risk assessment approvals) for your PIPS and communicate them to EASTBIO, host university and/or host organisation, in accordance with milestones and deadlines set out in the 'PIPS Student Guide';
- engage with your PIPS provider in a professional manner, when you are developing your PIPS project;
- carry out and complete a PIPS of suitable length and scope whilst adopting a professional behaviour in the host organisation;
- submit an online report to **BBSRC on the outcomes of your PIPS** and a short report/feedback to EASTBIO published on the website'
- consider presenting your experience to other EASTBIO students (e.g. Placements Q&A session, Symposia).

There are four mandatory forms/documents to be filled in and returned to EASTBIO for approval:

- PIPS Student Planning Sheet – due by the end of Y1
- Bring An Intern On Board
- PIPS Internship Agreement – to be approved before PIPS start
- PIPS Host Organisation Feedback – due post completion
- PIPS Student Feedback for the website, and optional blog, podcast etc. – due post-completion

PIPS-related expenses (e.g. travel and accommodation) should be covered by your RTSG and we encourage you to seek financial support from the PIPS provider. If your PIPS require overseas travel or an expenses application, you should fill these two forms, as necessary:

- EASTBIO Abroad Pre-departure Checklist
- PIPS Expenses Application.

There are additional mandatory documents to be communicated to BBSRC:

- BBSRC PIPS Online Placement Report

Prior to completing the report online, **students need to send an email directly to the BBSRC to request a link to the report by month 36 of your PhD**. Please email pips@bbsrc.ukri.org. EASTBIO is not involved in this requirement but we understand that there may be a delay in a response to your email.

d. Industry-Linked Collaborative Studentships

The EASTBIO training programme has a number of PhD studentships which are developed as partnerships between academic and industrial/non-academic organisations. These are known as Industrial or Industry-linked Collaborative Studentships. This type of studentship includes a placement with a non-academic partner doing high quality Collaborative research work that is directly related to your research project in one of the areas of science relevant to BBSRC's strategic priorities. This is integral part of the PhD project of your studentship, as agreed

between your PhD supervisor and their non-academic partner. The non-academic partner will nominate a relevant person independent of your academic PhD supervisor, who will be responsible for provision of the appropriate level of management, support, direction and training while you will be working at the non-academic partner premises.

To ensure the smooth completion of the Collaborative studentship and placement and for our reporting purposes, EASTBIO will ask you to confirm the details of the project and placement that you will discuss with your supervisor and the non-academic partner organisation; essentially, we will need a copy of the Agreement, or Memorandum of Understanding (MOU), drawn with the industrial partner; this may be organised by the Business/Enterprise team at the host institution that holds expertise in industry collaborations. Alternatively, we will ask you to complete the EASTBIO MOU template.

EASTBIO Industrial partner organisations

Since its inception, EASTBIO has developed a steadily increasing number & range of partnerships with organisations outwith academia in a variety of areas; these include bio-industry, biotechnology, energy, environment, agriculture, livestock breeding and fishing, crops, policy, data and computing. The partnership with industry covers all aspects of our DTP, as follows:

- recruitment of students and Industry-linked projects;
- non-academic placements (both within the PIPS scheme and the Industry-Linked Collaborative Studentship placements);
- engagement with our Advisory Board in terms of strategic and future directions;
- engagement of partners in our Training Programme.

Industrial partners engage with the EASTBIO programme by working closely with EASTBIO supervisors to shape PhD projects that we recruit to, contributing to the selection of candidates, and providing students with appropriate support during their industrial placements both in terms of research and professional/business skills.

EASTBIO has developed guidelines pertaining to industrial collaboration and a process to monitor the successful delivery of both the collaborative project and the industrial placements that forms integral part of it. In line with our contractual requirements to UKRI BBSRC, we seek to ensure that students are properly supported through this part of their PhD. We contact new supervisors and their industrial partners at the start of the PhD to confirm arrangements, explain our requirements, invite supervisors to the Placement Q&A session (online, 1-2 February 2023) and ask to review the formal agreement that governs the project to be carried out during the placement before this can start. Finally, we engage with our industrial partners via our Industrial-focused events and activities – primarily our Annual Symposia (Edinburgh, 12-13 June 2023) but also events that are coordinated with our industrial partners (IBioIC, BBSRC initiatives, and our business/enterprise teams across the partnership) and through our Advisory Board.

1. What industry training are students doing a Collaborative studentship required to complete?

- All first-year students doing a Collaborative studentship must attend one of the two EASTBIO-specific **Enterprise Foundation Training**, which focuses on different aspects of industry, enterprise and innovation. This foundation training component is mandatory. Collaborative students must complete the following training: **'The Practical Entrepreneur - Business Skills for the Future'** which is delivered by the **Industrial Biotechnology Innovation Centre (IBioIC)**. The option of doing an industrial-focused primer on 'Aquatic

Animal Disease and Welfare', delivered by the University of Stirling, is currently being considered and details will be shared with students after the Induction.

- You must also take part in all components of the EASTBIO training programme and are required to complete training in Years 1, 2, 3 and 4. However, you are not required to carry out a PIPS.
- For your placement, you will spend between 3 months and up to a maximum of 18 months with the non-academic partner. This can be taken in one 3-month block at any point during the PhD or a number of shorter blocks giving the flexibility to plan in sync with the partner's business priorities. An integral component of your placement training is that it provides you with a training experience unavailable at your academic institution. This should include, to give some examples, training in project management, business strategy, intellectual property and finance.

2. What are EASTBIO and the BBSRC expecting from students with regards to Industry-Linked Collaborative Studentships?

We are confident that you will take a proactive approach to working in collaboration with your PhD supervisor to engage with the non-academic partner to deliver your placement project. The following points summarise what EASTBIO expects from you:

- Prior to starting your Industrial Collaborative Studentship, please ensure that you have read and understood any formal agreement signed between the University and the industrial partner. This contains essential details relevant to your Collaborative Studentship in keeping with UKRI terms and conditions and outlining agreed Intellectual Property (IP) and publication arrangements.
- Deliver the project work of suitable length and scope of your placement whilst adopting a professional behaviour in the non-academic provider carrying out the agreed training package.
- If you require overseas travel for your placement, you must complete the 'EASTBIO Abroad Pre-departure Checklist' prior to commencing work with your non-academic partner. The form will be emailed directly to students.

Guidance, advice and support are provided to the parties involved in Industrial Collaborative Studentships by the DTP Manager (please see details in the contact list).

V. Year 4: Consolidation

In the final year of your PhD, we expect you to focus on finishing your research project and writing up your thesis. We expect you to submit your thesis by the end of **September 2026**, adjusted accordingly if you do a part-time PhD or have a deferred start date.

With the end in sight, make sure that you know what is expected from you in terms of thesis formatting, submission and examination procedures and regulations.

- If you are still finding it difficult to get into a regular writing habit, consider attending a writing retreat.
- Ensure you know the standards required for your thesis. Become an expert proof reader!
- Prepare as best as you can for the viva examination.
- Continue to build a plan for your career post-degree.
- Although this can be a stressful time do still plan for breaks and taking time out for yourself.

We hope to stay in touch with all our graduates and we will be contacting you with invitations to engage with our training events and activities.

VI. Annual Symposium

The EASTBIO Annual Symposia are student-led events that are organised by second-year student representatives from all EASTBIO partners, with help from first-year student representatives. They are supported by an alternating member of the EASTBIO academic Management Group and the EASTBIO team. The Symposia are planned each year by a different EASTBIO partner (the Symposium lead) and take place on the 12-13 June in Edinburgh (John McIntyre Conference Centre, central area).

Of the annual symposia you will be asked to attend during your PhD programme, two have a focus on bioscience Research and two on the Societal or Industrial impacts of bioscience research:

- **EASTBIO Research Symposia** – presentations given by EASTBIO students on an academic research topic (Collaborative students do not present their work at this event).
- **EASTBIO Impact Symposia** – Industry-style presentations given by EASTBIO Collaborative students only, alongside IBioIC PhD students, plus invited speakers exploring the broader impacts of science in terms of society, commerce, policy and industry.

The EASTBIO Symposia are an essential part of your training as they provide you with excellent opportunities to prepare a pitch or a poster, present, and discuss your research with the wider EASTBIO community, invite the speakers you like to meet, chair sessions, network with a variety of stakeholders and contribute to debates and interactive workshops. All Symposia have a Wellbeing session, usually with a panel of guest speakers spanning a variety of perspectives and careers.

The next EASTBIO Annual Symposium with a focus on the industrial impact of bioscience research and industry-related skills will be hosted by the academic representative of the University of Edinburgh, and held in **Edinburgh on the 12-13 June 2022**; please save this date on your diary. EASTBIO supervisors should attend at least one of the two days and we will ask for volunteers for particular contributions. Make sure you check regularly the EASTBIO website for updates, at www.eastscotbiottp.ac.uk/eastbio-symposia.





VII. Industry-Linked Skills School

In your third or fourth year, you will be invited to attend the Industry Skills School “Broadening Horizons: Cultivating an Innovative Mindset”. This industry skills school offers theoretical and hands-on training on industry practice in Scottish industry facilities. It is a fantastic chance for PhD students (UK and overseas doctoral training programs) to harness the current industrial challenges and opportunities and avail of hands-on training, generating successful graduates, ready to embrace their diverse future careers.

You can be involved in developing the event programme alongside industry experts. EASTBIO will provide support, guidance and advice should you decide to volunteer to become one of the student industry-linked representatives. Places to attend are available by competitive application via EASTBIO.

For an example of previous Industry Skills School, “*Broadening Horizons: Cultivating an Innovative Mindset*”, please visit the following link: <https://tinyurl.com/y2vtb3bp>.



Supporting you and your well-being

Equality, Diversity and Inclusion

I was an EASTBIO DTP student 2015-2020 at the University of St Andrews studying how messenger RNA metabolism is affected during a condition called Myotonic Dystrophy Type 1. Since cataract is one of the most abundant symptoms of this condition, our focus was cell and molecular biology techniques, including a lot of different types of microscopy, to investigate how the eye lens epithelium is affected by changes to the RNA metabolism. This led us to uncover changes related to the epithelium's ability to handle stress and opened some doors to this line of research that is still ongoing from my departure.

I took on this PhD nominally because I loved lab work, research and I was still deciding where to focus my career aspirations. All I knew at the time was that I wanted to work within the remit of biomedical sciences, and eventually push towards translational research. During this time, not only did I become an expert in techniques within my field, but EASTBIO's resources and extra training allowed me to broaden my horizons and acquire new skills that wouldn't have been possible in other doctoral programmes. Some of those skills were not limited to science. I was the student representative of my cohort, and with that I organised symposia and training days that are valuable experiences in my CV, and have allowed me to improve communication, management and confidence.

Furthermore, during my time, I experienced a building fire that resulted in a loss of some of my work, I became a mother and went through a global pandemic. EASTBIO's flexibility and encouragement allowed me to adapt my working environment and, in the end, I came out stronger, wiser and with a wealth of knowledge not just in science, but the ability to prioritise and the importance of a work to life balance. Currently, I am the Cell Biologist in an academic-industrial collaboration within the University of Dundee, Centre for Targeted Protein Degradation, working within a team of different disciplines to uncover new approaches to drug discovery. I am forever grateful to EASTBIO for giving me the opportunity to accomplish my ambitions, to work efficiently whilst still having a very fruitful family life, and I have only just begun my journey!

Dr Selma Gulyurtlu (2015 EASTBIO Alumna) (School of Life Sciences, University of Dundee)

The EASTBIO programme team strongly supports you in bringing your whole self to work. We value diversity in all forms and expect all students who join our community to support and promote equality, diversity and inclusion. To find out more about the EASTBIO Equality & Diversity policy and plans, please visit our website at <http://www.eastscotbioldtp.ac.uk/equality-diversity-and-inclusion/>. The EASTBIO EDI Committee will review our policy and plans annually.

- At any time students can complete in person half-day awareness-building courses within any EASTBIO Institution that are aimed to raise their awareness of unconscious bias, to apply that awareness to an HEI setting and to develop ideas for research-led actions to mitigate personal, managerial and organisational bias in key people processes. Online courses are also available.

- Listening to what students have suggested, we aim to embed EDI statements and provision across the EASTBIO life, from recruitment to training. Concrete examples include having EDI sessions across our training, and asking students who help organise or co-organise events to contribute innovative ways of making sure our EDI mandate is met. We continue to work with our student reps and our Management and Advisory Groups to review and implement our agreed EDI goals. If you would like to be involved, please get in touch with the EASTBIO EDI Champion and Support Officer (for details, please see the contacts list) or the volunteer EDI reps (webpage above).
- We also encourage individuals to become drivers for change by offering contributions focused on personal or community-based experiences and insights to boost the visibility of various identities, consolidate our inclusive research ethos and help to embed recognition and broad respect for those identities. EASTBIO supports such contributions in our programme and our media, printed or digital.

We recognise that there is still a fair ground to cover for a culture-change to take full effect and we are appreciative of your support. During the Induction Day, we will be calling for EDI student volunteers who will be joining our current nine EDI reps from the first- and second-year cohorts to form the EASTBIO EDI Committee. We are keen to encourage students to take on this role; any student in any year of study are welcome to contact us to raise an issue or discuss proposed recommendations to strengthen our EDI provision. The EDI Committee will be meeting formally 3 times per year and liaise with the Management and Advisory Groups to discuss and review our EDI plan in support of student wellbeing.

In 2022, with BBSRC funding, EASTBIO has provided training in Mental Health First Aid to volunteers (students and academics) across the DTP. From October onwards, **the 13-strong EASTBIO Mental Health First Aiders group** will be available to provide support upon request to all students and supervisors across the partnership. We also hope to liaise with local groups and EDI contacts to catalyse positive shifts in research culture. Details about the group and the role of a student rep will be discussed at the Induction and circulated in October 2022.



Student Support Services

The EASTBIO Management Team, our supervisors and EASTBIO administrators support all EASTBIO students in terms of researcher and personal development and endorse the UKRI BBSRC Duty of Care pledge as laid out in the two key documents below.

- UKRI Statement of Expectations for Postgraduate Training
<https://www.ukri.org/files/legacy/skills/statementofexpectation-revisedseptember2016v2-pdf/>
- 2019 Concordat to Support the Career Development of **Researchers Researcher-Development-Concordat_Sept2019-1.pdf** (researcherdevelopmentconcordat.ac.uk)

We recognise that students will face challenges during their PhD programme, whether related to their research or in their personal circumstances. Such challenges have been exacerbated by COVID-19 longer effects and both our funder UKRI BBSRC and our partner organisations have issued resources and guidance to help guide students. Speak to your supervisor and contact your local administrator if you think you cannot identify or access existing support measures. It is the EASTBIO team's intention to listen to your concerns and make every effort to be supportive of you in these circumstances, as well as assisting you to build resilience during your PhD.

Sources of support for students at any time

Firstly, if you want to discuss concerns, please contact your local EASTBIO Management Group representative, who will be happy to talk with you and, if need be, help you identify further local resources. If you feel that there are circumstances which are impacting on your EASTBIO training or you need additional advice and support, please email any of the EASTBIO team (see EASTBIO contacts).

BBSRC stipend support is currently provided for periods of sickness absence of up to 13 weeks within any 12-month period, during which you will continue receiving your full stipend.

Maternity, paternity, adoption and parental leave entitlement is also stipulated for UKRI-funded students. For further details, see the UK Research and Innovation Training Grant Terms and Conditions at [UKRI-291020-guidance-to-training-grant-terms-and-conditions.pdf](https://ukri.org/ukri-291020-guidance-to-training-grant-terms-and-conditions.pdf)

BBSRC stipulation about Disabled students allowance (DSA):

<https://bbsrc.ukri.org/skills/investing-doctoral-training/disabled-students-allowance/>

We highlight below, useful information with regards to maintaining overall student wellbeing. Local disability and counselling services support can be obtained through relevant services in the institution you are based in, and there are many more services you can identify through these links.

Student wellbeing information can be found online via the following links:

<https://thewellbeingthesis.org.uk/> and <https://group.sagepub.com/wellbeing>

Hardship/Discretionary Fund across the partnership – if you are faced with significant material challenges, we advise you that your first discuss with your supervisor and local administrator who are best placed to advise you on support available for you.

<https://www.abdn.ac.uk/students/finance/money-matters-3712.php> (Aberdeen)

<https://www.dundee.ac.uk/guides/apply-discretionary-funding> (Dundee)
<https://www.ed.ac.uk/student-funding/hardship-funding> (Edinburgh)
<https://www.st-andrews.ac.uk/pgstudents/money/financialsupport/discretionary-fund/>
(St Andrews)
<https://www.stir.ac.uk/student-life/support-wellbeing/student-support-services/money-support/> (Stirling)

If you wish to access Counselling Services:

www.abdn.ac.uk/infohub/support/counselling-service.php (Aberdeen)
www.dundee.ac.uk/student-services/counselling/ (Dundee)
www.ed.ac.uk/counselling-services (Edinburgh)
<https://www.st-andrews.ac.uk/students/advice/> (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/courses-training/student-support/> (SRUC)

If you wish to access Disability services:

www.abdn.ac.uk/infohub/support/support-for-disabled-students-1901.php (Aberdeen)
www.dundee.ac.uk/disabilityservices/ (Dundee)
www.ed.ac.uk/student-disability-service (Edinburgh)
www.st-andrews.ac.uk/students/advice/disabilities/ (St Andrews)
<https://www.stir.ac.uk/student-life/accommodation/students-with-additional-support-needs/> (Stirling)
<https://www.sruc.ac.uk/courses-training/student-support/health-wellbeing/> (SRUC)

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)

To report a concern or make a complaint:

If you need to find help with any issue and are unsure where to start, you could:

- approach your PhD supervisor to discuss your concerns;
- talk to someone within your local Institution's Postgraduate Office as your host institution should have its own advice and procedures about complaints that you should refer to;

EASTBIO has an alert system for students in crisis to discreetly ask for support so please approach either the DTP Manager or the Support Officer who are both Mental Health First Aiders and can speak with you confidentially; it is entirely up to you whether you want to simply speak to someone or choose to escalate a serious concern (see EASTBIO Contacts). You can alternatively speak to a student – either an EDI student rep or a student Mental Health First Aider. Read the EASTBIO Privacy Statement at <http://www.eastscotbiotdp.ac.uk/>.

If you believe that you or a colleague has been subjected to inappropriate behaviour, please act promptly to report the issue so that steps can be taken to address the situation immediately.

If unsure, please refer to the UKRI's position statement on **bullying and harassment**. Information available via the link: <https://www.ukri.org/what-we-offer/supporting-healthy-research-and-innovation-culture/bullying-and-harassment/>.

Get involved!

EASTBIO News

If you have any publications, scientific presentations, a new collaboration, an interesting knowledge exchange or outreach experience, please email enquiries@eastscotbiodtp.ac.uk or Tweet to @EastbioDTP. We will be delighted to publicise your news on our website at <http://www.eastscotbiodtp.ac.uk/news>. We also publish student publications at <http://www.eastscotbiodtp.ac.uk/publications>.

In 2022, we are reinstating the monthly **EASTBIO Newsletter** that will communicate important training details and deadlines, training opportunities whether EASTBIO-based or not, EDI-related news and resources, achievements and stories from our current and former students and a lot more. We will invite a student editor every other month to curate one issue.



PhD Students

There are many ways in which you can engage more closely with EASTBIO and contribute to building a vibrant cross-institutional student network. You can enhance your leadership skills and volunteer as a **student representative** and/or an **EDI student representative**; you can volunteer as a guest editor to help curate the monthly EASTBIO Newsletter by either writing a blog or collating some news or stories of interest from your fellow EASTBIO students and their supervisors; you can also tweet about the EASTBIO training events or blog about them on the EASTBIO website. In the past, students have taken various support and networking initiatives with foci ranging from students-with-young-families to LGBTQ+ representation to environmental activism to location-based social groups. Please let us know if you would like EASTBIO to facilitate any initiative that is close to your heart or you feel strongly about. For our current student reps' details, see <http://www.eastscotbioldtp.ac.uk/student-representatives-2021>.

We are looking for student representatives for the 2022 student cohort from each of the EASTBIO partners. As a student representative, you will join our student committee and, among other things, you will have the opportunity to get first-hand experience in organising the EASTBIO Symposia or Industry Skills School by working closely with second-year student reps and the EASTBIO team; attend the EASTBIO Management Group meeting(s) and shape training developments; collect the feedback and opinions of your fellow students; raise issues that need to be escalated to Management level; facilitate connections with student reps, Mental Health First Aid groups and EDI committees at your host institutions and make a difference within the research culture you are part of; organise local social events and meetups, or get to tell us how you see your role.

You will also be invited to speak to prospective students, whether EASTBIO applicants keen for some insider advice for their application, or undergraduate students who are awarded funding to have a taster lab placement in the summer of 2023. For details of an exciting opportunity to influence people who are supported to consider a career in research, volunteer early for the Widening Participation REP Induction Day (Dundee, end of May 2023 TBC), <http://www.eastscotbioldtp.ac.uk/research-experience-placements>.

We will ask for volunteers at the Induction and offer 10 (training) points to our student reps in recognition of their contribution to the EASTBIO programme & culture.

If you would like to represent your institution or contribute in any other way, please email enquiries@eastscotbioldtp.ac.uk. Although we only expect one rep per institution, additional volunteers can stand as reserves and agree ad hoc on representing their local cohort to meetings and planning duties as relevant; you can notify us should your work requirements reduce your availability for such work.

Student profiles & testimonies

In the first year, you will be asked to create your personal profile for the EASTBIO website, which provides brief information about your background and your research project. This information helps other EASTBIO students and the wider scientific and non-scientific community to find out who you are and what your research is about. You can include your twitter handle, your personal website, or other relevant links and can ask us to update your profile at any point during your PhD research.

To promote the visibility of wellbeing, including both challenges and strengths associated with the PhD life, we will invite students and supervisors to provide brief personal testimonies highlighting personal paths, experiences, perspectives and shared achievements via a mock interview format; EASTBIO will share a provisional template with all students and will collate the testimonies shared with us for publication on the website.

You can see all EASTBIO cohorts at: <http://www.eastscotbioldtp.ac.uk/our-community> and the 2021 student cohort at <http://www.eastscotbioldtp.ac.uk/eastbio-student-cohort-2021>.

EASTBIO on LinkedIn

With seven cohorts of EASTBIO students having now successfully completed their PhDs (DTP1 & DTP2), we have set up 'EastBio Alumni/ae', a closed LinkedIn group for all our alumnae/-i who wish to keep in touch with us and one another. We ask you to consider joining the group and thus help us keep in touch beyond your graduation. We also urge you to use Twitter to communicate your research and your PhD experiences.

EASTBIO website

We want our website to be interactive. We invite your contributions, covering anything from research-related to personal narratives, to publish online with your agreement. For further details, please email enquiries@eastscotbioldtp.ac.uk.

PhD supervisors

EASTBIO has updated the guidance for supervisors into a Supervisory Charter to be shared with our academics directly and which includes specific EASTBIO requirements and how we see our approach to supporting the important role of supervision. This year, EASTBIO asks all new supervisors to attend an online training on Neurodiversity (late October 2022, details TBC), open to all current supervisors too. We hope to be able to provide more research networking opportunities to our supervisors and will confirm plans in the autumn of 2022.

This year, we are looking to consolidate the industrial collaborations with non-academic partners by also improving the visibility of information and outcomes of such partnership and we will ask supervisors of collaborative studentship for recommendations EASTBIO can implement.

We expect that your supervisors will not only actively support your research and development throughout your PhD, but also engage with you EASTBIO training by **(1) attending the Induction Day** (or arranging for a representative from your lab to attend in your place) that will provide the opportunity to gain a better understanding of the EASTBIO programme and the arising expectations from your supervisees; **(2) contributing actively to the thematic groups training** by supporting the student organisers; **(3) attending the EASTBIO Annual Symposia**, contributing to sessions and/or providing feedback to students during poster sessions and presentations; **(4) considering delivering one of our Foundation Masterclasses** in your area of expertise **(5) hosting EASTBIO students from other institutions in their laboratories** if there is a need for these students to acquire specific expertise; **(6) being involved in the industry side of our training programme** and **(7) engaging with the EASTBIO Management Group in reviewing both our training programme and recruitment process**. We monitor the engagement of supervisors with the EASTBIO programme and those who fail to engage will be discouraged from taking on the supervision of new EASTBIO PhD students.



EASTBIO Contacts

All the people below are very happy to be contacted with any queries you have about EASTBIO, so please do get in touch!

EASTBIO DTP Support Team

Dr Maria Filippakopoulou, EASTBIO DTP Manager & Equality, Diversity and Inclusion Champion
Email: enquiries@eastscotbioldtp.ac.uk and Maria.Filippakopoulou@ed.ac.uk

Sio Carroll, EASTBIO DTP Support Officer
Email: enquiries@eastscotbioldtp.ac.uk

EASTBIO Academic Management Group

Dr Gerben van Ooijen, EASTBIO DTP Director, University of Edinburgh
Email: Gerben.vanOoijen@ed.ac.uk

Dr Ian Archer, EASTBIO co-director, Industrial Biotechnology Innovation Centre for Doctoral Training
Email: ian.archer@ibioic.com

Professor James E. Bron, EASTBIO co-director, University of Stirling
Email: j.e.bron@stir.ac.uk

Dr Stewart Burgess, EASTBIO co-director, Moredun Research Institute
Email: stewart.burgess@moredun.ac.uk

Dr Edgar Huitema, EASTBIO co-director, University of Dundee
Email: e.huitema@dundee.ac.uk

Dr Sam Miller, EASTBIO co-director, University of Aberdeen
Email: sam.miller@abdn.ac.uk

Dr Thomas Otto, EASTBIO co-director, University of St Andrews
Email: to7@st-andrews.ac.uk

Dr Craig Simpson, EASTBIO co-director, The James Hutton Institute
Email: Craig.Simpson@hutton.ac.uk

Dr Jo Stevens, EASTBIO co-director, University of Edinburgh
Email: Jo.Stevens@roslin.ed.ac.uk

Professor Eileen Wall, EASTBIO co-director, SRUC
Email: eileen.wall@sruc.ac.uk

EASTBIO Associate Partners

Dr Richard Profit, Cool Farm Alliance General Manager
Email: richard.profit@coolfarmtool.org

EASTBIO Advisory Board members

Professor Iain Gibson, Aberdeen
Email: i.r.gibson@abdn.ac.uk

Dr Lucy J. Leiper, Aberdeen
Email: bms276@abdn.ac.uk

Dr Lesley MacVinish, Cambridge
Email: ljm1000@cam.ac.uk

Kim Matthews, Head of Animal Breeding and Product Quality, Agriculture and Horticulture Development Board
Email: kim.matthews@ahdb.org.uk

Professor Geraint Thomas, UCL & LIDo DTP
Email: g.thomas@ucl.ac.uk

Local Administrative Contacts

Mrs Karen Slesser, University of Aberdeen

Email: k.e.slesser@abdn.ac.uk

Mrs Gail Guild, University of Dundee

Email: sls-PhDAdmin@dundee.ac.uk

Mrs Elaine McDonald, University of Edinburgh

Email: RDSVS.PGR.Admin@ed.ac.uk

Mrs Helena Sim, University of Edinburgh

Email: Grad.Biol@ed.ac.uk

Ms Jessica Fitzgerald, University of St Andrews

Email: precbiology@st-andrews.ac.uk

Ms Jessica Murray, University of Stirling

Email: jessica.caie@stir.ac.uk

Coordinator, Industrial Biotechnology Innovation Centre for Doctoral Training

Email: skills@ibioic.com

Ms Laura Logie, James Hutton Institute

Email: Laura.Logie@hutton.ac.uk

Ms Dawn Latto, SRUC

Email: pg.research@sruc.ac.uk

2021 Cohort Student Representatives

The students shown below, including reserves (for more details, see <http://www.eastscotbiodtp.ac.uk/student-representatives-2021>), will continue to represent local student cohorts in 2022/23 and will work together with volunteers from our new student cohort, starting in October 2022 (contacts TBA after our Induction).

Felicitas Pamatat, University of Aberdeen

Email: f.pamatat.21@abdn.ac.uk

Josh Richards, University of Dundee/James Hutton Institute

Email: 2435501@dundee.ac.uk

Carys Redman-White, University of Edinburgh/CMVM

Email: C.J.Redman-White@sms.ed.ac.uk

Rose Doyle, University of Edinburgh/CSE

Email: rose.doyle@ed.ac.uk

Rochelle Kennedy, SRUC

Email: rochelle.kennedy@sruc.ac.uk

Benjamin Thompson, University of St Andrews

Email: bt64@st-andrews.ac.uk

2021 Cohort EDI Student Representatives

Jack Barber, University of Aberdeen

Email: j.barber.21@abdn.ac.uk

Erin Brown, University of Aberdeen

Email: e.brown1.20@abdn.ac.uk

Ella Catherall, University of Edinburgh

Email: E.R.Catherall@sms.ed.ac.uk

Abdelazeem Elhabyan, University of Edinburgh

Email: A.A.Elhabyan@sms.ed.ac.uk

Logan Newstead, University of Edinburgh

Email: L.Newstead@sms.ed.ac.uk

Monika Selvakumar, University of Edinburgh

Email: M.Selvakumar@sms.ed.ac.uk

Mert Ünal, University of Edinburgh

Email: S.M.Unal@sms.ed.ac.uk

Annamaria Wakileh, University of St Andrews

Email: aw274@st-andrews.ac.uk

Michaela Wegg, University of Edinburgh

Email: Michaela.Wegg@ed.ac.uk

Appendix

Appendix 1

The characteristics of a highly skilled and employable bioscience graduate

Research skills and techniques - to be able to demonstrate:

- ability to recognise and validate problems, original, independent thinking;
- ability to develop theoretical concepts; knowledge of recent advances within one's field and in related areas;
- an understanding of relevant research methodologies and ability to critically analyse and evaluate one's findings and those of others;
- an ability to summarise, document, report and reflect on progress.

Research environment - to be able to:

- show a broad understanding of the context, at national and international level, in which research takes place;
- demonstrate awareness of issues relating to the rights of other researchers, of research subjects, and of others who may be affected by the research, e.g. confidentiality, ethical issues, attribution, copyright, malpractice, ownership of data and the requirements of the General Data Protection Regulation;
- understand the processes for funding and evaluation of research and justify the principles and experimental techniques used in one's own research;
- understand the process of academic or commercial exploitation of research results.

Research environment - Health & Safety - to be able to:

- carry out assigned tasks and duties in a safe manner, in accordance with instructions/training and to comply with safety rules/procedures;
- bring to the attention of your manager/supervisor any situations or practices that may lead to injuries or work related ill health;
- obtain and use the correct tools/equipment for the work and not to use any that are unsafe or damaged;
- not to operate any plant or equipment unless authorised;
- report all near misses, incidents and accidents to your manager/supervisor and HSQE department;
- undertake Health and Safety training relevant to your work activities;
- maintain good housekeeping in areas in which you are working;
- to avoid improvised arrangements and suggest safe ways of eliminating hazards.

Research management - to be able to:

- apply effective project management through the setting of research goals, intermediate milestones and prioritisation of activities;
- design and execute systems for the acquisition and collation of information through the effective use of appropriate resources and equipment;
- identify and access appropriate bibliographical resources, archives, and other sources of relevant information;

- use information technology appropriately for database management, recording, and presenting information.

Personal effectiveness - to be able to:

- demonstrate a willingness and ability to learn and acquire knowledge;
- be creative, innovative and original in one's approach to research;
- demonstrate flexibility and open-mindedness, self-awareness, and the ability to identify own training needs;
- demonstrate self-discipline, motivation, and thoroughness; also, to show initiative, self-reliance and the ability to work independently;
- recognise boundaries and draw upon/use sources of support as appropriate.

Communication skills - to be able to:

- write clearly and in a style appropriate to purpose, e.g. progress reports, published documents, thesis;
- construct coherent arguments and articulate ideas clearly to a range of audiences, formally and informally through a variety of techniques;
- constructively defend research outcomes at seminars and viva examination and contribute to promoting the public understanding of one's research field;
- effectively support the learning of others when involved in teaching, mentoring or demonstrating activities.

Networking and team working - to be able to:

- develop and maintain co-operative networks and working relationships with supervisors, colleagues and peers, within the institution and the wider research community;
- understand one's behaviours and impact on others when working in and contributing to the success of formal and informal team by listening, giving and receiving feedback and responding perceptively to others.

Career management - to be able to:

- appreciate the need for and show commitment to continued professional development;
- take ownership for and manage one's career progression, set realistic and achievable career goals, and identify and develop ways to improve employability;
- demonstrate an insight into the transferable nature of research skills to other work environments and the range of career opportunities within and outside academia;
- present one's skills, personal attributes and experiences through effective CVs, applications and interviews

Appendix 2

Guidance about what is involved in the virtual Thematic Training meetings

Note that the EASTBIO Support Officer will be able to help with the logistics of this training and can be asked to help to carry out any of the communications necessary. You should also approach your local administrator who can assist with the booking of a suitable room, organise catering, ensure access to locations, etc.

Thematic Training factsheet:

- The goals of the Thematic Training are to help students build their understanding of the field and future directions, develop critical and analytical skills, engage with the key concerns in the relevant areas, network with other researchers and explore shared ground, and bond as a cohort.
- Prior to the Induction Day, EASTBIO will circulate an email with information that will enable students and supervisors to discuss the thematic training at the Induction break-out sessions: this will include short descriptions of all thematic projects in each of the 5 thematic areas, group details (names and contact details of students and supervisors), guidance on the aim of the training and the Induction break-out sessions, feedback forms, etc.
- At Induction, each group decides on host teams (to be leading each session); 4 focal topics; likely dates. 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. Each group to agree on a date in October for the group to meet to finalise the overall schedule so that the details are agreed with the majority of the group members; in that meeting you can also specify how you want the group to communicate, whether you would like to set up a digital group, run polls for decisions, etc. Each group to decide whether to include short project presentations as part of the thematic sessions and at what stage, depending on the focus of each session.
- Meetings to run in alternate months, starting from December, in order to avoid classes with Masterclasses starting in November and running in alternate months.
- Each group to consider holding the fourth meeting on the day before or after the Annual Symposium (Edinburgh, 12-13 June) so that students can be accommodated for another night in Edinburgh and network with peers for longer.
- Proposal to run one of the four sessions as a joined session across all themes with a focus on Impact, with support from the EASTBIO team.
- The student-supervisor team hosting each meeting starts planning by working closely with all group members about the format, goals of meeting, guest speakers, etc. Mixing up speakers and interactive activities is most effective, as well as running a critical reading club. You can consult thematic sessions in previous years but you are not limited by how previous cohorts approached this training; you can also discuss the experience by contacting the second-year student reps or by asking to see the feedback on file. Be conscious of the wide range of research topics within each thematic area and try to cover a range of different topics so that there will be something for everyone in each session. The planning of sessions provide experience in project & time management as well as event organising skills, but care must be taken so that no individual will carry the burden of planning single-handedly.

- If your plans involve the input of others, get started as early as possible. Guest speakers have very busy diaries, so invite them to join your meeting and ensure you have confirmed the dates from the speakers before the meeting facilitator sends out the meeting invitation email.
- Organisers must be very clear with the invited speakers/organisations you may approach about what you want, what kind of talk or sharing you are interested in. It may be beneficial to add to your invitation the names of any confirmed speakers who will be present at the meeting. This will give the speakers who join on the day an opportunity to speak with one another (doing this could prove quite beneficial when looking for speakers). Send a reminder email to the speaker(s) a week or so before the event to remind them of their commitment (even if people can still drop out late, despite doing this!).
- EASTBIO provides approximately £15/per student for catering (coffees and lunch) and we will try to support with any additional expenses, for instance any travel expenses for guest speakers (UK only). We expect that student travel expenses will be covered by student RTSG.
- Once a session is confirmed, the hosts notify EASTBIO so that the details can be updated on the website and circulated to the entire group. You should aim to have a confirmed date a month or more prior to each meeting and a confirmed schedule 10 days before the meeting takes place. Organisers should ensure that a reminder is sent one week and one day in advance of the meeting. You should also make sure that the notification of the confirmed meeting will also go to the second-year cohort as they are expected to attend a minimum of one out of the four annual meetings.
- Schedule for a full day, e.g. 10:00 to 16:00 with 15 minutes coffee break and 1 hour lunch break. Talks/presentations should be no more than 20min with 10-15 minutes for questions. Schedule time for comments, discussions, questions and use technology to ensure max interactivity, invite comments and questions in advance, run science quizzes, PechaKucha, etc.
- Assign two students to act as chair, facilitator, scribe, etc. for the smooth delivery of the session and make sure that you remind all of the need to send their feedback to EASTBIO.
- On the day of the meeting, the organisers should keep an attendance register and send it to EASTBIO so that the team can confirm the training points for students. You should also remind participants to submit their feedback and ensure that any resources, slides, notes or recommendations by guest speakers is shared with all attendees.
- **We suggest that each group produces a short digital resource to highlight the learning gained from the sessions, for instance a podcast, a YouTube video or any other resource that can be used on the EASTBIO website and social media.**

Role of EASTBIO supervisors

- Every thematic meeting is hosted by one or two students who have volunteered to be the meeting facilitators alongside their PhD supervisor; they lead on the planning with input from all group members. Student organisers and supervisors are jointly responsible for organising the schedule and facilitating the successful delivery of the individual thematic meeting according to the guidance set out in this section..
- EASTBIO supervisors who will lead a thematic meeting are expected to support their students as planners of thematic meetings, advising and inputting on topics, suggesting guest speakers and exploring different ways to optimise the benefit of these meetings for all attendees.
- Each meeting is hosted by a different partner institution so that the student group can benefit from contributions from multiple EASTBIO academics.
- EASTBIO supervisors are strongly encouraged to attend as many thematic meetings as possible or ensure that there are representatives from their lab engaging with the students in each meeting.

Role of facilitator/chair (for face-to-face and virtual meetings)

- Start the meeting off by **introducing the structure of the day and highlighting the ground rules, house rules**, etc. And ask all participants to switch on their cameras if possible. Let people know how to submit their questions/comments and read these out during discussions. We recommend the group rules also highlighted in writing and, ideally, circulated in advance to cater for those participants with a special adjustment plan in place (although everyone can benefit). This sheet can then be re-used at other sessions.
- To work together effectively, it's important to give people the opportunity to **build rapport**. Ask people to **introduce** themselves at the start of the meeting. If appropriate, ask everyone to share something interesting they did at the weekend, or what's going on in their local lab area at the moment. This helps you to know who's talking and builds better engagement.
- **Lead the meeting actively**. Your role is to pass the discussion from one speaker to another. Do that and you'll help everyone follow the conversation and signal to the speakers when it's their time to speak. When asking questions, be specific and direct your queries to particular individuals.
- It's also a good idea to **confirm people's understanding** from time to time. If your comments are met with radio silence, this might signal there's a problem with your tech, communication style or message. So, check that your fellow attendees are following what's being said.
- If you're using a 'chat' function to take questions or comments from attendees, the facilitator can monitor incoming messages.
- Check if there is **any other business** and ask "Did the content of this virtual thematic meeting meet your expectations?"
- At the end of every meeting invite all group members to provide feedback on the meeting by completing the template EASTBIO is using, **Thematic Meeting Student Evaluation Form**.

Group Interaction (virtual meetings)

- In virtual meetings, effective communication is key. So, speak slowly and clearly, pause after each key point, and ask attendees to take extra time to listen before adding any comments or questions.
- Start the meeting with introductions to warm people up and talk through today's agenda.
- Be clear in your communications around the agenda and purpose of the thematic meeting.
- Ask open questions.
- Be prepared, e.g. bring along questions submitted in advance / outputs / review updates from the previous meeting.
- Create space for people to think and reflect – silence if useful.
- If brainstorming or doing an exercise or activity such as online polls within your meeting, have absolute clarity around the ground rules. We recommend the use of smaller breakout rooms during virtual meetings. This creates the possibility for more direct dialogue as participants are more likely to engage with an activity this way.

Thematic Meeting Student Evaluation Form

At the end of each meeting, individual students must complete an online form, the link for which you will be sent by EASTBIO. The details below give you a sense of what we would like your input on.

The Evaluation is anonymous by default. Leave your name here only if you would like to be approached for further elaboration of your feedback.

EASTBIO Institution / other (please give details):

Thematic Group:

Date of meeting:

1. How would you describe this training meeting to a colleague?
2. Mark with X the main benefits you have gained from this training meeting

Improved knowledge and understanding	
Improved skills	
Improved confidence in responding to students/peers/colleagues	
New ideas	
Refreshment of existing skills and knowledge	
Anything else, please comment:	

3. Please rate the following aspects of the training meeting:
3= Strongly Agree 2=Agree 1=Disagree 0=Strongly Disagree

Statement	3	2	1	0	Any comments
The content of the training meeting was good					
The style of presentation(s) was good					
Opportunity & quality of the interactive discussions.					
The technology used worked well.					

4. What part of the training meeting did you find most useful?
5. What part of the training meeting did you find least useful?
6. How relevant was the meeting for your PhD role within your school/college?
7. Describe two things that you will do differently as a result of the meeting?
8. Are there any points you would like to make to improve the training for future participants?
9. Do you have any recommendations for guest speakers / suggestions for future training meetings?

Thematic Training Group Report

At the end of each meeting, each meeting organisers must generate a report by discussing it amongst themselves, and with the participants as relevant. EASTBIO will send you the organisers a link for this feedback collection process.

Thematic Group:

Thematic meeting date:

Please list details of any contributors to your meeting (guest speakers, facility managers, industry representatives, or students from other PhD training programs, etc.).

Please list details of meeting activities (key resources, software, useful website, etc.).

To keep moving forward decide in your group what the key benefits of your thematic training meeting were. Write a brief summary that includes:

- One new idea
- One insight
- One learning
- One action

That completes the report. Thank you for your contributions.



This publication can be made available in alternative formats on request.

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