

EASTBIO Message re COVID-19

Dear EASTBIO students and supervisors,

We wanted to get in touch to update you with some EASTBIO guidance for COVID-19, something we know you will all be thinking about. Our priority is your wellbeing.

Below, we have outlined a few of the likely implications of the pandemic for the EASTBIO programme. We suggest you read this guidance in conjunction with the guidance provided by your local institution and department. **If you have any questions about this at all, or need support please do not hesitate to contact Maria at enquiries@eastscotbiodtp.ac.uk.**

Symptoms and self-isolation

Please follow current guidance on this, which can be found here: <https://www.nhsinform.scot/self-help-guides/self-help-guide-coronavirus-covid-19>. If you will self-isolate, or are diagnosed with Covid-19, please ensure you inform your supervisor and copy in your local institution postgraduate administration.

Planned travel

Please follow your local institution guidance about travel. If you have already booked travel which now has to be cancelled this can still be claimed as usual, you will not lose the ability to claim these expenses from your EASTBIO funding.

We recognise this may have an impact particularly on fieldwork/collaborative lab visits. Should you be concerned about the impact of this on your studies, please discuss with your supervisor.

EASTBIO Events

We are in the process of postponing or exploring the possibility of moving events online for all EASTBIO events due to run before the end of June 2020. We know this will be disappointing in some cases, and we do aim to either reschedule or run elements of training online where possible in the longer term. Should you be concerned about the impact of a postponement on your studies, please discuss with your supervisor.

Training Credit requirements are immediately suspended until further notice.

PIPS/CASE Placements

We recognise that some PIPS/CASE placements currently underway or imminent will be impacted by COVID-19. Please contact Caroline.Pope@ed.ac.uk to discuss any implications of this with her.

If the experimental or health impacts will be likely to delay your PhD submission

We recognise that potentially your studies will be impacted by either hold-ups in experimental plans, limited research support services, delayed fieldwork or future closures. You should discuss any impacts with your supervisor first of all. You/your supervisor should then discuss this with your local institution and if needed follow local processes for requesting an extension or formal break from your studies. **Your supervisor and local institution should then notify EASTBIO.** Medical interruptions can provide additional stipend within BBSRC guidelines. The current UKRI advice is that this would not be provided for short-periods of self-isolation or extension, but we are asking them for advice where the impact on research is substantial. Please contact us if you have a specific query related to this.

Stress and concerns

We know this will be a stressful time for you. University support services will remain open but we want to reiterate that you can contact us at any time with any queries, or just if you need support. In addition to the help you can find locally and through us, if you would like an online, supportive resource we recommend Mind: <https://www.mind.org.uk/information-support/coronavirus-and-your-wellbeing/>.

With best wishes from,

Clare Blackburn, Director of the EASTBIO Doctoral Training Partnership and the EASTBIO Team

Edinburgh, 17 March 2020