

## EASTBIO Recruitment – FAQs

*Note that the questions shown below are questions frequently asked by candidates, updated with questions the EASTBIO team has received in the 2021/22 recruitment, whether by email, phone or during the online Q&A drop-in sessions in October, November and December 2021. We will update the list with any questions that represent queries and issues faced by our candidates. You can email the EASTBIO team at [enquiries@eastscotbiottp.ac.uk](mailto:enquiries@eastscotbiottp.ac.uk) at any point to ask us about our recruitment and your application.*

*Click on specific Contents, below, if you want to read more about a specific aspect of our recruitment that you have questions about.*

### Contents

Money .....	1
Eligibility .....	2
Projects .....	2
Process .....	3
Documentation .....	3
References .....	4
EDI Survey & support .....	5
Post-application .....	5

### Money

What does the EASTBIO Studentship cover?

- The EASTBIO studentship covers:
  - o Your PhD fees
  - o A minimum annual stipend set annually by UKRI. For 2022/23, the minimum stipend is £17,668 full time equivalent.
  - o An annual Research Training Grant (RTSG) of £5,000 from the first to the third year of study, reduced to £1,500 in the final year (write up).
  - o An annual travel bursary of £230.
  - o Additional expenses for your mandatory Placement (or Collaborative Placement) via competitive application at a maximum of £1,000.00.
  - o Disabled Student Allowance (DSA) – this is additional individual support available for students who have a diagnosed disability and require a number of adjustments during their programme of study.

Does the EASTBIO studentship cover the difference between home and international fees?

- Each EASTBIO partner institution confirms each year a waiver scheme for international fees; this means that international students will pay home fees.

As an international student, I have high costs to do with Visa application and health insurance in the UK. If I were to be successful and accepted by EASTBIO, would I be able to apply to be reimbursed for this kind of costs?

- At the moment, EASTBIO is unable to cover visa and health insurance charges for our international students. The EASTBIO Management Group takes this additional cost and the limitation it represents for individual students seriously and each partner institutions continues to explore options to provide further support to our international students.

Does EASTBIO cover for my travel costs if I were to visit the lab hosting the PhD project I am applying for?

- The EASTBIO Management will confirm the support we can provide for funded lab visits for students who will be shortlisted to attend an EASTBIO interview.

Does the EASTBIO Stipend cover the normal cost of life in Scotland?

- EASTBIO applies the UKRI minimum stipend for PhD students which has increased in September 2022 by 10% to £17,668 full time equivalent from 1 October 2022 onwards. This represents an increase in line with the national inflation.

## Eligibility

I am an international student, am I eligible to apply?

- Yes, you are but please note that we have a limitation of the number of students that we can fund each year, as determined by our funding body, UKRI BBSRC. We cannot fund more than 30% of the annual student intake.

I am an international student with Indefinite Leave to Remain in the UK, am I eligible to apply?

- Yes, you are. Please see above.

I am an EU national with settled status and I have lived in the UK for over 3 years, but for educational purposes (study). Am I eligible to apply?

- Yes, you are.

## Projects

I have an idea for a PhD project. Would EASTBIO fund my project if I could secure a supervisor?

- No, we would not. EASTBIO is funded by UKRI BBSRC to support PhD students who are recruited on the basis of pre-approved PhD projects and themes that are of strategic priority to UKRI BBSRC.

I am interested in multiple projects. How do I go about it? Do I contact all supervisors before I apply and get them to support my application?

- EASTBIO considers applicants who have been nominated by project supervisors. Therefore, and although you may apply for up to 3 projects, you will need to contact individual supervisors and discuss your application with them before you submit it to each host institution.

I want to apply for more than one projects. Do I send the same application to the different institutions?

- Please send a different application to each institution hosting a project you are applying for. This may in effect consist of similar elements, but you may want to rephrase some of your statement to match the project that you wish to apply for.

If I apply for two projects and be nominated for both of them, am I to be shortlisted for both? How does the EASTBIO review committee decide on which of the two I should be interviewed for? Will I be asked?

- If your two projects you are both nominated and shortlisted for are within the same thematic area (for instance, Crops and Soil), you do not need to do anything about it. If you get interviewed by the Crops and Soil thematic panel, and receive an offer from EASTBIO, you will be asked to make a choice of the preferred project of the two at the point of the offer being made to you. Should the two projects fall within two different thematic areas (for instance, Crops and Soil and Livestock and Aquaculture), EASTBIO will ask you to score the two projects by order of preference so that you will be invited for a single interview for your first preference. We cannot interview shortlisted candidates more than once.

## Process

I want to do a PhD in Aquaculture/Bioinformatics, etc. Where can I get list of prospective supervisors in that area?

- EASTBIO advertises a number of projects across strategic areas including Aquaculture and Transformative Technologies. The PhD project advert features the names of the project supervisors, who can be contacted via the details provided, or via a search on the institution website hosting the project(s) in question.

Do I apply for the PhD project and, if I am accepted, I apply for the funding?

- No, your EASTBIO application is both for the PhD project you are interested in and the UKRI BBSRC-funded studentship.

Do I need to send my application and any of my application documentation to EASTBIO directly to make sure that my application will be submitted?

- No, you should not send your application to EASTBIO. You submit your application to the institution hosting the PhD project you are interested in. If you are nominated by the project supervisor, your application will then be sent to EASTBIO, where it will be scored and assessed by the EASTBIO thematic panels.

Can I apply to the EASTBIO programme for a second time?

- Yes, you can.

Where on EUCLID do I upload my EASTBIO Application Form?

- Please follow the guidance provided and upload your EASTBIO Application Form under the section Research Proposal.

## Documentation

Can I send EASTBIO my academic CV so that I know whether I can apply to the programme?

- No, you do not need to send an academic CV to EASTBIO as the EASTBIO Application Form has a relevant section for details usually provided in the CV. The PhD project supervisor may ask for your CV before they nominate an applicant to EASTBIO.

Are there other documents I will need to submit besides those mentioned on the EASTBIO “How to Apply” webpage, like IELTS score or a research proposal?

- EASTBIO requests only the documents specified on that page so that all applicants will be assessed on the same basis. However, the institution hosting the PhD project you apply for may ask for additional documents and you should ensure to provide these; details are given on the PhD project advert on Find-A-PhD.

I will not have completed my integrated Masters course by the closing date. Am I still able to apply?

- Yes, you can still apply. You should ensure that the end date of your Masters course is before October 2023, which is the default start date for the PhD programme. Please note that a deferred date is also possible, after discussion with the project supervisor and the host institution.

The Institution I am applying for has requested that I should also submit a statement of interests. Is this additional to the statement on the EASTBIO application form?

- Yes, it is additional and not part of your EASTBIO application form. Our partner institutions may ask applicants for additional documents and forms and you should ensure that you will have read the guidance provided on the PhD project advert carefully before submitting the required documents.

## References

Will my referees be asked by EASTBIO to provide their letter of support for me?

- EASTBIO will not contact your referees. The institution hosting the project(s) you are applying for will provide guidance for referees to follow and this may vary from institution to institution. Download the EASTBIO Reference form from <http://www.eastscotbiotdp.ac.uk/how-apply-0>, read the guidance on the Find-A-PhD project advert, and send it to your two referees with some details of what to expect; explain to them that you may ask them to send their reference for you to more than one institutions if you are considering applying for more than one projects hosted at more than one institutions. If you are unsure, please contact the person named on the PhD advert on Find-A-PhD.

Can the prospective supervisor provide a reference for me, as they were my MSc tutor?

- No, they cannot. You should ask another academic or professional who can provide some comments on your application.

I am not sure whether to submit my references via a specific link, or via email?

- Specific guidance for references is provided by the host institution on the PhD project advert on Find-A-PhD.

Will references submitted after the closing data be accepted?

- There is some flexibility around this, but you should contact the local administrator at the host institution to make them aware of any concerns around references.

## EDI Survey & support

Do I use the receipt number or I create my own ID in the online form?

- The Online Survey will automatically generate a unique respondent number that you can copy and paste on your EASTBIO Application Form. You do not need to do anything other than complete the form on the link we have shared via the web-page.

I am unsure about how to provide the EDI Survey Receipt Number requested on the EASTBIO Application Form. Do I have to do something to generate it?

- No, you do not; see the answer above. The Online Survey will automatically generate a unique number that you can use as instructed.

Can I download the EDI Survey and submit it to the Institution I am applying for?

- No, we do not advise you to do that as the survey asks for personal data that will be accessible to the EASTBIO DTP Manager only and will only be used to flag applicants for specific protected characteristics we use under our Equality, Diversity and Inclusion Policy. Please read our Privacy Notice at <http://www.eastscotbiodtp.ac.uk/>.

I have a family. What can I expect in terms of support from EASTBIO if I am awarded a PhD studentship?

- EASTBIO and EASTBIO partner institutions have a variety of support mechanisms for existing students in place that are reviewed each year and shared via the Student Handbook (for a current version, please go to <http://www.eastscotbiodtp.ac.uk/eastbio-handbook>, the webpage, and our monthly Newsletter and direct communications with students. For more information, please go to the EASTBIO EDI web-page at <http://www.eastscotbiodtp.ac.uk/equality-diversity-and-inclusion>.

## Post-application

What are the criteria for selection for the EASTBIO programme?

- The selection criteria are the candidate's academic merit and potential, as well as fit to the EASTBIO Programme. Candidates are assessed on the basis of their application, their interview and their understanding of the EASTBIO programme.

Is there a specific date by which EASTBIO will notify all applicants, whether successful or not?

- We cannot guarantee a date by which final notifications will be sent out to candidates due to the nature of our recruitment, jointly across our nine partner institutions.

When do I need to start preparing my presentation?

- If you are shortlisted by EASTBIO, you will receive an invitation to an interview at least ten days before the interview date. The interview presentation will be on the project that you have applied for. Therefore, you can start reading around the topic as early as you need to, especially if the project supervisor has confirmed that they intend to nominate your application.