**EASTBIO DTP Placements**

**2024 Student Guide**

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# What is the PIPS scheme?

**General context:**

PIPS stands for Professional Internships for PhD Students and is a UKRI BBSR-funded scheme in support of DTP-funded PhD students. As mandatory part of the EASTBIO DTP Training Programme it aligns with our commitment to providing our students with support in the development of career-focused, professional and entrepreneurial skills. The scheme is open to all EASTBIO PhD students: (a) those who are carrying out a standard PhD project; (b) students on a tier-4 visa; (c) optional for students on a studentship collaborative with a non-academic or industrial partner as they are required to do a placement at the premises of their non-academic partner, and (d) students associated with the EASTBIO training but not directly funded by EASTBIO. Specific guidance for each category will be provided in this guide.

**Definition:**

PIPS refers to a 3-month integrated student placement in a professional environment that is non-academic, during which the student works full-time on a project unrelated to their field of research (their PhD project). In other words,

* The organisation where you are to do your placement cannot be in an academic research setting; specific exceptions to this may be considered on a case-by-case.
* Students cannot carry out a research project in a clinical academic setting even if the field is unrelated to the student’s research; exceptions to this may be considered on a case-by-case.
* Students must choose a placement that is not related to your field of doctoral research.

**Objective:**

To give you an opportunity to gain professional experience, a variety of professional skills, insights into a different operational context and a new set of contacts in a non-academic setting before your graduation. The overall aim is to enhance your employability by helping you, as an early career researcher, to understand the context of your research, to get exposure to a range of career opportunities available after graduation, and to try out a professional role that is outwith your default lab researcher work.

In lay terms, and as former students have told us repeatedly, this is a great opportunity to do something practical, get a taste of something that you have been wanting to do (besides research!), safely discard (or reconsider) a second or third career option, test your commitment to a career in academia, explore work that albeit non-research related can have some meaningful connections with research outreach, impact or use, or, simply, get a quick sense of gratification by completing a meaningful project in a short time.

**Intended benefits to the student**

There are many different ways in which you will benefit from the experience of an internship, which may include:

* Getting direct experience of working in a professional environment that does not directly relate to your PhD project;
* Making a positive contribution to the work of your host organisation by, for example, managing a non-research project, developing policy, undertaking a discrete research project in industry, enthusing the next generation of researchers, and communicating science to a broader audience;
* Helping you to better understand the wider context of your research;
* Giving you the opportunity to consider the direction that your career might take after completing your PhD and broadening your awareness of areas where you can make a distinctive contribution;
* Building your confidence and making you a well-rounded individual;
* Giving you a chance to see the ‘big picture’ of your research and making you, therefore, a better researcher.

**Benefits to the host academic institution**

* building collaborations with non-academic partners;
* linking research with policy-making, business, or the wider public;
* demonstrating the wider context of research;
* promoting the excellence of the institution to prospective students and employers alike by managing a range of fulfilling internships;
* getting further evidence of researcher development opportunities.

**EASTBIO expectations**

EASTBIO Placements are essentially student-led. Although EASTBIO will advise, support, share advertised opportunities, and facilitate your steps in securing a rewarding placement, sourcing your PIPS host organisation and project is your responsibility.

Your PhD supervisor can help you directly by familiarising themselves with the PIPS scheme and its aims, providing you with ideas and/or relevant contacts, be a regular point of contact and support during your PIPS but, also, with specific steps, such as checking and signing your PIPS Plan and PIPS Agreement, or helping you with the risk assessment for a placement abroad.

The continuation of your PhD funding after PhD month 37 is subject to meeting the UKRI BBSRC requirement to complete your internship before month 36.

**PIPS Exceptions**

All funded students are expected to carry out a placement as this is a mandatory and a key requirement of the DTP Programme. However, there may be rare circumstances where a revised completion plan, or even a waiver may be necessary and will indeed be considered by EASTBIO and the relevant Academic lead(s). Circumstances include, for example, a grave change in the student’s personal circumstances, the PhD project, the intended programme outcome, or any other pressing and serious impact on the capacity of the student to complete an internship within the prescribed period of the three years. Concerns of that nature should be communicated as a matter of urgency to the EASTBIO DTP Manager, who may involve the local Academic lead for the affected student’s host institution in the process of reviewing a request for exemption or revision of the PIPS requirement.

**PIPS Terminology:**

* ‘PIPS’ is used alongside the terms ‘internship’ and ‘placement’ throughout the Guide. The only exception is that it cannot be used in relation to the placement that students on Collaborative Studentships are expected to do as different conditions apply to this type of placement.
* ‘PIPS provider’ or ‘PIPS host organisation’: Organisations that advertise a PIPS project or a placement opportunity, are considered for a placement by students, or provide a placement.
* PIPS MOU refers to the mandatory form ‘Placement Agreement’ or Memorandum of Understanding (MOU) that records the details of the PIPS project as agreed by all parties - the student, the PhD supervisor and the PIPS supervisor or mentor, and the EASTBIO representative; the signed document is approved and shared with all prior to the start of the student internship.

# How is PIPS funded?

**General**

As PIPS is mandatory for funded students, you continue to receive your PhD stipend during the 3 months of the placement, as normal, while working full-time on the agreed PIPS project. Any PIPS expenses are to be covered by your RTSG and the PIPS host organisation is expected to cover any project costs (consumables) during the placement. If you need to travel for your placement at a distance of 50 miles or more from your normal term-time residence, then:

(a) you are advised to ask the PIPS host for support towards additional costs such as travel and accommodation, and/or

(b) you are entitled to apply to EASTBIO for additional expenses of a maximum of £1,000 (set at £300 for travel maximum and £700 for accommodation maximum)

In the (b), please submit your application to EASTBIO as early as possible after you receive a placement offer as the approval of the additional funding needs to be awarded before your PIPS begin. Note that awards are made on a competitive basis to ensure our support for as wide a range of students as possible. We make you aware of the funding limitations from the EASTBIO side as early as possible. EASTBIO cannot support students beyond this level, hence we encourage students to discuss a contribution towards your travel or accommodation with your prospective PIPS host and, also, pursue alternative sources of funding. This may be especially pressing for students seeking a placement abroad/overseas.

**Payment from the PIPS host organisation**

PIPS providers are not expected to pay students a salary during the internship. However, some may choose to do so. If that is the case, please note that the scheme is in line with UKRI BBSRC terms and conditions, as follows:

* Where there will be payment from the PIPS host organisation during the internship of the equivalent of a PhD stipend, EASTBIO must be notified asap so as to pause the PhD stipend for the PIPS duration; this is implemented if the PIPS location is within a distance of less than 50 miles from your normal term-time address.
* If the student is in receipt of a salary from a PIPS host organisation that is located more than 50 miles from the academic Institution, the PhD stipend will not be stopped by EASTBIO; that is, the student will be in receipt of both the PIPS host salary and the PhD stipend during the internship. However, in this case the student will not be eligible to receive any PIPS additional expenses.
* If the student is in receipt of a salary from a host organisation that is located less than 50 miles from the academic Institution, part or all of the PIPS stipend may be stopped by EASTBIO. The total payment received by the student should not be less than the EASTBIO PhD stipend.

# PIPS Duration, Timing, Format

* The PIPS total time must be the equivalent of 60 working days (12 working weeks) full-time (35 hours per week) and the agreed dates must be shown clearly on the final ‘PIPS Agreement’ form before it can be approved; the PIPS Planning form can feature provisional dates indicating that student and supervisor have discussed this early on. PIPS should be taken as a continuous 12-weeks block but a UK-based internship may be taken in a number of shorter blocks (minimum 2 days per week) as long as the total number of working days is 60. For instance, the form submitted to EASTBIO for approval may indicate an agreed arrangement for “2 days per week over 8 months, with specific days such as, say, Tuesdays and Wednesdays weekly, making up the required total of 60 days”. Other options such as carrying out the placement at different periods in the year must be discussed and agreed with the explicit agreement of the PIPS host organisation as ad hoc arrangements may be more challenging to manage or carry less benefits for the student’s development.
* EASTBIO require that PIPS takes place between months 12 and 36 of your PhD. If you have specific concerns with this condition, please contact the DTP Manager as early as possible to discuss.
* You may feel that your internship should be taken at a certain time of the year or at a particular stage of your PhD in order to avoid disruption to your project. For example, fieldwork or seasonal variations should be taken into account and flexibility applied. In other words, your internship should be carefully tailored to your individual constraints and in advance so that it fits into the 12-to-36 month window of your PhD.

The format – and alternatives - of the PIPS depend on your PhD schedule and personal constraints, the capacity and requirements of the PIPS host organisation, and the type of project agreed. Any non-standard arrangement should be explicitly described on the final PIPS Agreement form so that mutual expectations are transparent to all parties.

**PIPS location**

* You will be expected to spend the majority of your internship working in the host organisation’s premises, although some travel to external sites and other organisations may be necessary. EASTBIO recognises that remote or hybrid PIPS may be necessary due to circumstances that are related to the student’s personal circumstances (especially if they have a young family, additional caring responsibilities, managing ill health or adisability), the timing of the placement or the requirements of the project itself. Such remote or hybrid arrangements need to be discussed in details and agreed by the student and the PIPS host organisation before the start of the placement and recorded on the PIPS Agreement submitted for approval.
* Internships could be hosted by more than one host organisation if this is considered appropriate. For example, students may wish to work on an outreach programme for a month in three different schools. However, for three different organisations, three different PIPS Agreement forms will have to be agreed, signed and approved.
* PIPS can be taken abroad in line with your professional goals. However, students are advised to give this option careful thought given the additional logistical and financial requirements for this option. EASTBIO has very limited funding open to students who face additional costs for placements at a distance of 50 miles or over – as described above, maximum funding awarded £1,000 per studentships. Students are asked to ask for their prospective PIPS host agreement for support with these costs or seek alternative sources of funding before committing to the PIPS project. By default, any extra costs associated with a placement abroad should be met by the PhD student (out of your RTSG) and/or host organisation. All overseas internships must be 12-weeks long.
* Students on a tier-4 visa may have specific restrictions on taking a placement abroad so they should seek the advice of the Immigration service of their host institution before proceeding making further plans.

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

* Complete all necessary Risk Assessment Procedures as prescribed by the local institution you are registered with.
  + Submit a ‘Leave of Absence’ form according to the regulations of the institution you are registered with.
  + Fill in the EASTBIO form ‘Placement Abroad Pre-departure Checklist’and submit to EASTBIO prior to your PIPS starting.

# Range of suitable PIPS

The objective of PIPS is to provide you with a unique, tailored experience chosen from a wide range of workplaces. Internships should ideally be discrete projects that are well planned and managed and can be completed with the 3-month period. They should provide experience at a level appropriate for a postgraduate student.During the internship you may wish to gain skills and experience in the following areas:

* Being customer-focused
* Influencing others
* Leading, developing and managing people
* Managing finances and resources
* Planning and organising
* Problem-solving and decision-making
* Pursuing professional excellence in a particular non-academic environment
* Thinking and acting strategically

Examples of different types or environments for PIPS include:

* Industry:
  + a short desk-based research project in a non-academic setting
  + review or analysis of manufacturing, processing, or production techniques
  + non-research roles, such as marketing, publishing, or sales
  + business development, or project management
* Legal offices
  + Patent-related project
* Consultancy
  + auditing projects
  + (non-academic) research projects
* Teaching – in schools, using the Researchers in Residence scheme in the University of Edinburgh (https://www.ed.ac.uk/women-make-cities/researchers-in-residence), or through other similar mechanisms found in most partner institutions
* Trainee internships – advertised by EASTBIO or student-sourced
* Policy sector – developing policy or working in a related setting, such as a government department, local authority, non-departmental public body, professional association, think tank, charity (with clear links to scientific activities), or research funder
* Media industry – a wide variety of roles are possible here that help students understand the wider societal context of their research. Such internships could include working in science communication roles in a charity or other roles in:
  + Press office
  + Science publishing company

**Quick check of PIPS suitability**

|  |  |  |
| --- | --- | --- |
| If the answer to any of the questions below is ‘NO’, then the organisation you are considering does not meet with the BBSCR PIPS scheme criteria. | YES | NO |
| Does the PIPS you are considering fit with the ethos of the UKRI BBSRC goal “to help students understand the context of their research and to expose them to a range of opportunities available to them after they graduate”? |  |  |
| Can the PIPS host organisation provide you with the following:   * A professional environment external to the academic institution? * Mentorship/Supervision (non-academic) on a day-to-day basis? * Desk space within physical work premises external to the academic institution? Or, in case of a remote PIPS (if approved), alternative appropriate structures to support home working? * Willing to complete the EASTBIO ‘PIPS Agreement’ with necessary health and safety policy, insurance, and liability in place? * Scheduled opportunities to interact with professionals from a non-academic background. The professionals that the PhD student will work with during this internship may include scientific writers, editors, client services, team members, creative team, senior leadership team, human resources; there may be some interaction with pharmaceutical client contacts, journal editors, admin staff, etc. |  |  |
| Does the PIPS project you are considering offer opportunities to develop professional skills and gain experience appropriate to PhD level? Below are some examples:   * Being customer-focused; * Influencing others; * Leading, developing and managing people; * Managing finances and resources; * Planning and organising in a non-academic setting; * Problem-solving and decision-making in a non-academic setting; * Pursuing professional excellence in a particular non-academic environment; * Thinking and acting strategically; * Gaining commercial awareness. |  |  |
| Will I spend a total of 12 weeks (or totaling 60 days) doing this PIPS? |  |  |

# PIPS paperwork

**Mandatory forms:**

1. PIPS Planning form

The form contains 2 Sections:

1. Section A to be completed by the end of September of your first year and submitted to [placements@eastscotbiodtp.ac.uk](mailto:placements@eastscotbiodtp.ac.uk) for approval, and
2. Section B to be completed after you have been offered an internship and submitted to [placements@eastscotbiodtp.ac.uk](mailto:placements@eastscotbiodtp.ac.uk); this is to allow us to check the project details and ensure it is at the level suitable for a highly-skilled PhD student. Although this is an optional step, you can use the form questions to structure your discussions with the PIPS host organisation and then copy in the contents directly onto the following form (MOU)
3. PIPS Agreement (Memorandum of Understanding - MOU)

To be completed once the intended PIPS project and plan have been refined in close collaboration between the student, the PIPS host organisation and the PhD supervisor. It is the student’s responsibility to return the completed form, signed by all parties to [placements@eastscotbiodtp.ac.uk](mailto:placements@eastscotbiodtp.ac.uk) for EASTBIO approval before PIPS can commence. Students who begin their internship without previous formal approval of the PIPS Agreement, shared will parties, will not be insured and PIPS cannot be retrospectively approved.

1. PIPS Feedback forms, one by the student and one by the PIPS host organisation, to be submitted to [placements@eastscotbiodtp.ac.uk](mailto:placements@eastscotbiodtp.ac.uk) once the internship is completed.
2. BBSRC PIPS Placement Report – this is submitted directly to BBSRC after the student requests a unique link from [PIPS@bbsrc.ac.uk](mailto:PIPS@bbsrc.ac.uk), within 3 months from completion of PIPS, and before month 36 of your PhD. Please note that BBSRC may also request PIPS case studies, information for which will be circulated directly to students by EASTBIO.

**Optional**

1. PIPS Expenses form for up to £1,000 for travel and accommodation on a competitive basis - optional,to be approved by EASTBIOprior to starting PIPS
2. PIPS Abroad Pre-departure Checklist (for overseas PIPS)

All PIPS forms are published on the EASTBIO website at <http://www.eastscotbiodtp.ac.uk/professional-internships-phd-students-pips> and will also be sent directly to first-year students after the Induction Day (October).

# How to manage your placement

EASTBIO has designed the PIPS scheme around three key principles:

* **Student-centred and student-led**: the scheme helps to develop the student capacity to reflect on their professional aspirations, knowledge needs and development trajectory, collect and process information and develop their own internship ideas so that they can take action to plan an internship that is meaningful to them personally within the scheme’s remit. It is the student who carries responsibility for leading on the PIPS planning according to the timeline and frame provided by EASTBIO.
* **Support to students by their PhD supervisor**: EASTBIO communicates early our expectations to supervisors. They are invited to the Induction and the PIPS Q&A session and are expected to work together with students, engage with and help them to build confidence to make decisions about internship opportunities and agree on the appropriate timing of an internship within the overall PhD schedule (between years 1 and 3 of the PhD).
* **Support by the EASTBIO team**: The PIPS scheme is administered by the EASTBIO team - the DTP Manager and Support Officer - who support students from start to finish and communicate feedback, progress and concerns related to the PIPS scheme with the EASTBIO local academic leads (members of the EASTBIO Management Group). Other than the Induction Day, students attend the online EASTBIO Placement Q&A session in February of their first year of PhD, where key information is shared about the process, expectations and timeline of the scheme and where students get access to EASTBIO students who have completed their placement and discuss experiences, insights and tips. First-year students get early access – following the Induction Day -- to the PIPS Student Guide and other resources (including forms to use), as well as the EASTBIO team that monitors their progress and helps them to stay on track. The resources shared include: communicating professionally with organisations; engaging proactively to obtain necessary approvals prior to starting and after completion of their internship; additional support in case of difficulties securing an internship; support with additional needs and requirements, etc.

A diagram of a diagram

Description automatically generated with medium confidence

Figure 1 PIPS Process at a glance

## Before your PIPS

To start planning:

* Reflect and review on which professional skills you would like to develop during your placement. When you explore potential host organisations, try and match such skills with an organisation that has a good track record in offering relevant opportunities in the area of your interest. Be aware of the benefits of developing a self-reflection practice as part of your daily work routine - this will help you to sharpen your intentions, optimise your plans, and set clear directions for future action. Most partner institutions will have relevant resources made available via their Careers or Employment services; indicatively, see the University of Edinburgh Careers team Reflection Toolkit at <https://www.ed.ac.uk/reflection> (sign in required).
* EASTBIO will regularly circulate internship opportunities directly and via the website and the monthly Newsletter.
* Approach your local Careers Advice Service to research ideas on what kind of organisation, environment or sector you would like to pursue your PIPS in (industry, policy, government, NGO, legal, charity, outreach, etc.), what opportunities exist, what support there is to plan successfully.
* Network to gain useful information that will guide your choices:
  + Use your personal support networks -- your PhD supervisory team, other trusted colleagues, lab members, PGR advisors, friends or family – to seek input or recommendations they may be able to make, or for a reality-check on your thinking;
  + consult EASTBIO or other PhD students who you know may have completed a placement and seek their input, advice or any tips. Aim to seek input at a time when you have a set of ideas based on your own priorities so that you are not unduly influenced by other people’s goals and aspirations.
  + Pursue any connections your supervisor(s) may have that could be useful.
  + Book one-to-one time with your local Careers Advisor to discuss your PIPS ideas and other suitable opportunities existing at that time.
  + Search online for further options by using LinkedIn, or established Internship schemes (see further resources list, below).
* Attend a CV briefing session to prepare a skills-based CV which you can tailor for your PIPS applications; consider attending local training on professional skills that you are missing in preparation for a placement, such as project or time management, interview coaching, business or entrepreneurial training.
* Identify an area/sector of interest (or two!) and a minimum of three names of host organisations per sector, in which you would like to carry out your PIPS.
* Agree the approximate timing of your PIPS with your PhD supervisor.
* We encourage you to start this planning process early as we know from experience that it may take a while to secure offer of an internship.
* By the end of September of your PhD first year, you are to complete and submit to EASTBIO for approval Section A of the mandatory PIPS Planning form - a record of your provisional plan for your PIPS. EASTBIO checks its fit with the scheme’s criteria and the suitability of the host organisations on the form and will either approve the form or share any concerns you need to address.
* Before making contact with any of the potential PIPS host organisations on your form, make sure they have been approved by EASTBIO. You may have received queries that you need to address, and these will relate to their fit of the scheme’s key criteria (non-academic sector, project unrelated to your PhD project). If your placement plans change after being approved by EASTBIO, please email the team so that the revised suggestions can be approved too via email (no need to resubmit your plan).

### Next steps after your Plan is approved by EASTBIO

#### Step 1 – Securing a placement offer

* Before contacting a potential PIPS host organisation, make sure they have been approved by EASTBIO (you will have received an approved form with comments, as appropriate).
* If you have difficulties securing an internship after multiple contacts, please contact EASTBIO for further advice and recommendations, seek advice from your PhD supervisor(s) and the local Careers Office and be prepared to explore your second or third PIPS option, as recorded on your PIPS Planning form; do not be despondent if your top choice is proving harder to achieve.
* Approach the prospective host organisation by sending a formal, succinct email to introduce yourself. Attach the ‘EASTBIO PIPS brochure’ and a link to the webpage <http://www.eastscotbiodtp.ac.uk/information-organisations> that explains more about the scheme, what is required and attach your tailored CV, which shows you have done your research on what the organisation does. Be clear about what area you would like to work on, your preferred timeframe and how flexible you are. You should ensure that you explain clearly what EASTBIO expects of you during your internship and of the host organisation; refer them to EASTBIO if there are any doubts about mutual expectations. Follow up the email if you have not had a response within a week, either with another email or a phone call. If the organisation agrees, you will then need to explore a suitable internship project with them that offers an opportunity for you to develop your professional skills, the role of the designate PIPS mentor/supervisor, the length of the internship (which should be 3 months or equivalent), etc. Placements must start after month 12 of your PhD.
* Follow our tips on [interacting with host organisations](#PIPSInteracting) at all times when liaising with the host organisation. If you have additional support requirements, EASTBIO can help you liaise with the host organisation to discuss the support available. Please note that whilst we can make your host organisation aware of the support you receive at your academic institution, we cannot guarantee that every host will be able to provide the same level of support/adjustments.
* It is helpful if you use Section B of the PIPS Planning form at this stage to help guide discussions if you are meeting an organisation representative to negotiate a tailored internship project. This section, once completed, can be shared with EASTBIO for an informal review, and is a useful start for later completing the Placement Agreement (Memorandum of Understanding – MOU), the final step before you are ready to go on your PIPS.

#### Step 2 – Completing the PIPS Agreement

* When the scope, nature and details of the project are agreed, fill in the PIPS Agreement and make sure it is signed by all three relevant parties (yourself, the PIPS Host organisation representative and your PhD supervisor). Then submit it to [placements@eastscotbiodtp.ac.uk](mailto:placements@eastscotbiodtp.ac.uk) to seek approval. We aim to review MOUs received within ten working days and share the confirmed copy with all parties, including the local administrative or academic lead, for their information.
* Once the PIPS Agreement is formally approved by EASTBIO, you can start your PIPS at the dates agreed with your PIPS provider and your PhD supervisor. Final step is to request an Absence of Leave from your host academic institution so that you can carry out the placement full-time (as relevant in your case depending on the details of your PIPS).
* We ask students who are on PIPS not to attend any training or events associated with their PhD (EASTBIO included) so as to allow them to focus on the PIPS project fully and make the best of their 3 months on their internship. From past experience, we are aware that there is a price to pay when students try to work on their PIPS and their PhD at the same time. Please email EASTBIO if there is consensus between you and your team of supervisory team about a commitment that you need to make during your PIPS.
* Be aware of local support & resources available to you as you transition from the lab to the PIPS host organisation’s premises, and vice-versa. Part of your preparation for your placement involves exploring such support and being pro-active in collating information about existing channels or sources of support for this transition so that you can be better prepared and reach out when you need actual assistance or advice. For instance, the University of Edinburgh has provided the following resources at <https://www.ed.ac.uk/careers/staff/making-transitions-personal>.

## During your PIPS

* Seek out ways of being enterprising, helpful, using your initiative, being assertive, networking and reporting about your experience.
* Capture your PIPS experience, by keeping a learning diary, or blogging about it. Consult the Reflection Toolkit referred to above or any similar resources for that purpose. Recording your experience and progress through your internship will not only save you time but will also deepen the value of the experience and can form the basis of the feedback you are expected to provide after you will have completed your PIPS. Some partner institutions – e.g. the University of Dundee - may prescribe that a short narrative on the placement be part of the PhD thesis. A PIPS narrative can also help you articulate the impact of your PIPS work that may prove helpful in a number of other types of engagement during the rest of your PhD and beyond. EASTBIO believes that funded students should be able to write a personal impact statement, whether on their research or associated work (in your chosen sector).
* Recognise if something is wrong, discuss early with your PIPS Supervisor, your PhD supervisor(s) and/or the EASTBIO DTP Manager to seek advice, identify ways to manage any difficulties and ensure that the outcome will be overall positive and to your best interests. EASTBIO is committed to supporting on-the-programme students and make every effort possible to ensure continuity of such support during the PIPS duration.

## After your PIPS

EASTBIO will contact you in the final weeks of your PIPS with a summary of what are the steps to follow to complete PIPS-related requirements. This is a short outline:

* You must complete a feedback report to EASTBIO on your experience that includes feedback to be uploaded on the EASTBIO website <http://www.eastscotbiodtp.ac.uk/information-current-students> and broader feedback on the PIPS scheme, your support by the PIPS host organisation and EASTBIO at the different stages of planning. The aim of the report is to capture information on your PIPS placement, including key outputs, outcomes and impacts from your placement, and to capture the extent to which your placement gave you the opportunity to develop further or new skills, make new contacts or perhaps provided a career pathway. We share collated and anonymised feedback with two of the EASTBIO sub-committees, the Training & Development and the Industry Engagement committees to allow the EASTBIO Management Group to review the scheme in their annual meeting at the end of the year (usually at the Annual Symposia, early June). We may also request specific impact case studies for our Annual Reports to the BBSRC or share a request for such narratives from BBSRC directly that we will share with your explicit consent. For that purpose, we will ask you to first check with the PIPS host organisation for any confidentiality clauses that restricts public use of any outcomes resulting from your PIPS project.
* Ask your Supervisor at the PIPS host organisation to complete the short PIPS Host Organisation Feedback form and submit it to EASTBIO after you completed your PIPS. This is not to assess your performance during your PIPS but to enable us to gauge the overall impact of the scheme and, also, to maintain an ongoing relationship with various PIPS providers. Should there be any constructive advice to the student personally, we may pass this discreetly to the student; should there be any major concerns, we will try to get more information from the host organisation with a view to establishing whether there has been any gaps in the overall support, guidance and delivery of the process for future learning.
* You are expected to give a 10-minute presentation at the online EASTBIO Placement Q&A Session(early February – mandatory for first-year students, supervisors invited too). The presentation is a critical reflection on your PIPS experience, the skills you developed, and any insights on how the experience has influenced your current career aspirations. You may also share with first-year students any advice on the planning of your PIPS based on any learnings from it. Other events you may also be invited to present on your PIPS are the EASTBIO Annual Symposia (early June, in person), the EASTBIO Induction (early October, in person), the REP Induction for undergraduate students (May, in person) and other ad hoc events jointly with former EASTBIO students and student reps.
* Submit to BBSRC your Placement Report by emailing [PIPS@bbsrc.ac.uk](mailto:PIPS@bbsrc.ac.uk) after requesting the relevant link with the text 'Please email me a unique link to the BBSRC PIPS DTP PIPS Placement Report'. Notice that this mandatory requirement aims to collect student feedback for the overall review of the scheme by the funder, therefore it is a process separate to EASTBIO expectations. Once this is completed, please let us know by emailing [placements@eastscotbiodtp.ac.uk](mailto:placements@eastscotbiodtp.ac.uk). Please note that that this is an essential requirement as EASTBIO is assessed by BBSRC on fulfilling our requirements related to the delivery of the scheme and its benefits to funded students.
* With an eye to the future, also consider to do the following:
  + Update your CV to reflect your recent PIPS experience.
  + Maintain your newly formed networks.
  + Explore opportunities within your PIPS host organisations for future collaboration, such as research fellowships, bids, postdoctoral positions or employment.

# PIPS guidance for overseas students

**General**

Following the UKRI decision in 2020 to allow recruitment of international students by DTP programmes, the EASTBIO partner institutions have proceeded to approve revised PhD programmes with integrated internships with the aim of enabling access to PIPS by tier-4 visa holders (otherwise constrained to access the full PIPS scheme). We have, consequently, updated our advice for funded international students with no access to such integrated PhD programme although, at the at the time of publicising the PIPS Guide 2024, we were still waiting to receive final confirmation of relevant arrangements from partner institutions; if you are unsure of your access, please email [placements@eastscotbiodtp.ac.uk](mailto:placements@eastscotbiodtp.ac.uk).

Funded students with international fees status and no access to a PhD programme integrated with an internship are restricted by the terms of their visa to the following work placement conditions:

* Maximum of 20 hours placement work per week during term time
* Placement to be strictly within UK
* Placement to be carried out alongside their PhD project

Under these conditions, EASTBIO DTP proposes a revised PIPS approach: students to discuss with their PhD supervisor and the local PGR advisor and – in communication with the EASTBIO DTP Manager - explore the option of a part-time placement within this limited frame before reaching a final decision. Criteria for the individual decision include: (a) the intended benefits of the amended placement for the student; (b) the implications for their PhD progress; (c) student’s own professional development needs, and (d) any personal impacts (e.g. family and caring responsibilities, health or disability management, etc.). EASTBIO will support students in their decision-making and will apply flexibility to the level required by them for the opportunity to be beneficial for the student’s personal development and career goals. All relevant EASTBIO expectations regarding the timeline, process and forms will be adjusted according to the specific circumstances of each student on a case-by-case. EASTBIO also expects that the student academic supervisor will be supportive by providing students with suitable recommendations, guidance, and advice.

## Options

In short, funded students are asked to consider the following options in order to carry out an (adjusted) EASTBIO placement, including a PIPS exemption request:

1. **Option 1 - Up to 20 hours[[1]](#footnote-1) per week during term time (per 7-day week) on a part-time basis[[2]](#footnote-2) and with the agreement of the academic supervisor (in writing)**. The project/placement will be unrelated to the student’s PhD project. No possibility to do a placement abroad as this may lead to a breach of visa regulations. Recommended minimum duration of one month; no maximum duration but, for reference, please note that the PIPS scheme is 3-month long which may not be suitable under the terms of this adjusted framework. The student should be employed (have signed an employment contract) by the host organisation even though the placement can be either paid or unpaid; the student continues to be in receipt of their PhD stipend and is also eligible to apply for the additional EASTBIO PIPS funds of a max of £1,000 (towards travel and/or accommodation). Types of work *not* allowed include free-lance, business work, self-employment, consultancy, entertainment, sports. During their placement, the student should continue meeting the reporting requirements stipulated by their visa (that is to say, demonstrating engagement with their supervisor, in writing). EASTBIO sets no restriction as to when such placement should be carried out within the PhD cycle and students can, for instance, consider doing a placement in their fourth year assuming this is not detrimental to their research schedule. EASTBIO should receive details of the placement planned by the student in advance and be kept informed of key steps during the planning. One-to-one catch-up sessions with the EASTBIO DTP Manager are advisable at this stage.
2. **Option 2 - Full-time placement with an industrial partner** – in this option, the studentship will become an industrial (Collaborative) studentship, within which visa-holding students are permitted to do a full BBSRC PIPS on the understanding that the placement is integral part of the PhD project. Terms that apply in this case can be found at <http://www.eastscotbiodtp.ac.uk/eastbio-case-studentships> and also communicated by EASTBIO. Please email [placements@eastscotbiodtp.ac.uk](mailto:placements@eastscotbiodtp.ac.uk) to request the relevant forms if you have secured a collaboration with a non-academic partner. Under this option, a placement outwith UK is permissible under the visa terms and conditions. Your academic supervisor(s) may be able to advise you the student on potential industrial collaborators who could host student placements. There is flexibility in the terms of the placements under this option, e.g. this may be a longer placement than the 3 months stipulated by the PIPS Scheme as it is dependent on the project requirements.
3. **Option 3 - Full time during vacation period/student Annual Leave, usually 8 weeks/year (in agreement with student host institution & academic supervisor)**. Given that during vacation periods there is no formal institutional monitoring or risk assessment obligation, students must agree with EASTBIO DTP Manager the terms of communication during placement in advance. Given that this option is largely a personal decision on the part of the student -- outwith the frame of the institutional obligation -- the implications must be discussed in advance of any planning with the DTP Manager and the student’s PhD supervisor(s).
4. **Option 4 - Micro-internships** (one or multiple) consisting of 2 days per week for a maximum of 8 weeks in total. For a case study of such a micro-internship (5 days) with the Scottish Government (UoE student), see <https://www.ed.ac.uk/students/careers/insights/case-studies/insights-in-person-steve>. For benefits to interns, also see this article: <https://insights.ise.org.uk/work-experience-internships/blog-5-reasons-why-more-employers-are-running-micro-placements/>
5. **Option 5 - Request** **an exemption from PIPS with a short justification** based on grounds of, for instance, limited capacity, intended but limited PIPS benefits, or negative impacts on the progress of the PhD project outweighing any rewards to the student.

Students on a tier-4 visa must submit the revised Placement form to EASTBIO with their preferred option once they reach a decision on their placement – no set deadline for this but EASTBIO will email you to remind you of the expectation to have a decision on record. Email EASTBIO if you have further questions about the above guidance or would like to receive further advice on your preferences and requirements.

Useful contacts:

* EASTBIO DTP Placements: [placements@eastscotbiodtp.ac.uk](mailto:placements@eastscotbiodtp.ac.uk)
* UoE Student Immigration service: [Contact us | The University of Edinburgh](https://www.ed.ac.uk/student-administration/immigration/contact-us)
* University of Stirling: [studentimmigration@stir.ac.uk](mailto:studentimmigration@stir.ac.uk)

# Guidance for Industry-linked Collaborative placements

Industry-linked Collaborative Studentships are collaborative research projects between EASTBIO academics and industrial/non-academic partners. These are developed through close collaboration between the two partners and in consultation with the local Industry/Business Engagement Team of the host academic institution where the academic supervisor is based at. EASTBIO reviews and advertises Collaborative projects and recruits students that are the best fit for the PhD project. From an early stage in the recruitment, there are clear expectations about: (a) the project’s alignment with the industrial challenge/opportunity it addresses; (b) the project’s outcomes, both in terms of the non-academic partner’s requirements and the recruited student’s professional development; (c) the student onboarding, frequency of meetings between the recruited student and the non-academic supervisors, type of resources & expertise provided from the industrial partner, etc. and (d) risks to successful completion and mitigating actions. Finally, the project describes the commitments of the non-academic partner in financial terms and in relation to the anticipated date and length of the student mandatory placement at the non-academic partner premises. Following the successful recruitment of a student to the project, the academic and non-academic partners are expected to confirm the Agreement that underpins their collaboration regarding the PhD project.

Students working on collaborative projects benefit from the full EASTBIO training programme along with time spent on the premises of the non-academic partner as speculated at the PhD project proposal and resulting Agreement. We ask that they are presented with the details of that collaboration and get plenty of opportunity to shape the Collaborative project on the basis of the strengths and ideas they bring along to the supervisory team.

Students on a Collaborative studentship are expected to carry out a placement at the non-academic partner of a longer duration than the PIPS -- from 3 minimum to 18 months maximum -- and on a project associated with their PhD project. The details of the project are based on initial conversations between the academic and the non-academic supervisors and developed with engagement from the student as soon as they join the programme. EASTBIO expects an update of these plans and a signed copy of the Collaborative Placement Agreement (MOU) once all the details of the project are finalised.

Although EASTBIO cannot influence the placement plans recognizing that these obey primarily the requirements of the project and the non-academic partner’s relevant operational processes, we still expect to see a plan in place. The expectation results from the commitments confirmed on the PhD project proposal as aligned with the UKRI BBSRC Terms and Conditions regarding collaborative studentships; reporting on the progress of these placements is part of the DTP reporting requirements to the BBSRC. Students who complete their Collaborative Placement are expected to present on their experience at the Placement Q&A session scheduled in early February for first-year students but also other EASTBIO events, particularly the EASTBIO Industrial Impact Symposia running on alternate years (next one is scheduled for the summer of 2025).

Students on Collaborative studentships can apply to EASTBIO for additional expenses should the non-academic partner not commit financial support for the purpose of travel and accommodation. The non-academic partner is liable to cover all project costs during the placement (e.g. consumables), including in kind support.

Students on Collaborative studentships have the option of pursuing a PIPS in addition to their collaborative placement with their PhD supervisor’s agreement and on the condition that the additional time required for the placement will not impact their PhD progress negatively. In this case, there is flexibility regarding the standard terms of the PIPS scheme and after a consultation with the DTP Manager, the plan will be approved with the student and their PhD supervisor.

# Further resources

Information on suitable PIPS providers can be identified via a number of routes, primarily at your local institution Careers Advice Service:

* Institution of Aberdeen: <http://www.abdn.ac.uk/careers/>
* Institution of Dundee: <http://www.dundee.ac.uk/careers/>
* Institution of Edinburgh: <http://www.ed.ac.uk/schools-departments/careers>
* Institution of St Andrews: <http://www.st-andrews.ac.uk/careers/>
* Institution of Stirling: <https://www.stir.ac.uk/student-life/careers/>
* SRUC: <https://www.sruc.ac.uk/study-with-us/student-life/student-support/career-services/>
* Moredun Research Institute: <https://moredun.org.uk/careers>
* James Hutton Institute: https://hutton.current-vacancies.com/Careers/JHI%20VSP%20-%20External-2065

You can also explore ideas and access potential providers though your PhD supervisor(s) and local network of colleagues, fellow students (EASTBIO or not), lab members, and friends. EASTBIO encourages contact with other EASTBIO students who have completed their placement via the website at <http://www.eastscotbiodtp.ac.uk/information-current-students> and the Industry Engagement Committee at <http://www.eastscotbiodtp.ac.uk/eastbio-dtp-committees>, panels with former EASTBIO students with careers in industry, the annual online Q&A Session (early February), and other key events (annual symposia, induction, etc.).

EASTBIO will regularly update students on PIPS opportunities that are submitted to us from BBSRC, our stakeholders and organisations that have hosted EASTBIO students in the past either via a direct email, through the website and the monthly newsletter.

## Advertised Internships

The following companies collate placement vacancies and allow you to search and compare them. You may need to register on their sites to access the internship vacancies but none of these listed companies charge students for their services.

|  |  |  |
| --- | --- | --- |
| **Name of website** | **Brief description of website** | **Address of website** |
| [**Prospects**](http://www.prospects.ac.uk/cms/ShowPage/Home_page/Work_experience/Search_placements/p!eigaLkL) | An interface of the Prospects job search tool specifically for placement vacancies. | <https://www.prospects.ac.uk/jobs-and-work-experience/work-experience-and-internships> |
| [**Student Employment Services**](http://www.studentemploymentservices.co.uk/) | Dedicated placement recruitment and employing agency. | <http://www.studentemploymentservices.co.uk/> |
| [**Fledglings**](http://www.fledglings.net) | Jobsite for placements and work experience vacancies. | <http://www.fledglings.net/> |
| [**Shell Step**](http://www.shellstep.org.uk/) | A national scheme that organises project-based work experience opportunities in SMEs. | <http://www.step.org.uk/> |
| [**RateMyPlacement**](http://www.ratemyplacement.co.uk/placement-job-search) | Placement and internship vacancies. There are also 65,000+ reviews from students who have completed placements and internships, covering the role, organisation and social life. These are really helpful for students to read when deciding where to apply for a placement, internship, insight or virtual experience - to make sure it’s the right fit for them. | <https://www.ratemyplacement.co.uk/> |
| [**Employment4students**](http://www.e4s.co.uk/search/internship-jobs) | Placement and internship vacancies. | <http://www.e4s.co.uk/search/internship-jobs> |
| [**Target Jobs**](http://targetjobs.co.uk/graduate-jobs/default.aspx) | This has work-experience/internship as a specific search criterion. | <http://targetjobs.co.uk/> |
| [**The Big Choice**](http://www.thebigchoice.com/) | This has work placement as a specific search criteria. | <http://www.thebigchoice.com/> |
| **Top Internships** | A dedicated global placement search and compare site. | globalplacement.com/en/top-internships |
| **Bright Network** | Internships, industry placements. | <https://www.brightnetwork.co.uk/internships/> |
| **80.000 Hours** | Jobs tackling the world’s most pressing problems (including internships) | <https://80000hours.org/job-board/> |

Remember, for quality purposes, all externally identified placements will need to be approved by EASTBIO to ensure the proposed PIPS fits with the UKRI BBSRC criteria.

**Tips on interacting with a potential PIPS host organisation**

As a student funded by UKRI BBSSRC, you are responsible for conducting yourself professionally in all your interactions with prospective or actual PIPS host organisations and for maintaining or facilitating an excellent working relationship between yourself, the PIPS host organisation and your academic institution.

If you feel that you may benefit from some advice in terms of professional conduct in the workplace, you may contact your academic institution’s Careers Service which may provide:

* one-to-one discussions with a Careers Advisor;
* preparation of a skills-based CV and a tailored covering letter;
* interview practice sessions;
* useful workshops such as ‘Finding an internship’, ‘Introduction to work-based internships’, ‘Business etiquette’, ‘Managing the transition to the Workplace’, etc.

Only begin discussions with any PIPS host organisation after:

1. You have agreed the timing of your internship with your PhD supervisor, and
2. Your PIPS Planning form has been approved by EASTBIO.

Here are a few quick pointers for upcoming meetings aimed to either develop an internship idea or to prepare an application for an internship vacancy advertised by the host organisation:

Before the meeting, you should:

* check with your PhD supervisor(s) and the Careers Service that your proposed PIPS internship ideas are suitable to share with the PIPS host organisation;
* reflect upon any discussions you might already have had about the scope of your internship project and how you would plan to approach it; join the meeting prepared to talk about this;
* undertake some background reading or research about the PIPS host organisation, investigate some ideas for your PIPS project, and join the meeting prepared to talk about this;
* if the meeting regards an advertised internship vacancy, read carefully through the internship vacancy specification to refresh your memory on the project that was outlined;
* make a list of questions you would like to ask your PIPS host organisation contact (or prospective Supervisor) about the organisation and the internship project you will be undertaking; for this, please read the EASTBIO forms to familiarise yourself with what is expected of them.

During the meeting you should:

* be prepared to talk about yourself, your academic interests, any previous work experience, your professional/research ambitions and your general interest in the proposed internship provider;
* bring along a skills-based CV for your host organisation contact/supervisor to take away;
* bring along your Planning form whose Section B may help guide discussions if you are meeting to negotiate a tailored internship project; that will help your host organisation to identify what they are expected to provide for you;
* bring along a copy of the PIPS Agreement form and agree its contents together, if appropriate at that time. The MOU sections are expected to fit with the needs of the academic institution, the PIPS host organisation and you the PhD intern, and must, therefore, be recorded, signed and approved by all parties involved;
* capture information being discussed by keeping notes or filling in the Section B of your Planning Form;
* be prepared to ask your host organisation contact/supervisor to clarify their expectations of you throughout the internship process; remember that mutual expectations must be made explicit and stay transparent for all involved;
* remember to ask the host organisation whether they may be able to help with any travel or accommodation costs of this placement, if applicable in this case. Explain how the funding of the PIPS work, what is mandatory for the PIPS host organisation during the placement (in-kind support and consumable costs) and what is optional (support of additional costs, e.g. travel and accommodation);
* clarify anything about the internship project you are unsure of or that seems vague, and discuss any additional training or support you’ll seek for this.

***TOP TIP: The individuals you need to speak to are busy people***

***You are asking them to give up their time, so make it worth their while…engage, be proactive, market yourself and your project, be professional, organised and confident.***

**After the meeting** you will be expected to email your host organisation contact/supervisor to confirm the meeting’s main discussion points. If you have been offered an internship position, you should liaise with your host organisation supervisor to complete the final details required in the PIPS MOU. This covers:

* An outline of the scope of your internship, the project title and a description of your role;
* A timeline for the internship, including any meetings or events you’ll be expected to attend;
* An outline of any health and safety, risk issues, confidentiality, and intellectual property you’ll need to take into account for your project from the start;
* An outline of any related travel and/or insurance issues you’ll need to consider, if applicable;
* An outline of any additional organisational approvals you may need from your host organisation;
* Submit the completed, signed PIPS MOU for approval to EASTBIO; the form should be read and signed by both your host organisation supervisor and your PhD supervisorprior to beginning an internship.

We advise you to send a copy of your PIPS MOU form to your PIPS host organisation after your PhD supervisor has reviewed it and provided you with feedback.

**Please note**: It will not be seen as acceptable professional practice to withdraw from either preliminary or advanced negotiations with a PIPS host organisation for anything other than genuinely unforeseen circumstances.

The following resources may be of interest:

* “Five reasons to do an internship during your PhD program” at <https://www.nature.com/articles/d41586-019-01087-9>.
* “How to get a great internship” at <https://www.nature.com/articles/d41586-019-01361-w>
* Nature Blog Posts: Ask the expert: What other jobs can bioscience researchers and PhD students consider if they want to leave academia? [Ask the expert: How do I figure out what value I have to offer non-academic employers?](http://blogs.nature.com/naturejobs/2015/02/19/ask-the-expert-how-do-i-figure-out-what-value-i-have-to-offer-non-academic-employers)
* <http://blogs.nature.com/naturejobs/2014/11/20/ask-the-expert-what-other-jobs-can-bioscience-researchers-and-phd-students-consider-if-they-want-to-leave-academia>
* <http://blogs.nature.com/naturejobs/2015/02/19/ask-the-expert-how-do-i-figure-out-what-value-ihave-to-offer-non-academic-employers>
* There is a helpful set of recourses on reflection practices produced by the University of Edinburgh, available at <https://www.ed.ac.uk/reflection> (sign in may be required).

*This guide was produced as a reference point for use by the EAST of Scotland Doctoral Training Partnership (EASTBIO DTP) students involved in undertaking 3-month mandatory professional internships as part of their UKRI Biotechnology and Biological Sciences Research Council funded programme. The guide was produced by EASTBIO DTP in consultation with the Institution of Edinburgh Institute for Academic Development, members of the Careers Service and the EASTBIO partner institutions and is reviewed each year. It adheres to the relevant sections of The UK Quality Code for Higher Education published by the QAA (qaa.ac.uk). It draws on methods of good practice within the ASET Good Practice Guide for Work-Based and Placement Learning in Higher Education (https://www.asetonline.org/).*

*This is intended as a guidance document to be used as a reference point to ensure that appropriate steps are being taken with regards to best practice and quality assurance to meet institutional responsibilities in safeguarding the student learning experience and development, as well as their safety and wellbeing. Disclaimer: This Guide has been developed based upon the advice and guidance available; every effort has been made to ensure that the information containted within the Guide is correct at the time of publication. Users of the guide should ensure that they are familiar with current guidance and regulations in their own institution. Should you notice any errors, inaccuracies or inconsistencies in this Guide or on our website, please let us know by emailing enquiries@eastscotbiodtp.ac.uk.*

1. The UoE advice on this is as follows: If you are a full-time student, the University recommends that you [postgraduate taught students] *do not work more than 15 hours per week*. The University will not employ full-time postgraduate research students for more than *an average of 9 hours per week across the academic year*, and we recommend that postgraduate students apply this limit to employment outside the University. ([Working in the UK during studies | The University of Edinburgh](https://www.ed.ac.uk/student-administration/immigration/working-in-the-uk/during-studies)). [↑](#footnote-ref-1)
2. Please note the following UoE advice in terms of full-time work placements: “If you interrupt your studies to undertake a work placement or internship, you *cannot* use your Tier 4/Student visa. You will need to seek alternative immigration permission which will allow you to undertake full-time work in the UK. You will need to apply for a new Tier 4/Student visa to return to studies.” [↑](#footnote-ref-2)