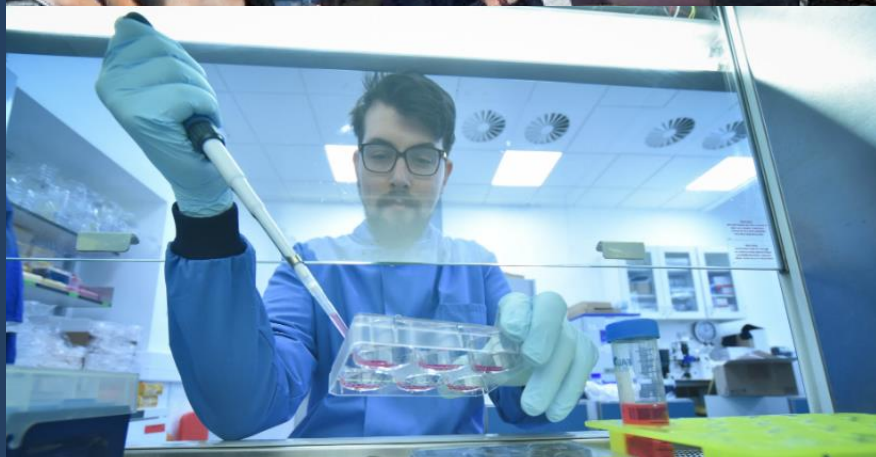




UNIVERSITY OF
CAMBRIDGE

School of Biological Sciences
Doctoral Training Partnership
SBS DTP

Student Handbook
2022-2026



Contents

Contents	1
Welcome.....	2
Programme structure	3
Training, Researcher Development and cohort building	3
Professional Internship for PhD Students (PIPS)	5
Communications.....	6
Assessment and progression during the PhD	7
Degree Committee	7
Plagiarism	7
Annual leave and Intermission	8
Student support and wellbeing	9
Paid Work	10
Laptops and internet access	10
Leaving DTP Programme.....	10
Finances	10
Useful Contacts.....	11
Student Charter	12
Appendix 1: General Safety in Research Labs.....	13
Appendix 2: Training schedules.....	14

Welcome

Welcome to Cambridge and to the School of Biological Sciences Doctoral Training Partnership (SBS DTP), your academic home for the next four years. World leading discovery research in our departments and institutes provides fundamental insights into living systems, often in turn leading to translation into real world applications to address societal and global challenges. Indeed, the importance of cutting-edge basic and translational biosciences research has never been more evident than in the midst of a viral pandemic. Advances at the edge of modern biosciences often require interdisciplinary working, with researchers capable and confident to work across the boundaries of traditional disciplines. Moreover, trained bioscience researchers are in demand not just in academia but also in large and small companies in the thriving bioeconomy and in other areas such as public policy. To meet this need, Departments across the University's [School of Biological Sciences](#), the [Babraham Institute](#) and the [National Institute of Agricultural Botany](#) joined forces to establish an innovative interdisciplinary programme for postgraduate bioscience students. The SBS DTP is a direct continuation of the [Cambridge Biosciences BBSRC DTP](#), building upon the excellent research training for which Cambridge is renowned, but offering a broader experience than traditional single-department PhD programmes. Key features of the SBS DTP include:

- A bespoke training programme across the 4 years of the programme
- A 3-month Professional Internship for PhD Students (PIPS) allowing you to experience a working environment distinct from your PhD.
- Cohort-building activities, some of which will involve interactions with other year groups in the Cambridge Biosciences BBSRC DTP. A highlight among these is the annual DTP Research Symposium

Our aim is for you to graduate in four years' time with a deep understanding and enjoyment of science and scientific research, and a network of colleagues and friends who will have shared your experience. Our hope is that you can aspire to become a future leader in research, whether in the academic or commercial spheres, or to use your knowledge and expertise in other ways to help society meet its future challenges. Four years, as you will find out, is not long, so make the most of the opportunities provided by the DTP, by your Department or Institute, and by Cambridge more generally.

Good luck in your studies - I look forward to hearing about your progress.

Professor Chris Smith
Director, SBS DTP and Cambridge Biosciences BBSRC DTP

Programme structure

The School of Biological Sciences DTP Programme is usually studied on a full-time basis. During the PhD project, you will continue to undertake further research skills and subject-specific training, and spend 12 weeks undertaking a *Professional Internship for PhD Students* (PIPS).

The Programme is four years in duration; therefore, students must submit their thesis no later than 48 months after their start date. For students starting in October 2022, the final date for submission of a thesis is 30 September 2026.

The Code of Practice sets out the University's guidelines for those courses examined by scrutiny of an extended research dissertation and an oral examination only. See below The Code of Practice for research students starting their course in 2022 -23: [cop_research_2022-23.pdf \(cam.ac.uk\)](#)

This year students will be carrying out their PhD research in the Departments and Institutes below:

Department of [Biochemistry](#)
Department of [Genetics](#)
Department of [Pathology](#)
Department of [Pharmacology](#)
Department of [Physiology, Development and Neuroscience](#)
Department of [Plant Sciences](#)
Department of [Psychology](#)
Department of [Zoology](#)
[Gurdon Institute](#)
[The Sainsbury Laboratory](#)
[MRC Toxicology Unit](#)

Partner Institutes

[Babraham Institute](#)
[National Institute of Agricultural Botany](#) (NIAB)

Students undertaking research in Partner Institutes remain registered with the University, receive their award from the University and have access to facilities at both the University and the Partner Institute.

Training, Researcher Development and cohort building

The SBS DTP includes a programme of training and cohort building events spread across the four years. **We expect all students who have been enrolled in the training to attend every session**; the training is an integral part of your course aimed at your personal development for future careers. If you are unable to attend an event, you should send an email to the DTP office (sbsdtp@admin.cam.ac.uk) to explain the reasons. Please note that this message will be communicated to your supervisor.

Our training programme has been developed according to the Cambridge Researcher Development Framework (CamRDF). The CamRDF maps out the skills and personal qualities needed to conduct up-to-date, professional research, in what is an ever more interdisciplinary and international context. It breaks this down into fifteen competencies, all of which are highly valued and sought after by employers both within and beyond academia. The competencies are grouped into four inter-connected areas: Personal Effectiveness, Engaging Others, Career Progression and Research Expertise. You can find out more at:

<https://www.rdp.cam.ac.uk/camrdf>

The training activities throughout the four years of the programme have been colour-coded to indicate how they map onto the Framework.



To support the start of your researcher development training, we have identified four main themes that we believe will help you in your first year: establishing new relationships, academic writing and data management and research ethics.

Early in the first year you will need to complete a Skills Analysis based on the CamRDF (please check this on [Inkpath](#)). This will help you to build a plan of where you'd like to focus your development efforts.

Training in Years 2-4 will also focus on specific themes appropriate to the stage of your PhD: resilience and presenting with impact in year 2, planning your career, publishing your research and profile raising in year 3, and writing your PhD, preparing for your viva and finding your future employment in year 4. Detailed timetables will be provided at the start of each academic year.

A number of cohort-building and inter-cohort activities, involving students from across year groups, will complement the training. These include annual PIPS event (see next section) and the annual DTP Student Symposium. The Symposium is organised by second year DTP students and features research talks and posters from DTP students from different year groups across a wide range of science, as well as talks from invited speakers.

In addition to the training organised by the DTP Office you will also have access to a plethora of training opportunities offered by the University Training service and your Department or Partner Institute. You should use the DTP programme as a base upon which you can build more specialised training tailored to your interests and needs (as informed by your ongoing Skills Analysis). You will also have access to a fund of £920, which can be used during your PhD to cover attending conferences and for travel.

Professional Internship for PhD Students (PIPS)

A distinctive feature of the SBS DTP is that all students undertake a 3-month internship during the 4-year PhD programme. The professional internship should be unrelated to your PhD project and provides the opportunity to experience a different working environment. This could be in a large company, a small start-up (of which there are many to choose from in the Cambridge area), in scientific publishing, outreach or policy development in the private, public and voluntary sectors. Previous PIPS have been hosted by AstraZeneca, UL EHS Sustainability, Alzheimer's Research UK, Royal Society of Biology, The Company of Biologists, The Naked Scientists, Entomics Biosystems Ltd, to name a few.

The PIPS experience has been highly valued by previous students and in some cases has led to subsequent job offers from the host organization, publications, and even the know-how to spin-out a company.

We recommend that the internship should take place during the second or third year of your studies. The exact timing will depend on when it will fit with your PhD project and the availability of the internship placements within your host organization.

We aim to run an annual PIPS event where you can hear about previous PIPS experiences from both the student and host organization perspectives, and meet with representatives of potential hosts.

You will continue to receive your stipend throughout the internship and there are some funds available (up to £1000) to cover expenses related to PIPS such as for travel or accommodation. Sometimes, the host organisation might also contribute to the cost of your expenses.

In some cases, companies have their own policy regarding internships; for instance, some host organisations must pay the stipend to their interns. If this is the case, we are happy to approve the PIPS but we will need to stop the DTP stipend for the duration of the paid internship.

There is an online platform (Moodle site) to support PIPS with guidance on how to prepare for your internship, find a suitable placement and the necessary forms to complete. The SBS DTP Programme Office will also provide support throughout the process on an ad hoc basis.

Before starting your PIPS, you must submit the following forms for approval via Moodle:

- Host approval form (if the Host is not on the approved organisation list – this can be found on Moodle)
- Taking PIPS abroad form 1 (if the internship is based outside the UK)
- Project Description
- Project Financial Support
- Project Skills Development Objectives
- Taking PIPS Abroad Form 2 (if applicable)

You will also need to apply for 'Leave to Work Away' via your CamSIS self-service.

Communications

As mentioned in the previous section, all DTP students will have access to Moodle site (<https://www.student-systems.admin.cam.ac.uk/moodle>), a Virtual Learning Environment, where you can find all the information about your course. We also use Moodle to get in touch with you about PIPS opportunities advertised by companies and organisations around the UK and abroad. Later on, you will be also able to share feedback about your own PIPS experience and give advices to students, who still need to complete their placement.

Our DTP website (<https://bbsrcdtp.lifesci.cam.ac.uk>) will serve as the main point of entry for information about the DTP for current and prospective students, supervisors and external collaborators (such as PIPS hosts). We are always looking to feature news stories, so please email us with any good news – papers published, poster prizes at conferences etc. — and we will publicise the news via the website.



We would also like to maintain contact with all of our students once they have graduated from the programme. We therefore suggest that all students set up a **LinkedIn** account (<https://uk.linkedin.com>). If you list Cambridge Biosciences SBS DTP as part of your PhD course, we will be able to follow your future success without the need to bother you with emails.

Assessment and progression during the PhD

You will only be formally registered for the PhD after you have successfully passed your First Year Assessment. Towards the end of your first year, you will be required to submit a report (First Year Report) which will be examined in a *viva voce* examination. This process will be managed by the Graduate Administrator in your Department/Institute. On passing this assessment, students become fully registered for the PhD, back-dated to October 2022.

Before the end of the fourth year, students must have completed and submitted their thesis for examination. Further information is available on the [PSLS website](#).

Degree Committee

The Degree Committee for the Faculty of Biology formally oversee your progress through the degree and will make the final recommendation to award you the PhD. The Degree Committees are responsible for appointing your supervisory team and examiners, monitoring your progress including the first year registration, reviewing any applications for a change in circumstances (for example to intermit or work away) and resolving any conflicts where these cannot be resolved at a local level. At the end of your programme, the Degree Committee will award the PhD if so recommended by your examiners. In the unlikely event that your examiners recommend failing the exam the matter will be considered by both the Degree Committee and by the Postgraduate Committee of the University. See Paragraph 4-10 page 5-6 of the Code of Practice for more information. <https://www.cambridgestudents.cam.ac.uk/new-students/manage-your-student-information/graduate-students/code>

Plagiarism

At all stages of the Programme you must adhere to the University and School Guidelines for assessed work. In particular it is important to understand plagiarism, and how to avoid it. The University's statement on plagiarism is below.

Plagiarism is defined as submitting as one's own work, irrespective of intent to deceive, that which derives in part or in its entirety from the work of others without due acknowledgement. It is both poor scholarship and a breach of academic integrity.

Examples of plagiarism include **copying** (using another person's language and/or ideas as if they are a candidate's own), by:

- **quoting verbatim** another person's work without due acknowledgement of the source;
- **paraphrasing** another person's work by changing some of the words, or the order of the words, without due acknowledgement of the source;
- **using ideas** taken from someone else without reference to the originator;
- **cutting and pasting** from the Internet to make a pastiche of online sources;
- **submitting someone else's work** as part of a candidate's own without identifying clearly who did the work. For example, buying or commissioning work via professional agencies such as 'essay banks' or 'paper mills', or not attributing research contributed by others to a joint project.

Plagiarism might also arise from **colluding** with another person, including another candidate, other than as permitted for joint project work (i.e. where collaboration is concealed or has been forbidden). A candidate should include a general acknowledgement where he or she has received substantial help, for example with the language and style of a piece of written work.

Plagiarism can occur in respect to all types of sources and media:

- text, illustrations, musical quotations, mathematical derivations, computer code, etc;
- material downloaded from websites or drawn from manuscripts or other media;
- published and unpublished material, including lecture handouts and other students' work.

Acceptable means of acknowledging the work of others (by referencing, in footnotes, or otherwise) is an essential component of any work submitted for assessment, whether written examination, dissertation, essay, registration exercise, or group coursework. The most appropriate method for attribution of others' work will vary according to the subject matter and mode of assessment. Faculties or Departments should issue written guidance on the relevant scholarly conventions for submitted work, and also make it clear to candidates what level of acknowledgement might be expected in written examinations. Candidates are required to familiarize themselves with this guidance, to follow it in all work submitted for assessment, whether written paper or submitted essay, and may be required to sign a declaration to that effect. If a candidate has any outstanding queries, clarification should be sought from her or his Director of Studies, Course Director or Supervisor as appropriate.

Failure to conform to the expected standards of scholarship (e.g. by not referencing sources) in examinations or assessed work may affect the mark given to the candidate's work. In addition, suspected cases of the use of unfair means (of which plagiarism is one form) will be investigated and may be brought to one of the University Courts or disciplinary panels. The University courts and disciplinary panels have wide powers to discipline those found to have used unfair means in an examination, including depriving such persons of membership of the University, and deprivation of a degree.

The University makes use of text-matching software for the purpose of plagiarism education and detection, and reserves the right to submit a candidate's work to such a service. For this purpose, candidates consent to the submission of their papers to the service and for the submitted papers to form part of the service's comparative source work database. To facilitate use of the service, students (and participating Examiners and Assessors) may be required to agree to the service provider's end-user agreement and provide a limited amount of personal data upon registration to the service, for instance, their name, email address, and course details.

(July 2016): www.admin.cam.ac.uk/univ/so/2016/chapter02-section19.html#heading2-17

The Faculty Board of Biology's Statement on Plagiarism can be found here:
[Faculty Board Guidance on Plagiarism | Faculty of Biology \(cam.ac.uk\)](http://www.admin.cam.ac.uk/univ/so/2016/chapter02-section19.html#heading2-17)

Annual leave and Intermission

Students who are unable to work on their project for medical or other reasons can apply to intermit by completing an application form, which is available from their CamSIS self-service page. Further information can be found on the Student Registry webpage at:

www.admin.cam.ac.uk/students/studentregistry/current/graduate/programme/intermission.html

If you are a full-time student, you are expected to devote around 40 hours per week to your studies for the full duration of the course. Full-time students are entitled to take up to 8 weeks holiday per year of study, in agreement with your supervisor (1 October to 30 September). Looking after your own wellbeing is important in itself, but it also helps you to maintain your productivity. It is therefore recommended that students take a minimum of 4 weeks of holiday per year. The entitlement includes Public Holidays and periods when the University is closed. Periods of holiday should be agreed with your Supervisor. Please refer to the Code of Practice (section 45):

https://www.cambridgestudents.cam.ac.uk/files/copresearch1920_final.pdf

Student support and wellbeing

Your PhD should be an exciting and enjoyable experience, but at times it may be stressful. Looking after your wellbeing should be a top priority. We will be organising DTPs cross events to promote peer-to-peer support among students from different cohorts and DTP programmes. There are a number of support mechanisms available to students, in addition to your PhD Supervisor.

Department

All Departments in the DTP should allocate you an Advisor or Mentor who is an academic member of staff who is independent of your Supervisor. They can offer objective independent advice on scientific or more general matters. Your department will also have a Postgraduate Education Committee (the exact name varies between departments) with student representatives. The student reps or the department Postgraduate Administrator (see useful contacts, below) may be able to help you.

DTP

The DTP office (sbsdtp@admin.cam.ac.uk) is always available as a first port of call in case of any problems. If we can't help directly, we will point you in the direction of the most appropriate source of support.

College Pastoral Support:

The colleges are a distinctive aspect of life at Cambridge. For postgraduate students they provide an interdisciplinary community that can be a focus for social activities. Importantly, colleges are also equipped to provide pastoral support. There are a number of different people in College who you can turn to for help and advice. In the first instance, students will be assigned a Graduate Tutor, who is normally a Fellow of the College and will take an interest in your wellbeing and progress. Graduate Tutors, as well as the College Senior Tutor, can offer advice on academic, social, financial, medical and personal matters. Tutorial Office staff, student MCR Welfare Officers and, where available, the College Nurse, Chaplain and College Counsellor can also provide pastoral care and help to students. Further information on the advice and support provided by Colleges can be found here:

<https://www.studentwellbeing.admin.cam.ac.uk/college-pastoral-support>

University Counselling Service

The Counselling service provides meetings with counsellors and workshops as well as a number of self-help resources. Information can be found on their website at: www.counselling.cam.ac.uk/studentcouns

Postgraduate Student and Postdoc forum

The Postgraduate Student and Postdoc forum represents postgraduate students and Postdocs from each University Department and Partner Institute from Life Sciences. The Forum was developed in 2011 to provide postgraduate students and early career researchers with a platform for the communication of ideas and mutual concerns, and for the coordination of academic activities. Further information can be found on the PSLS website:

<https://www.postgradschl.lifesci.cam.ac.uk/grasp>

Other

General information on being a student at Cambridge can be found here:

www.cambridgestudents.cam.ac.uk/

Information specific to postgraduate students in Life Sciences can be found on the Postgraduate School of Life Sciences website: <https://www.postgradschl.lifesci.cam.ac.uk/>

Information for postgraduate students in Colleges can be found at:

<https://www.postgraduate.study.cam.ac.uk/colleges>

Paid Work

Students are permitted to undertake up to ten hours paid employment per week during the course of their studies, usually teaching (demonstrating or supervising). However, we would advise that you do not work during the first year of the Programme.

Laptops and internet access

You will need to bring your own laptop to Cambridge. Once you start your full PhD your consumables fund can be used for IT software/upgrades if necessary. Please discuss your needs with your PhD supervisor.

You will need access to the internet on your laptop during the induction week of the programme. For this you will need to access the Eduroam network. For information on how to do this please follow instructions at this link: [Wireless services: eduroam Wi-Fi | IT Help and Support \(cam.ac.uk\)](#)

Leaving DTP Programme

For those students who do not proceed to the PhD degree, there is the option of converting to one of the following:

- Certificate of Postgraduate Studies (CPGS)—not openly available but can, in some circumstances, be awarded by the Degree Committee for Biology
- MPhil by dissertation

The exact route will be determined after discussion with your project supervisor and department.

Finances

You will receive payments on the 26th of each month. Your first payment will be on the 26th October 2022 and the last payment will either be on the 26th September 2026 or on the date your PhD thesis is submitted, whichever is the earliest.

The SBS DTP Studentship award comprises up to:

- £18,000 for consumables for the duration of the PhD
- £920 for travel/conferences for the duration of the PhD
- £1,000 for PIPS

These funds are paid directly to Departments and Partner Institutes. Students should therefore discuss expenditure requests with their Supervisors and liaise with their Department/Institute Postgraduate Administrator if they wish to spend these funds.

£1,000 is available to support you during your PIPS if required for transport or accommodation. For these expenses please ask your Department to pay for the costs initially and then invoice the DTP office at the address stated below and we can reimburse your Department:

Useful Contacts

Please find below the contact details of the Postgraduate Administrators in Departments and Institute:

Department/UPI	Contact	E-mail
Babraham Institute	Michelle Barthelemy	Michelle.Barthelemy@babraham.ac.uk
Biochemistry	Christine Thulborn	pg-admin@bioc.cam.ac.uk
Genetics	Sean Scinta	ss2699@cam.ac.uk
NIAB	Dr Fiona Leigh	fiona.leigh@niab.com
Pathology	Becky Straw	teach@path.cam.ac.uk
Pharmacology	Jenny Nicole Drumond Baptista	phar-secretary@lists.cam.ac.uk
PDN	Aileen Jordan	amb1014@cam.ac.uk pdngrad@hermes.cam.ac.uk
Plant Sciences	Alison Miller	pgadmin@plantsci.cam.ac.uk
Zoology	Marcus Pitcaithly	graduate@zoo.cam.ac.uk
MRC Toxicology	General enquiries	hadmin@mrc-tox.cam.ac.uk

In addition to your own Department administrator, you can also contact the DTP team for any issue related to PIPS and training.

Professor Chris Smith	DTP Programme Director	cwjs1@cam.ac.uk
Dr David Sargan	Chair of Training Committee	drs20@cam.ac.uk
Sandra Di Eleonora	DTP Coordinator	sd886@cam.ac.uk
Yolibeth Lopez	DTP Administrator	yld20@cam.ac.uk
SBS DTP Office	General enquiries	sbsdtp@admin.cam.ac.uk
Lesley Dixon	Faculty Administrator (Postgraduate School)	ld356@cam.ac.uk

Student Charter

Students will:

- Be integral members of the Department / Partner Institute they join. Equality, Diversity and Inclusion are core values of the SBS DTP. All fellow students, staff and visitors should be treated with respect.
- Act as ambassadors for the SBS DTP programme and the University of Cambridge at all times.
- Be aware of and adhere to good research practices and behave professionally.
- Have intellectual ownership of, and assign top priority to, their PhD to enable thesis submission within the 4-year timeframe, taking into account the time required to PIPS as per the programme of which they are part.
- Recognise that taking part in educational activities, such as PIPS, is a compulsory part of the DTP programme.
- Report to their supervisor and DTP Co-ordinator any issues likely to impact on their ability to undertake their PhD work.
- Attend BBSRC and SBS DTP organised training and cohort activities and take responsibility for their own development by attending courses, journal clubs, conferences.
- Engage with scientific literature.
- Respond to requests from the SBS DTP Programme Office in a timely fashion and submit all reports and documents by the agreed deadlines.
- Familiarise themselves with literature relating to their PhD studies, both scientific and administrative, including the SBS DTP guidelines and the University of Cambridge Code of Practice for Research Students.
- Understand that non-compliance will result in exclusion from the SBS DTP programme.

Supervisors will:

- Assign high priority to students to ensure thesis submission within the 4-year timeframe.
- Regularly monitor student progress and meet with students to discuss their development and/or research project on a regular basis (at least fortnightly and ideally weekly).
- Support and encourage student attendance at BBSRC and SBS DTP training and cohort building sessions.
- Student attendance at these sessions is a condition of student funding.
- Work with the student to develop their research aims throughout the course of the PhD and provide the necessary resources (including sufficient lab space, computational resources, all essential materials and consumables funding) and clearly delineate risks and back-up plans
- Provide an environment where good research practice is the norm. Mentor students in the scientific method and encourage them to present their work at conferences and write scientific papers
- Understand that PIPS is a compulsory and integral part of the programme
 - Support students in their selection of PIPS
 - Discuss during the first term of the PhD suitable timings for the PIPS to help reduce disruption to the students PhD work
 - Release students from all work related to their PhD during PIPS
 - Ensure the student is informed of any important information or training they may have missed during PIPS.
- Respond to requests from the DTP Office in a timely fashion and support the student to submit all reports and documents by the agreed deadlines, and to attend events relevant to their development.
- Familiarise themselves with the SBS DTP and the University of Cambridge Code of Practice for Research Students.
- Understand that failure to comply with the above points may result in their lab being excluded from receiving future SBS or BBSRC-funded DTP students

Appendix 1: General Safety in Research Labs

Before you start work in any laboratory, you must attend the University Health and Safety and the Lab and Chemical Management training sessions. You will not be covered by University insurance unless you have completed the training. Please check with your own Department.

You will need to adhere to the Health and Safety policies of your host department, and in particular to the extraordinary operating procedures and other special requirements that are in place during the covid epidemic. You should attend the appropriate safety courses and be aware of all relevant risk assessments. Some general information is given below.

www.safety.admin.cam.ac.uk

Chemicals: All labs contain biologically hazardous chemicals, which are not always immediately obvious. To protect from accidentally exposure to these chemicals, each laboratory holds COSHH forms listing the chemicals used in the lab, how to store and handle them and action to take in case of an accident. You should read the forms before using any listed substances. Your supervisor has a responsibility to ensure that you fully understand the potential hazards in the lab and the appropriate safety measures. You should seek the advice of technical or academic staff on the procedures for using dangerous substances before you start using them.

Radiochemicals: All students who expect to use radioisotopes must be registered with the relevant Departmental Radiation Officers before using isotopes. You must have received basic training on safe handling procedures in order to be registered. You are responsible for ensuring that you are fully aware of both handling and disposal procedures for each radioisotope you use and should therefore contact your supervisor before using any radiochemicals.

Equipment: All electrical equipment is routinely checked. You must not tamper with the power supply to any device. If you suspect a piece of equipment to be faulty, you should report it to the relevant Departmental electricians.

Animals: If you conduct a research project involving any procedures that may have the effect of causing pain, suffering, distress or lasting harm to animals protected by the Animals (Scientific Procedures) Act 1986, you must hold a Home Office licence. This will require attendance at training courses and reading relevant guidance documents. You must not begin any work with animals until you have received the licence, and even then you must work under the close supervision of your supervisor or other appointed persons.