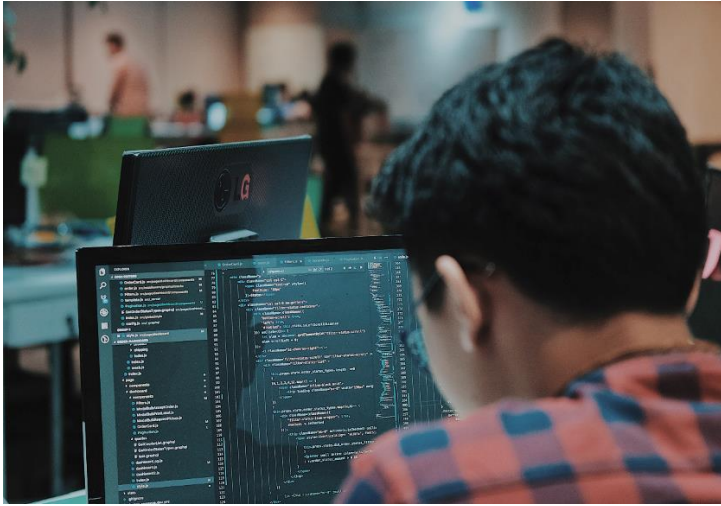
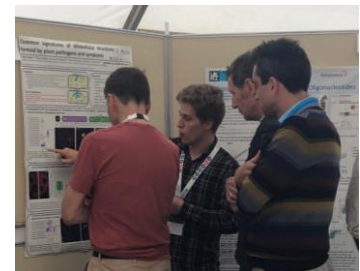




Biotechnology and Biological Sciences Research Council



Cambridge Biosciences BBSRC DTP Student Handbook



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Contact Information

Training and Inclusive Support Manager

Dr Sam Byers, sb2251@cam.ac.uk

BBSRC DTP Administration

Sandra Di Eleonora and Yolibeth López de Arcia, bbsrcdtp@admin.cam.ac.uk

Welcome

Welcome to the Cambridge Biosciences BBSRC DTP (Doctoral Training Partnership), your academic home for the next four years. The various University Departments and Institutes and affiliated Institutions in which make up the DTP have joined forces to establish an innovative interdisciplinary programme for postgraduate students in the biosciences. This builds on the excellent research training for which Cambridge is renowned but offers a broader experience and greater flexibility than the more traditional PhD based on direct entry into a single research group.

You will be able to take advantage of the unparalleled research community around which the DTP is based by undertaking two rotation projects in different research groups, alongside training in statistics and computational biology. In April next year, you will start your main PhD project, and later in your training period you will carry out a *Professional Internship for PhD Students* (PIPS) in a non-academic environment. As well as gaining experience in the wider world of work, you will also directly see the ways that scientific research impacts the lives of people or the wellbeing of the planet. As part of our new BBSRC DTP3 programme, we have teamed up with [AgritechE](#) and [OneNucleus](#), umbrella groups for organizations involved in the Agritech and Health related industries in the region, allowing you wider access to real world impacts of the biosciences.

Throughout your PhD you will benefit from a tailored training programme within a supportive inclusive cohort structure that will prepare you for the next exciting steps in your career. Our aim is for you to graduate in four years' time with a deep understanding and enjoyment of science and scientific research, and an enduring and diverse network of colleagues and friends. Our hope is that you can aspire to become a future leader in research, whether in academia or the commercial biosciences, or to use your expertise in other ways to help society meet its future challenges. Four years, as you will find out, is not long, so take full advantage 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, Cambridge Biosciences BBSRC DTP

Last update 19 September 2023

Getting Started at Cambridge

The purpose of this Handbook is to provide reference for essential and useful information about the BBSRC DTP Programme and life at the University of Cambridge as a PhD student.

Recommended Webpages to help get you started

It is highly recommended that you take time to consult with the [Cambridge students website](#) and [CamGuides for PhDs](#).

CamSIS (The Cambridge Student Information System)

[CamSIS](#) is University of Cambridge student repository system. It is highly recommended that you check your CamSIS profile to ensure it is up to date.

Setting up Je-S (Joint Electronic Submissions) records

Je-S is UKRI's online portal for reporting information relating to research grants, PhD studentships and the like.

Students must create a Je-S account within first two weeks of arrival. Please follow the instructions outlined in the Je-S Handbook [here](#).

All stages relating to ORCID Identifiers may be skipped, and under Account Type, only “The Student” should be selected.

In the Organisation section, please choose “University of Cambridge”. If you have a standard studentship, you can select the School of Biological Sciences as your department.

After creating your account, you should receive an email that includes a link to activate it. Once you have activated the account, please log into your account by accessing the [Je-S log in page](#).

Please ensure that your account is active as the DTP office will attach your BBSRC funding details to your student account once it's created.

Please keep your personal information updated on Je-S, as UKRI will access this data for reporting purposes related to the BBSRC DTP grant.

PhD student code of practice

You should also take time to familiarise yourself with [Code of Practice for Research Students](#)

Accessibility and Disability Resource Centre (ADRC)

The decision of whether or not to disclose a disability, medical condition, or specific learning difficulty is an individual's choice. For more information, please visit [Accessibility and Disability Resource Centre \(ADRC\)](#) which has several resources to help students that should require support during their studies at Cambridge.

General BBSRC DTP Programme Structure

The BBSRC DTP programme has two main pathways: Standard/targeted and iCASE. For information related specifically to each pathway, please see pages 6 and 11, respectively.

Whilst there are two pathways, both follow the principle that the BBSRC DTP Programme is a partnership between numerous Departments and Institutes at the University of Cambridge and three research organisations (Partner Institutes) situated nearby. Students can carry out research in any of the Departments and Partner Institutes, but all students are registered with the University, receive their award from the University and have access to facilities at both the University and the Partner Institute.

The BBSRC DTP Programme is studied predominantly on a full-time basis for a duration of four years (although 60% and 75% part-time routes are also available). As a result, students must submit their thesis no later than 48 months after their start date. For students starting in October 2023, the final date for submission of a thesis is 30 September 2027.

Progression and Completion of PhD

Funding from the DTP Programme is contingent on satisfactory reports of progress submitted via CamSIS by your Department or Partner Institute, and completion of PIPS (Standard and Targeted) or industrial placement (iCASE). Students are expected to submit their thesis within 48 months of starting the Programme. The Programme recommends that students submit a traditional thesis.

All supervisors are required by the University to provide a termly feedback report for the students they supervise. Students can access this report by logging into [CamSIS](#), clicking on “Students and staff” and then view reports. In addition, students will be expected to complete the relevant host Department or Partner Institute PhD progression procedures (for more information contact your departmental/institute postgraduate administrator).

You will be provisionally registered for the award of PhD. At some point during the second year of the Programme (exact timings will differ according to the host Department or Partner Institute) students 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 Postgraduate Administrator in your Department/Institute. On passing this, students become fully registered for the PhD, backdated to October 2023.

Before the end of the fourth year, students must have completed and submitted their thesis for examination. The DTP also organises a Thesis and Viva Preparation workshop during the final year of the Programme.

Leaving the BBSRC 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, the BBSRC DTP Programme Office, and the agreement of the Research Committee and Management Committee.

Standard and Targeted BBSRC DTP Programme Structure

Rotation Projects 2023/24

You will carry out two 10-week rotations projects during the first six months of the programme. These rotations will allow you to gain experience of two different research environments and subsequently to make an informed choice about your PhD project.

Before beginning the course, you will be able to contact supervisors in different Departments/Institutes to discuss possible rotation/PhD projects. Prior to arriving in Cambridge, you will have selected and confirmed your choice of project for Michaelmas Term (October – December) and Lent Term (January – March).

Each rotation project is 10 weeks in duration and is spent carrying out research, either in a laboratory or elsewhere depending on the requirements of the project. Following the rotation project there is a two-week period to write the rotation project report. The two-week writing period is to complete the analysis and write up of data; we would therefore not expect that research is undertaken during this time. Further information on what should be included in the project report is contained in the following section of this handbook.

Michaelmas Term 2023 (Rotation 1)

Start date: 9 October 2023

End date: 15 December 2023

MT rotation report deadline: 5 January 2024

Lent Term 2024 (Rotation 2)

Start date: 15 January 2024

End date: 22 March 2024

LT rotation report deadline: 8 April 2024

Rotation Project Report

Rotation project reports will not exceed 5,000 words in length, including figure legends but excluding the bibliography (and words in figures and tables). Your **word count** (excluding the bibliography) must be given on the title page.

Reports should be properly referenced. Information on referencing can be found on the Student Registry website: www.admin.cam.ac.uk/univ/plagiarism/students/referencing/

You must include in the report a preface with a **signed statement** along the following lines: "I confirm that the material in this report is not copied from any published material, nor is it a paraphrase or abstract of any published material unless it is identified as such and a full source reference is given. I confirm that, other than where indicated as above, this document is my own work."

Reports should be broken down into summary, introduction, methods, results, and discussion.

Introduction: this section should give the non-specialist reader, **in a concise manner**, the background information necessary to understand your project and set the results in context. It should not be a full literature review. You should explain why you are doing the research (why is it important or why should the public care) and its wider economic, societal or cultural impact (www.bbsrc.ac.uk/funding/apply/application-guidance/pathways-impact/).

Methods: this section should **be concise** yet contain sufficient information to allow someone else to repeat the work: give priority to novel approaches and condense standard molecular methods by citing previous publications or manufacturer's instructions.

Results: this section should flow as a logical, coherent description of the project, including the rationale for doing each experiment. This will not necessarily be the order in which you carried out the experiments. Make use of figures and tables. Remember that this is a report of what you did in your rotation, not a paper for publication: don't just put in your best (or only positive) results, but discuss problems encountered and/or troubleshooting.

Discussion: this section should NOT be a repetition of the Results section but should critically evaluate the significance of your results in relation to published works, which should also be critically appraised. It will usually contain ideas of further work required to clarify your findings. This is a valuable inclusion in a project report where you may not have had sufficient time to complete the research as you might have wished.

It is recommended that you write parts of the report alongside conducting the research. You will have a two-week writing period at the end of the rotation, but during this time you will need to submit the report to your rotation project supervisor. You should plan your time accordingly so that your supervisor has time to read the report and provide feedback and you have time to implement the feedback before the submission deadline.

Reports should be saved in .pdf format (make sure that the report has not changed once saved in this format) and emailed to the Programme Co-ordinator (bbsrcdtp@admin.cam.ac.uk) before 12:00 (noon) on the deadline (see Appendix 2). Hard copies are not required.

Each rotation project report will be read by the rotation project supervisor and an assessor, nominated by the supervisor, who will provide feedback and a mark.

Starting the PhD: Changing your Department or Faculty

Work for the PhD should start in the Easter Term 2024, following the submission of your PhD choice form, which will need to be submitted by **15th April 2024**. You might be required to transfer to another Department or Partner Institute as part of the transition to the PhD element. It is vitally important that you complete the process because this is linked to your Department or Partner Institute receiving funds from the BBSRC DTP funding allocation to support your research, and it allows the correct supervisor to be added to your CamSIS (Cambridge Student Information System) record for completing Termly reports. Start the process of changing Department by visiting the CamSIS [self service area](#).

Further guidance is available at <https://www.cambridgestudents.cam.ac.uk/your-course/graduate-study/your-student-status/changing-your-departmentfaculty>

PhD project proposals should be a maximum of 6,000 words in length including figure legends but excluding the bibliography (and words in tables). The word count (excluding the bibliography) must be given on the title page. Project proposals should be properly referenced and further information on referencing can be found on the academic misconduct website:

www.admin.cam.ac.uk/univ/plagiarism/students/referencing/

The proposal should be broken down into aims, background, methods and experimental design, controls, and budget, plus any health and safety considerations.

Aims of the project

This section should be succinct, with perhaps a few sentences of overview explaining the general focus and then listing some specific objectives/goals.

Background and work that has led up to the project.

This section should set the scene for the research, so needs to be a summary of the relevant literature, perhaps beginning more broadly and getting more specific. It may include some preliminary unpublished data from your work or from other work in the lab if it is relevant. It may also include some diagrams or pictures of data if they are helpful. You should explain the impact of this research (see section Rotation Project Reports). We suggest that about one-third of the proposal might be background, but there is no set rule.

Experimental design and methods to be used in investigating this problem.

This section should describe your plan of investigation. It is often helpful to subdivide this into sections. These might represent sequential steps in the investigation (e.g., genetic screen; molecular characterisation of genes; etc.) or parallel approaches (e.g., loss of function studies; gain of function studies; etc.) or different questions to be addressed (e.g., Does X regulate Y? Is X essential for mesoderm development?). See what works best for your proposed work.

Remember to think about issues such as: what controls you will use to test whether your results are meaningful; do you foresee any pitfalls and if so, how might you circumvent them if they arise; what are your back-up plans in case this project fails to work out as expected? You should include a timeline, or flow diagram, to show you have a realistic idea of how long each part of the project is likely to take.

This should be an Appendix (and does not count towards the word limit) and should include details of funding required if project involves *in vivo* skills training. This could be split into budgets for different elements of the training such as: animals and animal costs, consumables, equipment (if you need any specific equipment). You should try to find as much of this financial information out for yourself as possible but must liaise with your supervisor.

Reports should be completed in time for your PhD Supervisor to read and provide feedback before final submission.

Reports should be .pdf (make sure that the report has not changed once saved in this format) and emailed to the Programme Administrator (bbsrcdtp@admin.cam.ac.uk) **before 12:00 on 20th May 2024**. Hard copies are not required.

Each proposal will be read by the PhD Supervisor and an assessor, nominated by the Supervisor, who will provide feedback and a mark.

Feedback and Progression onto PhD

You will receive feedback and a mark (Excellent, Very Good, Good, Satisfactory or Requires Improvement) for each rotation project report and PhD project proposal. Students whose reports or proposal are marked as 'Satisfactory', or 'Requires Improvement' will be asked to meet with their Theme Leader and/or PhD Supervisor to discuss training and skills development. The DTP Programme reserves the right to withdraw financial support if a student is not adequately progressing (i.e., repeatedly receiving 'Requires Improvement' marks) through the Programme.

The review process is overseen by the Research Committee who will review feedback and marks from supervisors and assessors.

Professional Internship for PhD Students (PIPS)

A distinctive feature of the DTP programme is that all standard and targeted 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, GSK, Alzheimer's Research UK, Royal Society of Biology, The Company of Biologists, The Naked Scientists, to name just 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 run an annual PIPS Symposium 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.

Some companies have their own policy regarding internships; for instance, some host organisations have a policy of employing and paying all interns at standard rates. 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.

The DTP Office will provide support throughout the process on an ad hoc basis.

Before starting your PIPS, you must submit the following forms:

- Host approval form (if the Host is not on the approved organisation list)
- 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.

Please note that we are in the process of transferring PIPS forms and applications to OneDrive, which will be complete by Easter term 2024.

iCASE BBSRC DTP Programme Structure

The BBSRC DTP iCASE Programme is usually studied on a full-time basis (60% and 75% part time routes are available in principle, but all students this year are full-time). In contrast to the students on Standard studentships who undertake rotations, you will immediately become a member of your PhD host department. However, you will also be part of the BBSRC DTP cohort which is made up of students who have BBSRC funding, and other students who have alternative funding but who will follow the same training schedule and join in the other cohort activities. During the orientation week in October and the first week of term in January you will join with the other students who make up the BBSRC DTP 2023 Cohort for training and cohort building activities. During the PhD project, you will continue to undertake further research skills and subject-specific training both as part of the DTP cohort as well as within your department. The major difference is that as you have an industrial collaborative partner you will not undertake a PIPS. You should plan to spend between 3-18 months working in your industrial partner's organisation.

Student and Supervisor Charters

As a BBSRC DTP postgraduate research undertaking Research at the University of Cambridge, it is expected that you will abide by the student charter outlined below.

In addition, it is expected that your supervisory team will adhere to the supervisor charter also outlined in this section.

Student Charter

The BBSRC DTP Student Charter

Students will:

- Be integral members of the Department / Partner Institute they join.
- Treat all fellow students, staff, and visitors with respect, observing the DTP's core values of diversity and inclusiveness.
- Create a Je-S account within the first week of October.
- Act as ambassadors for the BBSRC 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, considering the time required to complete rotations, PIPS, or industrial placement as per the programme of which they are part.
- Recognise that engaging with the training programme, including the PIPS, is a compulsory part of the DTP programme.
- Report to their supervisor and BBSRC DTP Co-ordinator any issues likely to impact on their ability to undertake their PhD work.
- Attend BBSRC 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 BBSRC 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 BBSRC DTP guidelines and the University of Cambridge Code of Practice for Research Students.

Understand that non-compliance might result in exclusion from the DTP programme.

Supervisors will:

- Assign high priority to students and their rotation and/or PhD research 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 DTP training and cohort building sessions. 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 component of the BBSRC DTP that is distinct and independent of the students' PhD project, allowing them to experience a different professional working environment:
 - Be supportive of students during 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 BBSRC 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.
- Engage with the BBSRC DTP Programme Office by providing written feedback on student rotations and/or PhD reports and termly CamSIS reports by the deadlines provided. Ensuring assessors, you have nominated also provide feedback by the agreed deadlines.
- Familiarise themselves with the BBSRC DTP and the University of Cambridge [Code of practice for Research Students](#)
- Have attended Postgraduate Supervisor training and continue to engage with professional development activities to support postgraduate supervision (e.g., to support students with Mental Health difficulties).
- Be aware that an individual Supervisor can accept no more than one DTP PhD student in any single year and supervise no more than two PhD DTP students at one time.
- Be prepared to contribute to the DTP e.g., by volunteering to help with admissions.
- Understand that failure to comply with the above points may result in their lab being excluded from hosting future BBSRC funded students.

Training Opportunities for Cambridge BBSRC DTP Students

Training for BBSRC DTP Programme Students

During your four years at the University of Cambridge, there will be a plethora of training opportunities available to you, not only from the Central University Training services and Departments, but also by the BBSRC DTP Programme Office, via Dr Sam Byers, the BBSRC DTP Training and Inclusive Support Manager. It is recommended that PhD students spend at least 10 days per year on training. The BBSRC DTP will provide several training programmes/opportunities that are related to this, and over the course of the 4-year programme will average 10 days per year.

BBSRC DTP Training

BBSRC DTP related training is highly recommended, with mandatory courses clearly highlighted and attendance monitored. If you believe that you already possess the competencies being covered in any of the training courses, you should discuss this with Dr Sam Byers, providing evidence of your prior expertise.

BBSRC DTP training will provide fantastic cohort building opportunities and will be delivered each year with key learning objectives (see below) in mind, so that the training is timely to your studies and programme progression.

Year 1

Students should have

- Understand what it is to be a productive and effective researcher.
- Reflected on experience of rotations and written training plan for PhD

Year 2

Students should have

- Started PhD research project.
- Submitted FYR
- Introduction to different career/training themes

Year 3

Students should have

- Understanding of publishing protocol and procedure
- Introduction to careers
- Define networking and how it can be used to support research/future career.
- Introduction to different techniques used for academic networking

Year 4

Students should have

- Understanding of submission process
- Prepare for viva.
- Write up and submit.
- Career progression to next step

Training providers outside of Cambridge BBSRC DTP

In addition to the training that you will receive from BBSRC DTP, there is also complementary support from other providers within the University of Cambridge. Providers and their training programmes can be found via the University Training Booking System ([UTBS](#)). A key provider of postgraduate training is [Postgraduate Researcher Development](#)

It is highly recommended that you complete a skills analysis questionnaire at the beginning of each year so that you can identify the appropriate training provider that will support your development. Annual review meetings with Dr Sam Byers will be organised with you so that you are supported through the design of your training plan for the coming year.

Laboratory Training

Host departments will have their own mandatory Health and Safety training that will need to be completed for you to conduct your research.

Conference Attendance

You will also have access to a fund of £920 which can be used during your PhD to cover attending conferences and for travel.

Training Log

Training encompasses all the learning and development that you will acquire and apply during your time in Cambridge. It will provide you with the skills and experiences that you need as a researcher, both today for your PhD studies, and for the future, whatever you chose that to be. You will be provided with a Training log that will provide you with the opportunity to log all the training activities that you attend, both BBSRC DTP related and outside of the DTP, as well as record supervisor meetings, conference attendance and presentations you have delivered (both oral and poster presentations). In addition, you will have the option to reflect on the activities listed in your training log so that you may use this log as a basis for future applications and/or personal statements.

Opportunities and Networks Available at Cambridge

BBSRC DTP Cohort(s)

You are a member of the BBSRC DTP programme, and to provide ample opportunities to network with your peers, there will be cohort building activities organised by the BBSRC DTP Programme Office, throughout the academic year and your time at Cambridge. These activities will be designed to promote cohort building both within and between year groups.

Postgraduate School of Life Sciences (PSLS)

The [Postgraduate School of Life Sciences](#) (PSLS) was set up in 2000 to look after the education and career needs of postgraduate students in the Life Sciences here at Cambridge.

The PSLS combines the [School of Biological Sciences](#) and the [School of Clinical Medicine](#) and our students and Faculty collaborate closely together to produce ground breaking research.

Colleges

As a student at Cambridge, you will attach to a college, which will provide opportunities for you to socialise with other members/students within the university's community. For more information regarding colleges, please visit [Cambridge Colleges](#) webpage.

Societies

A list of all non-sport related societies can be found via the [Registered Clubs & Societies](#) homepage. More information relating to sporting activities can be found via the [Sports societies](#) webpage.

DTP Associate Partners

As Part of our DTP3 programme for cohorts starting in 2023 and 2024, we have teamed up with two Associate Partners who are umbrella groups for commercial and academic biosciences organizations in our region. The two organizations are complementary, with One Nucleus serving the healthcare and pharma sectors, while AgritechE serves the region's agrotechnology sector. Both organizations provide networking, training, and career development opportunities for PhD students. We encourage all our students to sign up with at least one of these Associate Partners.

One Nucleus

[One Nucleus](#) is a not-for-profit Life Sciences & Healthcare membership organisation headquartered in Cambridge. Providing local, UK-wide, and international connectivity, complemented by practical support on operational, investment and technology trends, One Nucleus seeks to enable our members to maximise their performance. Events of interest to students include the annual "Building Life Science Adventures" careers conference that attracts some of the most exceptional employers, students, early career seekers and universities.

To access the benefits of One Nucleus membership, you'll first need a website user account. You can sign up for one [here](#). Be sure to select University of Cambridge as your employer (and do not create a new one) so your membership can transfer to your account. If you have any questions, please contact info@onenucleus.com.



Agri-TechE unites farmers and growers with scientists and technologists across the UK and beyond to create a global agritech innovation hub.

[Agri-TechE](#) is a business focused member-led organisation, supporting the growth of a world-leading network of innovative farmers, producers, scientists, technologists, and entrepreneurs who share a vision of increasing the productivity, profitability, and sustainability of agriculture. Together we aim to help turn challenges into business opportunities and facilitate mutually beneficial collaboration.

Agri-TechE is supporting innovation by:

- Facilitating conversations and connections across the network
- Accelerating the application of research and technology developments
- Supporting businesses wanting to engage with the agri-food ecosystem
- Creating opportunities for networking through a vibrant events programme

Our [network](#) represents the body of our members, which we have alongside wider connections we can access in the UK and internationally. We have connections to all the latest agri-tech innovations, funding streams, research institutions, policy, business services and certifications.

Our [events](#), which are open to members and non-members, cover a mix of topics from tech-focused to practical on-farm advice, to the latest research. Our [annual REAP Conference](#) puts farmers at the centre of the discussion and helps delegates navigate the demands of 21st Century agriculture by reframing challenges to encourage new ideas and identify innovative solutions.

About the Early-Career Innovators' Forum

The [Early Career Innovators' Forum](#) (ECIF) is a platform that unites early-career individuals interested in agricultural innovation through a diverse programme of networking and knowledge-sharing activities that are free to attend.

Being part of the ECIF Programme will allow you to:

- Explore innovation across various areas of agriculture
- Develop your professional network by connecting with other early career individuals
- Acquire valuable tools and resources to help you thrive professionally in the agricultural industry

ECIF provides a welcoming, friendly, and informal environment where you will meet other researchers, graduates, and professionals from a variety of backgrounds including academia, agronomy, engineering, consultancy, farming, and tech development.

Join the ECIF Programme to build your professional network and be part of a dynamic community of early career individuals united by their passion for agriculture and agri-tech!

Keen to find out more about Agri-TechE and ECIF?

Get in touch with us for further info or to sign up to the ECIF Programme: info@agri-tech-e.co.uk

Follow us on social media: [LinkedIn](#) | [Instagram](#) | [Facebook](#) | [Twitter](#)



Student Support and wellbeing

Life as a PhD student can be stressful and demanding at times, and it is important to recognise that you are never alone. There are various support mechanisms available to students, starting your Rotation Project and PhD Supervisor. The University has a comprehensive [Student Support](#) webpage that is an excellent first port of call for information about the various sources of support related to physical and mental health, wellbeing, academic, and financial issues, as well as links to a variety of student communities.

BBSRC DTP Training and Inclusive Support Manager

Dr Sam Byers, the BBSRC DTP Training and Inclusive Support Manager can be contacted via email and is available to offer help, guidance, and support throughout your time in Cambridge. Sam can also put you in touch with other people and/or groups within the university as appropriate.

Email: sb2251@cam.ac.uk

DTP Adviser

A member of the Research Committee will act as a DTP adviser. Each student will be allocated a DTP adviser at the beginning of the course to provide supplementary support, operating independently from both the supervisory team and the Department/Partner Institute. The DTP adviser's primary responsibilities encompass the following:

- Serving as an accessible resource for students seeking general academic guidance
- Maintaining an open-door policy for discussions regarding research progress, personal development, and research-related requirements

DTP advisers should meet with students at least once and ideally on a termly basis during their first year, with the flexibility to conduct meetings either online or in person. These meetings are designed to be informal in nature and can be initiated by the student for convenience and ease of communication. Meetings in subsequent years are discretionary and the need can be discussed with the students.

College Pastoral Support

Your college is responsible for your pastoral support and there are several different people in College who you can turn to for help and advice. In the first instance, students will be assigned a Postgraduate Tutor, who is normally a Fellow of the College and will take an interest in your wellbeing and progress. Postgraduate 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.

University Counselling Service and Student Support

The Counselling service provides meetings with counsellors, and [group workshops](#). Further services are available to support students during their studies at Cambridge, which can be found via [student support](#)

Accessibility and Disability Resource Centre (ADRC)

The decision of whether or not to disclose a disability, medical condition, or specific learning difficulty is an individual's choice. For more information, please visit [Accessibility and Disability Resource Centre \(ADRC\)](#).

Communities

Building communities is an important part of the PhD experience and can be crucial to help you manage stress and achieve completion of your studies. Below is a list of established communities within Cambridge that can provide support:

- [Cambridge student union](#)
- [International Student Office](#)
- [Accessibility and Disability Resource Centre \(ADRC\)](#)

- [LGBT+ Campaign](#)
- [BME Campaign](#)
- [Women's Campaign](#) and [Cambridge AWiSE](#)
- [Student Parents and Families Support](#)

Additional Information

Plagiarism and Academic Misconduct

Cambridge university defines academic misconduct, broadly as any action which gains, attempts to gain, or assists others in gaining or attempting to gain unfair academic advantage. It includes plagiarism, collusion, contract cheating, and fabrication of data as well as the possession of unauthorised materials during an examination.

For more information visit [Plagiarism and Academic Misconduct](#) webpage.

Impact and Publishing Work

It is important that we can report the impact of the research carried out by BBSRC DTP students. Each term students will be emailed to ask for details of any work they have had published or any activities they have taken part in that are noteworthy. This information will be reported back to the BBSRC and shared on the [DTP website](#).

All work published by the students should be accredited to the BBSRC DTP, the code to use is **BBSRC BB/X010899/1** for students who joined the programme during DTP3 start years 2023-2024.

Further guidance to ensure that funders are acknowledged in a standardised way can be found at: <https://www.ukri.org/manage-your-award/publishing-your-research-findings/acknowledging-your-funding/>

Each student will be asked to create a [Research Fish](#) account. This is usually only required once you have entered the third year of your studies. ResearchFish (www.researchfish.net) is a central repository for all impact related work carried out because of funding from public bodies, such as the UKRI which ultimately funds the BBSRC DTP programme. Any published work that is credited to the student after graduation should also be entered on ResearchFish by the supervisor.

You can also use Cambridge Open Access <https://www.openaccess.cam.ac.uk/> to publish your work.

Annual leave, Intermission and Parental Leave

Due to the structured nature of the first year of the Programme, it is not possible for students to take annual leave outside of the designated holiday periods in December and Easter. In subsequent years of the Programme, students are entitled to a total of eight weeks of annual leave, to be taken at times agreed with their PhD Supervisor.

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 at: <https://www.cambridgestudents.cam.ac.uk/your-course/postgraduate-study/your-student-status>

Students who have a university authorised period of medical intermission will continue to receive their stipend for up to 13 weeks, within any 12-month period. Although students funded from UKRI training grants have no legally defined entitlement to maternity, paternity, or adoption leave, UKRI BBSRC does provide funding for such leave. Please click the link provided below for UKRI policies.

Stipend payments may need to be suspended or amended during periods of absence (e.g., medical intermission beyond 13 weeks, non-medical intermission, parental leave, etc.). Students must

therefore inform the DTP office (bbsrcdtp@admin.cam.ac.uk) if they have applied for an intermission or any other changes in circumstances.

More information for BBSRC UKRI studentship holders can be found here:

<https://www.cambridgestudents.cam.ac.uk/fees-and-funding/support-award-holders>

Working

Students who are full-time are permitted to undertake up to eight hours paid employment per week during 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: <https://help.uis.cam.ac.uk/service/devices-networks-printing/network-services/wi-fi>

Finances

Students funded by BBSRC will have their University tuition fees paid directly from the School of the Biological Sciences. Should you need to inform your College of invoice details, they are below.

Please ensure the invoice states that it is for BBSRC DTP fees and your name.

University of Cambridge
School of the Biological Sciences
BBSRC DTP
17 Mill Lane
Cambridge
CB2 1RX

Students will receive their first two stipends in October (at the beginning and at the end of the month), then they will receive the following payments on the 26th of each month. Your final payment will be on the 26th August 2027 to ensure you have received 48 months of maintenance payments. Please note that if you submit your thesis early, the UKRI Early Submission policy will be applied (further details can be found [here](#)).

As part of the BBSRC DTP Studentship each BBSRC-funded student is awarded:

- Up to £1,500 for consumables for each rotation project
- £15,000 for consumables for the duration of the PhD
- £920 for travel/conferences for the duration of the PhD

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

There is also up to £1,000 available to support you during your PIPS if required for transport or accommodation.

Communications

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 our students once they have graduated from the programme. We therefore request that all students set up a **LinkedIn** account. LinkedIn is a professional social networking site that you are likely to continue to use through your professional life. If you list Cambridge Biosciences BBSRC DTP as part of your PhD course, we will be able to follow your future success without the need to bother you with emails.