

SOUTH WEST BIOSCIENCES DOCTORAL TRAINING PARTNERSHIP

STUDENT HANDBOOK 2018 / 2019

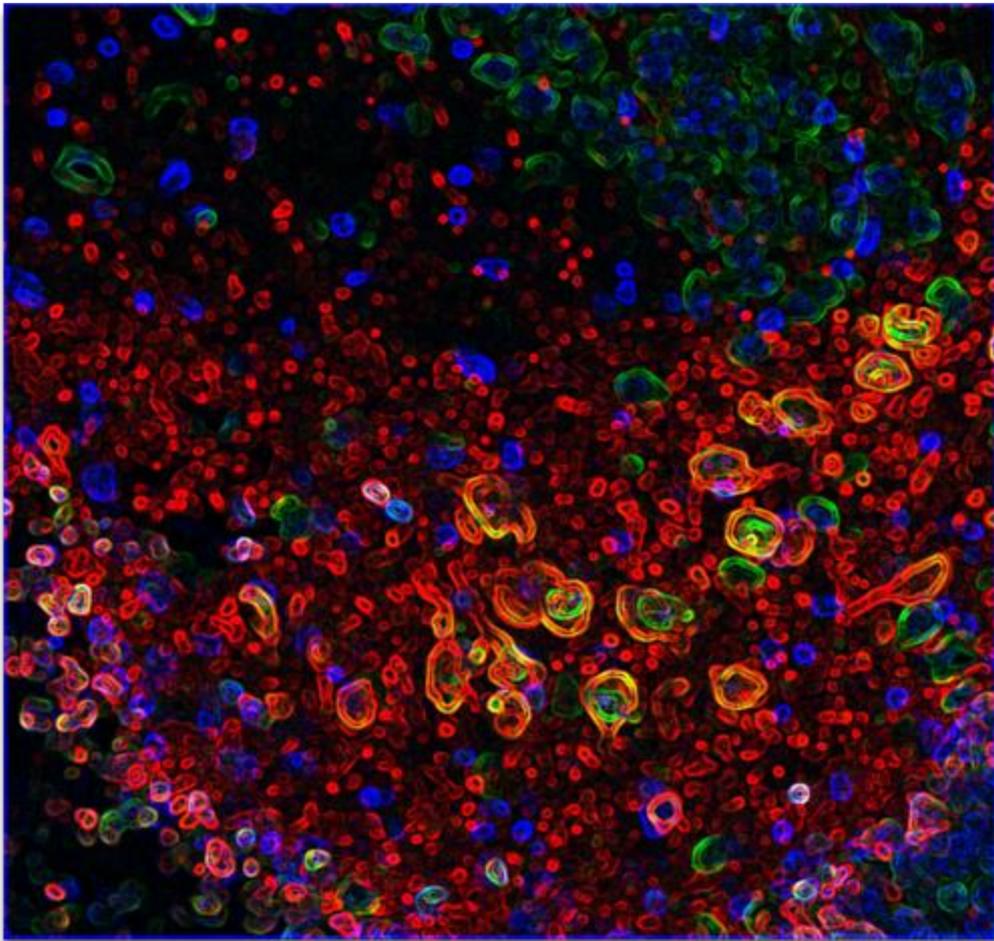


Photo credit: Cathy Beedie, SWBio DTP student

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Every attempt has been made to ensure the accuracy of the information contained in this handbook was correct at the time of release, however, it may be amended during the programme to reflect any changes. The current version will be available on the SWBio DTP website and supersedes all previous versions.

As a SWBio DTP student, it is your responsibility to ensure that you read through and understand the contents of this handbook. If there is any content that you do not understand, please contact swbio-dtp@bristol.ac.uk or your local Implementation Group Representative.

This handbook is written based on students undertaking the SWBio DTP programme full-time. For students undertaking the programme part-time (granted only under exceptional circumstances), part-time arrangements must be discussed and agreed with the Academic Coordinator.

This handbook should be read in association with your registered university's Code of Practice for postgraduate research programmes:

- [University of Bath](#)
- [University of Bristol](#)
- [Cardiff University](#)
- [University of Exeter](#)

BBSRC/UKRI* documentation

As a BBSRC-funded DTP student, please ensure you familiarise yourself with and abide by the following BBSRC/UKRI documents:

- [BBSRC Statement on Safeguarding Good Scientific Practice](#)
- [UKRI Terms and Conditions of Research Training Grants and Training Grant Guide](#)

Please be aware that BBSRC will also provide a [disabled students allowance](#). If you think you may be eligible, please contact your local postgraduate team.

**UK Research and Innovation (UKRI) came into existence in April 2018 and includes the seven Research Councils (BBSRC included), Innovate UK and Research England. UKRI, funded by the Department for Business, Energy and Industrial Strategy (BEIS), is an independent organisation, created to provide a stronger voice for both research and innovation.*

Acknowledgement

As you are in receipt of a BBSRC-funded studentship, please ensure that you acknowledge BBSRC and SWBio DTP support on all publications, presentations, exhibitions, press announcements and other

similar events. The BBSRC logo can be downloaded from the [BBSRC website](#) and the SWBio DTP logo can be made downloaded from the [SWBio DTP website](#) for use on posters and in talks.

When acknowledging the BBSRC and the SWBio DTP in publications, please use the following format:
Acknowledgement of a single grant: 'This work was supported by the Biotechnology and Biological Sciences Research Council-funded South West Biosciences Doctoral Training Partnership [training grant reference xxxx].'

The funder should be written out in full, followed by the training Grant reference in square brackets.

Acknowledgement of multiple grants: 'This work was supported by the Biotechnology and Biological Sciences Research Council-funded South West Biosciences Doctoral Training Partnership [training grant reference xxxx]; the Natural Environment Research Council [grant number zzzz]; and the Engineering and Physical Sciences Research Council [grant number aaaa].'

Multiple grants should be separated by comma and space. Where the research was supported by more than one agency, the different agencies should be separated by a semicolon, with "and" before the final funder.

Requests for the training grant reference number should be made to swbio-dtp@bristol.ac.uk.

Publishing of your research should be in accordance with normal academic practice and the [RCUK Policy on Open Access](#). Open Access is 'unrestricted, on-line access to peer-reviewed and published research papers'. Your supervisors should provide guidance on this.

Contacts

The SWBio DTP consists of a central DTP Hub based at the University of Bristol. This includes the: Director, Academic Coordinator, Hub Manager and Administrator.

The two important contacts for you within the DTP Hub are:

- **[Prof Leo Brady](#) (Interim SWBio DTP Academic Coordinator)**
Responsible for academic aspects of the delivery of the programme across the partnership, including the first taught year.
- **[Dr Samantha Southern](#) (SWBio DTP Hub Manager and Administrator): swbio-dtp@bristol.ac.uk**
Responsible for managing the administration aspects of the delivery of the programme across the partnership.

In addition, within your institution, you will have [local named DTP representatives](#) whom you can contact with any problems or queries in relation to the DTP programme.

Note: The DTP is separate from your local university administration and you should direct questions regarding annual progress monitoring, holiday, your stipend, supervisor/project issues, HR policies to the relevant departments/schools within your institution. If you still require further guidance, please feel free to raise your issue with the SWBio DTP Hub.

Wellbeing

It is important to the DTP that you feel well supported throughout your postgraduate studies. This is a high priority for our programme.

Your main initial contact for academic pastoral support for the DTP within your institution will be your local DTP [Implementation Group Representative](#). Alternatively, you can approach your local DTP [Management Group Representative](#). The SWBio DTP Hub members are always available too and can often advise and facilitate your engagement with other services.

In addition, all of our institutions provide extensive and professional pastoral support for students, which can be accessed via the links below:

- [University of Bath](#)
- [University of Bristol](#)
- [Cardiff University](#)
- [University of Exeter](#)
- [Rothamsted Research*](#)

By their very nature pastoral issues are invariably individual and hence it is important that you engage and seek help from anyone within our structure with whom you feel comfortable. Please be assured that all matters will be dealt with sensitively and in confidence wherever possible.

**Link accessible only via Rothamsted's VPN using a Rothamsted laptop/computer. Alternatively e-mail donna.fellowes@rothamsted.ac.uk*

Expectations of the DTP

This is to remind you that upon accepting your offer of a SWBio DTP studentship, you have agreed to abide by the '[South West Biosciences Doctoral Training Partnership's Expectations of Students](#)' (refer to Appendix 1).

Please remember that a key expectation of your studentship is that your thesis is submitted within four years of starting the programme.

New intake

Welcome week*

Local arrangements for Welcome Week will differ between the four universities so please check the schedule of the welcome week at the university with which you are registered. During or in close proximity to this week, you will be invited to a local SWBio DTP welcome session.

**May also be referred to as enrolment or induction week.*

Second year mentors

When starting the SWBio DTP programme you will each be assigned a second year student from the DTP as a mentor from within your host institution. They are a point of contact for you for informal support and guidance. Second year mentors will have just been through the first year of their programme and can assist you in adjusting to postgraduate life as part of the SWBio DTP. You should first meet them during your local SWBio DTP welcome session.

Visiting status

You will be given visiting status to the partner universities for the duration of your studies. This will allow you to have access (you will receive a student access card) and be able to use their facilities (for example, online systems, the library, courses, the gym).

You will receive details from each partner university before the start of the programme, with details on how to register. Please ensure you complete this in a timely manner, including upload of any photographs for your student access card. **At the start of each academic year, you will be required to re-register your visiting student status across the partnership.**

As Rothamsted Research is a research organisation, visiting status can be given but only for the duration of time you will spend at the institution. Please e-mail swbio-dtp@bristol.ac.uk when you require visiting status at Rothamsted Research.

Students mainly based at a university

Supervision

As part of the programme, you will have a supervisory team which will comprise, at least, your main supervisor and second supervisor. You will also have a designated contact for pastoral support.

Registration

You will be registered for a higher degree at the home university of your main supervisor and so will be subject to their local procedures for performance monitoring, progression between years and thesis examination. Your home school/department will be responsible for your annual progress monitoring.

Students mainly based at Rothamsted Research

Supervision

As part of the programme, you will have a supervisory team which will comprise at least your Rothamsted supervisor, your academic supervisor and a second local Rothamsted/academic supervisor. You will also have a designated contact for pastoral support. Your Rothamsted supervisor will be responsible for supervising you on a daily basis.

Registration

If you will be mainly based with Rothamsted Research (North Wyke or Harpenden site), you will be registered for a higher degree at the university where your academic supervisor is based, and from where you will have received your official offer of a BBSRC-funded SWBio DTP studentship. This arrangement is necessary because research organisations, such as Rothamsted Research, are non-degree awarding bodies.

You will be required to register at the university during their induction week and attend their respective registration/induction events. As a registered student at the university, you will be expected to follow university postgraduate rules and procedures as set out in the university's Code of Practice. However, your daily activities will most likely take place within Rothamsted Research and during this time you will be following their [rules and procedures](#)*. More information of your precise duties to Rothamsted Research can be obtained from the Rothamsted postgraduate team.

**Link accessible only via Rothamsted's VPN using a Rothamsted laptop/computer. Alternatively e-mail donna.fellowes@rothamsted.ac.uk*

Students with a non-academic (CASE) partner

Some projects will have a non-academic (CASE) partner. You will have been informed of the CASE partner when you applied to the project. This means you will have a non-academic (CASE) supervisor as part of your supervisory team and you will be expected to undertake a placement of 3-18 months with your CASE partner.

As part of the funding requirements, all CASE students are expected to submit a post-placement report on completion of their placement. It is your responsibility to contact CASE@bbsrc.ac.uk to obtain the report to complete.

Research placements

You may find that you have one or more supervisors/collaborators external to your main institution and may have the opportunity to conduct research/spend time at these institutions. Normally these will be expected to be of short duration. When based at a different institution, please ensure you follow their local rules and procedures.

As a SWBio DTP student, you are expected to spend the majority of your time at your host institution. If you are being asked to undertake your PhD project for large periods of time away from your host institution*, please discuss this with your local DTP [Implementation Group representative](#) as soon as possible.

**For CASE studentships, these are research placements in addition to your 3-18 month placement with your CASE partner.*

Mandatory taught first year

As part of the programme, you will be required to undertake a taught first year. Further information about the taught component can be found in the [SWBio DTP Taught Handbook](#).

To progress into your second year of studies, you will be required to successfully pass the first taught year. This is taught at Masters level and you will be required to pass 180 credit points with a pass mark of 50% for each unit.

You should not be undertaking any other forms of Annual Progress Monitoring during your taught first year within your host institution/collaborating university*. If you are included in local Annual Progress Monitoring in error, please contact your local DTP [Implementation Group representative](#).

**Cardiff-based students in their taught year will be automatically included in the online progress monitoring system for PhD students, and will be prompted to upload forms and documents into the portal; the local Implementation Group representative will advise you and your supervisors what action you should take in response to these prompts. This will not require you to produce additional pieces of work.*

Laptops

You will be provided with a laptop at the start of the taught first year which should be kept for the duration of your PhD studies. These laptops come pre-loaded with all the necessary software required for the taught units.

The laptop remains the property of the SWBio DTP and must be returned at the end of your studies to your main supervisor / Rothamsted supervisor.

To be able to access the internet at each of the sites, please ensure you have [eduroam](#) activated following your local institutional guidelines in advance of the taught units starting:

[Bath >>](#)

[Bristol >>](#)

[Cardiff >>](#)

[Exeter >>](#)

[Rothamsted >>](#)

Project refinement

Where feasible, there will be an opportunity to refine your project in response to your two rotation projects. This will take place near the end of your second Rotation Project, and will be in discussion with your main/Rothamsted supervisor. You will then be invited to meet with your local DTP Implementation Group Representative where you will have the opportunity to discuss how you are finding the programme so far, your project refinement (if any) and to raise any problems or queries you may have.

Professional Internships for PhD Students (PIPS)

It is a requirement of BBSRC that each student completes a 3-month (or part-time equivalent) placement in a non-academic work environment. **It is expected that you will undertake the placement during the second or third year of your programme.** The aim of the PIPS scheme is for you to understand the broader context of your research and to expose you to the range of opportunities in which you can apply your PhD skills and training after you graduate.

Further information about this placement scheme can be found on the [SWBio DTP website](#). Please refer to the 'finance' section of the handbook for details about your PIPS budget. **Please note that at the end of your PIPS, you will be required to complete a [BBSRC PIPS report](#) within 3 months of completing your PIPS. It is your responsibility to contact PIPS@bbsrc.ac.uk to obtain the report to complete.**

It is expected that Annual Progress Monitoring (APM) takes precedence over the internship. Therefore, the APM submission deadlines and meetings should be taken into account when deciding on dates for the internship. However, if it is unavoidable that:

- The APM submission deadline coincides with the internship, it is normally expected that the required work is submitted prior to starting the internship or during the internship by the original deadline.
- The APM meeting coincides with the internship, it is the student's responsibility to alert their postgraduate administrator in a timely manner to discuss this further.

Note: If your project has a CASE partner, undertaking a PIPS in addition to your placement is optional.

Cohort activities

As part of this programme, there will be a number of DTP cohort activities that you are expected to attend (unless otherwise stated). These activities bring all students from across the partnership together, and provide excellent opportunities for networking, peer-to-peer learning and sharing of knowledge. These cohort activities include:

- Annual Student Conference
- Annual PIPS Conference
- Student-led Away Days

- Research Theme-specific activities e.g. site visits, workshops
- Thesis Boot Camp

Please refer to our [DTP cohort events calendar](#) on the SWBio DTP website for dates of the cohort activities.

If for any reason you are unable to attend these activities, please e-mail swbio-dtp@bristol.ac.uk as soon as possible. **It is expected that you ensure your research/fieldwork/other training does not interfere with attendance at these cohort activities.**

If there are non-valid or repeated absences, the Academic Coordinator and your supervisors will be notified and you may be required to meet with your local DTP Implementation Group representative.

DTP Conferences

Annual Student Conference

This conference provides an opportunity to see the research from right across the DTP, broadening your research training. It usually also provides specific training sessions for your year group. At this conference you will be expected to present your own research in the form of either a poster or oral presentation.

Note: you are expected to attend each Annual Student Conference that takes place during your studies. This includes students who are on their PIPS.

Annual PIPS Conference

The aim of this conference is to introduce you to PIPS, offer career workshops, and to gain an insight into the placements that other SWBio DTP students have undertaken. Following your placement, you will be expected to either give a presentation or produce a poster at the next Annual PIPS Conference. For further information, please refer to the [SWBio DTP PIPS website](#).

Note: you are expected to attend the Annual PIPS Conference throughout your studies. This will be only for part of the conference once you have completed your PIPS.

Student-led Away Day

This activity is entirely organised by the Student Representatives. The day focuses on collaboration and team building and will involve a mixture of workshops/activities.

Note: you are expected to attend within both your second and third year (optional for first and fourth years).

Research Themes

As part of the DTP, there are three [Research Themes](#) which encompass the World-class Underpinning Bioscience and Agriculture & Food Security BBSRC research areas. The Research Themes are:

- Agriculture and the Environment
- Animal Behaviour and *In Vivo* Studies

- Biomolecular and Biophysical Studies

For each theme there is an academic Research Theme Champion who will organise theme-specific activities including an annual research theme event. You will belong to at least one of these Research Themes. The purpose of the Research Theme events is to develop your training in these scientific area, to promote networking opportunities among those undertaking research in similar areas, and to expose you to current methods and challenges within these areas.

Note: you are expected to attend the Research Theme event that is most relevant to your project, within both your second and third year (optional for first and fourth years). You are also able to attend other Research Theme events that you have listed as a secondary theme.

You can check your Research Theme using the online [Research Themes student list](#). If you need to change your listed research theme(s) during your studies, please contact swbio-dtp@bristol.ac.uk and the relevant [Research Theme Champion](#).

Thesis Boot Camp

To kick-start the thesis writing process, a supportive and productive 3-day guided writing event has been created for final year students. In addition to providing valuable protected time for writing, the sessions aim to foster and equip you with core tools to help manage writing your thesis. All final year students are expected to attend this workshop.

SYSMIC

As a SWBio DTP student, you have access to an online course known as [SYSMIC](#). SYSMIC provides training in maths and computing based around biological examples, using programs such as MATLAB and R. Enrolment on SYSMIC is optional but we do encourage you to take this course to help support your research.

There are two start dates for SYSMIC (normally June and November). You will be contacted by the DTP Hub in advance of these dates for registration.

Due to the time investment (approximately 5 hours per week with 6 months to complete), if you choose to do SYSMIC we strongly recommend that you undertake this course in the second or third year of studies. However, if you are undertaking a project that includes substantial computational modelling, such that it is beneficial for you to undertake this course in your first year, please contact swbio-dtp@bristol.ac.uk to discuss this further. If you wish to undertake this in your first year, we would recommend a June rather than a November start due to the workload associated with your taught units and assessments.

From October 2016, the cost for SYSMIC will be £800 and this will need to be met by your Research and Training Support Grant (refer to the 'Finance' section). This cost includes access to both modules 1 and 2 of the online course.

Researchfish

[Researchfish](#) is a system used by the BBSRC to gather information from BBSRC-funded researchers and students about the outcomes, outputs and impact of their work, such as publications, collaborations, internships and public engagement activities.

As a BBSRC-funded student, you must submit data to Researchfish. You will receive log-in details early in September as you are just about to start your third year of studies. You will be required to submit data annually from the third year of your studies, and you are encouraged to complete Researchfish up to three years following completion of your studentship.

Your main/academic supervisor should have also been given access to your Researchfish account as a team member, so they can offer guidance. Additional supervisors can be added to your studentship details as 'team members'. For Rothamsted-based students, you will need to manually add your Rothamsted supervisor to your account.

If you do not submit to Researchfish during your final year, you will be asked to complete a DTP Student Accomplishment Tracker.

Do not add any confidential, sensitive or personal information to Researchfish as outcomes submitted may be made public (e.g. through [Gateway to Research](#)).

Further information:

- Researchfish support desk: support@researchfish.com.
- [UKRI guidance on Researchfish](#)

Student representation

As part of the DTP there is the opportunity to act as a student representative. Each institution will have 1-2 student representatives who will normally be within their second or third year of studies. There will also be 1-2 student representatives specifically for the taught first year. Responsibilities of student representatives include:

- attending Implementation Group and External Advisory Group meetings where they can provide feedback about ideas, issues and concerns on behalf of their fellow students.
- organising the Student-led Away Day.
- attending local graduate meetings so they can feedback on behalf of the SWBio DTP to their institution.

Finance

As part of your studentship, you will have access to a Research and Training Support Grant (RTSG). The RTSG is available to support your research (such as consumables, fieldwork) and training needs (e.g. workshops, conferences, travel to DTP cohort activities). The RTSG budget is as follows:

- Year one: **£1,000/rotation project**
- Year two-four: **£14,000 in total (cost for laptop met by this budget)**

Note: if you underspend the RTSG budget in your first year, this can be carried over into the following years of your studies.

In addition to your RTSG, you also have a fieldwork budget of **£1920**. This is as follows:

- **£1,000** (students starting September 2015 onwards) or **£800** (students who started before September 2015) for your PIPS internship – this covers costs associated with accommodation and travel.
- **£920** for fieldwork – this can cover costs associated with fieldwork/conferences.

You have flexibility within your fieldwork budget, so if you underspend in your PIPS budget, you will have extra money to spend on fieldwork/conferences and *vice versa*. If you exceed your fieldwork budget, you can use your RTSG to cover these costs, but this is at the discretion of your supervisors.

As a DTP student, you are expected to monitor your budgets in liaison with your supervisors. To access the RTSG, a student charge code will normally be provided. Please contact your local finance team for further information about this student charge code.

Please also note that there are many additional sources of funding, usually in the form of bursaries, to help you attend conferences and courses. These are often provided by professional societies and they will require you to prepare and submit an application for funding. This is excellent practice.

Note: it is expected that you will not access your fieldwork budget until you are in year 2.

Sharing of data

You will be aware that the doctoral training programme you are undertaking may include collaboration between the University of Bristol, other universities, research organisations and other partners (including the BBSRC). As a result the SWBio DTP Hub (University of Bristol) may need to share information about you, which may include personal data with those partners.

Your personal data is processed in accordance with the Data Protection Act 1998. The University of Bristol will remain a data controller for the personal data it holds, and other universities, research organisations and/or partners may also become data controllers for the relevant personal data they receive as a result of their participation with the collaborative programme of doctoral training. The processing and storage of your personal data may occur outside of the EEA.

Further information can be found on your registered University's data protection webpages. If you have any queries or concerns about the use of your personal data during your time as a student, please contact your local data protection team.

Further information about how BBSRC may share your data can be found in the [UKRI Data Protection Policy](#) and the [BBSRC Data Sharing Policy](#).

Photographs

During cohort activities, photographs will be taken which may be used for publicity purposes for the DTP, for example the SWBio DTP website, leaflets and posters. If you do not wish to give permission for your photographs to be used, please inform the photographer at the time.

Social media

We encourage you to use social media to communicate about your research and raise your public profile. However, social media is a public platform so please remember to consider how you portray yourself.

DTP social media:

- [LinkedIn group](#)
- [Slack group](#) – an invite will be sent out by the DTP when you first start.
- Twitter: @SWBio_DTP

Additional information

The DTP has:

- a monthly student bulletin that will keep you informed and updated about the DTP
- a [Student Hub](#) on the SWBio DTP website which provides you with information about cohort activities, student representatives, public engagement opportunities, important DTP handbooks.

Support with the use of statistics for your research is available within your institution:

- [University of Bath](#)
- [University of Bristol](#)
- Cardiff University: E-mail data-clinic@cardiff.ac.uk
- University of Exeter: Contact your local Director of PGR
- Rothamsted Research: Contact [Suzanne Clark](#)

Appendix 1:

South West Biosciences Doctoral Training Partnership's Expectations of Students

The BBSRC-funded South West Biosciences Doctoral Training Partnership (SWBio DTP) studentship you have been offered is part of a programme that trains postgraduate students in world-class bioscience across the universities of Bath, Bristol, Cardiff and Exeter, alongside Rothamsted Research.

By accepting your offer of a SWBio DTP studentship, you agree to:

- abide by the programme requirements as described in the [SWBio DTP Student Handbook](#) and the [SWBio DTP Taught Handbook](#).
- abide by the terms and conditions of the funder (BBSRC):
 - [UKRI Terms and Conditions of training grants and training grant guide](#)
- abide by the regulations described in the following documents for the duration of your taught year and accept the jurisdiction of the Senate:
 - University of Bristol's [Regulations and Code of Practice for Taught Programmes](#).
 - University of Bristol's [Rules and Regulations for Students](#)
- submit your thesis within four years of starting the programme.
- undertake an internship as part of the [Professional Internships for PhD Students \(PIPS\)](#) scheme.

This will require you to:

- do your utmost to ensure the internship takes place in the second or third year of your studies.
- complete your [BBSRC PIPS report](#) within 3 months of completing your PIPS.
- abide by the requirements described in the 'Internships' section of the [SWBio DTP website](#).

Note: If you have an affiliated CASE partner as part of your project, the PIPS internship is optional.

- attend DTP cohort activities when expected and to alert the DTP Administrative Hub (swbio-dtp@bristol.ac.uk) as soon as possible if you are unable to attend.
- monitor your studentship budgets in liaison with your supervisors.

For studentships with an affiliated CASE partner:

- undertake a 3 month (minimum) placement with your CASE partner.
- complete a BBSRC CASE report following your CASE placement. (You will need to contact CASE@bbsrc.ac.uk to obtain the report).

Please note, research across the SWBio DTP is diverse and addresses biological phenomena at a wide range of levels. You are expected to respect the differing research approaches and techniques used by colleagues and to behave in a considerate and professional manner at all times in your dealings with one another. Healthy debate of research approaches and outcomes is a normal part of research and is welcomed, however, such discussions should

always be conducted with respect for colleagues, acknowledging the validity of the diversity of views and approaches that can be expected in a broad programme of this type.

This [SWBio DTP Expectations of Students](#) document is available online. This is the current version and supersedes all other versions. This document will be reviewed annually in January.