

University of Manchester

BBSRC Doctoral Training Programme

Programme Handbook

2021-22



BBSRC Doctoral Training Partnership Training Guide



'Supporting researchers to become leaders who, in all walks of life, will question, inspire and motivate'

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This handbook contains information specific to the BBSRC DTP.

The DTP programme has a defined eProg pathway with specific cohort milestones and training. The programme is managed and supported by your school administrator based in the Doctoral Academy in the Faculty of Biology, Medicine and Health.

DTP students are registered for their PhD in Schools across the two Faculties of the University that form part of the BBSRC DTP (FBMH and FSE). You will be registered in the School/Faculty where your main supervisor is based. During your PhD, it is likely that you will receive other information or instructions provided by your registering School. This may be confusing to begin with, but if you are unsure about anything please do not hesitate to ask!

INTRODUCTION

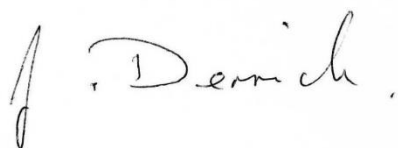
Welcome to the University of Manchester and to the [BBSRC Doctoral Training Programme](#).

The BBSRC DTP programme was established in 2012 to deliver excellence in doctoral training between large, successful research organisations and the BBSRC.

The priority research areas of DTP training provided at Manchester are in line with the BBSRC Strategic Plan and comprise Industrial Biotechnology, World Class Bioscience and Synthetic Biology. The University of Manchester has particular strengths in all three of these areas. It is also one of the largest and most successful centres for biological and biotechnological focussed research and training in Europe. Due to its size, the University successfully bid for a single institution DTP. The interdisciplinary nature of our DTP provides interfaces of core biosciences with physics, chemistry, mathematics, computer sciences, engineering, material sciences, pharmacy, psychological sciences, dentistry and medicine. Academic supervisors in the DTP are drawn across the Schools of Biological Sciences, Medicine, Health Sciences, Chemistry, Chemical and Analytical Sciences, Earth & Environmental Sciences, Mathematics, Physics & Astronomy. As a DTP student you will benefit from being a part of this exciting interdisciplinary training environment which provides new ways of working, including computational biology, bioinformatics and the development of niche skills. In year 2 you will undertake a 3-month professional internship (PIPS) placement, which has proved to be a highly enjoyable and beneficial experience for our current students.

You will be aware that the worldwide Covid-19 pandemic has impacted universities considerably. Please be assured that we are working to ensure the delivery of the range of skills and experience required by the DTP programme, whilst operating under the guidelines introduced by the university to minimise the spread of infection. This situation is subject to change, and I recommend that you consult the university's Covid-19 FAQs [here](#) regularly for up-to-date information.

We hope that you enjoy the challenges of the DTP programme and it will be a rewarding experience throughout. The aim of the Manchester DTP is to ***'support researchers to become leaders who, in all walks of life, will question, lead and motivate'*** and we hope that by the time you graduate in 4 years' time, you will be well on your way to becoming one of these leaders!

A handwritten signature in black ink, reading "J. Derrick". The signature is written in a cursive, flowing style.

Professor Jeremy Derrick
Director, BBSRC DTP Management Board
September 2021

1. DTP Management Board

The DTP Management Board, under the directorship of Professor Jeremy Derrick monitors the effectiveness of the Manchester DTP and liaises with BBSRC for continued development of the programme. The DTP board is responsible for assuring the quality of students recruited to the programme, the provision of appropriate skills training and the suitability of host organisations participating in the professional internship placement scheme (PIPs). Membership of the DTP board includes the Faculty Associate Deans for Postgraduate Research, the DTP Cohort Leads, student reps and a group of 'Academic Leads' with responsibility for recruitment, skills training, PIPs and supervisor support. The DTP Management Board operates under the governance of the University of Manchester Doctoral Committee.

The BBSRC will monitor the Manchester DTP programme via a written report submitted in August each year and a mid-term review of the DTP in 2018. Representatives of BBSRC will attend one DTP Management Board meeting each year and occasionally request to meet with students. The BBSRC values your feedback (as does the University) to help inform programme development.

2. Student Representation

Each cohort will elect a DTP student representative at the start of the year during welcome week. Cohort reps will be expected to attend the monthly DTP Management Board meetings and will be expected to help organise the annual DTP symposium and other student-led DTP events. The University has [policy and guidance on student representation](#).

BBSRC DTP Student Reps	Contact
Lauren Phipps	lauren.phipps@postgrad.manchester.ac.uk
Liliana Correia	liliana.correia@postgrad.manchester.ac.uk
Joanne Watson	joanne.watson-5@postgrad.manchester.ac.uk
Andra-Maria Ionescu	andra-maria.ionescu@postgrad.manchester.ac.uk
Philip Le Roy	philip.leroy@postgrad.manchester.ac.uk

If you are interested in becoming a student representative, please contact igra.habib@manchester.ac.uk

3. Programme Structure

The DTP programme is 4 years in duration and is expected to be studied on a full-time basis.

Year 1 covers a variety of generic training including induction, health & safety, academic literacy, plagiarism, bioethics, demonstrating and guidance on the preparation of your Literature Review and Continuation Report. You will also receive training in intensive interdisciplinary research and core biosciences technical skills, through your rotation training projects, and undertake maths and PIPS training/networking. Key progression milestones are submission of the Literature Review in January and the Continuation Report in July, as well as the three rotation project summaries. The Continuation Report is assessed by a viva and determines whether you will successfully progress into year 2 of your PhD.

Year 2 includes pre-placement training in preparation for the 3 month PIPS, a poster presentation at the DTP symposium and a residential workshop during the summer attended by students in years 2 & 3. Years 2 to 4 will be predominantly research focussed but there is a continued complementary programme of training specifically tailored for DTP students, which has the added benefit of keeping you in touch with your DTP cohort. During Year 3 you will give an oral presentation at the DTP symposium.

Year 4 will focus on thesis preparation and submission, and preparation for employment, whether your interests lie inside or outside of academia. You will have an informal writing-up meeting with your DTP Cohort Tutor mid-way through the 4th year to ensure that you are on track to submit within 4 years. Your PhD thesis must be submitted within 4 years as a requirement by the University and the Research Councils in measuring success.

Throughout your PhD, you will have almost unlimited access to a huge range of professional and transferable skills training and development courses, offered across the University; which can be tailored to your needs, in addition to the training you will receive as part of the DTP. You will be required to undertake a range of generic and research specific skills training and will undergo a training needs assessment when you meet with your supervisors at the beginning of each year. Some of the skills training will be DTP specific, whilst others will be arranged via your registering School/Faculty. Communication about specific DTP training will be sent to you at the relevant time.

All of these courses can be found in the [training catalogue](#) on eProg.

4. Systems Biology Maths Training

The BBSRC has identified a shortage of key skills required for systems and integrative biology research projects and wants to ensure that all BBSRC funded postgraduate students acquire a sufficient knowledge base of mathematical skills as part of their PhD training. All DTP students will therefore be required to undertake compulsory maths training within their DTP programme. **Successful progression into year 2 will be subject to having completed this compulsory milestone.**

Maths training will be given in a face to face training course run by **Dr Pawel Paszek** which runs for 5 weeks.

Please Note - All DTP and affiliated CASE students are required to attend.

Date	Time and venue
Friday 5 th November 2021	10.00 – 16.00, University Place Room 2.219
Friday 12 th November 2021	10.00 – 16.00, Williamson Building Room G.03
Friday 19 th November 2021	10.00 – 16.00, Williamson Building Room G.03
Thursday 25 th November 2021	10.00 – 16.00, Samuel Alexander Building Room SG.16
Friday 3 rd December 2021	10.00 – 16.00, Roscoe Building Room 2.3

SysMIC

The SysMIC course is optional and the DTP will pay for any student wishing to enrol. Discuss enrolling onto SysMIC with your supervisor before contacting Iqra Habib who will arrange enrolment and payment. The online SysMIC course is coordinated by UCL on behalf of BBSRC. It is 12 months in duration (5 hrs/wk; students study at own pace) and engagement and progression is monitored. Visit <http://sysmic.ac.uk/> for further information.

5. Year 1 - Continuation Report Assessment

Towards the end of year 1, your Continuation Report will be formally assessed by two independent examiners. You will normally be required to give a ten-minute oral presentation of your work as part of the examination process. Following examination, students may have to carry out minor corrections or revisions to their report. Four weeks will be allowed for revisions to be completed. All reports will be signed-off by the examiners, the supervisor and signed-off by the PG Tutor. The final outcome will be ratified by the DTP Management Board.

Please note that the deadline for submitting your Continuation Report, as well as the procedure for supervisor nomination of your examiners and arrangement of the viva, should follow the prescribed DTP guidelines. This process is outlined clearly for all supervisors and students on the [eProg](#) system. Individual schools may have alternative deadlines and processes for their non-DTP students; but DTP students should follow the prescribed DTP process. In contrast, for the writing of the report itself, and the content of the viva, individual Schools will have their own guidance, which should be followed.

All Continuation Reports must be submitted by the DTP deadline, which is mid-July. In the event of unforeseen/mitigating circumstances, cases for an extension should be made as soon as possible, in writing, by the supervisor to the DTP cohort lead. These will be discussed by the DTP Management Board and/or the Programme Director and only granted in exceptional cases.

At the end of year one if progress is not satisfactory, there will be a consultation process with the Director of the DTP Management Board, the supervisory team and examiners. If progression cannot be recommended, a student may be asked to complete his/her studies and may be given the option to submit for the exit award of MPhil.

In exceptional circumstances, if attendance or other concerns are raised, a student may be recommended by the DTP Management Board to withdraw from the programme. No student will be withdrawn without prior consultation.

6. Progression Monitoring

Progression monitoring for all research students in the University of Manchester is via the **eProg** system: www.eprog.manchester.ac.uk. The eProg DTP pathway will clearly indicate the milestones relevant to the DTP programme and how annual assessment of your individual skills and training needs is linked to your professional and personal development. It is essential that you and your supervisor engage with eProg and complete the succession of compulsory milestones by the dates indicated to ensure successful progression through the DTP programme.

Progression will be monitored within your registering School/Faculty but an overview of your academic progress will be closely monitored by the DTP Cohort Lead and the DTP Officer.

7. Professional Internships for PhD Students (PIPS)

As part of the DTP programme (not CASE students), you are required to complete a 3-month long PIPS (Professional Internship for PhD Students) placement. The idea of the placement is to give you the opportunity to gain work experience and skills in an area that is not directly related to your PhD. The PIPS scheme has been disrupted by the pandemic although, at the time of writing, many students from the previous cohort (2020-21) have arranged their placements. The DTP recognizes the pressures, which students and placement providers have been operating under, and we will show as much flexibility as possible in helping you to arrange your PIPS.

With guidance from the University, you will have the opportunity to select a placement that is of interest to you and will help you reach your long term career goals. The placement should involve carrying out a meaningful piece of project work that is at the right level to challenge you, is completely unrelated to your PhD project, and does not involve carrying out academic research. This opportunity is designed to help you understand the wider context of your research, as well to expose you to the range of opportunities available to you after you graduate.

The University will advertise various placements in different employment sectors (industry; business and enterprise; media; education; government and the voluntary sector) which you can apply to, or you can opt to organise the placement yourself. The earliest you will go out on placement will be at the beginning of year 2, and this will be dependent on passing the continuation report that is examined at the end of year 1. Training sessions will be held within the 2021-22 academic year to give you information on what types of placements are available, as well as give you all the information you need before you go on placement. It is our aim to ensure that every student is sent on a placement that is challenging, interesting and useful for their long term career goals.

As the placements are for a fairly short duration, we envision that most of them will take place in the Greater Manchester and North West region, so that you do not have to relocate. However, some high profile placements may be based in other areas, for example London. Unfortunately there is no extra funding available to pay for accommodation in another city, but you are encouraged to make use of any opportunities to stay with friends or family if you have this option available to you. However, there will be a small budget available for each student for things like daily local travel costs, CRB checks, etc.

At the end of your internship, the BBSRC will require you to submit a PIP report describing your experience and to evaluate the effectiveness of the scheme and the value of the placement to students and host organisations.

Please note that if you are a CASE student you do not need to complete a PIPS placement.

8. BBSRC DTP Symposium

We hope to run the annual DTP symposium in June 2022 although, at the time of publication of this handbook, there are prevailing uncertainties concerning how the global COVID-19 situation will affect campus events. We will provide further details later in the academic year. The Symposium is an opportunity for students to showcase their work and develop important presentation, networking and communication skills. Participation in the symposium is compulsory; first year students are only expected to attend, second years will present a poster and third year students will present a talk about their research. The student-led organising committee will gain valuable transferable skills in the organisation and running of the symposium, as well as the benefits of gaining experience in chairing the oral sessions.

9. DTP Administration

For administration purposes only, you will be registered in the School/Faculty of your main PhD supervisor, even if your other supervisors are based in different Schools. To ensure cohesion and a sense of belonging to the wider DTP community, you will progress through your PhD as a single cohort, with DTP milestones and cohort training in common. It is important you keep in touch with both your local School/Faculty administration team as well as the DTP Programmes Officer, who is

based in the FBMH Doctoral Academy. If you have any questions about any aspect of your DTP programme, please contact the [Doctoral Academy](#).

10. Student Support

As a DTP student, it may be confusing who to approach if you need advice or someone to talk to in confidence. If you are experiencing health or personal problems that are affecting your PhD, it is advisable to speak in confidence to your supervisor, the DTP Cohort Lead or the DTP Officer in the first instance. Additionally all students have an advisor, who is an academic independent from your supervisory team.

Students experiencing health problems or exceptional mitigating circumstances are able to request an interruption to their studies. This is normally done via your school administrator but the DTP Officer also needs to be aware of any changes to your circumstances. It is important that you raise any issues promptly, so that we can do everything possible to support you.

Details of FSE school administrators can be found [here](#)

Details of FBMH school administrators can be found [here](#)

11. DTP Cohort Lead

Every DTP cohort will be assigned a DTP Cohort Lead. The DTP Cohort Lead is in addition to your supervisory team and the academic and local support networks available in your registering School/Faculty. The DTP Cohort Lead will stay with you throughout your PhD, acting as a cross-Faculty link to help support your academic progression, personal development and career aspirations.

	<u>PG Tutor</u>	
<i>Cohort 6 DTP2 – 2017 starters</i>	Dr Sam Hay	Sam.Hay@manchester.ac.uk
<i>Cohort 7 DTP2 – 2018 starters</i>	Dr Anthony Green	anthony.green@manchester.ac.uk
<i>Cohort 8 DTP2 – 2019 starters</i>	Dr Constantinos Demonacos	constantinos.demonacos@manchester.ac.uk
<i>Cohort 1 DTP3 – 2020 starters</i>	Dr Margherita Bertuzzi	Margherita.Bertuzzi@manchester.ac.uk
<i>Cohort 2 DTP3 - 2021</i>	Dr Neil Dixon	Neil.Dixon@manchester.ac.uk

12. Buddy Scheme and Doctoral Academy Graduate Society

The BBSRC DTP runs a buddy scheme for new-starters and you should have all been linked up with a 'buddy'. Being part of a mentoring relationship can help you get through some of the challenges of

starting a PhD smoothly. They can help you find your feet when you start, and provide support beyond this. We also hope that you will become involved in being a buddy and offering peer support for the next intake of DTP students. The benefit of your experience is always invaluable to new students trying to find their way!

Alongside the connections you will make within the DTP, there are also many other PGR student groups you can join and get involved with. The [Doctoral Academy Graduate Society](#) organises events and PGR student networks in the Faculty of Biology, Medicine and Health, while the Faculty of Science and Engineering coordinate activity through the [FSE Research Development Team](#).

13. Finance

Finance Officer for BBSRC Students: clare.wood@manchester.ac.uk

For general Finance Queries – finance.doctoralacademy@manchester.ac.uk

The value of your award will have been confirmed in your funding offer letter. As with any other studentship, continued stipend payments are dependent on satisfactory attendance and progression and completion of all compulsory DTP milestones. Failure to comply may result in your stipend payments being withheld or stopped.

14. Research Training Costs (RTSG)

Your main supervisor will receive an annual allocation of funding towards your research and training support (RTSG) which is intended to cover lab consumables, research facilities, printing and reprographics, fieldwork (if appropriate) and conferences. You should speak to your supervisor regarding the processes for ordering items against your RTSG. *Note: The Research Councils do not normally permit the purchase of PCs, laptops or equipment using RTSG. Please contact the Doctoral Academy office if you require further advice.*

Please Note - Due to the Covid-19, it may be you will work remotely for some aspects of your work in this initial stage. If you do not have a laptop or have unsuitable IT equipment for this, please see [here](#) for details on obtaining a university loan laptop to support remote working. If you have any further questions about please contact doctoralacadmy@manchester.ac.uk.

15. Attendance, Holidays & Absence Monitoring

It is a requirement of the University that attendance is monitored for all students via eProg. Your supervisor will be prompted on a monthly basis to complete an Attendance Form on eProg to confirm that you are engaging with your project.

Holidays

You are entitled to 8 weeks of holiday per year, the timing of which should be agreed with your supervisor in advance.

Unauthorised Absence

With the exception of agreed holidays, students are not permitted to be absent from their studies without the knowledge or prior agreement of their supervisor. Unauthorised absence will be treated very seriously. **Action may be taken to cancel studentship or bursary payments, without notice, if absences of more than two weeks are not supported by a sick note or a written letter explaining your absence.** The University will seek to reclaim any overpayment made to any student where the student has been deemed to have received payments that they are not entitled to.

Absence due to Sickness

You must notify your supervisor and the DTP Officer as soon as possible if you are absent between one and seven days due to ill-health. Thereafter a 'Fitness to Work' note or other medical note outlining your inability to work should be obtained from your GP, the counselling service or a hospital consultant. Failure to submit a medical certificate or other appropriate documentation to explain your absence may result in loss of any claim that special circumstances be taken into consideration when academic performance or progression is assessed.

For long-term absence, all UKRI-funded students are entitled to up to 13-weeks paid sickness absence leave per year, which will require a formal interruption. Please contact the DTP Programmes Officer of Doctoral Academy for further information about this.

Any change to your registered status or circumstances must immediately be notified to the DTP Officer either via your DTP cohort lead, your supervisor or via your School administrator. Failure to comply may result in your stipend payments being withheld or stopped without prior notice.

COVID-19

If you suspect you or anyone you live with may have COVID-19, you should follow the [latest advice from the NHS](#) and take a look at the University's [PGR COVID-19 FAQs](#).

16. Reporting your data to BBSRC

Please note that The University is obliged to provide personal information to Research Councils UK on students selected for BBSRC studentships, together with information about their studies. Each year we submit data to the BBSRC via the JeS shared service reporting system and via an annual report. This mandatory information is crucial to enable BBSRC to demonstrate how it is investing in bioscience research training for the UK. Please notify your DTP Officer of any changes relating to your PhD or personal circumstances to ensure the relevant Research Council is notified promptly.

The Research Councils will use this information for monitoring purposes and policy studies in relation to their involvement with provision of postgraduate training. The data will be made available on the Research Councils' websites and other publicly available databases, including Gateway to Research (<https://gtr.ukri.org/>), and in reports, documents and mailing lists.

17. Acknowledging BBSRC Financial Support

It is important that you acknowledge financial support received from the BBSRC on any publications, posters or other written communications arising from your work. Your DTP studentship grant reference number is:

DTP3 2020-2025 entry - BB/T008725/1

18. Research Fish

The Research Councils have a responsibility to demonstrate the value and impact of research and training supported via public funds and as such they are required to provide information on the outputs, outcomes and impact of the research they fund to government and public bodies. You are responsible for providing this information via Researchfish, the online system the UK Research Councils use to collect all researcher outputs. You will receive details about engaging with Researchfish in your third year of your PhD and you will be required to enter and submit data every year from this point until three years beyond your studentship period. Therefore you should make sure that your contact details are kept up to date on Researchfish for this purpose at <https://www.researchfish.com/>.

The terms and conditions of UKRI training grants awarded from 1st February 2015 place a responsibility on universities to provide information about students, supervisors and research projects. The Research Councils will use this information for monitoring purposes and policy studies in relation to their involvement with provision of postgraduate training. The data will be made available on the Research Councils' websites and other publicly available databases, including Gateway to Research (<https://gtr.ukri.org/>) and in reports, documents and mailing lists.

19. Data Management

The Research Councils take data management and sharing very seriously – you are therefore recommended to refer to the University Research Data Management Policy. This governs data management and sharing for all our research activity:

<https://www.library.manchester.ac.uk/using-the-library/staff/research/research-data-management/policies/>

Research Data Management is part of good research practice and will help you complete your research efficiently. Before the start of your research project you must complete a [Data Management Plan](#) in [DMPonline](#). Training on Research Data Management is available in person and online via [My Research Essentials](#). There is more information on the [Research Data Management website](#) or you can send any questions to researchdata@manchester.ac.uk.

20. Lab Records

You are required to keep a systematic and detailed account of your experimental work and data as work progresses. It is recommended that you write-up your work in draft form as you go along, or as each piece of work is completed. You and your Supervisor should meet regularly to discuss your results and opportunities to publish your work. It is your responsibility to ensure that these meetings occur and that your lab book is kept up to date.

21. Communication

To ensure that you feel part of the DTP cohort, we will send a regular emails to students and their supervisors which will contain key information relating to your programme, training, social events and news worthy items.

Please note: We will only ever use your assigned University email address - please ensure that you access and read your University emails on a regular basis.

Specific information for DTP funded students can be found on the following web site:
<https://www.eprog.manchester.ac.uk/contacts/default.aspx>

22. Terms and Conditions of BBSRC Studentships

Your DTP studentship is governed by the Terms and Conditions of UKRI Training Grants, with delegated responsibility for administration and setting/adherence of policy to the award holding Research Organisation. For further details, please see: <https://www.ukri.org/funding/information-for-award-holders/grant-terms-and-conditions/>

23. University Regulations and Policy

The University ordinances and regulations, policies and codes of practice governing all postgraduate research students can be found at: <https://www.bmh.manchester.ac.uk/pgr-handbook/policies/policies-and-regulations/code-of-practice/>

It is your responsibility to familiarise yourself with the University regulations and policies which govern your research degree. At the first meeting with your supervisor, you will be asked to declare that you have read and understand these documents. You are specifically advised to familiarise yourself with the [Code of Practice for Postgraduate Research Degrees](#).

A student will abide under the University ordinances and regulations, which applied at the time of entry to their programme of study; however, changes to University and local School/Faculty or programme policy and guidance will apply with immediate effect.