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A close-up, low-angle photograph of a microscope's objective lens and stage, with a blue-tinted background.

# GW4 BioMed Broadening Horizons Newsletter

Issue 1, October 2024

## **Welcome to our first Broadening Horizons newsletter.**

These will be circulated quarterly to give you advice, hints and tips and a spotlight on placements our students have undertaken.

Your Broadening Horizons placement gives you the chance to work outside your current academic research environment, gain new techniques, build new networks, identify new and existing transferable skills and build your profile for your future careers and work environment.

## **NEW Broadening Horizons Drop in Sessions**

We will be starting new Drop In Sessions with Professor Emma Kidd and the DTP Hub on a monthly basis via Teams. If you have any questions about your Broadening Horizons placement, you will be able to book a slot and come and chat with us about your placement. Further details to follow.



# Tips and Advice: The Basics!

<b>What?</b>	This is a 3-month, 90 day placement, which can be full time, part time, in-person, hybrid or remote.
<b>When?</b>	You should undertake your placement towards the end of the second or during the third year of your PhD. Check out our 'What should I be doing right now' section. Ensure you attend the Placements session at Orientation, and start thinking about potential sectors and roles during your first year and early in your second year.
<b>How?</b>	Talk to your supervisors and collaborators, look into different sectors, read about where previous students have done their placements, look at opportunities identified by the DTP and our online guidance.
<b>Where?</b>	Research groups in other universities in the UK and abroad, pharmaceutical or other industries, government departments/organisations in the UK, policy organisations in the UK or abroad, charities etc.
<b>Funding?</b>	You will receive your stipend, and can access your RTSG and up to £5,000 from Flexible Funding to support your placement. You cannot be paid by the placement host and receive your stipend.
<b>The Legal Stuff</b>	Putting in place legal agreement, visitor forms, visas and risk assessment can take longer than you think. It is very dependent on what your host organisation requires. Previous students agree that this part can be quite challenging, liaising between supervisors and host. Give yourself sufficient time to get this into place, at least 3-6 months

# Tips and Advice: The Process





# What should I be doing right now?

<b>BioMed1</b>	All Cohorts	Many of you have already completed your placements, but please let the DTP know if you are completing your placement.
<b>BioMed2</b>	Cohort 2.1	If you have not already done so, finalise your thoughts on the type of placement you wish to do; research potential hosts and contact them directly; discuss this with your supervisor; apply for opportunities as they are advertised. If you have secured your placement, complete the Placement Description form and return to <a href="mailto:GW4BioMed@cardiff.ac.uk">GW4BioMed@cardiff.ac.uk</a> and start to look into the legal agreements required. If you have finished your placement, complete the Student Feedback form.
	Cohort 2.2	Start to research different sectors, apply for internships and discuss your thoughts and ideas with your supervisor.
	Cohort 2.3	Welcome to your PhD and your first year. Your primary focus for now is settling in and making the most of your Prep Period. Keep an eye on these newsletters as they will flag up when you need to be taking action for your placement.

# A Spotlight on Completed Placements



**Lucy Barrass, based at the University of Bristol, in BioMed2 Cohort 2.1, completed a 3 month policy internship at the Department of Levelling Up, In Housing and Communities**

My internship at the Department for Levelling Up, Housing & Communities (now Ministry of Housing, Communities and Local Government) was part of the UKRI Policy Internship scheme that provides the opportunity to spend three months in a wide range of governmental departments. I applied for the position in early September 2023, had interviews in December and heard the outcome a couple of weeks later. At the internship, I worked in the English Devolution Team, and completed some research work on the impact of English Devolution on political engagement using a longitudinal household survey. I also attended meetings with other departments, and presented my work to the wider team in my final week. I was able to understand the kind of work that policy teams do, how they work with analytical teams, and also got to see how the Civil Service works during an election period which was really interesting! The fast-paced work and quick changes to policy were quite different to the academic environment. The placement helped me realise what I did and didn't want out of a role too which is really beneficial going forward in my career. It also helped

me further my research skills in a topic outside of my PhD, aided in presenting to lay audiences and allowed me to seek alternative career opportunities away from academia. Overall, I really enjoyed my three months in the Civil Service!

**Student Tip!** Ask your supervisor if they have any collaborators you could visit. Reach out to people in your field, such as authors of relevant papers; many are open to being contacted about placement opportunities. Try to build up a strong baseline knowledge of the area you will be working in before you start your placement- this will maximise what you get out of it.



**Becky Ward, based at the University of Exeter, in BioMed2 Cohort 2.1, talks about her 3-month placement in Professor Ian Tomlinson's research group at the University of Oxford**

I am just coming to the end of my Broadening Horizons Placement in a cancer genetic research group at the University of Oxford. I was keen to use the placement as an opportunity to develop new skills in analysis methods I had yet covered in my PhD work. Our research group had an already established collaboration with a research group in Oxford that specialises in cancer genetics, so I was very lucky that choosing and setting up the placement was quite straightforward. I contacted the group PI to ask if they would be happy for me to spend my placement in their group and explained what I was hoping to learn/get out of the placement. Arranging accommodation for the 3-month placement has been quite tricky and I have had to switch accommodation in Oxford several times, as many places were not available for 3 months. I applied to the GW4 Flexible funding to help support 50% of the accommodation cost, since it was very expensive. For me, finding accommodation for the placement has been a major challenge, so it is worth trying to organise accommodation as early as possible, or perhaps considering whether you could undertake a placement remotely. I have really enjoyed my time in Oxford and the chance to focus on a project that was slightly different from the analysis I had been doing in the PhD. The highlight has definitely been getting to know everyone in the research group, and I hope to continue working with the group on a project after the placement finishes. It has also been fun getting to spend a summer exploring a different city!

# Q&A



## **Is the placement mandatory?**

Yes! Your funding has been extended to allow you to have a Prep Period and to complete the Broadening Horizons placement. If there are significant reasons why a placement cannot be undertaken, this would be discussed by your supervisors and the DTP team.

## **How do I find a placement opportunities?**

Be proactive – think about what working environment/sector/role you are interested in; what skills you wish to develop; do you want to be in a team or work independently; do you prefer onsite/hybrid/remote.

Make use of University Library and Careers services/databases; the websites of professional bodies/societies to identify and collate a list of companies, organisations and contacts you may wish to approach. Include those you may have had contact with during your research.

Use online tools such as eg LinkedIn, as well as engaging with contacts from your own networks eg your supervisor, other academics with external research partners.