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# GW4 BioMed Broadening Horizons Newsletter

Issue 2, February 2025

## **Welcome to the Broadening Horizons newsletter**

Welcome to our Spring Broadening Horizons placement newsletter. You can access this and previous newsletters on the Student Hub of our DTP website.

In the Student Hub, there is now lots of guidance and information around finding and organising your placement, tips for during your placement and what we need after your placement. Please do have a look at them. Thank you to the 2.1 Cohort for all their help in forwarding the documentation that they have needed to have in place.

## **Broadening Horizons Drop in Sessions**

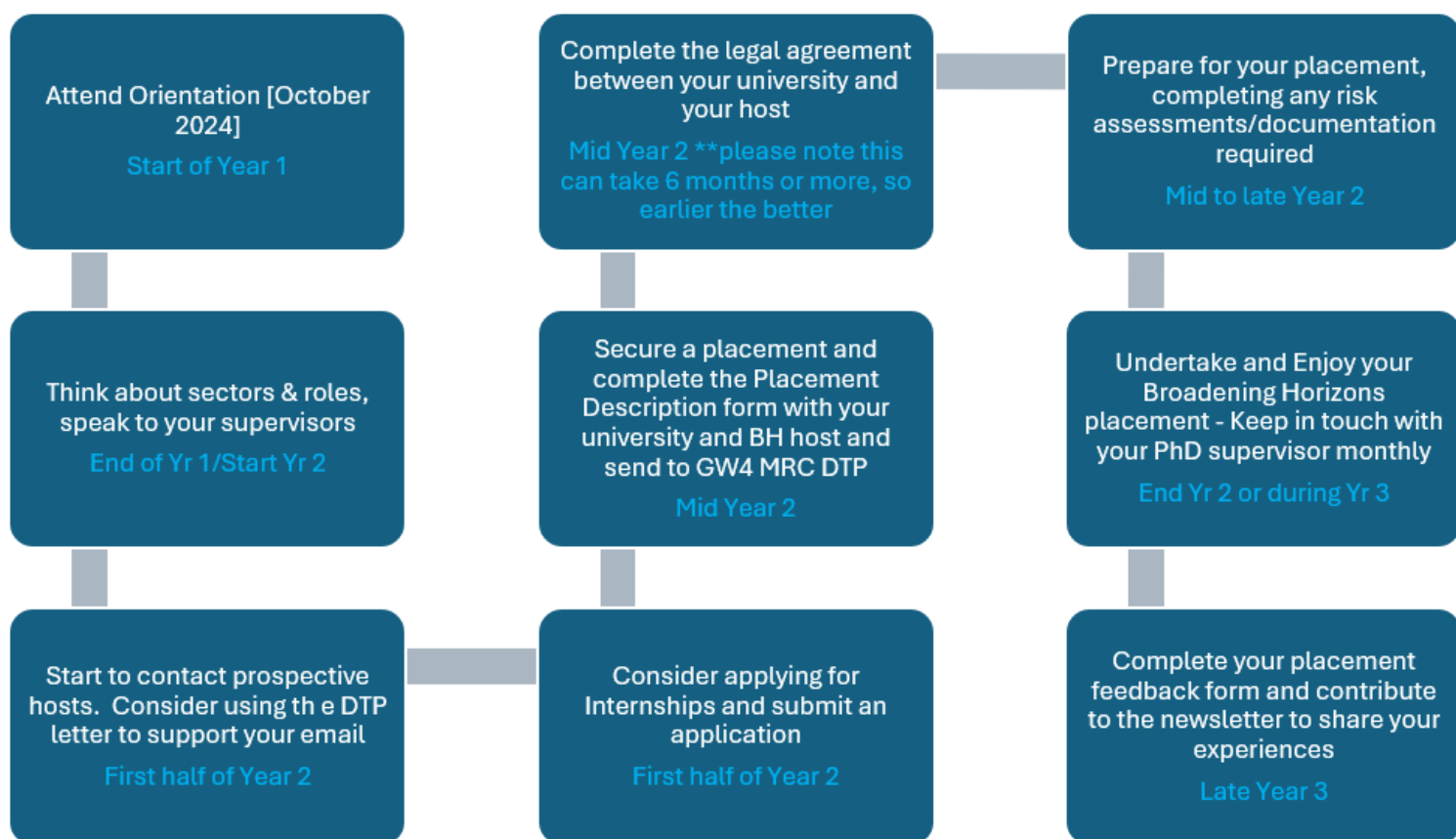
Thursday 20 February 2025 at 9 am via Teams

Friday 21 March 2025 at 9 am via Teams

Wednesday 22 January at 9 am via Teams

You will all be added to the Teams meeting but these are voluntary drop in sessions for any student wishing to ask questions about their placement.

# Reminder! Process & Timings





# What should I be doing right now?

<b>BioMed1</b>	All Cohorts	Most of you have now completed your placements, but please let the DTP know if you are still to complete 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	<p>Start to research different sectors, apply for internships and discuss your thoughts and ideas with your supervisor. If you have identified areas, then start to email potential hosts.</p> <p>There will soon be a list of potential contacts on the website and we are happy to share any contacts we may have. Check the guidance on line on arranging your placement, including potential costs. Come to one of our new drop in sessions to discuss any potential ideas with the team.</p>



# What should I be doing right now?

	Cohort 2.3	<p>You have now completed your Prep Period, your R&amp;I plan and your Project Outline and will be working on your Training Needs Analysis.</p> <p>You may have already had conversations with your supervisor about potential ideas for your placement. If you want to discuss these ideas further, pop to one of the online drop-in sessions. If not, you can start to think of broad areas you may be interested in and discuss these with your supervisors, who may have collaborators in that field.</p> <p>Watch out for UKRI Policy Placement deadlines and check out the information on Broadening Horizons in the student area of the website.</p>
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# A Spotlight on Completed Placements



**Mason Taylor, based at the University of Bristol, in BioMed2 Cohort 2.1, completed a 4-month research placement at the University of California (Irvine)**

I undertook a four-month placement as a Research Assistant in Dr Bryce Mander's Sleep, Cognitive Ageing, and Neurodegeneration lab at the University of California, Irvine. During my time in the lab, I was responsible for analysing EEG data from sleep studies, with a particular focus on understanding the relationship between sleep disruptions and Alzheimer's disease. I received training in applying advanced signal processing techniques to sleep EEG data, including multi-taper spectral analysis, sleep spindle detection, and slow oscillation-sleep spindle coupling. These techniques allowed me to quantify various aspects of sleep neurophysiology and investigate how changes in these patterns might serve as biomarkers for Alzheimer's disease. This experience has befitted my PhD research by broadening my data analysis capabilities and enhancing my ability to interpret complex EEG signals. The placement was relatively easy to organise, but the most time-consuming/challenging aspect was handling the admin issues requirements for working in America e.g., obtaining a visa, paying the fees, and visiting the embassy.



**Tessa Bate, based at the University of Bath, in BioMed2 Cohort 2.1, completed a 3-month research placement at Cambridge Cognition**

I completed a placement at Cambridge Cognition, a company which supports studies and clinical trials primarily in brain health areas for academics and pharmaceutical companies. This placement opportunity was circulated by GW4 BioMed and I decided to apply as I am interested in clinical trials and wanted to complete a placement in a different field than my PhD and a non-academic environment. During my placement, I had the opportunity to complete a range of work within the data management team and develop a variety of skills which I don't use in my PhD, including improving my Python proficiency. I also found it interesting to learn more about the practical side of how clinical trials are conducted and organised, from both the data management aspect and the roles of other departments in the company. I relocated to Cambridge for the duration of my placement as I worked in person for two/three days of each week which I found useful for learning from the data management team. Overall, I really enjoyed my placement and gained a lot of experience and skills which I will be able to implement during the rest of my PhD and future career.

### **Useful Student Tips**

- ★ 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.
- ★ If you are taking the placement abroad, make sure you have enough time for the requirements for working in that country, obtaining a visa, paying the fees, and visiting the embassy.
- ★ When planning a placement, make sure you're clear about the agreements and documentation which will be needed beforehand as there can be relatively little time between being offered and starting the placement which can be quite stressful to try to organise and understand in time.

# Q&A



## How long is the placement?

3 months / 90 working days in total. Placements can be full or part-time and can be taken in one full three-month block, or in several shorter blocks as well as part time over a longer period, depending on the student and the placement host. Your placement can combine onsite work and remote tasks. This might be useful if there are visa restrictions for international students on the time allowed outside the UK. They can be fully remote.

## What types of placements are suitable?

Placements can be related or unrelated to your PhD project. You should not be undertaking work that you would have routinely completed within your PhD. The aim is that new skills, techniques and networking are undertaken to help you understand how their research and professional skills can be used in a wider context.

### Placements could be in:

**Industry (including BioTech and Pharma):** including audits, project management, reviews or analysis of processes, data projects

**Publishing, Marketing and Communication:** including press office, publishing/marketing companies, scientific writing

**Policy:** including working in local government/authorities, other public and professional associations, charities and medical organisations eg NHS

**Academic and Teaching:** including colleges and schools, research policy and ethics

**Research Labs and Other Universities Research Groups:** the placement can be linked to your research but not be work you are already doing eg learning new techniques and networking.

## **Do I need an Interruption to Studies?**

No, you do not need an Interruption to Studies and please contact the DTP if you are asked to do so by your university. In some cases of paid placements (not iCASE students), an Interruption has been needed and a funded extension put in place. Please contact the DTP in this situation.

## **Can an international student in the UK on a student visa take a place outside the UK.**

Yes this is allowed, but you will need to consider the financial costs and there may be restrictions on how long you can be outside the UK. It is your responsibility to confirm with the Visa office about the terms and conditions of your visa and what changes may be required. You should leave sufficient time for such visa arrangements to be put in place.