

FAQs from Application Drop-in December 2022

Q1 What personal information should be included or excluded from the personal statement?

Please exclude your personal details (e.g name) from your personal statement. If you wish to add in organisational names or academics you have worked with you may but remember you have a word limit. The selection panel are more interested in what you got out of experiences, and the relevance of the experience to your application e.g demonstrating qualities needed for doing a PhD.

Q2 What evidence is required if my current UG degree or Masters is taught in English? Guidance can be found on the [University of Southampton English Language Proficiency webpage](#).

Extract from this webpage: *Other means of assessing English language proficiency*

Studying a degree taught and assessed in English in a non-majority English speaking country: Applicants who have successfully completed a degree taught and assessed in English in the two years preceding the date of first enrolment at the University of Southampton will be considered for admission. Applicants will be required to evidence this by means of an official letter from the awarding institution confirming English as the medium of instruction. We will also consider the whole application and accompanying documents to assess the level of competence in the language. The University reserves the right to ask for additional evidence of English language if we have concerns about an applicant's abilities.

Q3 If you have a gap after studying can you apply to SoCoBio? Yes, provide information about your experiences and how they demonstrate your ability to undertake a PhD with the SoCoBio programme.

Q4 How do I prove my English proficiency in the application? Guidance can be found on the [University of Southampton English Language Proficiency webpage](#).

Q5 The programme is stated as fully funded but are there any other expenses applicants would need to be aware of? Successful applicants would receive a stipend to cover living costs during their PhD. Current stipend level is given on the BBSRC website [here](#). The stipend for studentships starting 2023/24 will be announced in April 2023. Students also receive a Research Training Support Grant (RTSG). This is for costs associated with the PhD project and DTP cohort wide training. Fees are funded by BBSRC at the UK home rate, and SoCoBio DTP partners have waived the difference between home and international fee rate for International students offered a place on the programme; however the number of international students awarded a studentship is capped at 30% of the cohort.

Q6 Will applicants with degrees other than Biology be accepted to the programme if they have other relevant experience? Yes, applications are welcome from many backgrounds. The DTP provides high-quality interdisciplinary and industry-facing training experience. Demonstrate your qualities that make you a suitable candidate to undertake a PhD in your application from your experiences.

Q7 Should we mention excellent achievements and publications? These can be mentioned but we are more interested in what you got out of these experiences, and their relevance to demonstrating your qualities and reasons for applying to the programme.

Q8 If the project involves different labs in different universities, how is it decided which University you are based in? Successful applicants will be offered one of their project preferences for their first rotation project and they will be registered at the DTP partner where their first rotation project is located. The student will remain registered at their first rotation DTP partner for the first year of the programme.

During the first year of the programme students will also undertake a second rotation project before choosing their final PhD project. Second rotations can be undertaken at the same DTP partner as their first rotation project, or at any other DTP partner. If the final PhD project is chosen at a different DTP partner to the student's registered University then the student would transfer their registration to the DTP partner hosting their final PhD when they start that project.

Q9 Clarification of 'transferable skills' for personal statement: These are any relevant skills gained through experiences such as technical work in laboratories, or communication, leadership, problem solving etc skills through employment. It is important to explain your skills and their relevance to undertaking a PhD and your reasons for applying to SoCoBio.

Q10 For international students that have a family, would the program cover sponsorship for other family members for living in the UK? Please consult the University of Southampton [VISA information webpage](#)

Q11 What are the main things to mention in your personal statement? For guidance on format and what to include in your personal statement consult the guidance document located on the SoCoBio DTP website apply page (step 4) [here](#).

Q12 Are the two applications (University of Southampton and SoCoBio funding application) considered separately or as a whole? Both applications form the whole application to the SoCoBio DTP programme. Both applications need to be received together with all the supporting documents before your application can be considered.

Q13 Will my application be disadvantaged if I discuss only one project in my personal statement? Applicants are asked to select three projects that they are interested in but there is no guarantee as to whether you would get your first project preference. In your personal statement please write about your research interests and why you are interested in this research area and your qualities relevant to this research interest. You can refer to projects that you have selected if you wish to, to demonstrate your fit to the programme.

Q14 University of Southampton application entry fields:

- In the 'Field of Study' enter- PhD South Coast Biosciences, Doctoral Training Programme and
- In the 'Faculty' field enter - Faculty of Environmental and Life Sciences.
- For the question 'How do you intend to finance your studies' enter – SoCoBio DTP funded

Q15 Where will I be located? See answer to Q8

Q16 What is the interview format if applications are not to a specific project? All interview candidates will be asked a standard list of questions. The interview panel will be made up of two academics from different DTP partners with at least one panel member having reasonable knowledge of the applicant's area of interest.

Q17 Will applicants invited for interview be asked to prepare something or set a task? Applicants will be asked to give a presentation at their interview and details of this will be provided with the invitation to interview.

Q18 What are the conditions required to secure a place on the programme if awarded a studentship specifically if you are presently studying in the UK. Refer to University of Southampton webpage for [international student information](#)

Q19 International students - Academic Technology Approval Scheme (ATAS). Successful international applicants may be required to apply for an ATAS certificate. Find out more [here](#). Students will be informed in their formal offer letter if this applies to them.

Q20 What would be the deadline for accepting offers and meeting conditions stated, for students currently studying at Masters level, especially with an October completion date. Minimum entry requirements are stated on the SoCoBio website. Successful applicants will be made an unconditional offer and should accept this within the time frame given in the DTP informal offer. We ask for transcripts at time of application so we would expect applicant to achieve their predicted grades.

Q21 What if you are applying while finishing your undergraduate degree? Please provide transcripts for your current study and predicted grade with your application.

Q22 Is it mandatory to contact the proposed supervisor of interest prior to completing the online application and does this count during the overall decision? It is not mandatory to contact supervisors, but it will help you with your application as you may be able to link some of your experience to the projects you are interested in. Also consider looking at work completed by a lab you are interested in. If shortlisted there will be an opportunity to visit in person or meet supervisors remotely and visit their labs at each DTP partner.

Q23 What is the timeframe for accepting an offer specifically if multiple applications made to other DTP/ PhDs? SoCoBio DTP offer is open for a week to 10days however we realise that student may have applied to other programmes or PhDs so we ask that if applicants have other applications pending they request an extension from the DTP and keep them informed.

**Please don't hesitate to contact the DTP Manager if you have any further questions
through the contact page on the website**