



I L E S L A

INTERDISCIPLINARY LIFE AND ENVIRONMENTAL
SCIENCE LANDSCAPE AWARD

Open Day
26th November 2025

www.ilesla.ox.ac.uk

 [@iles_la](https://www.instagram.com/@iles_la)
 [@ilesla.bsky.social](https://www.bluesky.social/@ilesla.bsky.social)



Biotechnology and
Biological Sciences
Research Council



Natural
Environment
Research Council



Interdisciplinary Life and Environmental Science Landscape Award (ILES LA)

- 4-year Doctoral Programme (part-time study possible)
- Funded by BBSRC and NERC
- ~55+ students per annum
- 25% projects in collaboration with industry and non-academic partners

Doctoral Training Centre
1 to 4 Keble Rd
Oxford

Founded 2002



A brief history of the DTC...

- University of Oxford's Doctoral Training Centre (DTC) founded 2002
- 11 programmes (5 admitting students in 2026), 8 academic partner Universities and Institutions, 70+ non-academic partners
- ~1510 students admitted to date, > 1000 have graduated

...

- EPSRC Systems Approaches to Biomedical Sciences Industrial Doctorate programme founded in 2009
- BBSRC Doctoral Training Partnership (DTP) founded in 2012
- BBSRC DTP Expanded to include Oxford Brookes, Harwell organisations and the Pirbright Institute in 2015
- NERC DTP founded 2014
- NERC DTP integrated into the DTC in 2020
- **BBSRC and NERC-funded Interdisciplinary Life and Environmental Science Landscape Award - 2025**



2002



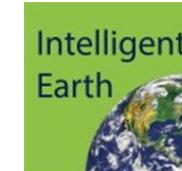
OXFORD
INTERDISCIPLINARY
BIOSCIENCE DTP



SYN BIO
onbi



DOCTORAL TRAINING PARTNERSHIP
ENVIRONMENTAL
RESEARCH



Intelligent
Earth

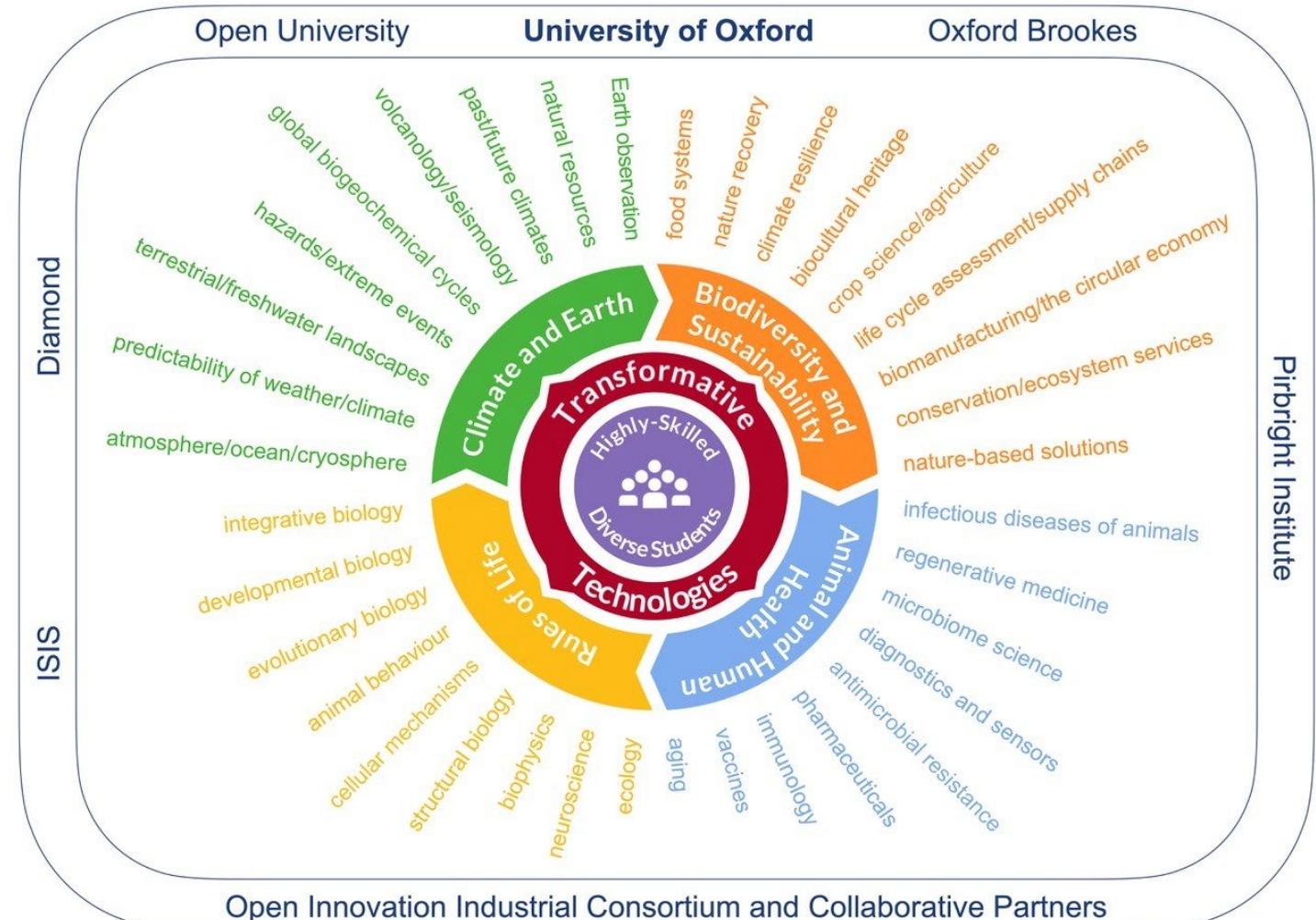


EIT

2026

Five Research Themes

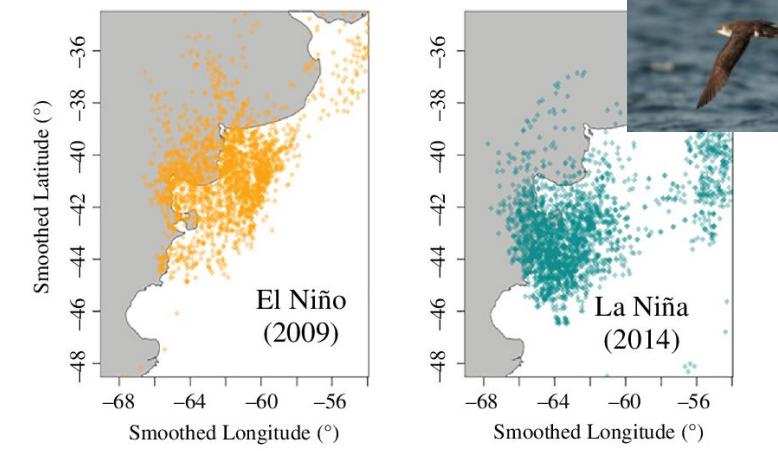
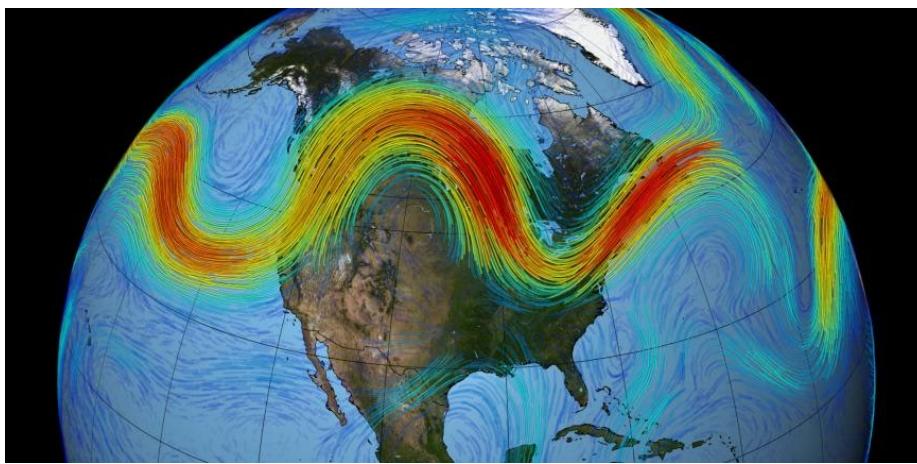
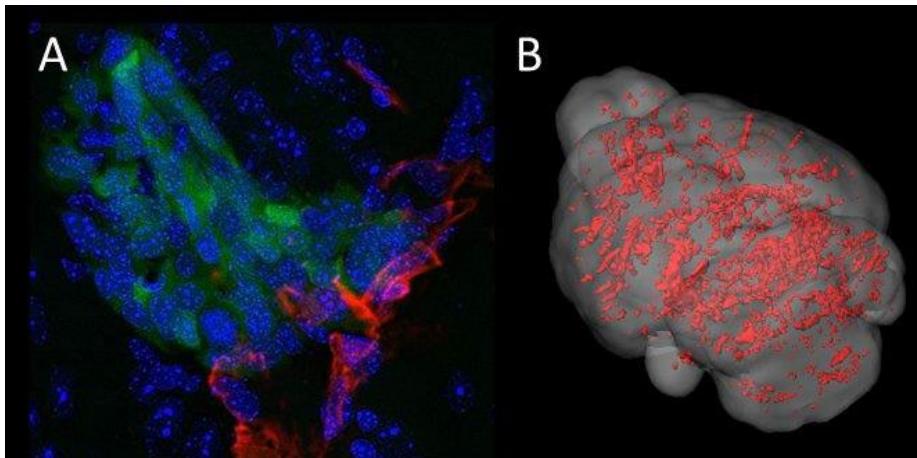
- Climate & Earth
- Biodiversity and Sustainability
- Animal and Human Health
- Rules of Life
- Transformative Technologies

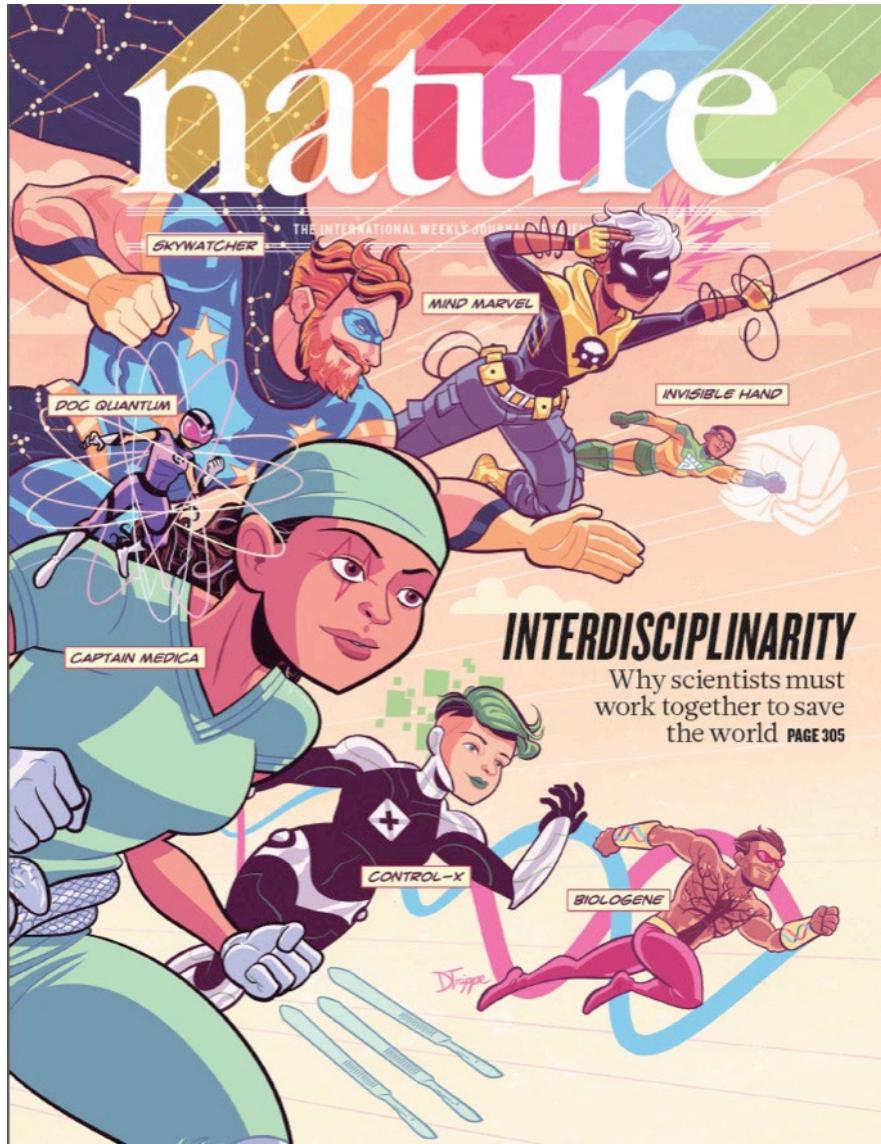


Please read the full theme descriptions on the website

Why do a DPhil/PhD with ILESLA
at the Doctoral Training Centre?

21st Century Science is Collaborative and Interdisciplinary





More postdocs, more data skills top biology sector wish list

Early results of 2014 vulnerable skills survey by BBSRC and MRC highlight concerns and importance of multidisciplinarity

October 23 2014



Becoming an employable researcher

- Critical thinking and analysis skills
- Problem solving skills (including knowing when and how to seek assistance)
- Motivation, commitment and resilience
- Time and project management
- Communication skills
- Interpersonal, team and leadership skills
- Specific technical skills/academic background knowledge (depends on the job)
- Broad knowledge of your discipline and other disciplines (flexibility and adaptability)

Our priorities

- Supporting scientific breakthroughs
- Developing new skills & interdisciplinary collaborations
- Underpinning industrial innovation
- Equity, equality, diversity, inclusion and societal impact
- Community, collaboration and kindness



Hosting partners (academic partners)

- Six hosting partners
- Three universities: **Oxford, Oxford Brookes & The Open University**
- **The Pirbright Institute, Diamond Light Source & ISIS Neutron & Muon Source**
- Eligible researchers can act as **primary supervisors** for students
- Students admitted via any of the three universities
- Students are required to work with a supervisory team that includes a supervisor at their registered university



Science and
Technology
Facilities Council

University of Oxford

- Ranked first in the *Times Higher Education* World University Rankings from 2017 - 2026
- More than 26,000 students, including 12,470 undergraduates and 13,920 postgraduates
- 450 postgraduate courses



Archaeology
Biochemistry
Biology
Chemistry
Computer Science
Dunn School of Pathology
Earth Sciences
Engineering
Experimental Psychology
Geography & the Environment
INEOS Oxford Institute
Jenner Institute

Kavli Institute
Kennedy Institute
Mathematical Institute
Nuffield Department of Medicine
Nuffield Department of Clinical
Neurosciences
Oxford e-Research Centre
Pharmacology
Physics
Physiology, Anatomy & Genetics
Statistics



Department of Biological and Medical Sciences (Animals, Plants and Microbes)

- Cell and Developmental Biology
- Genetics and Genomics

Centre for Bioimaging
Centre for Functional Genomics
Centre for Nutrition and Health

The Pirbright Institute



World-leading Centre of Excellence in the research and surveillance of viral disease of livestock and viruses that spread from animals to humans

Major new high-biological containment science facility (Brooksby Building) established in 2024 – focus on pandemic preparedness



University of Oxford & The Pirbright Institute

Development of vaccines for human and veterinary diseases

Harwell Science and Innovation Campus

Diamond Light Source

- Structural biology
- Bioimaging
- Spectroscopy

ISIS Neutron and Muon Source

- Materials analysis
- Biosurfactants
- Biopolymers
- Plant transport processes
- Membranes and protein-membrane interactions



Also [STFC Central Laser Facility](#), [Rosalind Franklin Institute](#),
[RAL Space](#), [ESA](#), [Research Complex at Harwell](#),
[Ada Lovelace Centre](#), [Mary Lyon Centre](#)...



The Open University



- The largest university in the UK
- Diverse community of ~900 postgraduate research students, doing cutting-edge PhD and Professional Doctorate projects
- Main campus in Milton Keynes



Open Innovation Industrial Consortium (Open-IIC)

- An alliance of industry partners committed to supporting students in IESLA
- Supervisors collaborate with Open-IIC partners to offer rotation and DPhil projects
- IP covered by an Open Innovation agreement
- Students undertake a 12 week+ internship with Open-IIC partners
- Students receive a £1K stipend uplift in years 2-4



Open-IIC

OPEN INNOVATION INDUSTRIAL CONSORTIUM

AstraZeneca Plc



CCDC



GE Healthcare



Glaxo SmithKline plc.



Hoffman La Roche



Lhasa Ltd.



LifeArc



Procter and Gamble Co.



Immunocore
IMMUNOCORE

Novo Nordisk and NNRCO

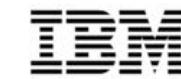


Syngenta
syngenta

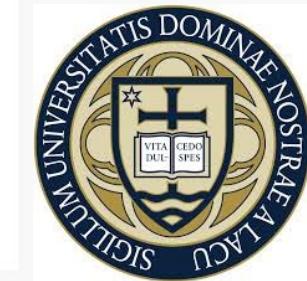
Oxford Drug Design



IBM



University of
Notre Dame



New partners are being added to the consortium...

Lilly
A MEDICINE COMPANY

Collaborative Partners

- Public and third sector partners
- Can co-supervise projects

STFC Central Laser Facility,
Harwell



Research Complex at
Harwell



The Met Office



National Centre for
Earth Observation



National Centre for
Atmospheric Science



National Oceanography
Centre



Natural History Museum
London



Natural History
Museum

Royal Botanic Gardens



European Space Agency



The Rosalind Franklin
Institute



Earthwatch



Centre for Ecology and
Hydrology



Natural England



Zoological Society
Institute of Zoology



The Mary Lyon Centre,
Harwell



RAL Space, Harwell



The Ada Lovelace Centre,
Harwell



The Training Programme

Core and advanced scientific training

Two 10-week research projects

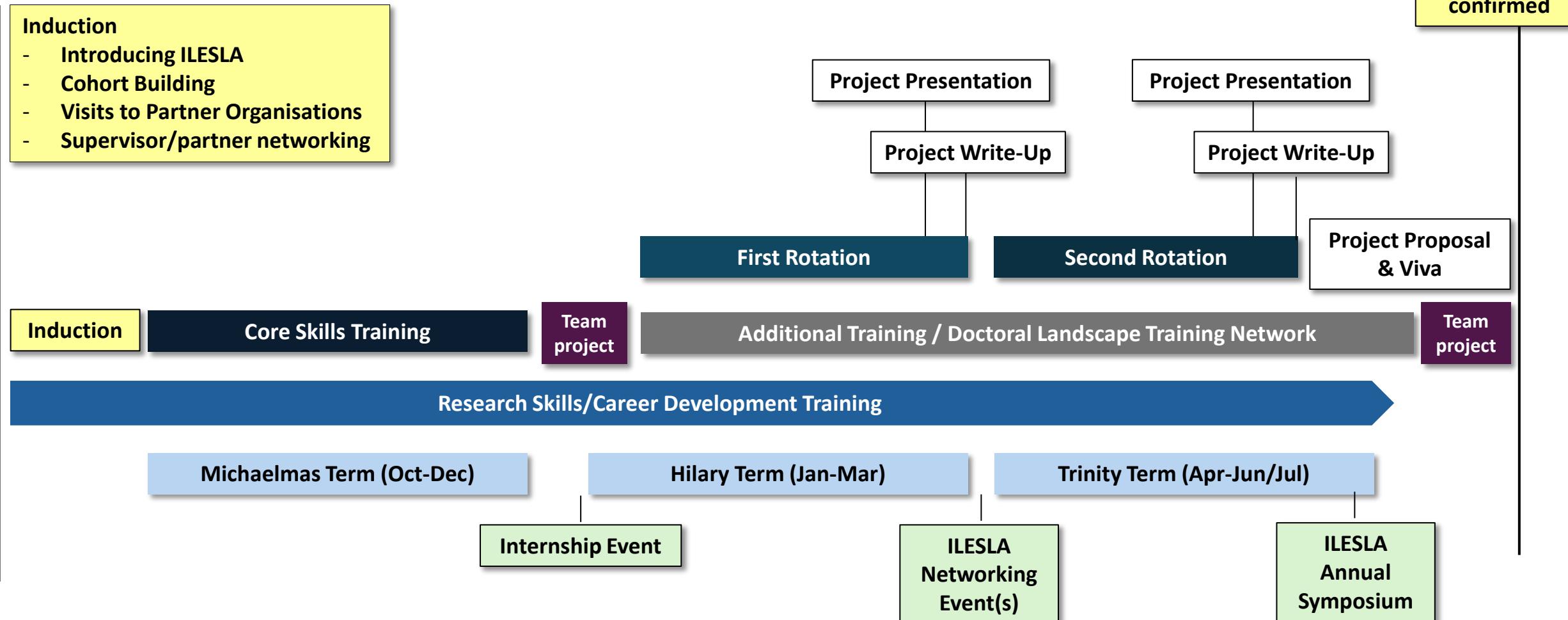
Three-year DPhil/PhD project

Career Development

12-week professional internship or
industrial placement (12 weeks-18 months) (iCASE)



ILES LA Year 1



Core Training

- Strong focus on computational, quantitative and data analysis skills
- Experiential learning
- Progress from where you start
- Research context
- Communication & Collaboration



Team projects

- Students undertake a team project in year 1 - typically involving software development, data analysis or consultancy
- Supported by a collaborative partner or Open-IIC partner mentor and an academic facilitator



Doctoral Landscape Training Network

- Inter-DTP training in advanced skills through online or in-person courses

Founding partners



Warwick
Birmingham
Harper Adams
Leicester
Coventry
Aston



Bristol
Bath
Cardiff
Exeter
Rothamsted
Plymouth
Swansea
UWE

**Yorkshire
Bioscience DTP**

Leeds
Sheffield
York
Bradford
Hull
Leeds Beckett
Sheffield Hallam
Teesside



Biotechnology and
Biological Sciences
Research Council



Natural
Environment
Research Council

EastBio

Edinburgh
Dundee
St. Andrews
Stirling
James Hutton Institute
SRUC
iBioIC
Moredun Research Institute

E5 Doctoral
Training
Partnership

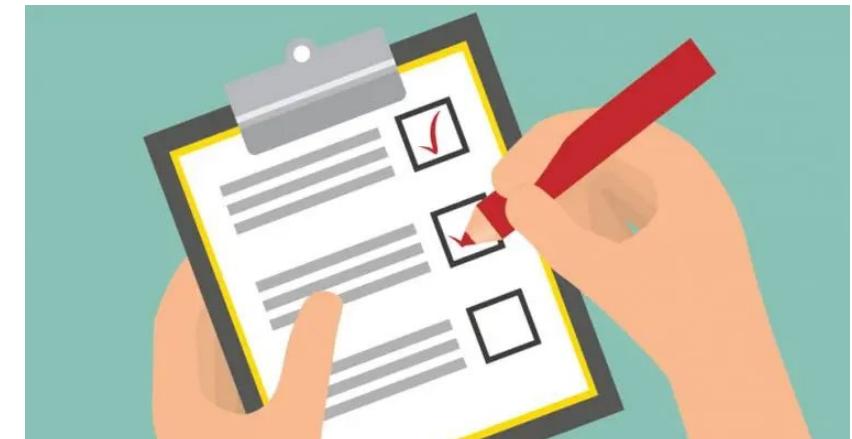
Edinburgh
SRUC
SAMS

Rotation projects

- Supervisors asked for project ideas in April/early May with a July 31st deadline
- Students given access to a list of eligible supervisors and projects during induction
- Primary supervisor from a hosting partner
- BBSRC/NERC remit
- Projects signposted as BBSRC, NERC, BBSRC/NERC or Open-IIC/iCASE
- Students meet with supervisors during induction and their first term
- Choose first project by the end of November
- Choose second project by the end of February
- Choose DPhil/PhD topic and supervisory team by June

Project proposals

- During the first six weeks of their substantive doctoral project, students write a research proposal in consultation with their supervisory team
- Assessed in a viva with two ILES LA supervisors for suitability and fit to remit
- Assessors provide formative feedback for students
- Reports are reviewed by Directors
- Decision on project suitability & feasibility



Internships

- All ILES LA students undertake a 12 week internship to gain work experience
- Open-IIC/iCASE students will undertake a 12 week+ placement with their partner organisation
- Entrepreneurial students can work on translating their research/ideas
- Wide range of internship options

Conservation

Education

Media

Industry

Policy

Publishing

Museums & science centres

Patent agencies

Scientific societies

Charities

Public sector

Entrepreneurship & innovation

Doctoral Innovation

- We encourage projects with translational/commercial potential
- Students and supervisors can access specific training and support in entrepreneurship and business skills
- Strong alumni network
- Students can use their 12-week internship for commercialisation activities with suitable mentorship and support



Equity, equality, diversity and inclusion

Equity, equality, diversity and inclusion is at the heart of ILES LA

- Inclusive and fair admissions
- Community and wellbeing
- Positive research culture
- Reasonable adjustments for disabled students
- Accelerating Futures Network
- Support for students with caring responsibilities
- UNIQ+
- Academic Futures Scholarships (Oxford)
- Returning, employed and part-time students



RePOWER: Returning to postgraduate study opportunities workshop

Friday May 15th 2026

If you are considering returning to postgraduate study after time spent in employment
– please complete our returning applicant survey (available soon)



ISIS Neutron and
Muon Source



Biotechnology and
Biological Sciences
Research Council



Natural
Environment
Research Council

Admissions - 2026 entry

- Deadline **January 8th, 12 noon** – applicants who miss this deadline will not normally be considered for studentship or scholarship funding
- All applicants initially apply via the University of Oxford – but **must clearly indicate which universities they wish to be considered for admission to (Oxford, Open, Oxford Brookes)**
- Students are required to have a supervisor in the university they are admitted to – but can have supervisors in their supervisory team from any of the six ILES LA partner organisations
- Students can have co-supervisors from Open-IIC and collaborative partners
- **Please follow the guidance on how to apply and fill out the application form as directed:**

<https://www.ox.ac.uk/admissions/graduate/courses/dphil-interdisciplinary-life-environmental-science>

Interviews mid-late Feb / early March
Offer decisions late Feb-March onwards
Scholarship decisions March-May