Emily Thompson

Life sciences investor and University of Edinburgh PhD graduate with experience across the full research-to-impact pipeline: academic research, technology transfer at Edinburgh Innovations, and venture investment at Old College Capital and Northern Gritstone. Board Observer on seven venture-backed companies, including six University of Edinburgh portfolio companies, with experience of governance and of monitoring performance against milestones and funding requirements. Awarded the Principal's Medal in 2021 for the STOPCOVID initiative and recognised for my contribution for improving the Student experience at the University of Edinburgh.

WORK EXPERIENCE

Investment Manager 2026–present, Northern Gritstone

- Identifying, evaluating, presenting and transacting on investments at Pre-Seed to Series E, primarily in life sciences, into spinouts from the Universities of Leeds, Sheffield, Manchester and Liverpool and the wider Northern ecosystem.
- Portfolio management, including acting as Northern Gritstone's Board Observer for IVF Micro.

Investment Executive 2024–2026, Old College Capital

- Identifying, evaluating and presenting investment proposals into startups and spinouts from across the University of Edinburgh at Pre-Seed to Series A stage.
- Executing investment transactions (commercial and legal aspects) in conjunction with both internal and external legal advisors.
- Portfolio management, including attending board meetings as an observer, building effective relationships with founders, investee companies, and other investors, and monitoring company progress against key milestones and funding requirements.
    - As part of this role, held Board Observer roles at six UoE portfolio companies across climate tech, agtech, life sciences and medical devices.
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Technology Transfer Manager 2023–2024, Edinburgh Innovations

All responsibilities of the Technology Transfer Executive role, plus:

- Negotiating and concluding Heads of Terms and IP licences with third parties and new spinout companies.
- Working alongside academics and external stakeholders to help form spinout companies from the University of Edinburgh.

Technology Transfer Executive 2022–2023, Edinburgh Innovations

- Working with technology transfer colleagues, academic staff, and patent agents to perform due diligence on submitted technology disclosures, including producing patentability reports and identifying commercial targets.
- Promoting technologies and identifying companies to target for commercialisation opportunities.
- Liaising with inventors and patent agents to manage the patent protection and prosecution strategy for relevant technologies and assisting in the review of patent specifications.
- Drafting and negotiating revenue share agreements, IP assignments and licences with support from an in-house legal team.
- Working with software-based technologies and championing commercialisation of copyright and copyleft technologies.

Opportunity Assessment Group Analyst Internship 2021–2022, LifeArc

- Performing thorough due diligence on several research proposals.

- Performing competitive landscape searches on therapeutic targets and medical device proposals.
- IP analysis, including patent searches, freedom-to-operate assessments and future IP strategy for several therapeutic approaches.

EDUCATION

PhD Inflammation, University of Edinburgh (2018–2022)

"Novel biomarkers and therapeutic targets for Inflammatory Bowel Disease"

- Immunohistochemistry & immunofluorescence on patient-derived gut tissue sections.
- Experience in a clinical setting and analysing patient data.
- Flow cytometry and cell sorting of cell and tissue samples.
- Peptide-based probe design and synthesis, including solid-phase peptide synthesis, HPLC and mass spectrometry.
- ELISAs and chemiluminescence plate-based assays.
- In vivo and ex vivo mouse experiments testing the therapeutic potential of new inhibitors.

Also worked on projects including "Fluorescent imaging tools for labelling metastasis-associated macrophages" and "Biomarkers of disease severity in COVID-19 patients" – as part of the STOPCOVID team and the Translational Healthcare Technologies group.

BSc (Hons) Human Biology, 1st Class Degree, Sheffield Hallam University (2014–2018)

Placement year 2016–2017, The University of Sheffield: "Determining whether pro-inflammatory IL-6 increases with ageing and in a telomerase-dependent manner across zebrafish tissues".

SELECTED PUBLICATIONS

Fernandez, A., **Thompson, E. J.,** Pollard, J. W., Kitamura, T., & Vendrell, M. (2019). A Fluorescent Activatable AND-Gate Chemokine CCL2 Enables In Vivo Detection of Metastasis-Associated Macrophages. *Angewandte Chemie International Edition.*

Ho, G. T., Cartwright, J. A., **Thompson, E. J.,** Bain, C. C., & Rossi, A. G. (2020). Resolution of Inflammation and Gut Repair in IBD: Translational Steps Towards Complete Mucosal Healing. *Inflammatory Bowel Diseases*.

Scott, J. I., Mendive-Tapia, L., Gordon, D., Barth, N. D., **Thompson, E. J.**, Cheng, Z., ... & Vendrell, M. (2022). A fluorogenic probe for granzyme B enables in-biopsy evaluation and screening of response to anticancer immunotherapies. *Nature Communications*.

Ellis, P. S., Martins, R. R., **Thompson, E. J.**, Farhat, A., Renshaw, S. A., & Henriques, C. M. (2022). A subset of gut leukocytes has telomerase-dependent "hyper-long" telomeres and require telomerase for function in zebrafish. *Immunity & Ageing*.

Scott, J. I., Cheng, Z., **Thompson, E. J.**, Karmakar, U., Cowell, V., David, M., ... & Vendrell, M. (2026). A chemiluminescence assay targeting granzyme A activity for monitoring inflammatory bowel disease. *Nature Biomedical Engineering.*

OTHER EXPERIENCE & AWARDS

Mentor/Supervisor

- Responsible for hiring and supervising Technology Transfer interns.
- Involved in mentoring other PhD, masters and high-school students during my time at UoE.

Awards

- Awarded the Principal's Medal in 2021 as part of the STOPCOVID initiative.
- Shortlisted for "Extra-Mile" Student of the Year award in 2021 for work to improve the PhD student experience during the COVID-19 pandemic.