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| **Project:**  |
| **Title: PhD student placement opportunity –** “*Developing evidence based guidance on the use of timber for biomass, and the conditions in which short rotation forestry can have a role in de-carbonisation*” |
| The Forest Resources Policy branch within Welsh Government is seeking a PhD student for a placement opportunity to support the delivery of key Wales’ policies. The team supports the development of the First Minister’s National Forest commitment and the delivery of the [Woodlands for Wales Strategy](https://gov.wales/sites/default/files/publications/2018-06/woodlands-for-wales-strategy_0.pdf) which outlines WG’s vision and targets for Wales’ trees, woodlands and forests. The strategy is built around 4 strategic themes:* Responding to climate change
* Woodlands for people
* A competitive and integrated forest sector
* Environmental quality

The team works closely with other areas within the Land, Nature and Forestry Division, e.g. Biodiversity and Plant Health, as we move towards a more joined up approach to land-use management and land-use change.The team is currently in the process of developing a long-term strategy for the establishment of a National Forest for Wales, increasing the rate of woodland creation and improving management of existing woodland, and leading on forestry research on behalf of the UK administrations amongst other key activities.**Decarbonisation, Biomass and Short Rotation Forestry**Over the past decade forestry and energy businesses have seen a large growth in the biomass and energy markets, the increase is attributed to the RHI. The RHI is a government incentive which encouraged the installation of biomass boilers which burn wood-chip. This subsequently led to more demand and increased prices for poorer quality timber as well as making operations such as ‘first thinnings’ far more profitable. The latest CCC report states, “*We assume an immediate scaling up of the industry (Bioenergy including SRF) would be required from the mid-2020s in order to deliver the rates in our scenarios: 10,000, 30,000 or 60,000 hectares being added annually by 2035*. “In order to deliver this and reduce the social, environmental and economic impact, Welsh Government will need to produce guidance in-line with the UKFS which is currently under review. Any publication will need to consider:* Where is the available land to plant crops for short rotation forestry for biomass (taking into consideration logistical challenges and carbon emissions from transport)
* How do land owners prepare land and establish crops so carbon emissions are reduced and the impact to the environment is kept to a minimum
* Markets – Will current supply chains be able to cope with the increase in supply what needs to happen to prepare businesses for this?
* Is this option realistic and achievable in Wales?
* What is the potential social impact on rural communities regarding jobs etc.?

This project will require the individual to work closely with a number of different stakeholders across a range of land uses from agriculture to conservation NGOs’ and will provide an opportunity to consolidate research which has previously been produced through ‘silo’ working.The exact tasks required of the students will be dependent on the particular focus of the team at the time of the placement but will likely centre around policy development. This may include:* Stakeholder engagement: facilitating discussion and collecting opinions – key stakeholders include Ministers and senior officials; UK administrations, local authorities; private sector organisations; third sector; education sector and more.
* Evidence gathering: building on the existing evidence documentation for Forest Policy and National Forest, working with WG policy teams, delivery partners and external stakeholders.
* Policy analysis and drafting policy papers, using the evidence gathered to develop options and recommendations on the way forward.
* Presenting findings/recommendations within key internal and external stakeholder groups, and in some cases, Ministers for their agreement
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| **Details**  |
| **Skills required:** | **Key Skills**Excellent research skills; Ability to analyse complex information and data; Ability to write clearly and concisely; Ability of presenting technical material in an accessible format; Presentation skills; Creative thinking; Ability to apply an innovative approach |
| **Outputs:** | As agreed with line manager and in relation to the above priorities |
| **Host Organisation:**  | Welsh Government |
| **Placement Start Date** | ASAP |
| **Development Opportunities** | The placement provides an opportunity to gain insight into the functioning of Welsh Government and evidence-based policy development at the highest level. The post-holder will work in an interesting and diverse team, contributing to the shaping of a future policy direction. The post-holder will be expected to work independently within parameters and guidelines provided by the Welsh Government. Working closely with a wide range of colleagues the successful candidate will build valuable working relationships, broaden their knowledge of public policy-making and enhance their existing transferable skills.The student will join an analytical team managing a diverse evidence-base and delivering technical and advisory support to the policy team’s programmes. This is an interesting and diverse role, working on a high-profile programme across Welsh Government portfolios which will allow the student to gain a broad knowledge and understanding of Welsh Government policy work. With support from their WG supervisor, the student will be expected to take responsibility for managing and delivery of work commitments during the placement period. |
| **Duration, location, working arrangements and environment:**  | The role will be full-time and is normally based with the policy team in one of Welsh Government’s regional offices. In view of current Covid-19 restrictions, the post-holder will be required to work from home in-line with working arrangements for all Welsh Government employees and it is unlikely that this will change for the foreseeable future. Post-holders will be provided with a laptop to facilitate regular contact with the policy team members and line management, other policy teams and external partners. Due to the remote nature of working, the policy team will ensure that the post-holder is fully supported during the placement and will endeavour to ensure that the placement is as close to the in-team office-based experience as possible.The placement will be for a 3 month period and will focus on delivering the objectives set out in the job specification. The option to extend for a further 3 months is possible if the project team feel there is merit in doing so and if it is compatible with the post-holder’s university research schedule and DTP/CDT arrangements. The Welsh Government is a bilingual organisation and Welsh language skills are considered an asset to the organisation. We encourage and support staff to use their Welsh language skills during a placement. Start date will be agreed following successful Welsh Government security clearance. |
| **Application criteria** | **Welsh Government can only accept applications to the PhD student placement programme from registered students**. **All applicants must seek approval from their academic supervisor before applying** |
| **Funding** |
| The placement will be funded by Welsh Government and will match the current UKRI PhD stipend rate, payable in one sum at the beginning of the placement (to minimise financial administration). The payment process aims to compliment PhD student university stipend payment structures, i.e. WG pay the university and the funds are passed-on to the student’s account. To avoid delays to students receiving payments, it is preferable that the student’s PhD stipend is not paused during the placement and that, instead, it continues and that WG reimburse the university for the time the student is not undertaking research. **Please note:  we do not pay students directly** |
| **Contact**  |
| **Name:**  | Caroline Fallone (Research & Academic Engagement Manager)caroline.fallone@gov.walesThe Welsh Government takes the protection of your data seriously. If you contact the Welsh Government then our [**Privacy Notice**](https://eur01.safelinks.protection.outlook.com/?url=https%3A%2F%2Fgov.wales%2Fabout%2Fwelsh-government-privacy-notice%2F%3Flang%3Den&data=02%7C01%7CCaroline.Fallone%40gov.wales%7C24ae25ebbd28440c42e308d742b5966d%7Ca2cc36c592804ae78887d06dab89216b%7C0%7C0%7C637051219998434627&sdata=Sg3llOKFBLuxSLlQXQlpg%2Bmxb3dMNeR3Sgjw4Z7HQSY%3D&reserved=0) explains how we use your information and the ways in which we protect your privacy. |
| **Application process**  |
| Please submit CV and covering letter to Caroline Fallone. **NOTE: All applicants must confirm that they have received authorisation to take an interruption of studies from their academic supervisor** We welcome receiving correspondence in Welsh. Any correspondence received in Welsh will be answered in Welsh and corresponding in Welsh will not lead to a delay in respondingIf you have an impairment or health condition, or use British Sign Language and need to discuss reasonable adjustments for any part of the placement programme, or wish to discuss how we will support you if you are to be successful, please contact caroline.fallone@gov.wales as soon as possible to discuss your requirements and any questions you may have. |