Doctoral Training Policy and Evidence Placement

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| **Project** | |
| **Title:** An assessment of impact from coastal plans and projects on biogenic reef around Wales. A short research project to inform the need for habitat creation and restoration of reef by the National Habitat Creation Programme | |
| **Description (250 words max):** Click or tap here to enter text.  The National Habitat Creation Programme (NHCP) is Welsh Government’s programme for provision of compensatory measures in Wales to provide environmental offset for coastal plans and projects, specifically for Risk Management Authorities.  By creating habitat offset through managed realignment and habitat restoration measures, the NHCP also offers an opportunity to deliver some of Welsh Government’s Programme for Government commitments for habitat restoration and their “Nature Network” outcome requirements for improving protected sites and the National Site Network.  Habitat offset needs from risk management authorities “coastal plans and projects” currently focus on saltmarsh and intertidal mud and sand habitats. However, another key receptor of coastal squeeze impacts are biogenic reefs that occur naturally around the coastline of Wales mainly within the intertidal and shallow subtidal.  In the first instance this project will undertake a literature review to clarify the key niche conditions for growth of biogenic reef in Wales. This review will support the assessment of opportunities for habitat creation, restoration and enhancement when considering coastal adaptation options such as managed realignment!  The primary aim of the Project is to undertake a semi-quantitative risk assessment of the “potential” impact on biogenic reef from coastal plans over the short, medium, and long term. The proximity and distribution of biogenic reefs will be compared and screened against coastal flood risk management assets that are likely to me improved or replaced around the coast of Wales. It can be expected that much of the asset data will be based on NRWs asset management database (AMX) and GIS representation of Shoreline Management Plan coastal policies (primarily hold-the line). This assessment will involve significant data management of biological data and is likely to require intermediate spreadsheet and GIS software skills.  The student will be provided with NRW IT hardware and software including access to GIS and AMX. Basic use of the AMX will be provided and appropriate flood risk management data will be exported for the student for use within the GIS platform. NRW library facilities and support for literature review and access to NRW intertidal and subtidal data sets will be provided. Intermediate skills in GIS and analytical skills are required.  A report will be compiled for completion of the Project. | |
| **Details** | |
| **Skills required:** | A strong track record studying/researching in the marine and coastal environment. Great ICT skills in standard Office packages – Word, Excel etc and GIS packages such as ArcGIS. |
| **Anticipated outputs:** | A report would be compiled with clear recommendations on the potential for biogenic reef habitat creation and restoration in the context of coastal adaptation and offset needs. |
| **Host organisation:** | Natural Resources Wales |
| **Duration and format (full time/part time):** | 3 month, full time placement |
| **Development opportunities** | The placement provides an opportunity to gain insight into the functioning of Natural Resources Wales and evidenced based decision making within the Welsh environment context. The researcher will work in an interesting and diverse team, and their contributions to tackling the nature and climate emergencies will be highly valued.  The researcher will be expected to work independently within parameters and guidelines provided by Natural Resources Wales. Working closely with a wide range of colleagues the successful candidate will build valuable working relationships, broaden their knowledge of this sector, and enhance their existing transferable skills.  The researcher will join a team managing a diverse range of programmes and providing technical and advisory support across our Operational and Evidence, Policy, and Permitting directorates.  This is a fantastic opportunity to understand how research and evidence is used to inform decisions. With support from their NRW supervisor, the researcher will be expected to take responsibility for managing and delivery of work commitments during the placement period. |
| **Location and working environment:** | Primarily home working with some potential for occasional site/office visits |
| **Start date:** | Flexible |
| **Application criteria** | Natural Resources Wales (NRW) can only accept applications to the PhD student placement programme from registered students who are within their funded period.  All applicants must seek approval from their academic supervisor before applying |
| **Funding** | |
| The placement will be funded by NRW and will match the current UKRI PhD stipend rate. The payment process aims to compliment PhD student university stipend payment structures, i.e. NRW 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 NRW reimburse the university for the time the student is not undertaking research. Please note: we do not pay students directly | |
| **Contact – for queries** | |
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| **Application process** | Please submit the equal opportunities form, your CV and a short covering letter, explaining why you are suitable for this placement to Lleoliadau@cyfoethnaturiolcymru.gov.uk.  NOTE: All applicants must confirm that they have received authorisation to take an interruption of studies from their academic supervisor  If 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 lleoliadau@cyfoethnaturiolcymru.gov.uk as soon as possible to discuss your requirements and any questions you may have. |