

Project:

Title: PhD student placement opportunities – Management and protection of Water quality in Wales

Welsh Government is seeking PhD candidates for two placement opportunities with The Interim Environmental Protection Assessor for Wales (IEPAW). The IEPAW is responsible for reviewing concerns about the functioning of environmental law in Wales; where warranted, the IEPAW may prepare reports on the functioning of the law for the Welsh Ministers.

The IEPAW is part of an interim process in Wales until a permanent body to oversee compliance with environmental law is developed. Its focus is on the functioning of environmental law, not on breaches of that law.

Purpose of the posts

The post-holders will be responsible for assisting the IEPAW with research on water quality pertaining to environmental legislation in Wales, which will help form the basis for the development, drafting and final production of a comprehensive report which will be delivered to Welsh Ministers regarding the functioning of environmental law in Wales in relation to water quality. The research which is conducted in the initial stages of this placement will form the basis of the report and inform the advice provided to the ministers to improve environmental outcomes for Wales.

Concerns about the functioning of environmental law fall into three broad categories:

1. The law no longer delivers its intended objectives and outcomes, either because it is outdated, or it no longer functions in a way which protects the environment.
2. Guidance or information about the law is not accessible. The quality and availability of information or guidance impedes deliverability or operability for users.
3. Practical delivery of the law is impeded. Where there are improvements which could be incorporated as a result of advances in science or technology or where barriers exist which frustrate or prevent practical delivery of law.

Key Tasks

Key duties will include:

- Researching relevant legislation and information relating to water quality, ensuring that all information is documented in a clear, cohesive and concise manner.
- Undertaking a comprehensive literature review of environmental legislation, associated case law and commentary in relation to water quality to include consideration of legal frameworks in relation to water quality, including best practice in other countries and other jurisdictions.
- Analysis of complex information and data trends and identifying potential evidence gaps.
- Drafting clear, concise summaries of findings which will form the basis of the report which will be presented to the Welsh Ministers.
- Participating in meetings and events with colleagues, including stakeholders from external organisations.
- Assimilation and coordination of expert evidence received, taking notes of evidence provided via written submissions, oral evidence sessions, workshops and seminars.

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Some of the publications which have been produced from the IEPAW can be found at:

https://www.gov.wales/publications?field_external_organisations%5B50653%5D=50653

Themes of the post holders research will include but not be limited to:

1. What are the rules and regulations governing the release of sewage into watercourses in Wales? When is this permissible? What conditions must be met? How are licences obtained? What checks are put in place in relation to the issue of those licences?
2. What monitoring mechanisms are utilised in relation to the licences that have been issued to water companies in Wales?
3. What is considered a breach of those licences? Thresholds/assessment criteria. What occurs if breaches of licences are discovered? What provision is there within environmental law in Wales to deal with such breaches?
4. How many breaches are there in any given year and are any prosecutions brought? If so, what is the outcome of those?
5. What technology is available to measure faeces in rivers? Can this feasibly be done at an all Wales level? Is there technology available that would measure the volume of sewage entering watercourses in Wales?
6. Is there best practice/technology that we should be aware of internationally?
7. How are Special Area of Conservation assessments carried out in practice? What criteria/ tools are utilised in carrying out those assessments?
8. Is there work going on already in relation to any of the above and what does that show?

Details

Skills required:	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Academic background in law, preferably environmental law • Good legal research, evaluation and analytical skills • Good writing skills and practice, particularly the ability to write accurate and concise reports.
Outputs:	As agreed with line manager and in relation to the above priorities
Host Organisation:	Welsh Government
Placement Start Date	Early 2024
Development Opportunities	<p>The postholders will join the team which provides the Secretariat for the IEPAW, based within the Landscapes, Nature and Forestry Division in the Welsh Government.</p> <p>The placements will help gain a better understanding of the legislative framework and offer experience of working with interesting, diverse and friendly colleagues in the high profile and exciting environmental arena. With support from Welsh Government supervisors, the postholders will be expected to take responsibility for managing and delivery of work commitments, providing opportunities to develop team working and project management skills.</p> <p>The postholders will have the chance to broaden their knowledge and understanding of producing reports and advice for Government Ministers and the opportunity to identify areas which add value to the delivery of evidence-based policy. There will also be the opportunity to meet stakeholders from a range of organisations.</p>
Duration, location, working arrangements	There are two posts available for this project. Each role will be a 6month placement within the IEPAW Secretariat, working part-time at 18.5hrs a week for the 6month period and at present will be home-based with the opportunity to work in the Welsh Government's Cathays Park offices in central Cardiff.

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<p>and environment:</p>	<p>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-holders are 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.</p> <p>The option to extend is possible if the project team feel there is merit in doing so and if it is compatible with the post-holders' university research schedule and DTP/CDT arrangements.</p> <p>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.</p> <p>Start date will be agreed following successful Welsh Government security clearance.</p>
<p>Application criteria</p>	<p>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</p>
<p>Funding</p>	
<p>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). 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</p>	
<p>Contact</p>	
<p>Name:</p>	<p>Contact Stephany Aymerich (Research & Academic Engagement Manager) via researchplacements@gov.wales</p> <p>The Welsh Government takes the protection of your data seriously. If you contact the Welsh Government then our Privacy Notice explains how we use your information and the ways in which we protect your privacy.</p>
<p>Application process</p>	
<p>Please submit CV and covering letter to Stephany Aymerich. NOTE: All applicants must confirm that they have received authorisation to undertake a placement from their academic supervisor.</p> <p>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 responding</p> <p>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 Stephany Aymerich as soon as possible to discuss your requirements and any questions you may have.</p>	