

Project: PhD student placement opportunity

Title: Management and protection of Water quality in Wales

Background:

The Interim Environmental Protection Assessor for Wales (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 Post:

The post-holder 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 The law no longer delivers its intended objectives and outcomes, either because it is outdated, or it no longer functions in a way which protects the environment.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.
- Interpretation and evaluation of expert and lay submissions from calls for evidence taking notes of evidence provided via written submissions, oral evidence sessions, workshops and seminars.

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

[Publications | GOV.WALES](#)

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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?
9. What changes to legislation are required in order to prevent water pollution from farming activities?

Location and pattern of working

The role will be a 3-month paid placement within the IEPAW Secretariat, working full-time flexible hours and at present will be home-based with the opportunity to work in the Welsh Government's Cathays Park offices in central Cardiff. Alternatively, there is the option to work on a part time basis, over a period of six months. IT equipment will be provided to ensure access to all communication tools and internal documentation.

Student Specification

The student must have:

- 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.

Development Opportunities

The postholder will join the team which provides the Secretariat for the IEPAW, based within the Landscapes, Nature and Forestry Division in the Welsh Government.

This placement 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 postholder will be expected to take responsibility for managing and delivery of work commitments, providing opportunities to develop team working and project management skills.

The postholder 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.

Testimony from a previous PhD placement student:

'I have thoroughly enjoyed my time working within the IEPAW, from day one the work was exciting, topical and engaging. I have learned a huge number of transferable skills over the course of the last three months which are directly applicable to PhD and will allow me to be more employable after I have finished. I particularly enjoyed the research and report writing aspect of the placement because it has allowed me to consider other ways of conducting research and writing reports other than the standard academic template that we as PhD students are encouraged to adhere to. It has allowed me to develop skills that I would not have attained from just undertaking a PhD and overall enhanced my employability as a researcher and as a professional. Some of the skills that I developed and attained during this placement include: a professional report writing technique, research skills directly pertaining to environmental legislation (something I would never come across in the area of my PhD), attention to detail when analysing evidence team work and the development of interpersonal relationships, development of an understanding of a big picture when completing a task and enhancement of both my written and verbal communication.

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Details	
Skills required:	<p><u>Key Skills</u></p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> • 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
Number of posts available:	1
Placement Start Date	JANUARY 2025 – Start date will be agreed following successful Welsh Government security clearance. <i>Please note that this process can take up to 8 weeks.</i>
Development Opportunities	<p>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 policymaking and enhance their existing transferable skills.</p> <p>The student will join an analytical team managing a diverse evidence-base and delivering technical and advisory support to the policy team’s programme. 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.</p>
Duration, location, working arrangements and environment:	<p>Placements are available as full-time and is normally based with the policy team in one of Welsh Government’s regional offices. In line with the flexible working policy, the post-holder will be able to work from home, and office working will also be an option.</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-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.</p> <p>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.</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>

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Application criteria	<p>Welsh Government can only accept applications to the PhD student placement programme from registered PhD students living in the UK.</p> <p><u>All applicants must seek approval from their academic supervisors before applying.</u></p>
Funding	
<p>For PhD students applying for a voluntary placement (Funded – voluntary): Funding will be provided 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. <u>Please note: we do not pay students directly.</u></p> <p>For PhD students with a placement requirement as an essential part of their PhD programme / PIPS (Unpaid – required placement): Funding for this type of placement is expected to be covered by the research council as per the applicant’s programme. Welsh Government will pay the cost of hotel, subsistence, travelling and any other additional expenses incurred by the PhD candidate in connection with the Project Support Services, subject to the limits in Welsh Government’s travel and subsistence policy.</p>	
Contact	
Name:	<p>Contact Dr Simon Baldwin (Head of Research & innovation) via researchplacements@gov.wales</p> <p>The Welsh Government takes the protection of your data seriously. If you contact the Welsh Government then our <u>Privacy Notice</u> explains how we use your information and the ways in which we protect your privacy.</p>
Application process	
<p>Please submit CV and covering letter to Simon Baldwin and indicate the type of placement (funded – voluntary or Unpaid – required placement) and the type of role: full or part-time.</p> <p>NOTE: All applicants must confirm that they have received authorisation to undertake a placement from their academic supervisor and/or programme coordinator.</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 the research and innovation team via the email provided as soon as possible to discuss your requirements and any questions you may have.</p>	