**Two Student Research Placement Posts with Welsh Government on the Functioning of Environmental Law in Wales**

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 posts

The post-holders will be responsible for assisting the IEPAW with the production of reports for Welsh Ministers on the functioning of environmental law in 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 The law no longer delivers its intended objectives and outcomes, either because it is outdated or it no longer functions in a way which protects the environment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:

* Carrying out research on relevant legislation, guidance and information ensuring that all information is documented in a clear, cohesive and concise manner.
* Analysis of data and evidence
* Assisting with a review of relevant issues, including best practice in other countries and other jurisdictions.
* Analysis of complex information, and evidence and identifying potential evidence gaps.
* Drafting clear, concise summaries of findings which will form the basis of the report
* Participating in meetings and events with colleagues, including stakeholders from external organisations.
* Assimilation and coordination of expert evidence received, taking notes of evidence provided in oral evidence sessions, workshops and seminars.

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>

Location and pattern of working

The roles are a 3-month paid placement within the IEPAW Secretariat, working full-time flexible hours and at present home-based with the opportunity to work in the Welsh Government’s Cathays Park offices in central Cardiff. 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 schedules and DTP/CDT arrangements. Alternatively, there is the option to work on a part time basis over a period of 6 months. IT equipment will be provided to ensure access to all communication tools and internal documentation.

Student Specification

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

The IEPAW is currently working on an investigation into contaminated land and would particularly welcome applicants interested in this topic although this is not an essential requirement for the post.

Development Opportunities

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.

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.

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 and visit sites where you can see the real-world implications of the relevant environmental legislation.

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.

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; will match the current minimum UKRI PhD stipend rate; will be payable in one sum at the end of the placement; and is in addition to the stipend a student normally receives from their university. 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. **Please note we do not pay students directly**

Application Process

Please submit CV and covering letter to ResearchPlacements@gov.Wales. **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 ResearchPlacements@gov.wales as soon as possible to discuss your requirements and any questions you may have.