

Cadw Topographic Names Research

Summary

This is an exciting opportunity to do a paid work placement on a project for the Welsh Government. The focus of the project is to investigate name changes for topographic features in Wales, identifying where, how and why changes to topographic names are taking place, how many names are changing or have recently changed, and the detailed nature and circumstances of these changes. The successful applicant will work closely with Welsh Government officials and stakeholders to research and develop a varied range of research outputs and support the Welsh Government in their research process. The applicant will have the opportunity to apply research skills in a policy environment, further develop generic skills (such as report writing or making presentations), and to enhance their knowledge of research outside academia.

The Organisation

The Welsh Government is the devolved Government for Wales with responsibility for the economy, education, health and the Welsh NHS, business, public services and the environment of Wales.

Specifically, the internship will be based within Knowledge and Analytic services (KAS). KAS provides the collection, analysis and presentation of research and data for policymakers and the general public in keeping with professional standards. They offer independent evidence to understand, develop, implement, monitor and evaluate government policies. KAS also supports policy colleagues with policy development, implementation and delivery.

The Internship

Cadw is the Welsh Government's historic environment service working for an accessible and well protected historic environment for Wales. This is done by:

- helping to care for our historic environment for the benefit of people today and in the future
- promoting the development of the skills that are needed to look after our historic environment properly
- helping people to cherish and enjoy our historic environment
- making our historic environment work for our economic well-being

- working with partners to achieve our common goals together.

Developing ways of safeguarding Welsh place names is an objective of the Welsh Government's Programme for Government and was previously reinforced by the Co-operation Agreement between the Welsh Government and Plaid Cymru. Fostering a positive infrastructure for the Welsh language, which includes ensuring that it is seen, heard and used, is also an important aspect of the Welsh Government's Cymraeg 2050 strategy, with its vision of reaching a million Welsh speakers by 2050, and the Cymraeg 2050 Work Programme for 2021-26 commits us to working "to protect Welsh place names that are an integral part of our heritage".

The internship will provide an exciting opportunity to work at the heart of the Welsh Government. The internship will require working closely with policy officials and researchers, and will provide an opportunity to apply research skills in a policy environment, further develop generic skills (such as report writing or making presentations), and to enhance policy knowledge.

The successful candidate will benefit from development opportunities offered centrally by the Welsh Government, potentially including mentoring, shadowing, peer support and training.

Interns will benefit from the experience of working closely with the Welsh Government:

- Gaining a better understanding of the world outside of academia and increasing employability, using their knowledge and skills to contribute to the work of the Welsh Government.
- The intern's colleagues at the Welsh Government can offer an insight into the intern's PhD project that can contribute to the success of their thesis', as well as networking opportunities within the policy arena linked to their research area
- Transferable skills and knowledge
- Time management skills
- Report writing skills

The Project

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Background

In conjunction with the Welsh Government's Cymraeg 2050 Division, Cadw is exploring how to better safeguard Welsh language and historic place names.

Welsh-language place names are an essential part of Wales' heritage and make a significant contribution to the distinctive character of communities throughout the country. They provide insights into the linguistic, social and historical changes that have shaped Wales, forming a rich legacy for present and future generations.

Welsh place names are often descriptive of the conditions at the time of naming and may refer to topography, associations with important people or past events or periods that impact the area, providing vital information about land use, archaeology and the history of Wales. Historic

Welsh-language names are particularly important to the visual and aural character of communities, and the special need to value and retain the rich legacy of our Welsh place names is recognised.

However, there is a widely held perception that this place name heritage is under threat in particular parts of Wales. For a number of years there have been calls for action to be taken to address the widely held concern that Welsh-language place names are being frequently changed to English names, and that this is having a detrimental impact on the distinctive Welsh-language environment in which people live. There have also been many media reports of Welsh-language property names – be they historic or otherwise – and topographical place names being replaced with names from English and other languages. Many of these reports relate to place-name changes in the Welsh-language heartlands of north and west Wales. However, evidence for these changes was largely anecdotal and comprehensive data on where, how and why Welsh-language property and topographical place names are changing was severely limited.

Cadw commissioned research (to be published in March 2025) to better understand the changes around Welsh language place names by exploring changes to place names as well as the reasons behind them. This research created a sound evidence base to assist in the identification of available options for safeguarding Welsh placenames if and where they are found to be under pressure of change. The research primarily examined property names (including houses, farms, and other buildings), business names, and development and associated street names.

The research touched on some examples of name changes involving topographical names. However, it did not include a detailed examination of topographical names, nor did it examine the relationship between place names coined by societies and companies engaged in tourism and outdoor pursuits and the normalising of those names in the local community and online. This internship provides an opportunity to pick up where this research left off in the exploration of name changes to topographical features in Wales and the circumstances in which these changes occurred.

Research specifically focussing on the relationship between topographic place names coined by societies and companies engaged in tourism and outdoor pursuits, and the normalising of those names in the local community and online, will help address concerns that the use of Welsh topographical names is being undermined as a consequence of these activities.

The aim of the research is to identify where, how and why changes to topographic names are taking place, how many names are changing or have recently changed, and the detailed nature and circumstances of these changes. The research is likely to involve a mixture of desk based analysis and stakeholder interviews.

Anticipated project outcomes:

- An audit of existing evidence and projects underway in this area.
- A geographically focused examination of how many topographic features are being named and renamed.

- Addition of new examples found to the 'name change' evidence base.
- To contact key stakeholders working in the field to establish their understanding of the current issues and any activities they undertake.
- Establish examples / timelines of how 'unofficial' names grow from being newly-coined to being prevalent online and eventually gaining parity with or threatening to displace an official recorded name.
- If time allows, a review of the issue as it exists on social media and in the press, including the frequency of incidents and the sentiment behind original posts and subsequent comments. To take the current temperature of how the issue is perceived in digital communities.

Internship responsibilities and requirements

The internship will last for 6 months, during which time the student's PhD project will be paused by their home institution. The student will be paid the equivalent of their stipend during their internship. Over and above leave policies, time for existing PhD commitments can be arranged on discussion with line managers. E.g. research groups meetings and conference presentations. Applications are encouraged from part-time students.

It is anticipated that the successful applicant will work in a hybrid way between home and a Welsh Government office during their internship. This may change depending on Welsh Government policy. Any changes to working arrangements will be discussed with successful applicants.

The internship will last for a period of 6 months full-time or the part-time equivalent. For students registered on a part-time studentship, this internship is available on a part-time basis over a longer time frame (no fewer than three days a working week), this would be negotiated between the WG and the successful applicant. If you would like to be considered on a part-time basis, please specify your preferred working hours on the application form.

Student specification

The student must have:

- Welsh language essential
- Experience of auditing and reviewing evidence sources
- Excellent communication skills, ideally with experience of stakeholder interviewing
- Excellent report writing skills

Start date of internship

Summer 2025 (exact date to be negotiated). There may be some flexibility dependent on individual circumstances.

Funding and costs

Reasonable travel and accommodation costs for students not normally based in Cardiff can be met. Requests should be consistent with WGSSS guidelines. Applications from students requiring additional funding for travel and accommodation will not be treated less favourably. For any queries on this please contact Carole Baker at the WGSSS on: enquiries@wgsss.ac.uk

Security

The Welsh Government's vetting procedures (which apply to temporary as well as permanent staff) involve the completion of a Baseline Personnel Security Standard (BPSS) application form and a Security Questionnaire for the purpose of security vetting.

This process requires the applicant to produce in person three original forms of identification documents, one of which should be photographic (passport, new driving license), one document should showing their current address, plus one of: a utility bill, birth certificate, P45 or P60.

Queries

Any queries relating to the post or application process should be directed Ceri.Thomas2@gov.wales