



Llywodraeth Cymru
Welsh Government

Developing a Democratic Engagement Framework

Summary

This is an exciting opportunity to do a work placement on a project for the Welsh Government. A number of internships are on offer to work on evidence to help inform the development of policy interventions. 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 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

The internship will provide an exciting opportunity to work at the heart of Welsh Government. The internship will require working closely with policy officials in the Elections Division as well as others in Local Government and researchers, providing 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

Project background

The Elections policy team (Welsh Government) is working to ensure as many people in Wales can actively take part in our democracy. To support this goal, we have:

- researched and prepared policies that identify and tackle barriers to participation;
- changed legislation to increase the accessibility of information, reduce barriers to participation and created means to encourage greater diversity in elected bodies;
- sponsored work by the Wales Centre for Public Policy to (1) identify electoral reforms that would help promote engagement and (2) commission a research project to define, measure and monitor 'democratic health' in an objective and meaningful way; and
- grant-funded local authorities and civil society organisations, particularly through the Democratic Engagement Grant, to undertake innovative activity.

Recently and specifically, the Elections policy team commissioned researchers in the Welsh Government Knowledge and Analytical Services Division to undertake an evaluation of the Democratic Engagement Grant (DEG).

The research highlighted limitations in measuring democratic engagement and recommended the development of a sector-wide outcomes framework to support the evaluation of work in this area. To support this work, this research project will form the first stage of activity and will be focussed on gathering and reviewing evidence to develop a definition of the 'nebulous' concept of democratic engagement and identify how it has been successfully measured by others.

The internship is likely to involve:

- Engagement with policy officials to understand evidence gaps and develop research questions.
- Reviews of existing evidence from both Welsh Government and wider research, including evaluations of projects/policy interventions, grey literature, and statistical outputs with links to the topic of interest.
- To explore the mechanisms by which others have measured democratic engagement and assess whether these methods could be applied in Wales, contributing to improving outcomes from the information available as well as develop a coherent picture of the issues and the groups affected.
- Potential to carry out focussed small scale qualitative research to explore experiences of other funders and stakeholders in relation to policy issues to provide additional context and understanding to the literature review.

It is important to consider the evidence in terms of how it related to the Well-Being of Future Generations (Wales) Act 2015, in particular 'a more equal Wales' and 'a Wales of cohesive communities'.

Anticipated project outcomes:

- A report reviewing and synthesising existing evidence focusing on defining and measuring democratic engagement.
- A presentation of the findings to relevant policy teams.
- Publication of a research report on the Welsh Government website.

Internship responsibilities and requirements

The internship will last for a maximum of 3 months. Full time students are expected to step back from their PhD to focus on the placement for its duration in line with ESRC guidelines ([ESRC Postgraduate Funding Guide](#) p. 27). 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 3 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:

- The ability to discuss with policy team to understand their needs and to carry out desk research of contributing factors.
- Strong literature review and evidence appraisal skills, including ability to synthesise a wide range of evidence.
- Ability to design and conduct stakeholder interviews and analyse qualitative data.
- Ability to evaluate research findings and apply them to a Welsh policy context.
- Ability to produce concise, well written documents, presenting complex evidence in an accessible format.

Start date of internship

January/ February 2026 (exact date to be negotiated). There may be some flexibility dependent on individual circumstances.

Funding and costs

Reasonable travel costs for students not normally based in Cardiff can be met. Requests should be consistent with Wales Graduate School for the Social Sciences (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 Katy Marrin Katy.Marrin001@gov.wales and Jo Coates Joanne.Coates@gov.wales.

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.

Nationality requirements

'Eligibility for taking up an internship on this scheme is dependent on meeting the [Civil Service Nationality rules](#). Please check that you are eligible before applying. Those who do not meet the eligibility criteria will not be able to take up a placement opportunity.

Queries

Any queries relating to the post or application process should be directed Emma Wallace (emma.wallace@gov.wales).

Privacy notice

<https://www.gov.wales/welsh-government-privacy-notice>