

Welsh Graduate School for the Social Sciences (WGSSS) Research in Practice (RinP)

Host Placement Guidelines

Research in Practice (RinP) is a broader development opportunity for WGSSS postgraduate researchers as part of their PhD, funded by the ESRC from Autumn 2024.

As part of the Welsh Graduate School for the Social Sciences (WGSSS), you can receive a postgraduate researcher (PhD student) in the social sciences to collaborate with your organisation for the equivalent of three months as part of their Research in Practice placement.

WGSSS students can either apply for an advertised placement or propose their own by working with a willing organisation.

Placements are flexible to support all postgraduate researchers to participate in and gain value from them. They are arranged to be taken at a time that ensures minimal disruption to a researcher's work, which is typically in the second or third year of the PhD programme (or part-time studentship equivalent). They can take place physically or virtually, and on a full- or part-time basis, to suit all researchers' requirements.

The aim of the placement is to offer the researcher a valuable opportunity to apply their academic expertise in a real-world setting, while developing a broader set of professional skills essential for careers both within and beyond academia. These may include innovation and entrepreneurship, policy development, stakeholder engagement, public communication, and strategic networking.

By hosting a placement, your organisation will benefit from fresh insights, research-informed approaches, and the chance to build connections with the next generation of social science researchers.

What is the process for hosting a placement?

Host organisations are asked to complete a placement proposal form, which will be reviewed by the WGSSS team to ensure it meets our expectations and ESRC guidelines. One reviewed, this document will be used to advertise your opportunity to our Postgraduate Researchers.

The pro forma template requests the following information:

- A description of the proposed project or activity
- Required skills and experience
- Placement location and format (in-person, remote, or hybrid)

- Support arrangements for the student
- Preferred start date and duration
- Contact details for further information
- Application and selection process

Host organisations are responsible for receiving, shortlisting and managing the application process as outlined in the pro forma. Once a candidate is selected, the host must confirm the decision with both the student and WGSSS Research in Practice Co-Ordinator.

A placement can begin only after:

- The student has submitted their placement approval application to WGSSS, the university has completed necessary approvals, including supervisor permission and due diligence checks
- A signed agreement is in place between the host, student, and university

You are welcome to advertise more than one placement opportunity, and we recommend placements are advertised for at least 4 weeks to attract sufficient interest.

What type of placements are suitable

Placements can take place from host organisations across academia, policy, business or civil society organisations and can be designed in collaboration with the student, or by your organisation with an outcome of your choice.

Specific activities could include:

- Working on a challenge together with industry stakeholders
- Informing policy makers on a particular topic
- Contributing to the development of a programme or service
- Disseminating research finding and testing research ideas
- Providing research support: Conducting literature reviews, surveys and interviews
- Analysing datasets and provide feedback to the organisation on findings
- Developing and contributing to workshops, seminars and training for stakeholders
- Knowledge exchange; Identifying new opportunities and building relationships with existing clients and stakeholders

Placement requirements:

As per the [ESRC placement guidelines](#), the placement must:

- Focus on a discreet project, challenge or research question which will enable the students to build on their skills being acquired through their doctoral studies
- Clearly defines the expected outputs/deliverables

- Does not service as a substitute for temporary staffing or cover routine business as usual tasks
- Is clear in terms of format (full-time/part time and location)
- Includes details of the support the student will receive during the placement, including access to work equipping and contribution to any associated cost occurred as a result of the placements (i.e. travel and subsistence)
- Placements are to last 3 months full time (13 weeks) or part time equivalent (e.g 6 months, 26 weeks part time) and can include in-person, remote and hybrid opportunities
- For academic placement, students must be placed outside of their home department and not with their current supervisor or research team, to allow the students to apply research skills in different environments.
- For collaborative studentships, the placements can be with the collaborative partnership, but the placement would need to be a distinct project, separate from their PhD
- As this is a core component of the student's doctoral programme, they will be required to complete an end of placement report which will be mandatory.

What we expect from Placement Hosts:

- If undertaken in-person, provide access to adequate working space and equipment needed to undertake the placement
- Have experienced staff members on hand to help develop skills/act as a mentor
- Ensure students are embedded within a team and included in all meetings, events and training opportunities that are available (where appropriate)
- Ensure that the principles of equality, diversity and inclusion are applied throughout the recruitment process and to the support available for students during their placements
- Make a contribution to the additional costs associated with the placement, for example the students travel and subsistence costs if possible.
- Students must not receive a salary during their placement as they will continue to be registered as a student and will continue to receive their stipend for the duration of the placement, which is part of their doctoral training.
- Complete an end of placement feedback form
- Maintain open communication with the WGSSS Research in Practice co-ordinator if issues arise
- Assist with any required risk assessment and documentation to demonstrate organisational responsibility for health and safety for the student during the placement

Key benefits to host organisations:

Minimal (or no) cost to your organisation: The researcher continues to be registered as a student and will continue to receive their stipend through their PhD studentship.

- Fresh perspectives and research-informed insights: Placements help bridge practice with the latest academic thinking.
- Access to academic networks: Build connections with researchers, universities, and research centres.

- Staff development opportunities: Offers your team experience in supervising and collaborating with early-career researchers.
- Enhanced visibility and recruitment potential: Raise awareness of your organisation among doctoral candidates and future graduates.
- Strategic partnerships: Strengthen relationships with the Welsh Graduate School for the Social Sciences (WGSSS), its partner universities, and academic staff.

Contact and further information

For further information, or to discuss a potential placement or your interest in participating in the Research in Practice Placement scheme, please contact

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