

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

These Placement Guidelines are for ESRC funded WGSSS Postgraduate Researchers who commenced their studentship from Autumn 2024 onwards, and is to be read in conjunction with the [ESRC Postgraduate Training & Development Guidelines 2022](#), and the [ESRC Postgraduate Funding Guide](#).

Undertaking a RinP placement is **a core component** of a WGSSS Postgraduate Researcher's doctoral studies if the studentship was funded by the ESRC from Autumn 2024. The aim is to develop students' skills in a number of core areas relating to employability and increase students' awareness of the breadth of career opportunities available to them.

All proposals for placements need to be approved by WGSSS in advance, to confirm that they meet the placement requirements.

Length and timing of placement

- Placements will usually take place in the 2nd or 3rd year (or part-time equivalent), however they can take place at any point during the PhD, but cannot be undertaken during the first three months, or the last six months of the PhD funding period (or part-time studentship equivalent).
- Placements cannot be undertaken during a Masters period.
- Placements may be undertaken on a full-time or part-time basis. The total time a researcher spends on a part-time placement must be equivalent to three months (13 weeks) full-time work, or part time equivalent over a period of six months (26 weeks) and must not exceed this.
- 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 pg 27](#)) we encourage students to minimise other commitments such as other paid work wherever possible, to ensure full engagement with the placement.
- Part time students are expected to step back from their PhD to focus on the placement and can maintain other roles they were holding part time alongside their PhD, e.g. employment, caring responsibilities etc.
- Placements will normally be undertaken in one continuous three-month block (or part-time equivalent). A Postgraduate Researcher may undertake up to a maximum of three shorter placements consecutively, or at different time periods, as long as the total time spent on placement is equivalent to three months full-time work (13 weeks at 35 hours per week). A one-month block (4 weeks at 35 hours per week) (or part-time equivalent) is the minimum amount of time a researcher must spend on any single placement.
- For the benefit of successful completion, it is strongly advised that planned leave and key PhD commitments do not overlap with the period of a placement.

Type of placement

- Placements must comprise a clear programme of activity/project which will develop a researchers' transferable skills, and ability to apply their research skills in different contexts, to enhance career prospects and employability.
- Placements must be distinct project from the 'usual' PhD activities. Any outputs from the placement cannot be included in the student's PhD project, it must not include data collection or literature/policy review that will be directly included within the thesis, as per ESRC guidelines.
- Placements cannot be used as a substitute for temporary staff or to cover business as usual within a host organisation.
- Placements may be undertaken physically, remotely, or a hybrid of the two. Placement activity does not need to be taken using the same format throughout.
- Placement activity as part of a WGSSS Collaborative Awards Scheme studentship will normally be undertaken with the collaborative partner organisation. If a Researcher on a collaborative studentship wishes to undertake a placement with a different host organisation, they must do so with the agreement of their Research Supervisor(s) and the collaborative partner organisation.
- Placements may be hosted by academic organisations (e.g. Research Centres), and by non-academic organisations across the public, private and third sector.
- Placements may be undertaken in a WGSSS partner university's professional support services (e.g. research services, quality assurance, finance, HR).
- Academic Placement must not be undertaken with the Researcher's current supervisor and/or research team, and must take place outside of their home department/school.
- Placements will normally be undertaken with a single host organisation. However, placement activity does not need to be taken with the same host organisation throughout. A Postgraduate Researcher can work with up to a maximum of three different placement hosts. A one-month block (4 weeks at 35 hours per week) (or part-time equivalent) is the minimum amount of time a researcher must spend with any single host.
- Placements will normally be undertaken in the UK. Placements may be based overseas only in exceptional cases that must provide an opportunity to develop skills that would not be available in the UK. A researcher undertaking placement activity overseas must ensure that they follow all of their university's specific guidance for overseas travel, including completing a risk assessment and acquiring travel insurance.

Funding

- Postgraduate Researchers will continue to receive their stipend for the duration of the placement and will continue to be registered as a student during this time.
- Students cannot receive additional payment for the placement in terms of a salary.
- Most host partners participating in the scheme have committed to providing a co-funding contribute to meet eligible travel and accommodation costs arising from the internship. Where host partners cannot make a contribution, reasonable travel and accommodation expenses may be claimed from WGSSS up to £1000 if essential for the placement to take place (e.g. if the placement cannot be conducted remotely, or there is a business need to travel regularly).
- Overseas placements: Due to limited funding available to support each placement, students proposing their own overseas placement opportunity must carefully consider the prescribed funding limit to ensure feasibility

The Placement Process

1. Expression of Interest

When you are ready to start considering a placement, we encourage you to complete the Expression of Interest form available on the WGSSS website. Once submitted, you will be contacted by the Research in Practice Coordinator, who will undertake an assessment of the placement needs and provide further guidance and support.

2. Apply to a placement

Apply for an advertised placement or propose your own by working with a willing organisation.

3. Submit placement application for approval to WGSSS

Once you have been offered a placement in principal, you must submit a placement application for approval to WGSSS. This outlines the details of your placement, duties and obligations and requires input from the student, host and your supervisor. This is submitted to WGSSS who review and approve or request revisions to ensure it meets ESRC guidelines.

4. Placement Host and Home University Placement process

Once WGSSS has approved your placement, this is passed to your home university. Before going on placement you must complete pre-placement paperwork, such as agreements, risk assessments and travel or accommodation bookings as instructed by your home HEI and placement host. Please allow sufficient time to allow this to be completed.

5. Onboarding and placement start

A placement can begin once all the necessary paperwork has been completed

6. End of placement report

As a mandatory component of your placement, a placement report is to be completed and submitted within 1 month of completing your placement to WGSSS. A copy of this is also shared with your supervisor.

Contact and further information

For further information, or to discuss a potential placement please contact
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