

Welsh Graduate School for the Social Sciences (WGSSS)

Research in Practice (RinP) Supervisor Placement Guidelines

As a supervisor, your role is pivotal in helping doctoral researchers make the most of their Research in Practice placement. This placement is a core component of the ESRC-funded PhD journey and is designed to enhance researchers' professional development, sector engagement, and transferable skills.

Information Sessions

Monthly Research in Practice information webinars session will be available to attend for students and supervisors. Event details will be shared via the WGSSS newsletter.

Starting the Placement Process

The first step for students is to complete the [Expression of Interest form](#) available on the [WGSSS website](#). Once submitted, they will be contacted by the Research in Practice Coordinator, who will undertake an assessment of the placement needs and provide further guidance and support. A step by step guide is also outlined on the WGSSS Research in Practice Web page.

Finding a placement

There are two main routes through which students can secure a placement. These are to either apply for an advertised placement or propose their own by working with a willing organisation. As a supervisor you may be able to offer suggestions or input of organisations to collaborate with.

Before any placement can begin, students must complete a Placement Approval Form. This form outlines the proposed project and the nature of the work to be undertaken. It must be submitted to WGSSS for review and approval to ensure the placement meets the necessary ESRC requirements. Once approved by the WGSSS, institutional HEI checks will also be required, with a placement agreement in place before the placement can begin.

Before the Placement

Skills and Career Planning: Support the researcher in identifying the skills they wish to develop and how the placement aligns with their longer-term career aspirations, within academia or beyond, use the DNA document to support this. Researchers should also be encouraged to use their Careers and Employability service for support with preparing or updating their CV for applications.

Application: Students will request a declaration of support from their Supervisor as part of their placement application. This statement should confirm that the proposed placement aligns with the student's Development Needs Analysis (DNA). Please ensure the statement is completed and returned to the student in good time ahead of the application deadline.

During the Placement

Maintain Contact: Continue regular supervisory meetings throughout the placement period. These meetings should include welfare check-ins, updates on the placement experience and an update on any news relevant to their research project.

Record Keeping: Ensure that all supervisory meetings are documented using your institution's tutorial or supervisory system and the dates of the placement are recorded appropriately.

Support: If any issues arise during the placement, or you need any support, please contact the WGSSS Research in Practice Coordinator at escrip@bangor.ac.uk

Following the placement

Returning to a PhD after time spent on placement can involve a period of adjustment as Researchers re-engage with their project, research objectives and academic routines. We recommend a meeting between you and your Researcher and, where appropriate, department to ensure a smooth transition and provide an opportunity to reflect on how the knowledge, skills and experiences gained during your placement can support the Researcher during their next stage of your research.

Following the placement, the student will be required to complete an end of placement report, to be submitted within one month of completing their placement, a copy of this report will also be shared with you, their Supervisor and will require your review and assessment.

Your role is to review their reflections and provide an academic perspective on the value of the placement and its contribution to your development as a researcher.

Placement requirements

(as per [ESRC Postgraduate Training and Development Guidelines](#))

Length and timing of placement

- There is flexibility of when the placement is undertaken. However, placements cannot be undertaken during a Masters period, or during the first three months of the PhD funding period (or part-time studentship equivalent). Final year students need to have 6 months left of their PhD when the placement starts.
- Typically, placements will usually take place in the 2nd or 3rd year (or part-time equivalent) at the date of the start of the placement at a time that will cause minimal disruption to their research.
- Placements may be undertaken on a full- 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). However, 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).
- Placements may be academic or non-academic, but must be hosted outside the researcher's supervisory team and home department.
- 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

Contact and further information

For further information, or to discuss a potential placement or to suggest any potential placement partners for the Research in Practice Placement scheme, please contact:

Sian Shepherd - Research in Practice Co-ordinator – esrcrip@bangor.ac.uk

Research in Practice Web page with step-by-step guidance - <https://wgsss.ac.uk/research-in-practice-placements/>