# Democratic engagement and

# participation in Wales

# Summary

# This is an exciting opportunity to do a paid work placement on a project for the Welsh Government. The project will involve undertaking a review of democratic engagement and participation in Wales, specifically looking at barriers to democratic engagement from an accessibility perspective. The project will also look to best practice across the world and seek to learn lessons about improving the citizen experience of participating in Welsh democracy. 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.

Welsh Government supports staff from diverse backgrounds. Welsh Government offers a range of network groups to support individuals with various protected characteristics should employees wish. The network groups include, but are not limited to, a BAME group, an LGBT+ group and a disability group. Welsh Government has a dedicated team who will help discuss workplace adjustments with employees who may require additional support or adjustments to enable them to maximum their capabilities.

The organisation has a flexible hours working policy and employees are encouraged to take 1 hour a week from office hours to do an activity that will benefit their well-being (pro-rata for part-time workers).

# The Internship

# The intern will be part of the Public Services and Local Government research team in the Social Research and Information Division, Knowledge and Analytical Services. The internship will provide an exciting opportunity to work at the heart of 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;

# Gaining a better understanding of working as a researcher within the Welsh Government, as well as the impact research can have on policy implementation and development;

# 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; and

# Report writing skills.

# The Project

The successful candidate will lead an evidence review to examine democratic engagement and participation in Wales. In particular the research will look at the “voter journey” and consider the barriers faced by citizens in taking part in democratic processes. The aim of the research will be to provide an evidence base for discussions with key stakeholders around future legislative proposals on the accessibility of elections and to develop future research proposals around the wider democratic engagement agenda. In order to achieve this, the research will aim to look in detail at a range of issues, including:

* The barriers faced by disabled people when engaging with democratic processes e.g. standing for election, voting, taking part in community engagement;
* The role the Welsh language plays in the voter experiences and barriers faced by those wishing to participate through the medium of Welsh; and
* Various changes to democratic processes implemented with the aim of directly increasing participation.

In addition, the review will highlight good practice in democratic participation beyond Wales particularly looking at those countries with two or more official languages and those that have recently successfully implemented electoral reform.

Alongside the evidence review, the successful candidate may undertake small-scale primary research to gather information on issues relating to the accessibility of the electoral process.

The successful candidate may also undertake further work around developing a proposal for future research to consider the citizens experience of democracy in Wales and identifying spaces for interventions to support better engagement.

Anticipated project outcomes:

* A presentation to analytical colleagues and policy officials from the Welsh Government on the findings of the evidence review;
* High quality data and analysis to aid an understanding of democratic engagement and participation in Wales;
* Publication of a Government Social Research Report that includes review of the literature on democratic engagement and participation in Wales and beyond, and a discussion of good and best practice around ensuring the accessibility of democratic processes.

# Internship responsibilities and requirements

The internship will last for six months, during which time the students 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.

The internship will last for a period of six 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.

It is anticipated that the successful applicant will be working from home during their internship. This is based on our current understanding of the situation and what is possible in terms of research work. This may change as the Covid-19 situation develops. Should the Covid-19 situation develop and allow for a return for a phased return to offices this will be discussed with successful applicants.

Student specification

## The student must have:

* Strong literature review skills including ability to synthesise a wide range of evidence to make it easily understandable to a non-expert audience; and
* The ability to produce concise, well-written documents presenting technical material in an accessible format.

# Start date of internship

April 2021 (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 Wales DTP 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 Wales DTP on: enquiries@walesdtp.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 to Nerys Owens: nerys.owens@gov.wales.