# A New Strategy for Innovation in Wales

# Summary

This is a genuinely unique opportunity to do a paid work placement on a project for the Welsh Government.

We are a tight team of innovation professionals currently working across Welsh Government departments and with external stakeholders, gathering evidence to inform a new, cross-government innovation strategy, to be presented to Ministers by spring 2023.

Building on existing analysis, the successful applicant will develop research tools aimed at collecting qualitative and some quantitative data, to then identify and analyse past performance, and input into the development of cross-government metrics designed to assist with the monitoring and evaluation of the future Strategy. Working alongside policy colleagues, the intern will also play a key role in designing and writing the Strategy. The intern will therefore have the opportunity to apply their research skills to the formation of a real-time government policy, further developing skills such as networking, research design, the development of research tools, quantitative and qualitative analysis, presenting and report writing. This internship provides a unique opportunity for the successful applicant to gain experience of analysis in government, enhancing their knowledge of research outside academia in a fast-paced and high-priority policy area.

Whilst the intern will be deeply embedded in the day-to-day work of the team of twelve officials, they will also have the opportunity to work across a range of government departments wherever Research and Development (R&D) and innovation is applicable. Thus gaining a real-world understanding of how government works and uses social research to inform decision-making.

The intern’s work will have a profound impact on Welsh Government policy: the Strategy is designed to look forward to 2030; will shape government interventions across the public, private and third sectors, in business, health, academic R&D, public sector procurement; and will contribute towards addressing our grand challenge areas such as decarbonisation, healthier ageing, e-mobility and Artificial Intelligence, all ultimately centred on improving the public good.

The intern will emerge with a vastly enhanced knowledge of the relationship between research and policy making.

# 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 the Innovation Team with analytical support from KAS 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

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The intern will work with the Innovation Team on the development of a new, cross-government strategy for innovation in Wales. The internship will provide an exciting opportunity to work at the heart of Welsh Government. It will require working closely with policy officials and researchers, and will provide an opportunity to apply research skills in a policy environment, enhancing 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.
* Transferable skills and knowledge
* Time management skills
* Report writing skills

# The Project

The Welsh Government published the current business innovation strategy, [Innovation Wales](https://gov.wales/sites/default/files/publications/2019-04/innovation-wales-strategy.pdf),[[1]](#footnote-1)in 2013. Since then the innovation landscape has changed considerably. For example, the current strategy:

* predates our [Well-being of Future Generations (WfG) Act](https://gov.wales/well-being-of-future-generations-wales)
* refers to several industrial key players no longer relevant to innovation in Wales;
* predates the UK’s exit from the EU and therefore does not take into account the loss of European Regional Development Fund (ERDF) money
* predates the Covid-19 pandemic and its impact on the Welsh economy and job market, health care in Wales and the viability of research institutions
* does not take account of the latest Programme for Government.

Wales is therefore facing a future that is both precarious and full of opportunity, but without a transformational innovation strategy to guide government, businesses and academia.

The Innovation Team has already conducted initial research and stakeholder engagement for a new strategy, intended as a starting point for stakeholder engagement. This existing analysis examines the innovation landscape within Wales, past, present and future, and analyses global innovation comparators. Findings to date include the need for:

* An **integrated and streamlined innovation strategy** across Welsh Government, leading to a simplified message from government and to a more joined-up conversation. This would involve at least Business Innovation; Science and Research; Procurement; Skills, Higher Education and Lifelong Learning; Healthcare innovation; and International Relations.
* **Social innovation**: the engagement of innovation with wider social challenges and problems, e.g. climate change, decarbonisation, levelling up etc.; building on the WfG Act and incorporating responses to the UN’s Sustainable Development Goals.
* A **dynamic innovation ecosystem** across Wales; more collaboration between academia and industry; more public/private sector partnerships.
* The importance of **leveraging public sector procurement** and boosting public sector investment.
* The importance of making the **public sector more risk aware** and less risk averse.
* Questions around whether Wales needs a **National Innovation Body** and what it might look like.
* **Simplified access and support** for funding and grants; improved support around large-scale bid writing.
* A strong emphasis on talking more about where Wales has **strengths**.

We are now looking to build these findings into a coordinated, cross-government innovation strategy,alongside the new [UK Innovation Strategy, Leading the Future by Creating It](https://assets.publishing.service.gov.uk/government/uploads/system/uploads/attachment_data/file/1009577/uk-innovation-strategy.pdf).[[2]](#footnote-2)

Developing the new Strategy will involve consideration of:

* Science and research
* Procurement
* Circular Economy
* Skills, higher education, and lifelong learning
* Health and Social Care Innovation
* Health and Social Care Research
* Our International Strategy for Wales

The Strategy should:

* Provide a clear and streamlined government position on future ambitions.
* Put innovation at the heart of the government agenda.
* Align with our WfG Act.
* Align Welsh strategy with UK strategy, which allows Wales to maximise funding allocations from UK sources and benefit from UK initiatives whilst maintaining a Welsh emphasis.
* Act as a catalyst for more collaborative working across Government, with a focus on shared investment and outcomes.
* Emphasise areas of synergy across departments.
* Align with current Welsh Government policies such as [Digital Strategy for Wales](https://gov.wales/digital-strategy-wales), [A Healthier Wales](https://gov.wales/sites/default/files/publications/2019-10/a-healthier-wales-action-plan.pdf); the [International Strategy](https://gov.wales/international-strategy-for-wales); the [Wales Public Procurement Statement](https://gov.wales/procurement-policy-statement-html), as well as housing and waste policies, circular economy etc.

# Internship responsibilities and requirements

The internship will last for three months, with the option of extension, 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.

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.

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:

* Experience in analysing secondary sources (e.g. literature reviews, documentary analysis)
* Ability to develop qualitative research tools (e.g. interview guides) and analyse qualitative data
* Experience in analysing quantitative data (e.g. quantitative monitoring data;and reporting findings in an accessible format
* Experience in conducting interviews
* Ability to develop questionnaires and analyse survey data
* Ability to identify and design appropriate monitoring tools aimed at measuring progress against the goals of the new strategy
* The ability to produce concise, well written documents presenting technical material in an accessible format.

# Start date of internship

January 2022 (exact date to be negotiated). There may be some flexibility dependent on individual circumstances.

1. <https://gov.wales/sites/default/files/publications/2019-04/innovation-wales-strategy.pdf> [↑](#footnote-ref-1)
2. <https://assets.publishing.service.gov.uk/government/uploads/system/uploads/attachment_data/file/1009577/uk-innovation-strategy.pdf> [↑](#footnote-ref-2)