ESRC Wales DTP Collaborative Studentships 2020

Public sector innovation in Wales: Developing a Welsh way of doing tax

Bangor University - Bangor Business School

Bangor Business School (Bangor University), supported by the ESRC Doctoral Training Partnership for Wales (Wales DTP), and in collaboration with the Welsh Revenue Authority (WRA), invites applications for a funded PhD study, commencing in October 2020, to explore an exciting and relevant theme given the current political and economic climate in Wales entitled ‘Public sector innovation in Wales: Developing a ‘Welsh way of doing tax’.

Background:
In April 2018, two new Welsh-specific taxes came into effect, the first taxes to be introduced by a Welsh Government in nearly 800 years. The Welsh Revenue Authority (WRA) was established to administer the new taxes, with the mission of “working together to deliver a fair tax system for Wales”. This project is an opportunity to work with the WRA, a new public sector organisation tasked with the administration and collection of Welsh devolved taxes, that will directly inform and impact on the work of the WRA and impact on Welsh taxpayers. The project also has a high potential of economic impact in Wales, as Welsh taxes will contribute directly towards the Welsh economy.

Summary of PhD project:
Using the WRA as a case study, the project aims to explore public sector innovation in the context of fiscal devolution in the first five years of a new tax authority. The WRA has engaged in administrative process innovation since the outset. However, the pressures to conform to established practices, policies, and procedures of the same ‘field’ (public sector, central and local tax administration), may stall innovation and the effectiveness of tax administration. Particularly, pressures may arise as a newly formed organisation, tasked with the administration of new devolved taxes, develops and matures, especially as it interacts with more partners and stakeholders in future. Thus, the research project will specifically examine:
1) The key factors enabling the WRA to implement its innovative ways of ‘doing tax’ in Wales as embodied by its core principles; and

2) The key factors preventing its practices, policies, and procedures from becoming ‘decoupled’ from its core principles.

Data & research methodology:
The project will adopt a mixed method approach. Quantitative data will include surveys and statistical data. Qualitative data will include documents, interviews, and observations in the ‘field’ to provide deeper insights and context to support the quantitative data. An abductive approach informed by institutional theory, legitimacy theory and stakeholder theory will be employed to formulate research questions, propositions, and to interpret findings.

Supervision
The student will be supervised and by Bangor Business School faculty members who have experience and knowledge of devolved taxation, based on their previous and current research projects and collaborative work with the Welsh Government and WRA.

Applications welcomed by 3 February 2020 (1200 hours).

These studentships are ‘collaborative’ awards. Applicants should take careful consideration of the working title and description of the project, and may wish to contact the named member of staff for a discussion prior to applying.

• In the Management and Business pathway - “Public sector innovation in Wales: Developing a Welsh way of doing tax”
  Professor Doris Merkl-Davies and Dr Helen Rogers
d.m.merkl-davies@bangor.ac.uk; h.rogers@bangor.ac.uk

WHAT THE STUDENTSHP WILL COVER
Studentship Awards commence in October 2020 and will cover your tuition fees as well as a maintenance grant (currently £15,009 p.a. for 2019/20 for full-time students, updated each year); and includes access to an additional Research Training Support Grant (RTSG), though an element of this latter fund may be ‘pooled’ and require separate applications from 2020 onwards. There are other opportunities and benefits available to studentship holders, including an overseas fieldwork allowance (if applicable), internship opportunities, overseas institutional visits and other small grants.

ELIGIBILITY
ESRC studentships are highly competitive, candidates should have an excellent academic background in the social sciences, holding a 1st or strong upper 2nd class degree; applications
from those also holding a relevant research training Masters degree (or an equivalent background in research training) will be considered for a +3 award. Full awards (fees plus maintenance stipend) are open to UK Nationals and EU students who can satisfy UK residency requirements.

1+3 OR +3?
With exception of studentships in the Economics pathway, awards are available on either a 1+3 or +3 basis. A 1+3 studentship provides funding for four years (or part-time equivalent), completing a research training Masters in the 1st year, followed by 3 years research funding for a PhD. A +3 studentship provides funding for the three years PhD research study only (or part-time equivalent).

ASSESSMENT
The closing deadline for applications is 12.00 noon on Monday 3 February 2020. Short-listed applicants will be invited to interview, which are expected to take place in late February/early March 2020. After interview, a final short-list of applicants will be put forward to a Panel convened by the ESRC Wales DTP Management Group at which final decisions with regard to studentship awards will be made. In most cases successful applicants can expect to hear by early April 2020.

HOW TO APPLY
Applications can be made here: [https://www.bangor.ac.uk/courses/postgrad/research/apply_research.php.en](https://www.bangor.ac.uk/courses/postgrad/research/apply_research.php.en)
The deadline for applications is 12 noon on 3 February 2020. Incomplete applications or applications received after this specified time will not be accepted.

The application must contain the following documents:

1. Covering letter: Please address to Professor Aziz Jaafar. The covering letter must name the collaborative studentship being applied for. It must set out your reasons and motivation for applying to study at Bangor University, and the Management and Business Pathway; your understanding, and expectations of doctoral study; and your academic interests generally, and particularly how these relate to the description of the project supplied. The covering letter should be no more than two pages. Please also specify whether you wish to apply on a +3 or 1+3 basis.

2. Academic / Professional Qualifications: Where appropriate, this should also include proof of English Language Competency (7.0 IELTS minimum).
3. References: All applications require two academic references to be submitted in support. Candidates must approach referees themselves and include the references with their application.

4. Curriculum Vitae: This should be no longer than two pages.

5. Research Proposal: For collaborative studentships, the proposal should build directly on the outline description that has been supplied. The proposal should be up to a maximum of 1000 words, not including bibliographic references. We suggest that you use the following five headings in your research proposal:
   - Your reflections on the title, aims and purpose of the research;
   - An overview of some key research literature relevant to the study;
   - Your proposals for developing the design and methods of the study;
   - A description of potential outcomes of the project for understanding, knowledge, policy and practice (as appropriate to the topic);
   - Bibliographic references

6. A completed Equal Opportunities form.

7. In the online application system, Under the Programmes tab, please select ‘Bangor University Advertised Studentships…’

Then select ‘ESRC Wales DTP Collaborative Studentship’, making sure to add Prof. Louise Hassan to the ‘Academic Contact’ box. Click Add.