

## Environmental Standards Scotland Internship Opportunities

<b>Placement titles</b>	There are two placements available: A. What does society consider acceptable water quality? B. Understanding drivers of ineffective recycling measures.
<b>Line Manager</b>	The intern will have a line manager determined by the project but with oversight and links to SGSSS overseen by Alan Hunt (Alan.hunt@environmentalstandards.scot )
<b>Payment</b>	The internship will be paid at <a href="#">UKRI doctoral stipend levels</a>
<b>Based</b>	Full time or part time subject to agreement. We support flexible working. We prefer hybrid working with some time at home and some at office at Haymarket Terrace, but open to discussion.
<b>Duration</b>	3 months (full-time) or 6 months (part-time), starting from May 2024
<b>To apply</b>	Please apply via <a href="#">SGSSS Apply</a> by <b>12pm (midday) on Friday 01 March</b>

### About Environmental Standards Scotland

Environmental Standards Scotland (ESS) is an independent body set up to ensure compliance with and the effectiveness of environmental law, and prevent enforcement gaps arising from the UK leaving the European Union.

Our Vision is that: ‘Scotland’s people and nature benefit from a high quality environment and are protected from harm through the consistent application of effective environmental laws, which are recognised internationally as setting high standards.’

Our Mission Statement is that: ‘We will ensure that Scotland’s environmental laws and standards are complied with, and their effectiveness improved to achieve Scotland’s ambitious targets for the environment, nature and climate change.’

Further information about ESS’ current Strategic Plan may be found here: [ESS Strategic Plan 2022-25 \(environmentalstandards.scot\)](#)

### Placement Information

ESS are offering two projects to be matched with the best candidate. We expect to award one or two internships at this intake. Please rank your preferred project and if you are interested in one or both on your application.

These projects have been identified as priorities for a social science approach considering our strategic plan and the initial evidence analysis ESS has carried out

The projects on offer are:

- A. What does society consider acceptable water quality?
- B. Understanding drivers of ineffective recycling measures.

### Context

This project contributes to our priority analytical topic of “Water Quality - Understanding water quality issues, with an initial focus on progress against River Basin Management Plan objectives.” A baseline evidence review which helped to scope this project is available here: [Water - Environmental Standards Scotland](#)

‘Water quality’ is an overarching term used to describe the general health of our rivers, burns, lochs and groundwaters. However, in reality it captures a multitude of parameters (e.g. ecological health, water levels and flows, levels of pollution, suitability for bathing and use as drinking water, etc.). Public expectation over what is considered acceptable water quality appears to have changed as [discussed recently in UK Parliament](#). This potential change in public perception may impact what is considered ‘acceptable’ under the current regulatory frameworks.

### Scope

This proposal would attempt to quantify the latest public perception of acceptable water quality in Scotland by undertaking secondary analysis of available literature and data. This project could look at the issue more broadly, or focus on a specific area (e.g., pollution). We do not envisage that the project would involve primary data collection, rather the project would review existing sources to provide a comprehensive overview. Examples that could be reviewed include:

- [Keen to go Green? Customer preferences and priorities for waste water solutions](#) – CCW
- [Awareness and perceptions of river quality](#) – CCW
- [Public perceptions and behaviours towards the water environment](#) – WaterLIFE

In addition, the project could assess the degree of divergence between current public perception and the requirements of the current regulations.

We anticipate that the project scope is refined at the outset of the internship. The output is subject to agreement but could be a short, written publication and/or presentation.

### Person specification

The successful applicant will need to evidence the following skills as part of your application.

Essential	Desirable
<ul style="list-style-type: none"><li>• Analytical approach to complex and uncertain evidence</li><li>• Interest in environmental law and/or policy.</li><li>• Clear and effective verbal and written communicator demonstrating clarity and accuracy</li><li>• Time and task management</li><li>• Curiosity, creativity, adaptability and a collaborative approach to work</li></ul>	<ul style="list-style-type: none"><li>• Knowledge of Scottish environmental policy and practice</li><li>• Specific knowledge relating to the project.</li><li>• Demonstrated ability to work in multi-disciplinary teams with diverse backgrounds</li></ul>

### Context

This project contributes to our priority analytical topic of “Resource Use and Waste - Progress against waste and recycling targets and the development of the circular economy.” A baseline evidence review which helped to scope this is available here: Resource Use and Waste - Environmental Standards Scotland

Scotland is making progress to reduce waste generated, increase recycling and reduce rates of landfill, but household recycling rates remain lower than the target set (and not achieved) of 60% by 2020. The rate for 2022 was 43%. The current Circular Economy (Scotland) Bill proposes new statutory targets for local authorities which would be in place from no earlier than 2030. Provision of waste and recycling services falls under the remit of the 32 local authorities, with rates varying from 21-58% household waste recycled in 2022. Evidence from Zero Waste Scotland relating to 2021-23 suggests that over half (52%) of waste thrown into the non-recyclable kerbside bin could have been recycled using existing kerbside services.

### Scope

Using existing data sources and identifying appropriate literature, this project would contribute to ongoing ESS work in this topic area using research methodology and approaches appropriate to the candidate’s area of academic study. The scope of the topic is Scotland-wide, but with the potential to focus on specific local authority areas if considered relevant to the line of enquiry.

Possible approaches may include:

- Secondary analysis of published data
- Comparative analysis of local authorities’ recycling arrangements and rates
- Mapping of infrastructure and collection arrangements across Scotland, related to recycling performance

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Before making an application, please ensure that you meet **all** of the eligibility criteria below:

- Registered at a university in Scotland, regardless of funding source;
- In the second or third year of PhD study only. Please note that if you are in your final year, you need to have more than 3 months left for your PhD when the internship starts;
- Eligible to work under the [UK Civil Service nationality rules](#);
- Eligible to work in the UK.

Please note that students holding a student visa will only be able to undertake a PhD internship part-time alongside full-time study. It is your responsibility to check that your funder and University will accept this before you make an application.

For further information, please consult the [SGSSS Internship FAQs](#). If this does not answer your questions, please contact Kelly Barbour (Research Impact and Partnerships Coordinator): [team@sgsss.ac.uk](mailto:team@sgsss.ac.uk).