



Cardiff University  
School of Psychology

<b>Studentship Title:</b>	Cardiff University Studentship
<b>Research Area/ Project Title:</b>	Public values for sustainable energy transitions
<b>Location:</b>	School of Psychology
<b>Expected Start Date:</b>	1 October 2018
<b>Duration:</b>	3 years
<b>Deadline for Application:</b>	23 February 2018

### **Description of Research Opportunity:**

#### **The research environment**

This PhD opportunity has been developed to extend and build on existing work arising from several projects examining public perspectives of energy transitions and energy issues. We are now seeking a highly motivated PhD candidate to work with Dr. Christina Demski to develop this work further. Other advisers on the projects include Prof. Nick Pidgeon (Cardiff University) and Dr Alexa Spence (external adviser at University of Nottingham).

The successful candidate will be part of the highly successful and interdisciplinary Understanding Risk group within the School of Psychology at Cardiff University. This group occupies dedicated research space in the Psychology Tower Building and is currently home to over 20 postgraduate and postdoctoral researchers. Research in the group spans a number of broad topics under the headings of: Risk Perception and Communication; Energy and the Environment; Science, Technology and Public Policy; and Sustainability. We are full members of the Cardiff University Institute for Sustainable Places (PLACE) and Energy Systems Institute. In 2010 our group also became full partners in the UK Tyndall Centre for Climate Change Research and we are also core partners to the UK Energy Research Centre (UKERC). For further information see: [www.understanding-risk.org](http://www.understanding-risk.org)

#### **The research project**

We envisage the project to examine public values in relation to sustainable energy transitions that meet UK climate change and energy security targets. However, the specific project is open to suggestions and interests of the successful candidate. Broadly, the project should build on existing research conducted as part of a Cardiff project funded by the UK Energy Research Centre. See the following publications for

more information: [Demski et al. \(2015\)](#); [Parkhill et al. \(2013\)](#); and related: [Pidgeon et al., \(2014\)](#); [Demski et al. \(2017\)](#). (Please contact us if you do not have access).

The core output of this mixed-method interdisciplinary research project involved the identification of a set of values and concerns underlying public preferences around energy system change (ranging from environmental to social justice concerns). To date, this analysis has garnered significant interest in both academic and policy communities and we therefore envisage that the PhD project would build on this. We propose multiple phases for this project. The first phase will examine the possibility of quantifying these values and to develop these further theoretically, for example in terms of their convergent validity with other types and measures of values. The second phase may then examine how these values influence people's decision-making and preference formation around specific energy issues. In particular we are interested in how different groups of people might prioritise these values in different ways and whether particular (sets of) values are more or less salient for different energy issues. This work may then lead to identifying different value profiles across various groups of people and across energy issues/technologies. For example, the PhD project could link up with ongoing work in the group to examine how different values are important in determining people's preferences and attitudes towards energy storage technologies; an energy topic that is of increasing importance.

While the suggested project has a focus on quantitative methods, it could also use more qualitative approaches in addition to this. In this regard the PhD would provide opportunities to gain skills and experience in mixed-methods. The opportunity is suitable for candidates interested in public perceptions of environment and energy systems and with a background in the social sciences (e.g. environmental psychology, human geography, environmental risk perception etc.).

**Award:**

The studentship will commence in October 2018 and will cover your tuition fees (at UK/EU level) as well as a maintenance grant. In 2017-18 the maintenance grant for full-time students was £14,553 per annum. As well as tuition fees and a maintenance grant, all School of Psychology students receive conference and participant money (approx. £2250 for the duration of the studentship). They also receive a computer and office space, additional funding for their research, and access to courses offered by the University's Doctoral Academy and become members of the University Doctoral Academy.

**Eligibility:**

Full awards (fees plus maintenance stipend) are open to UK Nationals, and EU students who can satisfy UK residency requirements. To be eligible for the full award, EU Nationals must have been in the UK for at least 3 years prior to the start of the course for which they are seeking funding, including for the purposes of full-time education.

As only one studentship is available and a very high standard of applications is typically received, the successful applicant is likely to have a very good first degree (a First or Upper Second class BSc Honours or equivalent) and/or be distinguished by having relevant research experience.

**How to apply:**

You can apply online - consideration is automatic on applying for a PhD in Psychology, with an October 2018 start date (programme code RFPDPSYA).

Please use our online application service at [www.cf.ac.uk/regis/general/applyonline/index.html](http://www.cf.ac.uk/regis/general/applyonline/index.html)

and specify in the funding section that you wish to be considered for School funding.

Please specify that you are applying for this particular project.

**Application deadline:** 23 February 2018 with interviews (either in person or by Skype) being held in March 2018 and decisions being made by the end of March or beginning of April 2018.

**General Information:**

The School of Psychology is one of the largest and most successful in the UK (<http://www.cf.ac.uk/psych/>). The School's excellent standard of research and teaching has been recognised in every Research Assessment Exercise. It has its own brain-imaging centre (<http://www.cf.ac.uk/psych/cubric/>), enhancing the international-leading research in behavioural neuroscience, cognitive ergonomics, forensic, social and developmental psychology.

Cardiff is the youngest capital city in Europe and the fastest growing in the UK. It plays host to many national and international sporting events at the Millennium Stadium (<http://www.millenniumstadium.com/>). Culturally, the city is thriving, with the Wales Millennium Centre (<http://www.wmc.org.uk/>) in Cardiff Bay. Cardiff is in very close proximity to the beautiful Welsh countryside (<http://www.breconbeacons.org/>), has a two hour rail link to London and a (cheap) one hour air link to Paris and Amsterdam (<http://www.cardiffairportonline.com/>)

Please address any informal enquiries to:

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**For further information please contact:  
Postgraduate Research Enquires**

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