

The Field Studies Council (FSC) is offering to host placements under the **NERC-funded Innovation Placements Call 2017**. The FSC has over 70 years of experience in environmental research and field course delivery. It has 19 centres across the UK. A placement with us is an excellent opportunity to work at the interface between conservation management research, environmental monitoring and biological recording and the delivery of environmental education courses to universities, schools and the wider public. In recent years we have been developing innovative work in areas such as using ICT in the field and sharing 'open data-sets'.

Placements with the FSC could involve a range of activities such as:

- Providing expert advice to the FSC in the development of new business opportunities
- Working with the FSC Biodiversity, FSC Digital Services teams and staff at FSC locations listed below to improve the robustness of FSC data. This could include:
 - Improving how ecological data can be better collated and shared by FSC staff and students in line with nationwide biological recording schemes;
 - Developing the use of ICT in field recording using mobile devices, field network systems and software such as ArcGIS;
 - Developing new ICT based fieldwork methodologies for use on Higher Education and Professional level field courses.

Placement researchers will also be expected to produce agreed outputs for communication within and outside the FSC. These could include:

- A report to the FSC on key findings and recommendations;
- Resources for use by the FSC in its delivery of courses including content for the website and intranet;
- Presentation of findings at a FSC Research Seminar;
- A review paper for publication in the *Field Studies Journal*.

As part of the placement you will have the opportunity to attend one FSC professional development course up to the value of £320, subject to availability.

In 2017/18 we are able to offer field-based Innovation Placement opportunities at the following locations:

1) FSC SLAPTON, SOUTH DEVON



[FSC Slapton](#) operates two residential centres (Slapton Ley and Start Bay) in the coastal village of Slapton, that can cater for over 150 students, as well as managing Slapton Ley National Nature Reserve. We employ 40 staff, as well as 70 volunteers and contractors. Slapton provides village amenities including a shop and 2 pubs as well as an active rural community within which the Centres and staff are fully involved.

Slapton Ley National Nature Reserve: a coastal lagoon 10km south west of Dartmouth, is the largest freshwater lake in the south west of England. The wetland is divided into the Higher Ley (mainly reed-bed) and the Lower Ley (reed fringed open water). The Ley is separated from the sea by a 4km gravel barrier beach and shingle ridge. Together with surrounding woodland it is a Site of Special Scientific Interest and a National Nature Reserve.



Research Areas: FSC Slapton has been providing a wide range of opportunities for research since 1959. Of the 35 recent papers published, areas of study have included: climate, hydrology, water quality, limnology, sediment yields, vegetation, fungi, fish, mammals, bird ringing and education (pedagogy and fieldwork). More information is available in on our website: [Slapton Ley Research](#)

Possible Placement Opportunities: FSC Slapton has decades of past data from biological recording and surveying schemes carried out by Slapton Ley Field Centre and NNR staff and visiting academics and also data collected by Higher Education and post-16 student attending residential courses at the Field Centre. The FSC has begun to look at ways of better storing, and standardising this data and developing platforms to share this with field course students, the wider academic community and the general public. ArcGIS is regularly used on taught courses at the Centre, but could be better integrated into biological recording carried out on the NNR. Researchers with skills in biological recording and water quality monitoring, (especially in freshwater ecosystems, water catchment management and water chemistry analysis) and expertise in using mobile devices and associated biological recording software to store and share field data are particularly welcome to apply.

2) FSC MILLPORT, ISLE OF CUMBRAE, SCOTLAND



[FSC Millport](#) is located on the eastern shore of the Isle of Cumbrae in the Firth of Clyde, easily accessible by a short ferry crossing. This marine station, located metres from the sea, is one of the oldest in the UK (established 1897). The FSC has run it since 2014, continuing its long tradition of research and fieldwork. It can host over 120 students and has fully equipped laboratories, a large library, a running seawater system and cold temperature rooms as well as its own research vessel.

Research Areas: there is over 100 years of marine research on the Isle of Cumbrae. The Centre is well placed for access to a wide range of intertidal habitats from sandy and rocky shores to full estuarine mudflats further up the Clyde and to different subtidal habitats including deep-water (50 m+) habitats only metres from the Island. There are also terrestrial and freshwater habitats on the Island. The Firth of Clyde, with its rich social and industrial history, is also an ideal location to study Geology, Geography, Social History and Coastal Zone Management. Examples of recent research include: marine micro-plastics, ornithological studies (bird behaviour and distribution), marine mammal studies (seal behavioural observations) and entomological studies. More information is available in on our website: [Millport Marine Habitats](#).

R.V. Actinia: 10.8m research vessel with a large stable deck for researchers to work on, licensed to carry 12 passengers and 2 crew. It can conduct scientific trawls and grab samples for benthic organisms (there are diverse substrates and depths nearby), marine mammal and bird surveys and plankton sampling.



Possible Placement Opportunities: FSC Millport has decades of past data from research carried out by previous marine station academic staff and also data collected by Higher Education and post-16 student attending residential courses at the Field Centre. The FSC has begun to look at ways of better storing, and standardising this data and developing platforms to share this with field course students, the wider academic community and the general public. The Centre is currently piloting the use of Field Network Systems with its students. Researchers with skills in biological recording (especially in marine ecosystems) and expertise in using mobile devices and associated biological recording software to store and share field data are particularly welcome to apply.

3) Other locations

If any potential applicants already have research links with any other FSC locations and would be interested in building these into their own proposal to NERC, please contact us as soon as possible using the email above.

FSC Head Office, Preston Montford, Shrewsbury, Shropshire SY4 1HW

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Registered Office: Head Office, Preston Montford, Shrewsbury, Shropshire, SY4 1HW

Researchers will be based at one of our Field Centres. There may be some travel to other FSC locations or to our Head Office in Shrewsbury as required. There may be the option of accommodation being available as part of the placement, by negotiation with the Field Centre.

Placements are expected to start on **1 November 2017**.

Application Process:

All applicants interested in undertaking a placement with the Field Studies Council are required to register their interest **as soon as possible** by contacting mark.ward@field-studies-council.org. Before contacting us, please ensure that you have read and fully comply with the NERC placement eligibility requirements outlined in the main call document. If your proposal meets our requirements, you will be matched with a FSC member of staff who will co-develop a detailed proposal with you. Applicants will then need to work up a full funding application to be submitted to NERC by **16:00 on 29 June 2017**.

A **Letter of Support is required** from FSC, which must be submitted alongside your application to NERC. Applicants who apply for this placement opportunity with FSC can also apply for other placements in this call.

For queries about this call, please contact:

Tessa Edgecombe
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Tel: 01793 41142610

For technical queries regarding the content of the Placement at the FSC please contact:

Mark Ward
FSC Project Officer – Higher Education
Email: mark.ward@field-studies-council.org
Tel: 01743 852127