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|  | School of Law |

**Queen’s University Belfast (QUB)**

**Project: Co-existence and Co-location in shared island Marine governance (CoCoMar)**

**(funded by the Marine Institute, Ocean Law and Governance Research Programme)**

**PhD RESEARCH STUDENTSHIP**

The School of Law is delighted to announce a PhD studentship funded by the Marine Institute (ROI) as part of the interdisciplinary research project: “Co-existence and Co-location in shared island Marine governance” (CoCoMar) project. The successful candidate will research the topic of “**Cohesive and Ecologically Coherent EU-UK fisheries management after Brexit”.**

**WHAT THE STUDENTSHIP WILL COVER:**

* The funded studentship will cover UK tuition fees plus an annual stipend equivalent to UKRI rates (currently £18,632 in the 2023-24 academic year), for a maximum of three years. For further details re eligibility criteria (including academic, citizenship and residency criteria) see below.
* The researcher will have standard access to facilities available in the School of Law and the Graduate School at Queen’s University, though travel and access to other sites across the partner network of the project is envisaged. At Queen’s, the researcher with engage with staff from the School of Law and the School of Natural and Built Environment, and will have direct access to Queen’s University Libraries.

Applicants must complete the application form on the Queen’s University[**Postgraduate Applications Portal**](https://dap.qub.ac.uk/portal/user/u_login.php) and also provide an up-to-date curriculum vitae (CV) and a short paper of between 1,000-1,500 words on the PhD theme (see further details below). The paper should demonstrate an understanding of post-Brexit arrangements for fisheries across the island of Ireland, including the key legislative and governance issues implicated through the NI Protocol (trade-based), and opportunities for cross-border management and co-working through international mechanisms (e.g. NEAFC) to develop coordinated and ecosystem-based management models.

**The closing date for applications is Thursday 23 November 2023 at noon.**

**Shortlisted candidates will be interviewed (online) at the start of December at a time and date to be arranged.**

**Candidates will be notified by mid-December of the outcome of their application.**

**Please insert the code CoCoMar23 into the Funding section within your application form.**

**ELIGIBILITY**

* UK and ROI residents: fees plus stipend.
* EU and international students: fees only up to “home” fee rate included, plus stipend. For EU nationals with settled status, a home fee rate may apply: for details please see [***https://www.qub.ac.uk/Study/PostgraduateStudy/TuitionFees/#postgraduate-research-949563-2***](https://www.qub.ac.uk/Study/PostgraduateStudy/TuitionFees/#postgraduate-research-949563-2)
* Study can only be undertaken on a full-time basis from January 2024 (*Note, there may be some flexibility on start date in certain circumstances – to be negotiated with successful candidates*).
* Qualifications:
  + An Upper Second or First Class Honours degree (or equivalent qualification acceptable to the University) in law or another relevant discipline, plus a Master's degree (or equivalent qualification acceptable to the University) with an average above 60%.
  + Applicants with an Upper Second or First Class Honours degree (or equivalent qualification acceptable to the University) in law or another relevant discipline, who are currently studying a Master’s degree (or equivalent qualification acceptable to the University) will also be considered.
  + Applicants with an Upper Second or First Class Honours degree (or equivalent qualification acceptable to the University) in law or another relevant discipline, plus evidence of ability to conduct independent and original research will be considered on a case by case basis.
  + Desirable: familiarity with the literature around transitional justice, including ‘truth recovery’ or investigatory processes, victimology, human rights.

**RESEARCH PROJECT**

Title: Cohesive and Ecologically Coherent EU-UK Fisheries Management after Brexit

Summary: The CoCoMar project is a collaboration between University College Cork and Queen’s University Belfast, with scientific input from the Marine Fisheries Ecosystems Advisory Services team at the Marine Institute, Galway. The aim of CoCoMar is to enable co-existence and co-location as mechanisms to deliver more integrated marine governance in the shared waters around the island of Ireland, informed by EU and UK policy ambitions relating to the four themes of (i) fisheries management post-Brexit; (ii) cross-compliance of policies for sectoral activities managed under Maritime Spatial Planning; (iii) expanding MPA networks; and (iv) delivering nature restoration.

The current PhD project is targeted at the first of these themes, whilst being cognisant of developments within and challenges arising as a result of the other three. In a post-Brexit world, Ireland will play a pivotal role within the EU in terms of negotiation of future access to fisheries resources (especially post-2026). There is a clear need to coordinate scientific effort on an all-island as well as an East-West (ROI-NI-GB) basis to ensure sustainable management of fish stocks and protection of marine ecosystems in the implementation of the Trade and Cooperation Agreement (TCA). As acknowledged within the EU, *“​​Brexit must not be used as an excuse to delay much-needed action to restore marine ecosystems, to achieve good environmental status of the marine environment as required by the Marine Strategy Framework Directive, or to achieve the objectives of the EU Biodiversity Strategy for 2030”* (European Parliament, 2022, Para 28).

In this context, any such proposals must be cognisant of emerging demands in areas such as marine biological protection, the co-location of offshore renewable energy, as well as broader trade-related considerations in the post-Brexit landscape. However, current access to data on fishing effort and broader attitudes and expectations of fishing communities is limited and piecemeal. At the same time, there is a need to situate and contextualise this local perspective by reference to the shared legal and policy frameworks applicable outside of the immediate Anglo-Irish and EU contexts, especially as developed in intergovernmental bodies like the North East Atlantic Fisheries Commission (NEAFC) and OSPAR Commission.

In this light, the PhD researcher will investigate the potential for good ocean governance by promoting sustainable fisheries practice in light of the best and most up-to-date scientific knowledge. As well as producing a legal and policy analysis of the shifting regulatory landscape, the researcher will also work with catch data and findings from stakeholder engagement – collated, analysed and provided by the Marine Institute in the Republic of Ireland – to develop proposals for cohesive transboundary fisheries governance on the island of Ireland. It is anticipated that the PhD researcher will lead on the production of a series of policy briefs and journal publications, taking account of work produced across the other work packages within the overall project.

Potential candidates are now invited to submit research proposals of between 1,000-1,500 words to address the above challenge. It is anticipated that the proposal should address some or all of the following questions?

* What are the key legal and policy considerations which need to be taken into account to ensure sustainable management of fish stocks and protection of marine ecosystems in the implementation of the fisheries aspects of the Trade and Cooperation Agreement (TCA)?
* How can local catch information and stakeholder engagement be utilised to support proposals for cohesive transboundary fisheries governance on the island of Ireland?
* How can legal and policy frameworks at the national and intergovernmental levels be better aligned across borders, north and south and east and west, with particular regard to other marine uses, especially the development of offshore renewable energy and the designation of marine protected areas?

Further information: Contact Professor Richard Collins ([rcollins@qub.ac.uk](mailto:rcollins@qub.ac.uk))