

Introduction & Key Information on the Research Training Programme

WETSKILLS – Integrated Research Training Group



WETSKILLS is part of the DFG-funded Collaborative Research
Centre/Transregio project WETSCAPES



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Overview of the Training Programme

WETSKILLS is an Integrated Research Training Group that supports doctoral candidates in becoming independent, critically engaged researchers and offers early-career postdocs advanced training and collaboration opportunities. Embedded in the context of peatland and wetscape restoration and sustainable management, its interdisciplinary programme combines scientific training, research camps, stakeholder engagement, and international collaboration to strengthen both academic and professional career paths. Currently, 16 doctoral candidates and 8 postdocs participate in the programme, contributing to a dynamic hub for interdisciplinary training and exchange. From 2026, the programme will also welcome visiting MSc and doctoral students.

Intended Outcomes of the Programme

- Shape your own academic development by taking part in the programme's training opportunities
- Engage in interdisciplinary exchange and collaboration within the WETSKILLS community.
- Contribute to programme development by electing representatives and providing feedback.
- Participate in international and outreach activities (e.g. research stays, conferences, stakeholder interaction).

Programme Requirements for Doctoral Candidates

- Acquiring 24 ECTS credits as part of the doctoral training programme (doctoral candidates).
- Submitting a thesis proposal (doctoral candidates), which is generally due 3–6 months after start (i.e. by Nov 2025) and for which a structure of 3 work packages is suggested – in

most cases targeting a cumulative format –, min. 3 literature references per WP, proposal presentation at the retreat November 2025; the purpose of the thesis proposal is to initiate early writing, strengthen contact with supervisors, and support planning and structuring of the project.

- Defining a mentoring/supervision committee for the doctoral project in close cooperation with the principal supervisor.
- Submitting a formal supervision agreement (doctoral candidates) – Templates are available from the UR and UG.
- Documented mentoring committee meetings (meeting minutes; at least once per year)

Services Offered

- Interdisciplinary scientific training tailored to peatland and wetscape research, including subject-specific and methods training.
- Field-based research camps (e.g. in Finland and England) and stakeholder-focused classes.
- Workshops and seminars led by Mercator Fellows and invited experts (WETSKILLS seminar).
- Funding opportunities for research stays abroad and conference participation.
- A structured curriculum that balances research, transferable skills, and career development.
- Networking and exchange with an international community of doctoral researchers and postdocs.
- Peer-support and exchange opportunities.

Programme Timeline & Key Elements (tentative)

- Welcome Event/Kick-Off (completed on 16.07.) — no ECTS

- WETSCAPES2.0 seminar (bi-monthly) — no ECTS
- Lecture series “Wetscapes” (2026, 2027, 2028) — 3 ECTS
- Retreats on key qualifications (1–2 per year; next in Nov 2025) — 3 ECTS
- Ethics in Science: Scientific conduct — 3 ECTS
- Practical skills training: presenting research & publishing — 3 ECTS
- Scientific writing workshops — 3 ECTS
- International lab exchanges (visiting work groups abroad) — no ECTS
- Research camp I (2026, 1 week, UK/Finland): hydrology & biogeochemistry of peatlands — 6 ECTS
- Research camp II (2027, 1 week, UK/Finland): peatland ecology & biological processes — 6 ECTS
- Retreat (late 2027, 2.5 days): peatland restoration & paludiculture; stakeholder workshop — 3 ECTS
- Summer School (2028, 2 days): best practice “from data to paper”; doctoral candidates present work — 3 ECTS
- Postdoc qualifications (e.g. collaboration with public administration & private sector) — no ECTS
- International conference (2028, e.g. EGU): organizing & presenting a WETSCAPES 2.0 session — 3 ECTS

Final ECTS credits will be confirmed closer to each training date; the values listed above are indicative.

Planned Trainings and Events (Regularly Announced)

- Statistical software courses: R basics (*Tidyverse*, *Ggplot2*, *RMarkdown/Quarto*) and advanced ecological analyses (with *vegan*) and mixed-effect models (with *lme4* or similar)

- Geographic Information Systems (GIS), including QGIS and GIS in R
- Writing workshops (academic, creative, and AI-supported)

Upon doctoral researchers' request and availability of experts

- Reflexivity (positionality statements, epistemology, ontology)
- First aid training/safety during field trips
- Embodiment in Research – walking & talking sessions
- Workshops on mental well-being during doctoral studies
- Social book and journal clubs – mutual writing support
- Other social events: sports, camping, creative workshops, social evenings, international cooking nights, etc.

Steering Committee – Here for Your Questions

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- Coordinator:
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