



PhD Training Plan Manual

2026-2027

**Graduate School of Social Sciences
VU Amsterdam**

Content

1. Introduction to the PhD training program	2
2. General structure of the program	3
2.1 Content areas	3
2.2 Mandatory courses	3
2.2.1 Bridging programs	3
2.3 Organizing your training plan	4
2.4 Exemptions	4
2.4 Keeping track of completed courses	5
3. Courses	6
3.1 Social scientific content and theory	6
3.2 Social scientific methodology, methods, and techniques.....	6
3.3 Academic and transferrable skills	6
4. Other VU-GSSS training and activities	7
4.1 Self-organized tutorials	7
4.2 Seminars and lab group meetings.....	8
4.3 Conference visit and/or presentation	8
4.4 Science communication	9
5. Courses offered outside VU-GSSS.....	9
5.1 Courses offered by research master	10
5.2 PhD courses offered by Vrije Universiteit	10
5.2.1 University Teaching Qualification (UTQ/BKO)	10
5.3 Research institutes with course-sharing agreements.....	11
5.4 Other research institutes	11
5.5 (Inter)national summer schools	12
5.6 Online training.....	12
Appendix: course descriptions.....	12

1. Introduction to the PhD training program

The VU-GSSS PhD program is designed to support PhD candidates linked to the departments of the VU School of Social Sciences (Faculty of Social Sciences and Humanities) in their project progress and individual development. The courses are designed to enhance the academic knowledge and skill development of PhD candidates, not only to enable successful completion of their PhD project, but also to prepare them for an academic or other career thereafter. The program is tailored to serve the needs of PhD candidates at different stages of their project, regardless of their topic or methodological approach.

To stimulate careful planning at the start of each PhD trajectory, PhD candidates and their supervisors are required to submit a trajectory plan within the first months of their project within Hora Finita (so-called registration). An individual training plan for the trajectory is part of this. A minimum of 30 European Credits (EC¹) of PhD training is required for all PhDs at the VU, as specified in the VU [Doctorate Regulations](#).

The training plan may vary per individual candidate depending on discipline, prior training, personal interest, and the requirements of the candidate's research project. Generally, the training plan should be designed such that PhD candidates develop their knowledge, expertise, and skills in three areas: 1) content & theory, 2) methods & techniques, and 3) academic & transferable skills. The 30 EC should be distributed equally across the three areas. The PhD candidates are advised to concentrate their coursework in the first two years of their PhD project and thus limit the coursework in the final year(s). PhDs should obtain 10 EC in the first year of their trajectory.

Important: PhD candidates are required to use the Training Plan Template on our website when designing the training plan. The PhD candidate discusses the proposed training plan in a meeting with the GS Program Director before submitting the final version in Hora Finita. Please email programdirector.gs.fsw@vu.nl to schedule a meeting in due time before the deadline for your Hora Finita registration.

2. General structure of the program

2.1 Content areas

The courses in the program center around one of three main fundamental content areas (there might be overlaps). These areas are:

- **1: Social scientific content & theory.** These courses aim to support PhD candidates to assess and build theories and obtain relevant social scientific knowledge at a

¹ One EC is equivalent to 28 hours of study load.

doctoral educational level, both within and beyond the boundaries of their own discipline.

- **2: Social scientific methodology, methods & techniques.** These courses focus on research design and methodology and provide hands-on experience with advanced methods of analysis.
- **3: Academic & transferable skills.** The focus of these courses is on the development of academic and transferable skills, aimed at improving the necessary skills for current and future practice as an academically educated researcher.

In addition to following courses, PhD candidates can arrange individual or small-group tutorials and seminar series focusing on a specialised theoretical, methodological or skills-based topic (more information in sections 4.1 and 4.2).

2.2 Mandatory courses

The following courses are **mandatory** to take in the first year of the PhD trajectory, ideally before the Go/No Go:

PhD Induction program (including Project Management workshop)	0.5 EC
Research Integrity and Responsible Scholarship	2 EC
Research Data Management Essentials	1 EC (mandatory before Go/No Go)

Note: It is also mandatory for PhDs to attend at least **one scientific conference** (1-2 EC) during their trajectory (more information in section 4.3).

2.2.1 Bridging programs

For some incoming PhD candidates (in particular international students or those with a very different academic background), it can be useful to follow the [Bridging Program](#) organized by the International Office. The Bridging Program is an intensive three-week course intended to strengthen the research, academic, and soft skills of first-year PhD candidates, and ease their transition into the PhD trajectory.

This training counts for 6 EC. For PhDs following the bridging program, more than 30 EC for the full training plan are usually needed.

2.3 Organizing your training plan

Individual training plans vary between PhD candidates depending on their prior education and methodological differences in their research projects. As a supplement to the courses offered by the VU-GSSS, the training plan can also include courses organized by other graduate schools and research institutes, given that they are at least research master's or PhD level. The courses must also be relevant to the PhD project. The relevance will be evaluated by the Program Director.

The Graduate School will inform PhD candidates about upcoming courses and seminars by email and on our [website](#) (→ Course overview). We also aim to keep you posted on relevant courses offered by other institutions. VU-GSSS PhDs can follow many courses at other VU graduate schools/faculties free of charge. Find an [overview of all VU PhD courses here](#). PhDs can also follow courses free of charge at [Zeppelin University](#) and [AISSR](#) (UvA), thanks to a course-sharing agreement.

Section 5 lists a variety of courses offered outside the VU-GSSS, including those offered at other graduate schools and research institutes within or outside the VU. It should be noted that the list is not exhaustive. There are many other interesting alternatives, which also depend on your specific needs, background, project, and discipline. PhDs are encouraged to search for relevant courses themselves. PhDs can also reach out to graduate.school.ssw@vu.nl for advice.

Please note that adaptations to the training plan might be necessary throughout the PhD trajectory. As your research direction crystallizes, a need for different expertise might become apparent. In addition, education programs, including the VU-GSSS training program, may change over time, with courses added, adjusted, or removed. This means that a course a PhD has in their training plan might no longer be offered at the time when they intend to follow it. It is important to remain aware of this and search for and discuss substitutions in a timely manner. You can contact the Program Director, programdirector.gs.fsw@vu.nl, to discuss revisions to your training plan.

2.4 Exemptions

Depending on previous experience, PhDs may be eligible for a training exemption. If you have completed a 120 EC master's program in the Social Sciences, you can apply for an exemption of a maximum of 10 EC. If you have 12 months or more of relevant research-related and demonstrable work experience, you can apply for an exemption of a maximum of 5 EC. The relevance is evaluated by the Program Director.

Please email programdirector.gs.fsw@vu.nl to apply for an exemption. Include the following documents:

- A list of courses (or relevant work experience) that you aim to get an exemption for, and which area of the training plan they fit into (theory/methods/skills)
- Course manuals for the courses you aim to get an exemption for, alternatively a list of reports and presentations demonstrating your relevant research-related work experience
- An hour calculation using the [GSSS converter](#) (if the number of EC is not clear)

Important: An exemption must be approved by the Program Director and noted in the training plan at the beginning of the trajectory.

2.4 Keeping track of completed courses

It is the responsibility of the PhD to keep track of completed courses/activities in Hora Finita. [Instructions can be found here](#). The registered EC will be reviewed and approved by the GS. You will receive an email once an activity has been approved. Note that the approval by a supervisor does not mean that the EC have been officially approved.

For courses outside VU-GSSS, certificates of attendance must be uploaded. If the certificate does not mention EC/time investment, additional information such as a syllabus and an [EC calculation](#) is requested as well. For conference attendance, please upload proof of attending/presenting, such as an email confirmation.

Note that the GS does not grant EC for all activity categories that exist in Hora Finita. Furthermore, all activities must be pre-approved. If courses/activities are not in your approved training plan, please reach out to the Program Managers before taking part in the activity to confirm that you can be granted EC for it.

VU-GSSS grants EC for:

- Courses and workshops (on research master's or PhD level)
- Summer/winter schools
- BKO/UTQ training
- Self-organized tutorials
- Science communication
- Conference attendance (max. 2 EC)

VU-GSSS does not grant EC for:

- Thesis supervision and teaching
- Organizational tasks
- Scientific publications
- Peer reviews for journals
- Hosting events/conferences/lectures
- Participation in a writing week/retreat

3. Courses

Find below an overview of the courses offered in the VU-GSSS training program. A short description of every course can be found in the appendix to this manual. The exact schedule varies. You can find the dates for upcoming courses on [our website](#).

3.1 Social scientific content and theory

Advanced Theory Development	4 EC
Key Thinkers in Social Sciences	3 EC
From Idea to Proposal Workshop	3 EC

3.2 Social scientific methodology, methods, and techniques

Selected Qualitative Methods	4 EC
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Interpreting Qualitative Data	3 EC
Typologies in Data*	3 EC
Structural Equation Modeling*	3 EC
Multilevel Models*	3 EC

** The quantitative methods courses are scheduled on a rotating basis. One course is offered each semester.*

3.3 Academic and transferrable skills

PhD Induction program (including Project Management workshop)	0.5 EC, <i>mandatory</i>
Research Integrity and Responsible Scholarship	2 EC, <i>mandatory</i>
Research Data Management Essentials	1 EC, <i>mandatory</i>
Writing Academic English	3 EC
Attractive Academic Writing*	3 EC
Presenting in Academic English	1 EC
How to Get Published	1.5 EC (0.5 EC/module)
Rise & Shine: Present your Academic Research	1 EC

** Note that having followed Writing Academic English is a requirement for taking Attractive Academic Writing, and that you must have completed two chapters (articles) of your dissertation to be admitted. You can only follow one writing course per year.*

4. Other VU-GSSS training and activities

4.1 Self-organized tutorials

Credits: max. 3 EC per tutorial

Tutorials can be organized by individual PhD candidates or small groups of up to five participants if no course on the desired topic is included in the VU-GSSS training program. Tutorials focus on a specialized theoretical or methodological topic or skill and allow PhD candidates to profit from the expertise of faculty researchers other than their supervisors. The content is variable and depends on the research interests and needs of the PhD candidate, as well as the input of the proposed available professor. Given the small setup, tutorials are usually highly interactive and hands-on. They can be organized throughout the PhD trajectory and are thus highly flexible both concerning timing and content.

The participating group should be broader than just one supervisor and their PhD candidates; the goal of a tutorial is to allow PhD candidates to profit from the expertise of other faculty researchers or invited guests, other than their own supervisor. Other PhD candidates will also be invited to participate by the tutorial organizer/the GS.

Tutors will receive compensation for teaching a tutorial. Preference is given to internal faculty members. If the expertise needed is only found outside the faculty, an external tutor might be eligible.

Organization

To organize a tutorial, participating PhD candidates (together with the tutor) must submit a plan beforehand, using [this template](#). The tutorial needs to be designed in close collaboration with the proposed tutor and in consultation with the Program Director. The final plan should be submitted for approval at least one month before the start of the tutorial by email to the Program Director (programdirector.gs.fsw@vu.nl) and the GS (graduate.school.ssw@vu.nl). The tutorial can only start after approval by the Program Director.

Other PhD candidates will be invited by the tutorial organizer and/or the GS. The GS can assist with practical matters, such as room booking.

Upon completion of the tutorial, the tutor reports to the Graduate School who completed it. The tutor is paid after the tutorial has been completed. Consult the Program Managers for further details.

4.2 Seminars series

Credits: 1-2 EC (max. 2 EC per PhD trajectory)

Seminar series are organized by PhD candidates around a shared research theme or topic and are supervised by faculty staff. Seminars can take different forms, such as a series of regular meetings in which participants discuss literature, guest speakers' presentations, methods, or their own work, or an intensive series of meetings over several days, for instance with (international) guest researchers.

A seminar series must be organized as a **structured learning activity**. This means that it should have clear learning objectives that are relevant to the knowledge and competencies needed to complete a PhD, as well as a plan for how the objectives will be met. A faculty member chairs the seminar and ensures that the learning objectives are achieved by the PhD candidates receiving credits.

Organization

To receive credits for seminar series, participating PhD candidates (together with a faculty member) must submit a plan for the seminar beforehand, using [this template](#). The plan should be designed with the faculty member chairing the meetings and in consultation with the Program Director. The final plan should be submitted for approval at least one month before the start of the seminar series by email to the Program Director (programdirector.gs.fsw@vu.nl) and the GS (graduate.school.ssw@vu.nl).

The GS can assist with practical matters, such as room booking.

An attendance list (showing who completed the seminar series and corresponding activities) should be submitted by the supervising faculty member to the Graduate School after the seminar has taken place.

4.3 Conference visit and/or presentation

Credits: max. 2 EC in total

PhD candidates are required to attend at least one large (2 days or more) scientific conference during their trajectory. PhD candidates can obtain 1 EC for attendance only, and 2 EC for an oral or poster presentation. When presenting at a conference, you are eligible to apply for the Graduate Fund (more information on our [website](#)).

Please upload proof of attending/presenting, such as an email confirmation and/or conference program, when registering your conference visit in Hora Finita. No pre-approval from the Program Director is required for conference visits.

Attending more than one conference is welcomed, but will not grant extra EC.

4.4 Science communication

Credits: 1-2 EC

Science communication means making scientific knowledge accessible to the wider public and as such contributes to the valorization of your research. The valorization of scientific knowledge becomes increasingly important, and as such is a relevant skill for PhDs to master. We stimulate practicing with science communication by granting 1-2 ECs for the produced items.

There are many forms of science communication, writing blogs and popular articles (for instance in newspapers) being the most common examples. Writing blogs or popular articles* allows PhD candidates to publish in an informal manner at an early point in their PhD trajectories, and to practice writing by explaining scientific research to a broader audience. It also allows both individual PhD candidates and the faculty to build a reputation of expertise on specific topics.

There is a vast array of channels to publish this, including:

- <https://www.socialevraagstukken.nl/>
- <https://standplaatswereld.nl/about/>
- LinkedIn articles ([example by previous PhD](#))
- SSW research labs (e.g. [The Resilience, Security & Civil Unrest Lab](#))

When a PhD candidate has published the required number of items to obtain EC (note that they have to be the first or only author of the piece), they submit an overview of the contributions in a Word document (with titles and links to published items) by email to the Program Director (programdirector.gs.fsw@vu.nl) and the GS (graduate.school.fsw@vu.nl) to apply for the credits.

For a standard item (+/- 1000 words) we estimate a workload of 9 hours (6 hours of writing, 3 hours of preparation such as reading literature or attending a seminar). Given that 1 EC corresponds to 28 hours of work, PhDs must produce 3 items to be granted 1 EC, and 6 items to be granted 2 EC (max. 2 EC per trajectory).

** We will also consider other forms of communication, such as podcasts. It is important that the product is traceable and related to your research.*

5. Courses offered outside VU-GSSS

PhD candidates are encouraged to attend courses offered outside the VU-GSSS training program, given that they are at least research master's or PhD level. These may be courses and workshops offered at other VU schools/faculties, at VU interfaculty research institutes, or other universities/research schools in the Netherlands and abroad. Following external courses can be particularly appropriate when they offer specialized content that is not covered within the VU-GSSS program, or when they are organized in a more fitting time for the PhD candidate. Furthermore, some PhD projects are closely linked to a disciplinary research school outside VU-GSSS, which justifies following (part of) the education program offered there.

When following courses outside the VU-GSSS, make sure to get a certificate confirming your attendance and the number of EC earned. Please upload this certificate to Hora Finita as proof of attendance when entering the credits. If credits are not specified for a course, PhD candidates can request the GS to judge the content of the course to specify whether, and how many, credits can be awarded. The PhD will need to provide a detailed program/syllabus including contact hours, readings, and assignments. To ensure you can earn EC by following an external course, please consult the Program Director before taking it.

5.1 Courses offered by research master

VU-GSSS collaborates with the [Social Sciences for a Digital Society](#) research master, which means that PhDs enrolled in the VU-GSSS can follow courses organized by the program. The Spring edition of the Research Integrity and Responsible Scholarship course is organized by the research master. Other courses that PhDs commonly follow include:

- Research Design in Practice
- Communicating Science
- Various (advanced) methods courses

Register for research master courses by emailing graduate.school.ssw@vu.nl.

5.2 PhD courses offered by Vrije Universiteit

Training for PhD candidates offered by other schools/faculties at the VU is open to every PhD candidate at VU Amsterdam. Admission requirements may be set for

specific courses, and in rare cases there is a fee involved. Find all PhD courses at the VU [in this overview](#) (updated regularly). The GSSS has a special course-sharing agreement with the VU Amsterdam Business Research Institute ([ABRI](#)). GSSS PhDs regularly follow courses at ABRI, and the other way around.

5.2.1 University Teaching Qualification (UTQ/BKO)

The VU Center for Teaching & Learning offers training to obtain the [University Teaching Qualification](#) (UTQ/BKO) several times every year. This training is particularly relevant for PhDs who will be teaching throughout their PhD trajectory, or plan on doing so after finishing their PhD. In the training, PhDs will learn how to apply active learning techniques, supervise students and design their own courses. The UTQ is recognized by all Dutch universities and counts for 5 EC in your training plan.

5.3 Research institutes with course-sharing agreements

VU-GSSS aims to facilitate linking PhD candidates to suitable research schools, relevant courses, and other scientific researchers, both in national and international contexts.

We have an agreement for exchange of course participation free of charge with:

- Amsterdam Institute for Social Science Research ([UvA-AISSR](#))
- Zeppelin University ([ZU](#)) – max. 5 courses

PhD candidates enrolled in the VU-GSSS can participate without a fee in most of the courses offered by these graduate schools. Their course programs and information about how to sign up can be found on their websites. Many of the ZU courses are offered online and do not require in-person attendance.

5.4 Other research institutes

For research institutes/graduate schools beyond the ones the GSSS has course-sharing agreements with (VU, AISSR, ZU), course participation usually comes with a fee. Note that you can apply for the Graduate Fund to cover (75% of) fees (more information about the Graduate Fund can be found on our [website](#)).

The following research schools offer PhD courses and are regularly attended by VU-GSSS PhDs. Courses at these research schools are (in most cases) accepted for the training plan:

- Research School for International Development ([CERES](#))
- Kurt Lewin Institute ([KLI](#))
- Netherlands Institute of Government ([NIG](#))
- Netherlands School of Communication Research ([NeSCoR](#))
- Netherlands Research School of Gender Studies ([NOG](#))
- Netherlands School of Anthropology ([NESA](#))

Some departments have course-sharing agreements with research institutes listed above. Check with your department about possibilities for taking part free of charge.

5.5 (Inter)national summer schools

There are many universities and research institutes in the Netherlands and abroad that offer summer courses on social sciences topics and methods. Find recommendations below. Relevant summer school courses are (in most cases) accepted for the training plan. A participation fee is usually required. Note that you can apply for the Graduate Fund to cover (75% of) fees.

- [Essex Summer School on Social Science Data Analysis](#) (UK)
- [ECPR Summer Schools](#), on various topics in different European cities
- [ICPSR Summer Program in Quantitative Methods](#) (US)
- [Lugano Summer School on Social Science Methods](#) (Switzerland)
- [Barcelona Summer School of Demography](#) (Spain)
- [VU Amsterdam Summer School](#) offers three blocks of 2 weeks topical and methodological courses in July and August, some of which are at PhD level
- [Utrecht Summer School](#)
- [UvA Summer School](#)
- [University of Groningen Summer School](#)

5.6 Online training

Some EDX, MOOC, and Coursera courses can be useful for your project and might be accepted for your training plan. Note that the course needs to be at least research master's or PhD level. You must buy the certificate to gain EC. Consult the Program Director before you decide to follow an online course as part of your training plan/to gain EC.

Appendix: course descriptions

Content & theory

Advanced Theory Development (4 EC)

This course helps you develop your theorizing, in other words, developing explanations of phenomena that are presently insufficiently understood. ATD therefore does not focus on the substance of theories or specific methods of data analysis, but rather on the logical forms of theories that exist. Throughout the course you also learn tools that can assist you in developing not only rigorous but also creative theorizations that help improve the quality of your research.

Key Thinkers in Social Sciences (3 EC)

This course will introduce you to a number of 'key thinkers' in the Social Sciences whose ideas have influenced our theories, research programs, and research objects. The thinkers will be introduced by a series of guest lecturers who are experts on the respective thinkers' lives and historical contexts, as well as their main ideas and theories. KTSS devotes explicit attention to their continuing relevance for present-day social scientists and the participants in particular.

From Idea to Proposal Workshop (3 EC)

This workshop helps PhD students develop their research idea into a coherent and convincing research proposal. We work step by step on the research problem (and questions), theoretical positioning, research design, contribution, and feasibility. Through in-class exercises, dedicated writing periods, peer feedback, and a mock proposal defense, students develop and refine their own proposal.

Methods & techniques

Selected Qualitative Methods (4 EC)

The goal of this course is to provide PhD candidates with high-quality guidance and information on conducting qualitative research, allowing them to profit from the expertise on qualitative methods available in the School of Social Sciences. The course is meant for PhD candidates in different phases of their fieldwork. Both those designing their methodological tools and those who have already collected field data will benefit from this course. Candidates will learn about different qualitative methods of data collection and analysis.

Interpreting Qualitative Data (3 EC)

The central task in qualitative analysis is finding ways to interpret data that has been collected. This involves making sense of the data as well as connecting it to the researcher's specific questions and to the broader social, theoretical, or methodological issues in which the research is embedded. Attention is usually given to the collection of qualitative data and to how this data should be transcribed and ordered (often with the help of computer programs), leaving unaddressed how to interpret the material once it has been collected. This course addresses that lacuna.

Typologies in Data (3 EC)

This course begins with an overview of logistic and multinomial logistic regression, then introduces finite mixture models—tools for identifying unobserved subgroups (latent classes) within a population based on categorical data. Focusing on Latent Class Analysis (LCA) and Latent Profile Analysis (LPA), participants will learn best practices for model specification, estimation, evaluation, and interpretation. The course also covers the inclusion of covariates, predictors, and distal outcomes, and concludes with longitudinal extensions that model transitions between latent classes over time, offering insights into patterns of change.

Structural Equation Modeling (3 EC)

Structural equation modeling (SEM) is a very general statistical technique, as it has regression analysis, path analysis, and factor analysis as special cases. It is also possible to combine the advantages of these techniques, which makes SEM one of the most general and flexible techniques available to researchers. This course will introduce PhD candidates to the fundamentals of SEM, serving as a foundation to discover its full potential via future SEM courses, independent learning, or practical research applications.

Multilevel Models (3 EC)

This course is designed to provide theoretical and applied understandings of multilevel modeling. The fundamentals of multilevel modeling are taught by extending knowledge of regression analyses to designs involving a nested data structure. Nested data structures include, for example, students within classrooms, professionals within corporations, patients within hospitals, or repeated observations from the same person. In each of these cases and many more, the data are hierarchically arranged and may require methods beyond multiple regression or analysis of variance. These methods fall under the heading of multilevel modeling, which is also sometimes referred to as mixed modeling, hierarchical linear modeling, or random coefficients modeling.

Academic & transferrable skills

PhD Induction program (0.5 EC)

During this half-day session, new PhD candidates will meet the Graduate School team and receive essential information about their PhD journey: what to expect at each stage, key contacts, and where to access important resources. In a separate half-day session, all new candidates will participate in a workshop on time and project management to help them plan and navigate their research effectively.

Research Integrity and Responsible Scholarship (2 EC)

This course introduces PhD candidates to the Netherlands Code of Conduct for Research Integrity and the ethics review policies at the School of Social Sciences at VU. It provides participants with the necessary knowledge about standards for research integrity and ethics in social science research. Participants apply and reflect on principles and values in research practice in collaboration with colleagues in academia and with societal stakeholders. The course is mandatory for first-year PhD candidates.

Research Data Management Essentials (1 EC)

During this course, PhD candidates will learn how to write a good Data Management Plan (DMP), in which the following topics are discussed: which laws and codes of conduct the research should comply with, where the data is going to be stored, where the data is going to be archived for the long term, and how data is made fair (Findable, Accessible, Interoperable, Reusable). The course is mandatory for first-year PhD candidates and should ideally be completed before the Go/No Go.

Writing Academic English (3 EC)

This course aims to support you in your writing tasks by improving your English academic writing skills. The course content focuses on topics that will help you achieve more clarity and coherence in your text. Another important aspect of the course is individual feedback on your texts, helping you identify your personal strengths and weaknesses as an academic writer.

Attractive Academic English (3 EC)

This course will help you finetune your writing skills and your individual style as an academic writer. We will work with the participants' text and reflect on personal tendencies and the choices that you have as a writer, and the task you have as a writer to assess the needs of a reader. This course is open to PhD candidates who have completed the Writing Academic English course already. Participants should also have completed at least two chapters/articles of their dissertation.

Presenting in Academic English (1 EC)

This is a practice course for PhD students to work on presenting academic English in a spoken context. Students will learn and practice techniques in order to improve their clarity, comprehensibility, and confidence while speaking academic English. The course focuses on linguistic (vocabulary, articulation, pronunciation) and paralinguistic (pace, inflection, pausing) elements in spoken English. Students will practice using their own topics and materials to improve their abilities to communicate effectively in international academic English.

How to Get Published (1.5 EC)

This course focuses on how to write publishable journal articles, how to deal with feedback, and how to be a good peer reviewer. Participants will learn more about the structure of a good paper, but also about how to find a journal, survive the review cycle, and manage the revision process. The course is divided into three modules: one on quantitative research, one on qualitative research, and one on peer review. Participants who join one session obtain 0.5 EC. It is also possible to join several modules and earn half a credit each, but participants should be aware that there is some overlap in the content between the modules.

Rise & Shine: Present your Academic Research (1 EC)

In this short but intensive course, PhD candidates will learn about the art of presenting academic research. Together, we will identify in three interactive sessions the best (and worst) ways to present your research. After successfully completing this course, you have a basic understanding of the different dimensions that shape the quality and impact of an academic presentation (content, design of visuals, presenter skills, context). Based on this understanding, you have prepared a default presentation that is tailored to your own discipline, preferred design style, and personal skills.