

**Research School**  
**Transformations in Architecture & Planning**  
**at the Faculty for Architecture & Spatial Planning, TU Wien**  
**Work Programme**

Coordinators: Lorenzo De Chiffre, Margaret Haderer, Elisabeth Leitner, Johannes Suitner

Contact: [johannes.suitner@tuwien.ac.at](mailto:johannes.suitner@tuwien.ac.at)

## 1 Objectives

### Goals

The Research School offers doctoral students at the Faculty A+R, who are working on socio-ecological transformations in architecture and planning in their dissertation projects, a structured support program to help them navigate the scientific and transformative expectations of their qualification. The aim is to provide participants with practical skills that will help them on their way to their doctoral degree, as well as to promote international academic, transdisciplinary, and peer-networking through targeted formats. The Research School accordingly sets out to:

- Convey scientific writing skills and **facilitate academic publishing**.
- **Reflect transdisciplinarity** and how to strike the research-praxis balance.
- **Increase international** and transdisciplinary visibility and **networking**.
- Create a peer-learning platform to **enable networks and bonds** among the Faculty's Early Career Researchers (ECRs).

### Expected outcomes

The Research School expects (1) an improved **scientific quality** of outputs, (2) an increased **competitiveness** of ECRs on the international academic market, and (3) an expanded **international visibility** of the faculty's innovative research and their ECRs. Beyond that, it equips ECRs with reflexivity and agency to craft their career paths in academia and/or praxis early on.

## 2 Members and partners

### Coordinators

The Research School will be coordinated by a team of senior researchers of the Faculty A+R, who have previously been engaged in similar PhD facilitation activities at the faculty and/or hold relevant expertise in the thematic area. The coordinators are Lorenzo De Chiffre, Elisabeth Leitner, Margaret Haderer, and Johannes Suitner. The group is responsible for curating the program, coordinating and/or implementing the foreseen formats, and serving as experienced mentors for the doctoral students if necessary.

### Doctoral Research Team

The group of joining doctoral students will participate in the Research School's program and is explicitly encouraged to co-design additional formats that cater to their specific needs. The Doctoral Research Team will be selected at the onset of the Research School according to transparent criteria that aim to balance thematic fit and diversity to create a coherent group with comparable backgrounds, approaches, and needs, while opening the door for interdisciplinary exchange between different transformation research cultures and associated career paths. The Research School indicatively targets **a group of 15 doctoral students** to form the Doctoral Research Team. Depending on their respective thematic foci this might involve 2-3 sub-groups.

### Advisory Board

The Advisory Board will be composed of professors of the Faculty A+R, who are both experts in the research areas addressed by the Research School as well as experienced supervisors with knowledge of institutional cultures in the academic system as such and at TU Wien more specifically. The Board will be invited **twice a year** to reflect on prior activities in the Research School and feedback the coordinators on planned activities and specific formats. Invited Advisory Board members are **Tina Gregoric, Alois Humer, Heike Oevermann, Ute Schneider, Ariane Sept, Franziska Sielker, Astrid Staufer**.

*Additionally, 2-3 international professors with comparable ECR-training expertise and experience will be invited once the Research School has started to expand the knowledge base with international perspectives on how to train future planners and architects.*

*The Dean of Faculty and the Deans of Study in Architecture and Spatial Planning will be invited to Advisory Board meetings as needed.*

## Associated Partners

Once the Doctoral Research Team has been constituted and the thematic foci of the cohort are clear, **national and international “role models”** will be invited to become Associated Partners of the Research School. These can range from national or international scholars with key expertise in thematic focus areas of the Doctoral Research Team who could then be invited as critics for a research colloquium and/or a lecture, to key practitioners who could then serve as sparring partners for knowledge dissemination beyond academia. The constellation of Associated Partners is hence open, since it depends on the thematic foci and specific needs of the Doctoral Research Team. Its core, however, is supposed to be composed of leading academic scholars in architecture, planning, and/or transformation.

## Supervisors

The supervisors of participating doctoral students will be involved in specific activities of the Research School, such as the planned annual colloquia, to create synergies between the bilateral supervision and the group's undertakings. In this context, it is crucially important to note that **the Research School** does not define thematic focus areas beyond its general orientation toward eco-social transformations in architecture and planning. It **is confined to supporting doctoral students at the practical level of achieving a doctoral degree**, e.g., by offering courses on academic skills, networking skills and other soft skills that students can collect ECTS for. In short, **the thematic and methodological supervision explicitly stays with individual supervisors**.

# 3 Work programme

## Formats

The Work Programme is structured around the four major goals of the Research School: (1) Writing and publishing, (2) international visibility and networking, (3) transdisciplinary reflection and impact, and (4) self-efficacy and career development. Accordingly, each individual format contributes to (at least) one of the overarching goals of the Research School. That said, our guiding principles imply that formats can be adapted to participants' specific needs or expanded with additional bottom-up developed formats from within the group during the three-year period. The following formats have been developed by the Coordinators to structure the three-year program:

### --- WRITING AND PUBLISHING ---

**Writing Class:** Since academic writing is a key skill of doctoral students, yet one that is hardly taught in Bachelor or Master programs, we will provide a course (3.0 ECTS) on just these skills. The Writing Class conveys and practices technical writing skills and writing techniques in multiple half-day workshops in preparation of upcoming individual writing tasks (such as producing PhD papers and/or chapters). It also leaves room to discuss the pros and cons of different writing styles and different individual writing approaches. Ideally, the course concludes with the establishment of self-organized writing classes among the Doctoral Research Team.

**Writing Retreat:** The above Writing Class culminates in an annual three-day out-of-house Writing Retreat, exclusively for Doctoral Research Team members. Hosted and facilitated by the Coordinators, the Writing Retreat will be focused on effective text production in an undisturbed environment. Students will do preparatory work (specifically reading, empirical work, data analysis, or similar) prior to the event to focus solely on writing during the three-day getaway. To facilitate this, the event will be structured around multiple writing sessions. At a later stage, doctoral students who have already participated in Writing Retreats can organize and lead their own retreats – in-house or out-of-house.

*Participation in the above Writing Class before participation in the Writing Retreat is recommended.*

**Manuscript Development Studio:** To support high-quality academic text production and learn the skill of giving constructive feedback, the Coordinators will offer the Manuscript Development Studio as an annual PhD course (3.0 ECTS). The course begins by introducing key terminology and addressing key questions of the “publishing game”, such as impact factors and indices, how to find suitable journals, what to expect from the review process, or similar. It then teaches how to give proper constructive feedback on academic texts. In an interactive part, it provides space for sharing participants' on-going writings with the group and receiving individual feedback to immediately improve the quality of papers and/or chapters through peer feedback.

**Research Design and Methods Studio:** This annual PhD course (3.0 ECTS) will provide input on research design, empirical methods and research ethics at the paper- and manuscript-level. Doctoral candidates bring their work in progress to the course for input and feedback. The goal is to improve a paper's or manuscript's soundness concerning research design, related methods, and/or research ethics prior to its submission for review – aspects that reviewers and editors are typically looking for. The pursued sensitizing of doctoral students for sound research designs, methods, and ethics also implies drawing on and referring students to existing and thematically related courses and resources at the Faculty A+R and, more generally, at TU Wien.

### --- INTERNATIONAL VISIBILITY AND NETWORKING ---

**Annual Symposium:** The Research School will kick off each year with a condensed symposium in March, at the start of the summer term. Experts representing strong – and even controversial – positions within contemporary discourses on transformation will be invited to present

their ideas. The aim is to map the field of transformation and the built environment, and to enable participants to familiarize themselves with leading and emerging ideas. In the first year, the kick-off event will focus on the expertise of the Faculty and the Research School team.

**International Research Colloquium:** The International Research Colloquium is an annual two-day mini conference exclusively for the members of the Doctoral Research Team. Research School participants will get the chance to present their on-going work from their dissertation projects during the event and receive feedback from specifically invited leading international scholars in the field of socio-ecological transformations in architecture and planning.

In preparation for the colloquium, students will share a (draft) paper or book chapter they are currently working on as part of their PhD with two guests to receive in-depth feedback on issues such as style, theoretical foundation, methodology, contribution to the field, targeted journals, or similar. The colloquium will provide space to discuss this feedback individually in dedicated 1-on-1 sessions and to use the concentrated knowledge of international scholars to elaborate potential future collaborations – from research visits to joint courses or novel research and publication projects. As with other formats, doctoral students can collect ECTS for participating in the International Research Colloquium.

*The aim is to invite around 5 guests per colloquium. Selection will be done together with the Doctoral Research Team. Guests might receive financial compensation for their time and/or they might be invited to give public lectures, participate in a panel discussion or suitable lectures as an incentive to participate.*

#### --- TRANSDISCIPLINARY REFLECTION AND IMPACT ---

**Transformative Research Skills Workshop Series:** This workshop series will focus on transdisciplinary and transformative research. It will involve inputs from the Research School Coordinators, as well as external researchers, and potentially international research colloquium guests, if feasible. The workshop series addresses doctoral students' experiences and challenges with transformative research – from applying innovative methodologies and navigating role conflicts (e.g., between being a researcher and a practitioner) to defining and evaluating societal impact, or similar. The specific content of the workshop series will be co-developed with the cohort and adjusted to specific needs. Input from TU-internal and TU-external experts is possible within this format, and the course will potentially be open for master students in Architecture and Spatial Planning.

**Expert Workshop:** The expert workshop will give doctoral researchers the opportunity to work 1-on-1 with external experts. The event aims to enable Doctoral Research Team members to gather feedback from various disciplines and perspectives simultaneously. To this end, the workshop is organized in a world café format, whereby each researcher can receive input from multiple experts. This format fosters multidisciplinary and pluralistic discourse on the work in progress.

#### --- SELF-EFFICACY AND CAREER DEVELOPMENT ---

**Career Development Workshop Series:** This workshop series addresses doctoral students' needs and interests regarding career development. The workshop series will entail input and a space for exchange on career transitions (e.g., from doctoral candidate to post doc, or from academia to praxis), on identifying and "selling" the hard and soft skills necessary for career transitions, and/or on presentation or interview skills in a "critical friends"-setting (e.g., for conference presentations, job interviews, or similar). Akin to the Transformative Research Skills Workshop Series, the concrete content of the workshop series will be co-developed with the cohort and adjusted to their needs. Input from TU-internal and TU-external experts is possible within this format.

## Overview of the Research School's three-year work programme

	JAN	FEB	MAR	APR	MAY	JUN	JUL	AUG	SEP	OCT	NOV	DEC
2026	Writing and publishing		Writing Class			Writing Retreat				Manuscript Development Studio		
	Internation visibility and networking		Kick-Off								1st Internat. Colloquium	
	Transdisciplinary reflection & impact			Transformative Research Skills Workshop Series					Expert Workshop	TRS continued		
	Self-efficacy and career development			Peer2peer exchange (individually organized, potentially mentored if needed), supplemented by writing groups, mini research teams, or similar								
2027	Writing and publishing	MDS continued	Research Design & Methods Studio			Writing Retreat				Manuscript Development Studio		
	Internation visibility and networking		Second Year Symposium								2nd Internat. Colloquium	
	Transdisciplinary reflection & impact	TRS continued	Third Mission & Societal Impact Workshop Series						Expert Workshop	TMSI continued		
	Self-efficacy and career development			Peer2peer exchange (individually organized, potentially mentored if needed), supplemented by writing groups, mini research teams, or similar								
2028	Writing and publishing	MDS continued				Writing Retreat				Manuscript Development Studio		
	Internation visibility and networking		Thrid Year Symposium								3rd Internat. Colloquium	
	Transdisciplinary reflection & impact	TMSI continued	Career Development Workshop Series						Expert Workshop	CD continued		
	Self-efficacy and career development			Peer2peer exchange (individually organized, potentially mentored if needed), supplemented by writing groups, mini research teams, or similar								

Formats displayed with color frame are single- or multi-day events. All others are semester-long or continuous formats.  
 Formats with grey dotted frame are courses with ECTS credits.