

Restoration Ecology Research Group – Mentor–Mentee Agreement (PhD Students)

Welcome!

This agreement outlines the responsibilities and expectations for both the mentor and the mentee during your PhD in the Restoration Ecology Research Group. By working together, we aim to support your growth as an independent researcher and ensure a productive and positive doctoral experience.

1. What You Can Expect from Your Mentor

I, as your mentor, commit to:

- **Scientific guidance:** I will help define your PhD research direction, design experiments, maintain field and lab protocols, secure funding, and connect you with collaborators and relevant literature.
- **Mentorship and career support:** I will support your professional development, including writing, presentations, teaching, and career planning. Guidance will be more intensive during the first 1–2 years, gradually shifting toward your independence.
- **Communication and feedback:** I will provide regular meetings and timely, constructive feedback on your experimental design, written drafts, and presentations. Google Docs will be used for collaborative editing when possible.
- **Conference and seminar support:** I will encourage and, when possible, fund your attendance at conferences, seminars, and workshops. I will also support applications for external funding opportunities.
- **Safe and supportive environment:** I will maintain a professional, welcoming, and harassment-free atmosphere. You can raise any concerns or conflicts immediately so they can be resolved constructively.

2. Responsibilities of the Mentee (You)

I, as a mentee, commit to the following:

2.1 Take Ownership of Your Education

- I will understand the requirements of my program or scholarship and ensure I meet them, seeking guidance as needed.
- I will maintain regular communication with my mentor, keeping her informed about my research progress and promptly reporting any challenges, delays, or changes that may affect the progress of my work.
- I will meet deadlines and allow sufficient time for my mentor to provide feedback.
- I will work toward independence and ensure the quality of my work.

- I will seek professional development in communication, mentoring, teaching, and ethical standards while prioritizing research progress.

2.2 Develop Research Skills

- **Read scientific literature:** I will follow suggested papers, run literature searches, and track new publications in relevant journals (e.g., Restoration Ecology, Applied Vegetation Science). I will dedicate regular time to stay updated, explore important references, follow Early View alerts, and incorporate them into my research.
- **Maintain detailed research notebooks:** I will record all research activities in English, including protocols, observations, measurements, and unexpected results. My notes will ensure reproducibility, support thesis writing, and help track the development of my project.
- **Research integrity:** I will adhere to the principles of responsible research conduct, including accurate data recording, transparent reporting of results, proper citation of sources, and avoidance of plagiarism or data manipulation.
- **Improve writing and presentation skills:** I will prepare initial drafts and figures before text and revise based on mentor feedback. I accept multiple rounds of revisions before submitting abstracts or papers. I will aim to participate in seminars and at least one international conference per year to practice presenting my results.
- **Accept feedback and handle failure:** I understand that feedback from reviewers, colleagues, committee members, instructors, and my mentor is intended to improve my work. Rejections and criticism are part of scientific life and do not reflect my value; I will use feedback constructively.
- **Plan experiments and research:** I will design research that addresses key questions, includes appropriate controls, manages time efficiently, and sets short-, medium-, and long-term goals. I will gradually develop my own scientific ideas and project independence.
- **Gain international experience:** Take advantage of opportunities for internships or research stays abroad where possible, provided they are professionally aligned with the group's research, your thesis, or your PhD project.
- **Pursue funding:** I will apply for fellowships, traineeships, and travel grants to support research and professional growth. I understand that proposal writing develops critical thinking and project-planning skills.
- **Mentor and develop management skills:** During later stages of my PhD, I will seek opportunities to mentor BSc or MSc students. I understand that mentoring supports my research progress and develops professional supervisory skills.

2.3 Contribute to the Group

- **Pay it forward:** I will help train new students in research procedures, literature searching, software use, and group practices. I understand that science is a community and will share knowledge and support others.

- **Teamwork:** I will assist colleagues voluntarily with fieldwork or demanding experiments whenever possible, without compromising my own deadlines.
- **Data and protocols:** I understand that research data generated during my work belongs to the research group. I will store organized copies of datasets, scripts, and protocols in shared locations and ensure that all materials remain accessible and well documented, particularly when completing my thesis or leaving the group.
- **Professional conduct and communication:** When using other labs, I will follow their rules, leave spaces clean, and report any incidents. I will communicate primarily in English with international colleagues, using Hungarian or other languages only when necessary and politely.
- **Respect and collegiality:** I will treat all group members with respect, value differences in personalities and work styles, and contribute to a positive lab environment.
- **Safety and environment:** I will maintain clean shared spaces (labs, offices, field stations), follow all safety procedures, and report accidents, equipment issues, or serious mistakes promptly.

2.4 Meetings

- **One-on-one meetings:** I will come prepared with updates on research progress and proposed next steps, sharing written material in advance for mentor review.
- **Group meetings:** I will attend group meetings and institute events (ÖBI seminars, R clubs, journal clubs). Occasional absences are acceptable with prior notice, but repeated or habitual absence is unacceptable.

2.5 Annual Evaluations

- I understand that my progress will be reviewed annually to discuss achievements, challenges, and plans for the upcoming year.
- I will prepare an annual plan outlining manuscripts, conferences, and fieldwork, as well as an annual report summarizing progress, which we will review together.
- I acknowledge that institute-wide evaluations will also take place, and I will discuss the results with my mentor in person.
- I will use feedback from these evaluations to adjust research plans, set goals, and improve my professional development.

2.6 Authorship

I understand that authorship reflects a substantial intellectual or experimental contribution to a project. As a PhD student leading a study, I am generally expected to be the first author, while the principal investigator will be the last author, and other co-authors will be listed according to their contributions. I will actively participate in research and discussions to earn authorship and take responsibility for understanding and defending all aspects of any work I author or co-author. I acknowledge that papers should be completed before leaving the lab, and if they are not, authorship may be reassigned in consultation with my mentor.

3. Compliance with the Agreement

Both mentor and mentee are expected to adhere to the responsibilities outlined above. Serious or repeated violations of this agreement, including failure to follow safety procedures, meet deadlines, or maintain professional conduct, may result in termination of supervision or discontinuation of the PhD project. Such decisions will be made in consultation with the mentee and in accordance with university regulations.

4. Acknowledgement and Signatures

By signing, we acknowledge that we have read, understood, and agree to uphold this mentor-mentee agreement.

Mentee Name: _____ Date: _____

Mentor Name: _____ Date: _____