

# Land Atmosphere Interactions group at Leipzig University

## Code of conduct

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### Mission

Our group aims to study the role of the biosphere in mediating carbon, water and energy exchanges between the atmosphere and the land surface, and the climate-biosphere feedbacks that arise from those interactions. Specific topics include the links between climate change, natural variability and extreme events and vegetation dynamics, with a focus on the carbon cycle, changes in disturbance regimes and ecosystem resilience under climate change and the influence of land-use and management on the terrestrial biosphere. By combining observation-based data with data-driven and process-based modelling, we aim to reduce uncertainties in key components of the Earth System, particularly the feedbacks between climate and the carbon-cycle and better constrain the contribution of land ecosystems for climate change mitigation.

### Core values

- We strive for meaningful, high-quality and innovative scientific work that has a long-lasting positive impact in our scientific field and to society;
- We value all dimensions of scientific work: research, teaching, communication, outreach and community service (e.g., review, editorial, representative committees);
- We conduct our research with the highest level of integrity and transparency;
- Our research is [open](#) and [reproducible](#) (see also *workflow*) and we adhere to the good scientific practice [statutes of the University of Leipzig](#) and of [DFG](#).
- We embrace diversity as a core aspect of scientific excellence and strive to promote an open, inclusive and supportive working environment.

## Work culture

### Philosophy

- Science is a team effort! We support each other in achieving our goals, nurture collaboration and solidarity, recognize and celebrate our achievements, give due credit and value discussion.
- We follow a positive feedback culture. We discuss our work openly within the group and provide constructive criticism. We acknowledge the contributions and give credit to those who contributed by providing help, new ideas and constructive critics.
- We give visibility to all of those contributing to the work through proper acknowledgement and fair attribution of responsibilities in communication and outreach.
- **I expect independent and self-driven work. As your supervisor, my role is to help you develop your ideas, scientific independence and [career](#) in the best way, not to give instructions.**
- **The regular meetings are for you!** Use them to receive feedback and discuss questions and problems.

### Diversity, equity, inclusion

- We are all unique and deserve to be fully respected, supported and encouraged, regardless of our origin, gender, sexual orientation, age, state of health, [neurotype](#), life-choices or other individual backgrounds.
- Diversity in our individual backgrounds enriches our team but also our collective science through different perspectives, past experience, and diverse abilities.
- We respect and protect personal boundaries. We strive for a safe and open environment to discuss our individual backgrounds and learn from each other, but respect those who might not want to discuss them openly in the workspace.
- **Any form of discrimination, harassment, or bullying will not be tolerated.** A person is **discriminated** against when they are treated less favourably than another in a comparable situation because of their individual backgrounds. **Harassment** corresponds to behaviour towards a person that causes mental or emotional suffering, which includes repeated unwanted contacts without a reasonable purpose, insults, threats, touching, or offensive language. **Bullying** is defined as actions violating a person's dignity and lasting for a longer period of time. More information on German law applicable to discrimination harassment and bullying in the workplace can be found [here](#).
- We all act to prevent and stop any form of discrimination, harassment and bullying. Any such case should be immediately reported to Ana, or to the [University services](#).
- We engage in and value training activities as a means to keep up with the best standards in promoting Diversity, Equality and Inclusion in academia.

## Communication

Communication is key to promote a good working environment and the group's core values in our research and teaching activities.

- We communicate with all colleagues and students in a professional, inclusive and respectful manner - this includes fellow scientists but also technicians, administration and support staff.
- Provide criticism and feedback always in a constructive and respectful way.
- Communicate transparently. Involve all concerned in exchanges about scientific work, teaching, important discussions, and express your needs, expectations and concerns clearly.
- Give credit. If a colleague has provided meaningful contributions to your work, you should acknowledge their contribution (and consider inviting them as co-author for your publication, see [Authorship and Credit](#)).
- Value feedback. When asking for feedback (publications, posters, presentations etc.) give all co-authors at least one week (or two, for publications) so they can have the time to give meaningful comments and ask if they need more time.
- Be patient, kind and accountable. No-one is perfect, and we all have bad days sometimes. We treat others in a kind way and with consideration of their personal challenges and acknowledge our own wrongdoing (and apologise) when needed.
- We consider, respect and learn about intercultural and other differences in daily communication.
- If you are out of office (sick leave, vacation, conferences), activate an out of office email. This will let others know that you can't reply, and reduce external pressures.

We apply these communication guidelines internally as well as in all other interactions in professional context (faculty colleagues, university staff, external partners).

We follow a socially-responsible and fair strategy for external communication (outreach, conferences, etc.): this means we ensure the visibility of all members contributing to our work and promote diversity in assigning communication roles and leadership of activities.

## Work/private life balance

Our lives are much richer than just our work time. Keeping a good balance between work and non-work life is fundamental to keep personal and family balance, motivation and high-quality work.

- Rest and free-time are integral parts of our personal balance: we make sure to take time for fun, socialising and sleep!
- Respect and protect personal boundaries. We do not expect replies and do not organise work events outside of office hours (evenings, weekends, holidays).
- We include everyone by keeping work-related socialising events to working hours. Socialising events are 100% optional.

## Mental Health

Most people will struggle with emotional and mental health balance throughout their career/life. [Stress-related symptoms](#) can manifest themselves physically (pain, fatigue, stomach and skin issues, ...), psychologically (insomnia, anxiety, depression, ...) or behaviorally (irritability, isolation, etc). These are not inevitable and can be addressed with changes in the workload, routines, etc., once identified.

- We prevent mental health issues by keeping an open and inclusive work culture, addressing conflicts, and supporting work/private life balance.
- We let others know when we need help: others might not always see if we have a problem, and can only help once they know it.
- We pay attention to signs of stress and mental health issues in ourselves and others. In doubt, the GP (Hausarzt) should be contacted as soon as possible for a professional assessment.
- Ana is always available to talk in confidence about whatever issue you might be struggling with ([phone OK for emergencies](#))!
- See the page on [Mental Health in the workplace](#) by the German Govt.

## Good scientific practice

We strictly adhere to the [DFG Guidelines](#) for good scientific practice and conduct our research activities following the highest scientific standards.

All group members are responsible for ensuring compliance with good scientific practices in every activity of our work life-cycle. We commit to report breaches in good scientific practice whenever applicable using the appropriate channels (see [Conflicts](#)).

## Authorship & Credit

- An author is an individual who has made a genuine, identifiable contribution to the content of a research publication of text, data or software. All authors agree on the final version of the work to be published.
- The contribution must add to the research content of the publication. What constitutes a genuine and identifiable contribution must be evaluated on a case-by-case basis but typically includes: the development and conceptual design of the research project, or the gathering, collection, acquisition or provision of data, software or sources, or the analysis/evaluation or interpretation of data, sources, and conclusions drawn from them, or the drafting of the manuscript.
- Authorships should be openly discussed with everyone who made a meaningful contribution to a given work. Be considerate of support from colleagues, even if they are not advisors or members of your project, as well as technical support.
- Providing data or resources only does not constitute sufficient justification for an authorship. However, a PI that provided crucial data or resources should be given the

opportunity to contribute actively as a co-author in publications that emerge from those data/resources.

- If a contribution is not sufficient to justify authorship, the individual's support may be properly acknowledged in footnotes, a foreword or an acknowledgement.
- Honorary authorship where no contribution was made is not permissible.

## Open science and reproducibility

Independent verification of data and results is a fundamental principle of scientific research. The underpinning mechanisms of the [scientific method](#) depend on the ability of researchers to reproduce the findings of published studies in order to strengthen evidence, test hypotheses, and build upon existing work.

- Our science must therefore be reproducible. This means that anyone with the same raw data should be able to reproduce our results exactly based on the documentation we provide (e.g. a paper). If this is not possible, then results cannot be trusted and lose, therefore, their scientific validity.
- For research to be reproducible, detailed and rigorous documentation of the data, assumptions, methods, modelling setup, etc. is fundamental. This includes not just the final publications but daily activities and revisions of the analysis.
- This also means that the **data and code that we produce should be open**, and we should aim to publish in open access journals. Like this, anyone can access and verify our results. Open science is also a priority at [European level](#).
- The use of version control software like Github/Gitlab is highly encouraged as a means to ensure documentation of pipelines, version control and of making data and software publicly available upon publication of results. See an introduction video [here](#).
- We share data internally but respect the main author's/supervisor's decision on when to make the data/results available externally (e.g. publications, collaborators).

## Management

### Giving and receiving feedback

- I commit to providing constructive feedback in all dimensions of work (science, organisation, communication, interpersonal interactions, etc.).
- Likewise, I appreciate constructive feedback as a means to improve my supervision and ensure a positive work culture.
- Work meetings provide a setting for bilateral and regular feedback.
- For PhD students, more detailed feedback is provided in the PAC meetings (6-12 months). For other staff, this will be ensured by annual appraisals.
- Annually, we will organise one meeting of staff where the group can bring up issues that need improvement or complain.

## Organisation and workflow

- I block time for regular meetings on my calendar for each person. Typically weekly for early PhD stages and bi-weekly for PD and other staff. This is arranged at the start of your contract and can be adjusted whenever needed.
- Prepare your **individual meeting** in advance: what do you want feedback on? What are the problems? What are the next steps?
- Use calendar invites for your meetings, and add all partners to the event. Like this, when you need to change, all will know.
- We have **biweekly group meetings**. Each person brings one slide to share with the group, and one person presents a longer scientific presentation of work in progress. These meetings are for you to practise presentation skills and get feedback/help.
- Use github for code management and versioning (see Reproducibility). You can add Ana and other team members to your repositories.
- Organise your time and work! There is no single solution that fits all, but make sure that you find a set up to organise your work flow, time planning, meetings, files, emails, literature etc. This helps to avoid problems and reduce stress. Get tips on this from Ana and your colleagues.

## Career development

One of the most wonderful aspects of science is that we have the opportunity to keep learning, challenging and developing ourselves. Career development is an integral part of our work and should be appreciated.

- I commit to support you in developing your career towards your goals, regardless of whether they are in science, industry, policy, etc.
- Learning German is highly encouraged (offered at LU by the [Graduate Academy](#)).
- Training in soft and hard skills is an integral part of continuous learning and of career development and you are incentivised to take time to do so.
- Specific training activities to be taken (when during working hours) should be discussed with Ana beforehand.

## Personal issues, conflicts

Academia is known to be a stressful environment due to a variety of reasons (competitiveness, high-pace, uncertainty in results and careers, ...). We strive to promote a balanced workplace (see above) and take care of ours and our colleagues' well-being.

- **We prevent conflicts by adhering to a positive group culture** and the rules of [good scientific practice](#).
- We strive to create a safe space to discuss our problems openly. We do not judge people based on their different abilities and respect their personal challenges.
- We report problems as soon as possible. This includes problems with the workspace, conflicts with colleagues and/or your advisors, discrimination harassment or bullying (see above) but also eventual personal issues that might make daily work more challenging.

**The earlier we identify problems, the easiest it is to address them, individually or together.**

- Conflicts or problems within the group or with external collaborators should be reported to Ana, who will then help following the appropriate steps.
- This includes potential issues in the interactions with Ana as supervisor. However, in those cases, complaints can be brought to the appropriate bodies at Institute (direction) and University level.
- The Office of Ombudspersons offers advice and support to scholars at Leipzig University in matters concerning good academic practice – and how academic dishonesty can undermine this.

### **Vacation, illness, parental leave**

- **Vacation** days should be taken as much as possible in the same year. While they need to be reported, you are free to decide when to take them. Vacation request procedures are explained [here](#).
- **If you are sick**, you should take time off to ensure good recovery. Sick leave longer than 3 days requires a doctor's leave and German law ensures that you are paid your salary while sick up to 6 weeks. Information about sick leave can be found [here](#).
- If there are personal issues that affect your ability to work but do not constitute grounds for sick leave, and no vacation can be taken, please talk with Ana as soon as possible to find the best solution.
- After the birth of a child, **mothers and fathers have the right to take a break from work to care for their child** and spend time with their family. You can request up to three years off work (unpaid), and apply for parental allowance. Find more information [here](#).

### **Onboarding and offboarding**

- Each group member is responsible for the good onboarding of new group members.
- The group's Notion space serves as a means to collect all the relevant information for incoming members.
- All members commit to update the Notion space regularly when learning about relevant information useful for newcomers.
- When leaving, all members commit to clean and archive their data (scripts should be in GitHub/GitLab), pass on the workspace/materials in the same state that they were received and ensure the reproducibility of their results.