



NEWSLETTER 1/2020

MSc Urban Climate and Sustainability

The MSc Urban Climate and Sustainability will produce high calibre graduates equipped with skills and knowledge to assess and manage climate change in the urban environment in a sustainable manner.

Coordinator:

- Glasgow Caledonian University (UK)

Partners:

- LAB University of Applied Sciences (FI)
- University of Huelva (ES)
- Dresden University of Applied Sciences (DE)

Erasmus Mundus Joint Master Degrees (EMJMDs)

https://eacea.ec.europa.eu/erasmus-plus/library/emjmd-catalogue_en

Co-funded by the
Erasmus+ Programme
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More about MURCS: www.murcs.eu

What has happened until now

The MURCS 2018 Cohort's studies had arrived to the graduation stage: master thesis works had been written and submitted, grades had been received and now the last step is for the receipt of master degree certificates from the universities. In addition, stay tuned for the upcoming publication book created by first Cohort jointly, where the collection of research articles based on master theses of students is going to be published.

Exceptionally, this year had been challenging for contact meetings due to pandemic COVID-19. Our annual The Consortium-Industry Liaison Group (CILG) meeting could not take place due to the travelling restrictions and recommendations of our countries. However, due to the stable usage of internet connection, our project group was able to meet on monthly and weekly basis to continue the work.

The MURCS 2019 Cohort studies had completed second semester in Finland and moved to the third semester in Spain. Certainly, COVID-19 pandemic influenced the process of studying in Lahti: starting from mid-March it became virtual for the students. Despite the initial difficulties of changing to the virtual environment, our students had successfully completed all courses and managed to safely relocate to the Huelva in Spain in order to continue their third semester and majority of students even worked for internships during the semester. Growing impact of second wave of COVID-19 has not affected much the student process: students successfully completed third semester in Spain as planned with using hybrid model of teaching.



Photo 1. Socially distant MURCS cohort 2019 (Jose Duenas)

Furthermore, COVID-19 has also made an impact to the MURCS 2020 Cohort. All candidates were selected and approved in the normal schedule, however the start of studies in Glasgow is moved from the September 2020 to January 2021. Hopefully, no more changes will be coming for this group and they can start studying as normal in January. Keeping fingers crossed!



MUrCS continues!

In July our programme team had received the delightful news: our master degree program received positive decision from European Commission on the further funding! This secures MUrCS position until 2026 and allows to recruit four more intakes for the MUrCS programme. The group got a new name: MUrCS^{1.5} as to promote producing high calibre graduates to understand, assess and manage climate resilience in cities to live within a 1.5°C warmer world. The enhanced approach of MUrCS^{1.5} will integrate three themes in a specific manner – science of nature-based solutions as the approach to mitigation, with circular economy as the driver for urban planning, with sustainability leadership as the management goal).

Photo 2. After COVID-19 reunion in Finland (Raju Bala)

The MUrCS^{1.5} Consortium has now grown to include the Glasgow Caledonian University (**GCU**), UK, LAB University of Applied Sciences (**LAB**), Finland, University of Huelva (**UHU**), Spain and University of Applied Sciences Dresden, Germany (**HTWD**). The consortium includes five academic Associate Partners from Japan, Sri Lanka, Turkey, South Africa and Brazil plus eleven local authorities, public and private sector bodies to facilitate problem-based learning and industry-relevant thesis projects in a work placement-setting.

MUrCS 2020 application process

The third application round was held in fall 2019 and selection process was executed in spring 2020. This time the number of registered applicants almost doubled, and we received 416 submitted applications. After careful consideration and selection, 22 students were admitted to the programme and they will start their studies in January 2021 in Glasgow.

MUrCS 2020 Application Process

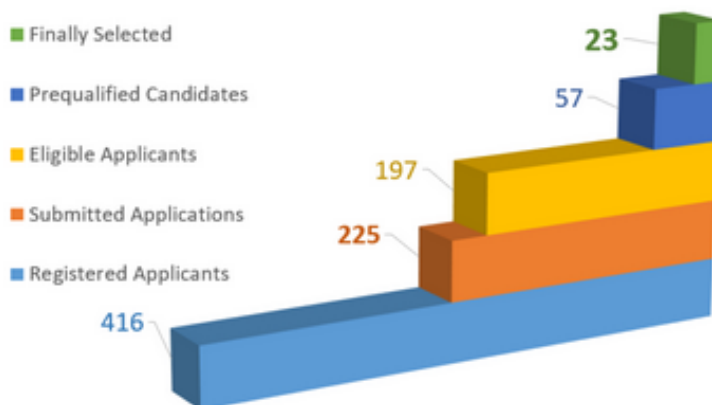


Figure 1. MUrCs Application Process 2020 (Hans Rosenlund)



Meet our new partner: Dresden University of Applied Sciences (HTWD)

Meet HENNING:



Prof. Dr.-Ing. Henning Günther is responsible for Garden and Landscape Engineering at HTW Dresden's Faculty of Agriculture/Environment/Chemistry.

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After an apprenticeship as gardener in tree nursery Henning graduated in Landscape Architecture at TU Dresden. He worked at TU Berlin and Hannover University as well as Geisenheim and Nürtingen Universities of Applied Sciences, where he was visiting professor for watercourse development. Henning has professional experience as landscape architect in restoration and design of near-natural water bodies. At HTW Dresden, he teaches urban landscape engineering and green space management. His research focus is on near-natural watercourse development and rainwater management related to vegetation and plants in the context of urban green infrastructures.

Henning is active in the German Association of Building Greening and the German and European Associations of Soil and Water Bioengineering.

Meet JENS:

Prof. Dr.-Ing. habil. Jens Engel is head of the Geotechnical Department at HTW Dresden's Faculty of Civil Engineering.

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After an apprenticeship as construction worker Jens finished his studies as civil engineer at TU Dresden, since working as specialist for foundation engineering, earth works and soil mechanics.

His main teaching areas are soil mechanics, engineering geology, foundation engineering and maintenance of built structures. Jens leads experimental and theoretical exercises and excursions to sites and test fields as part of the courses. To investigate stabilization effects of various methods in Engineering Biology, an earth pyramid with different substrates and a lysimeter station have been installed and are used in research and teaching.

A focus of Jens's scientific work are problems in unsaturated soils in connection with recultivation layers of landfills and other earth structures. Several projects were undertaken jointly with partners in Germany and the Czech Republic.



Meet SEBASTIAN:



Dipl.-Ing. (FH) Sebastian Wolter is a member of geotechnical staff at HTW Dresden's Faculty of Civil Engineering.

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After his vocational training as a forestry worker, Sebastian studied horticulture at HTW Dresden. Today, his main areas of work are laboratory investigations on soils. HTW's Geotechnical Department has an excellently equipped laboratory for soil mechanics available for scientific, practical and educational projects.

Sebastian has comprehensive knowledge and practical experiences in the field of soil mechanical testing and methods of Engineering Biology. He is the expert for issues related to using plants for the stabilization of soil and earth structures.

Besides of his research work in the laboratory, he teaches students and vocational apprentices to use testing methods for the determination of soil-mechanical and soil-physical parameters including the investigation of artificial substrates as building or recultivation materials.



Meet our new partner: Dresden University of Applied Sciences (HTWD)



Meet CORNELIUS:

Prof. em. Dipl.-Ing. Cornelius Scherzer is a member of HTW Dresden's Faculty of Agriculture/Environment/Chemistry.

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Cornelius has been working at Universities in Berlin and Hannover and in private practice as landscape architect throughout Germany before joining HTW Dresden. His teaching and research cover fields of history and conservation, design and management of public, institutional and private green open spaces.

Within his professional and academic community, Cornelius has connections to the private, public and voluntary sectors. He is committed to the enhancement of open spaces and to a fair and responsible urban and landscape development.

Collaboration with ERASMUS-partners includes Belgium, Finland, Italy, Poland, Sweden, Turkey and the UK. Cornelius is looking forward to meeting MURCS students and colleagues aiming to jointly propose options for a climate-conscious urban future including strategies and multi-functional concepts for green open spaces.