



## Early career researchers boot camp 2024

On April 11 and 12, 2024, *livMatS* held its fifth early career researcher's boot camp for circa 40 PhD students and Post Docs. The two-day event combined a one-day workshop on *Using AI tools for more efficient science* with a choice of day-two topics to tailor to the diverse interests and stages of early career researchers in *livMatS*.

On day one, participants had a workshop with Dr. Daniel Mertens. The day was split into four sessions. The first half of the day gave an overview of the state of the art of large language model based tools. Daniel demonstrated numerous tools for literature searches and text editing and also gave insights on the importance of prompting with such models. The second half of the day gave the participants opportunity to upload data sets and play with AI tools that turn data into graphical images. The day ended with a glimpse into the immediate future of the rapidly evolving AI world.



The second day offered three parallel workshops: *From Zero to programming using AI tools*, *Job Application Skills in Industry*, and *Coaching Skills for Student Supervision*. The AI programming for beginners allowed participants to actually play with and generate Python script for individual research questions and/or purposes. Participants ended the workshop better understanding how they can use AI tools to do coding for their specific research project needs. The workshop on *Job Application Skills* focused on giving participants tools to better assess their competencies and better understand what industry tends to look for when hiring postgrads. Participants also gained insights on crafting a cover letter to highlight competencies as well as the interviewing process. The third workshop on *Student Supervision* gave participants theory and techniques for mentoring/supervising students in research projects. The participants benefitted from insights from the trainer as well as sharing challenging supervision issues with peers in the course.

The 2024 boot camp aimed to raise awareness about the benefits and pitfalls of using AI in one's research while also giving students opportunity to develop soft skills vital during their academic career and later on in industry.