DIGITAL HUMANITIES (DIGIHUM)

ACADEMY PROGRAMME 2020–2022

Programme memorandum

1 JUSTIFICATIONS AND BACKGROUND

Digitalisation is profoundly transforming society. The changes are also affecting ways of doing research. In the past couple of decades bioinformatics, for instance, has integrated information technology with biological sciences and medicine to evolve a significant new method that is present in much of modern biological and medical research. In the humanities and social sciences, the corresponding transformation is only just getting underway, and it promises huge potential.

Digital humanities is a new concept that refers to the application of new technology in humanities and social sciences research. One example of research in this area is corpus linguistics and its computational methods, which have in many ways changed and expanded the methods of linguistics research. All humanities and social sciences research depends on large datasets and insights gleaned from these datasets, and therefore every field of research will be touched by these new technologies. Old questions can be revisited on an evidence basis by using extensive datasets, which can also be used to address completely new questions.

The Digital Humanities Academy Programme, a research programme funded by the Academy of Finland, is designed to address novel methods and techniques in which digital technology and state-of-the-art computational science methods are used for collecting, managing and analysing data in humanities and social sciences research as well as for modelling humanities and social science phenomena. The development of research in these areas will require broad-based collaboration involving not only researchers in the field, but also technology experts, representatives of memory organisations (libraries, archives) and database administrators and developers. One aspect of the programme is to examine digitalisation as a cultural and social phenomenon.

There is a strong tradition of digital humanities in Finland. By bringing together the existing best knowledge and skills in this field, Finland will put itself in a strong position to develop into a world leader in this rapidly evolving field. The programme is grounded in the needs of basic research, but technological advances in this area also have great potential for practical applications that warrant research.

2 OBJECTIVES

The Digital Humanities Academy Programme will aim to produce new and more comprehensive knowledge and understanding about the themes under investigation. It will seek to foster dialogue and exchange between the disciplines represented by the Academy of Finland's research councils, among other things by integrating methodologies and by networking at national and international level. The programme encourages interdisciplinary or multidisciplinary projects that combine two or more fields of science that employ different methodologies and approaches. The programme's aim is to promote:

- collaboration among producers, processors and users of humanities and social sciences data
- the development of research methods
- ethical examination of the research field
- the usability and awareness of datasets.

The programme is committed to strengthening multidisciplinary cooperation in the field of digital humanities. Therefore, programme funding will only be provided to projects seeking novel perspectives.

It is crucial that the research projects have direct access to high-level IT expertise. The IT or data analytics components of the projects must be clearly described in the research plan.

3 THEMATIC AREAS

The programme consists of three interconnected thematic areas that are not mutually exclusive:

(1) Research into digital interaction and digital services

Research and development in the areas of digital interaction, trends, identities and societal development has great current importance. Both in work and leisure, online interaction is now an important channel of contact and communication, indeed for many people the single most important channel when measured in terms of hours of use. Much of today's political debate also takes place in digital environments. These linguistic, cultural and societal phenomena are some of the issues on which it is possible to shed important new light when approached from the vantage point of the research question and the new datasets and methods.

(2) Employing open, multiform and/or real-time data in research

Digital humanities are often understood simply as the study of textual materials. However, the humanities also make extensive use of spoken materials. Researchers would also have access to valuable video and photo materials, but the processing and analysis of these materials require different kinds of methods than those used with traditional textual materials. More work is also needed to develop methodologies for the analysis of non-machine-readable textual materials such as old manuscripts.

When new and old data are used side by side, one key issue is to improve the usability of existing materials. This can be achieved, for instance, by enriching existing digital materials with identification, location and register data and by linking them with other digital resources.

(3) Data-based analysis and modelling of humanities and social sciences phenomena

Key instruments in the digital humanities toolbox are the methods developed in the field of computer science for the collection, management and analysis of digital materials, as well as statistical data processing tools. These methods can be used in the analysis and modelling of humanities and social sciences phenomena and processes, as well as in examining historical trends in development, processes of linguistic change, or linguistic and cultural encounters by combining different data sources with new kinds of methods. While it is important to invest in developing such computer-based research methods, it is also necessary to bear in mind the requirements of comparability and the reliability of the information produced in relation to many earlier methods.

Open data and open source software can help significantly to enhance the openness, transparency, repeatability and general availability of research results in the humanities and social sciences. The introduction of open data and open source code in humanities research

will significantly facilitate the development of new and universally accessible research tools that best meet the needs and demands stemming from research itself.

In recent years, there has been growing recognition in the field of digital humanities of the need not only for "big data", but also "small" (deep, rich) data, underlining the importance of expertise and knowledge of content that facilitates insightful analysis of data in each specific field. The complementarity of "big" and "small" data opens up many new avenues for research.

4 IMPACT OF PROGRAMME

The Digital Humanities Academy Programme is a genuinely multidisciplinary undertaking and, therefore, its impacts extend beyond humanities and social sciences research and also benefit other disciplines using new information technology.

5 IMPLEMENTATION

The Digital Humanities Academy Programme aims to strengthen interdisciplinary research in the field represented by the programme. Its themes cut across several of the domains of the Academy of Finland's research councils. Besides the Academy Board and the Administration Office, all three Academy research councils have contributed to the preparation of the programme (Culture and Society, Natural Sciences and Engineering, and Biosciences, Health and the Environment).

5.1 FUNDING

The Digital Humanities Academy Programme is a three-year research programme (2020–2022) funded and coordinated by the Academy of Finland. Through the programme, funding is provided to multidisciplinary research conducted by research projects and consortia with a view to supporting national cooperation and networking. A research consortium is a collaboration of independent fixed-term projects working under a joint research plan by combining different methods and research fields with a view to achieving greater added value than is achieved by normal project collaboration. The programme's call for 2020–2022 will provide funding to approximately six projects. The programme's funding budget for 2019 is 3 million euros.

5.2 NATIONAL COOPERATION

The Digital Humanities Academy Programme will include active collaboration with other ongoing thematic research programmes by the Academy of Finland, such as the Academy Programme Media and Society (MEDIASOC). The programme will also take into account relevant programmes and projects by other Finnish organisations.

5.3 INTERNATIONAL COOPERATION

The programme selectively aims to establish cooperation with research funding agencies in other countries that are committed to supporting leading-edge scientific research in the field and that are recognised and attractive partners for Finnish research. Another aim is to collaborate with corresponding and relevant international programmes and projects as well as with leading foreign organisations in the field.

5.4 TIMETABLE

Within the programme, funding will be provided to individual projects and consortium projects (two or more teams) for a maximum of three years in 2020–2022. The funding period is primarily three years, starting on 1 January 2020 and ending on 31 December 2022. The Academy of Finland's funding amounts to a maximum of 400,000 euros per individual project. Consortia can apply for a maximum of 800,000 euros, where each subproject can receive no more than 300,000 euros.

A detailed schedule for the call and the review of applications is given in Chapter 6 of this memorandum. A kick-off seminar will be arranged in early spring 2022.

The final evaluation of the programme will be carried out in 2023. For more information, see section 5.7.

5.5 STEERING GROUP

The programme is run by a steering group composed of members of the Academy's research councils and other expert members. Additional experts may also be invited to the group. The duties of the steering group are as follows:

- to prepare the programme and submit to the programme subcommittee a proposal on projects to be funded
- to propose possible additional calls and/or additional funding to Academy research councils and other funding bodies
- to manage and monitor the programme
- to steer programme coordination
- to be responsible for the final evaluation of the programme
- to promote the application of research results produced within the programme.

5.6 COORDINATION

The programme strives to support and promote the development of the selected projects into a coherent and cohesive structure through cooperation and exchange of information. Programme coordination is the responsibility of the steering group and the programme managers and project officer appointed by the Academy. They are responsible for ensuring this development, working closely with the projects to facilitate the attainment of the objectives set for the programme. The aim is to ensure that the projects reinforce each other and that the programme generates new multidisciplinary research knowledge. Consequently, the principal investigators of the projects will be required to commit themselves to the programme objectives and to cooperating actively throughout the programme and during the programme evaluation upon its completion.

The project PIs will:

- assume responsibility for and report on the scientific progress of the project and on the use of the funds in accordance with the instructions of the programme manager and relevant funding bodies

- see to that the whole research team attends all meetings, seminars and workshops organised by the programme coordination, and facilitate cooperation and exchange of information between the research teams within the programme
- take part in producing reviews, syntheses and information material around the programme, and actively disseminate information about the programme's progress and results on public and scientific forums.

During the course of the programme, the research projects will participate in events arranged together with end-users of research results and in any other activities designed to disseminate information to different stakeholders.

5.7 FINAL EVALUATION

The implementation and results of the programme will be evaluated upon its completion. The implementation of the evaluation will be planned in detail as the programme progresses, but the evaluation will consider issues such as the following:

- attainment of programme aims
- programme implementation (coordination, role of the steering group, project activity)
- evidence of impacts
- national and international cooperation
- publicity and visibility of the research.

The evaluation may be carried out as part of a more extensive evaluation of Academy programmes or other national programmes and in cooperation with other national and international actors.

The research teams receiving funding are required to report on the progress of their projects in accordance with the decision of the steering group and to submit a research report to the Academy upon project completion. The reports must include information on, for example, scientific publications produced and theses and doctoral dissertations completed within the programme.

6 APPLICATION GUIDELINES AND REVIEW CRITERIA

The *Research Programme on Digital Humanities* has a two-stage call. At the first stage, applicants submit letters of intent including short plans of intent (see guidelines in the Academy's April 2019 call). **The deadline for letters of intent is 24 April 2019 at 16.15. The deadline is non-negotiable.** The steering group will make a proposal to the programme subcommittee appointed by the Academy Board on projects that, based on the letters of intent, would best match the programme aims. The steering group's decisions will be notified in June 2019.

Applicants requested to submit full applications shall prepare a complete research plan and submit it in the Academy's online services no later than 4 September 2019 at 16.15 (see guidelines in the Academy's April 2019 call). The deadline is non-negotiable. The letters of intent will be reviewed by an expert panel composed of members of the steering group and possible other experts. The full applications will be reviewed by an international expert panel. On the basis of the scientific review of the applications and considering the programme aims, the steering group will prepare a proposal to the programme subcommittee on the projects to be funded. The programme subcommittee will make the funding decisions in December 2019 at the latest.

The applications will be reviewed in line with the Academy's general review criteria for Academy Programmes (see www.aka.fi/en > Review & funding decisions > How applications are reviewed). Besides the general review criteria, focus will also be placed on the objectives specific to the programme, as described in Chapter 2 of this memorandum. This aspect will be considered under section "Relevance of the project to the research programme" on the review form.

7 MORE INFORMATION

This programme memorandum is available as a PDF download at www.aka.fi/digihum > EN.

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