



Nordic Humanities Center

Call for a Collective Research Project: 6 Senior Fellows

Deadline: Wednesday, March 5, 2025

The Nordic Humanities Center invites applications from permanent faculty members at the faculties of Humanities at the University of Southern Denmark and the University of Copenhagen for a collective research project that will include 6 senior fellowships from February 1, 2026 – January 31, 2027.

The fellowships are one-year full-time fellowships to pursue a collective research project in the center and to co-organize the center's seminars and outreach activities in cooperation with the center coordinator, the head of communication, and the center director.

Nordic Humanities Center

The Nordic Humanities Center is an innovative and ambitious center of advanced study that fosters new ways of doing humanities research. The center constitutes a forum for collective humanities research that engages major societal challenges, and it connects humanities scholarship with societal actors and institutions to effect positive social change. Established with the generous support of The A.P. Møller Relief Foundation, the center is a collaboration between the Faculties of Humanities at the University of Copenhagen and the University of Southern Denmark. Every year, a new group of scholars from the two universities will come together to marshal insights from the humanities to develop new perspectives, frames, narratives, or solutions for one of the many societal challenges we face – at local, regional, and global levels.

To handle urgent challenges such as inequality, war, health, the climate crisis, or artificial intelligence, we often turn to the natural sciences, the social sciences, or to technology. But insights into culture, language, history, philosophy or communication from the human sciences are crucial, if often overlooked, resources for addressing central societal challenges and building better collective futures. We need a more precise understanding of the historical and cultural preconditions of the challenges we face, we need new humanistic visions for our future coexistence, and we need a tighter integration of the human sciences with adjacent knowledge fields and, especially, with stakeholders and societal institutions. Uniting scholars from the two humanities faculties and reaching out to researchers in adjacent fields, the Nordic Humanities Center engages leading scholars in a collective, interdisciplinary, and creative endeavor to offer alternative perspectives on – and potential solutions to – some of our contemporary grand challenges.

We are looking for tenured scholars who are able and willing to put their expertise to use in a new way and to work together with other scholars of different backgrounds in an interdisciplinary effort to explore and rethink a major societal challenge. A collaborative and exploratory mode of inquiry is therefore key to the working methods and the research conducted in the center. Through joint discussions, readings, workshops, writing retreats, and other activities, the fellows will work together on a range of outputs: research publications first and foremost, but also reports, and policy papers along with dissemination to the broader public



in the form of podcasts, short videos, briefs, newspaper articles, etc. A key objective is to integrate humanities scholarship more closely with societal actors and institutions to create impact in the form of positive social change. Activities will therefore involve stakeholder meetings, events, and collaborations with, for example, cultural institutions, NGOs, and politicians. These activities are also intended to catalyze new ideas for further collaborations and research projects beyond the fellowship year.

Between 2024-2028 the center hosts five year-long collective research projects. The center now invites proposals for the third collective research project.

Project

The center invites proposals that address a major societal challenge with global as well as regional and national dimensions. From an interdisciplinary perspective, the group should engage with issues such as misinformation, rising inequality, the climate crisis, the erosion of democratic institutions or public trust, the global rise of unhappiness, the uncertainties wrought by advanced AI – or other major challenges. The proposal should delineate how the combined competencies of the team will seek to analyze, frame, intervene in, and manage the challenge at a meaningful scale of engagement. The project should establish collaborations with one or more external partners who will be involved with the project on a recurring basis throughout the year to maximize societal impact.

The third collective project runs from February 1, 2026 – January 31, 2027.

Project Team

The project should be a collective endeavor undertaken by a single research group established across the two universities. The team should comprise 1 co-PI and 2 senior scholars from SDU and 1 co-PI and 2 senior scholars from UCPH – all should be tenured faculty members. The core team thereby comprises 6 scholars. In addition, the budget includes 10 months' salary for visiting international senior fellows. These funds may be used to host either one visiting fellow for all 10 months or they may be divided among up to 6 visiting fellows for shorter stays. To strengthen collaborative networks in the region, some of the visiting scholars should hail from the Nordic countries. To enhance impact and forge strong ties to societal institutions relevant for the project, applicants should include one or two non-academics from, for example, ministries, NGOs, companies, or cultural institutions among the visiting fellows. The non-academic visiting fellows may come from Denmark.

Organization

The Nordic Humanities Center is a single center housed at two universities. Fellows will have an office space at either SDU or KU. To ensure synergy and a good working environment, fellows are required to be in residence in the center offices at least two days a week during the project period. Once a week – every Tuesday – the two groups will meet – in Copenhagen one week, the following week in Odense. These meetings will provide the opportunity for joint discussions, work groups, internal center events, and for planning outreach activities in collaboration with the two project coordinators. Fellows who are selected for the center must be available for various preboarding activities during the nine months leading up to the launch of the project. Fellows should also expect that dissemination activities will extend beyond the fellowship period, and all fellows are expected to participate in the center's other activities and promote its overall mission.



Application

The two co-PIs are asked to supply the following to the center:

- A single proposal for the collective project (max 5 pages, 12 point Times New Roman, 1,5 spacing, excluding references) which outlines:
 - 1) the concrete societal challenge that the research team has identified and intends to tackle and explains how the research expertise of each team member will help address it
 - 2) a detailed plan for the year with draft descriptions of activities and events in the form of a series of integrated, connected outreach activities and collaborations with external partners and stakeholders that will support the center's ambitions of societal impact. The plan should also include a description of expected research output, including the team's contribution to the written formats the center has established (*HUM briefs* and the book series *Udfordringer*).
 - 3) a reflection on how the team will develop productive collaborative work methods and other effective formats most relevant for the project.
- CVs of all participants (max 2 pages per fellow).
- Approval of the fellowship period from the candidate's head of department

Selection Criteria

Applications will be assessed by the center's steering group, which consists of Dean Simon Møberg Torp, Dean Kirsten Busch Nielsen, Head of Department Anne Jensen, Head of Department Per Krogh Hansen, and the center director Anders Engberg-Pedersen. Preference will be given to an interdisciplinary project with the greatest potential for collaboration, synergy, creativity, and impact, and with the most persuasive plan for outreach activities that can make humanities research visible to the wider public and connect new ideas with societal institutions. The steering group further prioritizes projects that combine big-picture conceptual reframings of a given challenge with concrete engagements at a national and regional level e.g. via partnerships and collaborations with institutions, NGOs, and stakeholders. The center wishes to reflect the diversity of society and welcomes applications from all qualified candidates regardless of personal background.

Please send your application (in either Danish or English) as one aggregated PDF file to the director of the Nordic Humanities Center, Anders Engberg-Pedersen (engberg@sdu.dk). The decision will be announced in April.

For an overview of the center's structure and previous activities, please see www.nordichumanitiescenter.org. We strongly urge all interested applicants to consult with the center director before submitting a proposal. Please write to engberg@sdu.dk or call +45 53440771 to set up a meeting at SDU or KU.