



Digital Society Initiative

The DSI Excellence Program

for New PhD Students

The best way to predict the future is to invent it...
Alan Kay

Digitalization is fundamentally changing science and society. The Digital Society Initiative (DSI) at the University of Zurich (UZH) offers a complementary Excellence Program for new doctoral students interested in the digital transformation.

Whom is this for?

For excellent prospective PhD students of all disciplines committed to building up, deepening and expanding their digital competences and interdisciplinary skills in a cross-disciplinary environment while gaining their PhD in their home discipline.

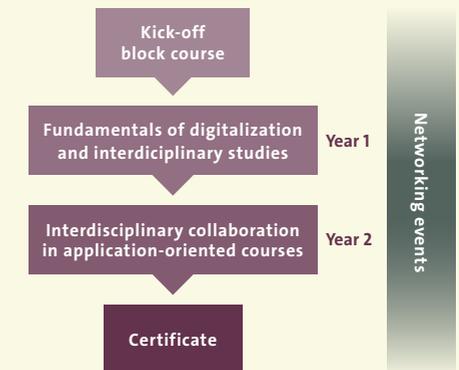
Where will this happen?

At the Digital Society Initiative. The DSI is a center of competence for critically reflecting, studying and improving all aspects of the digital society, including the future of communications, democracy, health, mobility and work. Interdisciplinary by its nature, it involves members from all UZH faculties.

What is it exactly?

The DSI Excellence Program features interdisciplinary courses about digital skills

and technical knowledge, interdisciplinary thinking and problem-solving, and critical reflection on all aspects of a digital society, including ethical, legal and societal aspects of digital change. Students accepted to the DSI Excellence Program will also apply for, and enroll in, a PhD program of their respective discipline at UZH and in addition participate in the Excellence Program studies. The Excellence Program is usually completed within the minimum duration of two years and consists of compulsory and elective courses. Participants completing a PhD in their home discipline will additionally receive a DSI Excellence Program certificate upon successful completion.



The DSI Excellence Program in a nutshell



Program details

The Excellence Program kicks off with a one-week block course before the official beginning of the Fall Semester, followed by block- and semester-courses. The first year focuses on providing the fundamentals of interdisciplinary studies and digitalization. The second year puts the emphasis on application. Course examples include skills in data handling and analytics, legal and ethical aspects of data management, data visualization, and research methods in various disciplines. Participants will collaborate in interdisciplinary teams with complementary competences to tackle research problems in digitalization. Interdisciplinary networking and team building across all UZH faculties is further strengthened by the DSI Fellowship network. Participants are expected to spend at least one day per week in the co-working space of the DSI. Regular events such as the DSI day and DSI summer school support networking during the entire PhD period and are excellent match-making opportunities for doctoral students,

senior scholars and professors. Conforming to UZH regulations, all DSI courses include performance assessments (module exams, presentations, paper writing, etc.).

DSI scholarship

Outstanding applicants who have not yet started their PhD studies at UZH will have the chance to receive a DSI scholarship comparable to the Swiss National Science Foundation (SNSF) doctoral student salary for up to four years, contingent on performance. If you choose to apply for a DSI scholarship, it will be part of your application for the DSI Excellence Program. In case that you get admitted to the program, a separate decision about the scholarship will be made.

If a DSI scholarship is awarded, applicants have the opportunity to start their research activities and the Excellence Program without being bound to a specific supervisor or enrolled in a PhD program. They have one year after the start of the Excellence Program to find

a supervisor and enroll in one of the UZH PhD programs (being supported in the process by the DSI).

Who can apply?

Prospective PhD students interested in the digital transformation of society who expect that digitalization will have a significant impact on their PhD research are invited to apply. Applicants are expected to have an MSc or MA degree with an excellent academic track record. A good command of English is a prerequisite. Students already enrolled in a UZH doctoral program can check our other announcement at www.dsi.uzh.ch/en/students/phd.html

How to apply?

To submit your application for the DSI Excellence Program, go to: www.dsi.uzh.ch/en/students/phd/application.html and follow the described process.

The DSI program starts each Fall Semester. The application deadline for the start in Fall 2021 is **10 December 2020**. Candidates will be notified by **28 February 2021**.

Note

Unless being awarded a DSI scholarship, applicants also need to apply for a PhD program of their choice at UZH and comply with its regulations to receive a PhD degree and participate in the Excellence Program (UZH PhD programs are listed at www.grc.uzh.ch/en/interest-phd/pgrs.html). The deadlines for the PhD programs are likely to differ.

More information:

www.dsi.uzh.ch/en/students/phd.html



Contact:

phd-program@dsi.uzh.ch

