DSI Fellowship Program

About this document: This document defines the criteria and procedures for selecting DSI fellows.

General Information

The fellowship program of the UZH Digital Society Initiative (DSI) aims to promote interdisciplinary cooperation at the University of Zurich regarding all questions concerning the impact of digitalization on society and academia. The following principles apply:

- **Thematic orientation:** In general, the DSI fellowship is open to all researchers who actively conduct research on questions relating to the digital society. The selection is made on the basis of the items defined in the "Criteria" section.

- **UZH researchers:** All professors, senior teaching and research assistants, postdocs, and other academic associates who are employed at the University of Zurich can apply for a DSI fellowship.

- **External researchers:** Visiting researchers from other universities can spend up to two semesters at the DSI. These researchers are usually employed by their home institution. Temporary employment at the DSI is possible. The application is submitted by a UZH researcher with whom a collaboration is planned during the DSI Fellowship. The recommending UZH researcher hereby also agrees to take care of the external fellow during his or her stay and to be available to him or her.

- **DSI researchers:** Persons employed directly by DSI projects (third-party funds and the like) are considered DSI fellows for the duration of their employment at the DSI.

- **Letter of recommendation:** Professors from UZH who wish to become fellows must submit a letter from their faculty's dean confirming their support for the application. For postdocs, senior teaching and research assistants, and academic associates, a letter from their supervisors is sufficient. External researchers need a letter of recommendation from the UZH researcher with whom they will collaborate during their DSI Fellowship.

- **Submission deadlines:** Applications for a DSI fellowship must be submitted before the beginning of the Spring Semester (cut-off date: 1 February) or Fall Semester (cut-off date: 1 August). The beginning of the fellowship is in the following or the one after the following semester; the desired starting date must be stated in the application. The decision on any fellowship is made the latest three months after the respective deadline.

- **Scope and duration:** A DSI fellowship usually involves a minimum workload of 20% and usually lasts one or two semesters (extensions are possible).

- **Compensation of UZH researchers:** Professors, senior teaching and research assistants, post-docs, and other academic associates employed at the University of Zurich remain employed at their faculty and are exempted from their duties to the extent of their activities at the DSI. For this, the faculty or institute will be compensated by the DSI, for example for the costs of teaching positions covering the professor's unavailability for teaching. As a rule, the compensation may not exceed CHF 12,500 per semester.

- **Compensation of external researchers:** Individual agreements are made for fellows from other institutions.

An application for a DSI fellowship must therefore consider the above points and include the following elements:

- A **letter of motivation** in which the applicant explains why they want to become a DSI fellow.
- A **project outline** of a maximum of five pages, in which the applicant presents the project to be carried out within the framework of the DSI fellowship and explains in particular how the points mentioned in the below "Criteria" section are considered.
- A **letter of recommendation**, if necessary (see above point "Letter of recommendation").
- A short **CV** (maximum of three pages) and a **list of publications** (publications from the last five years only) listing the activities and work carried out so far by the applicant in the field of digitalization.

The application has to be sent by e-mail to the DSI managing board (fellowship@dsi.uzh.ch). All documents must be combined into a single pdf-file.

Criteria

Researchers applying for a DSI fellowship must refer to the following criteria in their project description:

A) **Compliance with the strategic objectives of the DSI**
Within the framework of their fellowship, DSI fellows will work on a project that is in line with the strategic priorities of the DSI. These priorities are outlined in the document "DSI Roadmap" and are subject to periodic revision. The strategic priorities are proposed by the plenary assembly and determined by the DSI board of directors.

B) **Interdisciplinarity**
Interdisciplinary projects are given priority. The project proposal should explicitly show how the interdisciplinary cooperation will be structured.

C) **Innovative content**
It must be explicitly stated what the innovative content of the project is. This can be demonstrated, for example, on the basis of the question or the means, methods, or expected results.

D) **Collaboration**
During their fellowship, DSI fellows are expected to transfer their workplace to the DSI Center for at least one day per week in order to work with other fellows on interdisciplinary projects. In addition, the fellows are expected to participate in internal DSI events (DSI Brown Bag Lunches and similar).

E) **Labelling as DSI project**
By accepting the DSI fellowship, the corresponding project becomes a DSI project. For this reason, the applicant must state how the DSI's support of the project will be made recognizable (e.g. by using the logo on presentations, flyers, websites, etc. and/or by corresponding references in publications).

Procedure

Funding for a DSI fellowship is granted as follows:

1. Within two months of the deadline, the DSI board of directors shall decide on the appointment of the fellowships on the basis of the documents submitted and the assessment of the DSI managing board. The board of directors bases its decisions on the above-mentioned criteria and takes into account the available resources (financial resources, space) when awarding grants. Applications can be placed on a standby list if the quality is convincing but there are not sufficient resources for a fellowship at that time. Researchers on the standby list can be appointed as fellows if selected fellows have to withdraw at short notice. In addition, they will be included in the next round of fellowship awards if the applicant so wishes.

2. Within the third month after the deadline, the DSI steering committee decides on the appointment of UZH professors as fellows (all other categories are decided by the DSI board of directors).

3. The new DSI fellows will be informed three months after the deadline. Individual reasons will not be given for rejections, and there is no right of appeal. Rejected applications can be submitted again in the following period. Researchers on the standby list will be informed accordingly and asked if they want to be included in the evaluation procedure again in the next round.

4. Prospective fellows must inform the DSI managing board within two weeks whether they are able to take up the fellowship or not. In the event that they withdraw, it may be offered to a person on the standby list.