

Call for papers: *ECHIC Conference, Lund University, April 23-24, 2020*



The Many Faces of the Humanities

- ***Exploring Different Roles in the Humanities, Past, Present and Future***

In April 2020, the Joint Faculties of Humanities and Theology at Lund University will be hosting the 10th annual conference of the European Consortium of Humanities Institutes and Centres, ECHIC.

The purpose of the annual ECHIC conference is to examine and analyse the issues facing the humanities today, as academic disciplines and interdisciplinary fields. In 2020, the conference will tackle the issue of the many divergent and sometimes contradictory roles existing in the humanities. It is clear that the humanities perform a number of important functions in society, some prominent and time-honoured, others invisible or novel. But how do these roles relate to each other and to larger developments in academia and society? Can they all co-exist or are they in conflict with each other? While some of these roles are innate, such as research and teaching, others, like societal collaboration and impact might still be subject to intense scrutiny. Additionally, different disciplines within the humanities carry out a variety of tasks and interact with society in a number of unique ways, driven by tradition or inspired by modern trends. Moreover, these patterns are commonly nation-specific and policy regulated. Finally, there might also exist tension between insiders (scholars, teachers) and outsiders (policy-makers, politicians, media) on what the role of the humanities is and ought to be. These parameters in turn relate to individual values, academic prestige, career paths, financial opportunities, contemporary concerns and political developments.

The plurality of endeavours within the humanities raises a number of important questions. Is there a singular trajectory for the humanities vis-a-vis other academic fields? Should the humanities be viewed primarily as a scientific enterprise, playing by the same rules as STEM or the social sciences, or are there specific tasks for the humanities to perform? Does an education in the humanities offer individual progression or does it prepare for the job market? Is the outreaching scholar a public intellectual or a policy expert? Is there a special democratic and societal responsibility for the humanities? Answers to these questions will depend on the preferences of individual scholars, policies of universities and national and cultural contexts.

In order to fully understand how different roles interact and challenge each other a temporal perspective might prove particularly illuminating. How have roles transformed over time? What contemporary roles can be seen as vestiges from the past and what new roles are emerging? Must the roles change in the future? What kind of external pressures are currently being felt by departments and individuals and how can demands be met going forward? It might be argued that the humanities as an academic field is particularly dependent on its own history. Yet, there are also strong expectations for an expanded societal role for the future. How then can the past and present inform our understanding of these roles for the future of the humanities and its societal impact?

Papers and panels will focus on these and similar questions revolving around the place of the humanities in different arenas of society; academic, educational, political and public. In particular, the conference will present an opportunity to discuss these issues from different temporalities: historical, contemporary and future scenarios.

We invite proposals that address the following, or adjacent topics:

- The value and challenges of collaboration, outreach and impact
- The part played by the humanities in addressing societal challenges and change
- Present challenges and future opportunities for education in the humanities
- The significance of humanities infrastructures, present and future
- Digital and/or analogue patterns of research in the humanities
- New and traditional forms of disseminating research
- The role of cultural heritage and the arts for the humanities
- National and European research policies and their consequences
- Inter- and transdisciplinary platforms and projects
- The political role of the humanities today and tomorrow

We invite proposals for either 20-minute academic papers or 10-minute project presentations och demonstrations within the themes and topics broadly outlined above. The conference is open to all those who engage with the humanities as academic practices, directly or indirectly, at whatever stage of their career. Early career researchers are particularly encouraged to submit. We also welcome proposals for panels.

Please submit an abstract for an individual presentation (250 words) or proposed panel (500 words) together with a short biographical note (150 words) to the following addresses: echic2020@ht.lu.se and isak.hammar@kansliht.lu.se

Deadline of proposal submission: 15 September 2019

Notification of acceptance: 15 November 2019

Confirmed keynote speakers:

Helen Small, Merton Professor of English Language and Literature, University of Oxford
Sverker Sörlin, Professor of Environmental History, KTH Royal Institute of Technology
Jennifer Edmond, Associate Professor of Digital Humanities, Trinity College Dublin

Conference organisers:

Dr Isak Hammar, Publications Coordinator, Lund University
Professor Barbara Törnquist-Plewa, Dean of Research, Lund University

For more information, visit www.echic.org/