



ESHCC RESEARCH STRATEGY 2021-2024

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ERASMUS SCHOOL OF HISTORY, CULTURE AND COMMUNICATION



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ESHCC RESEARCH STRATEGY 2021-2024

1. Mission

Our mission is to operate as a centre of excellence for research into the fascinating yet complex relationships between culture, media, communication, society, economics, and history. Our approach is interdisciplinary, empirical, and theory-driven, situated at the crossroads of the social sciences and humanities. We seek to attract and nurture a diverse, international faculty and student body. With our research, we aim to contribute to key scientific debates and address major societal challenges at the local, national and international level. We seek to generate impact for a variety of stakeholders around the world and pursue strong connections between our research and teaching activities.

Our objectives:

1. to lead a cutting-edge interdisciplinary research agenda that contributes to history, arts and culture studies, and media and communication studies, as well as to the EUR strategic goals.
2. to contribute to the solution of (new) global societal challenges and to advance research collaborations with academic and societal partners around the world.
3. to play an active role in the democratization and dissemination of scientific knowledge through research transparency, stakeholder involvement, social engagement and public debate.

2. Vision

As described in our mission statement, ESHCC is engaged in high-quality fundamental research that deals with contemporary societal challenges, in that it aims at explaining, reflecting on, and finding solutions for societal challenges. For the years 2021-2024, our focus is on five societal challenges that are high on the agendas of many organizations and societies worldwide, and to which our expertise and knowledge is of high value (for a description of these themes, see below). Our aim is to become a world-leading research center in these research areas. We need to equip and support our current academic staff in the best possible way to realize our ambitions, while also actively searching for excellent candidates who can further enrich the international, global character of our research community and our expertise. In order to achieve that, we will upgrade our research support structure by building a professional research office. We will also facilitate and stimulate an environment of collaboration, by further encouraging mentorship and support among the staff. Moreover, we will explore ways of increasing research collaboration across the two research centres (ERMeCC and History@Erasmus) and three departments (Arts and Culture Studies, History, Media and Communication) that are currently housed in our faculty, establishing commonalities on the assigned priority themes. By the end of 2024, ESHCC researchers will work on high-profile research projects in all five themes and will benefit from the richness and vibrancy of ESHCC's research culture.

Theme 1: Globalization of Culture and Society

Globalization has brought people and societies across the world closer together, but at the same time it has deepened the divide between the haves and the have-nots, between those who are allowed to roam the earth in search of profit and leisure and those who are firmly restricted by national boundaries and harsh labour conditions. Digitalization has further accelerated this process. At ESHCC we want to deepen

our understanding of the historical and cultural dimensions of this phenomenon, while also putting an emphasis on the digital solutions that contribute to more equity, safety, and welfare around the globe. Our research office will train and stimulate staff to apply for future research funding in this research direction (G3.4).

Theme 2: Mediatization and Digitalization

In today's globalized world, the media play a pivotal role in all domains of everyday life, varying from interpersonal communication to communication in the domains of arts, education, policy, labour, health, business, entertainment, and leisure. Mediatization and digitalization have profoundly changed the way society is organized. ESHCC has a deep knowledge of mediated communication and its cultural and historical dimensions. In the next years, we want to further extend this knowledge and become one of the global frontrunners of research into mediatization and digitalization from an emphatically interdisciplinary perspective. In order to achieve this goal, we will stimulate research into this direction by 1) making this theme one of our priority themes in research funding acquisition as well as both internal and external communication (G3.4) and 2) increasing our presence within the LDE and Convergence initiatives, focusing on the Convergence theme AI, Data & Digitization (G3.3).

Theme 3: Innovation in Cultural and Creative Industries

The cultural and creative industries are at the forefront of innovation and value creation in societies worldwide. At ESHCC, we are a leading centre of expertise in the comparative and interdisciplinary study of the art worlds, cultural heritage, media and creative industries, and cultural economics and entrepreneurship - internationally recognised for our pioneering teaching programmes and research in the field. Our approach distinguishes itself by focusing on the social, cultural, economic and historical contexts in which culture and the arts are produced and consumed, paying due attention to changing organizational and market structures. Our in-depth knowledge of the innovative power and vitality of the cultural and creative industries has become even more crucial in a (post) Covid-19 world. In the next years we will extend and solidify our expertise in this research field, not only by generating more individual and collaborative research projects, but also by expanding our network of creative industries scholars across the faculty and beyond (G3.3).

Theme 4: Sustainability in Culture and Societies

Sustainability has been high on the agenda of many organizations and societies in the past years, but its importance does not seem to wane now the COVID-19 crisis has joined the Climate Crisis, pressing humanity to rethink its use of the earth's resources and its seemingly endless growth and unrestricted mobilities. ESHCC wants to deliver a crucial and unique contribution to these debates by adding a cultural and historical perspective to questions of sustainability and Sustainable Development Goals, looking in particular at the potential role of the creative and cultural industries, including digital media, for the wellbeing of (urban) communities. We will bring together scholars from different disciplines and research centres (G3.3), supporting them to actively search for funding opportunities in this direction (G3.4), amongst other in the direction of health humanities and research on wellbeing (G3.3).

Theme 5: Diversity and Inclusion

Recent years have made individuals, organizations and society as a whole more aware of the added value and need for diversity and inclusion. Addressing and improving the inclusive character of our society not only does justice to the individual and social rights within a (super) diverse, globalized society, but it also helps in improving work and living environments and – on a more utilitarian level - the performance results of teams and organizations. Questions of diversity and inclusion are an integral part of our research agenda, where we already work on themes such as citizenship, racism, migration, and economic inequality, oftentimes from a bottom-up perspective. We will generate further expertise in the field of diversity, inclusion, and equity based on a variety of social dimensions (and their intersections) such as gender, race, ethnicity, religion, and sexual orientation, in domains like cultural policy, sport, journalism and media culture. We aim to bring together scholars from different research fields, stimulating them to work together in small teams specialized in the theme of diversity and inclusion and work towards (collaborative) grant proposals (G3.4). Furthermore, we will also critically analyse our own organization in terms of its inclusive character, amongst other by letting the full management team participate in workshops on social safety and unconscious biases (G3.1), ensuring diverse recruitment panels, working towards diverse and inclusive leadership, and by appointing a Diversity and Inclusion officer at our faculty (G3.1).

3. Strategic instruments and goals

Here we list our strategic goals (the G-'s), resulting from our Vision as outlined in the section above. The strategic goals are divided into sub sections that match the ESHCC organizational units. Each unit is briefly introduced and followed by a list of concrete, measurable and time-specific targets.

3.1 Internal organization and staff

Professionalization of research support

To better support our researchers, we will establish a professional research office. This team, under guidance of the Vice Dean of Research, will consist of a senior research policy officer, research funding officer, research project manager, data steward, privacy officer and administrative assistant (3,4 fte). The research office is responsible for the development of research policies, supporting in the acquisition and management of research projects and fostering our research community, this in close collaboration with colleagues from finance and project control, the privacy officer and the ethics review board. In the coming year, we will also intensify our collaboration with Erasmus Research Services (ERS). For example, our research funding officer and data steward will both be working for ESHCC as well as ERS.

- Install Research Advisory Committee (RAC) which advises or make proposals to the Vice Dean of Research on all matters that concern faculty research (October 2020)
- Professionalize research office by hiring senior research policy officer (October 2020), project manager (April 2020), data steward (January 2021), and research funding officer (April 2021)
- Improve support structure, starting with the introduction of grant application flowchart (June 2021)
- Create clear work processes for research support staff and researchers (December 2021)
- The research office offers feedback on the content, planning and budget of new research proposals (December 2021)

- The research office together with ERS will provide (writing) workshops and (interview) training for researchers (December 2021)

Alignment with Education

At ESHCC, we recognize that the intersection of our educational programmes and the research of our staff are mutually beneficial. Aligning our research with our educational programmes where possible has therefore been and will remain a critical part of our overall strategy. In the next years, we will assess this alignment more systematically to determine offerings in our education programmes that may benefit from more specialized areas of research and identify potential gaps between our current education offerings and our research. We will harness this alignment to increase the impact of our research, our reputation in key knowledge fields, and the quality of our education.

- Identify best practices integrating current research into educational programmes (Dec 2021)
- Assessment of gaps between current ESHCC educational offerings and research projects and publications. Develop electives for better alignment between research and education. (March 2022)

PhD monitoring and recruitment

In recent years, ESHCC has already taken steps to arrive at the current high PhD completion rate and low drop-out figures. A range of measures has also been taken to improve the average duration of PhD trajectories, such as ensuring that each PhD candidate has a teaching free period of at least 6 months in the final year of her/his contract and throughout the trajectory has extended teaching free periods. The supervision structure has been strengthened: each PhD candidate can count on the support of at least two supervisors. In the forthcoming year, at the level of the School, we will solidify these measures and work on the development and implementation of a more advanced progress monitoring system that makes use of the *Hora Finita* portal.

- Install central contact point for PhDs candidates and supervisors (April 2021)
- Update and implement PhD policy and improve PhD monitoring system by integrating the annual progress meetings within the P&D cycle (September 2021)
- Further implementation of Hora Finita in 2021-2022 and train PhD candidates and supervisors (September 2021)
- Our research funding acquisition activities will result based on numbers from 2019 and 2020 in a yearly intake of approximately 16 new PhD candidates and 11 dissertations per year

Human Resources policy

ESHCC is currently working on updating its framework for promotion decisions, based on the advice of the external work group that was installed for this purpose in the third quarter of 2020. Also, recommendations from the EUR wide taskforce on Recognition and Reward will be taken into account here. Furthermore, ESHCC endorses the EUR wide 25-25 policy and targets to improve the gender imbalance in UHD and HL positions, in particular in the department of History and the department of Arts

and Culture Studies. With new permanent positions in place, ESHCC aims to further expand the international and truly global character of our research staff.

- ESHCC has appointed a Diversity and Inclusion officer (January 2021). The research office contributes to and implementation of diversity agenda in our research community
- Full management team participates in workshops on social safety and unconscious biases (May 2021)
- ESHCC focus groups on academic career development and diversity and inclusion are installed in 2021 and a plan for action is being defined. Results of these focus groups are implemented in the tenure and promotion policy (July 2021)
- Annual ESHCC Visiting Professorship (3 months) as of 2022 rotating between the different themes per year. Candidates are recruited via an internal call.
- By 2025, 25% of the senior positions (full and associate professors) in each ESHCC department are fulfilled by women and each department has at least one female full professor.

3.2 Research quality and impact

In the forthcoming year we will focus on improving the monitoring of our research and the development of clear-cut publications strategies, where we consider the balance between academic publications and publications/activities that aim at enhancing societal impact. To achieve this, we will also make good use of the Recognition and Reward policy that is currently under development at EUR. We will work towards criteria for societal impact. In addition, ESHCC will align with the EUR policy and strategy on Ethical Review and Open Science; the latter will increase visibility of ESHCC research output.

- Implement updated policy on ethical review and using the online submission system, ethics monitor (April 2021)
- Improve policy on integrity and transparency (May 2022)
- Update policy on research quality (May 2022)
- Update and implement policy on publication strategy (May 2022)

3.3 Research Collaboration

ESHCC research collaboration

In the coming year a taskforce of three researchers, one from each department, will be set up. The aim of this taskforce is to create opportunities between our researchers to foster excellence in interdisciplinary research and cross-departmental collaboration by organizing faculty-wide research meetings and develop team science initiatives/projects. Furthermore, the research office will launch a series of workshops on important themes for our research community.

- Set up taskforce interdisciplinary research through an open call (September 2021)
- Taskforce together with the research office will organize sessions (e.g. brown bag sessions) on average three times per academic year on current debates such as team science and collaboration opportunities
- The research office will host faculty-wide and group specific workshops. In 2021-2022 workshops on Horizon EU, Open Science, Ethics reviews, Pure and Hora Finita are foreseen

EUR research collaboration

In the forthcoming years ESHCC will stimulate the presence of our researchers within the LDE and Convergence initiatives, the Cultuurcampus and the living labs such as the Rotterdam Arts and Sciences Lab. By stimulating external research collaboration, we increase the impact of our expertise and at the same time extend our research funding sources. At the moment active involvement takes place in the Erasmus Initiative Vital Cities and Citizens, the convergence theme AI, Data & Digitization, the LDE programme Port City Futures, the LDE Centre for Global Heritage and Development, the LDE Centre for Bold Cities, and the LDE Centre for the Governance of Migration and Diversity.

- To create more involvement in the LDE and Convergence initiatives with a special focus on the new Convergence theme AI, Data & Digitization, researchers will be approached individually and stimulated to take part
- The research office will map the current involvement of our individual staff members in EUR research collaborations. This information will be shared and discussed with the RAC
- Health humanities: collaboration with other EUR faculties. Together with ESPHIL, ESSB and ISS we will look how to strengthen the position of the humanities at EUR

(Inter-)National research collaboration

Our researchers already have an extensive national and international network. ESHCC wants to nurture and expand these networks. In addition, we will also explicitly look for collaborations with fellow researchers from the global south in line with the theme of globalization.

- The research office will map all current research collaborations of our individual staff members. This information will be shared and discussed with our research community. Where necessary we will take steps to improve our (inter-)national network (September 2021)
- Organizing workshops on Horizon Europe in collaboration with ERS will contribute to network building (May 2021)
- Annual ESHCC Visiting Professorship (3 months) as of 2022 rotating between the different themes per year
- Organize brainstorm session to identify key international partners. Key international partners will be invited for site visit to discuss mutual research topics. (2022)
- ESHCC will become a lead partner in the Innovation by Creative Economy (ICE) Consortium proposal for the European Institute of Innovation & Technology: Culture & Creativity (EIT-CC). Together with the consortium partners and ERS an application is being prepared (March 2022)

3.4 Research funding strategy

One of the top priorities of our research strategy is the acquisition of research funding. Individual grants of the NWO and ERC are key targets, but in line with the EUR strategy we also want to contribute to the mission-driven research of the European agenda Horizon Europe 2021-2027. ESHCC has been rather successful in acquiring grants from Horizon 2020. We aim to continue and expand our successes while focusing on our five social themes. To get our researchers ready for the Horizon EU program, ESHCC organizes together with ERS faculty-wide workshops on the European funding scheme. Following this, we

also want to offer workshops on the National Research Agenda (NWA) for our researchers. Our research funding strategy for 2021-2024 focuses on the increase of second and third money stream. Furthermore, ESHCC with the help of the Business Development team at ERS and Erasmus Enterprise Holding wants to explore the potential for contract research within the school.

- Hiring a research funding officer specialized in Social Sciences & Humanities Research (May 2021)
- Set up a better support structure for research grant applications, starting with a flowchart of the research application procedure (June 2021)
- Increase of second and third money stream: 20% of research fte's are funded by second money stream and 20% of research fte's are funded by third money stream (2021-2024). These percentages are based on previous successes.
- The research office in consultation with ERS will create a system to document the grant applications (December 2021)
- Research funding officer will proactively approach researchers for individual and collaborative grants, so-called golden opportunities
- Data analyses of grant applications on a regular basis will provide a better understanding of our successes and our failures (annually in January)
- Continue with ESHCC incentive grant (annual call in October). With this incentive, we invest in talented researchers by providing them time to work on research proposals to be submitted in competitions that offer funds for conducting independent research, developing ideas and receiving training. In the next years we will explicitly target postdoc researchers, motivating them to form a team with senior researchers across the faculty and prepare collaborative research grant proposals
- Make budget available for final English editorial check or data visualisation of grant applications and proposals (implementation 2022)
- Plan brainstorm session and follow-up between ESHCC project leaders/principal investigators and Erasmus Enterprise Holding about contract research (September 2021)

3.5 External and internal communication

ESHCC has expanded the marketing and communication office (April 2020) who are appointed to professionalize research communication. Set goals are contributing to ESHCC community building and gaining more visibility of ESHCC research projects, the latter not only within the faculty but also within the Erasmus University and beyond there. We will stimulate and support our research staff to improve and highlight the impact and outreach of their research, for example where it concerns collaboration with policy makers and intervening in professional practices.

- The marketing and communication office will coordinate research news to (international) press, e.g. tv, radio, newspaper and podcast (January 2021)
- Launch of faculty-wide research newsletter, aim for every six weeks (June 2021)
- Update information about (PhD)research on intranet and website (September 2021)
- Implement outcome of ESHCC focus group on Communication & Information Provision (2021-2022)
- The marketing and communication office will formulate a strategy to improve our visibility on social media, EUR, and ESHCC websites (December 2021)