Research Strategy 2015-17 for the Royal School of Library and Information Science (IVA), Faculty of Humanities, University of Copenhagen (KU-HUM)

Research strategy

Purpose

This research strategy is designed to underpin IVA’s School Strategy 2015-17 and to ensure that IVA conducts research at the highest possible level. The strategy has four general objectives (stronger research ethos, more external research funding, more PhD students/postdocs, and more bibliometric research indicator points (BFI\(^1\)), and covers four prioritized focus areas (Information Seeking, Digital Cultural Heritage, Digital Literacy, and Methodological Approaches to Research Information) which are of particular interest in the period 2015-2017. The priorities are outlined below but still have to be developed by the writing groups appointed by the management. In this sense, the research strategy is not a finished product, more a work in progress.

Overall objectives

The overall objectives are:

- Encourage a stronger research ethos
- Attract more external research funding
- Attract more PhD students/postdocs
- Garner more BFI points.

It is important that the first overall objective – encourage a stronger research ethos – is viewed in the context of IVA’s long established tradition of dedicated teachers and pedagogic development, as well as various University-wide initiatives for the quality assurance of study programmes. It is however important that IVA maintains, and – with the help of

\(^{1}\) Danish Bibliometric Research Indicator points. For more information, see https://bfi.fi.dk/(in Danish)
the three other closely interconnected objectives, all of which also encourage a stronger research ethos – pays even greater attention to research. These efforts also reinforce research-based teaching as well as the School’s tradition of making an impact on society with its research.

In assessing its progress towards achieving the three interrelated objectives, IVA should benchmark itself against other departments/schools. Measured in terms of external research funding levels and BFI points, IVA is revealed to be somewhat below average in The Faculty of Humanities at UCPH. Fortunately, however, there is plenty of potential for improvement in the quality of the research activity. The School must exploit this potential.

**Strategic priorities**
The strategic priorities identify areas that IVA wishes to concentrate on in particular. They should, however, be seen within the broader context of IVA’s overall research profile which spans a much wider field, including for example, cultural policy, library development, organisation and management, domain analysis, knowledge organisation, classification, webometrics and knowledge theory.

This wide-ranging work will continue as a form of free research at IVA, with management providing incentives and monitoring it but not regulating what research individual academics conduct. It is important to acknowledge that the research competencies that the academic staff at IVA themselves bring to the school not only form the basis of the overall research profile of IVA, but also pave the way for future priorities in research.

The priorities should therefore be understood as strategic research stimulated by specific incentives such as seed money (e.g. conference and travel grants for researchers), allocation of funds for co-financing external projects, advertising for PhDs and other vacancies, the allocation of staff time to research, etc. Such initiatives must be agreed with the management and/or follow a recommendation by the Research Committee. Garnering BFI points, attracting external research and impact will be taken into account.

The priorities are not described in detail. This is to leave as much room as possible for bottom-up initiatives by members of IVA academic staff who have the research competencies within these focus areas. On a general level, such initiatives can be justified by contributing to:

1. closer integration of information and culture
2. building on existing research initiatives and development potential
3. deriving maximum benefit from the merger with HUM and the development of co-operation with the CCC.
4. potential for iSchool collaborations
5. IVA-specific perspectives on research-policy priorities, which are defined as significant challenges facing society.

On a more specific level, the priorities must be developed by management-appointed writ-

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2 [http://www.ischools.org](http://www.ischools.org)
ing groups consisting of 2-4 members of the academic staff with major research experience, working out how they lie within the following framework areas:

**Information Seeking**
Historically, members of the academic staff at IVA have built their reputations over a wide sphere, including interactive information retrieval systems, IR, information behaviour, user evaluations and interactive design. Digital technology makes it increasingly possible to search, collate and exchange information collectively, and this places different demands on (for example) process and evaluation, compared to searches conducted by individuals. IVA has made great strides in this area in recent years, and has the potential to develop research that focuses on, for example, health informatics, collaborative information seeking and use of social platforms for information searches.

**Digital Cultural Heritage**
In recent times, members of the academic staff at IVA have been involved in several research projects related to the digital mediation of cultural heritage in a broad sense as well as, for example, mobile media in museums and the digitisation of research libraries in a more narrow sense. As digital media have evolved – on the one hand used to digitise physical materials and on the other, capable of generating their own digitally-bred materials – cultural and research institutions are facing new challenges related to the collation, dissemination, sharing and processing of knowledge, information and experiences. Two challenges of note are Digital Humanities/research infrastructure and the development of an information architecture in the MLA sector that better integrates with new communication platforms.

**Digital Literacy**
Information competencies, information seeking competencies, information practices, digital competencies, digital skills, digital natives, etc. are all concepts that address some aspect of how citizens and organisations access and organise knowledge and information. Current research at IVA focuses on citizens’ and groups’ information practices and competencies. For instance, under the auspices of iSchool, academic staff from IVA have initiated activities regarding digital youth, reflecting a trend to a greater focus on young people’s competencies in information seeking in general in recent years. However, there is also considerable scope for studies of how organisations collate and use large amounts of data. This work opens up possibilities of developing new information practices, but can also, for example, present a challenge to civil rights.

**Methodological Approaches to Research Information**
Research Analysis has long been an important pillar in IVA’s research profile. The current state of research analysis calls for new methods for processing information such that they 1. reflect the tradition and uniqueness of the humanities approach to research; and 2. contribute to the development of new methods of processing information that belongs to organisations as well as to other domains, e.g. within business intelligence or under a designation like big data. This calls for IVA to make use of its specialist expertise in bibliometrics, etc. and develop new ways of analysing and understanding humanities research. Through these endeavours, a significant contribution can be made to understanding and explaining social value and impact of the humanities.