

The Union of the German Academies of Sciences and Humanities

The Union of the German Academies of Sciences and Humanities unites eight German academies in Berlin, Düsseldorf, Göttingen, Hamburg, Heidelberg, Leipzig, Mainz and Munich. The academies bring together more than 2000 scientists and scholars of national and international distinction, across a range of research fields. Together they work to promote interdisciplinary exchange, to guarantee scholarly and scientific excellence and to support early career researchers.

The Union coordinates the Academies Programme. It supports communication between the academies, undertakes press and publicity work, organises events on current themes in research and contributes to scientifically grounded consultations for civil society and the political process. Once a year it invites the public to the Academies' Day to learn about the research conducted by the academies. In addition, the Union represents its member academies both at home and abroad and sends representatives to umbrella organisations of academies in Europe and around the world.

over **350** publications annually

around **15** Academy Professorships

more than **60** trainees

about **100** Fellows

projects cooperating with over **60** countries

Members of the Union



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THE ACADEMIES PROGRAMME

Excellence in
the Humanities

The Academies Programme

The joint research programme of the German Academies of Sciences and Humanities, the Academies Programme, has the goal of studying, preserving and communicating global cultural heritage. It is Germany's largest research programme in the social sciences and humanities and is the only one of its kind in the world. Through their long-term basic research, the academies make an indispensable contribution to the documentation of our cultural memory and thereby also to the formation of both national and transnational cultural identities.

Since 1979/80 the Academies Programme has been funded jointly by the German Federal Government and Federal States. Within the Programme around 900 staff are working on around 130 projects in over 190 research units. Through their editions, dictionaries and text corpora, the academies create central stores of knowledge for the future, which are available – increasingly also in digital form – for use by researchers and the public.

The Academies Programme in figures (in 2021)

around **71** million euros in funding

around **130** projects with over **190** research units

around **900** project staff

over **200** project directors serving on a voluntary basis

more than **1,000** Academy Members
on voluntary project boards

Studying, preserving and communicating cultural heritage

The Academies Programme is at present Germany's largest research programme in the social sciences and humanities. German and foreign-language dictionaries, lexica and editions of important philosophers, theologians, writers and composers are the main focus of the research. The Academies Programme also studies themes that bridge the humanities and the natural sciences. The complexity of such extensive projects demands a long-term framework for which funding streams no longer exist in other forms of research funding. These projects have hence found their place in the academies, which are distinguished by the range of their methods, technical expertise and the excellence of their research. Their integration into this structure makes it possible for the academy research units and the boards guiding them to pursue these complex projects to the highest standards and in a sustainable fashion. The structure is especially advantageous for 'small subjects' such as the study of the ancient Near East, Egypt and the Hittites, and patristic studies.

The Academies Programme across borders

The research of the Academies Programme extends far beyond Germany and Europe, studying, preserving and communicating global cultural heritage on almost all continents. The programme's projects cooperate with researchers in more than 60 countries around the world. Research results are achieved jointly in international teams and there are exchange programmes and fellowships available especially for early career researchers. Distinguished experts from the scientific and scholarly community join the work of the academy projects and also ensure the quality standards of the research at the academies by contributing to regular evaluations of the academy projects.

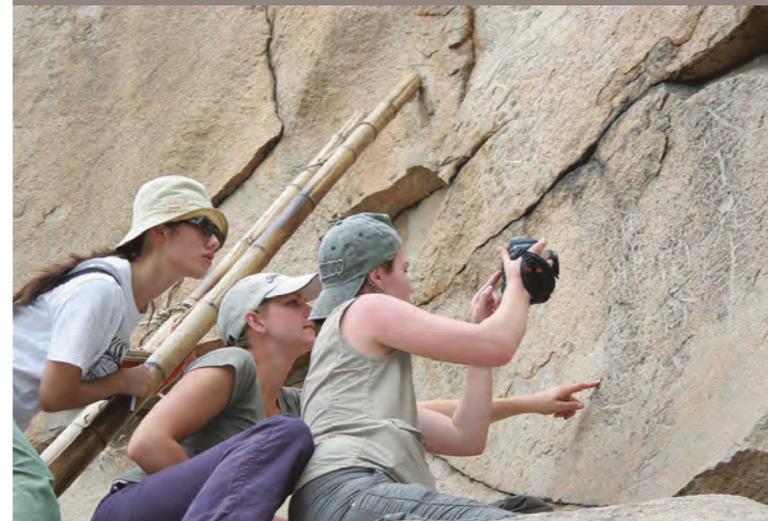


Stores of knowledge for the future

Buddhist sutras carved in stone, the study of the Qur'an, a dictionary of the Maya language, the writings of major philosophers such as Leibniz or Jaspers or the literary estate of the sociologist Niklas Luhmann, a dictionary of historical German legal terms, collections of documents, the works of Beethoven, medieval and early modern German inscriptions and baroque ceiling and mural paintings – these themes give just a glimpse of the variety of the Academies Programme.

With their editions, dictionaries and lexica the academies are building indispensable stores of knowledge for the future. These provide the foundations for other research in the humanities worldwide. No one with an interest in the Latin language can pursue it without the Thesaurus linguae Latinae or the Mittellateinisches Wörterbuch. Anyone researching the German language and its evolution needs the dictionaries of High German – Old, Middle and New – and of the present-day German language. Whenever works by Felix Mendelssohn Bartholdy, Richard Strauss or Bernd Alois Zimmermann are played on the world's concert stages, the Academies Programme is in a sense being heard too through the editions it produces.

Four research themes from the Academies Programme (clockwise from the upper left): Baroque Ceiling Painting (Barocke Deckenmalerei), German Inscriptions of the Middle Ages (Deutsche Inschriften des Mittelalters), Digital Dictionary of German Sign Language (Digitales Wörterbuch zur Deutschen Gebärdensprache) and the Buddhist Stone Inscriptions (Buddhistische Steininschriften)
Image credits: Christian Stein/Thomas Scheidt (CbDD); Andreas Endermann; Jann Wilken; HAdW



The digital Academies Programme

In order to make the numerous research activities at the academies more accessible both to researchers and the public, the AGATE portal was established in 2018 (AGATE – A European Science Academies Gateway for the Humanities and Social Sciences, <https://agate.academy>). AGATE bundles the research at the academies for the first time in a single fully searchable and curated online portal. The databank is filled with both current research projects and a multitude of already completed projects from the Academies Programme and our Swiss AGATE members. The long-term goal is to build AGATE into a pan-European digital platform that will raise the visibility and locatability of the European academies' research in the social sciences and humanities and will promote international cooperation. The academies of the Union have been cooperating for many years in the long-term provision of research data and results of the Academies Programme with national and international players in the field of research infrastructures. They are prominently represented in discussions of standardisation with respect to both research data and software development, as recently demonstrated by their extensive involvement in the National Research Data Infrastructure (NFDI).

Continuity, independence and excellence

Since 2006 applications to the Academies Programme have been awarded annually following a public tender. In order to be admitted to the programme, social science and humanities research projects must meet the following criteria: a significance for multiple regions and for the state as a whole, a high level of scholarly and societal relevance, a duration of between 12 and 25 years and a minimum annual funding of 120,000 euros. In addition, provisions must be made for the inclusion of early career researchers throughout the duration of the project and for the ongoing qualification of scientific and scholarly staff. The integration of the digital humanities into methodological practice and the possession of grounded concepts and strategies for the provision of digital resources and presentation of information are explicitly required.

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