ELIT Call for applications

The ELIT network opens a call for applications within the framework of the ELIT project (Empirical study of Literature Training Network). These positions will be funded by the European Union’s Horizon 2020 research and innovation programme under Marie Skłodowska-Curie grant agreement no. 860516.

What is ELIT?

To arrive at a profound understanding of the underlying processes and societal effects of reading, a European Network – the Empirical study of Literature Training Network (ELIT) – has been established that integrates two research cultures that are commonly separated, namely the social sciences and the humanities. We aim to train a new generation of creative, innovative and interdisciplinary early-stage researchers (i.e., PhD candidates) in the empirical study of literature. They should be ready to face current and future challenges in this field, which is in constant flux due to the influence of rapidly changing empirical research techniques, and contextual demands, such as, for instance, the digitization of reading. To meet these needs, ELIT will be collaborating closely with non-academic partners to draw invaluable insights from society at large about how reading can fulfil certain societal needs, such as stimulating empathy and pro-social behaviour.

The ELIT Network consists of ten European Universities that are at the forefront of the empirical study of literary reading. In addition, the network includes twelve non-academic partners from domains such as literacy (i.e., literacy associations, reading foundations, educational policymakers), bibliotherapy (i.e., reading groups, libraries), production (i.e., publishing houses), and research (i.e., eye tracking companies, international research networks).

Applications will be accepted from 09/04/2020 until 15/06/2020 at 2:00 pm (Central European Time).

This call for applications is for 10 positions as specified in Table 1 below. Each early-stage researcher will be involved in a doctoral programme leading to a double/joint doctoral degree involving the two universities, as for Table 1.

Applicants can find detailed information on each position (ESR 1 to 10) in the Annex below.

Table 1: PhD available positions

<table>
<thead>
<tr>
<th>No.</th>
<th>Research Project title</th>
<th>WP</th>
<th>Recruiting Organisation - Country</th>
<th>Second Academic organisation - Country</th>
</tr>
</thead>
<tbody>
<tr>
<td>1</td>
<td>Neurocognitive Poetics: Towards new integrative models and methods</td>
<td>WP1</td>
<td>Freie Universität Berlin (Germany)</td>
<td>Radboud University (The Netherlands)</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>2</td>
<td>Individual variation in literary reading</td>
<td>WP1</td>
<td>Radboud University (The Netherlands)</td>
<td>Freie Universität Berlin (Germany)</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>3</td>
<td>Reading in the city – in everyday life</td>
<td>WP1</td>
<td>University of Vienna (Austria)</td>
<td>University of Warsaw (Poland)</td>
</tr>
</tbody>
</table>
This project has received funding from the European Union’s Horizon 2020 research and innovation programme under the Marie Skłodowska-Curie grant agreement No 860516

Note: The content of this document reflects only the author’s view and the Research Executive Agency (REA) is not responsible for any use that may be made of the information it contains.
How to apply

Applications must be submitted electronically by the deadline specified above via the following online form: https://www.elitnetwork.eu/application-form/.

Applicants may apply for one or more positions, up to three positions in total. In case of multiple applications, applicants should submit one application with a separate research statement for each position and specify the priority order in their personal statement.

The following documents must be provided:

- Application form
- Personal statement (detailing the applicant’s motivations and goals within the program)
- Detailed CV (max 2 pages) with emphasis on academic achievements
- Research statement (max 3 pages): (detailing how the applicant would approach the research project; please refer to the reading list of each position sheet to prepare your research statement)
- Copy of Bachelor’s and Master’s degree certificate and transcript of records
- Diploma Supplement or List of courses, grade/rank, teachers (optional)
- A reference letter by the MA supervisor and one other academic (or professionally relevant) reference
- Copy of the ID document.

All documents must be submitted in English. For certificates and other official documents in any other language, an English translation of each one must be provided.

Applications must be submitted by the call deadline. Applicants are invited to submit their application in advance to avoid any trouble due to the overload of the IT systems. The ELIT network is not liable for late submission.

The applications must be complete in all their parts and must include all required annexes. Annexes must be in PDF format without any protection that prevents printing.

Only applications and annexes in English are accepted.

Evaluation

A specific Evaluation Commission will be established for each working package (WP) to assess the applicants. Each Evaluation Commission is composed of the main supervisors and an external member from the Supervisory Board.

The evaluation process will include two stages.

1st stage: Application assessment: Application materials will be assessed on the basis of the criteria specified in Table 2.
For each criterion, a score will be given from 0 to 5 points. For each position, up to 10 applicants with a final score between 11 and 15 will pass to the second step and will be invited to an interview in videoconference, according to the ranking list.

Table 2: Evaluation criteria for the preliminary selection

<table>
<thead>
<tr>
<th>Criteria</th>
<th>Weight</th>
<th>Scoring</th>
</tr>
</thead>
<tbody>
<tr>
<td>Criterion 1. Excellence of the applicant: Coherence and quality of his/her education and of his/her track record, as well as of any other element of his/her CV, such as their language skills</td>
<td>50%</td>
<td>From 0 (worst) to 5 (best)</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Criterion 2. Potential impact on the applicant’s career: coherence between the applicant’s motivations and the ELIT doctoral program</td>
<td>15%</td>
<td>From 0 (worst) to 5 (best)</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Criterion 3. Fit of the person and the research project: how do you propose to take on this particular project</td>
<td>35%</td>
<td>From 0 (worst) to 5 (best)</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Global score</td>
<td></td>
<td>From 0 to 15 (Threshold: 11/15)</td>
</tr>
</tbody>
</table>

2nd phase Interview: Individual interviews will be conducted to gain a better understanding of each applicant’s background, education and skills, proposed PhD research project and motivation for applying. All interviews will be conducted by videoconference and will last approximately 30 minutes. On the application form, applicants must specify their ID name where they can be contacted for the interview and must guarantee the use of a webcam so that they can be identified by the Evaluation Commission.

The Evaluation Commission will evaluate the interviewees on the basis of the criteria specified in Table 3. It will produce an evaluation summary report for each applicant, with scores and detailed motivations. All interviews will be conducted in English.

Table 3: Evaluation criteria for the interview

<table>
<thead>
<tr>
<th>Criteria</th>
<th>Weight</th>
<th>Scoring</th>
</tr>
</thead>
<tbody>
<tr>
<td>Criterion 1. Excellence of the applicant’s oral presentation: Argumentation, communication and language skills</td>
<td>20%</td>
<td>From 0 (worst) to 5 (best)</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Criterion 2. Specificity, clarity, and coherence of the applicant’s personal statement.</td>
<td>30%</td>
<td>From 0 (worst) to 5 (best)</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Criterion 3. Excellence of the research statement: innovativeness, complexity, and deep understanding of research, demonstrated during the discussion.</td>
<td>50%</td>
<td>From 0 (worst) to 5 (best)</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Global score</td>
<td></td>
<td>From 0 to 15</td>
</tr>
</tbody>
</table>

Each Evaluation Commission will produce a ranking list for each position. In the case of ex aequo, the applicant belonging to the less represented gender among all applicants (in the first instance) or the youngest (in the second instance) will be chosen.
Ranking list
The ELIT network will publish the final rankings for each position on the project website https://www.elitnetwork.eu/.
In addition, all applicants will be informed of the outcome of the selection process with an Evaluation Summary Report.

Applicants with disabilities or specific learning difficulties
The ELIT network will take specific measures for applicants with disabilities (e.g. blind or deaf applicants or those suffering from any other relevant disability) or with specific learning difficulties (e.g. applicants diagnosed with dyslexia, dysgraphia, dyscalculia or dysorthographia) to guarantee equal treatment.
For instance, we could arrange either an interview with the support of a trusted person, or a written interview, or any other appropriate alternative.
If you need a specific arrangement, please inform us about your specific disability or learning difficulty while applying and provide us with a clinical certificate(s) issued by the appropriate healthcare authorities or medical practitioners.

Admission to the PhD Programmes
Successful applicants are admitted to their selected PhD programme following the order of the ranking list.
The selected applicants must confirm by email their participation in the ELIT doctoral programme to the recruiting university within 15 days.
Applicants who fail to meet this deadline will be replaced by the next applicant on the ranking list, who will be informed by email and must enrol within 15 days following the same procedure.
Admission into the ELIT doctoral program requires, and is conditional on, admission to both universities at which the applicant is to study.
If no other applicant is available in the ranking list for the position, the ELIT network may decide to assign the position to a qualified applicant for a different PhD position or launch a special call for applications for the vacant position.

Employment conditions
The PhD candidates are expected to be recruited from 1st October 2020 to 30th September 2023 under a 36-month research contract and enrolled in the PhD programme starting from the 2020-2021 academic year.
All eligible researchers recruited within the ITN are entitled to receive the following salaries (gross amounts):

- Living: 3,270 €/month corrected by a country-specific coefficient established by the European Commission

1 See the Marie Sklodowska-Curie Actions Work Programme 2018-20, pp. 94-95.
• Mobility allowance: 600 €/month
• Family allowance: 500 €/month.

The amounts are total gross remuneration, inclusive of all social security contributions charged both to the recruiting organisation and to the PhD candidate.

The amount depends on the country of the recruiting organisation and the applied laws and regulations. Tax regulations in the host countries apply.

The family allowance is reserved for PhD candidates who have a spouse2 or are maintaining a child at the recruitment date. Any change in family obligations after this date will not be considered.

For further details, see the information on each position (ESR 1 to 10) the Annex below.

**PhD candidates’ rights, obligations and incompatibilities**

It is not possible to be simultaneously enrolled in more than one study programme leading to the awarding of a degree (e.g. Bachelor, Masters, Postgraduate Specialisation, short/executive Masters or PhD).

In the case of enrolment in the ELIT PhD programme successful applicants will be required to suspend or, if not possible, discontinue enrolment in their other degree programme before the commencement of the PhD programme; otherwise the applicant shall be excluded from the ELIT PhD programme.

**Confidentiality**

Personal data will be collected, used and processed in accordance with General Data Protection Regulation 2016/679 (GDPR).

The ELIT network commits to using applicants’ personal information for the implementation of the selection process and institutional purposes only.

The participation in the selection process implies the applicant’s consent to the collection, use and process of their personal data by the ELIT network.

**Further information**

Further information can be found on the ELIT website (https://www.elitnetwork.eu/).

The following contacts are available for further help:

• For **IT technical issues**, please email: helpdesk@elitnetwork.eu
• For **administrative issues** (e.g. eligibility requirements), please email: application@elitnetwork.eu

2 Namely, the PhD candidate must be linked to another person by a marriage, or a relationship with equivalent status to a marriage recognised by the legislation of the country where this relationship was formalised.
ELIT Call for applications
Annex: Detailed description of the available positions

ESR 1. Neurocognitive Poetics: Towards new integrative models and methods (WP1) ......................... 2
ESR 2. Individual variation in literary reading (WP1) .................................................................................. 4
ESR 3. Reading in the city – in everyday life (WP 1) .................................................................................. 6
ESR 4. Literary text perception and comprehension (WP 1) ................................................................... 8
ESR 5. Literary Empathy and Morality (WP 2) ......................................................................................... 10
ESR 6. The impact of narrative structure on engagement (WP 2) ................................................................. 12
ESR 7. The effects of literariness on empathy building in the classroom (WP 2) ................................. 14
ESR 8. Engagement of young adult readers in social media platforms (WP 3) ........................................ 17
ESR 9. Shared literary reading and mental well-being in the digital age (WP 3) ...................................... 19
ESR 10. Reading with digital tools in early childhood classroom settings (WP3) .............................. 21

REMARK

‘Full amount’ refers to salary for the early-stage researcher — i.e. Living + Mobility + Family allowance (if any) — as established by the MSCA Work Programme 2018-2020, with Living amount corrected by a country-specific coefficient established by the European Commission. It includes all social security contributions charged both to the recruiting organisation and to the PhD candidate.

‘Gross amount’ refers to the salary paid to the early-stage researcher (PhD candidate), including the social charges charged to the recruited researcher.

‘Net amount’ refers to an estimate of the net amount paid to the early-stage researcher (PhD candidate). This amount can vary according to tax systems.
ESR 1. Neurocognitive Poetics: Towards new integrative models and methods (WP1)

**Recruiting organization:** Freie Universität Berlin  
**Joint degree with:** Radboud University

We are offering a **3-year PhD position** in an international, multi-partner EU project. In our subproject, we offer a position in an empirical and computational research project in which we study the role of literary style and mental simulation during reading literary texts. Based on the assumptions of the Neurocognitive Poetics Model the project investigates how people can come to markedly different experiences while reading literature.

The successful candidate will receive a joint degree, through planned Secondments: Being mainly employed at Freie Universität Berlin (supervisor Arthur Jacobs) with a Second Supervisor and Academic Secondment at Radboud University (co-supervisor: Roel Willems, length: 12 months, months 20-31). Enrolment in Doctoral Degree(s): Freie Universität Berlin (FUB) and Radboud University. There is also a secondment at our non-academic partner hosted by the German Shared Reading organisation (industrial mentor: Carsten Sommerfeldt, length: 2 months, months 38-39) for theoretical and practical input, emphasizing the expertise of the German Shared Reading organization in understanding the role of stylistic features on reading experiences.

**Objectives:** The Neurocognitive Poetics Model of Literary reading (NCPM) describes literary reading as a multifaceted interaction between a stylistically elaborated literary text, a reader and a reading context. To understand the different reading experiences observed for one reader reading different texts or different readers reading the same text, characteristics of the text, the reader and the reading situation have to relate to measures at the neuronal, affective-cognitive and behavioral levels of observation.

This project aims to characterize and empirically test computational predictions about individual differences in two important aspects of literary reading: literary style and mental simulation. The successful candidate will combine computational text analyses with on-line measures of reading (e.g., eye-tracking and heart rate), as well as questionnaires and established individual difference measures (e.g., Need for Cognition, Interpersonal Reactivity Index). Besides collecting data in the lab, large online studies will be performed.

**Specific objectives:**  
(i) Develop working definition of Literary style by help of computational methods (e.g., machine-learning assisted quantitative narrative and advanced sentiment analyses/QNA/ASA; months 7-15);  
(ii) Collection of data on individual differences in relation to literary reading such as age, gender, reading habits, reading support (paper and screen) and reading exposure (months 16-38);  
(iii) Data analysis (months 39-42). The secondment spent at the German Shared reading organisation will be used to prepare quantitative predictions from QNA/ASAs and reader-specific personality assessments about potential effects of specific texts used in shared reading.

**Eligibility:** Must meet the general requirements of ELIT. If selected, admission will also require registration at the both the Freie Universität Berlin and Radboud University.

**Language requirement:** Fluency in English/German

**Other requirements:** a Master’s Degree in psychology or related research areas, experience in experimental methods, programming skills (Python, in particular NLTK, genism, w2v, tensowflow; Matlab).
The study plan is for three years and will take place mostly in Berlin, Germany. 12 months will be spent at Radboud University (months 20-31) of the project, and 2 months will be spent at Shared Reading in Berlin (months 38-39).

**Expectations:** The Early Stage Researcher (ESR = Doctoral candidate) will be expected to lead the research under the supervision of both supervisors and to publish results of at least two first-Authorship papers in peer-reviewed academic journals. This in addition to various forms of training within the ELIT framework as well as receiving non-academic experience, through a two month (internship at the German Shared Reading organization).

**Your application**

Part of your application packet is a short document describing how you would approach the research. This is a crucial part of the evaluation as it is meant to reflect your writing ability, creativity and grasp of theory and research. It is therefore crucial that you make your best effort toward making the document reflective of your true abilities.

When composing your text regarding the project you may wish to consider:

- What kind of texts could be used?
- What kind of stylistic figures could be focused on?
- What kind of personality variables will likely cause inter-individual differences?
- What kind of online measures might be appropriate?

You may find the following texts useful:

- Description of ELIT Work Package 2: [https://www.elitnetwork.eu/work-packages/](https://www.elitnetwork.eu/work-packages/)

**Allowance details**

**Without family allowance**

- Full amount: 3,771.90 €/month
- Net amount: 2,920.00 €/month

**With family allowance**

- Full amount: 4,271.90 €/month
- Net amount: 3,230.00 €/month

Please note that taxes might change, so gross and net amounts are just an estimate.
ESR 2. Individual variation in literary reading (WP1)

Recruiting organization: Radboud University Nijmegen

Joint degree with: Freie Universität Berlin

We are offering a 3-year PhD position in an international, multi-partner EU project. In this subproject we use on-task methods (such as eyetracking and pupil dilation) to study individual differences in mental simulation during reading of and listening to literary narratives.

The successful candidate will receive a joint degree, through planned Secondments: Being mainly employed at Radboud University Nijmegen (supervisor Roel Willems) with a Second Supervisor and Academic Secondment at Freie Universität Berlin (co-supervisor: Artur Jacobs, length: 12 months, months 20-31). Enrolment in Doctoral Degree(s): Radboud University and Freie Universität Berlin. There is also a secondment at our non-academic partner CPNB, the marketing and communication office for the Dutch book market (https://www.cpnb.nl/).

Objectives: The Neurocognitive Poetics Model of Literary reading (NCPM) describes literary reading as a multifaceted interaction between a stylistically elaborated literary text, a reader and a reading context. To understand the different reading experiences observed for one reader reading different texts or different readers reading the same text, characteristics of the text, the reader and the reading situation have to relate to measures at the neuronal, affective-cognitive and behavioral levels of observation.

This project aims to empirically test individual differences in mental simulation during literary reading. The successful candidate will use conceptual models (such as the NCPM) with on-line measures of reading (e.g., eye-tracking), as well as questionnaires and established individual difference measures. A special role in the project is for comparing literary reading and literary listening. Listening to literature is becoming more and more popular (e.g. audiobooks), but scientific insights on how the difference in medium influences the experience of fiction is relatively scarce.

Eligibility: Must meet the general requirements of ELIT. If selected, admission will also require registration at both Radboud University and the Freie Universität Berlin’s graduate offices.

Language requirement: Fluency in English. Knowledge of Dutch is an advantage, but is not necessary.

Other requirements: a Master’s Degree in psychology, linguistics or related research areas, experience in experimental methods and (statistical) data analysis. Programming skills (e.g. Python and R) and advanced data analysis techniques (e.g. machine learning approaches) are important for the project. Experience with and an interest in Open Science is an advantage.

The study plan is for three years and will take place mostly at the Centre for Language Studies (CLS) at Radboud University Nijmegen, The Netherlands (https://www.ru.nl/cls/) The CLS is a renowned research institute for all subdisciplines of language research. Language and cognitive neuroscience are top research programs at the Radboud campus. Twelve months of the program will be spent at Freie Universität Berlin (months 20-31) of the project. Exact arrangements are flexible.

Expectations: The Early Stage Researcher (ESR = Doctoral candidate) will be expected to lead the research under the supervision of both supervisors and to disseminate results in peer-reviewed journal articles and at
scientific conferences. This in addition to various forms of training within the ELIT framework as well as receiving non-academic experience, through a two-month internship at the CPNB.

**Your application**

Part of your application packet is a short document describing how you would approach the research. This is a crucial part of the evaluation as it is meant to reflect your writing ability, creativity and grasp of theory and research. It is therefore crucial that you make your best effort toward making the document reflective of your true abilities.

When composing your text regarding the project you may wish to consider:

- How would you measure mental simulation during reading?
- How do you expect reading and listening to fiction to differ?
- What kind of personality variables will likely cause inter-individual differences?
- What kind of online measures might be appropriate?

You may find the following texts useful:

- Description of ELIT Work Package 1: [https://www.elitnetwork.eu/work-packages/](https://www.elitnetwork.eu/work-packages/)

**Allowance details**

*Without family allowance:*
Full amount: 4,128.33 €/month

*With family allowance:*
Full amount: 4,628.33 €/month

Please note that net amount depends on the tax system.
ESR 3. Reading in the city – in everyday life (WP 1)

Recruiting organization: University of Vienna

Double degree: University of Warsaw

We are offering a 3-year PhD position in an international, multi-partner EU project. In our subproject, we offer a position in an empirical research project (mainly using eye-tracking) in which we study the presence, and quality, and aesthetic dimensions, of natural reading in our everyday lives. With our study we aim to establish a new, empirically based understanding of text and image interaction in everyday perception, with a special focus on aesthetic appreciation; and provide recommendations on utilizing mobile eye-tracking methods to investigate reading in everyday life.

The successful candidate will receive a double degree, through planned Secondments: Being mainly employed at University of Vienna (supervisor Helmut Leder) with a Second Supervisor and Academic Secondment at University of Warsaw (co-supervisor: Monika Płużyczka, length: 12 months, months 20-31). Enrolment in Doctoral Degree(s): University of Vienna (UNIVIE); University of Warsaw (UW). There is also a secondment at our non-academic partner hosted by Büro Bauer (industrial mentor: Erwin Bauer, length: 2 months, months 38-39) for theoretical and practical input, emphasizing the expertise of Büro Bauer in designing signage systems in public spaces.

Objectives: Text reading is a sub-skill of visually exploring, “reading,” and understanding the environment. In this project, we extend a new approach to collect relevant reading events during a walking tour in Vienna, by recording visual events with Mobile Eye-tracking (plus individually gathered film sequences, to be used in subsequent post-evaluations). All events are evaluated regarding general reading characteristics, meaningfulness, emotional memorability, aesthetic appeal and how long they are perceived. The data are analyzed to estimate: (a) which events in visually exploring the inner city of Vienna - by students, tourists and school children - qualify as “reading experiences”; (b) their prevalence and effects on visual exploration; (c) how they systematically differ between different perceivers. We combine this with our methods gathered in museum studies, our predictions from models of aesthetic experiences, and with the theoretical and practical input of Büro Bauer, especially their expertise in designing signage systems in public spaces. Thus, we will study how reading is meaningfully embedded in everyday urban life. Specific objectives: develop definition of reading in everyday life and in natural environment, design hypothesis on aesthetic experiences of texts in public spaces, collect data with mobile eye-tracking methods to investigate reading in everyday life, and publish the findings with our partners.

Eligibility: Must meet the general requirements of ELIT. If selected, admission will also require registration at the both the universities of Vienna and Warsaw.

Language requirement: English/German

Other requirements: Some training in experimental methods will be an advantage and a background in psychology or empirical aesthetics is preferred.

The study plan is for three years and will take place mostly in Vienna, Austria. 12 months will be spent at University of Warsaw (months 20-31) of the project, and 2 months will be spent at Büro Bauer (months 38-39).
**Expectations:** The Early Stage Researcher (ESR = Doctoral candidate) will be expected to lead the research under the supervision of both supervisors and to publish results of at least two first-Authorship papers in peer-reviewed academic journals. This in addition to various forms of training within the ELIT framework as well as receiving non-academic experience, through a two month internship at Büro Bauer, a leading Austrian graphic design agency.

**Your application**

Part of your application packet is a short document describing how you would approach the research. This is a crucial part of the evaluation as it is meant to reflect your writing ability, creativity and grasp of theory and research. It is therefore crucial that you make your best effort toward making the document reflective of your true abilities.

When composing your text regarding the project you may want wish to consider:

- What do you think, what kind of reading experiences take place when people walk through an urban environment?
- What features of text in urban environments might affect their attention demands?
- What kind of variables will likely cause inter-individual differences?

The description above is purposely vague. Try to make specific critiques or suggestions to how you would proceed from this vague description to make it more concrete?

You may find the following texts useful:

- Description of ELIT Work Package 1: [https://www.elitnetwork.eu/work-packages/](https://www.elitnetwork.eu/work-packages/)

**Allowance details**

**Without family allowance:**
Full amount: 4,089.09 €/month  
Gross amount: 2,929 €/month (14 month pays per year)

**With family allowance:**
Full amount: 4,589.09 €/month

Please note that net amount depends on the tax system.
ESR 4. Literary text perception and comprehension (WP 1)

Recruiting organization: University of Warsaw

Double degree: University of Vienna

Position: PhD candidate (3 years) in an international, multi-partner EU project. The successful candidate will receive a double degree: PhD in the Humanities at the University of Warsaw and in Psychology at the University of Vienna.

The study will take place mostly in Warsaw, Poland and the candidate will be employed at the University of Warsaw (supervisor: Prof. Monika Płużyczka). 12 months (months 23-34) will be spent at our academic partner organization, i.e. at the University of Vienna, Austria (co-supervisor: Prof. Helmut Leder, involvement in the project: Differentiation between reading in natural and artificial environment). There is also a secondment at our non-academic partner, hosted by Lillestrøm High School/ Norway (industrial mentor: Ole T. Mangen; length: 2 months, months 39-40) for gaining experiences with planning and preparing literary reading projects at schools, including the selection of literary texts and didactic implementation of these texts in the classroom.

Project objectives: In our project, we will establish through empirical research the cognitive specificity of literary reading. During eye tracking experiments and the analysis of the results, we will check whether the reading of literary texts shows specific eye movement patterns and therefore specific mental characteristics. In this phase, we will try to distinguish particular mental processes that underlie literary reading, as well as their causes. We will also try to recognize biological/physiological eye tracking indicators of relaxation (i.e. activation of the parasympathetic nervous system). Relaxation will be understood here as mental well-being. In the project, we will also try to assess to what extent the cognitive specificity of literary reading is derived from linguistic factors and genre-based factors. To do that, we will conduct linguistic analyses on a sample of selected texts from various literary genres to show the differences in responses of readers between those types of literary texts.

Expected results are: (i) Establishment of a new, empirically based, cognitive specificity of literary reading, and thereby the development of a neuro-cognitive model of literary reading. (ii) Identification of the effect of linguistic factors on cognitive involvement. (iii) Differentiation of the impact of various text genres on the cognitive specificity of literary reading and mental well-being of a reader.

Eligibility: Must meet the general requirements of ELIT. If selected, admission will also require registration at both universities of Warsaw and Vienna.

Language requirement: English (knowledge of German, Russian or/and Polish would be an additional advantage, but is not required)

Other requirements: experience or training in experimental methods will be an advantage and a background in linguistics and/or psychology is preferred.

Expectations: The Early Stage Researcher (ESR = Doctoral candidate) will be expected to lead the research under the supervision of both supervisors and to publish results of at least two first-Authorship papers in
peer-reviewed academic journals. This in addition to various forms of training within the ELIT framework as well as receiving non-academic experience.

Your application

Part of your application packet is a short document describing how you would approach the research. This is a crucial part of the evaluation as it is meant to reflect your writing ability, creativity and grasp of theory and research. It is therefore crucial that you make your best effort toward making the document reflective of your true abilities.

When composing your text regarding the project you may wish to consider:

- What hypotheses would you set based on the project description above?
- What research methods (both online and offline) could be used in the project?
- What types of texts could be used as research material?
- What linguistic characteristics of texts can influence their reception?
- What linguistic characteristics of texts influence the cognitive load in the readers?

You may find the following texts useful:

- Description of ELIT Work Package 1: [https://www.elitnetwork.eu/work-packages/](https://www.elitnetwork.eu/work-packages/)

Allowance details

**Without family allowance:**
Full amount: 3,068.85 €/month

**With family allowance:**
Full amount: 3,568.85 €/month

Please note that net amount depends on the tax system.
ESR 5. Literary Empathy and Morality (WP 2)

Recruiting organization: University of Verona

Double/joint degree with: Vrije Universiteit Amsterdam

We are offering a 3-year PhD position in an international, multi-partner EU project. In our subproject, we offer a position in an empirical research project on the subjects of empathy and morality.

Project objectives: The goal of this project is to establish the relationships between literary empathy and sense of morality. On a theoretical level we would also like to differentiate literary empathy from sympathy. Empirical research will focus on measuring empathy, sympathy, transportation, aesthetic evaluation, and moral evaluation after the reading of literary stories with either a morally bad protagonist, a morally good protagonist or a morally ambiguous protagonist. Ultimately, we would like to investigate the effects of reading morally diverse protagonists on various forms of engagement, moral judgments, and empathy skills. In view of sensitive educational issues (e.g., gender sensitivity, racism, holocaust education) the ESR will select a corpus of literary texts that enhance empathy or sympathy.

Eligibility: Must meet the general requirements of ELIT. If selected, admission will also require registration at the both the universities of Verona and VU Amsterdam. The study plan will take place mostly in Verona, Italy. One year will be spent in Amsterdam and 2 months non-academic secondment at Stiftung Lesen in Germany.

Scientific requirements: We are open for candidates with different backgrounds, such as Literary studies, Psychology, and Digital Humanities. Candidates should show some interest in interdisciplinary studies (e.g. Cognitive Poetics) or Empirical Aesthetics.

Language requirement: English. Other optional languages: German, Italian.

Expectations: The Early Stage Researcher (ESR = Doctoral candidate) will be expected to carry out the training within the ELIT framework as well as receiving non-academic experience. In addition, s/he will lead the research under the supervision of both supervisors.

Planned secondments: Second supervisor and Academic Secondment at VU Amsterdam (supervisor: Elly Konijn, length: 12 months, months 20-31): Differentiation between empathy with morally good and morally bad fictional figures.

Non-Academic Secondment hosted by Stiftung Lesen (industrial mentor: Simone C. Ehming, length: 2 months, months 36-37): Experiences with all steps required to develop programs aimed to promote reading (focused on reading for pleasure), including development of research and design instruments, data analyses and presentation of results.

Your application

Part of your application packet is a short document describing how you would approach the research. This is a crucial part of the evaluation as it is meant to reflect your writing ability, creativity and grasp of theory and
research. It is therefore crucial that you make your best effort toward making the document reflective of your true abilities.

When composing your text regarding the project you may want to consider:

- Is it possible to design a model of empathy that distinguishes it from identification and sympathy?
- Which strategies would you employ to promote empathy through reading?
- How reader’s empathy can relate to the moral nature of fictional figures?
- Which rhetorical and stylistic features do you consider most likely to impact empathy?

The description above is purposely vague. Try to make specific critiques or suggestions on how you would proceed from this vague description to make it more concrete.

You may find the following texts useful:

- Description of ELIT Work Package 2: [https://www.elitnetwork.eu/work-packages/](https://www.elitnetwork.eu/work-packages/)

**Allowance details**

**Without family allowance**
Full amount: 4,013.88 €/month  
Gross amount: 3,268 €/month  
Net amount: 2,895 €/month  

**With family allowance**
Full amount: 4,513.88 €/month  
Gross amount: 3,675 €/month  
Net amount: 3,256 €/month  

Please note that taxes might change, so gross and net amounts are just an estimate.
ESR 6. The impact of narrative structure on engagement (WP 2)

Recruiting organization: Haifa University

Double/joint degree with: University of Verona

Eligibility: Must meet the general requirements of ELIT. If selected, admission will also require registration and admission at both the universities of Haifa and Verona.

Language requirement: English

Other requirements: Some training in experimental methods and statistical analysis will be required and a background in communication or social psychology is preferred. Additionally, a background in literary studies is useful.

The study plan is for three years and will take place mostly in Haifa, Israel. One year will be spent in Verona and 2 months in non-academic training in Germany (see details below).

Expectations: The Early Stage Researcher (ESR = Doctoral candidate) will be expected to lead the research under the supervision of both supervisors and to publish results in peer-reviewed academic journals. This, in addition to various forms of training within the ELIT framework, as well as receiving non-academic experience. Some administrative and communication duties within the network will also be assumed by the ESR.

Project objectives: This project will explore the possibility that specific features of reading (text and context) lead to differences in how stories are experienced. The goal of the project will be to establish causal relationships between features of narrative texts and the way readers psychologically engage with the stories and enjoy them. Using experimental methods and concepts used in media psychology (i.e., transportation, identification, interpretation, and enjoyment) the proposed project will consist of a series of small experiments that will explore how specific literary features (such as the ratio of plot to exposition or the extent of inner-world description) and reading modes (e.g., e-books vs. audio vs. paper) affect reader responses and enjoyment. It is expected that better understanding of reader experience will lead to better methods of creating a desire for reading.

Planned Secondments: Second supervisor and Academic Secondment at UNIVR (supervisor: Massimo Salgaro, length: 12 months, months 18-29): Differentiate empathy from identification and transportation.

Non-academic Secondment hosted by RWCC (industrial mentor: Rüdiger Wischenbart, length: 2 months, months 33-34): Experiences and knowledge on how books and the reading market is researched, efficient promotion of reading in the book-publishing sector.

Enrolment in Doctoral Degree(s): University of Haifa (UH); University of Verona (UNIVR)

Your application

Part of your application packet is a short document describing how you would approach the research. This is a crucial part of the evaluation as it is meant to reflect your writing ability, creativity and grasp of theory and research. It is therefore crucial that you make your best effort toward making the document reflective of your true abilities.
When composing your text regarding the project you may want wish to consider:

- Which textual features do you consider most likely to impact reader response?
- Why should these features matter?
- How would you approach, define, and operationalize such features/variables in an experimental setting?
- Do you expect reading technology to be important to the experience of reading? Why or why not?

The description above is purposely vague. Try to make specific critiques or suggestions to how you would proceed from this vague description to make it more concrete?

You may find the following texts useful:

- Description of ELIT Work Package 2: [https://www.elitnetwork.eu/work-packages/](https://www.elitnetwork.eu/work-packages/)

**Allowance details**

**Without family allowance**
- Full amount: 4,069.00 €/month
- Gross amount: 3,130.00 €/month
- Net amount: 2,034.50 €/month

**With family allowance**
- Full amount: 4,569.00 €/month
- Gross amount: 3,514.00 €/month
- Net amount: 2,284.50 €/month

Please note that taxes might change, so gross and net amounts are just an estimate.
ESR 7. The effects of literariness on empathy building in the classroom (WP 2)

Recruiting organization: Vrije Universiteit Amsterdam

Double/joint degree with: Haifa University

Eligibility: Must meet the general requirements of ELIT. If selected, admission will also require registration at both the Vrije Universiteit Amsterdam and Haifa University in accordance with a double/joint degree arrangement.

Language requirement: English (minimum is TOEFL 600 (paper based) or 100 (internet based) and IELTS 7.0). In addition: Dutch is an advantage.

Other requirements: Some training in experimental methods is required and a background in communication and information studies, language and communication, psycholinguistics, communication science, social psychology, or media studies is preferred. Additionally, a background in literary studies is useful. At the Graduate School of the Social Sciences at Vrije Universiteit Amsterdam, a Research Master degree or equivalent is required for a three-year PhD-position.

The study plan is for a minimum of three years and will take place mostly in Amsterdam, the Netherlands. One year will be spent at Haifa University in Israel and 2 months in Belgium (see secondments below).

Expectations: The Early Stage Researcher (ESR = PhD-candidate) will be expected to conduct the research under the supervision of both supervisors the Vrije Universiteit Amsterdam (prof. dr. Elly A. Konijn) and Haifa University (prof. dr. Jonathan Cohen), and co-supervised by prof. dr. Frank Hakemulder (Utrecht University). Various forms of training within the ELIT framework as well as acquiring non-academic experience is included in the program. The candidate is expected to publish results in peer-reviewed academic journals and present at international conferences. Finally, a completed dissertation, in part compiled of journal publications, is expected at the end of the project.

Project objectives: Recent empirical research shows that literary reading, by virtue of its appeal to first-person experience, yields unique cognitive and emotional benefits (e.g., enhancing the capacity for empathy, social inference, emotional self-regulation, verbal abilities, and intelligence). The goal of this sub-project is to examine the effects of literariness on empathy and pro-social behavior. Specifically, the researcher will focus on the role of foregrounding (i.e., stylistic qualities of a text that disrupt common ‘automatic’ reading processes) on perspective taking and self-reflection, underlying empathy building, and (didactic) approaches to literature. The methodological approach includes textual, stylistic analyses as well as theory-based empirical and experimental research in lab and field contexts. Thus, the candidate will develop a model of literary/deep reading based on foregrounding and its neuropsychological underpinnings in view of educational purposes and collect data to validate the model. Investigating the effects of foregrounding on empathy building will increase our understanding of the possible practical applications of literariness in reading in various social contexts, varying from education, to therapy, to management, and shared reading projects (e.g., in the classroom, in prisons).

Planned Secondments: Second supervisor and Academic Secondment at Haifa University, Israel (supervisor: prof. dr. Jonathan Cohen, length: 12 months, months 21-32): Identifying literary quality and empathetic processes for practical applications of literariness in reading in various social contexts. Non-academic
**Secondment** hosted by Het Lezercollectief (industrial mentor: Dirk Terryn, length: 2 months, months 37-38): Collaboration in identifying personal engagement through literary quality for different participants of reading groups, experience and knowledge about research into interactions between reader and texts and among readers.

**Enrolment in Doctoral Degree(s):** Vrije Universiteit Amsterdam (VUA); University of Haifa (UH).

**Your application**

Part of your application packet is a short document (max. 8 pages A4, font size 11, double spaced) describing how you would approach the research. This is a crucial part of the evaluation as it is meant to reflect your writing ability, creativity and grasp of theory and research. It is therefore crucial that you make your best effort toward making the document reflective of your true abilities.

When composing your text regarding the project you may want to consider:

- Which textual or stylistic features do you consider most likely to impact readers’ empathy building?
- Why should these features matter?
- How you may approach, define and operationalize such features/variables in an empirical or experimental setting?
- What approach to the reading of literary texts (prior, during, and afterwards) could enhance the effects on empathy and pro-social behavior, or more specifically, on perspective taking and self-reflection?

The description above is purposely open. Try to make specific critiques or suggestions to how you would proceed from this general description to make it more concrete?

You may find the following texts useful:

- Description of ELIT Work Package 2: [https://www.elitnetwork.eu/work-packages/](https://www.elitnetwork.eu/work-packages/)

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*Note: The content of this document reflects only the author’s view and the Research Executive Agency (REA) is not responsible for any use that may be made of the information it contains.*

**Allowance details**

*Without family allowance:*
Full amount: 4,128.33 €/month  
Gross amount: 2,325.00 €/month

*With family allowance:*
Full amount: 4,628.33 €/month

Please note that net amount depends on the tax system.
ESR 8. Engagement of young adult readers in social media platforms (WP 3)

**Recruiting organization:** University of Basel

**Double/joint degree with:** University of Stavanger

**Position:** PhD candidate (36 months) in Digital Humanities at the University of Basel (Switzerland), one year at the Reading Centre in Stavanger (Norway) and three months of non-academic training at Interessensgemeinschaft Leseförderung in Switzerland.

**Eligibility:** Must meet the general requirements of ELIT. If selected, admission will also require registration at both the Universities of Basel and Stavanger.

**Language requirements:** German and English

**Other requirements:** A background in computational linguistics or machine learning is preferred, as is an affinity with qualitative research methods.

**Expectations:** The Early Stage Researcher (ESR = Doctoral candidate) will be expected to lead the research under supervision of both supervisors and to publish results in peer-reviewed academic journals. They will be involved in various forms of training within the ELIT framework as well as receive non-academic experience.

**Project objectives:** The project aims to understand the role of stories and story literacy for the development of resilience and coping mechanisms to deal with stress in young adult readers. The project will focus on how literary reading and writing in *online social media environments* (such as Wattpad and Goodreads) can improve people’s ability to understand others and through that their sense of well-being. The ESR will develop new computer-based methods to investigate the relationship between reading and writing in online social media environments and the development of coping mechanisms to deal with stress (i.e., resilience). The use of new computer-based and cognitive methods in this project will broaden the spectrum of methods of scholarly research normally used to investigate issues of literary reading and its contribution to well-being. During the non-academic secondment at “Interessensgemeinschaft Leseförderung” the ESR will be familiarized with ‘real life’ readers in the context of a shared reading program that aims to stimulate literary reading among young adults, which provides the ESR with an interesting opportunity for comparison.

**Planned secondments**

- Second supervisor and Academic Secondment at UIS (supervisor: Anne Mangen, length: 12 months): Identifying ways in which reading and writing online in social environments could be used to enhance subjective psychological well-being.

- Non-academic Secondment hosted by Interessensgemeinschaft Leseförderung (industrial mentor: Barbara Piatti, length: 2 months, months 37-38): Collaborating on developing measures to capture young adults’ reading habits and promote literary reading among young adults through the use of online social media platforms.
Your application

Part of your application is a short document describing how you would approach the research. This is a crucial part of the evaluation as it is meant to reflect your writing ability, creativity and grasp of theory and research. It is therefore crucial that you make you best effort toward making the document reflective of your true abilities. When composing your text regarding the project you may want wish to consider:

- How do you think online environments (such as Goodreads and Wattpad) impact the reading experience?
- What do you think are the mechanisms of literary reading that could lead to effects on well-being?
- How would you approach, define and operationalize story literacy?
- What kind of computational methods would be useful for the investigation of online reading and writing?

The description above is purposely vague. Try to make specific critiques or suggestions to how you would proceed from this vague description to make it more concrete.

You may find the following texts useful:

- Description of ELIT Work Package 3: [https://www.elitnetwork.eu/work-packages/](https://www.elitnetwork.eu/work-packages/)

Allowance details

**Without family allowance**

- Full amount: 4,563.24 €/month
- Gross amount: 4,076 €/month

**With family allowance**

- Full amount: 5,063.24 €/month
- Gross amount: 4,576 €/month

Please note that net amount depends on the tax system.
ESR 9. Shared literary reading and mental well-being in the digital age (WP 3)

**Recruiting organization:** University of Stavanger

**Double/joint degree with:** Trnava University

**Eligibility:** Must meet the general requirements of ELIT. If selected, admission will also require registration at both the universities of Stavanger (UIS) and Trnava (TRUNI).

**Language requirement:** Scandinavian and English

**Other requirements:** Some training in empirical methods will be an advantage and a background in literature and/or psychology is preferred. The study plan is for three years and will take place mostly in Stavanger, Norway. One year will be spent in Trnava, Slovakia and 2 months in Århus, Denmark.

**Expectations:** The Early Stage Researcher (ESR = Doctoral candidate) will be expected to lead the research under the supervision of both supervisors and to publish results in peer-reviewed academic journals. This in addition to various forms of training within the ELIT framework as well as receiving non-academic experience.

**Project objectives:** This project will explore ways in which literary reading may positively affect aspects of mental well-being. The goal of the project is to assess the short-term effects of the shared reading program carried out in selected samples in and around Stavanger. Combining experimental methods and concepts from psychology (e.g., rating scales, working memory tests) with perspectives from literary text analysis (e.g., perspective-taking), the proposed project will carry out an empirical study of shared reading sessions over an extended period (approx. one year). Focus will be on the interplay between the literary texts, the discussion/dialogue in the group, and participants’ experiences of the texts and the dialogues, during and after reading. Plausible methods include rating scales, memory tests, observation, surveys and interviews, in addition to qualitative text analysis.

**Planned Secondments:** Second supervisor and Academic Secondment at TRUNI (supervisor: Zuzana Petrová, length: 12 months, months 19-30): development, implementation and evaluation of shared reading programs in educational settings.

**Non-academic Secondment** hosted by Læseforeningen (mentor Mette Steenberg). Length: two months (months 32-33): collaboration in identifying clinical and non-clinical samples to assess short-term effects of shared reading programs. Development of materials used to promote reading in reading groups, planning and implementing shared reading programs, and facilitating discussions and reflections about texts in the shared reading practice.

**Enrolment in Doctoral Degree(s):** University of Stavanger (UIS); Trnava University (TRUNI).

**Your application**

Part of your application packet is a short document describing how you would approach the research. This is a crucial part of the evaluation as it is meant to reflect your writing ability, creativity and grasp of theory and...
research. It is therefore crucial that you make your best effort toward making the document reflective of your true abilities.

When composing your text regarding the project you may want to consider:

- Which aspects of literary texts do you consider most relevant in nourishing mental well-being?
- Why do you consider these textual aspects important?
- How would you approach, define and operationalize such features/variables in an experimental setting?
- What are your thoughts and perspectives on associations between literary reading, mental well-being and digitisation?

The description above is purposely vague. Try to make specific critiques or suggestions to how you would proceed from this vague description to make it more concrete?

You may find the following texts useful:

- Description of ELIT Work Package 3: https://www.elitnetwork.eu/work-packages/

**Allowance details**

**Without family allowance**

Gross amount: 4,960 €/month (year 1); 5,110 (year 2); 5,188 (year 3)
Net amount: 2,994€/month (year 1); 2,986 (year 2); 2,938 (year 3)

**With family allowance**

Gross amount: 5,460 €/month (year 1); 5,610 (year 2); 5,688 (year 3)
Net amount: 3,494€/month (year 1); 3,486 (year 2); 3,438 (year 3)

Please note that taxes, gross salary for PhD candidates in Norwegian universities might change yearly, so gross and net amounts are just an estimate.

Please contact Katrine Peck Sze Lim (katrine.p.lim@uis.no) for further information.
ESR 10. Reading with digital tools in early childhood classroom settings (WP3)

Recruiting organization: Trnava University

Double/joint degree with: University of Basel

Eligibility: Master’s degree in the study field “Education and Education sciences” or in the study field relevant to the project. The applicant must meet the general requirements of ELIT and to be eligible for admission to the doctoral programmes at the Trnava University and at the University of Basel. If selected, admission will also require registration at the universities of Trnava and Basel.

Language requirement: Good command of English both orally and written, oral and written fluency in German and in one of the Slavic languages is an advantage.

Other requirements: Some training in empirical methods will be an advantage and a background in language and literary education is preferred.

The study plan is for three years and will take place mostly in Trnava, Slovakia. One year will be spent at academic secondments in Basel (Switzerland) and 2 months at non-academic secondment in Bratislava (Slovakia).

Expectations: The Early Stage Researcher (ESR = Doctoral candidate) will be expected to lead the research under the supervision of both supervisors and to publish results in peer-reviewed academic journals. In addition, various forms of training within the ELIT framework as well as receiving non-academic experience are planned in the project.

Objectives: This project will target early childhood settings (for 3-6 years old children) with the aim to investigate the development of early language and literacy skills and children’s attitudes to and engagement with reading within classroom practices implementing literary reading programs, providing both paper-based and digital reading experience. The project will require developing a literary reading program for early childhood settings that implement both the underpinning theoretical argument and a range of research–informed strategies and practical classroom approaches. Besides analysing the responses of children to literary reading program, data on attitudes to and engagement with reading, as well as performance and attainment in literacy measures (e.g., text comprehension, vocabulary growth, storytelling/story re-telling skills), home literacy environment, including family socio-economic status, etc. will be collected. The general objective of the project will be to discuss the supposition that reading enjoyment plays a more important role in school success than socio-economic status, and that early exposure to literacy practices increases the impact of these experiences on attitudes toward reading and well-being, within the digital era.


Non-academic Secondment hosted by Raabe Publishing House (industrial mentor: Mária Zelenková, length: 2 months, months 39-40): Experiences and knowledge on the specific needs of the field of education that are studied and targeted by the publishing sector; how to connect reading research with the development of
reading promotion materials and how to plan, prepare, conduct and evaluate training formats for different promoters of reading in the field of education.

**Enrolment in Doctoral Degree(s):** Trnava University (TRUNI); University of Basel (UNIBAS)

**Your application**

Part of your application packet is a short document describing how you would approach the research. This is a crucial part of the evaluation as it is meant to reflect your writing ability, creativity and grasp of theory and research. It is therefore crucial that you make your best effort toward making the document reflective of your true abilities.

When composing your text regarding the project you may want to consider:

- What are the features of well-working reading and literacy promoting programs? How paper-based and digital reading experiences might differ, considering the targeted group (children in their early years)?
- What paper-based and digital reading experiences will be implemented in the project to promote literacy reading in early years?
- Which features of reading and literacy promotion programs do you consider most likely to impact the response of a child? How do you plan to approach them in a research setting?
- Which specific measures do you think are relevant in studying the relationship between literacy development, engagement of children in the reading process and school success and well-being, in the context of the digital age? More specifically, when targeting children in their early years?

The description above is purposely vague. Try to make specific critiques or suggestions to how you would proceed from this vague description to make it more concrete?

You may find the following texts useful:

- Description of ELIT Work Package 3: [https://www.elitnetwork.eu/work-packages/](https://www.elitnetwork.eu/work-packages/)

**Allowance details**

**Without family allowance:**
Full amount: 3,229.08 €/month

**With family allowance:**
Full amount: 3,729.08 €/month

Please note that net amount depends on the tax system.