



DEEP Consortium

Open call for associate projects

DEEP (Digital Education for Equity in Primary schools, <https://deep-consortium.ch/>) is a *research* consortium that aims to clarify the foundations, challenges, and consequences of the digital transformation for Swiss primary schools. The aim is to contribute to an equitable and sustainable digitalization in the early years of school education.

In 2024, DEEP was founded by seven partner universities - PHZH, EPFL, PHSZ, PHSG, PH FHNW, UZH and UniGE - and is supported by the Jacobs Foundation. Over 50 researchers from the founding partner universities are working actively on DEEP projects and form the current DEEP research community. The consortium is planned to operate for two phases (2024-2027 and 2028-2031).

The particularity of DEEP is that it goes beyond the research activity as it creates and operates a functional framework for the results of research to be made useful to inform all stakeholders of the Swiss primary school field. These *translational* activities are addressed to practitioners (teachers, principals, PICTS/personnes ressources etc) as well as education administrators and policy-makers. In this translational perspective, DEEP is part of Jacobs Foundation's initiative [Education in Digitality](#), together with the project [Chance Digitality](#) operated by [staatslabor](#) and [ProEdu](#).

The DEEP consortium opens its research community to contributions by new associate partners through an open call for associate projects (requesting funding from DEEP) within the scope of equity and digital education in Swiss primary schools in 2025 and an open call for associate membership (without funding, inviting scholars to join the community based on their existing projects and resources). This document describes the open call for projects. Please refer to the parallel open call for membership for details on association without funding: <https://deep-consortium.ch/open-calls>

Call for associate projects

This call invites scholars in Swiss higher education institutions to submit proposals for projects that contribute to the research and translational work done on the thematic focus areas of DEEP.

Thematic orientation

The general goal of this call is to broaden the thematic coverage of DEEP such that we address the variety and complexity of questions related to digital education and equity.

Please refer to the document "DEEP flagship challenges" for the definition of our priority research areas, one or several of which your submission should relate to, as well as to the DEEP consortium website (<https://deep-consortium.ch/>) for the overview on existing DEEP projects. In addition, we identify the following two focus topics that we target in particular with the current call.

Focus on equity in relation to digital education

We are, in particular, interested in proposals that strengthen the understanding of *equity*-related issues in digital education. Associate projects are appreciated to address scientific concepts and debates that aim to capture and understand equity in digital education (e.g. fairness, inequalities, special needs education, discrimination, access, participation, quality, universal design for learning etc) and their consequences. These issues can reflect the complexity of educational disadvantaging (and its connection to the digital transformation of education).

Focus on learning sequences in digital education

Proposals are also particularly welcome on the research priority area "learning sequences including digital tools in varying classroom contexts" (see DEEP flagship challenges), i.e. if they add to the variation of contexts in which the usage and consequences of digital tools is studied in order to gain context-aware and translation-ready research results.

Authentic learning is likely to be composed of sequences mixing digital and non-digital learning activities. Therefore, we look for contributions to add to our understanding of the interplay of digital and non-digital learning activities and how it is influenced by contextual factors.

Proposals might even suggest methodologically innovative approaches that aim at overcoming the difficulty to reproduce effects of digital education interventions in other contexts. Building on empirical work in existing DEEP projects can be an interesting option here.

Design of proposals

Researchers interested in joining the DEEP research community with a funded project should design their proposal considering the following:

a) Project context

Proposals to this call can either consist in new small-scale or pilot projects specifically designed to address the thematic scope, or they can connect to / expand on existing projects with a relevant thematic scope (those of the applicant or an existing DEEP project). A possible connection with existing DEEP projects could take the form of additional (pilot) studies, conference organization, or international workshops, for instance.

b) Type of work

Applicants can propose research or research-related activities, as well as translational activities.

Research activities involve conducting original empirical research that addresses a specific research question.

Research-related activities include any academic contribution to advance the knowledge in our research field e.g. publications, symposia, conferences.

Translational activities which help bridge research and practice, involve sharing, discussing, and adopting research findings in collaboration with stakeholders in the field of Swiss primary education (practice, administration, policy). Such translational activities can produce a variety of outputs (design and testing of recommendations/guidelines, (participatory) workshops, dedicated non-scientific publications, outreach, learning material, training material etc.).

DEEP research community membership

Successful proposals will enter the DEEP project base and the involved researchers will be included as associate members in the DEEP research community. Belonging to the DEEP research community includes:

- cross-institutional networking opportunities with over 50 researchers (plus those selected through the open call for associate projects and associate membership)
- participation in DEEP events e.g. thematic workshops
- visibility of your work and expertise on the DEEP website through other communication channels and during DEEP events
- Integration of your results into the overall DEEP work and its uptake by the DEEP Coordination Office
- increased impact of your research work through integration in the DEEP translational framework addressing stakeholders of the education system

Conditions for submission

- **Eligibility:**
Proposals can be submitted by researchers affiliated to a Swiss higher education institution (except the seven founding universities PHZH, EPFL, PHSZ, PHSG, PH FHNW, UZH and UniGE).
- **Project duration:**
The work should start earliest on 01.08.2025 and needs to be finished by the end of 2027.
- **Funding amount:**
DEEP will select proposals for a total amount of maximum 500K. The minimum amount of requested funding attributed to any one single proposal will be 25K and the maximum amount of requested funding attributed to any one single proposal

will be 100K. The total costs of the project are composed of requested funding and matching funds from the applicant. Matching funds (in kind or in cash) are required to be at least as high as the requested funding. The sum of overhead expenses shall not exceed 20% of the total project costs (consisting of direct project costs and overhead expenses), and overhead can be covered in equal parts by the required funding and the matching funds provided by the associate partner.

Proposals should be submitted in English.

Evaluation criteria

Proposals will be evaluated for the following criteria:

- relevance and strength of contribution to the DEEP priority research areas and focus topics defined in the call
- scientific and/or translational quality depending on the type of work, including clarity of goals and means to achieve them
- feasibility (in terms time, resources, team/expertise etc)
- contribution to the (institutional, disciplinary, methodological, regional, and contextual) diversity of the DEEP community
- potential for impact and contribution to DEEP translational framework
- complementarity and/or synergy with existing DEEP projects

Submission

Proposals must use the submission template. They can be submitted until 31.03.2025 to info@deep-consortium.ch.

Decisions are expected to be communicated by 31.05.2025.

For any questions please contact: info@deep-consortium.ch

Related documents

The following documents can be found here: <https://deep-consortium.ch/open-calls>

DEEP flagship challenges

Parallel open call for associate membership

Submission template