

Emerging Tech Fellowship

for Higher Education in Lower Saxony



- Funding amount: EUR 20,000
- Duration: 4-12 weeks, between June 1, 2026, and November 30, 2026
- Application period: November 25, 2025 – January 31, 2026
- Four Emerging Tech Fellowships are open for application

The Emerging Tech Fellowship

What is the Emerging Tech Fellowship about?

The Emerging Tech Lab, part of the *Hochschule.digital Niedersachsen* initiative, is looking for up to four forward-thinking technology experts to join us in Lower Saxony in 2026 to share their knowledge and insights on emerging technologies in higher education. With the help of these experts, the potential and risks of emerging technologies for studying and teaching will be explained, discussed, and tested.

Why does the Emerging Tech Fellowship exist?

Technological innovations are changing higher education. Too often, the disruptive potential of emerging technologies goes unnoticed. With the Emerging Tech Fellowships, the Emerging Tech Lab aims to help universities in Lower Saxony recognize these technological developments early, reflect on them critically, and actively shape their impact on higher education. The goal is to **strengthen their ability to respond and innovate**.

What does the Emerging Tech Fellowship enable?

The Emerging Tech Fellowship supports stays at public educational institutions in Lower Saxony lasting between **4 and 12 weeks**. During their stay, Emerging Tech Fellows will implement formats that deal with emerging technologies in higher education. Each fellowship is endowed with **EUR 20,000**. The details regarding the use of funds will be defined in a joint kick-off meeting between the fellow, host, and Emerging Tech Lab after the fellowship has been granted. A total of **four fellowships** will be awarded.

Funding Lines

The Emerging Tech Fellowship offers two funding lines. While line A focuses on a specific topic, line B is open-ended.

Funding Line A: Combining AI and XR

Artificial intelligence opens up new possibilities for extended reality applications, for example through the integration of AI companions in educational spaces to support independent learning. These and other connections between AI and XR are the subject of funding line A. Potential Emerging Tech Fellows choose **one** of the following three thematic approaches when applying for this funding line.

1. Research & Analysis

Understanding, interpreting, and communicating emerging technologies

You are a researcher, theorist, or analyst working in the field of AI, XR, or related technologies. Your focus lies in investigating technological foundations, scientific models, or societal implications. You contribute by translating complex research findings into accessible insights and fostering informed discussion within the academic community.

2. Creative & Experimental Practice

Exploring, prototyping, and design with emerging technologies

You are an innovator, developer, designer, or researcher who works hands-on with AI, XR, or related technologies. You build prototypes, create experiential spaces, or design interactive formats that make technology tangible. Your focus lies on experimentation, iterative design, and practical usability.

3. Speculative & Scenario-Based Exploration

Discussing, reflecting, and envisioning possible futures

You are an author, artist, philosopher, future designer, or researcher who explores the social and cultural implications of emerging technologies such as AI and XR. You create speculative scenarios and narratives that invite reflection, provoke dialogue, and raise awareness of potential futures.

Funding Line B: Open Emerging Tech Fellowship

Funding line B is not tied to current debates or predefined topics. It targets individuals who explore technologies or ideas for higher education that reach beyond the present moment and concepts that are still visionary, experimental, or well ahead of their time.

We are looking for (e.g.)

- philosophers who deal with consciousness and knowledge in the future,
- engineers pioneering fundamentally new ways of communication,
- computer scientists who are thinking about a new architecture for the internet,
- artists with audiovisual ideas for future universities.

Key Players

Three key players work together in the Emerging Tech Fellowship.

Emerging Tech Fellow

As an Emerging Tech Fellow, you serve as an **expert** voice and help advance the discourse on emerging technologies in higher education. You contribute your research-oriented, creative-experimental, or scenario-based perspective to inspire new ways of thinking about future technologies.

In your role as an expert, you act as a **source of inspiration, a catalyst, and a multiplier**. During your stay, you will work with your host institution to design your own formats, workshops, or contributions and network with actors in Lower Saxony.

Emerging Tech Lab

The Emerging Tech is the central organizational unit of the Emerging Tech Fellowship program and ensures its visibility within the higher education landscape of Lower Saxony.

The Emerging Tech Lab:

- **connects** Emerging Tech Fellows and hosts with relevant players from science, administration, and practice,
- integrates fellows and hosts into established formats,
- develops **formats for exchange and visibility** (e.g., workshops, public discussions, exhibitions) together with fellows and hosts,
- **accompanies and supports** the tandems throughout the Emerging Tech Fellowship in terms of organization and content.

In this way, the Emerging Tech Lab contributes to making the Emerging Tech Fellowship a visible and effective part of Lower Saxony's educational landscape.

Host

Emerging Tech Fellows rely on professional exchange and support during their stay. As a host, you are the **first point of contact** and create the connection between the fellow and your institution.

In this role, you will help to create a shared workspace and think tank where collaboration, dialogue, and encounters can take place. In addition, you will become part of a growing emerging tech network and have the opportunity to deepen collaborations and actively innovate the future of higher education.

As a host, you will shape the Emerging Tech Fellowship together with the Emerging Tech Fellow and the Emerging Tech Lab. You are a **door opener and enabler**:

- you provide the content framework and create space for productive collaboration.
- In collaboration with the Emerging Tech Lab and the Fellow, you will co-create the program - defining key themes and designing engaging event formats.
- You open doors to your institution and facilitate exchange with relevant networks, colleagues, and students.

This role is **ideal for professors or institutional leaders** interested in contributing their expertise and helping to shape the fellowship's activities.

Application Process

Who can apply?

The Emerging Tech Fellowship is open to experts who are engaged with emerging technologies and are interested in exploring their role in higher education. Applications are open to individuals from Germany and abroad who would like to implement a project in one of the three areas of funding line A or the open funding line B.

We are looking for individuals who bring fresh perspectives, ask (critical) questions, spark discussion, or create spaces for experimentation and discovery.

The Application

Applications for the Emerging Tech Fellowship can be submitted until January 31, 2026, using the form on [the Emerging Tech Lab website](#).

The form includes questions about the applicant's background and qualifications, as well as key details about the proposed project - including its motivation, objectives for the fellowship, and potential formats (e.g., keynotes, roundtables, summer school) during the stay.

In addition to the application form, **two documents are required:**

- a detailed CV,
- a confirmation of support from the host and host institution*.

*A template for this document is available for download on [the Emerging Tech Lab website](#). The Emerging Tech Lab supports applicants who are interested in the fellowship but do not yet have a host in Lower Saxony.

Please contact us if you need assistance in finding a host.

Selection Process and Criteria

The Emerging Tech Lab checks all submissions for completeness and creates a shortlist, which—together with the longlist—is presented to an independent jury from the fields of science, education, and university development. After an initial review of all submissions by the jury, short introductory calls will be held with the finalists. The jury will then make the final decision on the awarding of the Emerging Tech Fellowships.

The jury evaluates the submissions according to the following criteria:

1. Project

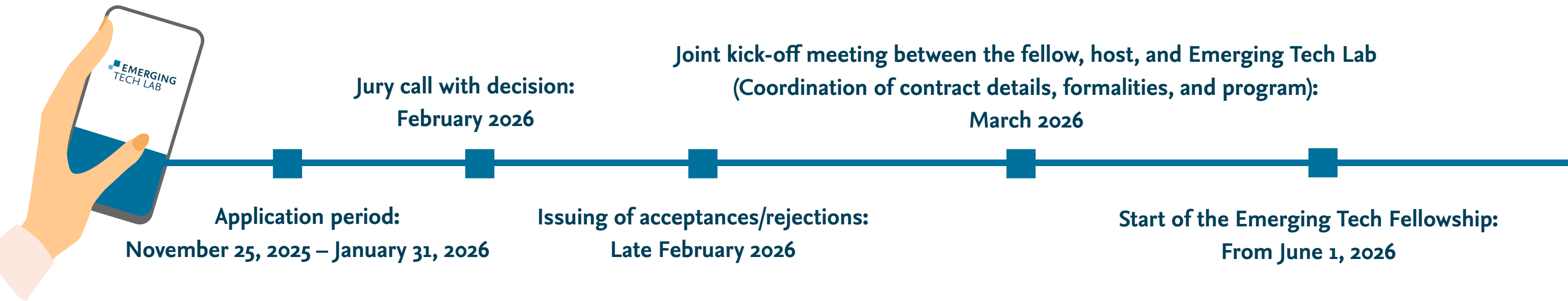
- Relevance of the topic: To what extent does the project contribute to the discussion of emerging technologies in higher education in Lower Saxony?
- Innovation potential: What new perspectives, methods, or discourses does the project open up?
- Feasibility: Is the planned program realistically achievable within the specified time frame?
- Coherence: Are the objectives, methodology, and planned formats coordinated?

2. Qualifications

- Previous work: Which publications, projects, or works demonstrate the relevant expertise of the applicants?
- Professional experience: Which activities or positions underscore the applicant's qualifications?

Timeline

The Emerging Tech Fellowship process, from application to program start, follows this schedule:



Contact persons

If you have any questions about the Emerging Tech Fellowship or need help connecting with a fellow or host, Ina van Beesel and Derk Trei are happy to help.



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