

Emerging Tech Fellowship for Higher Education in Lower Saxony



- Funding amount: EUR 20,000
- Duration: 4-12 weeks, between June 1, 2027, and November 30, 2027
- Application period: September 4, 2026 - December 4, 2026
- Four Emerging Tech Fellowships will be awarded
- Please also find all the information on [our website](#)

The Emerging Tech Fellowship

What is the Emerging Tech Fellowship about?

The Emerging Tech Lab, a project under the *Hochschule.digital Niedersachsen* initiative, is announcing the Emerging Tech Fellowship for the second time. The Emerging Tech Lab monitors and analyzes new technological developments and supports universities in shaping these developments in an active and forward-looking manner.

As part of the fellowship, the Emerging Tech Lab will invite international technology experts to Lower Saxony between June and November 2027 to provide impetus for the integration of emerging technologies into higher education. With the help of the fellows, the potentials and risks of emerging technologies for student learning 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 in 2027.

Funding Line A: Zero Human University – How Much of a Human Element Will (Still) Be Present in the University of the Future?

The debate about the university of the future ranges from utopian scenarios of a largely autonomously organized educational institution to dystopian visions of the future in which human interaction and academic self-determination lose their significance.

Against this backdrop, the Fellowship draws on the idea of the “**Zero Human Company**” from the startup world (Paul Cheek). This concept describes the vision of a company that, after its founding, is operated largely autonomously by AI agents and requires only minimal human intervention.

The **Zero Human University** Fellowship applies this perspective to higher education and invites participants to explore possible future scenarios for academic education in the age of autonomous technologies. The focus is not merely on the general question of how higher education will change as AI and autonomous systems increasingly take over tasks in teaching, student studies, and university administration, but specifically on:

- Who bears responsibility and makes decisions?
- How will the university as a space and its various spaces change?
- Which educational and training goals and course content will take center stage in the future?
- Will students and faculty still exist as we know them today?

We are seeking **visionary, critical, or experimental projects** that explore what academic education might look like under these conditions and **what role people will play in the university of the future.**

Funding Line B: Open Emerging Tech Fellowship

Funding Line B opens the door to unconventional perspectives, critical assessments, and visionary concepts for the future that go beyond established debates.

It is aimed at individuals who are radically rethinking academic education while also considering technologies and developments that currently lie on the fringes of what is conceivable.

The focus is on “far-out” technologies and speculative scenarios to rethink existing structures, roles, and processes within higher education.

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 from international universities and institutions who are engaged with emerging technologies and are interested in addressing them in higher education. The Emerging Tech Fellowship deliberately leaves open whether it supports early-career researchers or established experts. The sole determining factor is the quality of the proposed project.

We are looking for, for example:

- **Scholars** conducting research on or regarding the modern use of technologies
- **Artists** who take a creative approach to new technologies and can help facilitate the transfer of skills in this area
- **Philosophers** capable of rethinking the fundamental concept of higher education
- **Tech entrepreneurs** who bring expertise through their own technologies and wish to test them in practical settings

More important than professional background is a credible, critical, and/or visionary engagement with the future of academic education in light of emerging technologies.

The Application

Applications for the Emerging Tech Fellowship can be submitted **until December 4, 2026**, using the form on the [Emerging Tech Lab website](#).

The form includes questions about the applicant's background and qualifications, as well as guiding questions regarding the content, within which the goals for the fellowship are to be described.

A central component of the fellowship is the creation of **at least three formats** during the residency:

- a **lecture** as part of the Emerging Tech Lecture Series,
- a **workshop** format,
- a **format** of the applicant's choice, e.g., an exhibition, future workshop, performance, discussion, or an experimental format.

Ideas for these formats are to be described in the application form.

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

- a detailed CV (max. two DIN A4 pages),
- a letter of support from the host institution*

*A template for this document is available for download on the [Emerging Tech Lab Website](#).

Selection Process and Criteria

The Emerging Tech Lab reviews all submissions for completeness and compiles a shortlist, which – along with the longlist – is presented to an independent jury composed of experts from the fields of science, education, and higher education development.

The jury evaluates the submissions and decides on the awarding of the Emerging Tech Fellowships based on the following criteria:

1. Project

- Project's Ambition: Is the project relevant to higher education in Lower Saxony? How innovative is the project?
- Coherence of the Project: Are the components of the project coherent and feasible?

2. Qualifications

- Previous Work: Which works demonstrate the applicants' relevant expertise?
- Professional Experience: Which activities or positions underscore the applicants' qualifications?

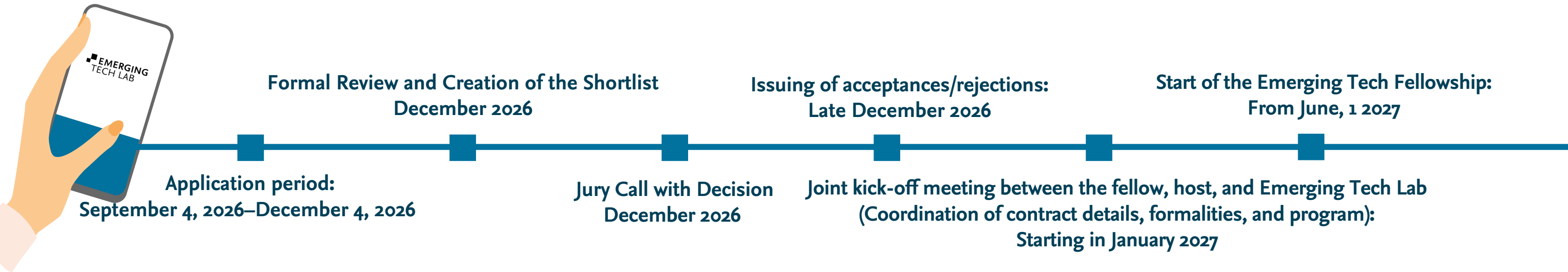
Insights into the First Funding Round

Through the first call for applications for the Emerging Tech Fellowship in 2026, four international fellows – from South Africa and Brazil, among other countries – were selected to bring new perspectives on emerging technologies to universities in Lower Saxony and to share and discuss these perspectives through workshops, lectures, exhibitions, discussions, and other formats.

You can learn more about the fellows, their projects, and the results of the first funding round on our [website](#) as they become available.

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, please feel free to contact the EmTech Fellowship team – Ina van Beesel, Dr. Lukas Dehmel, and Derk Trei – at emtechlab@tu-braunschweig.de



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