Press Release

HRK German Rectors' Conference
The Voice of the Universities

12 January 2026
Digital higher education and artificial intelligence: BMFTR funds HRK projects

The digitalisation of studying, teaching, research and administration as well as the use of artificial intelligence (AI) in everyday university life are the focus of two projects of the German Rectors' Conference (HRK), which are now being funded by the Federal Ministry of Research, Technology and Space (BMFTR) as part of the High-Tech Agenda Germany (HTAD).

The HRK project KI-LOTSE (National Service Centre for AI in Higher Education) aims to support German universities in tapping into the potential of artificial intelligence. Among other things, the new service centre will develop dialogue and advisory formats and publish guidelines on the legal, technical and organisational integration of AI applications.

The follow-up funding provided for the Hochschulforum Digitalisierung (Higher Education Forum on Digitalisation; HFD) will also continue the successful advisory service on the digitalisation of studying and teaching. The joint project, which has been supported by the HRK, the Stifterverband and the CHE Centre for Higher Education since 2014, remains the central point of contact and driving force for the further development of digital higher education, including its infrastructural requirements. The HFD supports the trial and concrete implementation of innovative approaches with topic-specific publications, training and advisory services.

Professor Dr Ulrike Tippe, HRK Vice-President for Digitalisation and Academic Continuing Education, thanks the BMFTR for funding both projects:

"Digitalisation and artificial intelligence are permanently changing the way we work, obtain information and interact with our environment. Dynamic developments in the field of AI in particular are currently creating completely new fields of application for universities in research, study and teaching as well as administration. The HRK's KI-LOTSE will make it easier for universities to systematically tap into the transformative potential of AI. This is a strategic task. A particular focus of the project will also be on enabling students to approach AI in a reflective way. We are equally pleased about the continued funding of the Higher Education Forum on Digitalisation, which will enable the further expansion of this sustainable network. Especially in view of rapid technological and political developments, the possibility of direct, cross-institutional dialogue is important. Only through intelligently conceived and utilised collaborations can we adequately meet the numerous challenges, develop digital resilience, build skills and drive innovative ideas at universities," says Tippe.

Background

KI-LOTSE
With the KI-LOTSE project (National Service Centre for AI in Higher Education), which runs from January 2026 to March 2029, the HRK is setting up a service centre to support universities across Germany in the strategic use of artificial intelligence. Among other things, the project will advise universities on legal, technical and organisational issues that arise when AI is used in teaching, studying, research and administration at universities. The project will also build up a central collection of application examples and make them accessible online. Guidelines on specific topics will also be made available.
www.ki-lotse.ai

Higher Education Forum on Digitalisation ("HFD 4.0")
As a transfer-oriented competence centre, the Higher Education Forum on Digitalisation (HFD) brings together a broad community around digitalisation in studying and teaching, contextualises technological trends and supports the concrete implementation of innovative approaches. It provides networking, advice and support for stakeholders in academia, politics, business and society. Launched in 2014, the HFD is a joint initiative by the Stifterverband, the CHE Centre for Higher Education and the German Rectors' Conference (HRK). The joint project will be funded in a fourth period from January 2026 to 2030 by the BMFTR (HFD 4.0).
www.hochschulforumdigitalisierung.de/en