

Call for Contributions

European Conference on Critical Edtech Studies (ECCES) – 2026 Futuring Studio

Theme: Shaping (Better) Educational and Societal Futures through and with Critical Edtech Research

Date: September 16-18, 2026 (pending final confirmation)

Location: Helmut-Schmidt-University Hamburg, Holstenhofweg 85, 22043 Hamburg (Germany)

Organizers: Sigrid Hartong (Helmut-Schmidt-University Hamburg); Mathias Decuypere (Zurich University of Teacher Education); Ben Williamson (University of Edinburgh); Jeremy Knox (University of Oxford)

Conference Theme

Facing an ongoing intensification of planetary crises, expanding attacks on democracy as well as rising global inequality, education scholars around the world have called for a much more serious engagement in shaping different educational and societal futures, oriented towards sustainability, justice, diversity and care. Within the more specific field of *Critical Edtech Studies* (CES), scholars have accordingly problematized how the design and implementation of education technology (edtech) have, in contrast to the optimistic promises of extensive societal enhancement, also contributed to the maintenance, if not the amplification, of inequality, injustice and planetary harms, oftentimes caused by nonreflexive pedagogical adoption and/or policies. At the same time, scholars have also emphasized the enormous transformative potential of edtech, if designed and implemented in more planetary-, equity- and power-sensitive (e.g., feminist, speculative, creative or antagonist) ways. There has, in that regard, also been an increasing engagement in professionalization activities that take broader societal, political, economic or ecological interrelations of digital education in general, and different edtech products in particular, more strongly into account. These approaches and activities commonly share the idea of close collaboration and co-creation between research, practice, policymakers, edtech developers, intermediaries (e.g., NGOs), and communities. Collaboration and co-creation are thereby regarded as key, not only to overcome persisting structures, but also to put differently imagined futures more easily into practice, also by creating the space to include voices otherwise marginalized from decision-making. Critique is, in that regard, understood as productive, generative, reparative, and collaborative in the development of education technologies, as opposed to merely exposing or ‘debunking’ existing flaws and/or assumptions. At the same time, the key areas where CES must still substantially improve and innovate include the cultivation of cross-field alliances in order to achieve more substantial impact on actual educational practices.

Responding to these developments, the European Conference on Critical Edtech Studies (ECCES) is launching a *Futuring Studio* in 2026: a communal design space to shape future edtech practices, applications, and research. We invite scholars to **present and learn about the exploration and substantiation of CES impact creation with regards to education research and practice, policy, or edtech development, to share experiences, and to develop approaches for shaping better edtech futures.**

The futuring studio builds on the inaugural ECCES conference, hosted by the Zurich University of Teacher Education in summer 2025 (tiny.phzh.ch/ecces), which included a community-based envisioning of the future of CES. Throughout ECCES 2025, it became clear that the co-creative shaping of better edtech futures together with practitioners, policymakers and/or tech developers was considered as one of the strongest potentials – yet at the same time one of the greatest challenges – of CES. The ECCES futuring studio 2026 provides a creative and vibrant space for experimentation, for acting on these potentials and challenges, and to build collectives. Positioned in between two ECCES main conferences (2025 in Zurich; 2027 in Oxford), the futuring studio is **smaller in scope, particularly addresses emerging scholars in the field of CES**, and strongly encourages **the inclusion of practitioners, policy-makers, edtech developers or other groups.**

Call for contributions (panels/workshops/activities)

We invite proposals **for contributions** (panels/workshops/activities/etc.) of **either 90 min or 120 min length.**

- **Contributions must be led and submitted by emerging scholars** (PhD students, postdocs, or scholars holding non-permanent positions). Professors and other senior scholars can, however, act as supporting co-organizers or co-contributors.
- **Contributions can include** practitioners, policymakers, edtech developers, or other relevant groups as active participants.
- **Contributions should be situated in one or several of the following thematic areas:**
 - Technological artifacts (educational platforms, apps, AI, VR, data visualizations, other digital tools);
 - Policy and governance (governments, institutions, actor networks, discourses shaping edtech development and adoption);
 - Political economy (business practices, capitalization, value creation, edtech industry);
 - Social justice and diversity (edtech and marginalized communities, inequalities, heterogeneous or postcolonial audiences);
 - Learning, pedagogy and assessment (types and visions of learning, teaching, pedagogy and assessment enhanced or inhibited by edtech);
 - Ethical considerations (privacy, surveillance, ethical implications of edtech);
 - Sustainability and planetary futures (environmental impact/design of edtech).
- **Contributions can make use of the following approaches** (you are invited to propose additional approaches):
 - Co-design, co-creation, and/or design-based research;
 - Participatory research, action research, research-practice partnerships;
 - Futuring practices (e.g., speculative methods; building alternative infrastructures);
 - Science communication and impact creation;
 - Building alliances, political capacity, productive resistance, art and activism.

- **Formats** can include presentations; however, creative workshop methods, groupwork, work with technology, and interactive or artistic formats will be favoured in the application process.
- **Contributions should address one or more of the following target groups** (you are invited to propose additional target groups): Teachers, students, parents, edtech developers, education leadership, policymakers, intermediary actors (e.g., teacher unions, NGOs)
- Contributions should either **illustrate concrete experiences and approaches regarding CES impact creation** (including failing experiences), or **develop ideas for its future enhancement**.
- Contributions **should avoid dismissive critique** and open up avenues for constructive debate.

Other requirements for submissions:

- **Components of proposals:** names and affiliation of contributors, indication of duration (90 or 120 min), as well as a summarizing abstract (max. 400 words) including outline of the program, indication of main target group(s), approach(es) and theme(s) covered in the contribution.
- If you would like to offer an **activity for the social program** of the event (e.g., music, art, sports,...), please indicate this **in your submission email**. However, offers for the social program can only be submitted together with an ordinary contribution.
- Deadline: **February 15, 2026** (8pm CET);
- Limit of persons: Each proposal can maximally involve **four** persons who are actively **participating in the event**, to allow for a broad range of slots to be accepted. It is of course possible to list additional non-presenting persons who are not participating in the event.
- Notification of Decision: **end of March, 2026**

If you are interested in contributing to the program, please submit your panel/workshop/activity proposal to ecces2026@hsu-hh.de

Registration fees

The event will be free of charge, but participants need to cover their own travel expenses.

In case active contributors necessarily require **funding support** to be able to travel to the event, please indicate this in your proposal. We would then check whether there might be options to support those participants.

Contact Information

Please submit your abstract exclusively to ecces2026@hsu-hh.de. Please also use that email address if you have any other questions about the futuring studio. We will respond to you as soon as possible.

We are looking forward to receiving your ideas and proposals, envisioning a vibrant collective event!

The ECCES Futuring Studio organizing committee

Sigrid, Mathias, Ben, and Jeremy