

PROGRAMME OVERVIEW & CALL FOR APPLICATIONS

HCE College 2026/27

Environmental Change and Society: Understanding and Shaping Transformations

The HCE College brings together doctoral researchers from across disciplines for sustained intellectual exchange on environmental change and societal transformation. It creates a space to learn across disciplinary boundaries, communicate research to colleagues from other fields, and build a strong interdisciplinary network at Heidelberg University.

What the HCE College offers

A compact, interdisciplinary cohort programme with five in-person core sessions from November 2026 to April 2027. Exchange across natural and life sciences, social sciences and economics, and cultural studies, with room for climate, water, food, biodiversity and other environmental transformation topics.

A deliberately low-burden format that focuses preparation on shared reading and discussion rather than extensive additional assignments.

Programme goals

- Challenge disciplinary assumptions and learn from different scientific perspectives and methods.
- Strengthen the ability to communicate research clearly across disciplinary boundaries.
- Develop systems thinking, critical reflection and the integration of different forms of evidence.
- Build a trusted peer network and identify opportunities for collaboration, training and transfer.

Core programme 2026/27

Date	Time	Format	Focus
12 Nov 2026	15:00 - 18:30	Kick-off	7-minute research pitches, short Q&A and World Cafe
10 Dec 2026	16:30 - 18:00	Journal Club 1	Interdisciplinary reading and discussion
21 Jan 2027	16:30 - 18:00	Journal Club 2	Interdisciplinary reading and discussion
18 Mar 2027	16:30 - 18:00	Journal Club 3	Interdisciplinary reading and discussion
29 Apr 2027	13:00 - 18:00 + open end	Closing Workshop	Integration, transfer, collaboration and networking

Location: Mathematikon, Heidelberg University. Exact room details will be communicated to the selected Fellows.

How the programme works

Kick-off | 12 November 2026

Each Fellow introduces their research in a 7-minute pitch, followed by short questions and connections from the group. The second part uses a World Cafe format to establish shared working principles and jointly shape the Journal Clubs.

Three Journal Clubs | December, January and March

Each session is prepared by a pair of Fellows from different disciplines. The pair selects one paper or comparable text, which everyone reads in advance. A short framing input opens a structured discussion focused on translating assumptions, methods and findings across disciplinary boundaries.

Integrative Closing Workshop | 29 April 2027

The final workshop brings the strands of the programme together through integrative group work, communication and transfer activities, reflection on lessons learned, and opportunities to develop follow-up collaborations. The formal programme ends at 18:00 and is followed by an informal open end.

Benefits for Fellows

- EUR 600 support per academic year for networking and training activities, subject to the availability of HCE funds and regular participation.
- Certificate of participation, including ECTS/SWS where applicable.
- An interdisciplinary peer network across Heidelberg University and increased visibility for your research.
- Access to selected HCE and 4EU+ training and networking opportunities.
- The opportunity to actively shape topics, discussions and activities within the College.

Application

Apply by 30 September 2026

Please send your application to hce@uni-heidelberg.de.

Applications should include a CV and a one-page motivation letter.

The motivation letter should briefly explain why you would like to join the HCE College, what perspective you would like to contribute, and your availability for the core programme dates.

Optional follow-up opportunities

K3 Congress on Climate Communication | 9 - 11 June 2027 | Heidelberg

Fellows can use the K3 Congress as an optional additional opportunity for networking, science communication and transfer after the formal HCE College programme.

4EU+ interdisciplinary program Collegio futuro | Summer School: 28 June – 02 July 2027 | Heidelberg

During the Collegio futuro Summer School, participants will tackle environmental issues in an interdisciplinary manner and practice science communication to policymakers and civil society.