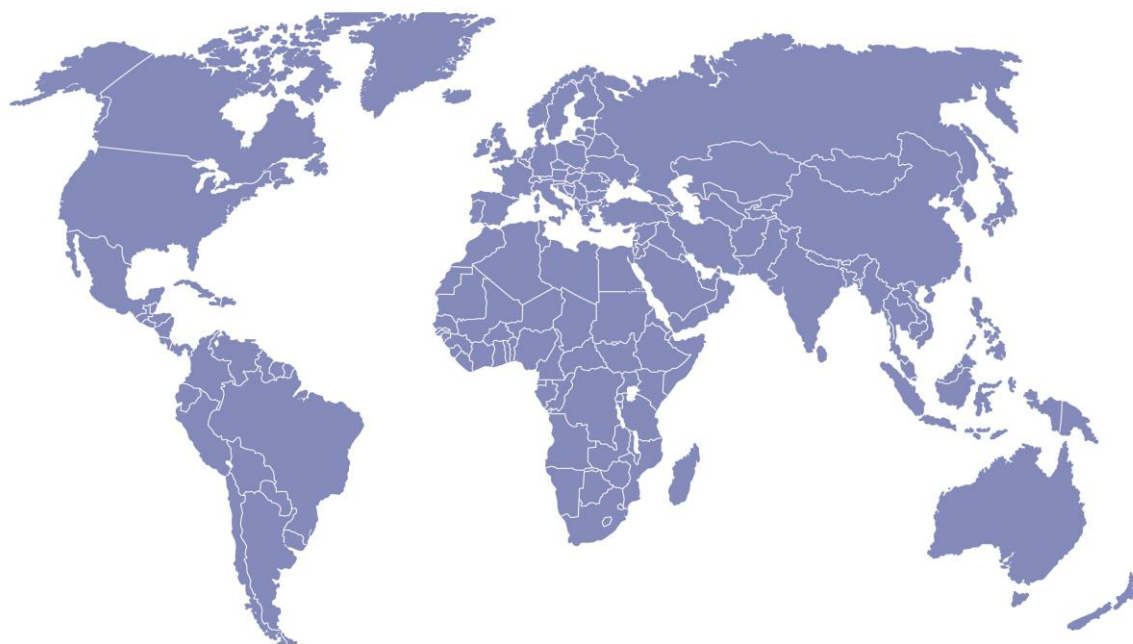


CALL FOR APPLICATIONS

UNILEAD 2026

DIES University Leadership and Management Training Course



Supported by the



Federal Ministry
for Economic Cooperation
and Development

UNILEAD 2026

The German Academic Exchange Service (DAAD) and the C3L - Center for Lifelong Learning at the University of Oldenburg (Germany) are jointly organising the DIES University Leadership and Management Training Course UNILEAD in Oldenburg, enabling young managers at higher education institutions in selected countries of the Global South to successfully tackle every-day challenges. In order to do so, the training course brings together the topics **Project Management, Strategic Management & Academic Leadership and Human Resource Management** with individual and practice-oriented change projects of each participant.

So far, more than 550 participants from over 50 countries have taken part in the UNILEAD Training Courses.

Developed in 2008, UNILEAD is part of the DIES programme (Dialogue on Innovative Higher Education Strategies), which is jointly coordinated by the DAAD and German Rectors' Conference (HRK) since 2001 and supported by the Federal Ministry for Economic Cooperation and Development (BMZ).

Further information on the DAAD DIES programme and the DIES training courses can be found at www.daad.de/dies/en.

Course and Methodology

UNILEAD focuses on three key areas:

1. Project Management.

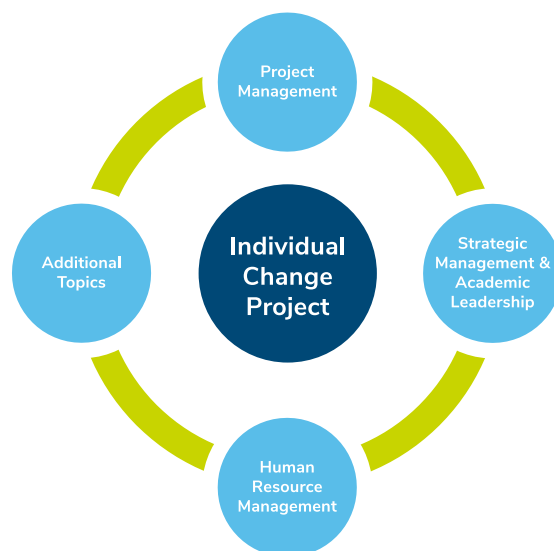
This includes courses on Methodology of Project Management and Financial Management in projects.

2. Strategic Management & Academic Leadership.

This includes courses of theoretical basics and practical tools for the development and implementation of Strategic Management and acquisition of competences in the area of Leadership.

3. Human Resource Management.

This includes courses on instruments of Human Resource Development, Conflict Management and Communication.



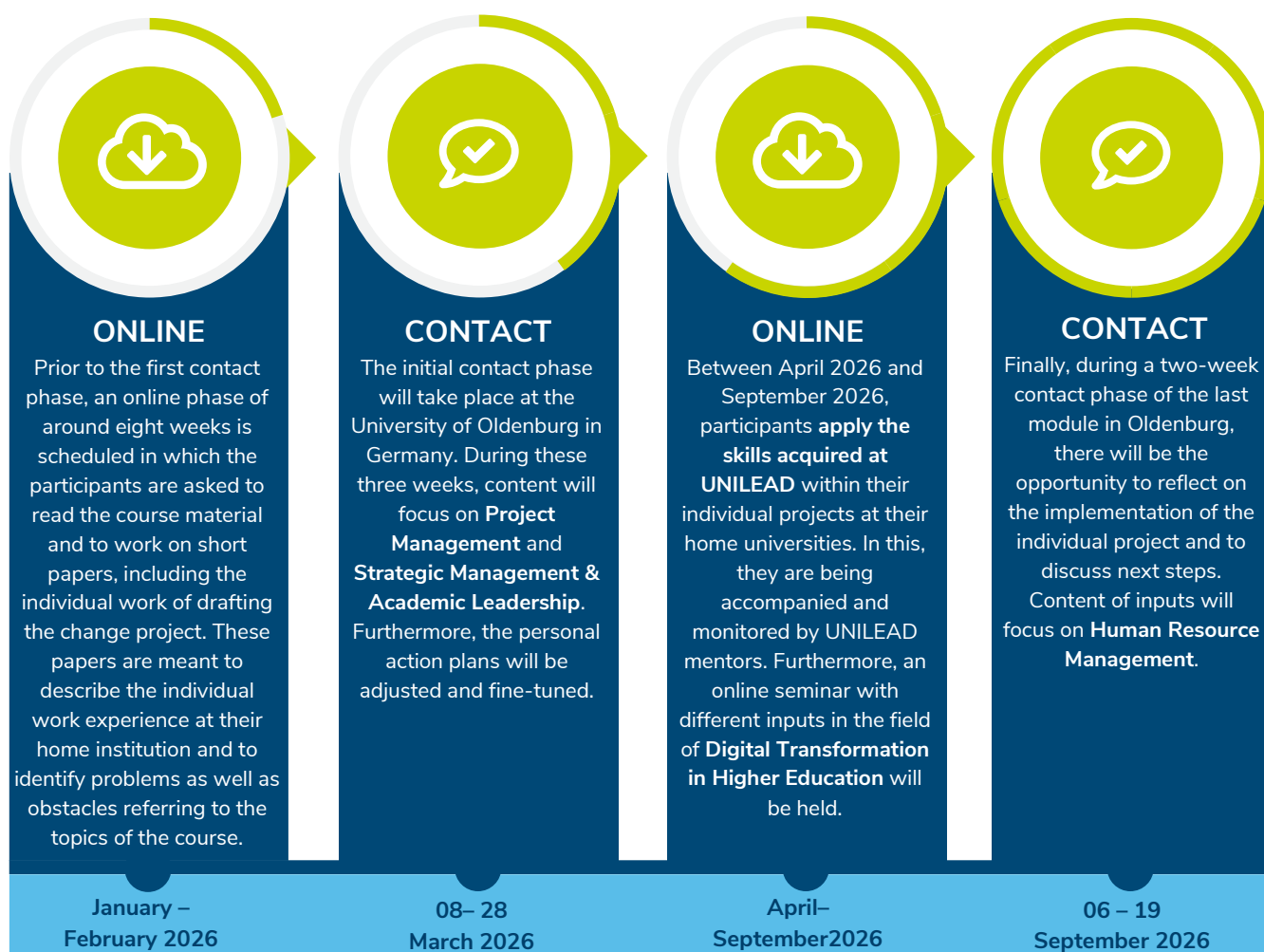
In order to complement these three modules, **additional topics**, such as Strategic Story Telling, Team and Key Competences, and Resilience are touched upon. In addition to a web seminar on the topic of “Digital Transformation in Higher Education”, excursions to other higher education institutions are also integrated into the curriculum.

The core of the entire course is an individual and practice-oriented change project that participants are required to propose already in their application. The project should explicitly be **linked to the strategic objectives** of their universities and the field they are working in. The course content will always reflect on and relate to these change projects.

The methodology will be strictly project-oriented and is based on case studies or questions derived from the particular job situation of the participants. Thus, it is expected to bring in personal experience and to share this knowledge with the group of around 25 participants from different regions and countries of the world. High personal motivation, the willingness to get actively involved during the online and contact phases and excellent English language skills are essential for the successful completion of this course.

Learning Approach / Schedule

Using a blended learning approach, UNILEAD is structured in two on-site contact phases at the University of Oldenburg, and mentor guided online phases.



As the modules of the programme are interconnected, participants are expected to take part in the online and contact phases and the web seminar.

- **Online Phase 1: January – February 2026**
- **Contact Phase 1 in Oldenburg: 08. – 28. March 2026**
- **Webseminar: April – June 2026**
- **Online Phase 2: April – September 2026**
- **Contact Phase 2 in Oldenburg: 06. – 19. September 2026**

A written statement from the higher education management, that confirms a strong commitment to attend all parts of the course is an entry requirement for being admitted.

Partners' Profile

The **University of Oldenburg** is the academic coordinator of this training course and works closely together with the DAAD.

With the C3L, the University of Oldenburg has a renowned institution for continuing education that offers various international and national programmes such as part-time study programmes, certificate and degree programmes for professionals of (higher) education institutions. Thus, it has a wide network of experts who act as lecturers and provides in-depth experience in the field of education management and continuing education. International and national lecturers will bring in expertise in higher education management and will help reflecting the specific questions from an international and intercultural perspective.

Participants' Profile

UNILEAD is targeting higher education managers from selected countries of the Global South who have just been promoted to a position with management responsibilities.

The objective is to equip these managers with the necessary leadership skills to successfully master the challenges that lie ahead of them. The greatest benefit and success are therefore enjoyed by participants who are still at the beginning of their management career.

The two key criteria for applicants are:

- Applicants have been holding a **university management position with administrative, managerial, operational or personnel function** that contributes to institutional sustainability, student success, and innovation. **The management responsibility should not exceed 4 years:**
 - Managers of central university departments (Planning, Quality Management, Human Resources, Continuing Education; **excluding academic units such as Deans, Vice Deans, Head of Department**).
 - Task force managers for university change projects.

- Active and **excellent English language skills** (speaking and writing) are indispensable. Phone interviews will be organised with short listed candidates to guarantee the requested proficiency.

Further criteria are:

- Applicants are university leaders preferably between 30 and 40 years.
- Applicants hold at least a Master's degree.
- The provision of international experience will be an asset.

Participants from higher education institutions of **the following countries** are eligible to apply:

- **South East Asia:** Cambodia, Indonesia, Laos, Malaysia, Myanmar, Philippines, Thailand, Timor-Leste, and Vietnam.
- **Sub-Saharan Africa:** Botswana, Burundi, Cameroon, Eswatini, Ethiopia, Gambia, Ghana, Kenya, Lesotho, Liberia, Malawi, Mauritius, Namibia, Nigeria, Rwanda, Sierra Leone, South Africa, Tanzania, Uganda, Zambia, and Zimbabwe.
- **Middle-, South America and Mexico:** Argentina, Belize, Bolivia, Colombia, Costa Rica, Cuba, Dominican Republic, Ecuador, El Salvador, Guatemala, Honduras, Mexico, Nicaragua, Panama, Paraguay, and Peru.
- **Northern Africa and Middle East:** Algeria, Egypt, Jordan, Lebanon, Morocco, and Tunisia.

Application Requirements and Process

Applications can be submitted via the online application form on the UNILEAD-website at

<https://c3lms.uni-oldenburg.de/unilead-2026/>

Strict closing date of the application is October 07, 2025, 10.00 am Central European Summer Time.

Following information and documents are requirements for an application:

1. **Application Form** including a clear practice-oriented **Project Proposal** – using the online-form provided on the website.
2. **Letter of Motivation including date and signature** – uploaded to online-application form as pdf-file.
3. **Letter of Recommendation from university top management** (President/Rector or Vice-Chancellor/Vice-Rector of the university) **including date and signature**. The letter should describe and emphasise the managerial qualifications and leadership competencies, the future potential of the candidate – uploaded to online-application form as pdf-file.

4. **Proof of excellent English proficiency** (e.g. TOEFL, Cambridge Certificate) will be an asset (pdf-file).

The Selection Committee composed of high-profile higher education management experts meets in November 2025.

The selection criteria are based on the following points:

- Personal profile match (position, managerial experience)
- Motivation letter
- Description of change project and its influence and impact on the strategy of the university
- Institutional profile match
- Recommendation of university's top management

The selected candidates will be informed about the results of the selection meeting by mid of December 2025.

Funding

During the contact phases the participants will be guests of the University of Oldenburg.

Following expenses will be covered:

- Course costs for participation in UNILEAD.
- Travel costs: Flights to and from Germany (Economy class) and ground travel to and from Oldenburg (2. class train). We kindly ask the participants to make their own travel arrangements – they will then be reimbursed in cash upon arrival in Oldenburg.
- Accommodation (including breakfast) and Welcome and Farewell Dinner at the two contact phases in Germany.
- Emergency health insurance during the contact phases.

Expected co-funding: Participants' home institutions are expected to contribute to the course costs by paying a one-time fee of 300,00 € (in words: three hundred euros).

In addition, local transportation in the participants' home countries and visa costs for the stay in Germany have to be covered by the participants and/or their home institution.

Further details on terms and conditions will be given to the admitted applicants together with the invitation letter.

Contact details of Programme Management

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