

Call for Applications – SCRIPTS Forum Visiting Researcher Stay (Early-Career Researchers)

Up to 6 Visiting Researcher Stays to be hosted between April and December 2026.

Stays may range from a minimum of one month up to a maximum of six months, depending on availability and demand. The available funding allows for different configurations (e.g. one six-month stay, two three-month stays, several shorter stays, or combinations thereof).

Applicants are asked to indicate their preferred duration and time period in their application.

The SCRIPTS Forum 2026

The SCRIPTS Forum “*Emergent Digital (Dis-)Orders: AI Governance between Liberal and Authoritarian Scripts*” – a public outreach programme of the Cluster of Excellence “Contestations of the Liberal Script” (SCRIPTS) in Berlin – investigates how artificial intelligence and digital technologies reshape global contestations of political order. AI is not merely a technical innovation but a political instrument: it can foster transparency, participation, and democratic inclusion, while simultaneously enabling surveillance, manipulation, and authoritarian control. The Forum examines how political institutions, governance structures, and normative frameworks determine whether AI strengthens liberal or authoritarian logics, with comparative analyses spanning China, the US, and other global contexts. Outreach activities include interdisciplinary lunch talks, participatory mini-projects, policy simulation workshops, and a two-day conference, generating both academic and public-facing outputs. By combining empirical research, creative engagement, and public dialogue, the Forum explores AI’s implications for freedom, equality, and resource allocation, bridging SCRIPTS’ research on technology, liberal allocation scripts, and contestations of political order. The Forum’s interdisciplinary and comparative approach not only advances academic understanding of AI governance but also diversifies research perspectives, regional expertise, and public awareness, fostering a broader conversation about the social, ethical, and political consequences of digital technologies in a rapidly transforming world.

PIs:

- Prof. Dr. Genia Kostka (Freie Universität Berlin, Professor of Chinese Politics)
- Prof. Dr. Anita Gohdes (Hertie School, Professor of International and Cyber Security)

Tasks

- Develop a mini-project or research idea to be presented at the end-of-the-year conference.
- Collaborate with the SCRIPTS Forum 2026 team in generating ideas, organising, and carrying out planned outreach activities such as round tables, half-day workshops, town halls, and the end-of-year conference.
- Support MA and/or PhD students working on mini research projects connected to the Forum.

Criteria and conditions:

- The SCRIPTS Forum Visiting Researcher Stay is open to all early-career researchers (PhD candidates in the later phases of their research and postdoctoral researchers up to six years after completing their PhD) who are **affiliated with an academic institution outside Germany**. Candidates should have an excellent academic record and align with the overall research agenda of SCRIPTS, particularly with the focus of the SCRIPTS Forum.
- Applications from SCRIPTS partner institutions and suitable candidates from regions and communities underrepresented in academia are particularly welcome. Likewise, we welcome applicants who can enrich the diversity of perspectives at SCRIPTS.

Benefits & coverage:

- Each SCRIPTS Forum Visiting Researcher will receive up to 2800 EUR per month to cover living expenses. Visiting researchers with their own funding will receive a contribution to cover additional living costs in Berlin. Visiting researchers without own funding will receive the full allowance.
- Visiting researchers will have access to office space either at the Institute for Chinese Studies at Freie Universität Berlin (Fabeckstraße 23/25, 14195 Berlin) or at SCRIPTS (Edwin-Redslob-Straße 29, 14195 Berlin).
- The SCRIPTS team will support the Visiting researchers with visa procedures and other welcome services, such as assistance in finding childcare placements. Please reach out in advance.

Please send your application by email, together with the following supporting documents: short letter of motivation explaining your fit and initial ideas for a mini project, CV, and confirmation of affiliation with your home institution, indicating the reference code **SCRIPTS_Forum_2026**, in PDF format (preferably as one document) to Dr. Lena Wesemann (lana.wesemann@fu-berlin.de) by **08. March 2026**. Interviews with shortlisted candidates will likely be scheduled for 16.-20. March 2026.

Please make sure to clarify your preferred duration and time period for your Visiting Researcher Stay (please also consider, if applicable, time necessary to receive a visa).

For further information, please contact Dr. Lena Wesemann (lana.wesemann@fu-berlin.de).