



DLR DESIGN CHALLENGE 2026

X-Design: Demonstrator of the future

The German Aerospace Centre (DLR) invites students from German universities to take part in the DLR Design Challenge 2026: Take the next step in aviation together with us and **develop an innovative, feasible concept for an experimental aircraft** to demonstrate future aviation technologies!

Background:

The generation of airliners after next is due to enter service by 2050. Many of the technologies required for this are already being intensively researched or tested on the ground. However, in order to be able to integrate them into future aircraft in time, they must be tested under real flight conditions. This is precisely why test aircraft are needed.

We are not looking for a modified existing aircraft, but a fully feasible design that could be built in the coming years. The basic framework conditions are based on regional aircraft with 9 seats and CS-23 certification.

Your Task:

As part of the development of the aircraft concept, you decide which (combination of) future technologies your demonstrator should be able to test. Possible areas include new types of propulsion, manufacturing technologies, material innovations, new aircraft concepts and aerodynamic solutions. It is not only important to select the technologies - think about the realisation, operation and certification of your design right from the start.

This is included for all participants:

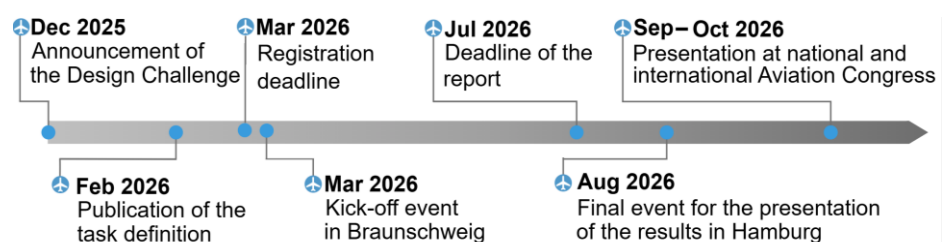
- Going through a design process from A to Z - under realistic conditions
- Consolidation, deepening and expansion of the knowledge acquired during your studies
- Exchange with an experienced DLR mentor during the design process
- Develop your soft skills through teamwork
- Fun, challenges and recognition, including an official certificate of participation from DLR, with the opportunity to have academic achievements recognised at your university*
- Invitation to DLR in Braunschweig and Hamburg for kick-off and closing events** including networking opportunities
- Feedback on your concept from a DLR jury of experts headed by Dr. Markus Fischer, Divisional Board Member for Aeronautics
- Mention in DLR press release and other communication channels

What's also in it for the finalists:

- First to third place: One-off opportunity to present the concept at the German Aerospace Congress (DLRK)**.
- If you win: One-off opportunity to present the concept at an international conference**

Ready for the challenge?

Then contact the responsible supervisors at your university. They will officially register your teams of four to six students for the competition.



* to be clarified individually with the respective universities

** incl. reimbursement of travel and accommodation costs as well as any conference fees incurred



More information
coming soon here