

Call for Proposals

Consortium of Higher Education Researchers (CHER)

37th CHER Annual Conference, Poznan, Adam Mickiewicz University
of Poznan, Poland

September 3-5, 2025

**Adapting to Change: Higher Education Systems, Institutions and
Academics in a Transforming World**



The theme for the CHER 2025 Annual Conference is “**Adapting to Change: Higher Education Systems, Institutions and Academics in a Transforming World**”. The political, social, and economic world has been changing ever more rapidly and higher education (HE) institutions, embedded in their countries and regions, are increasingly exposed to new risks, challenges, as well as opportunities.

While higher education has always been exposed to change pressures, the current political, economic, demographic, funding, and technological pressures seem to intensify, and new pressures emerge. **Different world regions and countries experience these pressures differently.** National and global HE communities should be prepared to study current trends, contextualize current pressures, and explore their implications. **Change in HE has multi-level implications: from large-scale**

implications for national systems and individual organizations to micro-level implications for students and academics.

The overarching theme of change includes **change in education, change in research and innovation, change in third mission and impact, and change in governance and internationalization.**

HE institutions, while among the most durable and resilient institutions globally, also face powerful pressures to adapt and change that come from numerous directions and from multiple, local, national, and international, stakeholders. **There are new uncertainties related to changes in society and economy, HE governance and management structures, public funding regimes for HE and academic research.** Newer uncertainties are also related to international students and their contributions to institutional budgets, teaching and learning models, widening participation, sustainable models of research funding, quality assurance mechanisms, working conditions and job satisfaction of the academic profession, and many others.

Alongside older and more traditional challenges, there are also new challenges, related to global, regional, and national politics, as well as most recent technological developments (such as generative AI and its various powerful uses). **Higher education is exposed to change – but it is also able to steer social and economic change,** at least through guiding public debates, producing socially and economically useful research, and teaching socially responsible citizens for the future.

The emergence of big data, data sharing, and open access will continue to shape collaboration and competition patterns as well as democratize access to scientific research and educational resources, alongside global stratification. Higher education research, with its theories and analytical tools, can play an important theoretical and empirical role in new global debates about the future of science and scholarship (and scientists and scholars) in the current data-rich social world, along with science of science, economics of science or quantitative science studies. **New datasets, both open access and commercial, open new opportunities for academic career research and academic profession studies. New opportunities for HE research emerge, yet not without novel limitations.** New large datasets, new tools and methodologies allow us to study huge amounts of data related to HE, science and scholarship, and the academic profession to discover patterns that would otherwise remain imperceptible.

Providing unique opportunities, new data-driven research directions in HE can be applied from global, multilevel, and comparative perspectives. Synthesizing research topics and uncovering gaps supports more sustainable and responsive research agendas for a globalizing multidisciplinary and stratified field of HE research. Increasingly, it is possible to analyze HE, research production, and the academic profession with increasing scope and, simultaneously, ever more precision.

We invite both theoretical and empirical contributions that offer insights into the change in higher education across key domains: education, research and innovation, third mission and impact, as well as governance and internationalization.

While we offer some guiding questions for each area below, these are certainly not exhaustive, and we strongly encourage the exploration of other research questions or topics.

Conference format

As in previous years, the conference will be organized in distinct streams, each focusing on specific thematic areas, including an open stream dedicated to research questions on topics less aligned with the overarching conference theme. In addition to the tracks, the conference will offer opportunities for interaction and exchange through roundtable discussions and editorial workshops. More information about these opportunities will be available on our conference website.

Stream 1: Education

- To what extent are HE institutions changing their teaching and learning in response to calls for more diversity, equity, ethics, sustainability, and social responsibility?
- How do HE institutions change in response to demands for more novel models of teaching and learning that are more accessible and inclusive?
- How are HE institutions becoming more responsive to societal needs? How are these changes influence the identity of HE institutions and their members?
- How do big data and generative AI change the design and delivery of HE programs?
- How is the reinforcement of nationalism and regionalization shaping current and creating new educational models, study programs, and curricular offerings?
- How could quality assurance be reshaped to better evaluate and address the changing needs of educational offers?

Stream 2: Research and Innovation

- How are HE institutions adapting to new models of knowledge production?
- What patterns of change and adaptation can be observed with respect to multi-disciplinarity, (international) collaboration, open science or research dissemination?
- What are universities doing to counter the anti-science discourses that are populating politics and the media?
- How do HE institutions and scholars respond to calls for more socially impactful research?
- In what way do external forces, including competition, policies and funding, publishers and rankings influence the content, quality and assessment of research?
- How do the notion and perceptions of geopolitical and technological change shape research agendas and steer (supra-)national research funding priorities?

- How do data sharing and open access facilitate scientific discoveries and innovation?
- What kind of research incentives are needed to promote breakthrough long-term research rather than short-term, publish-or-perish research dynamics?
- How can research ethics and integrity be ensured, when pressures to publish and the potential use of AI may create unforeseen scientific challenges and dilemmas?

Stream 3: Third Mission and Impact

- What do we know about the changing social, environmental, economic and cultural impacts of HE institutions? What mechanisms are at work?
- How do HE institutions adapt their strategies, structures and practices to strengthen their impact on society, the economy and the environment?
- How do HE institutions manage the quality of their third mission activities? What processes and systems are in place, and do they lead to desired outcomes and impacts?
- What is the role of actors (internal and external), and top-down and bottom-up initiatives in strengthening the impact of HE institutions?
- How can higher education institutions and organizations contribute more effectively to meet the UN Sustainable Development Goals, such as quality and inclusive (higher) education?
- What mechanisms would ensure that third mission activities are of high quality, sustainable, and relevant?
- How can HE stakeholders more fully address inequalities on local, national, and global levels?

Stream 4: Governance and Internationalization

- What roles do different stakeholders play in steering HE institutions? How is competition shaping the governance of universities? How do networks and alliances influence governance models in HE institutions?
- What are more innovative models for HE institutions and how have they impacted the perception of universities?
- What are changing patterns in internationalization and how are HE institutions, staff and students adapting to them?
- What new models are needed to adequately manage the quality of HE institutions?
- How will geopolitics influence the governance and internationalization of universities as the future becomes increasingly multi-polar (polycrisis)?

- What opportunities and threats do new technologies (e.g., generative AI) pose for the governance and management of HE?
- As regional funding incentives (e.g., European Universities Initiative) expand, how can their sustainability be ensured?
- To what extent is HE autonomy at risk in various contexts and how can these threats be compared?
- How can universities and university leadership achieve diversity, equity, and inclusion?
- What ongoing and future developments are likely to reshape the academic profession? What do current trends suggest?
- What is the future of the academic workplace under the current pressures of precarity, contractualization, short-term employment, and research underfunding in which especially younger scholars have to operate?

Open Stream: Current Topics in Higher Education Research

In addition to the four main thematic areas, as in past conferences, we offer an open stream for contributions that may not align precisely with the overarching theme(s) of the conference or the above-delineated topics. This stream is of equal significance, inviting submissions that delve into various contemporary topics within higher education research and science studies.

Submission of proposals

Participants are invited to submit a proposal for **a paper, a poster, or a panel** on a topic that is relevant to the conference theme or the open stream. A paper refers to a presentation delivered by one or several authors or collaborators on a particular research topic. A poster presentation is generally suitable for preliminary studies or early-stage research projects. A panel generally comprises a series of 3-4 presentations on a common research topic delivered by a group of authors facilitated by a moderator (for this format, a joint proposal is expected).

More detailed instructions on what is expected for each submission format are provided in the templates. Abstracts for all three formats need to follow the structure provided in the **templates** and should not exceed 1000 words. Please submit your structured abstracts by Friday 7 March 2025 on the conference website (ConfTool registration required). All abstracts will be peer-reviewed and applicants will be informed on the results of the review process by early April 2025. Authors are expected to **submit their full papers** by **31 July 2024**, giving session chairs and other contributors in the session sufficient time to read in advance.

Selected conference papers will be nominated for inclusion in the CHER special issue of the *European Journal of Higher Education* corresponding to the conference theme. Initial peer review will be provided by the special issue editors, followed by the journal's regular peer review process.

Templates for Proposals and **the Call for Proposals can be downloaded from**

<https://cher2025.amu.edu.pl/call-for-proposals/>

Important Dates

Abstract Submission Deadline: 7 March 2025 (*via ConfTool only*)

Notification of Acceptance: 15 April 2025

Early Bird Registration: 31 May 2025

Conference Registration Deadline: 15 July 2025

Submission of Full Papers: 31 July 2025

Conference in Poznan: 3-5 September 2025

Program Committee

Hugo Horta (CHER Board of Directors, Chair)

Marek Kwiek (CHER Board of Directors; Chair, CHER 2025 Conference)

Terhi Nokkala (CHER Board of Directors)

Justin Powell (CHER Board of Directors; Chair, CHER 2024 Conference)

Maria João Rosa (CHER Board of Directors, General Secretary)

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Taru Siekkinen (CHER Board of Directors)

Barbara Sporn (CHER Board of Directors; Chair, CHER 2023 Conference)

Organizers

Marek Kwiek (CHER Board of Directors) and Marcin Byczynski

Conference Fees

The conference fees comprise an all-inclusive package that covers participation in the 3-day conference, lunches and coffee breaks, the welcome reception, and the gala dinner including cultural activities.

Early Bird (until May 31):

Member €350 (evidence of membership required)

Non-member €500

Doctoral student €250

Academics at risk €100

Regular (after May 31)

Member €450 (evidence of membership required)

Non-member €600

Doctoral student €300

Academics at risk €150

Further information on registration, the conference program, and travel and accommodation options in Poznan are provided on the conference website [CHER2025.amu.edu.pl](https://cher2025.amu.edu.pl)

Contact Information

Conference website: [CHER2025.amu.edu.pl](https://cher2025.amu.edu.pl)

For any conference-related questions, please contact us at [CHER2025@amu.edu.pl](mailto:cher2025@amu.edu.pl)