

# Access to higher education in the 21st century – policies and outcomes

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## Call for papers

**Deadline extended**

### Convenors

Bogdan MURGESCU, Vice-Rector, University of Bucharest & Romiță IUCU, President of the Board of Trustees, University of Bucharest

### Introduction

Enlarging the access to higher education is both a global trend and a requirement of public policies in many countries. While there is an obvious relationship between this trend and the shift towards a knowledge-based society, significant differences persist across countries and inside societies. The global higher education gross enrollment ratio (GER) has doubled in the last two decades and converges to about 40%; in some parts of the world, it is significantly below this global average, in others, it exceeds it, as in North America where it is above 70% already since 2010. Such differences generate different challenges for various stakeholders and policymakers. While in developed economies, demographic constraints impact higher education institutions, enlarging tertiary education access is directly linked to economic and social modernization in other parts of the world. Transnational cooperation helps alleviate some of the existing imbalances while enhancing the quality and outcomes of higher education. The formidable challenge of the COVID-19 pandemic has forced universities to adjust to virtual teaching and learning. It is still open, which adjustments will persist and which will be abandoned.

All these evolutions raise several academic questions and practical challenges for universities and various authorities governing the higher education systems. How does the massification of higher education change the prospects for would-be graduates and/or for those who do not attend higher education programs? Despite the well-ascertained benefits of higher education in the long term, is it still a factor fostering upward social mobility? In what measure are the higher education

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systems equitable? How did the higher education institutions adapt their mission while unprecedented changes occurred in the labor market? Do universities adapt to provide skill updates or professional conversion programs through adult education in the context of lifelong learning? What is the relationship between enlarging access to higher education and the sustainability of democratic societies in the 21<sup>st</sup> century?

This list of questions & challenges is far from complete. At the same time, it is evident that policies regulating access to higher education in the 21<sup>st</sup> century must consider national, regional, and global phenomena. The tasks ahead are formidable. Taking stock of various experiences and reflecting on them can help us tackle these challenges.

## General Topics of Interest

The organizers welcome both specific case studies and broad analytical and theoretical approaches, which may also include comparative or global analyses. Contributions can focus on one or more of the following topics but are not restricted to the list below:

- Public policies regulating access to higher education in the 21<sup>st</sup> century – answers to national, regional, and global phenomena
- Constraints and opportunities of providing labor market tailored skills and competencies through HEIs
- Disadvantaged or marginalized social groups and their limitations towards accessing and graduating from higher education
- Affirmative actions – forms, controversies, outcomes
- The emergence of micro-programs and micro-credentials and their accessibility
- Intergenerational implications of enlarging access to higher education
- The development of the European Higher Education Area and its implications regarding access to higher education
- Quantity vs. quality in assessing the outcomes of access to higher education
- Transnational cooperation – new ways of access to higher education
- Access to higher education and the democratic infrastructure of contemporary societies

## Important Dates

- **Abstract submission:** September 10, 2023
- **Notification of acceptance:** September 20, 2023
- **Listener registration:** October 18, 2023

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**Interdisciplinary Research Training Group:**  
Higher Education Studies. Policies, institutions and people in  
the transition from modernity to a post-industrial world (HES)

- **Dates of the conference:** October 19-20, 2023

### Submission Instructions

- Interested researchers must submit their abstracts using this [online submission form](#).
- The conference's scientific committee will evaluate the proposals based on their relevance to the general topics of interest, degree of innovation, and expected outcomes.
- Successful applicants will be notified by email no later than **September 20, 2023**
- The authors of the accepted proposals shall prepare a presentation (15 minutes) for one of the parallel sessions of the conference
- Full papers will be submitted for the conference volume no later than **December 15, 2023**.

### Guidelines for Writing the Papers

- Authors are responsible for the originality of their work. However, any suspicion of plagiarism or ethical violations will result in the rejection of the paper.
- The final articles' final versions will be sent to our email address at [ahe-ro@unibuc.ro](mailto:ahe-ro@unibuc.ro).
- We recommend that articles should not exceed 6000 words.
- Technical requirements: format: Microsoft Word (docx); margins: normal; font Times New Roman; spacing: 1; dimension of the font: 12 p. for the text, 10 p. for footnotes, 11 p tables; alignment: justify; title centered followed by the author's name and institutional affiliation; subtitles: centered and numbered; abstract: up to 200 words, in English; Keywords: 5 words in English.
- Citation style: APA (consult further details here: <https://apastyle.apa.org/>).
- Papers will be published only after being reviewed by the editorial committee. The editorial committee may ask authors to make some corrections or improvements. Acceptance of a presentation at the conference is not a guarantee for subsequent paper publication. Articles that do not comply with the submission requirements will be rejected.

### Further Information About the Conference

- The working language throughout the event will be English.
- No registration/ participation fee is required. The organizers will provide accommodation, meals, and coffee breaks.
- Please register [here](#) if you would like to attend the conference without giving a presentation.

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## Contact

- Regular updates about the Conference, practical information for the participants and the registration form are available at <https://ahe-ro.unibuc.ro/>. You can also write us at: [ahe-ro@unibuc.ro](mailto:ahe-ro@unibuc.ro).