

Call for Applications
Histories of Education Summer School

Histories in Flux
(Re-)Imagining Histories of Education Across Scales, Borders and
Boundaries

7-11 September, 2026 | Katholieke Universiteit Leuven, Belgium

Histories of education have long unfolded across a multiplicity of scales, boundaries, and borders. From the ‘intimate’ space of the classroom to the global circulation of educational ideas and reforms, historians of education have continuously questioned how and where to situate and how to define their histories. Certainly in recent decades, scholarship in the history of education has increasingly moved beyond state-centered and institutional frameworks toward more locally and contextually-situated, transnational, and entangled approaches. In doing so, historians of education have sought to connect multiple analytical scales and, in the process, have pushed the boundaries of the field itself. This reorientation has invited deeper reflections on how methodological and conceptual choices define, or even make fragile, the borders of our scholarly practice, and on how rethinking those borders may open new possibilities for understanding the complexities of education in the past. After all, scales, boundaries, and borders, whether conceptual, disciplinary, or spatial, have shaped not only how education has been practiced in the past, but also how that past is studied, narrated, and understood. For each line the historian of education draws or crosses may fundamentally reshape the histories they write.

The **2026 Histories of Education Summer School** invites emerging historians of education to reflect on their methodological choices with regards to the scales and borders in/of their analysis, on the politics of spatial framing, and on the epistemological implications of where and how we draw the lines of our historical inquiries. It encourages participants not only to ask how educational phenomena have traveled, transformed, and gained meaning across a multiplicity of geographical contexts and historical periods, but also to how changing the scale or extending the boundaries of our historical inquiry may reshape our understanding of the educational past.

Specifically, the Summer School invites participants to consider:

- How do choices of scale (ranging from the micro to the macro, from the local to the global, from the nation-state to the municipality, from the urban to the rural, or from the individual/personal to the societal) shape the narratives we construct about education in the past? What becomes visible or obscured when we zoom in or zoom out in our historical analyses?
- In what ways do boundaries and borders, whether geographical, institutional, disciplinary, or conceptual, structure our historical understanding of education in the past? Can transgressing such borders uncover alternative routes and genealogies within the history of education?
- What happens when we understand borders not as fixed lines of division but as zones of contact, translation, negotiation, and exchange? How might this perspective challenge conventional notions of (national) education systems or an assumed universality of pedagogical thought?

Through lectures, seminars, and collaborative workshops, the Summer School offers participants an opportunity to engage with these questions, present their own research, and collectively explore how rethinking scales, boundaries, and borders can generate new insights into the history of education.

Program highlights

Keynote lectures that explore foundational questions about how historians of education define and frame their historical inquiries, engaging with current debates on methodological and theoretical approaches to situate histories of education across different contexts.

Methodological workshops that provide practical insights in archival research and historical source analysis, centering on innovative strategies to for locating, interpreting and integrating a diversity of sources and emphasizing the challenges and opportunities associated with researching educational pasts beyond scales, borders and boundaries.

Round-table discussions featuring leading scholars in the history of education that encourage critical reflection and scholarly experimentation in the field of history of education.

Collaborative research and reading sessions that provide participants with the opportunity to present their ongoing research, share ideas, and receive in-depth feedback in collaborative reading and work-in-progress sessions. These exchanges invite participants to engage deeply with each other's projects, forging connections and broadening analytical horizons.

By participating in this Summer School, participants will develop advanced methodological skills, expand their academic horizon, and gain new perspectives on how to approach histories of education through multiple scales and borders. The program aims to inspire critical thinking, support innovative historical scholarship that pushes the boundaries of the field.

Application procedure

- Applications will open in December, 2025
- Deadline for applications is February 28, 2026 (23:59 CEST)
- Selected participants will get notification on the result of their application by April 1, 2026
- To apply, upload:
 - A one pager: (i) discussing your current research project, and explaining how the topic of this Summer relates to your current/future research interests, and (ii) including two questions that you would like to critically reflect on.
 - A short cv of max. 2 pages
 - A motivation letter of maximum 1 page that elaborates on why you want to participate in this Summer School

Contact

- **Academic coordinators:** Sarah Van Ruyskensvelde & Pieter Verstraete (University of Leuven, Belgium) & Johannes Westberg (University of Groningen, Netherlands)
- **Please direct all questions to** hoesummerschool2026@kuleuven.be

Dates & Practicalities

The on site program, taking place in the city center of Leuven, will start on **Monday September 7 and will end on Friday September 11, 2026**. Prior, a couple of online preparatory meetings will take place in the first week of September. An online closing session will take place the week after. More information on the program will be published in the Spring of 2026.

Location: The on site program of the Summer School will take place in the city center of Leuven. More details on the exact locations will appear online in the Spring of 2026.

Target audience

The **2026 Histories of Education Summer School** welcomes early career researchers, ranging from graduate students, PhD students and post-doctoral researchers.

Practical information

Prepare your trip to Leuven and find out more information on accommodation and travel.

Registration procedure

Selected participants will be informed about the registration procedure by April 1, 2026.

Registration fee:

- Registration is free for students from the following participating universities: KU Leuven (Belgium), Rijksuniversiteit Groningen (Netherlands), University of South-Eastern Norway (Norway) and the University of Uppsala (Sweden).
- The registration fee for students from universities other than the listed above is **400 euro**

The registration fee includes

- Coffee breaks, lunches, welcoming reception and a Summer School dinner
- Please note that the costs associated with travel and accommodation are not included in the registration fee and should be covered by the participants

Important invoice information

Proofs of payment (indicating the amount paid) can be provided after payment by credit card or bank transfer. Yet, if you require an invoice, please contact the organization before your proceeding to the payment of the conference fee, as an official invoice cannot be provided *after* your payment.

Cancellation policy

Should you want to cancel your registration, please email the organization as soon as possible.

The following cancellation policies apply:

- For cancellation before August 1, 2026, a full reimbursement of the registration fee will be applied.

- Cancellations received after August 1, 2026 will not be eligible for reimbursement of the registration fee

Cancellations will only be accepted in writing and through email (hoesummerschool2026@kuleuven.be) and must be received by the stated cancellation deadline. All refund requests must be made by the participant/attendee, or credit card holder. Refund requests must include the name of the attendee/participant, the bank account number used for the transaction, and/or the transaction number. Unpaid registrations will be cancelled automatically after 4 weeks (i.e. 4 weeks after the date of registration).