

Future of Higher Education – Special Issue: Call for Papers

The future of the higher education sector in general, and higher education institutions in particular (henceforth HE and HEI for higher education institutions respectively) is both troubling and uncertain. At the moment, it seems that there are several social, political, economic and technological trends which really test the sector's and the institutions' adaptive capacities. As far as social changes are concerned, it can be clearly seen that in the coming year there will be huge changes in the composition of the population worldwide either because of the challenge of an aging population or because of migratory movements (both inflows and outflows) generated by climate change or political conflicts. Political challenges include tides in the process of democratisation and a shift towards autocratic regimes in many parts of the world. Changes in the geopolitical structure also raise new questions about the nature of knowledge and who gets to say what pieces of knowledge are valuable and worth transmitting in HEIs. Economic and technological issues also affect HE. Budgetary cuts have severely affected the sector in many countries, restricting both institutional and individual autonomy. The institutional decoupling of key functions (research, teaching, and the evaluation of knowledge) is often seen as a way forward, even if many actors inside the sector are against it. And last but not least, technological changes also question tried and tested practices in HE. On the one hand, disruptive innovations cast doubt as to whether the knowledge that these institutions transmit is valuable from an employability point of view. On the other hand, trends of digitalisation and robotisation now increasingly affect white collar workers, which in the long run might raise uncomfortable questions about the position of university based intellectuals.

In relation to these trends a diverse and widespread discourse emerged in order to search for new functions and practices of higher education. This special issue aims to contribute to this discourse by exploring the future trends of higher education. The questions which the special issue aims to answer are as follows:

- How can HE adapt to these future trends?
- How can HE affect these trends? For example, what is the responsibility of HEI in the face of future migratory crises or climate change adaptation?
- How do these trends affect the future of learning and teaching?
- What are the different scenarios of HE as a social institution? What policy implications these scenarios might have?
- What are the ways of constructing scenarios and visions for HE? How can institutional and/or political sustainability of these visions be maintained?
- Are there alternative ways, based on different cultural or institutional traditions, and/or opened up by new technological innovations etc., of organising the functions of HE in the future?
- Are there specific areas of knowledge or professions (for example the fields of accounting, finance or architecture etc.) which will be affected more than others by the trends above? If so, which are these and why are they different?

Guest editors will welcome contributions from scholars searching for answers to the questions above. Authors can contribute in three forms:

1. Theoretical studies dealing with the current and future trends of higher education and their impact on institutions and individual actors.
2. Empirical studies aiming to explore future visions of or new paths for higher education.
3. Case studies discussing new methodological approaches to explore possible futures of tertiary education and/or ways to prepare for future challenges.

We encourage scholars to submit an extended abstract of 1500-2500 words including a short biography and the description of the main question(s) and findings of the paper together with the methodology applied, by **June 30, 2017** by email. Authors will receive feedback from the guest editors by **July 30, 2017**.

Tentative submission timetable and deadlines:

Full paper submission – end of October, 2017
Reviews to Authors – end of January, 2017
Revisions submitted – March, 2017
Further reviews and acceptance – May, 2018
Online publication of final versions: June, 2018

*In case of any further questions contact our **Guest Editors:***

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About the journal

Futures® is an international, refereed, multidisciplinary journal concerned with medium and long-term futures of cultures and societies, science and technology, economics and politics, environment and the planet and individuals and humanity. Covering methods and practices of futures studies, the journal seeks to examine possible and alternative futures of all human endeavours. Futures® seeks to promote divergent and pluralistic visions, ideas and opinions about the future.

Papers submitted must make a contribution to knowledge that is relevant for the field of Futures Studies (which includes Foresight and Anticipation). Studies related to risk, prediction, policy or planning per se without an evident contribution to Futures knowledge are likely to be outside of scope of the Journal. Papers are expected to reflect a futures orientation, rather than having that notion 'stuck on' the end of the paper, and reflect to some extent extant literature in the field.

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