



EUROPEAN LEARNING FORUM & TEACHING

Thematic Peer Groups for the EUA Learning & Teaching Initiative

CALL FOR PARTICIPATION

Deadline: 16 January 2017

1. Introduction

Since its establishment in 2001 EUA has contributed to the policy debate on how to improve learning and teaching in Europe, be it through participation in the Bologna Process, or by contributing to EU processes such as the Lisbon Agenda, EU 2020 and the 'Modernisation Agenda' for higher education. The association has also published various comparative studies and project reports on key aspects of higher education (e-learning, lifelong learning, tracking, quality assurance, internationalisation etc.) and contributed to exchange of good practice at institutional level. EUA's series of TRENDS reports on higher education in Europe show that while progress has been made through the implementation of structural reforms and the enhancement of institutional frameworks, there is a need to pay more attention to the process of learning and teaching itself.

Therefore, EUA has decided to organise on 28-29 September 2017 in Paris the first European Learning & Teaching Forum (hereinafter the Forum) that will facilitate the exchange of experiences on learning and teaching in higher education among the EUA members. The Forum will be organised in collaboration with the Conférence des présidents d'université (CPU). In order to prepare and complement the Forum, EUA will also organise thematic peer groups on learning and teaching.

The thematic peer groups and the Forum will provide the participating universities with opportunities for peer-learning and exchange of experiences while at the same time contributing to European policies on learning and teaching. Outcomes of the Groups' work will be considered as inputs for EUA's policy statements feeding to the Bologna Follow-up Group and the upcoming Bologna Process Ministerial meeting and Communiqué 2018.

2. Objectives

Main objectives of the thematic peer groups are:

- To identify core principles for successful learning and teaching across Europe by taking into account the changing higher education environment
- To exchange good practices in various organisational, educational and qualitative aspects of learning and teaching
- To contribute to the enhancement of learning and teaching at European universities.

3. Themes and outcomes

EUA has identified the following four themes to be covered by the thematic peer groups:

1. Addressing larger and more diverse student bodies ensuring student success. The theme will explore conditions for students' success such as how to sustain student engagement, implement

- student-centred learning and ensure the progress of students from the very beginning of their studies.
2. Empowering students for their future professional life and civic engagement. The theme will explore how to respond to the needs of society for informed citizens, capable of critical and reflexive thinking considering the expectations towards the future graduates.
 3. Building a link between research and teaching missions of the university. The theme will discuss how research and teaching are intertwined, and how research can aspire and enrich learning and teaching.
 4. Fostering engagement in developing learning and teaching. The theme will focus on the institutional policies and structures, such as those related to human resources management, that can be used to motivate the actors in the university community to invest efforts in teaching and improving the quality of learning.

All themes will reflect on the following three aspects*:

1. What are the key challenges related to the theme and how to address them?
2. How can innovation in learning and teaching be embedded into the theme?
3. What kind of institutional policies and processes can support this development?

Based on exchange of knowledge and experiences each thematic peer group is expected to prepare a short document outlining key considerations, principles and good practices in its respective theme.

4. Activities and timeline

EUA envisages the thematic peer groups to be active from 1 February to 30 September 2017. Each group is expected to consist of six to seven EUA member universities.

The work of the groups will be coordinated by one institution that will be selected as a group coordinator. All group coordinators will be invited to participate in an introductory meeting in Brussels in February or March 2017, where the objectives and expected outcomes of the thematic peer groups will be discussed in further detail.

Afterwards, the groups are expected to meet for three times on their own arrangements hosted by participating universities. EUA secretariat will support the work of thematic peer groups and liaise with the group coordinators.

5. Eligibility

Participation in the Call is open to all [EUA member universities](#).

Each university should be represented by a vice-rector/deputy vice-chancellor, or other person in a senior position with responsibilities in learning and teaching at the university. Representatives will commit to attending all three meetings. Furthermore, universities are encouraged to engage the student representative(s) or to involve them in the internal briefings.

* These questions and definitions of each theme will be further elaborated in the group coordinators' meeting.

6. Selection criteria

Selection of applicants will be done primarily on the basis of the motivation and the track record of the experience in the theme the university wishes to take part in, as demonstrated in the application. In addition, the following aspects will be considered:

- Geographical distribution of universities
- Balance of institutional profiles (e.g. multi-faculty, art, other specialised)
- Engagement of student representative(s) in the work of thematic peer group.

Applicant university is invited to choose three themes among the ones listed above, in order of preference. EUA will compose the groups following these preferences, while taking into account the selection criteria. One university will be able to take part only in one thematic peer group so to provide equal opportunities for collaboration to other EUA members.

7. Terms and conditions for participation

Participating universities will participate on a self-funding basis and are responsible for organising and covering their own travels to the meetings. However, to help reduce the travel costs, the meetings will be organised in three different locations throughout Europe. Moreover, hosts will be invited to seek ways to arrange discounted rates at convenient hotels. Catering (lunches, coffee breaks, and dinners) during the meetings will be covered by EUA.

Universities interested in participating in the Call are invited to fill in the online application, [available here](#), by **16 January 2017 latest**. For further questions please contact Goran Dakovic (goran.dakovic@eua.be).

About EUA

European University Association (EUA) is the representative organisation of universities and national rectors' conferences in 47 European countries. EUA plays a crucial role in the Bologna Process and in influencing EU policies on higher education, research and innovation. Thanks to its interaction with a range of other European and international organisations, EUA ensures that the independent voice of European universities is heard, wherever decisions are being taken that will impact on their activities. For more information please visit the EUA website: <http://www.eua.be/>

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