

2023 Learning & Teaching Thematic Peer Groups

CALL FOR PARTICIPATION

Deadline for application: **20 January 2023**

1. Introduction

Across our [activities on learning and teaching](#), the European University Association (EUA) aims to draw attention to its importance in European higher education and invite EUA member universities to exchange practices and discuss key considerations. To do this, EUA coordinates [Learning & Teaching Thematic Peer Groups](#) that provide participating universities with an opportunity for peer learning and exchange of experiences, while at the same time contributing to the Association's policy work on learning and teaching, e.g. in the context of the Bologna Process. The groups' work also feeds into EUA's yearly [European Learning & Teaching Forum](#).

Through this call EUA seeks participants for the 2023 round of Thematic Peer Groups (TPGs).

2. Objectives

The main objectives of the groups are:

- to discuss and explore practices and lessons learnt in organising and implementing learning and teaching in European universities;
- to contribute to the enhancement of learning and teaching by identifying key considerations on the selected themes.

3. Themes and expected outcomes

In 2023, three Thematic Peer Groups will be set up, covering the following topics:

1) **Flexible learning paths: what, how, and does it work?**

Demands for higher education to offer more flexible education, for example in the form of shorter learning experiences and flexible curricula, are not new. However, this phenomenon has been fuelled by new developments in recent years, such as ever more pronounced demographic and labour market changes, as well as burgeoning interest in micro-credentials as a potential means to facilitate flexible, lifelong and "life-wide" learning. This TPG will focus on flexible learning paths and curricula, and address related questions such as: do the different stakeholder groups – including students, teachers, university leadership, managerial staff, and society – have different expectations as to the shape and outcomes of flexible learning paths? What would flexibly designed curricula imply for quality assurance, including

accreditation? What kind of support would students and teachers need to make best use of the available options and avoid overload and fatigue? The group will discuss these and other potential questions, while also exploring if and how a more flexible outlook on study paths might change the relationship between different actors in higher education.

2) Challenges and enablers in designing transnational joint learning provision

This TPG will take stock of experiences and lessons learnt in the provision of transnational joint learning. This may include joint programmes and curricula, jointly delivered courses and other forms of physical and virtual joint or shared provision. How can universities define a clear purpose and measurable benefits of joint learning provision? How feasible are various models in terms of long-term sustainability, for example with regard to funding, or student mobility? What kind of interinstitutional dynamics and partnership models work best for which approach? How do you mitigate costs and risks? And what would the potential impact be on the quality of learning and teaching, as well as the student experience? The group will address these questions, based on the experience of all types of inter-institutional partnership frameworks at regional, national and international level.

3) Development and strategic benefits of learning and teaching centres

EUA's Trends surveys point to a growing proliferation of learning and teaching centres in Europe's higher education institutions. The function of these centres is, broadly speaking, to support the development of learning and teaching within an institution, faculty or department. This TPG will explore the tasks and measures through which centres fulfil their supporting function, which strategic role they play within the institution, and how they are established and further developed with long-term sustainability in mind. For example, how can academic leadership and L&T centres support and benefit from each other? What role do students play in the set-up and development of the centres? What internal, interinstitutional and intersectoral dissemination strategies for information provision and sharing of good practice exist? The group will discuss these questions, while also considering potential paths for these centres to take on a leading role in the strategic development of learning and teaching.

All themes will reflect on:

- the key challenges related to the theme and how to address them;
- what kind of institutional policies and processes can help address key challenges.

Based on the exchange of knowledge, experiences and practices, each group will summarise the conclusions in the form of a short report that will be published as part of [EUA's Learning & Teaching paper series](#).

4. Activities and timeline

Eight to ten EUA member universities will take part in each TPG. In 2023, group members will attend three meetings, each lasting one or two days. As a given, one of the three meetings will take place in person and one online, whereas the group is free to decide whether to organise the third meeting in person or online. Meeting venues and dates will be jointly determined after the availability of group members has been mapped.

A final workshop will facilitate exchange and discussion among all groups. It will be organised prior to the 2024 European Learning & Teaching Forum, which all group members are encouraged to attend, as workshop facilitators or participants. It will provide an occasion to present each group's outcomes to a wider audience.

5. Group chairs

The EUA secretariat will assign a coordinator to each group, who will support the group's work, organise and attend all meetings and draft the group's report.

EUA will also appoint one representative from the group to act as chair. Chairing responsibilities include the planning of the group's work, facilitation and steering of the discussions during meetings and ensuring that the group stays focused and goal-oriented in collaboration with the EUA secretariat. Group chairs will receive a fee-waiver (one per group) for the 2024 European Learning & Teaching Forum.

Those interested in taking up this role are invited to express their interest as part of the application.

6. Eligibility

The call is open to all [EUA member universities](#), represented by a vice-rector, deputy vice-chancellor or another person in a senior position with responsibilities in learning and teaching at the university. Participating universities are expected to ensure student perspectives are included in the groups' work, preferably by inviting students to join group meetings. Applications submitted jointly with a student representative are encouraged.

Each university is invited to send up to two representatives to the group meetings. Students do not count towards this maximum number.

7. Selection criteria

The selection of group members will be done primarily on the basis of the motivation of the university and the experience in the selected theme, as demonstrated in the application. In addition, the following aspects will be considered:

- geographical diversity;
- balance of institutional profiles (e.g. multi-faculty, specialised);
- engagement of student representatives.

In case of strong competition for participation in a TPG, preference will be given to institutions that have previously not taken part in a group. This is to ensure inclusiveness in EUA's Learning & Teaching activities.

Each university can submit only one application and participate in only one of the groups. Applicants are invited to indicate up to two themes in order of priority.

8. Terms and conditions for participation

Universities will participate on a self-funding basis and are responsible for organising and covering their own travel and accommodation for the group's meetings and the final workshop. There is no participation fee. EUA will cover the costs of joint meals (lunches, coffee breaks, and dinner) during the meetings.

Universities interested in participating in the Thematic Peer Groups are invited to fill in the [online application form](#) by **20 January 2023**. For further questions please contact Tania Durt (tania.durt@eua.eu).

About EUA

The [European University Association \(EUA\)](#) represents more than 850 universities and national rectors' conferences in 49 European countries. EUA plays a crucial role in the Bologna Process and in influencing EU policies on higher education, research and innovation. Through continuous interaction with a range of other European and international organisations, EUA ensures that the independent voice of European universities is heard.

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