STAFF-DEV FINAL CONFERENCE

Impactful staff development to enhance learning and teaching in European higher education

Location: Maison des Associations Internationales, Rue Washington 40, 1050 Brussels

30 November 2026

Introduction

How can European universities best design and organise staff development activities to improve learning and teaching?

Over the past three years, the EU-funded 'Staff development for learning and teaching at European universities' (STAFF-DEV) project has conducted data gathering, research, peer learning and capacity building activities to build higher education institutions' capacity and agency to offer insightful staff development, connecting to the broader institutional framework for enhancing learning and teaching.

The STAFF-DEV final conference will build on knowledge gained and lessons learnt throughout the project. Addressing university representatives, policy makers and other stakeholders in higher education, this event will offer a mix of panel discussions and policy labs, to discuss key takeaways, policy recommendations and what can be done to take learning and teaching enhancement further.

The conference will provide a unique opportunity for participants to exchange with policy makers and higher education professionals from across Europe, in the heart of Brussels. The data and insights on staff development that will be presented will help participants to kickstart impactful staff development within their own institutions and leverage broader policy developments.

This event will be of particular interest for leaders, managers and educational developers responsible for learning and teaching at higher education institutions, as well as policy makers engaged in higher education policy and professionals interested in or committed to teaching enhancement.

Policy recommendations

This conference builds on the STAFF-DEV project's recent publication: *"Enhancing learning and teaching through staff development: Recommendations for institutional leadership and policy makers in the European Higher Education Area (EHEA)"*

This publication is based on project outcomes and lessons learnt, outlining key policy recommendations for university leadership, higher education authorities and networks to enhance learning and teaching through staff development policies and capacities, recognition for teaching, academic assessment and careers. During the conference, the speakers will connect the recommendations to their experience, both in the practical application of staff development, and policies that are created to affect change.

Programme

Monday 30 November	
08:45	Registration & coffee *Entrance hall*
09:15	**Welcome words and setting the scene** ❖ Ivanka Popović, Vice-President, European University Association; University of Belgrade, Serbia ❖ Thérèse Zhang, European University Association ❖ Ella Picavet, European University Association *Brussels room*
09:30	**Staff development in learning and teaching – towards an ecosystem approach?** **Keynote speech by Bjørn Stensaker, University of Oslo, Norway** Followed by a discussion and Q&A with the audience *Brussels room*
10:15	**Panel discussion 1: Perspectives on policy recommendations for learning and teaching** *Brussels room* Speakers: ❖ Philippe Lalle, Vice-President, University Claude-Bernard Lyon 1, France

	❖ Marcin Pałys, Vice-President, European University Association; University of Warsaw, Poland ❖ Kinga Szuly, Head of Sector, Higher Education Policy, DG Education, Youth, Sport and Culture, European Commission ❖ Bjørn Stensaker, University of Oslo, Norway Moderated by Thérèse Zhang, European University Association.
11:00	Coffee break
11:15	**Workshop round (1): From practice to policy** Parallel thematic sessions This first series of workshops depart from examples of practice to reflect and elaborate on how they could inform and inspire policies. Each workshop will run twice, as a 45-minute session. On the day of the conference, participants can choose two workshops to attend this round, switching sessions after 45 minutes. **1.1 Teaching democratically: learning to teach with values** *Room: Paris* This session will explore how to support teachers to navigate increasing polarisation, and how learning and teaching can contribute to strengthening citizen skills, social cohesion and democracy. It will demonstrate the potential and challenges of teaching development initiatives to promote democratic teaching and show the results of five years of a multinational, alliance-based effort to support teachers to develop democratic teaching methods. ❖ Michael Kozakowski, Central European University, Austria ❖ Tamara Kamatović, Central European University, Austria ❖ Facilitated by Peter Salden, Ruhr University Bochum, Germany **1.2 Learning and teaching centres as sustainable support and empowering structures** *Room: Roma* The Dutch Centers for Teaching & Learning (CTLs) Programme, a strategic instrument of Npuls, aims to achieve system-wide educational transformation by anchoring a robust learning culture where educational professionals continuously learn from and with each other. CTLs act as the motor for professionalization. This

	session presents the case example of Npuls and the CTLs in the Netherlands, to inspire discussion about how this practice can inform and inspire policies. ❖ Nynke Kruiderink, Npuls, The Netherlands ❖ Facilitated by Catherine O'Mahony, University College Cork, Ireland **1.3 Fostering educational leadership** *Room: The Club* Every teacher is a leader. Leadership becomes change when the ecosystem enables it. This session presents Universidade Católica Portuguesa's Faculty Professional Development Model, as an ecosystem for learning and teaching enhancement. It explores the role of its Learning Innovation Lab, communities of practice, and how these initiatives have contributed to embedding educational leadership across the institution. The session provides a concrete example for discussing how educational leadership practices can inform and shape policy. ❖ Diana Soares, Universidade Católica Portuguesa, Portugal ❖ Facilitated by Manon Kluijtmans, Utrecht University, the Netherlands **1.4 Innovating, challenging, revolutionising teaching with AI** *Room: Berlin* Artificial intelligence is rapidly transforming the landscape of learning and teaching, and higher education institutions are feeling that pressure acutely. The question is no longer whether to adopt these tools, but how to integrate them thoughtfully and support teachers in focusing on critical thinking, ethical standards, and a human-centred approach. This session presents examples of current practices on AI at SWPS University in Poland. ❖ Paweł Pyrka, SWPS University, Poland ❖ Facilitated by Fredrik Mørk Røkenes, University of Oslo, Norway
12:50-13:50	Lunch *During the conference, reporting will take place through cartoons sketched by students from the Ecole supérieure des Arts – Saint-Luc. Their cartoons from the morning sessions will be displayed next to the lunch area, and participants are invited to visit their gallery during the lunch break.*
13:50-15:25	**Workshop round (2): From policies to practice** Parallel thematic sessions

	In this second round, workshops depart from policy making narratives to address how these different imperatives may play out in practice at higher education institutions. Each workshop will run twice, as a 45-minute session. On the day of the conference, participants can choose two workshops to attend this round, switching sessions after 45 minutes. **2.1 Teaching in careers and in an academic competence framework** *Room: Berlin* This session presents the OECD Competence Framework for Academic staff (AcadComp), currently under development, which aims to provide a common international framework for academic staff competences. Participants will be invited to discuss its practical implementation. This session also serves as an opportunity for the OECD to consult the higher education sector, and input will feed the OECD's currently open public consultation. ❖ Matej Bilik, OECD ❖ Facilitated by Ivanka Popović, Vice-President, European University Association; University of Belgrade, Serbia **2.2 The diversity of teaching tasks** *Room: Paris* This session explores how the diversity of teaching tasks can be recognised through teaching assessment, with the example of the Spanish DOCENTIA programme. DOCENTIA aims to assist higher education institutions in developing and implementing their own mechanisms for managing the quality of university teaching and promoting staff development. Participants will discuss how a national-level initiative coordinated by quality assurance agencies can inform practice at higher education institutions. ❖ Sara González Betancor, University of Las Palmas de Gran Canaria, Spain ❖ Facilitated by Thérèse Zhang, European University Association **2.3 National initiatives to reach systemic changes** *Room: Roma* In Ireland, the National Forum for the Enhancement of Teaching and Learning and the Higher Education Authority have built a strong policy framework to support staff development and recognise staff teaching competences. This presentation will focus on this journey from the publication of a National Professional Development (PD)

	Framework in 2016 to the launch of an online platform offering short PD courses in 2021 and ending with the current work to consolidate these initiatives in the form of a National Professional Recognition Framework. Specifically, this session will focus on how these policies have been enacted in practice and will consider the positive changes we have seen in the Irish system. ❖ Ross Woods, National Forum for the Enhancement of Teaching and Learning, Ireland ❖ Facilitated by Manuel João Costa, University of Minho, Portugal **2.4 Learning from and engaging with students** *Room: The Club* Presenting the European Students' Union's (ESU) work with the Council of Europe on the Students' Rights Charter, this session will focus on how students envision the role of staff development for the purpose of quality education. Participants will be able to discuss how this Charter could inform practice at higher education institutions. ❖ Daciana Pop, European Students' Union (ESU) ❖ Facilitated by Philippe Emplit, Université libre de Bruxelles, Belgium
15:25-15:45	Coffee break *Cartoons from the afternoon sessions will be displayed in the hallway, and participants are invited to visit their gallery.*
15:45-17:00	**Panel discussion 2: Setting the scene: The future of teaching enhancement at European higher education institutions.** *Brussels room* Workshop facilitators and STAFF-DEV project partners join an interactive panel, summing up conversations from the workshops, connecting outcomes with discussions and findings from previous STAFF-DEV activities, and setting the scene for the future of staff development and the broader landscape of L&T. <u>Panellists:</u> ❖ Peter Salden, Ruhr University Bochum, Germany ❖ Catherine O'Mahony, University College Cork, Ireland ❖ Manon Kluijtmans, Utrecht University, the Netherlands ❖ Fredrik Mørk Røkenes, University of Oslo, Norway ❖ Thérèse Zhang, European University Association

	Moderated by Ivanka Popović, Vice-President, European University Association; University of Belgrade, Serbia
17.00-17:15	**Closing & thanks** Thérèse Zhang, European University Association
17.15	End of conference

Speakers & facilitators

Ivanka Popović	Ivanka Popović is a former Rector of the University of Belgrade, Serbia. She was elected to the EUA Board in 2021 and currently chairs the Association's Task Force on Ukraine and Learning and Teaching Steering Committee. Prior to her term as Rector (2018-2021), Professor Popović served as Vice-Rector for Research (2012-2015) and Vice-Rector for International and Inter-University Cooperation (2015-2018) at the University of Belgrade. She also previously presided the Serbian Rectors' Conference (2018-2021), the Danube Rectors' Conference and the Rectors' Forum of Southeast Europe and the Western Balkans. Professor Popović studied at the University of Maryland (USA) and at the Faculty of Technology and Metallurgy (FTM) of the University of Belgrade. She holds a Doctorate in Chemical Engineering from the latter.
Thérèse Zhang	Thérèse Zhang is Deputy Director for Higher Education Policy at the European University Association. In this capacity, she contributes to developing the Association's work in areas such as learning and teaching in higher education, lifelong learning, global relations and European policy making in higher education at large. Thérèse has longstanding experience in higher education policy and in working with higher education institutions across Europe. Her experience covers activities in the field of quality assurance and management, institutional development, evaluation methodologies, and pedagogy.

Bjørn Stensaker	Bjørn Stensaker is Professor of Higher Education at the University of Oslo, and Research professor the Nordic Institute for Studies in Innovation, Research and Education (NIFU), Norway. He has a special research interest in higher education governance, reforms and organizational change and transformation, and he has conducted a number of studies on these topics in Scandinavia, Europe and beyond. He is currently President of the European Quality Assurance Register for Higher Education (EQAR).
Philippe Lalle	Philippe Lalle is Deputy Vice-Rector for Structuring Projects and Professor of Molecular Biology at Lyon 1 University, France. Previously, he served as Deputy Vice-Rector for Education (2007-2012) and Vice-Rector for Education and Student Life (2012-2016). From 2016 to 2021, as a strategic advisor for pedagogy at the French Ministry of Higher Education and from 2021 to 2025, he worked at the French National Research Agency (ANR), where he was responsible for the "New University Curricula" and "Blended learning" programmes, funded under the France 2030 plan. From 2018 to 2024, he co-chaired the Learning and Teaching working group of the BFUG.
Marcin Pałys	Marcin Pałys is currently Vice-President of the European University Association, having joined its Board in 2019, contributing to work on innovation and career assessment. Between 2012 and 2020, he served two terms as Rector of the University of Warsaw, Poland, where he is Professor of Chemistry, actively participating in national debates on research and higher education reforms. Professor Pałys is currently a member of the Steering Board of the Coalition on Advancing Research Assessment (CoARA) and Chair of the General Council for Science and Higher Education in Poland. Between 2020 and 2024 he was a member of the Governing Council of Magna Charta Observatory.
Kinga Szuly	Kinga Szuly is Head of Sector, Higher Education Policy at the European Commission's Directorate-General for Education, Youth, Sport, and Culture (DG EAC) since November 2017.

	The sector provides, among other tasks, policy support to member states, ensures Commission representation in the Bologna Process, and cooperates with international organizations like the OECD to provide evidence-based research in the field of higher education. Before joining DG EAC, Kinga worked in various fields at the Commission, including as Political Adviser at the Representation of the European Commission in Budapest, media analysis and internal audit.
Michael Kozakowski	Michael Kozakowski is Director of the Yehuda Elkana Center for Teaching, Learning, and Higher Education Research at Central European University in Vienna, Austria. He is the co-editor of a forthcoming book on 'Teaching Democratically in Higher Education' and co-founder and co-editor of the Academic Freedom and the Democratic University book series. His research spans the fields of history and education, with a particular focus on the intersection of democracy, citizenship, inclusion, and education. In addition to leading or participating in international capacity building projects, he regularly facilitates workshops on enhancing teaching and learning in Europe and beyond.
Tamara Kamatović	Tamara Kamatović is a Lecturer at the Yehuda Elkana Center for Teaching, Learning, and Higher Education Research at Central European University in Vienna, Austria. In this role, she designs courses and facilitates workshops for doctoral students and faculty at CEU and partner institutions. Her work focuses on democratic and inclusive teaching, technology-enhanced learning, and the history of education. Her current research explores democratic backsliding, technological solutionism, and teaching practice. She publishes and presents on generative AI, authorship, learning, and writing, and coedits a series on Democratic Universities and Academic Freedom.
Peter Salden	Peter Salden is Director of the Centre for Teaching and Learning (*Zentrum für Wissenschaftsdidaktik*) at Ruhr University Bochum, Germany. He also heads the AI Center of Excellence NRW, a network of 36 North Rhine-Westphalian universities working together to develop expertise and university-specific AI software and hardware infrastructure. Dr Salden is involved in the practical development of teaching at his home university, as well as major inter-university projects at local,

	national and international levels. He is an editor of publications on higher education and a keynote speaker, as well as an advisor to political committees in various German states.
Nynke Kruiderink	Nynke Kruiderink works on strengthening Centres for Teaching and Learning (CTLs) within Npuls, the Dutch national programme for transformation in tertiary education. She helped shape the national CTL framework and subsidy scheme, supporting institutions in developing sustainable structures for educational innovation and staff development. Her work connects institutional practice with national strategy, bringing together universities, universities of applied sciences and vocational education institutions. She focuses on how CTLs can organise continuous professional learning, connect educators with research and expertise, and enable institutions to learn from one another. Previously, Nynke worked at the University of Amsterdam and SURF, building experience in educational innovation, digitalisation and teacher professionalisation.
Catherine O'Mahony	Catherine O'Mahony leads the Centre for the Integration of Research, Teaching and Learning at University College Cork, Ireland. As Director, she sets the strategic vision for professional development in teaching and learning. Over the years she has led institutional, national and international projects on topics ranging from student engagement and sustainability education to undergraduate research, inclusive practice, and educational leadership. Most recently she has implemented a cross-campus curriculum change initiative, is leading work on innovative teaching and mobilities for the UNIC European Universities alliance, and has co-developed a national professional recognition framework for teaching and learning.
Diana Soares	Diana Soares is Assistant Professor at Universidade Católica Portuguesa and Director of the Católica Learning Innovation Lab (CLIL). Her work focuses on academic development, educational leadership and teaching and learning enhancement in higher education. She has led institutional initiatives to support academic staff development, foster communities of practice and strengthen educational leadership across the university.

Manon Kluijtmans	Manon Kluijtmans is Professor of Education to Connect Science and Professional Practice at the University Medical Centre Utrecht and Dean of University College Utrecht, the Netherlands. Until recently, she served as Vice-Rector for Teaching and Learning at Utrecht University, where she also founded and directed the Centre for Academic Teaching and Learning and chaired a focus area on higher education research.
Paweł Pyrka	Paweł Pyrka is an Associate Professor at the Faculty of Humanities of SWPS University, Poland, where he is also the Vice-Rector's Representative for Digital Innovation, responsible for AI policy and collaboration with technology partners in the field of education. He is also an expert at the Polish Accreditation Committee. His research interests encompass the Gothic and the weird, digital humanities, speculative fiction, interactive narratives, and the cultural representations and meanings of technology.
Fredrik Mørk Røkenes	Fredrik Mørk Røkenes is an Associate Professor at LINK – Centre for Learning, Innovation, and Academic Development at the University of Oslo, Norway, where his research interests include digital competence, digitalization, teaching and learning with digital technologies in education. Fredrik has worked with research and development projects focusing on the digitalization of teacher education in Norway, the Nordics, and internationally. He has extensive experience as a teacher educator in English didactics and as a supervisor at all educational levels, with a focus on systematic reviews, literature reviews in doctoral theses, and research methods in doctoral education. His latest work focuses on the use of generative artificial intelligence in teaching and learning, assessment, and academic development in higher education.
Matej Bilik	Matej Bílik is a Policy Analyst in the Higher Education Policy Team at the OECD, where he works on internationalisation, academic careers and artificial intelligence in higher education. He previously worked at the Slovak Accreditation Agency for Higher Education and first became involved in higher education policy through the Student Council for Higher Education, Slovakia's national students' union. Earlier in his career he worked for the Institute for Active Citizenship in Slovakia and at UWC Changshu China.

Sara González Betancor	Sara M. González Betancor is Full Professor of Applied Economics at the University of Las Palmas de Gran Canaria, Spain. Her research focuses primarily on the Economics of Education, with a quantitative approach to educational inequalities, academic performance, educational trajectories and the evaluation of education systems. She is Director of Academic Quality and Head of the Institutional Evaluation Office at ULPGC, with responsibility for academic quality assurance, institutional evaluation, programme accreditation and monitoring, and the evaluation of university teaching. She previously served as Director of Institutional Evaluation in 2007–2008, contributing to the initial implementation of the DOCENTIA programme and the first internal quality assurance systems at ULPGC. Her experience combines academic teaching and research with institutional responsibility for quality assurance and teaching evaluation, providing a long-term perspective on the development and implementation of teaching evaluation policies at university level.
Ross Woods	Ross Woods is Senior Manager at the Higher Education Authority (HEA), Ireland, with responsibility for HEA's work on the Enhancement of Teaching and Learning, Healthy Campus, Mental Health and Wellbeing. From 2019-2023, he led the HEA's Centre of Excellence for Equality, Diversity and Inclusion's work on gender equality and other areas of equality, diversity and inclusion. This included initiatives such as the first ever National Survey of Race Equality in Irish Higher Education and work to address sexual violence and harassment in higher education institutions. Most recently he has led the HEA's Review of the National Student Success Framework and the development of a HEA National Teaching and Learning Strategy for Higher Education.
Manuel João Costa	Manuel João Costa is an Associate Professor at the School of Medicine at the University of Minho, Portugal. He is the Vice-President of the National Council for Pedagogical Innovations in Higher Education of Portugal and coordinator of the interinstitutional EPIC consortium (Excellence in Pedagogy and Innovation in Co-creation), focused on developing pedagogical excellence across six institutions. He previously served as Vice-Rector for Educational Innovation and Student Affairs at the University of Minho and as coordinator of the

	University of Minho's Centre for Innovation and Development in Teaching and Learning (IDEA-UMinho) (September 2018–December 2025). He was the Institutional Lead at the University of Minho for the Arqus European University Alliance (January 2022–December 2025). Manuel is a former member of EUA's Learning and Teaching Steering Committee.
Daciana Pop	Daciana Pop is a student activist from Romania who currently serves as President of the European Students' Union (ESU). Over the past six years, she has been deeply involved in the student movement at local, national and European levels, passionately advocating for students' rights, academic freedom, quality education and student-centeredness. Daciana is also currently pursuing a Doctorate in International Relations and European Studies at Babeș-Bolyai University, Romania.
Philippe Emplit	Philippe Emplit is Emeritus Professor of Applied Physics at both the École Polytechnique de Bruxelles and the Solvay Brussels School of Economics and Management of the Université libre de Bruxelles (ULB), Belgium. He previously served as Vice-Rector for Teaching & Learning Affairs and Director of the ULB Teaching & Learning Centre. He currently holds the position of Academic Head of the Quality Unit at the École Polytechnique de Bruxelles. Philippe has participated in and chaired several EUA thematic working groups on L&T and, since 2024, he has been a member of the EUA Learning and Teaching Steering Committee.
Ella Picavet	Ella Picavet is Project & Policy Officer for Higher Education Policy at the European University Association. In her work, she contributes to various policy domains in the European Higher Education Area (EHEA) and EU policy, including the Erasmus+ programme and Union of Skills, lifelong learning, learning and teaching, and staff development. Ella has experience with higher education policy in the Netherlands, and in European Universities alliances.