

## CALL FOR ABSTRACTS

**11<sup>th</sup> Annual Higher Education Conference**  
**27 to 29 September 2017**

**Southern Sun Elangeni Conference Centre,**  
**Durban, South Africa**

### **Higher Education Today: Crises, Contestations, Contemplations and Futures**

The Annual Teaching & Learning in Higher Education Conference is an international gathering of academics and researchers, which seeks to showcase innovations, generate debate, theorise policy and practice, and explore opportunities and challenges associated with teaching and learning in Higher Education. The conference also serves as a platform for disseminating higher education and institutional research findings.

**Hosted by**



**Every Student Matters**

**UTLO website:** [utlo.ukzn.ac.za](http://utlo.ukzn.ac.za)

**Conference website:** <http://hec.ukzn.ac.za>

**For further information, contact +27 (0) 31 260 3002**

**#HEC11**

Abstracts between a minimum of 500 to a maximum of 750 words to be submitted on-line no later than **28 April 2017**.

<http://hec.ukzn.ac.za/abstract-submissions>

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## CONFERENCE THEMES

	Theme	Co-ordinator
1.	Decolonisation and Transformation of the Curriculum: When, what, how, who?	Professor Michael Samuel; Dr Fayth Ruffin
2.	Higher Education Data Analytics: Building organizational and analytical capacity to support decision making and student progression	Professor Naven Chetty; Dr Annah Bengesai; Prof Randhir Rawatlal
3.	Governance and Leadership in Higher Education	Dr Cecile Proches; Dr Mabutho Sibanda
4.	Student Attributes, Transitions, Destinations and Aspirations	Professor Nyna Amin; Ms Rose Mokhosi; Mr Nevil Balakrishna
5.	Funding Higher Education as a System: Entitlements, accountabilities, consequences, possibilities	Ms Reshma Subbaye Dr Brian Shawa; Dr Saras Reddy
6.	Collaborative Quality Enhancement for Sector-wide Change in Higher Education: Responsibilities and possibilities	Professor Bala Pillay; Dr Tilly Moodley;
7.	Language Policy, Planning and Implementation in Higher Education: Future directions	Dr Langa Khumalo; Dr Ansurie Pillay
8.	Technology for the 21 <sup>st</sup> Century Teaching & Learning	Mr Ebrahim Adam; Mr Abdulbaqi Badru
9.	Disciplinary Contestations and Pedagogic Practices: Fuzzy Boundaries but Clear Teaching?	Professor Maheshvari Naidu; Professor Daisy Pillay
10.	Reclaiming the Arts in Higher Education	Professor Chats Devroop
11.	Open and Blended Learning	Dr Kaviraj Sharma Sukon; Mr Perienen Appavoo
Conference Chair and Coordinator		Dr Rubby Dhunpath

### Theme 1: Decolonisation and Transformation of the Curriculum: When, what, how, who?

Higher education curricula are being criticized as unresponsive, irrelevant and out-dated to the ever-changing social and economic realities, government and industry needs and global demands. More recently, students have weighed-in on the growing demands for curriculum transformation, calling for the excising of all remnants of coloniality from higher education. It is not always clear exactly what is meant by this, or who should take responsibility for its demise, nor how this should be done, but the message is abundantly clear: higher education can no longer take refuge in sublime indifference to the increasing demands for reassessment of what is branded a hegemonic curriculum, which is complicit in advancing structural inequality and privilege.

Paradoxically, universities, which are sometimes dismissed as bastions of conservatism, have now become the sites of contestation, mobilization and activism. The increasingly confrontational and sometimes violent activism is not just about what universities teach or don't teach; the university is increasingly being linked to social justice, gender justice, linguistic justice and a host of other pathologies endemic to society. Responding to many of these demands falls



outside the capacity of the university alone, but the university does have the capacity to begin engaging in what it means to engender curricular justice in our lifetimes.

## **Theme 2: Higher Education Data Analytics: Building organizational and analytical capacity to support decision making and student progression**

For many years, higher education institutions have been contemplating solutions to “unsatisfactory student success”. The issues include attrition rates, retention and throughput, content knowledge, fit for purpose, learning outcomes and time taken to graduate. These concerns are compounded by the increasing demands for accountability and efficiency, in particular, whether university expenditure is being used effectively to help students succeed. It is with this in mind that the field of data analytics has emerged quite recently with rapid growth and uptake in higher education institutions worldwide. Universities have realised the potential of the vast quantities of data produced through their information systems in addressing these strategic challenges in the current volatile educational landscape. While these data have been used retroactively to assess student success and progress, they also offer new possibilities, which include better placement of students in optimal qualifications and early warning systems to identify and assist ‘At Risk’ students.

Further, through analytics, which go beyond descriptive statistics, institutions can find metrics to measure success and participation in higher education as well as new approaches to making decisions. The combination of embedded administrative and academic technologies, big data, powerful analytical tools, and sophisticated data-mining techniques is revolutionising education delivery and is making vast in-roads into measuring the efficacy of the education and is, at the same time driving and improving access and success. This theme calls upon papers, which explore the application of data analytics to the current challenges facing higher education. Topics include: enrolment patterns, retention and graduation, tuition and fees, course taking patterns, and workloads

## **Theme 3: Governance and Leadership in Higher Education**

Governance in Higher Education Institutions is becoming increasingly complex due to the dynamic nature of intraorganizational, interorganization and government relationships. This complexity in governance is further exacerbated by tensions between the pursuit of various pivotal pillars defining the higher education institutions that demand multiple goals and objectives, both locally and globally, and the efforts to remain competitive, while facing increasing cost and resource constraints. In addition, competition from private and for-profit higher education institutions requires strong and dynamic leadership for an institution to remain relevant and sustainable. Unionization and student protests on the other hand, has placed pressure on leadership and governance structures amid dwindling state financial support. In addition, the very purpose of universities is being questioned and their role in society is increasingly coming under the spotlight. To formulate effective responses to these challenges requires effective leadership and governance of these higher education institutions. The focus has also shifted to developing the leadership abilities of academics and to facilitate the smooth running of the university, hence corporatization of higher education. Within this terrain, higher education institutions navigate their way through the meaning of terms such as accountability, autonomy, increased responsiveness, performance, hierarchy and bureaucracy, and policies and procedures. Consequently, new approaches to leadership and governance of higher education institutions are required. Thus, in a dynamic higher education landscape,



there is a need to develop innovative governance models, structures and systems, and dynamic leadership at various levels. In this strand, we welcome papers that evaluate, analyse and explore the dynamics in leadership and governance of higher education institutions.

#### **Theme 4: Student Attributes, Transitions, Destinations and Aspirations**

21<sup>st</sup> Century university students: (i) want to have a voice in their education, and will respond better to instruction when their voices are heard; (ii) have higher levels of digital literacy than their parents or teachers; (iii) want freedom to express their creativity and dislike rote learning; (iv) want to connect with others in real time, all the time, and on their own terms using social media and mobile technology; (v) collaborate well and embrace teamwork; (vi) can multi-task; (vii) incorporate a “trial and error” approach to learning new skills; (viii) learn better by doing rather than by watching; (ix) have multicultural awareness and appreciation; (x) are open to change; (xi) have access to information – do not know a world without Google; and (xii) consequently have access to more knowledge.

In response, the 21<sup>st</sup> century academic has to be creative and innovative in curriculum design and pedagogy, engage with blended learning, and integrate emerging academic and digital literacies in the curriculum. We invite papers and posters highlighting how the needs of the 21<sup>st</sup> century university student can be met by the 21<sup>st</sup> century university teacher.

#### **Theme 5: Funding Higher Education as a System: Entitlements, accountabilities, consequences, possibilities**

The past decade has witnessed drastic changes in the way universities are structured and financed. Globally, governments are investing less and less in higher education, leading to emerging private sector-funded universities, and an increasing number of privately funded students at public universities. Additionally, the past year has seen the rise of student-centred movements such as #FeesMustFall, #GrantsNotDebt and #MillionStudentMarch that seek to challenge existing higher education funding models and make higher education more accessible.

Whilst these developments have and will continue to widen access to university education opportunities, it has introduced and will increasingly introduce pedagogical implications. Class sizes have increased, and diverse student populations with varied learning abilities, cultural capitals, social class, and linguistic variations are accessing higher education. Alternative instructional strategies, resources and paradigms will need to be embraced and financed for successful outcomes. Invariably this means shifting the burden of increased costs to students. Are there viable alternatives, which disrupt the exponential increase in the costs related to higher education provisioning? Are there innovative non-traditional funding models involving synergies between non-traditional partners?

In this strand, we invite comparative perspectives on the challenges and opportunities in funding higher education. We welcome papers that explore innovative funding practices and exemplary funding models that harness the benefits of an increasingly internationalising global higher education system. We encourage non-conventional economic philosophies and theories that offer new ways of conceptualising fee-structuring, student support, student loans, bursaries, endowments and other possibilities.



## **Theme 6: Collaborative Quality Enhancement for Sector-wide Change in Higher Education: Responsibilities and possibilities**

The focus on educational quality has changed dramatically in recent times: from evaluation as a summative judgment by agencies conferred with authority to declare fitness for/of purpose to an evidence based approach of gathering and analyzing institutional data and making this available for research and reflection. Norris, (1998) alludes to the need for educational institutions to become 'more adaptive' in the face of the complexity and unpredictability. "Institutional reflexivity and the learning organisation lie at the heart of this impulse toward evaluation" (Norris, 1998). Under this gaze, the individualistic approaches to quality assurance have given way to developmental conceptions of quality as a shared systemic function and a responsibility of the Higher Education sector as a collective.

In introducing its Quality Enhancement Project, The South African Council on Higher Education (CHE) underscores the vital role quality higher education has to play in contributing to the reconstruction and development of all aspects of South African society to produce "*Enhanced student learning with a view to increasing the number of graduates with attributes that are personally, professionally and socially valuable*". Participants are invited to share their perspectives on the value of collaborative quality enhancement approaches for systemic change in Higher Education and their prospects to elevate the quality of higher education as a system.

## **Theme 7: Language Policy, Planning and Implementation in Higher Education: Future directions**

Language in South Africa, and particularly in that of its Higher Education context, is complex and contested. It mirrors the chequered historical circumstances, which have seen the country transition from a bilingual context to a *de jure* multilingual and *de facto* monolingual situation that persists today. It is in this context that South African Higher Education is increasingly waking up to the imperative of placing language, and particularly African languages, at the centre of academic activity. We have seen the promulgation of institutional language policies and implementation strategies seeking to translate into practice constitutional and legislative clauses on language that adorn the South African statute books. Consequentially, academic discourse on the role of language in Higher Education is shifting away from the entrapment of academic sentimentalism and advocacy to practical implementation of strategies that seek to increase the role of language in access to knowledge, and the active role African languages can play in the global knowledge economy.

Thus, the imperative to disrupt pedagogies, for effectively teaching multilingual classrooms in Higher Education institutions, has been motivated. While transformational issues, including the decolonisation of both curricula and institutions, aim to provide relevant episteme and foster social cohesion, issues of access and success need to be critically interrogated together with the language policies that shape institutions, if any real progress is to be made.

This is a call for papers, posters and workshops that report on empirical research and/or on new, innovative theoretical considerations relating to Language Policy, Planning, Pedagogy and Implementation in Higher Education.



## **Theme 8: Technology Affordances and Perils Facing 21<sup>st</sup> Century Higher Education**

In recent times, higher education has been rocked by turbulence and demands for transformation on a global scale. Many debates, discussions and deliberations have emerged regarding the future of higher education, with many glances in the direction of technology. Past discussions have centred around the rapid evolution of learning technologies, adoption of innovative digital pedagogies, and enhanced research capabilities and efficiencies in higher education. Some technologies and paradigms being discussed include MOOCs, Web 2.0, social media, blended learning, big data and analytics, and the prevalence of mobile devices which, coupled with technologies like cloud computing, present many opportunities for enhancing experiences of students, academics and support staff. Much has been reflected on how to engage students through these platforms, how to effectively and ethically utilise these platforms for research, the opportunities and challenges in terms of costs and access, and how institutions can embrace these paradigms and technological platforms to derive maximum value for teaching, learning, research and community engagement. This has taken place whilst acknowledging that these paradigms and platforms threaten the traditional higher education systems which have been in existence for hundreds of years.

Within the context of the recent crises and contestations facing higher education, technology has begun to assume a fundamental, as opposed to previously complementary, role of engaging students with curricula, connecting researchers with platforms to enhance research, and enabling universities to function. Additionally, widely accessible technologies are increasingly levelling the field among institutions with technology serving as a differentiator whilst also being regarded as a commodity. Such a shift in perspective demands that greater consideration is given to the role of technologies as integral to higher education, as opposed to technologies as merely an enhancement. The technologies, which have been featured in discussions, are now increasingly relevant.

Additional topics of interest include exploring the role of technology in fostering innovation in higher education, the re-designing of learning and research spaces, learning analytics and personalised learning, augmented and virtual reality, makerspaces and robotics, and game-based learning and gamification. A further area of interest is the role of technology for acquiring and generating knowledge through research.

Students are increasingly provided with constant access to streams of information, which brings immense potential. However, the motivation and aptitude to access and interrogate original and seminal academic texts as sources of knowledge has been substituted by easily accessible search results, and posts and tweets, which can have potentially destructive consequences. There is an increasing urgency to explore and unpack strategies to bridge this widening gap between academic sources of knowledge and media commonly accessed by students, in a manner that encourages substantial learning whilst also paving the way for knowledge generation.

Scholars and researchers are invited to offer insights into innovative and practical approaches that may address the various crises and challenges faced by higher education. Ultimately, the multifaceted role of technology in shaping the higher education landscape into the future requires exploration, debate and discussion.



### **Theme 9: Disciplinary Contestations and Pedagogic Practices: Fuzzy Boundaries but Clear Teaching?**

This track invites papers which recognise that so called 'signature pedagogies' are constitutive of identity formations through multiple and sometimes competing discursive practices at play in particular pedagogic spaces and specific disciplinary contexts. Papers that probe transdisciplinarity and post disciplinarity and what this may mean for embodied and 'disciplined' teaching philosophies, identities and practices are invited. Both theoretical papers as well as empirical papers that compel us to confront *who* we are within our teaching, what we teach within our disciplinary- transdisciplinary 'boundaries', and why we teach the way we do, are invited.

### **Theme 10: Reclaiming the Arts in Higher Education**

Performance-led, Research-led Practice (*Wo es war, soll ich werden - Freud*)

In the West, Performance is commonly associated with self-expression and interpretation. The kinds of autonomy and creativeness these notions authorise have become the dominant theme of performance studies. However, in order to arrive at a notion of performance that has applicability and value beyond the West, it is necessary to carefully invert this largely western configuration. Through Rancière's work, it has become clear that expression, self-expression, interpretability, artistic freedom and other linked notions occur together in particular distributions of the senses. All of these notions call forth their conceptual and evaluative counterparts in certain kinds of criticism and evaluation of technique, concurrent with these redistributions.

Since Rancière's examinations almost entirely concern western examples, it is urgent to situate, crosscut or insulate the understanding of practice beyond the West in the fields of academic and critical deliberation that have been opened up by his and similar scholarship around perceptions and concepts in film, architecture, dance, drama, music and other endeavours where experience and its available conceptions converge. This provides a field that is just as easily enriched by the testimony of performers as by the long apprenticeship in appreciating performance undertaken by the best critics. The historical and philosophical network that provides reality to performance in different circumstances invites innovative reconstruction and clarification from a wide range of scholars.

Today, there is room beyond the post-modern and the post-colonial debate to focus on and develop ontological perspectives on performance and on the kinds of situation in which knowledge, disciplinary frameworks, techniques and concrete abstractions may be derived. Just as there is scope today for separating practice from technique and method, which have accompanied its western reception, so there is also the opportunity to separate criticism, as an appreciation of and a distinct kind of thought about practice, from critique and from historicism, the two formats in which the academy represents and studies practice.

This call is open for submissions under the theme of performance-led research or research-led practice/performance.

### **Theme 11: Open and Blended Learning**

Can the brick-and-mortar universities provide higher education to the increasing number of people willing to acquire university education? The development of the web technologies is allowing the rapid dissemination of information around the globe. This



makes high quality open and distance learning potentially a key to widening access to higher education in developed and developing countries. Constructs such as MOOCs, e-campus, off-campus, blended mode, and online universities are now an integral part of the higher education discourse.

However, experts agree that distance education, which remains multidisciplinary in nature, is still in a developmental phase. Several challenges must be overcome: Which form should the teaching and learning process take in an increasingly interactive world? How do we ensure that the quality of the delivery meets the required norms? What are acceptable norms, standards and models for higher education institutions in a connected world?

Academics and researchers are invited to submit papers that offer insights into effective practices in teaching and learning through distance/blended/on-line modes while addressing the emerging and growing learning needs of the 21st century.

### PRESENTATION FORMATS

We invite extended abstracts of **a minimum of 500 to a maximum of 750 words** (in English and/or isiZulu) for the following presentation formats:

<b>Paper Presentations</b>	15 minute presentations with discussion time for scholarly, evidenced papers
<b>Workshops</b>	By invitation, presenters will have 2 hours to focus on innovative methodologies and approaches
<b>Posters</b>	A2 posters (Displayed throughout the conference with presenters in attendance periodically)

### GUIDELINES FOR SUBMISSION

#### Paper Presentations

Selection of papers will be based on abstracts of **a minimum of 500 to a maximum of 750 words**. Abstracts must include the name(s) of author(s), institution(s) and email address(es) and must be submitted on-line at: <http://hec.ukzn.ac.za/abstract-submissions> not later than **28 April 2017**.

Abstracts must include a clear but brief indication of the purpose of the paper, methodology, major results/findings, and conclusions/implications. The abstract should provide a concise indication of what the audience can expect from the paper presented. Author(s) should indicate the thematic strand (listed above) under which the abstract should be included.

Abstracts will be reviewed by a Review Panel and abstracts, which meet the review criteria, will be selected. Each abstract will be reviewed for acceptance against the following criteria:

- Relevance to the overall conference theme
- Clarity and coherence
- Appeal to a diverse higher education audience
- Contribution to scholarship, innovative practice, critical reflection
- Evidence-based arguments and findings
- Sound and appropriate methods





**The Review Panel may also recommend alternative presentation formats, such as Workshops or Posters. Authors will be notified of acceptance by 19 May 2017. Acceptance of the abstract implies that at least (but not limited to) one of the authors will be attending the conference and presenting the paper. Abstracts selected for presentation will be published in a book of abstracts.**

## **Workshops**

Workshops have become a popular forum for both researchers and practitioners to exchange cutting-edge advances in the state of the art and practice, with regard to methodology, theory, pedagogy and practice. The purpose of these workshops is to provide a platform for presenting novel ideas in an interactive environment, offering opportunities for researchers to present their work and obtain feedback from an interested community. The format of each workshop may be determined by the organisers, but should include sufficient time for general discussion.

The workshop focus should be relevant to the main conference themes and should include the following information:

1. A statement of goals for the workshop
2. Expected outcomes
3. Proposed approach
4. The expected/optimal number of participants
5. The URL of the workshop web site where relevant
- 6.

Abstracts must be submitted online at: <http://hec.ukzn.ac.za/abstract-submissions>

Online submissions should reach the conference coordination committee not later than 28 April 2017.

## **Poster Presentations**

The poster presentation provides an ideal opportunity for conference participants to learn about new and innovative completed projects or work-in progress. Participants are given an opportunity to preview research projects in process, but whose preliminary results are already noteworthy. Posters will be displayed for the entire conference and presenters are encouraged to be present during tea breaks.

A selection of posters will be based on the submission of abstracts of between **a minimum of 500 to a maximum of 750 words**. Abstracts must include the name(s) of author(s), institution(s) and email address(es). Abstracts must include a clear but brief indication of the purpose of the poster, methodology, major results, and conclusions/implications. The author(s) should clearly mention under which thematic strand (listed above) the abstract is to be included.

Abstracts for posters will be reviewed by a Review Panel and only approved abstracts will be selected. Online submissions should reach the conference coordination committee by 28 April 2017. Abstracts must be submitted online at: <http://hec.ukzn.ac.za>.

Authors will be notified of acceptance by 19 May 2017. Acceptance of the abstract implies that at least (but not limited to) one of the authors will be attending the conference and presenting the paper/poster. Abstracts selected for presentation will be published in a book of abstracts.



**DISCLAIMER:** It is the responsibility of the author/s to adhere to ethical research practices. This means that authors must guard against plagiarism, avoid the misuse of privileged information, ensure data integrity, and where relevant obtain the necessary permissions to conduct studies and present the findings thereof.

### BOOK OF ABSTRACTS

All abstracts will be reviewed and successful abstracts will be published in a Book of Abstracts. Presenters, whose registrations have not been finalised, will not have their abstracts published and will not be included on the conference programme.

### ABSTRACT SUBMISSION DATES (only on-line submissions will be reviewed):

Event	Date
Abstract Submissions Open	5 December 2016
Closing date for Abstract Submissions	28 April 2017
<b>Abstract Review Meeting</b>	<b>12 May 2017</b>
Notification of Outcome of Abstract Submissions	19 May 2017
Revise and Resubmissions Deadline	26 May 2017
Notification of Outcome of Revise and Resubmit	2 June 2017
<b>Programme Meeting</b>	<b>7 July 2017</b>

### REGISTRATION DATES (register on-line to reserve a seat and payment will confirm participation):

Event	Date
Conference Registrations Opens	5 December 2016
Early-bird Registrations Closes	24 March 2017
Regular Registrations Closes	30 June 2017
Presenting Delegates Registrations Closes	1 July 2017
Late Registrations Closes	31 July 2017

### CONFERENCE REGISTRATION FEES:

	<b>Early-bird</b> 5 Dec '16 – 25 Mar '17	<b>Regular Rates</b> 25 Mar '17 – 30 Jun '17	<b>Late registration</b> 1 Jul '17 – 31 Jul '17
UKZN Delegates	ZAR 2500.00	ZAR 3000.00	ZAR 3250.00
External Delegates	ZAR 3750.00	ZAR 4000.00	ZAR 4250.00

