



CACE Assembly Beyond Borders: Hybrid Conference Format

<https://www.cacebb.com/>

Call for Ideas

About

Crossroads in Academic Continuing Education (CACE) is a transdisciplinary think tank that connects international academics, experts, and visionaries discussing the future of academic continuing education. The CACE Assembly 2021 will lay the ground for an international trans-institutional collaborative working and publication process.

We will discuss and share project ideas, new developments, and research findings during the two-day Assembly Beyond Borders. The thematic focus will be placed on the topics prioritized by the CACE founding members in 2020:

- **Visionary ideas on the future of academic continuing education**
- **Flexible curricula and individual learning paths in academic continuing education**
- **The role of culture and internationalization in academic continuing education**
- **Curation and quality assurance in academic continuing education**
- **Ecosystem challenges and financial aspects of academic continuing education**

The increasing relevance of continuing education can be seen in a constantly increasing demand and market. When facing future challenges, a need for further developing "systems that are effective in education, research, and innovation and are connected to their societies"¹ is stressed in strategic policies.

"In a fast-changing and uncertain world, lifelong learning can help individuals adapt and become resilient to external shocks."² While private institutions provide specified programs for continuing education, higher education institutions must adapt their offerings to the growing group of post-graduate students that seek to develop their skills further and adapt to changing environments and realities.

Curricula and the study process must be student-oriented and at the same time ensure the transfer of the latest research insights to the teaching scope. Based on increased quality, trust, and cooperation among higher education institutions,³ networks for intensified cooperation must be established. Only higher education institutions have the experience and capacities for profound knowledge transfer, but they need to critically reflect and reinvent their structures and programs to take the leading role in the market of continuing education.

¹ European Commission (2017), *A New Impetus for Higher Education in the EU*.

² OECD (2021), *OECD Skills Outlook 2021: Learning for Life*.

³ European Commission (2020). *The European Higher Education Area in 2020: Bologna Process Implementation Report*.

Hybrid Conference: Save the Date

Date: **1-2 October 2021**

Venue: **Danube-University Krems**, Dr.-Karl-Dorrek-Straße 30, 3500 Krems, Austria
Online, video-conference

Collaborative Publication Process

CACE accompanies editors and authors through a collaborative publication process. The Assembly in October will only be the starting point of a journey of academic discourse and writing. Authors will present their ideas with the opportunity to initiate new working groups beyond borders. Collaborative writing projects with scholars and practitioners from various research and practice groups will be facilitated. While editors will collaboratively shape the scope of the entire book, they will also ensure that the individual chapters within the sections are aligned and provide relevant insights and information on the common theme of Academic Continuing Education.

This format aims to intensify the exchange between practitioners and scholars and form new connections, beneficial for both.

Call Details

The idea proposals shall be 1-2- pages and must contain:

- Title
- Authors: names, affiliations, e-mail contact
- Keywords
- Description of the idea may contain the following: scope of the idea, description of a problem, solution for current needs, research questions, methodology, project information, etc.
- Key references

Submit your contribution via <https://www.cacebb.com/>.

Guidelines for chapters will be communicated once the editors have selected the contributions to the book.

Academic Paper Submissions: Scholars can present their research as well as reflections on the future of continuing education and the specific sections of the book.

Practitioner Paper Submissions: We encourage practitioners to present their ideas and experiences in their chapters. The aim is to share best practices and innovative concepts that are embedded in an academic context.

Publication and Timeline

The book shall be published as an open-access publication, and chapters shall be indexed in relevant academic databases. We are currently in contact with renowned academic publishers. CACE will cover the costs of the publication.

- Call for Ideas for chapters: 21 July 2021
- **Submission of Ideas for chapters: 9 September 2021**
- **CACE Assembly: 1-2 October 2021**
- First online chapters coordination event: December 2021
- Second online chapters coordination event: February 2022
- Publication: Q2/Q3 2022

Scope of the Publication

The publication will be organized along with the five focus topics of CACE. Each topic will be addressed in a separate section of the book, which will be developed collaboratively by the section editors and the authors contributing to each section. As a first step, we ask interested authors to submit their ideas and proposals for contributions to a particular section. The preliminary scope of the sections is described in the following:

Section I: Visionary Ideas on the Future of Academic Continuing Education

Academic continuing education as part of higher education institutions' mission and service for the society to promote lifelong learning is embedded in a broader discussion about the future of higher education in general. Academic continuing education has received increasing attention in past decades and is nowadays a central part of a fundamental discussion about lifelong learning. Therefore, the future of academic continuing education is not only linked to an "institutional discussion," but also to a more overarching debate about skills relevant to future generations and learning paths stretching over a lifetime, as well as its enablers such as digitalization, competence-oriented provision of educational interactions or the interplay between formal, non-formal and informal learning.

Rapid changes and societal dynamics call for a more proactive and future-oriented debate about academic continuing education. New organizational solutions, innovative program designs, and new pathways in teaching and learning will stimulate changes in continuing education. The future will be influenced by new frameworks, policy formations, institutional approaches, micro-credentials, and new and innovative pedagogies. In order to explore possible future scenarios, this specific section is looking for conceptual contributions, including, e.g., foresight, out-of-the-box models, or opinion pieces. Consideration will be given, but not limited, to the following:

- Scenarios for academic continuing education in different higher education systems
- Institutional strategies and models, including organizational approaches to overcome future challenges

- Program innovations and synergies between different learnings (formal, non-formal, informal)
- Meta competencies and future skills development approaches through academic continuing education
- Development of involved academic and administrative staff as well as quality enhancement practices

Section II: Flexible Curricula and Individual Learning Paths in Academic Continuing Education

One particular challenge of academic continuing education is to deal with learners' heterogeneity in terms of their prior skills and knowledge as well as their living and study conditions. Actively addressing the needs of learners that arise from this diversity can be an asset for continuing education offers that set them apart from more traditional academic programs. Operatively enabling individualized learning paths, both in terms of study organization and content, requires a suitable formal framework in the form of flexible curricula.

The requirements on and potential forms of such curricula are manifold. This section explores concepts and formats that enable individual learning paths in academic continuing education and their anchoring in formal higher education frameworks. Procedure models and conceptual cornerstones for designing and implementing curricula that enable such individual learning paths are of particular interest.

Consideration will be given, but is not limited, to the following:

- Research reviews that discuss the current state-of-the-art in this field or a subfield
- Case studies and applied research reports that demonstrate to which degree and in which dimensions flexible learning can be anchored and implemented in academic continuing education curricula
- Case studies and applied research reports that demonstrate how individual learning paths can be implemented in the formal framework of academic continuing education programs
- Socio-technical support instruments on how to identify and guide individual learning paths
- Theoretical studies that explore formats of individual learning paths and flexible curricula

Section III: The Role of Culture and Internationalization in Academic Continuing Education

Organizational culture is like "water to the fish." In order to achieve sustainability in academic continuing education, institutions need to reflect further, adapt, and develop their culture. Assumptions, values, habits, as well as institutional artifacts need reflection and revision. A broader openness towards societal needs, a proper balance between the academic world and

the world of work requires a culture that enables institutions to manage change, overcome difficulties and adapt to new realities in uncertain times.

Internationalization as part of the modernization agenda of higher education has not been a core element of academic continuing education for a long time. Globalization, competition, limited resources, but also market needs demand more internationally oriented approaches. This section explores new ideas for student mobility, international cooperation, partnerships, and new types of provision (e.g., virtual or distance) and should lead to a more specific discussion about internationalization for and in academic continuing education.

Consideration will be given, but not limited, to the following:

- Dedicated studies on the outcome and impact of the institutional and academic culture in continuing education
- Specific approaches to develop an institutional culture to support academic continuing education
- The limitations of different cultures in the provision of academic continuing education
- Role dedicated measures and implementation of activities towards an internationally oriented academic continuing education

Section IV: Curation and Quality Assurance in Academic Continuing Education

The recent trend towards producing accessible learning materials as OERs (Open Educational Resources) and/or as MOOCs (Massive Open Online Courses) is an enabler for personalized, interest- and need-driven learning processes. In the context of academic continuing education, learning outcomes achieved in such processes have the potential to be validated and recognized and thus contribute to achieving a formal degree issued by a higher education institution. Such institutions, however, face the challenge of making sure that the learning materials and didactic settings live up to the quality standards that need to be expected in an academic learning environment.

This challenge can be met in different ways. Institutions can act as curators, providing ex-ante evaluations of learning materials, thereby facilitating learners to assess the quality and chance of recognizing learning outcomes already in the selection process. Vice versa, quality assurance can also be provided as an ex-post service, where evaluations are carried out on demand. Whatever the approach, such curation and quality assurance activities require established and stable processes as well as assessment criteria. This section explores the challenges and potentials in this field, focusing on its application for academic continuing education. Consideration will be given, but not limited, to the following:

- Research reviews that discuss the current state-of-the-art in this field or a subfield
- Case studies and applied research that demonstrate effective curation and quality assurance processes for learning materials
- Studies that explore the role of OERs and MOOCs in academic continuing education and how they can interface with HEI's other educational offers
- Theoretical studies that explore quality assurance for informal learning in the context of academic continuing education

Section V: Ecosystem challenges and financial aspects of academic continuing education

In order to fulfill their so-called "Third Mission," higher education institutions need to intensify their interaction with society at large. More precisely, academic continuing education as part of institutions' third mission relies on interaction within and outside academic environments. The involvement of actors such as adult learners, higher education professionals, academics, and practitioners creates a complex and demanding teaching and learning environment. In addition, national and supranational parties, like national ministries, employers' representatives, or the European Commission, significantly impact the ecosystem and development and implementation of academic continuing education. Key aspects, including funding, career opportunities through up and cross-skilling, promotion, and market needs and competition between institutions and programs, create a complex ecosystem for academic continuing education.

The ecosystem of academic continuing education is embedded in local, regional, national, and international contexts and must be responsive to the different contexts and often contrasting demands. This external ecosystem must be reflected and echoed by international processes and procedures and transferred into higher education environments and institutional realities.

Consideration will be given, but not limited, to the following:

- Overall and specific aspects of conceptual frameworks for the provision of academic continuing education
- The interaction between different actors and their involvement in strategy, implementation, and evaluation of related activities in academic continuing education
- Funding models, financial solutions and trade-offs at macro, meso, and micro levels
- Comparisons on the effectiveness and efficiency of such ecosystems

Further Information and Contact Details

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