



Higher Education – Its Relevance to Students and Society

Conference Date: August 31, 2019

Time: 8:30 – 16:15

Location: Reykjavik University

Address: Menntavegur 1, 101 Reykjavík

The *Icelandic Ministry of Education, Science, and Culture* and the *Quality Board for Icelandic Higher Education* co-host a conference on higher education's relevance to students and society.

Higher education contributes to society in many, sometimes indirect, ways. In addition, members of society are likely to at some point be stakeholders of universities. This conference will explore some of the ways in which universities contribute to civic education by preparing students for active participation in a democratic society, how universities engage with stakeholders to add value, and how universities ensure the proper match between higher education and real-life demands after graduation. The conference builds on keynote speakers, with subsequent dialogue with panellists, discussants and the audience. The voice of students will be prominent at every step of the conference, which will conclude with a student panel.

This conference is held in conjunction with Iceland's Presidency of the *Nordic Council of Ministers* and serves as the annual conference of the *Quality Enhancement Framework*. The conference also contributes to the work of the *European Higher Education Area Thematic Peer Group C on Quality Assurance*. This event targets government agencies and stakeholders from the Nordic countries that are engaged in policymaking and quality assurance in higher education. The conference will be streamed live and parts of the conference will also be available as videos for viewing later.

Practical information on registration, hotel and transportation is to be found on [page 5](#) of this document.



Conference Programme

08.30–09.00 Welcome coffee

09.00–10.00 Introduction and opening remarks

- Lilja Dögg Alfreðsdóttir. Icelandic Minister of Education, Science and Culture.
- Andrée Sursöck. Chair, Quality Board for Icelandic Higher Education.
- Anders Söderholm. Director General, Swedish Higher Education Authority.

Session chair

- Una Strand Viðarsdóttir. Senior adviser on higher education and science, Icelandic Ministry of Education, Science and Culture.

10.00–10.30 Coffee break

10.30–11.45. Maximising Universities' Civic Mission.

Through the ages, universities have served humanity well. They have acted as the cradle of knowledge, the fount of innovation and creativity and the bulwark of civilisation. Today they stand at the centre of our societies, supporting people to achieve their personal development goals, providing the basis for a society rich in culture and social capital and providing the skills needed to serve our economies and maintain and enhance our living standards. It is because of that central role that universities are again asked to do more; to stretch beyond the traditions of scholarship, teaching and research; to reach out beyond their walls, real or hypothetical, and connect with community in ways that are novel and challenging.

This session will set the stage for the conference by discussing universities' civic mission, and how the civic engagement role can be central to their vision and mission and inform their strategies, actions and relationships.

Presenter

- Ellen Hazelkorn. Director, Higher Education Policy Research Unit, Dublin Institute of Technology.

Respondents

- Fríða Björk Ingvarsdóttir. Rector, Icelandic University of the Arts.
- Riitta Pyykkö, Vice-Rector for Education, University of Turku.

Session chair

- Sigurður Kristinsson. Professor, School of Humanities and Social Sciences, University of Akureyri.

11.45–12.45 Lunch



12.45–14.15 Parallel theme sessions

Session A: Quality Assurance of work placements

Through two presentations, this session will explore how universities ensure the quality of their work placements, how they identify and work with their non-academic partners to supervise students and assess their learning and the type of structures and staff required in the university to coordinate and organise this activity.

Presentation 1: Increasing the relevance of education through work placements.

Presenter

- Ingvild Andersen Helseth. Senior Adviser and Project Manager, Norwegian Agency for Quality Assurance in Education.

Presentation 2: Ensuring the quality of student internships in nursing: A case study.

Presenter

- Hafdís Skúladóttir. Senior Lecturer, School of Health Sciences, University of Akureyri.

Panel discussants

- Sandy Carson. Undergraduate student, Equine Studies, Hólar University College.
- Elsa Eiríksdóttir. Senior Lecturer, School of Education, University of Iceland.
- Ragnheiður Guðmundsdóttir. Member, Technology Committee of the Icelandic Science and Technology Policy Council.

Session chair:

- Hanne Smidt. Senior Adviser, European University Association.

Session B: Higher education engaging with society

Through two presentation, this session will explore how universities interact with their local communities to maximise the value that the university can bring to society.

Presentation 1: Social engagement, at the core of our institutional identity.

Presenter

- Ari Kristinn Jónsson. Rector, Reykjavik University.



Presentation 2: Competences for democratic cultures.

Speaker

Cecilia Christersson, Pro-Vice-Chancellor, Malmö University.

Panel discussants

- Irma Erlingsdóttir. Director, United Nations University Gender Studies and Training Programme.
- Julian Lu Curlo. Executive Committee Member and International Officer, National Union of Students in Denmark.
- Anders Söderholm. Director General, Swedish Higher Education Authority.

Session chair

- Katrín Oddsdóttir. Chairperson, Icelandic Constitutional Society.

14.15–14.45 Coffee break

14.45-15.30 Student Panel.

Relevance of Higher Education: the student perspective with special emphasis on student life in the West-Nordic Region and equality

This panel has representatives from each Nordic country's student association. Members of panel make short opening statements, followed by questions from the audience.

Panel members

- TBD

Session chair

- Anna Marsibil Clausen. Journalist, Icelandic National Broadcasting Service and Founding Chairperson of the National Union for Icelandic Students.

15.30–16.15 Closing comments and insights

Comments and summary of the day (1)

- Einar Hreinsson. Vice-Principal, Reykjavik Junior College.

Insights and priorities for continued Nordic cooperation (1)

- Tone Flood Ström. Senior Adviser, Norwegian Ministry of Education and Research.

16.15–17:00 Light refreshments



Higher Education – Its Relevance to Students and Society

Conference Date: August 31, 2019

Practical Information and Tips

Registration at: <https://forms.gle/UfPHcA9cTnLLpXAF7>

Conference Hotel

- Hotel Klettur, Mjólnisholti 12-14, 105 Reykjavík.
- Conference rate per night is 22.740 ISK for a single bed, and 28.020 ISK for a double bed.
- The number of rooms available at the conference rate is limited.
- Last date to make a reservation at the conference rate is August 1.
- Conference rates are valid for reservations August 30 – September 1.
- Book through gudrun@hotelcabin.is and cite reference number G-KL-40026809.

Getting from Airport to Conference Hotel

- A taxi from airport to Conference Hotel will cost approximately 20.000 ISK one way.
- A bus ticket can be purchased via the “strætó” app. More information on the app and bus stop locations can be found at <https://www.straeto.is/en>, which also has a “route planner.” Bus ticket each way is 1.880 ISK. If paying by cash, make sure to get a “connection ticket” from the driver for your second (connecting) bus ride.
- A round trip from KEF airport via coach can be booked at <https://alpha.re.is/tour/flybus/> at a cost of 8.000 ISK per person. Select “Klettur Hótel” in the drop-down menu for destination.

Getting from Airport to other Hotels

- A taxi from airport to Hotel will cost approximately 20.000 ISK one way.
- A bus ticket can be purchased via the “strætó” app. More information on the app and bus stations can be found at <https://www.straeto.is/en>, which also has a “route planner.” Bus ticket each way is 1.880 ISK. If paying by cash, make sure to get a “connection ticket” from the driver for your second (connecting) bus ride.
- A round trip from KEF airport via bus can be booked at <https://alpha.re.is/tour/flybus/> at a cost of 8.000 ISK per person. Select your hotel in the drop-down menu for destination.

Getting from Conference Hotel to Reykjavík University

- Buses #5 and #18 go to Reykjavik University. Either bus can be boarded at Hlemmur bus station, which is a two-minute walk from the conference hotel. Full directions are available at: <https://bit.ly/2wGsh5i>

Questions

Please contact the Secretariat of the Quality Board for Icelandic Higher Education

- sigurduroli.sigurdsson@rannis.is
- (+354) 897-8935