

Higher Education Policy
Special Issue Call for Papers

International Organizations and Higher Education

Guest Editors:

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Abstract submission deadline: 15 January 2025

In a globalised world, higher education policy and governance is no longer confined to the national level, and there have been significant shifts and expansions in governance arrangements, both upwards and downwards. With regard to the former, international organizations (IOs) – with states as members and operating across national borders – in various parts of the world (or globally) are of a particular interest. Thus far, research has primarily focused on a handful of IOs.

A rich strand of research has focused on the EU and the Bologna Process, providing a good understanding of the role of and relationship between various state and non-state actors (Brøgger, 2019; Cino Pagliarello, 2022; Corbett, 2005; Maassen & Olsen, 2007; Serrano-Velarde, 2015). The added European layer of higher education governance is characterized by a strong involvement of stakeholder organizations and experts (Dakowska, 2019; Elken, 2017; Fumasoli & Seeber, 2018; Grek & Russell, 2024). IOs also play a role in establishing or facilitating regional cooperation beyond Europe, for example in Southeast or Central Asia (Chou et al., 2024; Chou & Ravinet, 2015; Leskina & Sabzalieva, 2021), as well as in Latin America (Barriga & Torres-Olave, 2009) and Africa (Teferra, 2009). There is also evidence that IOs such as UNESCO, the World Bank, IMF and OECD impact developments at the national level through both voluntary and coercive policy learning (Bassett & Maldonado-Maldonado, 2009; Harmsen & Braband, 2021; Robertson & Dale, 2009). Through this, they facilitate diffusion of ideas concerning core aspects of higher education (teaching and research), as well as aspects of broader societal relevance (e.g. SDGs). Some IOs known for implementing projects in education, and especially higher education (HE) struggle to maintain their resources and thus are dependent not only on states but also on private actors (Dakowska, 2022).

Overall, IOs (try to) influence policy development through, for example, agenda-setting initiatives, stocktaking, supporting or complementing national policies, funding and policy evaluation. As Martens et al. (2023) argue, there are many IOs that produce expertise in education, but there is still limited academic work on their contribution, with many IOs, in particular those operating outside Europe, being under-researched.

Against this backdrop, Higher Education Policy invites scholars to contribute to **a special issue on “International Organisations and Higher Education”**.

Scholarly contributions from a variety of theoretical and methodological approaches are welcome. A tentative set of questions guides the content of the special issue:

1. What roles do IOs play in higher education, both globally and on the national level?
2. How has the population of IOs focusing on higher education developed over time and space? What patterns, if any, can be identified, and how can they be explained?
3. What are the antecedents and consequences of relationships between various IOs, both those operating in different parts of the world and those that overlap in their geographical focus?
4. How do IOs relate to other actors in higher education governance and policy-making, e.g. nation states, transnational stakeholder organizations (e.g. IAU) etc.?
5. In an increasingly complex geopolitical situation, how does higher education relate to wider political and societal developments? What is the role of IOs focusing on higher education in this regard, for example in specific crisis situations?

Proposals for the special issue need to have the form of **an extended abstract**, outlining the following elements: (1) research objective / questions, (2) relevance of the proposal for the special issue, (3) theoretical and methodological approach, (4) (preliminary) results and conclusions. Proposals **should not exceed 1000 words** (excluding references), and should be sent to dorota.dakowska@sciencespo-aix.fr and martina.vukasovic@uib.no no later than **15 January 2025**. Based on quality and relevance, the guest editors will select proposals to be developed further by 10 February 2025. The aim is to submit manuscripts for double-blind peer review by the journal before summer 2025.

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