Call for Papers

European Perspectives on the Socially Responsible and Engaged University
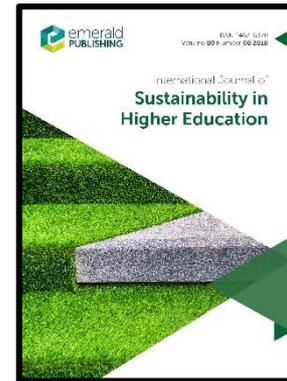
A special issue of

International Journal of Sustainability in Higher Education

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Background and Research Focus

Higher education institutions are said to be in an era of change (Maassen et al. 2019). Research and teaching as the two main missions of higher education institutions are supplemented with a Third Mission (Schober et al. 2016), which pressures higher education to have more and more impact on economic, social, and environmental challenges of the community and to act socially responsible on various levels.

Global trends including digitalization, strengthening of the knowledge society, work transformation, social and political challenges, increasing inequalities, and powerful technical innovation pose challenges to traditional educational institutions and thus initiate this era of change. Higher education institutions are in the process of losing their monopoly for knowledge, as many innovations tackling complex societal problems need interdisciplinary solutions – and require multi-actor solutions at interfaces harnessing different forms of (theoretical, non-formal, formal, experimental ...) knowledge. In order to be competitive and to make a global and a local difference, higher education institutions need to open up to society (Francois 2015). This again requires new forms of collaboration in order to meet expectations of the future and a balance for producing both a global and a local impact at the same time (GUNI 2017).

This leads to a unique and renewed emphasis on University Social Responsibility (USR) in higher education (Wallace & Resch 2017) and the main question, whether or not it will be possible to respond to glocal societal, economic, and environmental needs (Francois 2015) with the current higher education system, or if change is required.

We believe, University Social Responsibility (USR) is a valid and comprehensive answer to current challenges. The field of University Social Responsibility (USR) is highly relevant and pressing for the higher education discourse in Europe, and around the globe. The discourse was introduced roughly in 2015, when the first pioneer projects started and first networks emerged. USR as a policy discourse can be described on a continuum ranging "from a conservative-managerialist to a transformative-critical pole" (Menezes, Coelho, & Amorim, 2017, p. 1) – it involves higher education institutions' policies and practices, values and discourses. It involves a multi-stakeholder perspective: institution, faculty, staff, and students. We understand Social Responsibility as an umbrella term for the discourse evolving around the Third Sector, and encompassing research, teaching and governance – areas, in which higher education institutions operate to become more socially responsible and engaged. This discourse is shaped by regional (terminological) specificities, e.g. civic engagement (Boland 2014),

community-based research (Nigro 2017), social innovation (BEPA 2010), or service learning (Aramburuzabala et al. 2019).

For this Special Issue, we pose a number of opening questions to collect some of the most prominent answers in the Special Issue announced here: What does Social Responsibility in higher education comprise? What does it involve to conduct responsible research and teaching? Which socially responsible university extension practices are available? Which concepts are being discussed for an 'engaged university'? Which (governance) processes have universities found useful to document and assess USR? Which socially responsible services function at university level and which impact do they have?

Topical Areas of the IJSHE Special Issue

The special issue of *International Journal of Sustainability in Higher Education* will focus on issues surrounding social responsibility in higher education and university engagement with social responsibility in order to generate a European overview of USR from the perspective of responsible research, responsible teaching, USR as an institutional topic, and socially responsible services.

We welcome submissions to this special issue. Topics covered include (but are not limited to):

1 Social Responsibility emerging in Research
- Social Responsibility, Third Mission, Community Research and Co. – Terminology debates
- Socially responsible research and engaged research – what does responsible research involve?
- Citizen science and social responsibility

2 Social Responsibility emerging in Teaching
- The role of teachers in USR – what is socially responsible teaching and how do you do it?
- Student engagement and its recognition in higher education
- Service Learning as a socially responsible teaching method
- Cooperative Teaching: teaching with praxis stakeholders

3 Social Responsibility emerging as an institutional topic in HE
- The sustainable university
- Diversity, fairness, and inclusion in higher education
- Documenting social responsibility – the relevance of the "social" for indicators, statistics, and rankings

4 Socially Responsible Services
- Legal Clinics as a socially responsible service
- Community-based services: Involving community partners in social responsibility action – challenges of transfer
- Building responsible networks for sustainability – how universities cooperate with the NGO sector for sustainable development

Consistent with the aims of IJSHE and in line with the topical areas, contributions are invited on a range of empirical and conceptual issues, with priority given to papers expanding previous research while addressing the specific characteristics, potentials, benefits and challenges of the socially responsible and engaged university. In section 4, practical contributions and elaborated case studies are especially welcome.

Deadline and Submission Details

Please send expressions of interest with an 800 word-extended abstract and full contact details of the authors to the guest editor: Katharina Resch (katharina.resch@univie.ac.at) by **15 October 2021**.

The submission deadline for all papers is **1 April 2021**.

To submit your research, please visit the Scholar One manuscript portal.

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