



## Higher Education and Science in Transition? Theoretical Considerations and Empirical Results on the Macro, Meso and Micro Level

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REHES III Workshop  
Zurich University of Applied Sciences, Winterthur, September 6-7, 2021  
Call for Contributions

Digitalization, open science, lifelong learning, sustainability, promotion of innovation... and last but not least the challenges suddenly induced by the Corona pandemic: Higher education and science, but also the corresponding systems and institutions are in transition. This is observed and advanced at various levels: the macro level, including the higher education and science system and its interaction with the (knowledge) society, the meso level of the individual organisational actors as well as the micro level, covering individual actors within and outside organisational actors of higher education and science.

The aim of the REHES community is to offer a platform in Switzerland for the discussion of such topics. The higher education development unit of the Zurich University of Applied Sciences is proud to host REHES III in Winterthur, continuing the successful series initiated in 2019 with REHES I organised by CHESS in Bern and an REHES II organised online by our colleagues from the University of Lausanne in 2020.

The proposed subject areas are based on the position paper drafted by the REHES working group in summer 2020 and hence allow to continue the discussion within the REHES community. REHES III aims thus at bringing together researchers from various higher education institutions (HEI) and stakeholders from scientific organizations and administrations to discuss current research on higher education and science.

We invite you to submit your proposal and focus on one of the following subject areas taken from the REHES position paper:<sup>1</sup>

- Knowledge Society (macro level)  
HEI and the research conducted within them display an increasing interdependency with other societal subsystems, such as politics, economics, and medicine. How do HEI deal with the diverse social expectations with which they are confronted from other areas of society, and how do they deal with general change processes in society? What is the contribution of HEI and science to social change?
- Higher Education and Science System (macro level)  
HEI position themselves and develop their own profiles in an increasingly differentiated higher education and science system, which promotes new competitive and cooperative structures. Will the Federal Act on Funding and Coordination of the Swiss Higher Education Sector lead to more differentiation or increase convergence between existing HEI? How is the higher education system financed, which incentive structures do exist? Besides the detailed examination of processes within the Swiss higher education system, also an international comparative perspective is of interest.

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<sup>1</sup> <https://www.rehes.uzh.ch/en/Position-Paper.html> (20.11.2020)



- HEI Organization (meso level)  
The way HEI organize themselves and include requirements from different stakeholders has an impact on service areas such as education, research, knowledge transfer and administration. In this context, comparative approaches across institutions as well as across time are welcome. What is the "lived" governance of HEI in Switzerland? Which are the effects on the gain of knowledge, academic freedom and the practice of science at HEI?
- Members of HEI (micro level)  
Students, academic staff, higher education professionals and administrative staff, thus individuals within academia, are the most important resource of higher education and science. A variety of topics can be of interest here: the permeability of the system and the contribution of higher education to social (in)equality, factors of success and failure in studies and academic careers, mobility of students and staff are a few examples. Also questions of the performance relationship between science and HEI and their social environment can be examined at this level, for example the much-discussed lack of skilled workers in MINT subjects.
- Policy in practice (level interactions)  
HEI policies are situated in a multi-level environment. Decisions taken with regard to one level impact other levels. Cross-level interactions are thus an additional relevant issue. How do academic staff react to a stronger mission-oriented focus at HEI? How do governance measures impact how research is conducted? How do individual efforts influence interactions between HEI and society? How are disciplinary traditions limiting governance practices?

Short proposals (exclusively in English) should be submitted to [hochschulentwicklung@zhaw.ch](mailto:hochschulentwicklung@zhaw.ch) by 31st March 2021. They should include the name and contact details (email address and organizational affiliation), the title of the contribution, the assignment to a subject area and the abstract with a maximum of 250 words. We encourage you to indicate an appropriate format for your submission (e.g. classical presentation or interactive workshop format) – you're invited to be creative! The scientific committee may deviate from the desired format in order to make the program coherent but is open to different formats. We welcome proposals covering a wide variety of topics and domains in the subject areas mentioned above.

Scientific committee: Lukas Baschung (HE-ARC), Christine Böckelmann (HSLU), Michael Ochsner (FORS), Carole Probst (ZHAW), Katharina Sommer (ZHAW), Luca Tratschin (UZH), Christian Wassmer (ZHAW)

Organization committee: Christian Wassmer, Carole Probst, Katharina Sommer (all ZHAW)

Important dates:

March 31, 2021	Deadline for proposal submission
April 30, 2021	Notification of acceptance or rejection
May 31, 2021	Publication of the conference program and opening of registration
June 30, 2021	Closing date for registration
September 06-07, 2021	Conference in Winterthur