

**Global Challenge Steering Group
Position Paper 2018-2020**

Global Higher Education and Research (GHEAR)

<p>Summary objectives and rationale</p>
<p>GHEAR provides a future-oriented global network spanning six continents that focuses on addressing the most urgent challenges related to improving the value of higher education to individuals, communities, nations, and the world – all in the context of a global commitment to sustainable development.</p> <p>GHEAR is guided by a vision of inclusive universities that, by acting as both a fulcrum and a catalyst for change, are applying their scholarly expertise and actively steering the engagement of higher education with the 21st century challenges.</p> <p>GHEAR seeks to leverage the expertise across the WUN network in its ambition to:</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> ▪ Promote, through research and scholarship, the ongoing development of equitable, contextually relevant, high quality and accessible higher education throughout the world; and ▪ investigate and learn about the interactions among the drivers, policies, institutional infrastructure, human capacities, resources, and outcomes that are associated with this overall aim; and ▪ develop conceptual advances that are of interest to, and may influence the policy and practices of, WUN network members; and have wider impact. <p>GHEAR is aligned with the United Nations’ Sustainable Development Goals (SDGs) for 2030 in its commitment to leaving none behind. SDG 4 - Quality Education - Ensure Inclusive and Quality Education for All and Promote Lifelong Learning – identifies higher education as a key contributor to educational progress at all levels; and GHEAR should also contribute insights related to SDG 10 Reducing Inequalities, as well as to SDG 17, which relates to global partnerships.</p>
<p>Background to this Position Paper</p>
<p>GHEAR has been rejuvenated by the appointment in 2017 of a new Chair and, in 2018, a Vice-Chair and refreshed Steering Group.</p> <p>In 2018, a new draft position paper was discussed at a full day GHEAR AGM meeting in Perth. An effective participatory workshop delivered the shared agenda and priorities that underpin this position paper. Workshop participants discussed their commitment to building strong and inclusive institutions (through internationalisation, networks, multi-disciplinarity, mobility, governance, nurturing talent, and curriculum reform); debated which educational policies and practices are encouraging diversity and effectively promoting equitable access, participation and success in university; and impacts of encouragement to reposition tertiary provision as a private rather than public good. They considered research frontiers: the role of higher education research in society; members’ responses to the need for transdisciplinary, problem-led and impact-orientated research required to deliver the global Sustainable Development Goals; how new partnerships change the nature of research/evidence production; and the effects of applications of technology and open access publishing on knowledge generation and exchange. They reflected on engagement and impact:</p>

fostering equitable North-South and South-South partnerships and advocacy with policy, civil society actors and communities; employability and preparing graduates for opportunities across the spectrum of local, national and international contexts; and how GHEAR itself can have impact across the WUN Global Challenge and regional groups.

The 2019 SG meeting, held at UCT in Dublin during the WUN AGM, endorsed the position paper and agreed it should be adopted to guide GHEAR activity until 2020 and beyond, subject to review at the 2020 AGM.

Research update from 2018-19

GHEAR developed further critical engagement with the theme of 'Getting sustainability into HE curricula' during a successful two-day workshop held in Dublin 2019. The workshop comprised two keynotes: (1) 'Global higher education into the 2020s: openness, mobility and barriers' (Professor Simon Marginson, University of Oxford); and (2) 'Inclusivity, equity, and quality: discursive tensions and structural constraints' (Professor Emerita Sue Clegg, Leeds Beckett University). It provided space to explore these themes in two workshops: 'Cooperation and competition in a globalised Higher Education' (led by Dr. Vassiliki Papatsiba, inputs from Dr. Pan Kurfeng, Renmin University of China and Dr. Douglas Proctor, University College Dublin, Ireland) and 'Curriculum turns, shifts and connections: Are we there yet?' (led by Dr. Kasturi Behari-Leak, inputs from Prof. Sue Timmis, University of Bristol).

GHEAR also hosted a presentation in Dublin from the 2018 GHEAR RDF project 'Researching Diversity, Inclusion and Student Success: Towards a global campus climate framework' (led by Dr. Chrystal George Mwangi with inputs from Prof. Sangeeta Kamat (University of Massachusetts Amherst), Dr. Nana Akua Anyidoho (University of Ghana), Dr. Kasturi Behari-Leak (UCD), Dr. Marie Clarke (UCD), Dr. Chandraiah Gopani (University of Allahabad) and Dr. Navin Kikabhai (University of Bristol)).

GHEAR Programmatic Research Agenda 2018-2020

GHEAR facilitates collaborative partnerships involving WUN experts in higher education research as the basis for intentionally developing specific WUN-supported research projects that produce high impact scholarship (e.g. peer-reviewed journal articles, externally commissioned papers and briefs, externally sponsored research projects) and findings that may inform practice.

The three priority topics for the GHEAR Programmatic Research Agenda 2018-2020 are:

1. Transforming the higher education curriculum for the 21st century.

For example, GHEAR would be interested in proposals for research that examines:

- What does de-colonisation of university curriculum mean in different national/institutional and/or disciplinary contexts?
- What are the contests around social justice frameworks in education in a 'post-Western' world?
- How are the Humanities faring in different WUN universities and how are institutions responding to any challenges identified?

These are indicative suggestions and researchers should feel free to use these and/or develop other questions.

2. Strengthening the legitimacy and authority of the university in a changing world.

For example, research into:

- Contemporary student activism, the different forms it takes in different national contexts, and its role in changing the university and the wider society.
- Transforming systems to reduce inequalities: whose vision? Whose agenda?

- Local university-community engagements and other forms of dynamic partnerships that address questions of the university's legitimacy and authority.
- The role of digital media and other sources of 'authority' in strengthening or weakening the legitimacy and authority of the university.
- Etc.

3. Critically examining/enabling global and local mobilities of people, ideas, programmes, knowledges in higher education.

For example, research into:

- Internationalisation – what does it mean to universities, what values underpin it, how does it intersect with equity?
- Spatiality in higher education: migration, rural-urban divides, conflict and post-conflict contexts
- Agenda 2030: how are universities engaging with the Sustainable Development Goals and pledge to Leave No-One Behind?
- Higher education as a driver of sustainable development.
- WUN itself – how to decolonize the Network and reach out in ways that interrupt increasing stratification in higher education?
- Etc.

Plan of Action

GHEAR seeks high quality RDF proposals that:

- engage with at least one of the three priority topics; and
- leverage the value of the WUN Network.

It is particularly interested in innovative proposals that use these topics as a platform to bring together researchers across the other Global Challenges, the Global Africa Group and the emerging China network.

GHEAR will:

- Pursue mutual interests around research topics, including supporting a working group process and meeting to catalyse the emergence of strong research proposals for RDF funding;
- Lead, encourage and support engagement with all Global Challenges, the Global Africa Group and the emerging China network;
- Cultivate partnerships among WUN experts along with scholars and institutions in the 'global south' to promote the GHEAR vision and partnerships for research capacity development.
- Encourage an active engagement with the global Agenda 2030 within GHEAR itself and support WUN more widely in contributing to this engagement.