

## Symposia Abstract Book - Main Abstract Book with Submissions and Programme (All Symposia)

Reimagining Higher Education Equity Research in Transformative times ( 0410 )

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**Rationale Text:** Higher education has been in the midst of transformative times. Through the rapid shifting to physical campus closures and an online only environment, higher education practices have had to be reimagined and rebuilt at breakneck speed. Yet despite this, patterns of inequality in higher education participation remain within familiar trajectories. Communities who have historically been on the margins of higher education have remained on the margins, despite interventions aimed at bringing greater representation of otherwise underrepresented or simply unrepresented parts of the population. As novel, if not unprecedented conditions reshape higher education, there is an urgency to reshaping how higher education is understood in its relationship to broader social inequalities. Corporatised higher education persists in constructing universities as bounded spaces: inequalities exist in policy discourses as student 'backgrounds' or otherwise privatised and individualised concerns. Discourses of fairness depict equality as everyone receiving the same opportunity despite the differences in what is brought with students from their social positions. Higher education thus narrows its vision to the most immediate concerns of university 'business': problems of admissions, attrition and retention and normative discourses of success, aspiration and employability. This has a neutralising effect on the embodied experiences of higher education students and staff and tends to erase from view interwoven social, cultural, symbolic and political injustices that deeply condition the trajectories and possibilities of students from marginalised communities. This symposium showcases some of the ways that the Centre of Excellence for Equity in Higher Education is reshaping higher education equity research through the lens of critical praxis. In this symposium, we assert the imperative of higher education research to examine how systemic and intersectional inequalities, violences and marginalisations shape the experiences of students. The papers explore how broadening the scope and critical project of equity in higher education praxis can contribute to understanding and ameliorating these inequalities. Through a sustained research praxis agenda, we seek to reimagine the location of higher education in relation to questions of multidimensional inequalities in their persistent and emergent forms. This effort, far from jettisoning old themes, theories and methods seek to reinvigorate them through careful interrogation of conceptual and methodological lineages. We demonstrate that equity research must contest political

and epistemic interests that prevent the reimagining of higher education's relationship to systemic social inequality.

**Linked Submissions:**

Class at the Friction Point - Exploring Class Theory in a Transforming Higher Education Landscape ( 0428 )

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**Research Domain:** Student experiences (SE)

**Paper Abstract:** This paper theorises social class through the linked concepts of friction points and thresholds. It explores a theory of class suited to the transforming landscape of higher education and its relationship to broader social structures and institutions. Higher education is constituted as a classed friction point - a phenomenologically experienced but structurally significant limit of certain forms of being that are either remade or deflected during higher education access and participation. This dispositional threshold entails that people who share diverse or non-conforming cultural tastes and practices must adapt to suit the narrow and dominant cultural norms expected within higher education. These markers of social class can provide a powerful form of symbolic recognition, as an individual's language, lifestyles, social networks, aspirations can all be 'classified' and used to determine their value. This, subsequently, determines what cultures, ways of being, trajectories and strategies are successful in higher education.

The Situated Evaluation: Subverting and (Re)building Methods ( 0437 )

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**Research Domain:** Student experiences (SE)

**Paper Abstract:** Evaluation in higher education plays a role in reproducing hegemonic value systems that hold in place deeply inequitable arrangements and structures. In response, the Centre of Excellence for Equity in Higher Education at the University of Newcastle, Australia is exploring and reimagining how to construct approaches that challenge and undermine these structures of inequity through the methods and methodologies we adopt in evaluation. However, in rebuilding evaluative research practice for this purpose, we foreground that there is no purely equitable approach to evaluation free from producing inequitable arrangements and structures. We bring to projects both personal and professional subjectivities conditioned by the social forces into which we intend to intervene. In this paper, we share from participatory projects operating across different contexts of higher education to problematise aspects of practice in which

intersections of identity, culture and power in evaluative research create difficult moments, and possibilities, for methodology and method.

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Reimagining Gender Equity Through Exploring the Impact of Gender-Based Violence on Higher Education Access and Participation ( 0438 )

Penny Jane Burke<sup>1</sup>, Julia Coffey<sup>2</sup>, Stephanie Hardacre<sup>3</sup>, Felicity Cocuzzoli<sup>4</sup>

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**Research Domain:** Student experiences (SE)

**Paper Abstract:** Gender-based violence (GBV) is a global pandemic with significant implications for educational access and participation and is shown to have intensified as a result of COVID-19 (UN Women, 2020).&nbsp;&nbsp; With the expectation to address gender equity, universities are challenged to understand and respond to the significance of GBV in the context of higher education (HE). Yet, there is little attention to this in research or policy terms, aside from more explicit attention being given to sexual violence on campus (see for example Phipps and Young, 2013; Australian Human Rights Commission, 2017).&nbsp; This is the first study to explore the relationship between experiences of GBV across the life course and participation in higher education.&nbsp; Drawing on feminist theories, this paper will explore the relationship of GBV to lived experiences of HE in the context of the wider social pandemic of gendered violence, focusing on themes of identity-formation, affect and becoming.&nbsp; 

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