Newer Researchers Conference 2012

11 December 2012

**What is Higher Education for? Shared and contested ambitions – Newer
Researcher Perspectives
Celtic Manor, Newport, Wales, UK**

INVITATION TO PARTICIPATE AND CALL FOR ABSTRACTS
(Submission deadline: Sunday 15th July 2012)

Dear Colleagues,

On behalf of everyone at the SRHE, we are delighted to announce the SRHE Newer
Researchers Conference, which will take place on 11 December 2012 at Celtic Manor Resort,
Newport, South Wales.

This year, echoing the theme of the SRHE Annual Research Conference, we invite you to
contribute to the critical discussion "What is Higher Education for?" from the perspective of
the Newer Researcher. Furthermore we will ask ourselves: *What are HE researchers for?*
reflecting on the impact of our research and the role and function of HE research within the
Academy. Finally, we will explore how we can respond positively to the responsibilities that
public funding and intellectual independence bring.

These debates are significant for everyone with a stake in contemporary higher education.
They inform the research questions newer researchers should be asking and debating given
the huge societal and global challenges we face.

We would like to invite you to participate in this year's Conference by submitting an abstract
for a paper or poster presentation. You may also like to run a symposium. You are, of course,
also welcome simply to attend this prestigious annual event. The SRHE Newer Researchers
Conference provides a unique space for newer researchers in higher education to share and
discuss their ongoing work with peers in the international higher education research
community in a supportive but stimulating environment.

We bring together students and newer researchers in the early stages of a research career as
well as those who may have more experience either in education, or in other fields, but are
new to the issues of higher education research. This Conference provides the opportunity to
present your own work whilst learning more about topics other newer researchers in higher
education are exploring from a wide range of perspectives. As part of our commitment to
promoting the development of higher education research and researchers, we welcome papers
or posters reporting on ongoing research as well as pilot or completed studies and work of a
conceptual, theoretical or empirical nature. All submissions are peer-reviewed, resulting in a
range of high quality presentations.

Whether returning to the SRHE Conference to present your own work or seeking to engage
with the emerging debates with international delegates for the first time, the Newer

Researchers conference also provides many opportunities for you to network with your peers and with more experienced researchers, as well as gaining experience through chairing presentations.

Please see below for further details about the conference theme and how to submit your abstract for a paper, poster or symposium. We look forward to welcoming you to Celtic Manor for what we know will be another stimulating and inspiring Conference.

Dr Saranne Weller, Dr Sian Lindsay and Dr Mark Kerrigan
Co-convenors of SRHE Newer Researchers' Network

FURTHER INFORMATION

Within the theme, we invite abstracts that engage in Higher Education research associated with, for example

- Approaches to learning, teaching and assessment
- Policy developments
- The student experience
- Curriculum design
- The role of educational and learning technologies
- Quality assurance
- Leadership, governance and management of Higher Education
- Critical analysis of methodologies and methods that we use to understand Higher Education
- Employability

We particularly welcome international perspectives of the above.

To help you engage in this year's conference theme, we have provided some questions below which may prompt you into understanding how your research may be appropriate to present at Conference. These questions are not exclusive or exhaustive and you may choose to engage with these questions in part or in whole or alternatively pose your own questions. However, we intend these questions to stimulate inquiry, discussion and debate:

- What are the different communities embodied within Higher Education? How is Higher Education accessed, who accesses it and, in an age of enhanced technologies, how permeable are the boundaries of contemporary Higher Education? How does the teaching and research of universities engage with old and new communities including employers?

- What are the networking challenges for Higher Education institutions and individuals in terms of the need and/or desire to speak across disciplines, between cultures or through new media? How do, and how could, Higher Education institutions speak both to their local and global communities? Do they need to be able to demonstrate their engagement to ensure success?

- Do Higher Education institutions have economic, social and intellectual obligations and responsibilities? If so, how are these articulated through the curricula, educational development, research and impact the work of institutions?

- In the context of the "professionalisation" of academic practices, research assessment regimes and the quality assurance agenda, how accountable to society are Higher Education institutions? How are they equipping and empowering their staff and students to fulfil or critique these new demands?

- How are changes to institutional governance, leadership, management and policy developments responding to and/or transforming the futures of Higher Education?

- How do we research Higher Education in the future? What counts as evidence of the student/staff experience or research quality? Do we need to critique our paradigms, methodologies and theoretical frameworks? Are there new methodologies and new perspectives we should be bringing to understanding what Higher Education is for?

In exploring the purpose of Higher Education now and in the future, what are the implications of those actively involved in its research and development? How can Higher Education researchers and developers demonstrate impact?

How to submit an abstract
Abstracts are invited for paper presentations, posters and symposia that engage with the Conference theme. All submissions are subject to a blind peer review process. For all submissions, except posters, the requirement is for **a 400-word abstract**. The different presentation formats are outlined below.

Individual Papers
Each abstract accepted for individual presentation will be allocated 25 minutes for presentation and discussion. Generally, we recommend that you plan for a maximum of 15 minutes speaking, and at least 10 minutes for questions so that you can benefit from interaction with and feedback from the audience on your topic.

Poster Sessions
Posters provide an opportunity to engage your audience in discussion and invite feedback using a visual format and should not be regarded as a less important presentation format to any others. In particular they enable newer researchers to present ongoing research to an international audience especially pilot studies, preliminary results or information on new projects. Poster displays will also be featured in the Newer Researchers Conference programme and will be allocated sufficient time in the Conference programme for participants to engage in dialogue and informal exchange. Posters will be on show in a specific location throughout the Newer Researchers Conference. For those who wish to engage a wider audience, poster presenters at the Newer Researchers conference will be able to display their work at the Annual Research Conference from the 14-16 December, providing they book as delegates at the this conference. Posters will be prominently displayed to attract the widest attention.

Posters will be displayed on 6 foot by 4 foot (1.8m x 1.2m) poster board. We recommend that poster presenters look at the guidelines set out
at: http://www2.le.ac.uk/offices/careers/pgrd/resources/designing-poster/designing-poster

Symposia
A symposium consists of the presentation of three or four related papers on a single theme, presented within a 75 minute session and led by a Symposium Convenor. In making a proposal for a symposium, the following should be provided:
- A clear symposium title;
- Name of the Chair (the Chair is usually a member of the symposium);
- The Convenor's institution;
- A 400 word overview of the symposium submitted by the convenor;
- A separate abstract for each presentation, including the names and details of all participating presenters. These may be submitted by the chair, or submitted by individual presenters using the online submission system.

Abstract Guidelines

As part of our commitment to the developmental nature of the Conference, we provide substantial guidelines to help you develop your skills in submitting and presenting research. As you will be submitting to a peer reviewed conference, the quality of your submission is an essential selection criterion. In writing a strong abstract you will need to demonstrate some or all of the following elements: clarity of aims or focus, engagement with relevant literature, clear connection to the broad conference theme and the higher education setting in general as well as sufficient detail to enable reviewers to get a sense of what will be presented. Each abstract should be up approximately 400 words in length and should contain the following:

1. Title of presentation (brief but indicative of contents).
2. Purpose of presentation: Clearly state what your specific presentation will seek to do before setting out the relevant debates and information on your research.
3. Clear statement on the nature of the research being presented (e.g. conceptual work, literature review discussion, reflexive analysis, empirical research) and the stage you will have been reached by the time of presentation (e.g. literature review completed, developing methodology, initial pilot study, developing theoretical framework for testing, ongoing research, reporting on completed research).
4. Methodology, approach and sample.
5. Key argument, findings, implications and/or conclusions to be presented.
6. Short list of references (it is important to locate your presentation in relation to the research literature and to refer to this).
7. Up to 5 keywords separated by a comma
8. Please note above guidelines on submission of symposia.

Following peer-review, if it is felt that an abstract is not suitable for an individual presentation, it may be recommended that it be re-written or submitted as a poster presentation. This could be for a number of reasons which would include work still under development, or not of significant scale for individual presentation. If you are invited to re-submit your work you will be supported in re-writing your abstract so it meets the quality required for the conference.

Some additional tips

- Write in a clear, concise and accessible way, keeping focused on what's going to happen in this specific presentation rather than your work in general. 'Get to the point' quickly in the opening section, making it clear what you are going to present and why. Reviewers and delegates only have 400 words to become familiar with your work and your aims in this presentation, so spending a long time at the beginning mapping out the background to your general theoretical framework, or providing a long piece on the wider literature may not be as useful as clearly stating what your presentation will seek to do.
- Try to avoid jargon, acronyms that are not explained, overly dense language or a focus on very specific terms or concepts that may not be familiar to a wider, international audience. The audience will include a range of people researching HE from many different perspectives.
- Make good use of a small number of headings to structure your submission.
- Ensure that you cover all of the areas required in an abstract that are relevant to your submission, perhaps noting where some are not applicable to help the reviewer understand what your research is and what it is not (e.g. if you work is primarily conceptual at this stage, or presents preliminary data make it clear that is the case).

- Make reference to at least 3-4 key pieces of literature related to your field of research/enquiry. References are included in the word count, so a good balance is needed between using citations and not using up your word count.
- Make good use of the word count – if you are well below or above the 400 word abstract, then you are probably not making effective use of the space.
- Don't forget that your abstract is not only submitted for reviewers to judge your submission, but will appear in the list of abstracts from which delegates will decide whether or not to attend your presentation. To help ensure you are attracting your target audience, make sure that your abstract is of a good quality and clearly states what you want to do and why.
- Ask a friend, colleague or supervisor to read and comment on your abstract as a critical friend.

All abstract proposals should be submitted electronically, via the SRHE website at http://www.srhe.ac.uk/. Authors will find here all the instructions needed on what is required in making a submission.