

Special Issue Call for Papers

Journal:

Triple Helix Journal

Special Issue:

“Engaged Research, Transformative Education and Third Mission Excellence in Higher Education and Innovation Ecosystems”

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There is a consensus that universities contribute significantly to the economy, society, and environment through their roles in education, research, innovation, community engagement, leadership, and influence, as well as through cultivating the potential of their students to become active citizens and societal influencers (Stough et al., 2017; Scoffham et al., 2018; Etzkowitz & Cai, 2020; Haddock-Fraser & Gorman, 2023). Higher education institutions foster the attitudes, changes, and leadership essential for societal transformation (Piqué, Berbegal-Mirabent & Etzkowitz, 2020; Price et al., 2021). Moreover, the impact of university research and knowledge is vast and multifaceted, driving talent development and advancements in economic and development through innovation.

In recent years, universities are increasingly expanding their traditional focus on teaching and research to include a Third Mission aimed at contributing more directly to societal development (Pokidina et al., 2023; Sormani & Rossano-Rivero, 2023; Olvera et al., 2021). This shift reflects unprecedented challenges in redefining and aligning societal and labour market needs with education and research, and ultimately third mission (Zomer & Benneworth 2011; Rubens et al., 2017). Hence, HEIs need to lead the way in navigating these dynamics.

While university research and knowledge are seen as essential drivers of innovation ecosystems, there remains a need for a deeper understanding of the specific roles that engaged research and transformative education play as catalysts for innovation. Therefore, this Special Issue explores the dynamics of engaged research, transformative educational and third mission activities in fostering universities' contribution to innovation, economic development, and societal progress. To do so, this Special Issue aims to explore new approaches to both education, research and third mission and their linkage to impact generation and ecosystem development.

Engaged research, as a transdisciplinary approach that involves meaningful interaction with diverse stakeholders at various stages of the research process, emphasizes collaboration with industry, government, and local communities to address 'wicked' problems (e.g. water crisis and digital disruption) and foster innovation (Thomas & Cassidy, 2022). Open innovation, as a paradigm associated with the development of an engaged research agenda, advocates engaging with external

knowledge networks as a mechanism to enhance, accelerate and guarantee innovation efficacy (European Commission, 2016; Scheller, et al., 2020). Engaged research is rooted in the emergence of mode 3 of knowledge production, which emphasizes the interaction of research with societal stakeholders to generate positive and relevant impacts on society (Carayannis & Campbell, 2009; Godonoga & Sporn, 2022). "Mode 3 of knowledge production involves transdisciplinarity between academic knowledge and community interactions in research development. The goal of transdisciplinarity is 'to integrate different bodies of knowledge in order to produce context-tailored solutions that are both scientifically sound and socially relevant' (Davis & Matthew, 2024). Collaboration between academia, industry, government and civil society allows for the inclusion of non-traditional research paths related to non-technological improvements, service creation, social entrepreneurship, and creativity exploitation (Carayannis & Campbell, 2009; European Committee of the Regions et al., 2016).

Transformative education, as outlined in the OECD Future of Education and Skills 2030 framework, focuses on empowering students and helping them to feel capable of shaping a better world and future (OECD, 2019; Kantonen, 2024). Transformative education enables students to contribute to our collective survival during uncertain times by equipping them with the knowledge and skills to address the Sustainable Development Goals. In this context, the aim of transformative education is to prepare learners to take actions that address the unsustainability of our current socioeconomic model that influences educational policy and practice, through progressive stages of learning (Odell et al., 2020). By integrating real-world challenges into curricula and research agenda, universities can promote entrepreneurial spirit, enhance educational outcomes and nurture a culture of innovation within their ecosystems (Etzkowitz, & Zhou, 2017).

The institutionalization of third mission activities towards the entrepreneurial and engaged university is generally considered an important process that can facilitate economic and societal development (Plata, 2024). The entrepreneurial university is driven by a strong strategic vision that focuses on knowledge spilled-over, hybridisation, and stimulating entrepreneurial culture (Cai & Amaral, 2021). The related concept of an engaged university considers a more extensive set of third mission activities that support the civic society (and, more specifically, local development processes) through activities such as the participation in territorial, cultural, social and healthcare projects sponsored by local governments and social actors, or the provision of expert advice to local policymakers and stakeholders (Bellandi et al., 2021).

This Special Issue will explore various facets of these dynamics to explore the broader societal impacts of universities. Titled "Engaged Research, Transformative Education and Third Mission Excellence in Higher Education and Innovation Ecosystem" the issue will examine how HEIs can foster innovation and impacts in the face of local and global challenges and technological transformation.

Accordingly, we invite papers covering, but not limited to, the following topics:

- Drivers and enablers of university Third Mission
- Stakeholder engagement and the role of stakeholders in research, education and innovation
- The entrepreneurial university: its journey, activities, and challenges
- Digital and transdisciplinary approaches in engaged education under the helices' paradigm
- Pathways to higher education institution transformation in community engagement
- Strategies for enhancing university-industry-community collaboration
- Building a sustainable innovation ecosystem with a Triple Helix approach
- Governance models and frameworks for engaged research
- Advancing responsible research and innovation through the Triple Helix approach
- Innovation hubs and living labs as drivers of open innovation

- Transdisciplinary approaches in research with a focus on the Triple Helix model
- Education and training for transdisciplinary research within the framework of entrepreneurial university
- Indicators and metrics for the Third Mission in higher education institutions
- Governance and institutional policies for Third Mission in university
- Technology and knowledge transfer from the university perspective
- Equity, diversity and inclusion strategies for the Third Mission

The guest editors of the special issue are seeking strong qualitative or quantitative studies that examine individual HEIs within their specific geographic or innovation contexts. They also encourage studies that encompass multiple contexts or ecosystems, or that critically compare different universities or HEIs across various countries. Papers utilizing innovative empirical methodologies or systematic literature review techniques are particularly encouraged, as are those that shed light on regions typically overlooked in existing scholarship in this field. Case studies showing engaged research or innovative education in particular sectors are also encouraged. Authors should clearly outline their primary research question, theoretical framework, and the anticipated contribution of their paper to the field. Submitted manuscripts must be original and not currently under consideration or previously published elsewhere. Below is the timeline for the special issue.

- **October 15, 2024:** Expression of interest, abstract (optional) (around 500 words) submission by email to all guest editors for consideration in the special issues.
- **November 15, 2024:** Acceptances/Rejections, Guest editors provide recommendations for further paper development.
- **February 15, 2025:** Submission of the full article manuscript. The final submission will be managed through the standard submission systems for external review of the journal. The finally accepted paper will be first published online.
- **June/July 2025:** Publication of the special issue.

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