

CALL FOR CONTRIBUTIONS



Southern African Association for Institutional Research

30th SAAIR Conference

24-26 October 2023

Theme:

Future-Forward Higher Education: The Next 30 Years

HOSTED BY



VENUE

Lord Charles Hotel

Somerset West



Important dates:

The submission deadline for outlines and abstracts: **Wednesday 31 May 2023.**

Acceptance/revision or rejection: **Monday 31 July 2023.**

Please register your abstracts and outlines <https://easychair.org/conferences/?conf=30thsaair> by **Wednesday 31 May 2023.**

For accepted contributions, submissions of an electronic copy of the presentation should be sent to the Conference admin [SAAIRCONF@sun.ac.za] not later than **Friday 06 October 2023.**

Fees: To be confirmed

Registrations are not open yet at this stage.

For any queries related to the conference, you can contact SAAIRCONF@sun.ac.za

Overview

The world has undergone dramatic changes since SAAIR's inception in 1993, with scientific and technological advancements transforming the higher education landscape. Amidst this rapid evolution, the pursuit of institutional effectiveness remains a critical theme. In fact, it was the focus of SAAIR's very first conference, 'Institutional Effectiveness and Quality

Improvement.' As we celebrate our 30th year, we have chosen the theme of 'Future-Forward Higher Education: The Next 30 Years' to explore how higher education can prepare for the future. This conference will examine the ways in which institutional research can support higher education institutions in becoming more future-oriented, effective, and sustainable over the next three decades.

Conference topics

The conference will focus on the following topics:

1. *Adapting to the Future: Higher Education Institutions in the Next 30 Years:* This topic area focuses on exploring innovative approaches and solutions to the challenges facing higher education institutions in the coming decades, such as the use of emerging technologies, new interdisciplinary fields, and promoting lifelong learning.
2. *Innovative Future Research to Advance Education: Or is it? :* This topic is targeted at exploring how higher education institutions prepare for the next 30 years as they must grapple with a range of challenges, from meeting the needs of diverse and lifelong learners to navigating a rapidly evolving job market. In response, innovative approaches and solutions are needed, including the use of emerging technologies like AI software. For example, AI-powered language models like ChatGPT are already being used to generate educational content and facilitate natural language interactions between learners and educators. In addition, Google's BARD (Building an Accessible Reality Enhancer) is a virtual reality platform that may help to transform how learners engage with complex concepts and simulations. While there are differing opinions on the extent of their impact, these and other emerging technologies are poised to shape the future of higher education institutions in significant ways, enhancing the delivery and accessibility of education for learners worldwide.
3. *Institutional Research for Future-Oriented Decision-Making:* This topic area delves into the role of institutional research in supporting evidence-based decision-making for effectiveness at all levels: at the department, faculty, division, university, and national level. Papers in this area may include discussions on data collection, analysis, and interpretation methods, as well as the use of analytics, learner analytics, and human-centered design in institutional research.

4. *Sustainability, the UN's Sustainable Development Goals and Higher Education*: This topic area can explore sustainability of higher education institutions in the future, as well as the role of higher education institutions in contributing to the achievement of the UN's Sustainable Development Goals (SDGs). Papers could focus on how institutions can integrate sustainability into their teaching, research, and operations, and how they can collaborate with industry and community partners to address local and global challenges.
5. *Open topic*: Should your submission be relevant to the goals of SAAIR which are presented below, please submit a paper under this open topic.

SAAIR Statement of purpose

The major purpose of the Association is to contribute significantly to the understanding, planning and effectiveness of higher education institutions and systems in the Southern African region.

The Association serves its members by providing capacity development and networking opportunities.

In keeping with the dynamic nature of institutions of higher education, the Association exposes its members to diverse thinking and applications of research principles and methodologies beyond the lens of Higher Education practice.

It also looks for opportunities to connect its members and to share their research via various platforms, some of which may be offered by the Association itself.

Call for abstracts

The conference will bring together experts from universities, higher education, industry, civil society, and international organizations to discuss the future of higher education.

You are invited to submit an abstract reflecting on your practice at both individual and institutional levels under any of the four topics listed above.

Abstracts should be submitted by *31 May 2023*, and the acceptance notification will be sent by *31 July 2023*.

Presenters/authors are requested to submit an abstract (at most 150 words) and outline (at least 600 words) of their proposed contribution at

<https://easychair.org/conferences/?conf=30thsaair>

Before sending proposals, you must have an account with EasyChair. If you do not have one, you can register for free at <https://easychair.org/account/signup>

Final paper submission deadline: *29 September 2023*

All papers must be original and not simultaneously submitted to another journal or conference. Papers may draw from a research report, a case study, or the use and application of a particular research methodology, or may address particular theoretical and conceptual issues relevant to the theme of the conference. The proposed paper can be based on original data collection or secondary data analysis and can be based on quantitative, qualitative, or mixed methodology.

Contributed papers will be presented as oral presentations and will be scheduled in 30-minute slots of which at least 10 minutes should be dedicated to discussion.

All questions about submissions should be emailed to SAAIR2023 [SAAIRCONF@sun.ac.za].

The Evaluation Process

The evaluation of proposals is an important activity to ensure the quality of submissions. The SAAIR Executive Committee is committed to coordinating the evaluation process in a fair, objective, and rigorous manner whilst also considering issues such as the representation of all types of higher education institutions across Southern Africa.

In facilitating this, the following should be noted:

- A panel of experts will be constituted to assess proposals against a predetermined list of quality criteria (see below).
- All evaluations are undertaken through a double-blind review process.
- Where proposals are rated at roughly the same level of quality, the evaluation committee will consider the number of proposals by an individual researcher, and the type of institution to which the individual researcher(s) are affiliated in order to ensure reasonable diversity without neglecting the quality requirements as evaluated by the peer review panel.
- Contributions that seek to make a scholarly contribution to addressing the theme of the conference will be given first priority of acceptance. However, submissions that do not directly address the theme of the conference will also be considered, provided that they have a clear focus on one or more of the objectives of the SAAIR, namely “to benefit, assist and advance institutional research leading to improved understanding, planning and operation of institutions of higher education”.

General criteria applicable to all proposals

- Whether the proposal links to one or more of the SAAIR's, objectives namely "to benefit, assist and advance institutional research leading to improved understanding, planning and operation of institutions of higher education".
- The degree to which the proposal links to the Conference theme (Submissions that do not directly address the theme or sub-themes of the conference will also be considered, provided that they have a clear focus on one or more of the objectives of SAAIR).
- The overall clarity of the proposal (e.g., quality of writing, organisation of ideas, clarity of assumptions, the logic of arguments).
- The importance, significance, and relevance of the topic and major issue(s) addressed for institutional research.
- The potential significance of the contribution.

Specific criteria applicable to contributed papers

- Appropriateness of theoretical or conceptual framework.
- Soundness of research design.
- Appropriateness of data sources or evidence used.
- Clarity of exposition of ideas, analyses, arguments, and conclusions.
- Evidence that the research is near completion and that the paper will be completed by the time of the conference (e.g., preliminary results).

Specific criteria applicable to pre-conference workshops

- Overall focus of the workshop and major issues addressed.
- Soundness of design.
- Appropriateness of data sources or evidence used.
- Clarity of exposition of ideas, analyses, arguments, and conclusions to be shared with participants.

Publication

Full length papers may potentially also be submitted to a special issue of a South African accredited journal for review and publication, which will qualify for subsidy in South Africa.

Call for contributions

The call is open, so please submit as soon as possible.

We look forward to receiving your abstracts and welcoming you to the 30th SAAIR Conference.

Sincerely,

René Robbertze, Ian Cloete (Prof) and Albè van Niekerk (Stellenbosch University)