



**The Open
University**

**EUROHESC
EUROCORES programme on
Higher Education and Social Change**

The 'What', 'Why' and 'How'

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EuroHESC: 'WHAT?'

A programme of

- comparative research into the relationship between higher education and society
- 5 interconnected research themes

and which addresses

- how higher education impacts on society
- how society impacts on higher education



EuroHESC: 'WHAT?'

A programme which

- *addresses methodological issues of comparative research in this field*
- *explores ways of utilising other social science datasets (e.g. ESS)*
- *draws out relationships with other fields of social science research*
- *draws out implications for national and international policy makers*
- *makes a significant contribution to the development of research capacity*



EuroHESC: 5 interconnected topic areas

- Higher education and the needs of the ‘knowledge society’
- Higher education and the achievement (or prevention) of equity and social justice
- Higher education and its communities
- Steering and governance of higher education
- Differentiation and diversity of institutional forms



EuroHESC: 4 cross-cutting research themes

- Changing social contexts
- The implications for higher education
- Mechanisms of interaction between higher education and society
- Higher education's impact on society

(Projects to address two or more.)



EuroHESC: Research Questions (1)

What are the relationships and interconnections between contemporary social and economic changes and transformations and the changes and transformations occurring within higher education institutions and the roles of academics?



EuroHESC: Research Questions (2)

Other questions concern

- the impact of changing balance of power between higher education's different constituencies and interests;
- the growing multi-functionality of higher education and a blurring of boundaries with other social institutions;
- the links between organisation change and change in programmes, agendas and advances;
- the continuing role of national, regional and local contexts.



EuroHESC: 'WHY?'

- Massive expansion of higher education systems
- Much greater diversity and differentiation
- Multi-functionality of higher education
- Wider-ranging and more complex relationships with rest of society
- Real and potential social impacts of higher education much greater.



EuroHESC: 'WHY?'

- Knowledge societies
- Globalisation
- Equity and social justice
- Social cohesion
- Privatisation, marketisation and the 'public good'
- Criticality, reflexivity and liberty



EuroHESC: 'HOW'?

- New forms of comparative research – the 'European laboratory'
- Articulating qualitative and quantitative methodologies
- Multi-level approaches
- Multi-sector approaches
- Comparative research beyond Europe