

# Flexible Learning Pathways in Higher Education

International Policy Forum  
 July 6-8, 2021



**JPT** | DEPARTMENT  
 OF HIGHER  
 EDUCATION



**TUESDAY, JULY 6, 2021 – 12:15-16:00 CEST | CHECK YOUR TIME ZONE**

## Opening session

12:15 – 12:30	<p><b>Welcome (10')</b></p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>Paul Coustère, Director a.i., IIEP-UNESCO</li> <li>Faisal Rafiq Mahamd Adikan, Vice Chancellor of Universiti Sains Malaysia, <i>Malaysia</i></li> </ul> <p><b>Introduction to the Forum (5')</b>: Michaela Martin, R&amp;D Team Leader a.i., IIEP-UNESCO</p>
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## Keynote opening speeches

**Moderator:** Francesc Pedró, Director, UNESCO Institute for Higher Education in Latin America and the Caribbean

12:30 – 13:50	<p><b>Keynote speech on national policy perspective (30')</b>: Noraini Ahmad, Honourable Minister of Higher Education, <i>Malaysia</i></p> <p><b>Guest keynote speech on Micro-credentials (30')</b>: Peter van der Hijden, Higher Education Strategy Advisor, <i>Brussels, Belgium</i></p> <p><b>Discussion (20')</b></p>
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13:50 –  
14:00 Coffee break

## THEME 1: Diverse entry pathways into higher education

### Panel on implementing flexible entry pathways

**Moderator:** Courtney Brown, Vice-President of Impact and Planning, Lumina Foundation, USA

14:00 – 15:45	<b>International overview (10')</b> : Michaela Martin, IIEP-UNESCO
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**Presentation on Open Studies pathway in Finland** (15'): Leasa Weimer, Researcher, University of Jyväskylä

**Presentation on APEL in Malaysia** (15'): Khairul Salleh bin Mohamed Sahari, Deputy Chief Executive Officer, Malaysian Qualifications Agency

**Discussant** (10'): Trudi van Wyk, Chief Director of Social Inclusion and Quality, Department of Higher Education and Training, *South Africa* (10 min)

**Q&A** (55')

## Conclusion Day 1

15:45 – **Concluding remarks** (15'): Thérèse Zhang, Deputy Director for Higher Education Policy, European University Association

## WEDNESDAY, JULY 7, 2021 – 12:15-16:00 CEST | [CHECK YOUR TIME ZONE](#)

### THEME 2: The role of technology in supporting flexibility in higher education

#### Panel on implementing flexibility through technology

**Moderator:** Nina Arnhold, Tertiary Education Lead, The World Bank

12:15 – **International overview** (10'): Uliana Furiv, IIEP-UNESCO

14:00 **Online and Distance Learning in India** (15'): Garima Malik, Assistant Professor, National Institute of Educational Planning and Administration

**Local and Global Online Learning with FutureLearn in the UK** (15'): John Brennan, Emeritus Professor of Higher Education Research

**Discussant** (10'): Wan Zuhainis, Director of Academic Excellence Division, Ministry of Higher Education, *Malaysia*

**Q&A** (55')

14:00 – 14:10 Coffee break

### THEME 3: Flexible pathways to progress through higher education

#### Panel on flexibility through credit (transfer) and bridges

**Moderator:** Francisco Marmolejo, President of Higher Education, Qatar Foundation, Qatar

14:10-15:45 **International overview** (10'): Uliana Furiv, IIEP-UNESCO

**Presentation on integration of TVET and higher education in Jamaica** (15'): Dawn Barrett Adams, Accreditation Officer, University Council of Jamaica

**Presentation on bridges in Moroccan higher education** (15'): El Bachir Kouhlani, Professor, Hassan II University of Casablanca, *Morocco*

**Discussant** (10'): Patricia Martínez-Barrios, Professor/researcher, Universidad Simón Bolívar, *Colombia*

**Q&A** (55')

## Conclusion Day 2

15:45 – **Concluding remarks** (15'): Wan Fatma Zuharah Wan Musthapa, Director of  
16:00 Commonwealth Tertiary Education Facility, *Malaysia*

**THURSDAY, JULY 8, 2021 – 12:15-17:00 CEST | [CHECK YOUR TIME ZONE](#)**

**THEME 4: The role of supporting instruments in enhancing flexibility**

### Panel on the role of governance mechanisms in supporting flexibility

**Moderator:** N.V. Varghese, Vice Chancellor, National Institute of Educational Planning and Administration, *India*

12:15 - 14:00 **International overview** (10'): Michaela Martin, IIEP-UNESCO

**Presentation on the role of the National Qualifications Framework in South Africa** (15'): Heidi Bolton, Research Director, South African Qualifications Authority

**Presentation on the role of funding policies and quality assurance in Chile** (15'): Maria José Lemaître, Executive Director, Interuniversity Development Centre

**Discussant** (10'): Atte Jääskeläinen, Director General, Ministry of Education and Culture, *Finland*

**Q&A** (55')

14:00 – Coffee break  
14:10

## WORKSHOP SESSIONS

### Thematic workshops

14:10 – **Workshop A:** Diverse entry pathways into higher education  
15:40 **Workshop B:** The role of technology in supporting flexibility  
**Workshop C:** Flexible pathways to progress through higher education  
**Workshop D:** The role of governance in enhancing flexibility

### Workshop plenary session and discussion

15:40 – **Facilitators' presentations of findings from the workshop sessions** (~10' each)  
16:40 **Q&A** (20')

### Conclusions and closing remarks

16:40 –  
17:00

- Mazlan Yusof, Secretary General, Ministry of Higher Education, *Malaysia*
- Peter Wells, Chief of Higher Education Section, UNESCO

## PARTNERS

The Forum is organized jointly by IIEP-UNESCO, the Commonwealth Tertiary Education Facility, the Universiti Sains Malaysia, the Malaysian Ministry of Higher Education and its Department of Higher Education, the Malaysian Qualifications Agency and the Malaysian National Commission for UNESCO.

## CONTACTS

For further information, please contact: Uliana Furiv or Camilla Petrakis ([FLPForum@iiep.unesco.org](mailto:FLPForum@iiep.unesco.org)).

## INTERNATIONAL POLICY FORUM: SPEAKERS' BIOGRAPHIES

### IIEP-UNESCO FLP Research Team



**MICHAELA MARTIN** is a Programme Specialist and the interim Research and Development (R&D) Team Leader at IIEP-UNESCO, with a track record of more than 25 years in research and teaching in the fields of higher education policy, governance, and planning. She has been working on internal and external quality assurance in higher education, indicator systems for higher education, management of university-enterprise partnerships, management of higher education institutions, and so on. Since 2018, she has overseen IIEP's research on flexible learning pathways in higher

education. She studied Economics and Public Administration in Germany, France, and Belgium at the graduate and postgraduate level and she holds a PhD in Education from the University of Paris, France. She leads the organization of the International Policy Forum and will provide a comparative overview of IIEP's research findings during the Forum panel discussions.



**ULIANA FURIV** is an Associate Project Officer in the R&D Team at IIEP-UNESCO. She contributes to research activities in the areas of higher education policy-making, planning and management, and external quality assurance. Before this, Uliana assisted on research activities related to the use of learning assessment data and educational planning. She holds a Master's degree in Administrative Science in Higher Education from Tampere University, Finland. Since 2019, she has been supporting IIEP's research on flexible learning pathways in higher education. She is

coordinating the organization of the International Policy Forum and will provide a comparative overview of IIEP's research findings during the Forum panel discussions.

### TUESDAY, JULY 6, 2021

#### Opening session



**PAUL COUSTÈRE** is currently Interim Director of IIEP-UNESCO, and has been working as Deputy Director since 2015. Mr Coustère contributes to the goals and objectives of the Institute by promoting an integrated approach to capacity development, including training, research, and technical assistance, in the areas of policy formulation, educational planning, and management. Beyond his responsibilities within the director's office, Mr Coustère analyzes developments in the field of education economics, participates in the development of analytical tools for the education sector, and contributes to the operationalization of the post-2015 education agenda. During the Forum, Mr Coustère

will give a welcome speech on behalf of IIEP-UNESCO.



**FAISAL RAFIQ MAHAMD ADIKAN** has been serving as the eighth Vice-Chancellor of Universiti Sains Malaysia since 2019. He has participated in numerous national-level committees, including that of the Economic Planning Unit. In October 2015, Mr Adikan was appointed as Executive Director of University of Malaya's Holdings. He has received awards for Best Lecturer and Excellence in Services, as well as the University of Malaya's Best Administrator (Dean) award on several occasions. He obtained his PhD in 2007 from the Optoelectronics Research Centre at the University of

Southampton, UK, specializing in glass-based integrated optical devices. Mr Adikan will give a welcome speech, as a representative of Universiti Sains Malaysia, one of the organizing partners of the Forum.

### Keynote opening speeches



**NORAINI AHMAD** was appointed as the Minister of Higher Education of Malaysia in March 2020. She previously served as Deputy Minister of Human Resources. In 2013 she was appointed by the government as the Chairperson of the Malaysia External Trade Development Corporation (MATRADE). Ms Ahmad was also Chairperson of the Commonwealth Women Parliamentarians from 2016 to 2019. She holds a Bachelor's degree in Commerce from the University of Saskatchewan, Canada, an MBA from Tun Abdul Razak University, Malaysia, and a PhD in Development

Management from Universiti Utara Malaysia. At the Forum, Noraini will deliver a keynote speech about the Malaysian policy perspective regarding flexible learning pathways.



**PETER VAN DER HIJDEN** is an independent higher education strategy advisor. He previously worked for 23 years for the European Commission, where he was the Head of the Higher Education Policy Sector. Currently, he is advising European Universities on the design and further strategic positioning of their alliances. He is a member of the Advisory Board of ENGAGE.EU, the European University engaged in societal change, and a member of the Advisory Board of Kiron beyond limits. He is also serving as an expert of the DG EAC Erasmus+ Key Action 3 Support for Policy

Reform project 'Micro-credentials and their link to the Bologna tools'. He has a background in Law at Maastricht University in the Netherlands. At the Forum, Mr van der Hijden will give a keynote speech on Micro-credentials as a priority action of the European Skills Agenda.



**FRANCESC PEDRÓ** is the Director of the UNESCO Institute for Higher Education in Latin America and the Caribbean (IESALC) since May 2019. He joined UNESCO's Education sector in Paris (France) in 2010. In this role he led the team working on education policy, providing technical assistance to UNESCO Member States by reviewing their normative frameworks and education policies upon request, to ensure alignment with SDG 4-Education 2030, and contributing to knowledge dissemination through international comparative analyses. From 2005 to 2011 he worked

at the OECD Centre for Educational Research and Innovation (CERI). Francesc (Barcelona, 1960) obtained his MEd degree from the Autonomous University of Barcelona and a PhD in Comparative Education from UNED (Madrid). Later he completed a post-doctoral degree in

Comparative Public Policy at the University of London Institute of Education. At the Forum, Francisc will moderate a keynote opening session.

## THEME 1: Diverse entry pathways into higher education

### Panel on implementing flexibility through technology



**COURTNEY BROWN** is Vice President of Impact and Planning for Lumina Foundation, an independent, private foundation based in Indianapolis (USA) committed to making opportunities for learning beyond secondary education available to all. As the chief data and research officer, Ms Brown oversees the foundation's efforts in the areas of strategic planning, learning, impact, and effectiveness. She also leads Lumina's international engagement. Before 2011, she was a senior research associate at the Center for Evaluation and Education Policy at Indiana University. There, she led studies and evaluations focused on education and post-high school programmes within the United States and across Europe. Ms Brown earned her master's and doctoral degrees from the University of Virginia. At the Forum, she will moderate a panel discussion on implementing flexible entry pathways.



**TRUDI VAN WYK** is the Director of Career Development and Open Learning, and the Chief Director for Social Inclusion, Equity, Access and Quality Services at the Department of Higher Education and Training in South Africa. She is skilled in the fields of mobile learning, e-learning, social learning, and learning management. Ms van Wyk has 24 years of experience in the design and implementation of innovative and cost-effective learning. She has a particular interest in Technical and Vocational Education and Training (TVET), blended and work-integrated learning models, and open learning. She holds a MEd degree in Educational Management from the University of Johannesburg. At the Forum, Ms van Wyk will join a panel discussion to provide a policy perspective on implementing flexible entry pathways.



**LEASA WEIMER** is a researcher in international higher education at the Finnish Institute for Education Research (FIER), University of Jyväskylä. She also serves as the Assistant Director for Strategic Partnerships and Initiatives at the Fulbright Finland Foundation. Her research agenda focuses on the intersection of the political economy, policies, and the implementation of international higher education. Ms Weimer has contributed to numerous international publications including editing various volumes, authoring journal articles, book chapters, and commissioned policy papers. At the Forum, Ms Weimer will present the findings from the [Finnish FLP case study](#) on the Open Studies pathway in Finland.



**KHAIRUL SALLEH BIN MOHAMED SAHARI** is the Deputy Chief Executive Officer of the Malaysian Qualifications Agency (since May 2019). Prior to the current post, he was a professor at Universiti Tenaga Nasional, holding the posts of Assistant Vice Chancellor (Academic), Director of the Strategic Planning Centre, and senate member of the university, among others. He is also an active assessor for the accreditation of engineering programmes under the Board of Engineers Malaysia. Mr Khairul obtained his Bachelor's in Mechanical Engineering from Waseda University,

Japan in 2000, and his PhD in Engineering from Kanazawa University, Japan in 2006. At the Forum, Mr Khairul will present the findings from the [Malaysian FLP case study](#) on the implementation of APEL in Malaysia.



**THÉRÈSE ZHANG** is the Deputy Director for Higher Education Policy at the European University Association (EUA). In this capacity, she contributes to developing the Association's work in areas such as learning and teaching in higher education, lifelong learning, global relations with other regions, and European policy-making in higher education at large. Thérèse has been active in higher education policy and management and, more generally, project management in education and culture, for over fifteen years. Her experience covers activities in the field of quality management, institutional development, evaluation methodologies, and pedagogy. Thérèse holds a PhD in Romance

Philology and a Master's in European Studies from the Université catholique de Louvain, Belgium. She completed part of her education at the University of Bologna, Italy, and at Brown University, United States. Ms Zhang will give the concluding remarks of Day 1 with an overarching theme of diverse flexible entry pathways to higher education.

**WEDNESDAY, JULY 7, 2021**

**THEME 2: The role of technology in supporting flexibility in higher education**

**Panel on implementing flexibility through technology**



**NINA ARNHOLD** is a Lead Education Specialist for the European region and Global Lead for Tertiary Education at the World Bank (WB) where she has been working for more than 14 years. The key areas of focus in her work are higher education financing, equity, and quality assurance issues. Before joining the WB, Ms Arnhold worked for the European University Association (EUA), the German Center for Higher Education (CHE), and the Boston Consulting Group. She holds a DPhil and a Master's degree in Comparative and International Education from the University of Oxford, United Kingdom, and a Master's degree from the TU Berlin, Germany. At

the Forum, Ms Arnhold will moderate a panel discussion on implementing flexibility through technology.



**WAN ZUHAINIS** is the Director of the Academic Excellence Division, Department of Higher Education, Ministry of Education, Malaysia. She oversees strategic academic planning and policy development, innovations, scholarships for teaching and learning, and talent excellence. As a researcher, Ms Zuhainis has, over the years, published numerous publications on microbiology in well-reputed journals and has won many awards both as a researcher and leader. She holds a PhD degree in Microbiology from the Universiti Putra Malaysia. Some of her areas of research work include, but are not limited to, e-learning, technology-enhanced

learning, and flexible learning through massively open online courses (MOOCs). At the Forum, Ms Zuhainis will join the panel discussion, to provide a policy perspective on implementing flexibility through technology.



**GARIMA MALIK** is Assistant Professor, Centre for Policy Research in Higher Education at the National Institute of Educational Planning and Administration (NIEPA), India. She has a PhD in Economics from the Ohio State University, United States. Before joining NIEPA, she was an Assistant Professor of Economics at the University of Delhi. She was also a Fellow at the Indian Council for Research on International Economic Relations and has worked as an Economist with Tata Services Limited and PricewaterhouseCoopers. Her current research focuses on

governance and management in higher education. At the Forum, Ms Malik will present the findings from the Indian FLP case study on Online and Distance Learning initiatives in India.



**JOHN BRENNAN** is an Emeritus Professor of Higher Education Research at the Open University, and a Visiting Professor at the London School of Economics and the University of Bath. For nearly 20 years, he directed the Centre for Higher Education Research and Information at the Open University, where he led and participated in many national and international projects on topics such as graduate employment, quality assurance, the academic profession, and universities and social transformation. He has published several books and many reports and articles on higher education and its changing relationship with society, and has

spoken at countless conferences on higher education in the United Kingdom and many other parts of the world. At the Forum, Mr Brennan will present findings from the [UK FLP case study](#) on Local and Global Online Learning with *FutureLearn* in the UK.



## THEME 3: Flexible pathways to progress through higher education

### Panel on flexibility through credit (transfer) and bridges



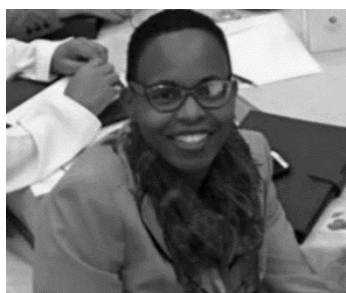
**FRANCISCO MARMOLEJO** is the President of Higher Education at the Qatar Foundation for Education, Science and Community Development, based in Doha, Qatar. From 2012 to 2020, he served as Lead Tertiary Education Specialist of the World Bank (WB). He also served the WB as Global Coordinator of Tertiary Education from 2012 to 2018, and as Lead Education Specialist for India and Asia, between 2016 and 2020. He undertook analytical work on tertiary education in developing countries and emerging economies, and guided the WB's community of practice around

higher education. He holds a PhD degree in Organizational Administration from Universidad Nacional Autónoma de México. During the Forum, Mr Marmolejo will moderate a panel discussion on flexibility through credit (transfer) and bridging programmes.



**PATRICIA MARTÍNEZ-BARRIOS** is a Colombian active leader in education. She has served as Deputy Minister of Higher Education of the Ministry of National Education of Colombia (2012-2014), Rector of Fundacion Universitaria Los Libertadores (2020), and Rector of the Technological University of Bolivar (2002-2012). As an international consultant in the higher education sector, she has been working towards the continuous improvement of higher education institutions in the Caribbean and Latin American regions, on issues of university governance, organization, management, quality, inclusion, and internationalization. She

holds a PhD degree in Educational Sciences from the University of Cartagena, Colombia. At the Forum, Ms Martínez- Barrios will join the panel discussion on flexibility through credit (transfer) and bridging programmes, to share her perspective as an institutional leader.



**DAWN BARRETT ADAMS** is an educator with extensive experience in higher education. She served as Lecturer, Head of Department, and Dean at the College of Agriculture Science and Education, Jamaica, and is currently employed as an Accreditation Officer with the University Council of Jamaica. She has researched areas in chemistry, accreditation and quality assurance systems, programme development and review, self-study preparation, report writing, and science education. Ms Barrett Adams holds a Doctor of Philosophy in Chemistry and a Master of Education in

Adult Education and has a passion for diversity and equity in education. At the Forum, Ms Barrett Adams will present findings from the Jamaican FLP case study on the integration of TVET and higher education in Jamaica.



**EL BACHIR KOUHLANI** is a Professor of Higher Education. He holds a Doctorate of State of Economic Sciences from the Université de Paris II. He served as a Dean of the Faculty of Law and Economics from 1997 to 2006, a Director of Higher Education between 2007 and 2012, and a Director of Cooperation and Partnership from 2012 to 2015, in the Ministry of Higher Education and Scientific Research of Morocco. At the Forum, Mr Kouhlani will present the findings from the FLP case study on articulation and bridges across programmes in Moroccan higher education.



**WAN FATMA ZUHARAH** was appointed as the Commonwealth Tertiary Education Facility (CTEF) Director at the beginning of May 2021 and has served as an Associate Professor at the School of Biological Science, Universiti Sains Malaysia, since 2010. She received her PhD degree in Ecology and Evolutionary Sciences from Victoria University of Wellington, New Zealand. She has worked on the implementation of knowledge, best practices, and management in preventing the transmission of vector-borne diseases amongst the public. At the same time, she served as the

President of the Entomological Society of Malaysia for the 2021-2022 term. At the forum, Wan Fatma will give the concluding remarks of Day 2, with an overarching theme of flexibility during study.

**THURSDAY, JULY 8, 2021**

**THEME 4: The role of supporting instruments in enhancing flexibility**

**Panel on the role of governance mechanisms in supporting flexibility**



**N. V. VARGHESE** is Vice-Chancellor at the National Institute of Educational Planning and Administration (NIEPA) in India. He is also the founding director of the Centre for Policy Research in Higher Education (CPRHE) at NIEPA. Formerly, he was the Head of Governance and Management of Education at IIEP-UNESCO in Paris, where his job involved directing research projects in UNESCO Member States, extending policy and planning support to countries, and organizing training programmes for leaders and

senior managers of universities in Africa and Asia. He holds a master's degree and a Doctoral degree in Economics with a specialization in educational planning. At the Forum, Mr Varghese will moderate a panel discussion on the role of governance mechanisms in supporting flexibility.



**ATTE JÄÄSKELÄINEN** is the Director General at the Ministry of Education and Culture of Finland. He has had a short career in academia and a lengthy career leading change in media. As Professor of Practice at LUT University in Finland, he worked in the fields of digitalization, media management, and sustainable business renewal. He was chair of the LUT Advisory Board, whose members are some of the most senior business leaders in Finland. At Helsingin Sanomat, the leading daily in Finland, he first had the role of Business Editor, and then Politics Editor. He has a background in both business and law from Helsinki University and

Helsinki University of Technology. At the Forum, Mr Jääskeläinen will join the panel discussion to provide a policy perspective on the role of governance mechanisms in supporting flexibility.



**HEIDI BOLTON** has been the Research Director at the South African Qualifications Authority (SAQA) for over 11 years. Before that, she was a Senior Researcher at Umalusi (Council for Quality Assurance in General and Further Education and Training). She has a PhD in Sociology of Education from the University of Cape Town in South Africa. She also taught in various further, higher, and adult education contexts, developed curriculum materials, and had the role of academic textbook publisher. She currently leads the conceptualization of SAQA's research and development agenda and collaborates in, and oversees, its implementation. At the

Forum, Ms Bolton will present the findings from the [South African FLP case study](#) on the role of the National Qualifications Framework in South Africa.



**MARIA JOSÉ LEMAÎTRE** is an Executive Director at the Centro Interuniversitario de Desarrollo (Inter-University Development Centre) in Chile. She is an expert in the design and implementation of quality assurance processes in higher education. At the Forum, Ms Lemaître will present the findings from the [Chilean FLP case study](#) on the role of funding policies and quality assurance in Chile.

## Conclusions and closing remarks



**PETER WELLS** is the Chief of the Higher Education Section at UNESCO. Since 2016 he has led UNESCO's priority area of quality higher education with an emphasis on widening access, quality assurance, and academic mobility. He also co-leads on the UNESCO Qualifications Passport for Refugees and Vulnerable Migrants initiative that aims to support access to learning and employment opportunities for displaced persons. Prior to taking up his current post, Peter was a Higher Education Specialist and Director of the UNESCO's European Centre for Higher Education for ten years. He holds a Bachelor's degree in European Studies from the University of Leicester, a Master's degree in International Relations and a PhD in

Quality Enhancement of Higher Education Systems. At the Forum, Peter will provide closing remarks on behalf of UNESCO.

**MAZLAN YUSOF** was appointed as the Secretary General of the Ministry of Higher Education (MOHE) Malaysia in 2020. He has a strong background in strategic management and public policy, with over 30 years of management experience. His areas of expertise include strategic management and leadership, government, and human resources. Previously, he served as the Director General of MAMPU (Modernization and Management Planning Unit) at the Prime Minister's Department from 2017 to 2020, and as the Director of the National Institute of Public Administration (INTAN) in the Public Service Department (JPA) from 2014 to 2017. He obtained a Doctor of Philosophy on Strategic Management from the University of Hull, United Kingdom in 2008. Mr Mazlan Yusof will

give closing remarks on behalf of the MOHE Malaysia, one of the organizing partners of the Forum.