



*Improving education  
through research*

## **Call for Papers**

### **Scottish Educational Research Association**

41<sup>st</sup> Annual Conference, 2016

School of Education, University of Dundee, Wednesday 23<sup>rd</sup> November – Friday  
25<sup>th</sup> November 2016

‘Challenging? Attainment and improvement...’

Building on last year’s theme ‘Education as (if) the Whole Earth Mattered’, the SERA Conference 2016 focuses on the pressing issue of attainment and educational improvement. This theme is particularly relevant in the wake of the publication of Scotland’s National Improvement Framework and with the growth in political in transnational assessment programmes such as PISA and TIMMS.

The conference theme welcomes original and critical contributions from scholars and practitioners from a wide range of disciplines and educational settings that explore a rich and diverse view of education and learning as a means for supporting a multiplicity of life-projects, engaging knowledge, relationships and the imagination. This theme is particularly relevant nationally and internationally to individuals and groups who wish to explore the ways in which conceptions of education might move beyond narrowly defined performative measures, but which do so within an era of global testing regimes.

The SERA Annual conference is an important event for the educational research community in Scotland. The three-day conference, to be held in Dundee, invites researchers and practitioners working in Scottish and international research contexts to share their insights under the theme ‘Challenging? Attainment and improvement.’ Contributions discussing new research possibilities, new forms of contexts for learning, and new types of collaboration among academics and practitioners are welcomed.

Details about the 2016 SERA Conference submission and registrations protocols are provided below.

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## SERA 2016 CONFERENCE STRANDS

Key organising strands for this year's SERA conference will include:

- **Social Justice and Inclusion:** How is education reaching out to all? How is education responding to the challenge of competition, distribution and access to educational services supporting our communities? To what extent can education respond to increasing diversity in society? How is education fostering awareness around sustainability and responsible food consumption? How can we produce more equitable education systems? What contribution can informal education play in creating a more equitable society? What role might testing play in all of this?
- **Professional and Vocational Learning (including teacher education and higher education):** What new challenges in work spaces and practices are impacting on professional and vocational learning? How is knowledge generated and shared in occupational and professional contexts and across professional boundaries? How might professional education and development be reconceptualised? What new possibilities could be explored around professional learning and leadership?
- **Policy and Education:** How does policy at global, national and local levels shape education and lifelong learning? How do educational actors (regardless of sector) respond to, and inform, policy directions? How do new partnerships enhance or inhibit educational initiatives and the mobilisation of research? How can we engage pupils and practitioners in policy development? What might policy contribute in the performative era?
- **Curriculum:** How does curriculum engage with a constantly changing and evolving world? To what extent can the curriculum support interdisciplinary learning and reflection on key themes of human development? What insights can be gleaned from different theoretical perspective on curriculum? To what extent can educational practitioners engage with the process of curriculum reform?
- **Assessment and Evaluation:** In what way can the assessment evidence (both National and International) be used to improve educational attainment in the short term and should attainment be the key concern? What issues might arise from the new National Numeracy and Literacy Assessments planned for P1, P4 P7 and S2 pupils? What are the current challenges faced by institutions in transforming assessment and feedback in Higher Education? How can we support the accreditation of informal education?
- **Digital Learning:** How is the infusion of new technologies impacting learning experiences in/out of formal educational settings? What new spaces are emerging to enable more sustainable forms of pedagogy and learning? How does the open education movement support or inhibit inclusion/exclusion locally and globally?

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- **Innovative Research Methods:** What challenges are facing educational researchers and how are new research methods being innovated in response? What new questions need to be asked and examined? How are different theoretical perspectives and paradigms creating openings for new questions, new forms of research, and offering critical insights? How can more innovative research methods contribute to supporting learning and change in challenging times and spaces?

The conference will accept individual papers, short papers, symposiums, poster presentations, as well as suggestions for roundtable discussions, performance/ arts-based sessions and workshops.

### **Individual papers and posters presentations**

Individual papers and poster proposals require a 250-word abstract. Please note that authors must identify the theme (above) that their abstract addresses. Abstracts should include:

Theme (best fit from the list above); Title of paper; Name(s); Affiliation(s); Contact email address; 4 keywords. The abstract should be structured to cover Background literature/theoretical framework; aims; methods; main findings; conclusions.

### **Short papers (to be presented as Pecha Kucha presentations)**

A Pecha Kucha presentation is an engaging and highly visual presentation of 20 slides for a maximum of 20 seconds each (400 seconds or just over six minutes in total). The format keeps presentations concise and fast-paced and is useful when wanting to highlight key points, pose questions, present evocative insights, and/or share research in-progress efficiently. Short paper proposals require a 250-word abstract. Please note that authors must identify the theme (above) that their abstract addresses. Abstracts should include:

Theme (best fit from the list above); Title of paper; Name(s); Affiliation(s); Contact email address; 4 keywords. The abstract should be structured to cover aims; methods; main findings; conclusions.

### **Symposia**

Proposals for self-organised symposium are welcome. A symposium is a planned event lasting 90 minutes. Symposia organisers are free to decide on how their Symposium is run. They should provide a chairperson who will introduce the session and highlight relationships amongst the contributions. Symposia organizers should also provide a discussant to offer a critique of the symposium as a whole. The contact person identified on the proposal must act as a link between the conference organizers and other contributors. Proposals should include:

Title of symposium; Name(s); Affiliation(s); Contact email address; Name of chairperson/discussant; Presenters and an outline of 200 words describing the purpose of symposium and relationship between papers. Also to be included are 250-word abstracts for each paper in the symposium, including Title of paper, name(s), affiliation(s), contact email address, 4 keywords; aims; methods; main findings; conclusions.

### **Workshops and Round tables**

Workshops and round tables will be scheduled as 60 minute events.

Proposals for workshops should include the design and delivery of a learning activity that engages participants directly both in experience and subsequent reflection. Workshop proposals can center on the analysis of a research methodology/approach or a teaching and learning method. A descriptor of 250 words should include:

Theme (best fit from the list above); Title, Name(s); Affiliation(s); Contact email address; 4 keywords; Rationale and/or theoretical background, aims and methods of proposed activity.

Proposals for round tables will indicate the theme to be discussed by a range of stakeholders sharing a range of views and experiences. Cross-cutting themes that are of interest to a range

### **Performance/Arts-based Sessions**

A performance-based or arts-based session aims to involve participants to work experientially to explore and to reflect on a particular theme. All forms of performance-based activities (i.e. spoken word poetry or narratives, oral storytelling, art forms (including paintings, drawings, sculpture, etc.), drama, dance, walking, digital multimedia presentations, etc.) are welcome.

A descriptor of 250 words should include: Theme (best fit from the list above); Title, Name(s); Affiliation(s); Contact email address; Indication about spaces, any special equipment that might be required and maximum number of participants.

### **Prizes and Awards**

3 minute thesis-competition

This year, SERA will hold a 3-Minute Thesis Competition. SERA welcome applications from masters and doctoral students, at any stage of study.

Participants will be asked to present their dissertation or thesis verbally in 3 minutes to an audience with the help of one static PowerPoint slide. Presentations will be

judged on comprehension, engagement and communication style. 1st prize will be awarded to the most effective presentation.

There are many benefits to squeezing your thesis into a 3 minute presentation. It challenges students to consolidate and communicate complex ideas in a creative succinct manner, which requires in-depth knowledge of the research and its relevance to education. It is also lot of fun, and great preparation for what is the most commonly asked first viva question!

To apply, please send your name, email address, area of research, course, university and title of your presentation to [sera.conference@gmail.com](mailto:sera.conference@gmail.com). Please include “3-min competition” in the subject line and clearly indicate in your email that you intend to participate in the ‘3- minute thesis competition’.

### **SERA Submission Dates**

Call for proposals opens 11 March 2016

All proposals to be sent to [sera.conference@gmail.com](mailto:sera.conference@gmail.com) by Friday 18<sup>th</sup> April 2016

Peer review of abstracts completed by end of May 2016.

Notification of acceptance will be given on or before 13th June 2016 SERA

### **CONFERENCE REGISTRATION ARRANGEMENTS**

SERA Conference registration will open at the end of April and will be available at <http://www.sera.ac.uk/conference/>