Thematic Peer Group on institutional data

CALL FOR PARTICIPATION

Deadline for application: **16 January 2026**

1. Introduction & background

Increasingly, universities are recognising the value of data in shaping their operations and future development. From student recruitment and retention to infrastructure management, alumni employability and diversity among campus communities, institutional data can inform sound decision making and strengthen institutional narratives.

Building on EUA's work on digitalisation and artificial intelligence, the Association will explore data-steered initiatives pioneered among EUA members through a Thematic Peer Group (TPG). Drawing on their experience in academic or administrative leaderships, TPG members will share practices from within their institutional context and contribute to the development of work programme output(s). Applications for the TPG are invited from EUA member representatives with wide expertise in one or more of the following areas: data governance; digital transformation; institutional research; strategy and organisational change.

2. Objectives

The Thematic Peer Group will, in the first instance, create a space for its members to discuss established and emerging practices that maximise data for the purpose of enhancing institutional performance. To support EUA's broader community of members, the group will work towards:

- **creating a community of practice** to explore the value of data-steered initiates and compare practices in gathering, managing, analysing and governing institutional data.
- **developing activities and/or resources** that bring concrete practice examples to the community and contribute to a more sustained discussion the use of data for institutional development.

3. Themes and expected outcomes

Through the group, EUA will to bring to light pioneering initiatives undertaken by its members using institutional data. Exchanges among members will examine the success factors and/or transformative potential of such initiatives and explore their scalability or transferability in comparable contexts. This in turn will spark further reflection among the data community – and among university leaders – on the value of their institution's data and its potential to serve institutional missions. By showcasing good practices, EUA aims to:

- recognise the merit of data-steered initiatives and signal the need to invest in the individuals and communities driving them.
- highlight the potential of institutional data beyond the purpose of reporting to national authorities, demonstrating its value in enhancing institutional performance and transnational cooperation.

4. Activities and timeline

Between 15 and 20 EUA member universities will take part in the Thematic Peer Group. Group members will attend **three meetings** during 2026 (between February and December), each lasting one or two days. At least one of the three meetings will take place in person, hosted by a group member, and another will take place online. The group is free to decide whether to organise the third meeting in person or online. Meeting venues and dates will be jointly determined once group members have been selected and the availability of selected group members has been mapped.

Based on the exchange of knowledge, experiences and practices, the group will summarise the conclusions in the form of a short **report or similar resource** that will be published on the EUA website and shared among the Association's wider community.

5. Group chair

A coordinator from the EUA secretariat will support the group's work, organise and attend all meetings and draft the group's report.

EUA will also appoint one representative from the group to act as chair. Chairing responsibilities include the planning of the group's work (including meetings and potential asynchronous work), facilitation and steering of the discussions during meetings, and ensuring that the group stays focused and goal-oriented in collaboration with the EUA secretariat.

Those interested in taking up the role of group chair are invited to express their interest as part of the application.

6. Eligibility and candidate selection

The call is open to all EUA member universities, represented by senior leaders, managers or coordinators who can demonstrate wide ranging and consistent contribution to their university's strategic development through the responsible and innovative use of institutional data.

The selection of group members will be done primarily on the basis of the motivation of the university and the experience of the candidate, as demonstrated in the application. In addition, the following aspects will be considered:

- geographical diversity;
- balance of institutional profiles (e.g. multi-faculty, specialised);
- diversity of candidates' professional background and expertise.

7. Terms and conditions for participation

There is no participation fee. However, universities will participate on a self-funded basis and are responsible for organising and covering their own travel and accommodation for the physical group meeting(s). EUA will cover the costs of joint meals (lunches, coffee breaks, and dinner) during the meetings.

Universities interested in participating in the Thematic Peer Group are invited to fill in the online application form by **16 January 2026**. Applicants will be informed in mid-late January whether their application has been successful. For further questions, please contact Clare Phelan (clare.phelan@eua.eu).

About EUA

The European University Association (EUA) represents more than 900 universities, affiliates and national rectors' conferences in 48 European countries. EUA plays a crucial role in the Bologna Process and in influencing EU policies on higher education, research and innovation. Through continuous interaction with a range of other European and international organisations, EUA ensures that the independent voice of European universities is heard.