

EMERALDHANDBOOKS

THE EMERALD HANDBOOK ON INTERNATIONAL HIGHER EDUCATION

NAVIGATING WORKFORCE AND LEADERSHIP
CHANGES IN A DIGITAL AGE

EDITED BY

JON **McNAUGHTAN**

ALEXANDER W. **WISEMAN**



The Emerald Handbook on International Higher Education

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The Emerald Handbook on International Higher Education: Navigating Workforce and Leadership Changes in a Digital Age

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Introduction to the Handbook

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In the wake of the global pandemic and the associated advent of new working conditions, distance technologies, and other factors contributing to a rapidly evolving landscape of international higher education during the first quarter of the 21st century, higher education workforce and leadership dynamics are undergoing a profound transformation (McNaughtan et al., 2023; Rumbley, 2020). The purpose of this Handbook is to provide space for an insightful and comprehensive overview of many of the key challenges and opportunities faced by higher education institutions worldwide as they adapt to the changing nature of work and learning. This Handbook places a particular focus on understanding and managing the workforce shifts brought about by the rise of remote work and online learning (Oliveira et al., 2021), emphasizing the critical role of these employees in enhancing student experiences and institutional effectiveness (Affouneh et al., 2020). The digital age has ushered in a new era of education, with remote work and online learning becoming more prevalent than ever before (McNaughtan et al., 2023). As a result, higher education institutions are grappling with the need to align their workforce and leadership strategies with this transformative shift (McNaughtan, 2023). The Handbook explores the multifaceted aspects of this transformation and offers practical guidance for educational leaders, administrators, and faculty members.

The goal of this compilation of perspectives is to provide evidence-based guidance, real-world examples, and valuable resources to equip educational leaders, administrators, faculty members, and all stakeholders with the knowledge and strategies necessary to excel in this transformative era of international higher education. It is also a significant contribution to the research on international higher education generally and is of special interest to international higher education researchers as well as those who make and implement policy in higher education systems and institutions worldwide. This comprehensive Handbook is structured around exploration of six key challenges and also provides a set of case studies for reflection on how these challenges are being experienced across the world.

The first section of the book provides a comprehensive survey of the prevailing global trends in workforce development in the field of international higher

education. Chapters center on the changing needs of students from both a content and modality perspective as well as the ability of colleges to prepare them for the shifting economy. These chapters provide a variety of perspectives to enhance perspectives of institutional leaders.

The second and third sections focus on workforce challenges and opportunities across higher education systems worldwide. For example, in the context of remote work, chapters address the intricate dynamics of managing virtual teams in higher education institutions (e.g., Abarca et al., 2020, Garro-Abarca et al., 2021). A few chapters explore best practices for effective communication, team cohesion, and productivity when employees are spread across different time zones and locations (for review, see Morrison-Smith & Ruiz, 2020). When considering how the shifting higher education global market is adjusting, some chapters discuss innovative ideas such as micro credentials and the importance of career mobility (Presbitero, 2020).

The fourth section focuses on the growth and practice of online learning, which has become a cornerstone of post-pandemic higher education (Agormedah et al., 2020). Contributing authors discuss the roles of instructional designers, online educators, and technology support specialists in ensuring the success of digital learning initiatives (e.g., Agormedah et al., 2020; García-Morales et al., 2021). They provide strategies for designing engaging and effective online courses and highlight the importance of ongoing training and development for faculty and staff.

The fifth and sixth sections discuss shifting perspectives of leadership within international higher education and the tools available to higher education. The goal of these chapters was to provide current perspectives and practices for researchers and administrators. Both institutional and academic leadership takes center stage as the Handbook delves into the qualities and skills required of higher education leaders. It emphasizes the need for visionary leadership that can navigate the complexities of the digital age, foster innovation, and drive institutional excellence (McNaughtan et al., 2023). The Handbook provides leadership models and frameworks tailored to the unique challenges faced by higher education leaders today.

The central theme of the Handbook is the evolving nature of the workforce in higher education existing in systems worldwide. In addition to the chapters in sections one through six, section seven provides a set of case studies that provide additional context for how international leaders are navigating the workforce in the digital age. Contributing authors delve into the challenges and opportunities associated with a globally dispersed and increasingly diverse pool of employees. They examined how universities harness talent from around the world and how this workforce diversity can lead to innovation and cross-cultural collaboration.

Naturally, the key strength of the Handbook is its global perspective. The final section of the handbook includes case studies and insights from a diverse range of higher education institutions from around the world, offering a rich tapestry of experiences and solutions. This global outlook enables readers to draw from a wealth of international best practices and adapt them to their own contexts.

In conclusion, *The Emerald Handbook on International Higher Education: Navigating Workforce and Leadership Changes in a Digital Age* is an invaluable

resource for anyone involved in higher education. It provides a nuanced understanding of the workforce and leadership changes that are shaping the future of education. By emphasizing the importance of adapting to remote work and online learning, this Handbook equips institutions with the knowledge and strategies needed to excel in the digital age. As the world of higher education continues to evolve, this Handbook serves as an essential guide for navigating the challenges and seizing the opportunities presented by this transformative era.

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The Changing Landscape of International Higher Education

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Chapter 1

Disability and Employability in Higher Education Research – A Comprehensive Review

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Abstract

This chapter focuses on the nature of research activity on disability and employability in higher education (HE) and understanding the role of universities and industry in supporting employability for disabled students. Based on the comprehensive review for 2001–2023, we review publications from Web of Science, Scopus, Google Scholar and the Education Resources Information Centre. This expansive review addresses the gap by analysing studies on disability and employability in international HE from a comparative lens. It demonstrates that exclusionary practices in the labour market and university limit disabled students to access equitable workplace experience. These students often lack opportunities that allow them to accumulate work experience whilst studying. The complex nature of developing inclusive employability for disabled students requires transformative structural practices that support holistic career and employability development. The chapter concludes that inclusive HE is necessary to strengthen employability for disabled students. The chapter offers recommendations that can be implemented in policy and practice to promote inclusive HE that facilitates university-workplace transitions.

Keywords: Employability; disability; inclusion; higher education; inclusive workplace; disabled students

Introduction

Higher education (HE) is considered a key contributor to the economy, especially in its capacity to train and provide the workforce for the economy therefore, the employability of all students is a crucial component for universities (Tight, 2023). Thus, HE should strive to be more inclusive in its role and efforts to provide a workforce for the economy (Zhang et al., 2018). The call for universities to be inclusive was spearheaded by the establishment of anti-discriminatory legislation and policy frameworks, as noted by Engelbrecht et al. (2006) and Ramaahlo et al. (2018). Examples of key declarations include The World Declaration of Education for All (UNESCO, 1990), The Salamanca Statement and Framework of Action on Special Needs Education (UNESCO, 1994) and The Dakar Framework for Action (UNESCO, 2000). Ainscow (2015) and Messiou et al. (2016) acknowledge that the frameworks allowed universities to provide high-quality educational experiences for all students but importantly for Students with Disabilities (SWD).

Overview

Globally, the inclusion frameworks encouraged access and participation of SWD in HE and the number of SWD who accessed HE increased (Kendall, 2016; Moriña et al., 2015). This growth trajectory intersected with other trends and shifts that influenced HE spaces like massification, internationalisation and the industry and marketisation logic (Zezeza, 2021). Of importance in this review is the marketisation and industrialisation logic. In this regard, Riddell (2009) and Gumpert (2019) reflect on how universities around the world shifted towards a competitive, industrial, market and entrepreneurial-driven logic and philosophy.

The dominance of the industrial and marketisation logic prompted universities to actively develop initiatives to support the transition from educational training to the workplace for all students including SWD (Molesworth et al., 2009). The new market logic of the 1980s and 1990s (Altbach, 2010) required universities to provide employment-ready programmes for graduates, with training in a variety of areas that are practical rather than academic. Arguably, the industry logic exposed more inequalities given the competitive nature of the labour market that demands work-ready graduates.

Research acknowledges that the existing challenges in both HE and workspaces hinder student work readiness (Jackson, 2017; Mokibelo & Seru, 2020; Rook, 2017). SWD also experiences challenges like job discrimination, lack of funding for SWD and poor networking skills related to university-workplace transitions (Collins et al., 2019; Grigal et al., 2019; Jameel, 2011). These challenges are exacerbated by the existing structural barriers in universities which make it difficult for students to transition from university to the workplace (Espada-Chavarria et al., 2021). The battle between the internal and external factors in HE has brought research attention to how SWD to transition into a workspace that is usually designed for able-bodied individuals (Campbell, 2009; Meekosha & Soldatic, 2011).

Capitalising on the above analysis, this chapter focuses on reviewing the growing research interest in exploring the extent to which SWDs are supported to