Call for Abstracts for the Special Issue:

Collaboration between Academic and Administrative Staff in Higher Education and Research Institutions

A trusting, efficient, and effective collaboration between academia and administration in higher education is a key success factor for individual higher education and research institutions as well as for regional, national, and global research and innovation systems in general. Teaching, research, and academic self-governance involve numerous interfaces with administrative structures, for example in examination management, the transfer of research results, the establishment of start-ups, the acquisition and administration of third-party funding, as well as recruitment, personnel development, and leadership.

The quality of cooperation between academic staff and administrative personnel has a substantial impact on the performance of higher education institutions. Constructive working relationships and a collaborative institutional culture can help minimise friction, improve coordination, and enable more efficient and successful processes in research, teaching, and knowledge transfer. At the same time, universities are increasingly confronted with growing regulatory complexity, rising expectations regarding service orientation, and the need to integrate new digital technologies into internal workflows.

The special issue addresses how academic and administrative actors cooperate and collaborate, which factors facilitate or hinder effective collaboration, and how institutional structures and emerging technologies such as artificial intelligence may contribute to improving internal processes. Given the different institutional logics, areas of responsibility and decision-making processes in academia and university administration, the question of what constitutes good collaboration is essentially a governance issue. The findings and contributions are expected to provide valuable insights for higher education governance and to support a better alignment of academic and administrative processes.

This special issue aims to take a closer look at the relationship between academia and administration from the perspectives of both academic staff and administrative employees. It invites contributions that examine the structures, practices, expectations, tensions, and reform potentials that shape this relationship in contemporary higher education institutions. We welcome submissions from and about all disciplines, regions, and contexts.

Possible topics include – but are not limited to:

Collaboration, roles, and organisational culture

- collaboration between professors, researchers, and administrative staff in everyday university practice
- perceptions of role distribution, mutual expectations, and communication between academia and administration
- organisational culture, trust, and conflict at the intersection of academia and administration, explicitly including negotiation processes, questions of responsibility, and legitimate goal conflicts
- empirical findings, conceptual contributions, and examples of good practice for improving cooperation

Leadership, governance, and institutional development

- leadership culture and its impact on cross-functional collaboration within universities
- governance structures and institutional arrangements that foster or impede effective cooperation
- the innovative capacity of university administration and its contribution to institutional development
- comparative perspectives on collaboration models across different types of higher education institutions

Digitalisation, AI, and administrative innovation

- the use of digital tools and AI-based applications to improve administrative efficiency and service quality
- digitalisation and the transformation of administrative processes at higher education institutions
- how digitalisation and AI reshape decision-making authority, responsibilities, and professional discretion at the academia–administration interface
- opportunities and challenges associated with the implementation of new technologies in university administration

De-bureaucratisation and process improvement

- pathways towards reducing bureaucracy in university administration
- strategies for reducing administrative burdens and simplifying internal procedures
- the tension between regulatory requirements and accountability obligations, on the one hand, and administrative burden, on the other
- process optimisation, service orientation, and efficiency gains in academic and administrative workflows

Interfaces in research, teaching, transfer, and HR

- administrative support for research funding, third-party grant management, and project administration
- administrative conditions for knowledge transfer, entrepreneurship, and start-up support
- cooperation at the interfaces of teaching, examinations, student services, and quality management
- human resource management, recruitment, onboarding, and staff development in academic and administrative contexts

We welcome manuscripts of different orientations and lengths, including theoretical contributions, empirical studies, comparative analyses, and practice-based reflections. Interdisciplinary perspectives and contributions employing qualitative, quantitative, or mixed-methods approaches are particularly encouraged. Our primary formats are *research articles* (quantitative or qualitative studies), *research notes*, as well as *insights into practice*. Details on formats can be found in the "Guidelines for Authors" section of the journal (https://openjournals.fachportal-paedagogik.de/bzh/richtlinienfuerautorinnen).

If you are interested, please first submit an abstract in English (max. 600 words) by **14 December 2026**, with a note on your intended article format.

All submissions will be evaluated by the editors concerning their suitability for the planned thematic issue. The authors will receive a corresponding message by the **end of January 2027**. The deadline for

submission of complete manuscripts is **30 April 2027**. Then the double-blind two-stage review process will be carried out. The articles that pass the review stage and are finally accepted will be published in issue 1/2028 of the "Contributions to Higher Education Research".

About the Journal:
Contributions to Higher Education Research is one of the leading academic journals in the field of higher education research in the German-speaking area, publishing papers in German and English. The journal is characterised by high-quality standards, a broad range of topics, wide coverage, and gold standard open access. The scientific and practical relevance as well as the diversity of disciplines and approaches are its hallmarks. It is aimed at academics conducting research on higher education-related topics, political decision-makers, and staff in higher education administrations, ministries and public administrations as well as higher education and science organisations. All articles that are considered for publication undergo a review process by independent reviewers (double-blind). Publication is in print and via the journals' website (https://openjournals.fachportal-paedagogik.de/bzh/index) and free of publication charges.

The guest editors of this special issue are Prof. Dr. Carola Jungwirth (Chair of Governance at the University of Passau), Prof. Dr. Isabell M. Welpe (Professor of Strategy and Organization at the Technical University of Munich), Prof. Dr. Michael Hölscher (Chair of Higher Education Management and Management of Science at the University of Speyer), Dr. Susanne Falk (Bavarian State Institute for Higher Education Research and Planning), Dr. Ulf Banscherus (Central Institute for Scientific Continuing Education and Cooperation at the Technical University of Berlin), and Dr. Thorsten Lenz (Bavarian State Institute for Higher Education Research and Planning).

We look forward to receiving contributions that advance our understanding of how collaboration between academia and administration is organised, experienced, and transformed in higher education institutions, and that help identify ways of making these relationships more effective, innovative, and sustainable.

Submission Guidelines & Deadlines:

Submission of abstracts:	14 December 2026
Submission of manuscripts:	30 April 2027

Please submit your abstracts via email in English:
beitraege@ihf.bayern.de

If you have any queries, please contact the editors at:
beitraege@ihf.bayern.de

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