



## **SIG 14 - Conference General Track**

We invite you to submit your research to explore the theme of  
**FOSTERING INNOVATION TO ADDRESS GRAND CHALLENGES**  
for the EURAM 24<sup>th</sup> Conference.

We look forward to receiving your submissions.

### **T14\_03 - Business and Management Education to prepare students for Grand Challenges**

#### **Proponents:**

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#### **Short description:**

Our students' generations face challenges that are often unpredictable, chaotic and seemingly unsolvable, and researchers question if business schools can meet these challenges (Waddock, 2020). Technological innovations emerge at speed with business schools and their students needing to move apace to keep up with changes in markets and society. As business educators, we must prepare our students for jobs that might not yet exist and teach them to adapt to technologies that are not yet invented. This track critically appraises the grand challenges faced by business students and questions how to educate them to innovate when faced with such challenges.

#### **Long description:**

Our students' generations face challenges that are often unpredictable, chaotic and seemingly unsolvable, and researchers question if business schools can meet these challenges (Waddock, 2020). Technological innovations emerge at speed with educators and their students needing to move apace to keep up with changes in markets and society. This track examines how we can develop the knowledge and skills business and management graduates will need to address the grand challenges of our era.

The size of today's grand challenges seems to surpass the messy problems of nearly forty years ago when the VUCA model (volatility, uncertainty, complexity and ambiguity) was first introduced as a military approach (Aimar & Smith, 2021), not to mention the 'wicked problems' from half a century ago (Crowley & Head, 2017). Our students face 'grand challenges' in contexts across the PESTLE

spectrum: political upheaval, economic turbulence, social unrest, technological revolutions, challenges to traditional legal frameworks and environmental devastation. As faculty we must prepare students for jobs that might not yet exist and teach them to adapt to technologies that are not yet invented. Indeed, Gatzweiler et al. (2022) outline three barriers to learning on grand challenges, namely cognitive overload, emotional detachment and organizational obliviousness.

These grand challenges also force us to think differently about the position of the organisation. Management science often focuses on modes of action and strategic learning devices centered on organisations, or even meta-organisations (Berkowitz et al. 2022), situating collective action on an abstract scale. We can no longer undermine action located locally on a territory (Maréchal et al. 2013) in favor of protecting the Commons (e.g., natural resources and infrastructure, as well as knowledge, know-how, technologies and cultures) (Ostrom et al. 2012).

Technological innovation promises solutions – but not without introducing their own dilemmas. It is not a question about being dystopian or utopian about technology, but an acknowledgment of how today's grand challenges and their potential solutions will require our students to think more holistically (Chowdhury, 2023), employ 'radical reflexivity' (Allen et al., 2019) and find ways to collaborate with others using a set of transdisciplinary knowledge and skills (Pokojska, 2022). Solutions need both humans and technologies, and this invites us to consider how to educate on grand challenges (Maihot & Lachapelle, 2022; Schantz et al., 2023).

How might we educate our students to address these dilemmas? And conversely, what contribution might business and management education make to a transdisciplinary solution?

#### Keywords:

- Management education
- Educating for grand challenges
- Contextualised learning
- Transdisciplinarity
- Artificial intelligence in academia
- Active citizenship

#### UN Sustainable Development Goals (SDG):

Goal 4: Quality education

#### Publication Outlet:

- Open Learning: The Journal of Open, Distance and e-Learning
- Management Learning
- Journal of Interactive Media in Education (JIME)

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