Going Global Istanbul 2026
Future-ready tertiary education

DRAFT CONFERENCE PROGRAMME

(Version 13 November 2026)

Date: 17–19 November 2026
Location: Hilton Istanbul Bomonti Hotel & Conference Center, Silahsor Cad. No 42 Bomonti-Sisli, Istanbul, 34381, Türkiye.

	Conference Overview	
Day one Tuesday 17 November	08.00	Departure for institutional visits
	08.00	Registration opens (all day)
	09.00–10.30	Institutional visits
	11.30	Networking and refreshments
	12.30	Welcome lunch
	14.00	Opening address (Crystal Ballroom)
	14.30	Opening performance
	14.45	Opening plenary
	15.45	Networking and refreshments
	16.15	Parallel sessions (1.01, 1.02, 1.03, 1.04)
	17.30	Day one close
	19.00–20.00	Welcome reception
Day two Wednesday 18 November	08.00	Registration opens (all day)
	09.00	Welcome refreshments
	09.15	Parallel sessions (2.01, 2.02, 2.03, 2.04)
	10.30	Networking and refreshments
	11.00	Day two plenary (Crystal Ballroom)
	12.15	Lunch
	13.30	Parallel sessions (2.05, 2.06, 2.07, 2.08)
	14.45	Networking and refreshments
	15.15	Parallel sessions (2.09, 2.10, 2.11)
	16.30	Day two close

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Day three Thursday 19 November	08.00	Registration opens (all day)
	09.00	Welcome refreshment
	09.15	Parallel sessions (3.01, 3.02, 3.03, 3.04)
	10.30	Networking and refreshments
	11.00	Parallel sessions (3.06, 3.07, 3.08)
	12.15	Lunch
	13.15	Closing plenary (Crystal Ballroom)
	14.45	Conference close

	Day 1 – Tuesday 17 November
Day one 08.00 onwards **Location:** Crystal Ballroom Foyer	**Registration opens**
Day one 08.00 **Assembly point:** Lobby	**Departure for institutional visits** **Main contact:** Ali Murat Güçlü, Education Manager, British Council Türkiye - AliMurat.Guclu@britishcouncil.org.tr Mobile: +90 534 352 62 03 Delegates are encouraged to wait in the hotel lobby for departure.
Day one 09.00–10.30	**Institutional visits** **IV01: Yıldız Technical University** **Website:** https://www.yildiz.edu.tr/en **Number of delegates:** 40 **Departure from:** Hilton Bomonti Hotel and Conference Centre at 08.00 **Estimated journey time:** 30–45 minutes **Estimated visit time:** 90 minute

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	Departure for: Hilton Bomonti Hotel and Conference Centre at 10.45. **IV02: Istanbul Technical University** **Website:** https://itu.edu.tr/en/homepage **Number of delegates:** 40 **Departure from:** Hilton Bomonti Hotel and Conference Centre at 08.00 **Estimated journey time:** 30–45 minutes **Estimated visit time:** 90 minutes **Departure for:** Hilton Bomonti Hotel and Conference Centre at 10.45
Day one **11.30–12.30** **Location:** Crystal Ballroom Foyer	**Networking and refreshments**
Day one **12.30–13.45** **Location:** Globe Restaurant	**Welcome lunch**
Day one **14.00–14.30** **Room:** Crystal Ballroom	**Opening address** **Denise Waddingham**, Country Director, British Council, Türkiye **Catriona McCarthy**, Director Education, British Council, United Kingdom **Sir Steve Smith**, International Education Champion, UK Government, United Kingdom **Professor Dr Erol Özvar,** President, Council of Higher Education, Türkiye *Simultaneous interpretation between English and Turkish (via headsets) and live captioning available.
Day one **14.30–14.45**	**Opening performance:** A short musical performance from Golden Horn Brass

Room: Crystal Ballroom	Golden Horn Brass was established in 2004 and is one of Türkiye's first and longest-running brass quintets. Consisting of trumpets, horns, trombones and tubas, the group's colourful repertoire ranges from baroque and classical to jazz and pop music, from the works of Turkish composers to folk melodies. They were selected as the Chamber Music Ensemble of the Year at the 2014 Donizetti Classical Music Awards, and in addition to domestic concerts, the group has performed at the Berlin Konzerthaus and international festivals and halls. This performance will feature music from Vaughan Williams, the Beatles, traditional Turkish melodies and more.
Day one **14.45–15.45** **Plenary session** **Room:** Crystal Ballroom	**Opening plenary: Built for growth, ready for change?** *Expansion, resilience and the future of international higher education* Tertiary education has expanded rapidly across Central Asia, Türkiye and the South Caucasus, widening access and strengthening international engagement. Yet as institutions face technological disruption, shifting labour markets, demographic change and growing demands for relevance, a fundamental question emerges: is the model that delivered growth fit for the future? This opening plenary launches the Going Global 2026 conversation by challenging long-held assumptions about what tertiary education systems were designed to achieve and whether those assumptions still hold. Bringing together a diverse group of voices from across the sector, this discussion will explore emerging vulnerabilities, confront uncomfortable truths, and explore what it will take to create resilient, inclusive, and future-ready tertiary education systems in an increasingly uncertain world. **Speakers:** **Chair: Catriona McCarthy,** Director Education, British Council, United Kingdom **Professor Dr Komiljon Karimov,** Rector, Westminster International University in Tashkent, Uzbekistan **Professor Lisa Roberts**, President and Vice-Chancellor, University of Exeter, United Kingdom **Professor Dr Mehmet Naci İnci,** Rector, Boğaziçi University, Türkiye *Simultaneous interpretation between English and Turkish (via headsets) and live captioning available.

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Day one **15.45–16.15** **Location:** Foyer	**Networking and refreshments**
Day one **16.15–17.30** **Panel session** **Room:** Crystal Ballroom	**Parallel session 1.01** **Türkiye's higher education system** This session aims to provide a comprehensive overview of the Turkish higher education system, including its institutional structure, governance and key policies, while highlighting its education and research capacity, quality assurance mechanisms and internationalisation strategies. It also seeks to promote the exchange of knowledge and best practices, explore opportunities for academic cooperation, and strengthen international partnerships in higher education. **Speakers:** **Chair: Bilge Doğandündar,** Legal Expert, Council of Higher Education, Türkiye **Professor Dr Burhaneddin Sandıkçı**, Member of the General Assembly, Council of Higher Education, Türkiye **Mustafa Efe,** Head of the Department of International Relations, Council of Higher Education, Türkiye **Professor Dr Naci Gündoğan**, Vice President, Council of Higher Education, Türkiye *Simultaneous interpretation between English and Turkish (via headsets) and live captioning available.
Day one **16.15–17.30** **Panel session** **Room:** MR23	**Parallel session 1.02** **Future skills systems: Are our current models fit for purpose?** As economies across Central Asia, Türkiye, the Gulf and beyond diversify and transform, education and skills systems face growing pressure to equip learners with the competencies employers need today and tomorrow. National Occupational Standards (NOS) can play a pivotal role in bridging this gap, but only when they are developed as dynamic, employer-informed frameworks rather than technical compliance tools.

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	Drawing on lessons from the UK, the Middle East, South Asia and Sub-Saharan Africa, this session explores what it takes to make occupational standards reform deliver real impact. Through practical examples and interactive discussion, participants will examine how collaboration between government, industry and educators can strengthen skills systems, improve labour market relevance and build workforce readiness, while assessing their own system's capacity for sustainable reform and economic transformation. **Speakers:** **Chair: Jane (Rexworthy) Whitehart OBE,** Chief Executive Officer, Skills for Inclusion Ltd, United Kingdom **Dr Aida Saginteyeva,** Vice Provost for Academic Planning and Budget**,** Nazarbayev University**,** Kazakhstan **Atir Guliyeva,** Senior Specialist, Institute of Education of the Republic of Azerbaijan, Azerbaijan **Firuza Nasibzade,** Lecturer, Webster University, Azerbaijan **Dr Mariam Keburia,** Deputy Head, Department of Higher Education, Georgia
Day one **16.15–17.30** **Panel session** **Room:** MR24	**Parallel session 1.03** **Internationalisation: Global by nature or by necessity?** Universities say internationalisation is part of who they are. For many, it is also how they balance the books. As immigration policy, finances and geopolitics reshape the international market, this session asks university leaders from Türkiye, the UK and Georgia a question panels rarely put directly: why do we internationalise, and who is it for? Panellists will weigh economic necessity against educational purpose, ask what students and staff gain beyond the transaction, and test whether shared frameworks such as the Sustainable Development Goals still guide partnership in a changed world. **Speakers:** **Chair: Ali Murat Güçlü**, Higher Education Programme Manager, British Council, Türkiye **Professor Eliso Elisashvili,** Rector, Georgian International University, Georgia **Professor Dr Esra Hatipoğlu,** Rector, Bahçeşehir University, Türkiye **Professor Dame Sally Mapstone,** Principal and Vice-Chancellor, University of St Andrews, United Kingdom

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Day one **16.15–17.30** **Panel session** **Room:** MR25	**Parallel session 1.04** **Quality at scale: Can quality keep pace with growth?** Ensuring quality at scale has become one of the defining challenges of higher education reform as systems expand and diversify. This panel will explore how modern quality assurance and university governance frameworks can support transformation while maintaining quality, relevance and equity. Drawing on lessons from system-wide higher education modernisation, the panellists will examine the growing importance of global benchmarking, institutional accountability and international standards in strengthening competitiveness and public trust. The discussion will also consider how reforms in quality assurance and governance enable sustainable transnational education partnerships, while addressing the opportunities and risks presented by artificial intelligence. Participants will gain insights into how countries can build resilient, future-ready higher education systems that deliver quality outcomes for learners while supporting national development goals. **Speakers:** **Chair: Alistair Jarvis CBE,** Chief Executive, Advance HE, United Kingdom **Dr Bakhtiyor Yuldashev,** Director, National Quality Assurance Agency for Education (NQAAE), Uzbekistan **Professor Dr Farhod Ahrorov**, Head of Department, Ministry of Education and Science of the Republic of Uzbekistan, Uzbekistan **Dr Faruk Berat Akçeşme**, Director General for Higher Education and Education Abroad, Ministry of National Education, Türkiye **Julie Till,** Director of Global Business Development and Engagement, Quality Assurance Agency, United Kingdom **Professor Dr Komiljon Karimov,** Rector, Westminster International University in Tashkent, Uzbekistan
Day one **17.30–18.00**	**End of conference day one**
Day one **19.00–20.00**	**Going Global welcome reception, sponsored by IELTS** **Venue**: Hilton Istanbul Bomonti Hotel and Conference Center, Crystal Ballroom Foyer, M1 Floor

	Drinks with a variety of canapes including meat (halal), fish and vegetarian options will be served. Hosted by the Council of Higher Education Türkiye and the British Council will bring delegates together for an evening of networking and informal exchange. Accompanied by drinks and canapés, the reception offers an opportunity to connect with university leaders, policymakers and sector partners from the UK, Türkiye and around the world, establish new relationships and exchange ideas ahead of the conference discussions.

	Day two – Wednesday 18 November
Day two **09.00–09.15** **Location:** Foyer	**Welcome refreshments**
Day two **09.15-10.30** **Panel session** **Room:** Crystal Ballroom	**Parallel session 2.01** **The University of the Future** As AI reshapes learning, assessment and work at unprecedented speed, universities face a fundamental question: is it enough to adopt AI tools, or must institutions redesign themselves around them? Building on conversations from day one about the future of skills and curriculum relevance, this session explores how higher education can respond strategically to a rapidly changing landscape while protecting what matters most in the human experience of learning. Drawing on perspectives from Georgia, Türkiye and the UK, speakers will examine how AI is impacting institutional strategy, governance, teaching and student experience. Exploring examples including Business and Technology University's long-term vision of a 'University of the Future' and emerging national frameworks for generative AI, and including insights from the

	psychology of learning, the discussion will test different approaches against the demands of quality, relevance and equity. The session will also consider which challenges universities can solve alone, and where international collaboration will be essential to shaping the future of higher education in an AI-driven world. **Speakers:** **Chair: Professor Nino Gachechiladze,** Head of Research Centre, Business and Technology University (BTU), Georgia **Professor Nigel Holt**, Associate Pro Vice-Chancellor International, Aberystwyth University, United Kingdom **Professor Tsotne Zhghenti**, Associate Professor, Business and Technology University, Georgia **Professor Dr Yavuz Demir**, Founding Rector, Ankara Bilim University, Türkiye *Simultaneous interpretation between English and Turkish (via headsets) and live captioning available.
Day two **09.15–10.30** **Workshop session** **Room:** MR23	**Parallel session 2.02** **Technology, teaching and inclusive T-shaped learning** How can TVET and tertiary education systems harness technology, inclusive teaching, and international collaboration to scale quality education that develops learners equipped with the technical expertise and transferable skills needed to thrive in a rapidly changing world? This interactive workshop will explore evidence-informed approaches to leadership, technology-enhanced teaching, and T-shaped learning, combining technical expertise with transferable skills, adaptability, and resilience. Drawing on UK, regional, and international best practice, colleagues will examine strategies to widen participation, strengthen industry partnerships, and create authentic, real-world learning experiences. **Speakers:** **Chair: Cerian Ayres,** Senior Consultant, TVET, British Council, United Kingdom

	Dr Blanka Hilton, Lecturer, School Deputy Director and VR Lead Science Apprenticeships, University of Kent, United Kingdom **Jonathon Parker**, Lecturer an Digital Innovator, Gower College Swansea, United Kingdom **Liz Ridley,** Vice Principal Education and Impact, Hull College, United Kingdom **Professor Dr Oğuzhan Gündüz**, Head of Department of Metallurgical and Materials Engineering, Technology Faculty, Marmara University, Türkiye **Dr Sema Gündüz**, Researcher and University Lecturer, Marmara University, Türkiye **Dr Stephen Hilton,** Professor of Chemistry and Enabling Technologies, University College London, United Kingdom
Day two **09.15–10.30** **Panel session** **Room:** MR24	**Parallel session 2.03** **Integrating AI into higher education systems** AI is arriving in higher education faster than the rules that govern it. What does a national system need to put in place for AI to work, and how does it make sure the quality is good? A Deputy Minister, a learning researcher and a quality assurance expert test the question against evidence of how students actually use AI, the standards accreditors apply, and the risk that tools built for English leave other languages behind. Delegates weigh each answer against quality, relevance and equity, and leave with the conditions AI should meet before any system scales it. **Speakers:** **Chair: Professor Dr Zviad Gabisonia,** Deputy Minister, Ministry of Education, Science and Youth, Georgia **Facilitator: Dr Geena Whiteman**, Head of Tertiary Education Insight, British Council, United Kingdom **Dr Mariam Keburia,** Deputy Head, Department of Higher Education, Ministry of Education, Science and Youth, Georgia **Dr Muireann Hendriksen,** Lead Specialist Researcher, Research, Development and Thought Leadership, Pearson, United Kingdom

	Dr Narimane Hadj-Hamou, Chief Executive Officer, Centre for Learning Innovations and Customised Knowledge Solutions (CLICKS), United Arab Emirates
Day two **09.15–10.30** **Panel session** **Room:** MR25	**Parallel session 2.04** **Transnational education as a driver of system transformation** New British Council research, Quality Assurance in UK–Uzbekistan Transnational Education, receives its international launch at Going Global. It examines how quality is maintained as UK TNE in Uzbekistan grows fast and the national system expands around it. Drawing on a mapping of all UK provision and five institutional case studies, it finds partnerships moving towards local ownership, quality systems that are robust but heavy, thin academic staff capacity, and practice spreading within host institutions. The authors present the findings; a panel from Uzbekistan, Türkiye and the UK then tests them, with examples from elsewhere: can TNE keep quality as it grows, and can that quality reach the wider system? **Speakers:** **Chair: Professor Dr Komiljon Karimov,** Rector, Westminster International University in Tashkent, Uzbekistan **Hikmat Abdurahmanov,** Chief Executive Officer, TEAM University, Uzbekistan **Nilgün Yalçın Felchner**, Head of Education, British Council, Türkiye **Shannon Stowers**, Director of International Policy and Engagement, Quality Assurance Agency for Higher Education, United Kingdom
Day two **10.30–11.00** **Location:** Foyer	**Networking and refreshments**
Day two **11.00–12.15** **Plenary session**	**Day two plenary: What does good look like?** *Testing new models of higher education against quality, equity and relevance* Building on the ideas and provocations of day one, this plenary will examine some of the approaches to transformation that have been proposed so far, from AI and new institutional models to research ecosystems, global positioning and

Room: Crystal Ballroom	skills, the conference's three tests of quality, equity and relevance. At its heart is a critical question: what does good transformation actually look like? Bringing together leaders from higher education, quality assurance, industry and student perspectives, the discussion will examine where transformation is delivering meaningful results, where challenges remain, and who may be left behind. Through a candid, evidence-informed conversation, speakers will assess whether emerging approaches are robust and effective, aligned with evolving labour market and societal needs, and capable of serving all learners fairly. The session will leave delegates with a clear takeaway: transformation is only worth pursuing when it delivers on all three tests, helping set the agenda for the conference's final day on partnerships, collaboration and action. **Speakers:** **Chair: Ayşen Güven MBE**, Head of English and School Education, British Council, Türkiye **Alistair Jarvis CBE**, Chief Executive, Advance HE, United Kingdom **Dr Fulya Koyuncu,** Member of the Youth and Education Commission of the Turkish Business Confederation (TÜRKONFED) and General Manager of the Junior Achievement Türkiye Foundation, Türkiye **Professor Dr Hasan Mandal**, Rector, Istanbul Technical University, Türkiye **Hilal Karaoğlan**, PhD Student, Marmara University, Türkiye *Simultaneous interpretation between English and Turkish (via headsets) and live captioning available.
Day two **12.15–13.30** **Location:** Globe Restaurant	**Lunch**
Day two **13.30–14.45** **Panel session**	**Parallel session 2.05** **Transnational education in Turkish higher education** This session aims to provide an overview of Türkiye's transnational education initiatives, focusing on higher education institutions established abroad, and

Room: Crystal Ballroom	academic programmes offered internationally by Turkish universities. It will highlight Türkiye's growing role in international higher education, explore existing models of cross-border educational cooperation, and discuss opportunities for strengthening institutional partnerships, academic mobility, and quality assurance. The workshop will also serve as a platform for exchanging experiences and best practices and foster dialogue on the future development of transnational education and its contribution to global higher education cooperation. **Speakers:** **Chair: Mustafa Efe,** Head of the Department of International Relations, Council of Higher Education, Türkiye **Professor Dr Hüseyin Karaman,** Chairperson of the Board of Trustees, Khoja Akhmet Yassawi International Kazakh-Turkish University, Kazakhstan **Professor Dr İbrahim Çapak,** Chairperson of the Board of Trustees, Kyrgyz-Turkish Manas University, Kyrgyzstan **Associate Professor Dr Ömer Faruk Beyca**, Coordinator of Türkiye-Azerbaijan University programmes at Istanbul Technical University (ITU), Türkiye *Simultaneous interpretation between English and Turkish (via headsets) and live captioning available.
Day two **13.30–14.45** **Workshop session** **Room:** MR23	**Parallel session 2.06** **Green skills, global impact** The green transition is happening now. Are our TVET systems ready to lead it? As industries transform and demand for green skills accelerates, education leaders face a pressing challenge: how do we bridge the skills gap and prepare learners for a rapidly changing world? This interactive workshop explores how strategic leadership, innovation and international collaboration can transform TVET provision and future-proof learning. Drawing on British Council TVET International Skills Partnerships and global examples of effective practice, participants will explore practical frameworks, tools, and innovative approaches to embedding sustainability, environmental literacy and systems thinking into curricula, while strengthening industry relevance and institutional capacity. Through shared insights and

	discussion, we will identify actionable strategies to empower educators, inspire learners, and drive meaningful change, preparing learners not just for the world of work, but to shape a more sustainable world. **Speakers:** **Chair: Cerian Ayres**, Senior Consultant, TVET, British Council, United Kingdom **Jamie Allan,** Global Partnerships Manager, Forth Valley College of Further and Higher Education, United Kingdom **Mike Blakeley**, Group Executive Director of Apprenticeships and Partnerships, Exeter and North Devon College Group, United Kingdom **Professor Dr Oğuzhan Gündüz**, Head of Department of Metallurgical and Materials Engineering, Technology Faculty, Marmara University, Türkiye **Dr Sema Gündüz**, Researcher and University Lecturer, Marmara University, Türkiye
Day two **13.30-14.45** **Panel session** **Room:** MR24	**Parallel session 2.07** **Beyond growth: Building resilient systems through internationalisation** Internationalisation has strengthened quality, competitiveness and economic growth across tertiary education. However, recent shocks including geopolitical tension, demographic change, migration policy shifts and economic uncertainty have shown that the same engagement can create dependency on a narrow set of markets, partners or income streams. This panel asks what resilience looks like when growth is no longer the only measure of success. Drawing on their own experience, speakers from the UK, Türkiye and the wider region will discuss how governments and institutions can balance economic, educational and societal objectives, and what systems still expanding their international ambitions can learn from those that have already faced the risks of concentration. The panel will test a central tension: does TNE, together with digital and AI-enabled delivery, make systems more resilient by diversifying partners and building local capacity, or does it create new dependencies on a few providers, platforms and models? **Speakers:** **Chair: Professor Dr Alexander Markarov**, Head, International Cooperation Office, Yerevan State University, Armenia **Catriona McCarthy**, Director Education, British Council, United Kingdom

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	Jonathan Ledger, International Education Strategy Lead, Department for Business, Innovation, Science and Trade, UK Government, United Kingdom **Dr Mikayel Hovhannisyan**, Vice-rector for International Cooperation, Development and Innovations, Yerevan State University, Armenia
Day two **13.30–14.45** **Panel session** **Room:** MR25	**Parallel session 2.08** **Beyond projects: Building research ecosystems for the long term** Strong research systems are built on more than funding, infrastructure or international partnerships alone; they depend on the ability of universities, governments and research partners to create the conditions in which collaboration, talent and innovation can flourish over the long term. Yet across Türkiye, the South Caucasus and Central Asia, many institutions that are seeking to strengthen research performance are also navigating shifting funding environments, evolving geopolitical realities and growing competition for talent and influence. Bringing together regional evidence, institutional experience and system-level perspectives, this session explores what it takes to move from research capacity to research ecosystem. It will examine how collaboration patterns, policy choices, governance structures and international partnerships shape research outcomes, and what distinguishes resilient systems from those that remain dependent on individual projects or external support. **Speakers:** **Chair: Professor Eliso Elisashvili,** Rector, Georgian International University, Georgia **Professor Neville Wylie,** Senior Deputy Principal and Deputy Vice-Chancellor, University of Stirling, United Kingdom **Nilgün Yalçın Felchner,** Head of Education, British Council, Türkiye **Dr Razia Isaeva**, Rector, Khazar University, Azerbaijan
Day two **14.45–15.15** **Location:** Foyer	**Networking and refreshments**

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Day two **15.15–16.30** **World café session** **Room:** MR23	**Parallel session 2.09** **Crossing borders — online and offline** Digital transformation is reshaping not only how higher education is delivered, but how internationalisation, quality and inclusion are understood. Framed by DAAD's Strategy 2030 and its vision for digitally enabled, sustainable and accessible international higher education, this interactive World Café will explore how institutions can use digital technologies and AI to expand access, enhance learning and strengthen transnational collaboration. Through case studies and facilitated discussion, participants will examine how these ambitions are being translated into practice through transnational education partnerships, digitally supported curricula and AI-enhanced teaching approaches. Drawing on examples from Germany, Türkiye and Georgia, the session will explore both the opportunities and challenges of implementation across diverse educational contexts. Participants will leave with practical insights, peer perspectives and transferable approaches for designing innovative, inclusive and sustainable international education partnerships in an increasingly AI-enabled world. **Speakers:** **Chair: Suad Shumareye,** Head of Section, DAAD (German Academic Exchange Service), Germany **Professor Dr Christoph Weisser,** Professor of Business Data Science, Bielefeld University of Applied Sciences and Arts (HSBI), Germany **Dr Nicola Huson,** Coordinator, Turkish-German University, Türkiye **Professor Nino Gachechiladze**, Head of the Research Centre, Business and Technology University (BTU), Georgia **Professor Dr Sven Hellbach,** Professor for Informatics and Intelligent Systems, Westsächsische Hochschule Zwickau, Germany
Day two **15.15–16.30**	**Parallel session 2.10** **Driving innovation, employability and growth through applied and technological education models**

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Panel session **Room:** MR24	Around the world, a new generation of universities is emerging that blends hands-on technical learning with innovation, entrepreneurship and strong ties to the labour market, to drive employability and regional economic growth. This session explores the role of technological universities and applied higher education institutions in shaping more resilient and relevant higher education systems, drawing on perspectives from Egypt, Türkiye and the UK. Drawing on a newly published British Council study of the technological university model in Egypt, the session examines how different systems balance applied skills, employability, research and innovation, and how international collaboration can strengthen these models. Several of Egypt's institutions involve embedded international partners (for example from Germany and Korea), drawing on established technical education frameworks and creating direct links to international employers. Through a comparative lens, the session will identify what makes such models thrive and how they can be adapted to different national and regional contexts. **Speakers:** **Chair: Nesma Mostafa,** Head of Tertiary Education Insights and Mobility, British Council, Egypt **Emma Meredith,** Director of Skills Policy and Global Engagement, Association of Colleges, United Kingdom **Professor Dr Hacı Ali Mantar**, Rector, Gebze Technical University, Türkiye **Hanan El Rihany**, Chief Executive Officer and Board Member, ElSewedy University of Technology, Egypt
Day two **15.15–16.30** **Panel session** **Room:** MR25	**Parallel session 2.11** **Employability and the future of work: Bridging skills gaps through global partnerships** This session will explore the role that transnational education plays in supporting the development of skills needed for the future of work in the host country, and the role that host country governments play in shaping the agenda. This includes the skills needed for employment in emerging sectors in the labour market, and for building enterprises for the future.

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	Speakers: **Chair: Susanna Carmody**, Director Student Mobility and Internationalisation of UK Education, British Council, United Kingdom **Cherise Basslian**, Director of Careers and Student Enterprise, University of East London, United Kingdom **Dr Geena Whiteman**, Head of Tertiary Education Insight, British Council, United Kingdom **Dr Howaida Barakat,** Chief Operating Officer, Egypt Global Hub at University of East London, Egypt **Dr Mukhammadfoik Bakhadirov,** Head of Innovation and Entrepreneurship Lab, Westminster International University in Tashkent, Uzbekistan **Dr Nitesh Sughnani,** Expert (Higher Education) Policies, Research & Programs, Knowledge and Human Development Authority, United Arab Emirates
Day two **17.30**	**End of conference day two**

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	Day three – Thursday 19 November
Day three **09.00–09.15** **Location:** Foyer	**Welcome refreshments**
Day three **09.15–10.30** **Panel session** **Room:** Crystal Ballroom	**Parallel session 3.01** **From crisis to transformation: Rebuilding universities for a more resilient future** Higher education institutions increasingly find themselves responding to crises that disrupt access to education, damage institutional capacity and affect entire communities. Whether caused by conflict, displacement, political instability or other global shocks, these challenges raise an important question: how can universities move beyond short-term emergency interventions towards sustainable forms of international collaboration that create lasting impact? This interactive session brings together leaders from government, universities and sector organisations to explore how higher education can contribute to resilience, recovery and long-term transformation in crisis-affected contexts. Drawing on lessons from Ukraine, global refugee education initiatives and broader experiences of institutional reconstruction, contributors will examine what enables partnerships to evolve from acts of solidarity into strategic, mutually beneficial collaborations. **Speakers:** **Chair: Colm McGivern**, Country Director, British Council Northern Ireland, United Kingdom **Dr Anzhela Stashchak**, Director for Projects, Cormack Consultancy Group, United Kingdom **Ben Webster,** Founder and Chief Executive Officer, Mosaik Education, United Kingdom **Professor Gwen van der Velden**, Co-Director of the Centre for Peace-making, Reconstruction and Equitable Futures, University of Warwick, United Kingdom **Mykola Trofymenko**, Deputy Minister, Ministry of Education and Science, Ukraine

	*Simultaneous interpretation between English and Turkish (via headsets) and live captioning available.
Day three **09.15–10.30** **Panel session** **Room:** MR23	**Parallel session 3.02** **The new 'Education Silk Road': Who will lead TNE?** Transnational education (TNE) has become an increasingly important policy tool for governments seeking to align higher education with national development goals. A decade ago, TNE was largely demand-led, absorbing unmet domestic need. Today, it is shaped by host-country priorities such as skills development, innovation, economic diversification, and global competitiveness. This shift requires universities to adopt a clearer strategic approach, ensuring partnerships align with national agendas, labour market needs and geopolitical contexts. TNE is increasingly affected by geopolitics and international disruption, demographic, economic and technological drivers are reshaping student mobility, strengthening regional education hubs, and increasing the strategic importance of cross-border collaboration to consolidate their position and protect them against disruption. **Speakers:** **Chair: Dr Janet Illieva,** Founder, Education Insight, United Kingdom **Anna Dukes**, Director of Global Engagement, Cardiff Metropolitan University, United Kingdom **Professor Dr Jason Lane**, Senior Advisor to the President, University of Illinois, United States **Mustafa Efe**, Head of the Department of International Relations, Council of Higher Education, Türkiye **Hikmat Abdurahmanov**, Chief Executive Officer, TEAM University, Uzbekistan
Day three **09.15–10.30** **Panel session**	**Parallel session 3.03** **Inclusive futures: International partnerships and systemic change** As tertiary education systems expand, ensuring that all students can participate, progress and succeed has become a defining challenge. This panel explores how universities can embed equity and inclusion at scale, and the role international partnerships can play in driving meaningful change.

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Room: MR24	Through perspectives from university leaders, academics, teachers and students in Uzbekistan and the UK, participants will examine effective approaches to inclusive leadership, curriculum design, disability support, governance and capacity building. The discussion will also explore how digital technologies and AI can support access and student success while avoiding new forms of exclusion. Drawing on lessons from collaborative projects, the session will identify practical strategies for creating more inclusive institutions and stronger higher education systems. Participants will leave with ideas and approaches that can be applied within their own contexts. **Speakers:** **Chair: Martin Hope,** Director, Tertiary Education Partnerships and Science, British Council, United Kingdom **Professor Andrew Linn**, Deputy Vice Chancellor, Research and Knowledge Exchange, University of Westminster, United Kingdom **Professor Gosia Kwiatkowska**, Director of the RIX Inclusive Research Institute, University of East London, United Kingdom **Jamilya Gulyamova**, Deputy Director, British Council, Uzbekistan **Dr Nodira Isamukhamedova**, Associate Professor, Westminster International University in Tashkent, Uzbekistan **Dr Shakhnoza Tokhtiyarova**, Associate Professor, Department of Speech-Language Therapy, Uzbekistan National Pedagogical University, Uzbekistan
Day three **09.15–10.30** **Panel session** **Room:** MR25	**Parallel session 3.04** **Alumni as partners, not audiences: What universities miss about their international graduates?** UK alumni networks represent a powerful but often underused resource for strengthening higher education and TVET systems across Armenia, Azerbaijan, Georgia, Kazakhstan, Türkiye and Uzbekistan. This interactive session will explore how alumni can contribute as institutional partners, policy influencers, entrepreneurs and community leaders, helping to connect global knowledge with local priorities.

	Drawing on examples from across the UK and the region, participants will examine practical models for alumni engagement, including ambassador programmes, communities of practice and collaborative initiatives. Together, they will consider how alumni networks can support innovation, skills development, leadership, inclusion and international collaboration in a rapidly changing educational landscape. Participants will leave with practical ideas for embedding alumni more strategically within partnership, employability and institutional development agendas, recognising alumni not only as beneficiaries of education systems but as active contributors to their transformation. **Speakers:** **Chair: Susanna Carmody**, Director Student Mobility and Internationalisation of UK Education, British Council, United Kingdom **Maria Tsakali**, Senior Consultant, Programme Development, Alumni UK, British Council, Greece **Atir Guliyeva**, Senior Specialist, Institute of Education of the Republic of Azerbaijan and Alumni UK SDG 4 Inclusive Education Ambassador, Azerbaijan **Professor Dr Barış Alpaslan**, Vice President of the Committee of Experts on the 2030 Agenda for SDGs at the Turkish National Commission for UNESCO, Türkiye **Lusine Manukyan,** Executive Director, Health for Armenia and Alumni UK Ambassador for Wider Europe, Armenia **Rosemary Simm**, Head of International Employability, University of Glasgow, United Kingdom
Day three **10.30–11.00** **Location:** Foyer	**Networking and refreshments**
Day three **11.00–12.15** **World café session** **Room:** MR23	**Parallel session 3.06** **Advancing women's leadership for a more inclusive and sustainable future** Despite significant progress in higher education globally, women remain underrepresented in senior leadership positions. This interactive session

	explores how advancing women's leadership can become a catalyst for wider institutional and systemic change. Using a simple ME-WE-US-IMPACT framework, participants will examine the relationship between individual leadership, organisational culture and institutional systems, and consider how a broader range of leadership capacities can support more inclusive and sustainable futures. Through facilitated discussion and a collaborative Tree of Change, participants will identify practical actions that help create cultures, structures and leadership practices in which diverse talent can flourish. **Speakers:** **Chair: Barbara Bassa**, Senior Consultant, Leadership and Organisational Development, Advance HE, United Kingdom **Co-chair: Yulia Sobol**, Head of Education, British Council, Ukraine **Facilitators** **Colm McGivern**, Country Director, British Council Northern Ireland, United Kingdom **Dr Geena Whiteman**, Head of Tertiary Education Insight, British Council, United Kingdom **Jane Lowther**, Global Lead Tertiary Education Insight and Engagement, British Council, United Kingdom **Susanna Carmody**, Director Student Mobility and Internationalisation of UK Education, British Council, United Kingdom
Day three **11.00–12.15** **World café session** **Room:** MR24	**Parallel session 3.07** **Skills in the storm: Systems that survive disruption** Across the Going Global 2026 region and beyond, education and skills systems face ageing populations, youth unemployment, migration, labour shortages, economic volatility, AI disruption, climate change and geopolitical uncertainty. Traditional assumptions about stable careers and qualifications that last a lifetime no longer hold. This interactive World Café session explores how TVET and tertiary education can build resilience for an unpredictable future. Drawing on lessons from countries managing workforce disruption, migration and recovery, participants will examine what resilient-by-default systems look like and how they can adapt to rapid change. Delegates will join one of four discussion tables and leave with practical design principles for future-ready education and training. **Speakers:**

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	Chair: Jane (Rexworthy) Whiteheart OBE, Chief Executive Officer, Skills for Inclusion Ltd, United Kingdom **Emma Meredith,** Director of Skills Policy and Global Engagement, Association of Colleges, United Kingdom **Jonathan Ledger**, International Education Strategy Lead, Department for Business, Innovation, Science and Trade, UK Government, United Kingdom **Robert Taylor**, Country Director, British Council Kazakhstan **Yağmur Kamacı,** Student, Hacettepe University, Türkiye **Zaza Purtseladze,** Country Director, British Council, Georgia
Day three **11.00–12.15** **World café session** **Room:** MR25	**Parallel session 3.08** **Beyond Access: Disability Inclusion in Practice** As tertiary education systems across the region expand, disability inclusion remains an unfinished promise. Students and staff with disabilities continue to encounter barriers that limit access, participation and success, from the physical and digital environment to institutional cultures and policy frameworks. Bringing together practitioners and policymakers from Armenia, Türkiye, Ukraine and the United Kingdom, this session will explore both progress and persistent challenges. Contributors will share practical examples of what is working, alongside honest reflections on what is proving difficult, where gaps remain and why change can be slow. Through roundtable discussions and shared reflection, participants will exchange experiences, test assumptions and learn from diverse approaches across countries and systems. The session aims to surface insights, foster connections and encourage a deeper conversation about what it takes to create truly inclusive higher education environments. **Speakers:** **Chair: Professor Anica Zeyen**, Professor in Entrepreneurship and Inclusion, Royal Holloway University, London, United Kingdom **Ivanna Mohylyak**, Dean of Student Affairs, Ukrainian Catholic University, Ukraine

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	Professor Dr Meltem Yılmaz, Council of Higher Education Commission Member for Students with Disabilities and Dean, Faculty of Architecture, Hacettepe University, Türkiye **Naregh Galoustian,** Vice Rector for International Affairs, Yerevan State Theatre and Film Institute, Armenia
Day three **12.15–13.15** **Location:** The Globe Restaurant	**Networking Lunch**
Day three **13.15–14.30** **Plenary session** **Location:** Crystal Ballroom	**Closing plenary: Building the future through partnership:** *Shared leadership for higher education transformation* The closing plenary turns what the conference has found into commitments: how transformation happens, with whom, and what delegates do next. At its centre is the tension between dependence and partnership: who holds the power in a typical transnational education partnership today, and how should that shift? We'll hear answers to those questions both from those who build and who hold partnerships: a host-country university leader in Istanbul; a UK university leader building campuses and partnerships across Europe, Asia and Africa; an employer; and a university leader from Azerbaijan. This will be a moderated conversation rather than a contest, with short opening contributions followed by discussion between speakers and ending with commitments that delegates can carry into the first month after Istanbul. **Speakers:** **Chair: Sir Steve Smith**, International Education Champion, UK Government, United Kingdom **Professor Dr Ayşe Başar,** Rector, Kadir Has University, Türkiye **Seçil Bayram Erdem,** Human Resources Director, Pegasus Airlines, Türkiye **Dr Razia Isaeva**, Rector, Khazar University, Azerbaijan **Professor Simon Guy,** Pro-Vice Chancellor Global (Digital, International, Sustainability), Lancaster University, United Kingdom

	*Simultaneous interpretation between English and Turkish (via headsets) and live captioning available.
Day three 14.30-14.45 **Location:** Crystal Ballroom	**Farewell address**
Day three 14.45	**End of Going Global Conference 2026**