

# About 2025 APQN AAC & AGM

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UNESCO recognises the pivotal role of higher education institutions (HEIs) in achieving the Sustainable Development Goals (SDGs), particularly SDG 4 which aims to ensure inclusive and equitable quality education and promote lifelong learning opportunities for all. Industry collaboration in higher education is a powerful conduit for achieving this goal.

The concept of industry collaboration represents an emerging trend for the future of higher education, refining the traditional boundaries between academia and industries, with a more integrated approach to learning, where higher education institutions and industries work together in preparing students for the complexities of the modern workforce, ensuring that they acquire not only theoretical knowledge but also practical skills that are applicable in their professional lives. This emerging trend emphasises the importance of adaptability and lifelong learning, amidst the rapid pace of technological advancement and globalisation. By fostering direct connections with industry, universities can become hubs of innovation. When educational institutions partner with industry leaders, they gain access to cutting-edge technologies and industry expertise, including applications of AI, which can be integrated into the curriculum. Such collaborations can foster innovation in pedagogical approaches, leading to more engaging and effective teaching methods that cater to diverse learning styles, thereby improving educational outcomes.

With the support and resources of industry partners, universities can undertake research projects that may lead to breakthroughs and advancements in various fields. These projects often provide students with the opportunity to work alongside experienced professionals and researchers, further enriching their educational experience.

Moreover, such collaborations can lead to the development of specialised courses and programmes with academic and professional excellence, e.g. micro-credentials co-developed to fill skill gaps in the industry, thereby increasing the employability of graduates, and at the time, facilitate the development of multiple pathways for higher education and lifelong learning.

In essence, industry collaboration in higher education is not just about enhancing the quality of education; it is about refining the educational landscape to produce graduates who are not only employable but also conscientious citizens capable of contributing to the achievement of the SDGs. It is about creating a more inclusive, equitable, and sustainable world through the power of education.

During the Conference, the following four sub-themes:

#### Sub-themes

- Professional Relevance and Quality of Higher Education: Collaboration and Integration with Industry
- Innovation and Quality in Higher Education Curriculum and Pedagogy in line with Industry Collaborations
- Fostering Quality of Flexible Learning Pathways
- Driving for Excellence in Higher Education: Role of External Quality Assurance

offer a framework for higher education institutions and quality assurance agencies to share knowledge and experiences amidst the changing landscape of higher education and industry collaborations, as well as the challenges and opportunities brought by technological advancement, such as AI, on curriculum design, pedagogy, research and assessment, including the development and recognition of micro-credentials for creating flexible learning pathways for higher education. High-quality education relies on robust internal quality assurance mechanisms in institutions. There are also challenges in terms of maintaining academic standards, quality of collaboration, and balance of interests among stakeholders. The functions of external quality assurance standards and processes are extending from gatekeeping to supporting development and enhancement. Quality assurance for industry collaborations is also a key perspective to ensure success of this emerging trend.

