TRANSFORM4EUROPE CONFERENCE
Enhancing Professional Excellence: Synergy of academic and non-academic staff (PROF-SYNERGY)

We are happy to invite you to the Transform4Europe Alliance's international conference "Enhancing Professional Excellence: Synergy of Academic and Non-Academic Staff (PROF-SYNERGY)". The conference will take place on 9–11 April 2025 at Vytautas Magnus University. This conference is part of the Transform4Europe Alliance's conference series. The event follows the tradition of the previous Inno-Methods conferences, which focused on innovative teaching and learning methods in higher education.

This year's conference marks a significant evolution as it brings academic and non-academic staff together, aiming to foster a more profound synergy between these groups. During this conference, we seek to create opportunities for meaningful exchanges between academic and non-academic staff, promoting collaboration across professional roles within higher education. This new conference format emphasizes the importance of professional growth and collective development within the educational community.

We invite all attendees to actively participate, collaborate, and exchange experiences as we work together to foster a culture of continuous improvement and excellence.

Make sure to register, and do not forget to apply for the Erasmus+ staff training programme to secure funding for participation.

How to use the Erasmus+ staff training programme to participate in the event?

Technically, the Erasmus+ staff training programme is not eligible for participation in events formatted as conferences. However, the programme is designed to fund mobilities and participation in various training programmes. We are offering five different programmes during the conference in Kaunas. Therefore, instead of applying for participation in the conference, please apply for one of the five training programmes that we are offering. Detailed information about the training programmes is

available below. Additionally, to make our event programme more compatible with the Erasmus+ staff training programme, we are offering an optional third day dedicated to job-shadowing activities at respective departments at Vytautas Magnus University.

While applying for Erasmus+ grant apply for one of the following 5 training programmes:

Training programme	Short description of the programme	Expected outcomes
Digital Learning Technologies	Digital transformation in higher education offers significant opportunities for both academic and non-academic staff to enhance teaching, learning, and administrative practices. Participants will explore and experience a range of innovative digital tools and platforms designed to enhance engagement and address the diverse needs of students. The sessions will focus on practical strategies for effectively integrating technology into teaching practices, providing hands-on experience with various tools. Additionally, the training will promote an understanding of the challenges and opportunities associated with digital equity in educational contexts, ensuring that all students have equal access to digital resources and learning opportunities.	▪ **Increased Competence in Using Digital Tools**: Participants will develop proficiency in utilizing a variety of digital tools and platforms to enhance teaching and learning, such as interactive learning management systems, collaborative tools, and multimedia resources. ▪ **Enhanced Engagement Strategies**: Participants will learn how to integrate technology in ways that boost student engagement, fostering more interactive and participatory learning experiences. ▪ **Effective Integration of Technology in Teaching Practices**: Participants will acquire practical strategies to seamlessly integrate digital tools into their teaching practices, improving lesson planning, delivery, and assessment. ▪ **Critical Reflection on Digital Transformation**: Participants will engage in discussions about the impact of digital transformation on higher education, critically analyzing how digitalization reshapes the educational landscape and its implications on teaching and learning. ▪ **Preparedness for Future Digital Trends**: Participants will be equipped with the knowledge to stay ahead of emerging digital trends in education and adapt to future technological innovations, maintaining relevance in the evolving educational environment.

		Development of Inclusive Teaching Practices: Participants will learn how to design and deliver courses that are digitally inclusive, considering the varied technological skills and access levels among students.
Innovative Teaching Methods	Innovative teaching methods enhance educational content by incorporating the latest digital tools, while considering both the needs of students and the skills of teachers. Participants will have the opportunity to explore and experience a variety of pedagogical approaches that foster critical thinking, collaboration, engagement, and other essential skills. Emphasizing the importance of ongoing professional development, the sessions will equip both academic and non-academic staff with actionable strategies to improve educational delivery, ensuring they are well-prepared to adapt to evolving learner expectations and the changing landscape of education.	▪ **Enhanced Pedagogical Knowledge**: Participants will gain an understanding of innovative teaching methods that incorporate the latest digital tools, enhancing the way content is delivered and received by students. ▪ **Improved Teaching and Learning Strategies**: Participants will develop actionable strategies for integrating digital tools into their teaching methods, fostering engagement, collaboration, and critical thinking among students. ▪ **Better Adaptation to Evolving Learner Needs**: Participants will be able to identify and adapt to the changing expectations of students, applying new pedagogical approaches that cater to a diverse range of learning styles and needs. ▪ **Increased Engagement and Collaboration**: Participants will learn how to create an interactive and collaborative classroom environment, using digital tools to encourage student participation and teamwork. ▪ **Fostering Critical Thinking in Students**: Participants will explore methods for promoting critical thinking and problem-solving skills in students through the use of technology and innovative pedagogical approaches. ▪ **Improved Digital Literacy in Teaching**: Participants will gain greater proficiency with a range of digital tools that can be used to enhance lesson planning, delivery, and assessment, contributing to a more dynamic and effective teaching environment. ▪ **Collaborative Approaches to Educational Delivery**: Participants will learn how to collaborate more effectively with both academic and non-academic staff to create cohesive, technology-enhanced learning experiences.

		■ **Capacity for Flexible Teaching Adaptation**: Participants will develop the skills needed to adapt their teaching to various learning environments (e.g., in-person, online, hybrid), ensuring consistent quality of education in any context. ■ **Refined Understanding of Learner-Centered Teaching**: Participants will deepen their understanding of learner-centered teaching principles, focusing on ways to meet the diverse needs of students through innovative and inclusive pedagogical practices.
Resilience Skills	Psychological resilience skills are essential for supporting the mental wellbeing of both academic and non-academic staff amidst the ongoing changes and challenges in education. Participants will have the opportunity to explore a variety of strategies for cultivating resilience, including emotional intelligence, adaptability, stress management techniques, and more. The sessions will emphasize the importance of fostering a supportive and caring culture within the institution, providing both academic and non-academic staff with practical tools to mentor colleagues and enhance the overall wellbeing of the educational environment.	■ **Enhanced Stress Management Techniques**: Participants will gain practical strategies for managing stress effectively, enabling them to maintain mental wellbeing during periods of change and pressure. ■ **Improved Adaptability**: Participants will learn how to adapt to changes more easily, cultivating resilience in themselves and others by developing a more flexible mindset and approach. ■ **Supportive Workplace Culture**: Participants will understand the importance of fostering a culture of support, where academic and non-academic staff feel empowered to maintain mental wellbeing and provide mutual support. ■ **Practical Resilience Strategies**: Participants will explore and practice various strategies for building resilience, equipping them with tools to navigate challenges both personally and professionally. ■ **Improved Mental Wellbeing Awareness**: Participants will gain a deeper understanding of the psychological aspects of resilience and how to apply them to foster mental wellbeing in an academic setting. ■ **Better Coping Mechanisms for Change**: Participants will learn how to navigate the ongoing changes within the education sector with a stronger sense of resilience, helping them to cope with uncertainty and challenges.

		- **Promotion of Mental Wellbeing in Educational Environments**: Participants will develop the knowledge and skills to advocate for and contribute to a positive, mentally healthy educational environment, supporting the mental wellbeing of all staff and students.
Lifelong Learning Competences	Lifelong learning skills are essential for continuous professional development in higher education. This session highlights the importance of fostering a culture of lifelong learning that involves both academic and non-academic staff, ensuring that all members of the institution are engaged in ongoing development. By sharing experiences and best practices in designing effective learning pathways, participants will gain actionable strategies to promote continuous learning and professional growth. Additionally, the session will provide valuable insights into how technology can enhance and facilitate lifelong learning opportunities, making professional development more accessible and flexible for all staff.	- **Enhanced Understanding of Lifelong Learning**: Participants will gain a deeper understanding of the importance of lifelong learning in higher education and how it contributes to continuous professional development for both academic and non-academic staff. - **Strategies for Promoting Continuous Learning**: Participants will develop actionable strategies for fostering a culture of lifelong learning within their institutions, encouraging ongoing professional growth and development. - Best Practices in Designing Learning Pathways: Participants will explore and share best practices for designing learning pathways that are flexible, accessible, and tailored to the needs of diverse learners, ensuring continuous learning opportunities for all staff. - **Integration of Technology in Lifelong Learning**: Participants will learn how to leverage technology to create and enhance lifelong learning opportunities, using digital tools to facilitate access to professional development resources and learning platforms. - **Improved Support for Staff Development**: Participants will explore ways to support the continuous learning journey of both academic and non-academic staff, ensuring that development opportunities are available and accessible to everyone. - **Collaboration Across Roles**: Participants will strengthen their ability to collaborate across academic and non-academic roles to create a holistic approach to lifelong learning, benefiting the entire institution.

		▪ **Fostering a Learning–Oriented Institutional Culture**: Participants will gain insights into how to cultivate a learning–oriented culture within their institution, where professional development is prioritized and seen as a shared responsibility.
		▪ **Better Engagement with Professional Development**: Participants will develop strategies to engage staff in professional development initiatives and encourage them to take ownership of their own lifelong learning.
Development of Quality Culture	Developing quality culture in Higher Education (HE) aims to explore key milestones, best practices, and strategic approaches to fostering excellence in higher education institutions. Participants will delve into strategies for embedding a quality culture within their organizations. Workshops will emphasize the importance of defining and measuring quality in HE, the role of innovative methods and AI in enhancing quality, improving student support services, feedback and enhancing the overall student experience, student-centered learning, international perspectives on quality culture by learning from best practices in other countries. By addressing these critical topics, this conference seeks to contribute to the ongoing development of quality culture in HE, ultimately enhancing the overall quality of teaching, learning, research, management, and administration.	▪ **Understanding Quality Culture in Higher Education**: Participants will gain a comprehensive understanding of what constitutes a quality culture in higher education and why it is essential for the continuous improvement of academic institutions. ▪ **Defining and Measuring Quality in HE**: Participants will learn how to define and establish clear metrics for measuring quality in higher education, ensuring consistent and effective assessments of institutional performance. ▪ **Leveraging Innovation and AI to Enhance Quality**: Participants will explore how innovative methods and artificial intelligence (AI) can be used to improve educational quality, streamline processes, and enhance the student experience. ▪ **Improving Student Support and Feedback Systems**: Participants will gain insights into enhancing student support services and feedback mechanisms, ensuring that students receive timely and effective guidance to improve their academic experience. ▪ **International Best Practices in Quality Culture**: Participants will examine international perspectives on quality culture, learning from the best practices and experiences of other countries to implement effective approaches in their own institutions.

		▪ **Strengthening Teaching, Learning, and Research Excellence**: Participants will explore approaches to improving the quality of teaching and research, ensuring that academic practices align with the highest standards of excellence.
		▪ **Improving Management and Administrative Practices**: Participants will examine the role of institutional management and administration in fostering a quality culture, learning strategies to enhance operational efficiency and student satisfaction.

Important Information about VMU for the Erasmus+ Mobility Agreement:

The Receiving Institution / Enterprise

Name	in national language	Vytauto Didziojo universitetas	
	in English	Vytautas Magnus University	
Organisation ID (if applicable)		E10207994	
Erasmus code (if applicable)		LT KAUNAS01	
WEB page address		http://www.vdu.lt	
Size of receiving institution		☐<250 employees; ☒>250 employees	
Country	Lithuania	Country code	LT
Full address		K. Donelaičio g. 58, LT–44248, Kaunas, Lithuania	
Department/unit		Center for Strategic Analysis and Partnerships	
Contact person name and position		Name Tomas Mickevičius	

	Position Project Manager
Contact person (e-mail / phone)	e-mail Tomas.Mickevicius@vdu.lt phone +370 37 327834

Don't hesitate to contact us via email at Transform4Europe@vdu.lt if we can be of any assistance.