

Tomorrow's Teachers Today: What Universities Can Do for the Teaching Profession

LERU advice paper
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Executive summary

Pre-university education in Europe is facing serious challenges. One of these is recruiting teachers in STEM¹ subjects and languages. Another one is the need to support teachers' efforts to better prepare their pupils for the challenges and opportunities of the 21st century. But there are many more.

This paper identifies contributions that universities can make to address these challenges. The focus is on those initiatives that universities can undertake themselves to make Initial Teacher Education and Continuing Professional Development for teachers more attractive and that can help to improve the prestige of a career in pre-university teaching.

LERU recommends four areas of action for universities. These are:

1. A renewed and Rewarded Involvement in Initial Teacher Education and Continuing Professional Development

- Focus on increased involvement of academic staff in Initial Teacher Education and of universities in general in various Continuing Professional Development initiatives;
- Innovative cooperation between STEM and Social Sciences & Humanities disciplines and exploration of interdisciplinary thinking in pre-university curricula;
- Extra commitment on the part of academic staff needs to be properly acknowledged and rewarded. Structural funding and robust infrastructures are needed to make any initiative sustainable.

2. Improved Public and Pupil Engagement

- Encourage academics to enrich their courses with outreach excursions on how to share the course content with the wider public, including pupils;
- Introduce an (elective) communication and teaching track in all academic programmes.

3. The Promotion of (for now) Atypical Teaching Careers

- Promote pre-university education as a positive, potential career perspective for PhD holders;
- Facilitate flexible and affordable teacher training programmes to stimulate influx from other parts of the labour market into education, as well as the development of hybrid careers.

4. Increased Educational Research

- Promote the right balance between subject expertise and pedagogical skills in Initial Teacher Education and increased investment in educational research.

The paper also outlines briefly how external stakeholders can improve the attractiveness of pre-university education careers and highlights several outreach and Continuing Professional Development initiatives at LERU universities.

Acknowledgements

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