



The International Education Association of South Africa (IEASA) is delighted to announce its 28th Annual Conference, set to take place in East London from 25 to 28 August 2026.

The theme of the conference is **‘Rewriting the Agenda: Internationalisation Through a Global South Lens’**.

IEASA’s 28th annual conference invites higher education leaders, internationalisation practitioners, academics, scholars and students to critically engage with the assumptions, priorities and power structures that have long shaped internationalisation globally. Framed through a distinctly Global South lens, the focus is on illuminating emerging trends, innovations and collaborations that originate from Africa, Latin America, Asia and the Middle East—spaces too often positioned as recipients rather than drivers of global knowledge. Discussions will explore how institutions from the South are redefining mobility, research partnerships, strategies, international curricula and digital engagement in ways that foreground equity, sustainability, cultural relevance and local development.

The 2026 theme aims to take the conversation a decisive step further, marking a shift from critique to authorship and ownership - moving beyond exposing inequities to actively designing new models of internationalisation, and asserting Africa’s right to conceptualise, innovate and lead. This shift widens the aperture of internationalisation beyond mobility to include digital engagement, knowledge diplomacy, language, rankings and South-driven research agendas. In doing so, it reinforces IEASA’s growing role in shaping sectoral strategy, and not only operational practice.

By linking Africa to Latin America, Asia and the Middle East, the theme promotes a continental and interregional perspective, highlighting shared histories and collective futures that challenge traditional Global North–South hierarchies. This solidarity-based positioning strengthens IEASA’s voice within global platforms—especially as discussions around multipolarity and knowledge geopolitics gain traction.

The theme also supports South Africa’s aspirations for knowledge diplomacy, African integration and partnerships that drive socio-economic development. At the institutional level, it enables universities to create more inclusive and locally relevant models of internationalisation while remaining globally competitive. Importantly, the theme reflects the growing leadership role of IEASA as a platform for thought leadership, policy engagement and capacity building. It positions the conference as a site for agenda-setting—both for South Africa and the broader Global South community.

Sub-themes for exploration:

- **Decolonising internationalisation and rebalancing power:** Considering contextually grounded theories and practices rooted in southern epistemologies; rethinking rankings, prestige and visibility for impact; highlighting the shift from one-way knowledge transfer to mutual co-creation;
- **Africa-led global engagements and knowledge diplomacy:** Unpacking African and broader Global South knowledge diplomacy approaches as strategies for shaping South-driven research agendas;
- **Curriculum, pedagogy and language:** Unpacking internationalisation of the curricula from the South-intellectual foundation; the role and place of African languages in global academic spaces and engagements; cultural internationalisation beyond Western norms;
- **Innovation from the Global South:** Showcasing how Africa and other parts of the Global South are developing solutions and models distinct from Northern precedents; discuss how to tackle global challenges through South-driven research and innovation;
- **Inclusive and innovative mobility ecosystems:** South-South mobility opportunities and barriers; integrating virtual, hybrid, and AI-driven strategies that widen participation; virtual mobility as a tool for equity and inclusion; technology models for widening participation;
- **Student voices, agency and leadership:** Engagements on students as co-creators and leaders in internationalisation; youth-led initiatives and innovations; student-driven models of South-South engagement.
- **Professional futures of internationalisation practitioners:** Professionalisation, leadership, skills development, career pathways, and communities of practice.

Call for contributions:

IEASA warmly invites academics, researchers, professionals, practitioners, educators, students, innovators, and leaders in international higher education to contribute to this conference. We encourage diverse perspectives and insights, including:

- Informed opinions or thought pieces.
- Research findings and reflections.
- Best practice examples and lived experiences.
- Innovative plans and strategies.

Contributors are encouraged to align their proposals with one or more of the sub-themes, which reflect the conference's commitment to centering Global South leadership, innovation and epistemologies in international higher education. Contributions are invited for the following formats:

- Parallel Sessions: Interactive discussions and presentations
- Panel discussions: Multi-voice dialogues offering diverse perspectives on a shared topic
- Case Studies: Institutional, national or regional examples illustrating effective emerging practices
- Innovative or Interactive sessions: Creative formats that actively engage participants beyond traditional presentations
- Poster Presentations: Visual displays of research, projects or innovative practices
- Workshops: Hands-on and in-depth explorations of topics.

We look forward to your participation in advancing dialogue, collaboration, and innovation in international higher education.

Submission details and timelines:

Parallel, panel, case studies, innovative active and poster sessions:

Please submit your proposal online by **Friday, 13 March 2026** at:

<https://forms.office.com/r/1ZpVVVx8bW>

Workshops:

Please submit your proposal online by **Friday, 13 March 2026** at:

<https://forms.office.com/r/HYWx9vNAn2>

Submission of proposals	Opens on Friday, 16 January 2026 Closes on Friday, 13 March 2026
Notification of Selection results	April 2026
Deadline for Speaker Confirmation	April 2026
Conference registration	Opens in May 2026

Contact details:

Please address all conference-related queries to the Conference Committee via the following email address:

events@ieasa.studyasa.org.