



As at: 23 October 2026

Call for Papers**Career Guidance in a Digitally Transformed World:
Supporting Careers, Learning and Agency in the Age of AI****4th CAREER LEAD Network Online Conference
12–13 April 2027**

Digital technologies are transforming the world of work, professional activities and the (skills) requirements placed on (future) employees. At the same time, they are increasingly shaping the way in which young people find out about careers, explore career opportunities and develop ideas about their future careers. Career guidance therefore no longer takes place exclusively within institutionally organised education and counselling programmes, but equally on digital platforms, on social media and, consequently, often within algorithmically structured information spaces.

As career guidance services become increasingly digital – not least through artificial intelligence, virtual reality and augmented reality – new opportunities are emerging to enable young people to gain experience in job-specific activities, to offer more personalised and targeted guidance services (e.g. via chatbots), or to provide them with a more diverse information base. Virtual and augmented learning environments can make it possible to experience vocational activities, workplaces and business processes regardless of spatial, temporal or organisational barriers to access. AI-based applications can process information, support individual learning and reflection processes, suggest career options, or link skills and interests to educational and career pathways. Furthermore, digital and hybrid formats can facilitate new forms of guidance, cooperation and support during career transitions.

However, these developments raise fundamental pedagogical, didactic, social and ethical questions. Digital services do not merely reflect career realities; rather, they select information, structure perceptions and influence which career options are made visible or identified as suitable. The use of algorithmic systems therefore raises questions regarding transparency, data protection, fairness and pedagogical responsibility. At the same time, it is necessary to examine whether digital services reduce existing barriers to access or whether they create or exacerbate new forms of digital and social inequality.

Against this backdrop, the overarching question arises as to how career guidance can be shaped in the context of digital transformation, so that it not only informs young people or connects them with existing educational and career opportunities, but also empowers them to shape their



own career paths in a self-determined and reflective manner, whilst taking social conditions into account.

The fourth CAREER LEAD Network Conference is dedicated to the potential, enabling conditions and limitations of digital technologies in school-based career guidance. It brings together European and international perspectives from academia, educational practice, counselling, educational administration and education policy. The aim is to discuss the latest research findings, present innovative approaches and applications, and promote dialogue on the pedagogically responsible design of digitally supported career guidance.

Key Topics:

We welcome theoretical and conceptual, empirical and design-oriented contributions, as well as academically grounded practice and development projects **with a focus on schools**. Contributions may, amongst other things, address the following questions:

Digital Transformation and Labour Market Information

- How can young people be supported in understanding technological changes in the world of work and relating these to their own aspirations for their future careers?
- How are digital platforms, social media and algorithmically selected content changing perceptions of occupations, educational pathways and career opportunities?

Digital Learning and Experiential Spaces

- How can digital and hybrid learning environments support career exploration and reflection on one's life journey?
- What pedagogical potential do virtual reality, augmented reality and other immersive technologies offer for exploring careers and working environments?
- How should digital experiences be linked to real-world workplace experiences, school-based learning processes and personal guidance?

Artificial Intelligence in Career Guidance

- How can generative and other AI-based systems be used in career guidance?
- What opportunities does AI offer for personalised information, learning support, reflection and guidance?
- What are the potential benefits and limitations of AI-supported methods for skills assessment, diagnostics and matching individuals, educational pathways, occupations and work experience opportunities?
- How do algorithmically generated recommendations influence career decisions and the perception of individual options for action?
- What skills do pupils need to be able to critically evaluate AI-generated career information and recommendations?



Professionalism and Pedagogical Responsibility

- How are digital technologies and AI changing the tasks and roles of teachers, career counsellors and other stakeholders in career guidance?
- What digital, AI-related and career choice education skills do teaching and advisory staff require?
- How can these skills be fostered through initial, in-service and continuing professional development?
- What forms of cooperation are required between schools, careers guidance services, businesses, higher education institutions, technology developers and other non-school partners?

Participation, Diversity, Inclusion and Digital Inequality

- Which groups benefit from digital career guidance services, and which may not be reached?
- Can digital and immersive services reduce geographical, social, linguistic or disability-related barriers to access?
- Under what conditions do digital applications reproduce or reinforce existing social inequalities, occupational stereotypes and mechanisms of exclusion?
- How can digital services be designed to be sensitive to diversity, inclusive, accessible and tailored to the target audience?

Ethics, Data Protection and Regulation

- What ethical requirements arise from the use of AI, learning analytics, diagnostics and algorithmic matching?
- How can transparency, traceability, data protection and informational self-determination be guaranteed?
- How can biases and risks of discrimination in datasets, algorithms and AI-generated recommendations be identified and addressed?
- What are the limits of automated recommendations, and which decisions require professional judgement and human responsibility?

Impact, Quality and Transfer

- How can the quality and effectiveness of digital career guidance services be assessed?
- What effects can be observed in terms of knowledge, self-exploration, career choice competence, decision-making ability and transition management?
- Which research and evaluation designs are suitable for digital, immersive and AI-based learning environments?
- Under what organisational, technical and institutional conditions can innovative approaches be implemented sustainably in schools and guidance systems?
- How can the transfer between research, technology development, educational practice, educational administration and policy be structured?



The topics and questions listed above are intended as a guide. Contributions that open up further relevant perspectives on digitalisation, AI and immersive technologies in the context of career education and guidance are also welcome.

Target Audiences

The conference welcomes participants from Europe and around the world, including researchers in career education and guidance, vocational and business education, educational science, psychology, sociology and related fields; teachers, career guidance professionals, social educators, school leaders and other practitioners; representatives of educational administration and policy; developers of digital learning environments; employers, professional associations, higher education institutions and other partners; and doctoral students, postdoctoral researchers and other early-career researchers.

Contribution formats:

- Paper Presentation / Lecture (20 min. presentation + 10 min. discussion)
- Emerging Researcher Presentations (15 minutes presentation + 15 minutes discussion): A format specifically designed for researchers at an early stage of their academic careers, including doctoral candidates and recent PhD graduates. Participants may present ongoing or completed research. The extended discussion time provides opportunities for constructive feedback, scholarly exchange and networking with experienced researchers and peers.
- Workshop (90 min.; interactive format)
- Symposium or Thematic Panel (2–3 related presentations followed by discussion). For a symposium, the organising author must additionally submit an overarching abstract.



Deadlines

Submission of abstracts for the conference	January 8, 2027
• Submit your abstract through https://cleg.oapublishing.ch • Select: Conference Submission You will then be guided through the process. • Have your abstract ready: up to 500 words, structured as Context, Approach, Findings or Contributions, and Conclusions.	
Notification of acceptance	January 25, 2027
Costs	Participation is free of charge.
ONLINE CONFERENCE	12–13 April 2027
After the Conference is Before the Publication	
All contributions accepted for conference presentation are invited to submit a full paper for possible publication (optional).	4 July 2027
• You will get further information upon acceptance of your submission to the conference. • Submitted full papers undergo a separate double-anonymous peer-review and editorial process. Conference acceptance does not guarantee publication. • All authors are welcome to review another paper (critical friend feedback).	
Notification of full-paper peer-review decisions	6 September 2027
Submission of final revised full papers	27 September 2027
Availability	Accepted full papers will be published open access at https://cleg.oapublishing.ch