

## Call for Abstracts

# European Conference on Critical Edtech Studies (ECCES)

## Conference Theme: Defining the Field, Envisioning the Future

**Date:** June 18 (morning) – 20 (lunchtime), 2025

**Location:** Zurich University of Teacher Education, Lagerstrasse 2, 8090 Zurich (CH)

**Organizers:** Mathias Decuypere (Zurich University of Teacher Education); Sigrid Hartong (Helmut Schmidt University Hamburg); Jeremy Knox (University of Oxford); Ben Williamson (University of Edinburgh)

### Conference Theme

The rapid evolution of educational technologies (edtech) has transformed, and continues to transform, the landscape of education, particularly through the ongoing growth of digital networks, data-based and, more recently, AI-driven technologies. As these technologies become ubiquitous, a critical examination of their implications for teaching, learning, and society has become increasingly imperative. Responding to this need, over the last decades, a growing number of studies dedicated to the critical analysis, evaluation, and (re)design of educational technologies has emerged. More specifically, by examining the pedagogical, social, technical, political, economic and cultural dimensions of edtech, *Critical EdTech Studies* have sought to uncover the underlying power dynamics, biases, and unintended consequences that often accompany the introduction of technological innovations into educational policy and practice. Building on these analytical approaches, Critical EdTech Studies have also sought to contribute to the envisioning and creating of alternative edtech futures, often oriented towards challenging or overcoming the harmful consequences of technocratic decision-making in education.

Despite their growth in number, however, Critical EdTech Studies have remained dispersed and lack a dedicated space for debate, networking, knowledge building, and agenda-setting – practices vital to the establishment, identity, and maturing of the field. To address this need, we invite junior and senior scholars, as well as educational practitioners and edtech developers, to participate in the inaugural *European Conference on Critical Edtech Studies* (ECCES). Open to contributors from anywhere in the world, the first edition of ECCES aims to establish a foundational understanding of Critical Edtech Studies, but also to provide a forum for intense discussions around potential futures for the field. The conference invites participants to share in this agenda, through engagement in an informal and supportive community that can stimulate debate and further research in Critical EdTech Studies.

The ECCES conference is particularly dedicated to critical scholarship around the following areas:

- **Technological Artifacts:** Educational platforms, apps, AI, VR, data visualizations, and other digital tools.
- **Policy and Governance:** The role of governments, institutions, actor networks, and particular discourses in shaping edtech development and adoption.

- **Political Economy:** Business practices, capitalization, assets, value creation, corporations, EdTech industry, startups, edu-businesses.
- **Social Justice and Diversity:** The impact of edtech on marginalized communities, the (re-) production of inequalities, and how edtech is (not) addressing heterogeneous or postcolonial audiences.
- **Learning, Pedagogy and Assessment:** Types and visions of learning, teaching, pedagogy and assessment enhanced or inhibited by interfaces, data analytics, and algorithmic modelling.
- **Ethical Considerations:** Privacy, surveillance, and the ethical implications of data-driven education.
- **Methodological Approaches:** The various ways in which Critical Edtech Studies can investigate and contribute to (re-)shaping edtech, including evolutions towards more participatory and co-design approaches.
- **Sustainability and Planetary Futures:** The environmental impact of edtech, how it matters, and how it can be mitigated.
- **Histories of EdTech:** patterns and repetitions, hype cycles, persistent discourses, antecedents and early traces, hidden histories.
- **Future Visions:** Speculative futures, utopian and dystopian scenarios, alternative pathways for edtech development and education policy, literacy frameworks for professionalization.

If you are interested in contributing to the program of the conference, please submit an abstract to [ecces@phzh.ch](mailto:ecces@phzh.ch), adhering to the following requirements:

- **Length of Abstract:** 250-350 words
- **Deadline:** December 15, 2024 (8pm CET)
- **Format:** In order to enhance equal opportunities for presentation, the submission format is individual paper abstracts only (no panel submissions). Individual abstracts can be single-authored or include multiple authors.
- **Further requirements:** Abstracts must clearly articulate the author's critical position within the field of Critical Edtech Studies, be empirically grounded, and demonstrate a strong understanding of relevant theoretical and methodological frameworks. Submissions should avoid dismissive critique and open up avenues for constructive debate on the future of edtech and the themes of the conference. Moreover, submissions should consider the broader social, political, and cultural implications of their research. Submissions should adhere to these criteria to be taken into consideration for presentation at the conference.
- **Notification of Decision:** Early February, 2025

### Registration Fees

The regular registration fee for the conference will be 150 CHF. PhD students as well as participants in precarious positions will be given the option to register for a reduced fee of 80 CHF. Registrations will open in February 2025.

### Further Information

For more information, see <https://tiny.phzh.ch/ecces>.

### Contact Information

To avoid confusion, please submit your abstract exclusively to [ecces@phzh.ch](mailto:ecces@phzh.ch). Please also use that email address if you have any other questions about ECCES. The conference team will respond to you as soon as possible.