IFNTF "Symposathon" April 16-17, 2026
Optimising Teaching Excellence:
The Way We Work | The Way We Learn

The International Federation of National Teaching Fellows (IFNTF) is pleased to host its fourth virtual "symposathon" (Symposium + Marathon) in April 2026.

This is the seventh annual international summit/symposium held by IFNTF. The IFNTF First World Summit in 2017 in Birmingham, UK, featured the theme *Defining Teaching Excellence across Disciplines*. The IFNTF Second World Summit in Halifax, Canada, in 2018, was themed *Nurturing Teaching Excellence across Disciplines*. The IFNTF 2021 Symposium held in conjunction with the Canadian STLHE conference featured *Shaping Teaching Excellence across Disciplines*. In 2022, IFNTF held its first "symposathon" themed *RE-Shaping Teaching Excellence: Pandemic and the New Now*. The second symposathon themed *Augmenting Teaching Excellence: Embracing the future of education with AI and Emerging Technologies* was held in December 2023. The third symposathon themed *Transforming Teaching Excellence for the future* was held in December 2024.

The IFNTF 2026 Symposathon will bring together educators, fellows, students, activists, researchers, administrators, and thinkers to explore the deep changes underway in higher education.

This year we address the question: *In a world of collapsing models, rising automation, shifting trust, and intensifying metrics — what does it mean to "optimise" education?*
This isn't just a theme. It's a pressure point. A question of whose futures we're building, what values shape our systems, and who gets to decide how we teach, learn, and work.

We invite submissions on these main (but not limited to) thematic areas:

Theme A: What Does "Optimising" Education Really Mean?
A meta-theme: asks what we mean by optimisation, for whom, with what values, and what getting optimised might leave out.

Theme B: Work & Academia — Labour, Value, and Transformation
Explores how academic labour is changing: models of work, value extraction, invisibility of care, shifting reward systems.

Theme C: Institutional Disruption & Business Models in Higher Education
Focuses on how business/logics of universities are evolving: revenue, scale, outsourcing, market pressures.

Theme D: Politics, Autonomy & the Academic Public Sphere
Looks at freedom, surveillance, regulation, public trust, culture wars impacting education.

Theme E: Automation, AI & Re-thinking Teaching and Learning
Examines the impact of AI, data, automation on teaching models, credentialing, student/teacher roles.

PAPER SUBMISSION

We welcome submissions for paper sessions. Papers can be theoretical, conceptual, and/or empirical. Authors should submit an extended summary limited to 1500 words (excluding references). Papers should be related to the key theme of the conference and the key task areas.

Submissions are welcome from all educators. However, at least one of the co-authors of each paper must be eligible for full membership at IFNTF. That is, **at least one of the co-authors must have received a National Teaching Fellowship in their home country.**

To submit your extended summary, please go to https://forms.gle/VkoJTEv2VXwz7SMP8

All authors will be invited to expand their paper submission for publication in an e-book which will be available on the IFNTF website. The eBook produced from last year's "symposathon" is available at: https://www.amazon.co.uk/Transforming-Teaching-Excellence-Proofing-Education-ebook/dp/B0FC2WCR4J

IMPORTANT DATES

Submissions deadline   : 31 Jan 2026 (11.59 PM Anywhere on Earth (AOE))
Notification of acceptance   : 28 Feb 2026
Registrations deadline   : 10 Mar 2026

REGISTRATION FEE AND DATES

Registration fee for authors   : 30 GBP
Early bird registration fee for other participants : 30 GBP
Regular registration fee for other participants   : 40 GBP

Early bird registration deadline is 28 Feb 2026, 11.59 PM (AOE)
Last registration for all participants is 15 April 2026, 11.59 PM (AOE)

SYMPOSATHON TIMINGS

In the true spirit of an international federation, the symposathon will run across multiple time zones to accommodate participants around the world. It will begin with a 3-hour UK-focused session, transition to a 2-hour North America session, and conclude with a 2-hour session tailored for participants in Australia and New Zealand.

Time Slot 1: UK Focus
- UK Time (London): Thu 16 Apr, 7:00–10:00 PM (BST)

Time Slot 2: North America Focus
- Eastern Time (Toronto/New York): Thu 16 Apr, 5:00 – 7:00 PM (EDT)

Time Slot 3: Australia & New Zealand focus
- Perth: Fri 17 Apr, 7:00–9:00 AM (AWST)
- Auckland: Fri 17 Apr, 11:00 AM–1:00 PM (noon) (NZST)

In UTC, these three run consecutively as:
- Slot 1: 18:00–21:00 UTC
- Slot 2: 21:00–23:00 UTC
- Slot 3: 23:00–01:00 UTC

REGISTRATION LINKS

Authors: (a link will be emailed to authors on acceptance of Paper (28 Feb 2026).
Early bird registration for **non-authors** (before 23.59, 28 Feb 2026):
https://www.eventbrite.com/e/ifntf-symposathon-2026-optimising-teaching-excellence-early-bird-registration-1975020545618?aff=oddtdtcreator

Regular registration for **non-authors** (after 1Mar 2026):
https://www.eventbrite.com/e/ifntf-symposathon-2026-optimising-teaching-excellence-regular-registration-1975020944812?aff=oddtdtcreator

Student registration:
https://www.eventbrite.com/e/ifntf-symposathon-2026-optimising-teaching-excellence-student-registration-1975022135373?aff=oddtdtcreator

ABOUT IFNTF

IFNTF (https://www.ifntf.org) is a non-for-profit organization that aims to bring together award-winning teachers from across the world for the global advancement of excellence in learning and teaching in higher education. The federation was officially launched at the House of Lords in London, UK, in September 2016, and currently has members from Australia, Canada, Ireland, New Zealand, UK and the USA, and all members aim to work in collaboration on innovative projects and initiatives on teaching and learning pedagogies in higher education.

IFNTF MEMBERSHIP

IFNTF welcomes new members to join the federation and collaborate internationally, promoting and sharing evidence-based strategies for excellence in teaching and learning in higher education. For more information about the types of membership and for enrolling as a member, please visit: https://www.ifntf.org/page-membership