

Call for Papers for the EAWOP Small Group Meeting
Building the future of work and organizational psychology:
Developing a practical toolkit

Date: 9-11 September 2020

Location: Vrije Universiteit Brussel, Pleinlaan 2, 1050 Brussels, Belgium

Many academics have become increasingly critical about the theoretical landscape in (work) psychology, the practical and societal relevance of our research, the prevalence of Questionable Research Practices, the rise of work pressure and mental health problems in academia, the problems relating to inequalities at universities, and the methodological isomorphism that favors predominantly quantitative, positivistic epistemologies in work and organizational psychology (WOP). While there is a momentum to improve psychology in general, and WOP in particular, many scholars are puzzled by how to implement meaningful changes.

Several reasons may explain why calls for action have remained largely unanswered to date. First, many of the abovementioned problems are systemic and interconnected. Tackling one of these issues in isolation may appear difficult or even impossible as it may require simultaneously tackling other related issues. Second, addressing the issues is an unnerving task for individual scholars, who are already swamped by their day-to-day academic activities. Instead, these issues require collective action. Therefore, events are needed that bring scholars together to build a community of engaged academics who are able to implement changes through joint initiatives.

With this Small Group Meeting, we want to address the critical issues that affect our field by developing tools and practices that can be used to build a sustainable future for WOP, that has societal relevance, promotes equality, embraces diversity, makes academia a healthy environment, and builds on rigorous scientific methods.

Time and place: The Small Group Meeting will cover two and a half days—from 9 a.m. Wednesday 9th to 1 p.m. Friday 11th September 2020, so that participants

have ample time on Friday afternoon to travel home. The meeting will take place at the Vrije Universiteit Brussel, Belgium.

Tracks: The first day will focus on track 1 and the second day will focus on track 2. The final day will integrate the discussions and outcomes from the previous two days and build an agenda for the future.

Track 1: Building tools to improve WOP research

This track focuses on taking a critical stance to how we do research in WOP—both in terms of theory and research methods—and to develop tools that help WOP members to improve the quality of their research and practice. We draw on perspectives from various critical traditions, to address the dominance of neo-positivist epistemologies in WOP, enabling us to grapple with fundamental questions about the nature of what and how we research. Simultaneously, we build on the notion of substantive-methodological synergy, emphasizing the need for a close match between research questions and research methods. We invite participants to reflect on methodological pluralism and link this topic to open science practices and other best practices.

Track 2: Building tools to improve life in academia

Within this track, we want to capitalize on the expertise of participants to develop tools that help improve life in academia. On the one hand, we invite participants to use their expertise to make academia a healthier workplace, for example by developing tools that can help deal with job uncertainty or burnout within an academic context. On the other hand, we encourage participants to reflect on practices that promote equality in the workplace, to improve wellbeing for everyone in academia.

Submission of proposal:

We invite participants to submit a proposal that relates to one of these two tracks in one of the following four formats:

1. *Workshops*: These sessions involve guided instruction and training by experienced mentors.
2. *Hack-a-thons*: These sessions involve projects where all participants jointly

work toward a clear end goal.

3. *Unconference sessions*: Participants can freely pitch and discuss ideas during these sessions, which are moderated by the session organizers and focus on a particular topic or issue.
4. *Lightning talks*: These sessions include short, five-minute presentations which may be bundled into lightning talk sessions (i.e., participants do not need to submit symposium style proposals, but an individual presentation).

More specific information about the session formats and a fuller description of the two tracks can be found on the FOWOP website.

Participants who wish to propose sessions that meet the goals of the SGM, but do not fit the two tracks or four formats set out above, should contact the organizers to discuss their ideas before submitting. Colleagues who want to participate but do not have projects underway that relate directly to the themes of the meeting are invited to submit a proposal based on emerging ideas or work in progress. Initial ideas and queries may be sent to tim.vantilborgh@vub.be.

All proposals should include the following:

- a brief description of the topic
- a description of why the topic is relevant to this event
- your motivation for running this session/ lightning talk
- goals for the session/ lightning talk
- details of how the session will be organized. In the case of lightning talks, this includes what will be presented (i.e., focus on your own presentation only). For unconference sessions, this should include an outline of the main points of discussion.
- who will lead/speak at the session (not applicable for lightning talks)
- any aspects of the session that could pose challenges for delegates with specific communication or accessibility needs.

Proposals should be around 500 words in total and submitted to tim.vantilborgh@vub.be by 5.00 p.m. on 28th February, 2020. In the spirit of collaborative working, the organizers may recommend that the proposers of similar ideas work together to develop a single proposal for a session at the event.

Costs

The cost to attend the event will be €100 regular fee and €50 for students. Registration will be open in early 2020.

Organizing Committee: The meeting will be organized by Tim Vantilborgh (Vrije Universiteit Brussel), Dieu Hack-Polay (University of Lincoln), Zoe Sanderson (University of Bristol), Joanna Sosnowska (University of Amsterdam) and Edina Dóci (VU University Amsterdam). If you have any questions, please email Tim Vantilborgh: tim.vantilborgh@vub.be.