

Call for Papers

CHER NextGen Research Lab (PhD & Early-Career Workshop)

4-5 June 2026, Bergamo, Italy

Presentation

The CHER NextGen Research Lab is a mentoring-oriented initiative of the Consortium for Higher Education Research (CHER) for PhD students and early-career researchers. Participants in the Lab receive detailed feedback on ongoing work, strengthen research designs, and connect with an international community of higher education researchers, with a focus on developing research for publication.

The first edition of the CHER NextGen Research Lab is organized by the HEYE, a Research Centre at the University of Bergamo, Italy.

Objectives

The Lab pursues three main goals:

- Enhancing research quality through in-depth, constructive feedback in a collaborative setting.
- Supporting publication opportunities by helping participants strengthen their work in view of CHER 2026 and the related journal publication pathway.
- Recognizing innovation through an Innovation Award.

What to Submit

Applicants should submit a single PDF including:

- Abstract (max 300 words).
- Draft paper (work in progress; theoretical and/or empirical).
- Short CV (1–2 pages).
- Brief motivation statement (career stage, what feedback you are seeking, and whether you plan to submit to CHER 2026).

Workshop Format

Preliminary programme:

- Day 1 (June 4): starting 2pm;
- Day 2 (June 5): ending at 2pm.

The workshop prioritizes discussion over presentation. Each paper will receive at least 45 minutes for presentation and developmental dialogue led by senior scholars and peers.

A Policy Round Table titled “What is Research Impact?” will foster dialogue between academics and policymakers on the meaning, measurement, and implications of research impact.

Networking opportunities include coffee breaks during both sessions and an evening aperitivo at the end of the first day.

Publication Pathway and Special Issue

Participants will be encouraged to develop manuscripts for the European Journal of Higher Education (EJHE) Special Issue linked to CHER 2026.

IMPORTANT! Eligibility rule: While all submissions will be considered for presentation at the workshop, only papers that are also submitted to the CHER 2026 Conference can be considered for the EJHE Special Issue. The conference submission deadline is 28 February 2026. Details are available here: <https://www.cher2026.eu/>

Financial Support and Logistics

Thanks to sponsorship by the HEYE Research Centre and the University of Bergamo:

- No registration fee for participation.
- Meals during the event are covered (coffee breaks, evening aperitivo, light lunch).
- Support for booking affordable accommodation (student housing, budget B&Bs, negotiated hotel rates).
- Local public transportation costs during the event will be covered.

Innovation Award

An Innovation Award will recognize outstanding originality and potential impact. The awardee may be invited to present their work as part of a panel proposal linked to CHER 2026 (subject to acceptance).

Key Dates, Submission and Contacts

CHER 2026 conference submission deadline (for Special Issue eligibility)	28 February 2026
Workshop application deadline	31 March 2026
Workshop acceptance notification	30 April 2026
Workshop dates	4–5 June 2026
Submit application to:	cher_phd_workshop@unibg.it
For further details:	michele.meoli@unibg.it

Organizing Team

The NextGen Lab is hosted by HEYE (Higher Education and Youth Employability) Research Centre, University of Bergamo, in collaboration with CHER, and organized by:

Chiara Alberti; Alice Civera; Michele Meoli; Stefano Paleari (Organizing team at the University of Bergamo).

Ana Godonoga-Kopalko (WU Vienna, CHER Board Representative for Early-Career Researchers)

Giulio Marini (University of Catania, Chair of CHER 2026 in Catania)