

CALL FOR APPLICATIONS

African Centre for Career Enhancement & Skills Support (ACCESS)

2023 CONFERENCE AND SUMMER SCHOOL (ABUJA/IBADAN, Nigeria)

***“Cultivating New Frontiers in Employability Research for Skills
and Career Enhancement”***

30 JULY - 05 AUGUST 2023

Conference (Abuja): 30 July – 1 August 2023

Summer School Workshop (Ibadan): 3 August -5 August 2023



APPLICATION DEADLINE: 15 March 2023

@ 23:59 GMT+1

**2023 ACCESS CONFERENCE AND SUMMER SCHOOL
NIGERIA**

About ACCESS

The African Centre for Career Enhancement & Skills Support (ACCESS) is a consortium of six African universities in Benin, Ghana, Kenya, Nigeria, Rwanda, and Tunisia, working with Leipzig University in Germany, to investigate the stagnant labour market in Africa despite the increasing level of education of its countries' citizens. Within this project's framework, we develop and implement new teaching models with the aim to increase employability for African students. The consortium also seeks to increase the opportunities for African students in the global labour market by connecting them with companies that can use their expertise. Leveraging existing collaborations between Leipzig University and its African partner universities, ACCESS seeks to create a practice-oriented platform for African Higher Educational Institutions (HEIs), development cooperation partners, business associations, and agencies in the Global South.

The 2023 ACCESS Conference and Summer School

Background

In many African countries, there is a perception that it is difficult to find a suitable job, even for people with good qualifications. Indeed, official statistics suggest that formal unemployment is quite high, while most people are employed in informal labour. There is an increasing number of young people as percentage of the population, of whom more and more decide to go to university to improve their chances in the labour market. According to UNESCO statistics, the number of students in African universities has more than doubled since the beginning of the century. However, the unemployment rates for university graduates continue to be high, and in a number of countries including Nigeria and Rwanda, World Bank Statistics indicate formal unemployment rates for graduates that are significantly higher than those for people without a degree. While it is easy and quite simplistic to say that high graduate unemployment is largely a function of insufficient number of jobs in relation to job seekers, the fact remains that while unemployment is true and real, there are people all over the world, who find excellent jobs with ease, change jobs at will and sometimes hold down two or more jobs at a time. Sadly, there are millions of people all over the world, and in Nigeria, who find it extremely difficult to get good jobs. One of the primary reasons for this phenomenon, apart from shortage of jobs is that they are just unemployable; they lack the effective mix of skills, attributes and attitudes required to function effectively in specific roles, and in specific jobs. Hence, it is difficult for them to get jobs in a world that is becoming increasingly demanding and competitive on all fronts.

No doubt, globally and in Africa, employers are in constant need of graduates with the appropriate mix of hard, digital, and soft skills. People who can think for themselves, take initiatives, integrate into fast paced work environments, learn new ways of working and develop creative solutions to real problems. Thus, employability research should focus on how to equip individuals to be successful on the job market, while also examining broader structural job market issues that mitigate against its efficient functioning.

Conference

The conference component of the 2023 ACCESS programme in Nigeria will examine and seek to enhance the level of employability of university graduates within the African context. The conference is organized by the ACCESS team in the University of Ibadan, in collaboration with Leipzig University, the University of Tunis, other ACCESS partners and the National Universities Commission, Abuja.

Call for Abstracts

Abstracts are invited from interested participants on topics within the context of the conference theme (*Cultivating New Frontiers in Employability Research for Skills and Career Enhancement*), and issues relating to how graduates in Africa search and find work, build up their careers, and seek to develop and test innovative concepts for employability promotion at Higher Education Institutes (HEIs) in Africa. We welcome abstracts of papers on Employability Research relating to topics including – but not limited to – the following:

- What are the functionalities and experiences with digital (coaching) platforms?
- How can students be best supported in developing job-relevant capabilities that rely more on methodology and key skills than on academic contents?
- How can job-relevant learning approaches be integrated into all disciplines and study programmes (curricula) at African and European Universities?
- What can be learnt from the experiences of existing graduates and from the existing efforts at employability promotion at universities in Africa and Europe?
- How can university employability promotion be developed in collaboration with partners outside universities in the private or public sector?

Guidelines

Abstracts should not exceed **500 words** and must follow the following format:

1. Word processing should be with MS Word, Font size 12 pts Times New Roman, 2.5cm margins all round, justified margins and double spaced.
2. The abstract should be submitted by email as an attachment to accessnigeria2023@gmail.com with a copy to debekanl@gmail.com and lawalademola94@gmail.com and acesstunisie2020@gmail.com (for Tunisian applicants). All mails should be titled: ACCESS NIGERIA 2023 CONFERENCE. Only abstracts received by email will be considered please.
3. All contact details (including cell phone, email, mailing address) should be provided to ensure that prospective presenters can easily be reached.

Workshop

The Conference will be followed by a workshop on the following topics:

- Leveraging on The Alumni for a Vibrant University-Business Linkage and Graduate Career Enhancement
- Optimizing E-Teaching, E-Coaching and E-Learning for Capacity Building and Enhanced Graduate Employability
- Strategies for Soft Skills Development
- Dynamics of Employability Research

Target Participants

This Conference and Workshop is targeted at all those who are involved in research, teaching, and innovation in the employability of African graduates.

Venue

The venue of the Conference will be the Auditorium of the National Universities Commission, Abuja while the Workshop will hold at the Conference Centre, University of Ibadan, Ibadan, Nigeria.

How to Apply

Interested participants at the conference are required to complete the registration form and submit it not later than **Friday, 30 June 2023**

Registration Link:

https://docs.google.com/forms/d/1_8fyM7v3xu9LCDGMemoZ_dUGYoNVffmK_WX0S9BSCL4/edit

Registration Fees for the Conference: Free

For the Workshops: Free (Registration for the conference would be the ticket for admission into the workshops).

Important Dates

Note the following important deadlines:

Activity	Date
Conference Announcement/Call for Abstracts	Monday, 16 January 2023
Deadline for submission of abstracts	Wednesday 15 March, 2023
Notification of acceptance of abstract	Friday 14 April 2023
Submission of full paper	Friday 30 June 2023
Closing for registration	Friday 30 June 2023
Arrival	Sunday 30 July 2023
Conference	Monday 31 July- Tuesday 01 August 2023
Welcome Reception	Evening of Monday 31 July 2023
Air Travel from Abuja to Ibadan	Wed, 02 August 2023
Workshop	Thursday 03- Friday 04 August 2023
Cocktail Reception	Evening of Thursday 03, August 2023
Excursion (Optional)	Evening of Friday 04 August 2023
Departure	Saturday 05 August 2023