



AEA-Europe Annual Report 2021

The Council of AEA-Europe

October 2021

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Introduction 2021

Once again, we can look back on a year with the covid-pandemic. It has changed the world and how we view it, in a way most of us could not envision only a couple of years ago. It has shown us how vulnerable but also how resilient we are, and how we can adapt and also find solutions to challenges and problems. Within AEA-Europe, we have taken the pandemic very seriously and although the core of the association's activities has to do with communication and interaction, we have found solutions with the help of digital tools - and for the most part it has worked very well. Like the rest of the world, our knowledge and skills when it comes to digital tools and meetings has taken a giant leap forward. The 2020 AEA-Europe Festival was a very successful event and showed us that it is possible to meet and share knowledge online when it comes to scientific conferences, also when a large number of people are participating. During the last year even more activities and more interaction has happened, through online seminars, workshop etc, and new networks and special interest groups have been initiated and established. There have also been many meetings to plan and carry out such activities. The council, secretariat and the committees have been busy, and their members have dedicated a lot of time and effort to this work, as will be described below.

This report will describe the work that has been done since the meeting in 2020, and some of the plans for the future.

The AEA-Europe Council

The council consists of President Christina Wikström, vice-president Therese Hopfenbeck, Executive Secretary Alex Scharaschkin, Treasurer Cor Sluijter, and council members Andrej Novik, Elena Papanastasiou and Deborah Chetcuti. The coming year will be a changeover year for the presidency when my term comes to an end, handing this position to vice president Therese Hopfenbeck. This means that there will be an election for a new vice president (president elect) in the spring. 2022 is also end of term for the Treasury and the Secretariat and one of the council members, but they have all the possibility to continue for a new term, which we of course hope for since it is very valuable with continuance and experienced members on the council, and we are deeply grateful to corporate members such as AQA and CITO for hosting the Secretariat and the Treasury, and their support for many years.

Organising conferences

AEA-Europe works constantly on the organisation of the upcoming and future conferences. However, all experiences with online meetings the recent year – webinars, the festival etc – had showed that the digital format works very well for presenting research and sharing knowledge, and that our members were very comfortable with the digital format. The evaluation of the festival came back very positive. This made it easy to decide to make the 2021 conference a digital version of a traditional AEA-Europe conference. It has taken a lot of work and effort from the council, the committees and our conference organising agency EasyConferences in planning this conference, although we are very helped by having many years' experience from on-site conferences. AEA-Europe has a very good track record when it comes to organising high quality conferences, both when it comes to the scientific and the social programme, and we have very high hopes that this year's annual conference will be as successful.

Like in previous years, the 2021 Annual conference has been superbly supported by the Scientific Programme Committee under the joint chairs Andrej Novik and Stuart Shaw as well as the professional services support of EasyConferences who worked with us to adapt their support from the face to face conferences to the technical support for an online event, with their own platform that will serve as our venue this year. The publications committee, led by Deborah Chetcuti, has also put in a lot of work and effort in different ways of communicating the conference and AEA-Europe activities, and organising online webinars. Also, the professional development committee, led by Elena Papanastasiou, has contributed in a very important way by making sure that we have a professional and transparent review process, both when it comes to the AEA-Europe accreditation scheme and the Kathleen Tattersall New Researcher Award.

We are grateful to all who have made this event come to pass. Meeting online in 2020 and also in 2021 was inevitable, and although we sincerely hope we will meet on site for future annual conferences, we will benefit from all the experiences gained from the online meetings and combine the best of the two worlds when planning and organizing different types of events in future years.

As for the future conferences, the AEA-Europe Council will put out a call for proposals for hosting these conferences in spring of 2022. We very much encourage members to talk with Council over the next few months if they are interested in hosting a future conference.

Enhancing the professionalism of the association

In 2021, the association has continued to improve its internal organisation. The Council and Committee members are already highly committed in their own professional responsibilities and their work for the association is completely voluntary. For this reason, it is a priority to rationalise the procedures and rules of the association so as to derive maximum benefit from engagement of everyone involved, both in terms of professionalism and efficiency of the Association. Over the years, more members have been involved in committees and special interest groups which has proven to be a very successful way of expanding activities through shared work. There is also an agreement with EasyConferences in place, to take on some of the administrative work also outside the conference organisation.

Reaching out and networking

Through the activities of the association, researchers, specialists and policy-makers come together to share their expertise and experiences in the field of assessment. The AEA-Europe's Special Interest Groups (SIG) on e-assessment and in assessment cultures continues to grow in activities and visibility. We also welcomed the formation of a new SIG on inclusive assessment in 2021. We look forward to seeing the activities and events it intends to pursue and thank them for taking on this activity on behalf of the Association.

Another focus area is the strengthening of the association's educational assessment community via the accreditation process as well as the promotion of the network of PhD students. To this effect, we continue to work with members to think about accreditation and the benefits that having such accreditation can bring as well as encouraging more PhD students to become members of AEA-Europe.

President's Note

My first year as president of AEA-Europe has been interesting and rewarding in many ways. AEA-Europe is a great community and I am extremely impressed with the work done by my council and committee colleagues and all the other dedicated members. I would like to thank you all for your support, efforts and advice during this year.

It has also been a challenging year as the pandemic has continued to make our lives quite difficult, and forced us all to be both flexible and creative in finding new ways to meet and collaborate. I had not expected that we would meet digitally for two years in a row, and very much looked forward to the annual conference in Dublin/Dun Laoghaire, first in 2020, then in 2021, and now in 2022. I am very grateful for the patience of our Irish colleagues who have been waiting for us for so long. I have had the pleasure of visiting the venue, and it is easy to envision what a AEA-Europe conference will be like at such a place, with the impressive Maritime hotel overlooking Dublin Bay, the small and picturesque villages on the coastline, just a few minutes on the train from buzzing Dublin.

Still, I have learned to appreciate also the digital format, and am sure that the 2021 digital conference will be both interesting and memorable, like AEA-Europe conferences always are. The scientific programme looks great, and I really look forward to the social events, meeting colleagues and friends. I am confident that we have taken an important step into the future while only been given a glimpse of what is possible.

Christina Wikström

President: Association of Educational Assessment-Europe (2020-2022)

Evaluation in Relation to Strategic Aims

As written in the constitution, the association's aim is "to act as a European platform for discussion of developments in educational assessment, fostering co-operation and facilitating liaison between organisations and persons active in educational assessment across the whole of Europe".

To achieve this, three goals have been set with respect to the association: (1) to increase its authority (2) to increase its membership, and (3) to enhance its standards of professionalism. In the following, we present activities to date in relation to these three goals.

1. Organising successful conferences

Quality

In 2020 the annual conference was replaced with the online AEA-Europe festival, where all but the PhD session was invited speakers, so there was no regular submission process for posters and papers. Still, the annual evaluation came back very positive. The only negative was that participants were missing the social parts that we find so valuable in on site annual conferences. In 2021 the conference is online yet again, although with a full programme, and opportunities for social interaction. The number of submissions were lower than a normal year, but still the quality of the scientific programme is very good, and the programme includes internationally renowned keynote speakers. 190 submissions were carried over from previous year when the conference call was for an on site conference that later was cancelled, and it was offered that we would keep the submitted paper for the next conference. 27 were withdrawn when the new submission period for 2021 opened. After reviews had been done, the final number of presentations in the programme is 82, excluding keynotes.

Attendance

Since the 2020 Conference had to be postponed due to the COVID19 pandemic there is no data from last year. Before covid, when annual conferences were held on site, there was a stable number of attendees – in recent years around 270. The number is lower this year, which can be expected with the new format, but still good, with more than 200 registered attendees.

Developing communication tools and networking activities

Social media. The use of social media has significantly increased (Twitter, LinkedIn, Facebook) thanks to a very active Publications committee

Special Interest Groups (SIGs). We now have 3 SIGs (E-Assessment, Assessment Cultures and Inclusive assessment) and members are always encouraged to suggest other groups that might be of interest to the association.

Strengthening professional development

Kathleen Tattersall New Researcher Award 2021. The very high quality applications for this award were reviewed by members on behalf of the PDC.

PhD network. A dedicated event for PhD students was organised during the AEA-Europe Festival, the work with establishing the network has thereafter continued. During the 2021

conference there will be a social event on the first evening, to facilitate discussion relevant for young researchers and to offer networking possibilities. The plan is to further increase network possibilities and professional development activities the coming year.

Accreditation. So far in 2021, four complete applications were received and were successful. One was for the Fellow status and the other three for the Practitioner status.

Plans

- To continue to organise annual on-site conferences of the highest quality
- To explore possibilities for more meetings between annual conferences, to share knowledge and ideas, with the use of digital platforms
- To continue expanding the Association’s website in order to make Association’s main communication tool even more attractive and user friendly
- To continue and reinforce social media use as a quick and easy way to communicate with members and wider world
- To develop and advertise the accreditation process - especially for Fellow status
- To encourage more applications to the Kathleen Tattersall New Research Award
- To develop a more sustainable platform for PhD students to meet and network.

2. To increase the membership of the association

Membership numbers

We have been working on a more efficient way to send out membership invoices and for this also a revision of the member database, to make sure that membership records are up to date. This thorough work means that figures are more accurately reflecting paying members. Also note that comparing membership numbers in November each year might not accurately reflect the yearly active membership.

We introduced the retired professional category of the membership this year, which has led to an increase in total membership of the Association. The figures in Table 1 include fully paid members, and members, at the of preparing this report, had yet to renew for 2019 and/or 2020. Members who have not renewed for 3 consecutive years are removed.

Table 1. Membership

Membership	2017	2018	2019	2020	2021
Individual	133**	135	136	145	141
Corporate	37	35	37	40	42
Student/Retired Professional	10	4	13	14	31

Membership by country

The majority of members come from a small number of countries and a lot of European countries are not represented in the association.

Defining a strategy to increase membership

The Publication Committee along with the treasurer and the secretariat have been working on AEA-Europe membership. Several strategic actions have been proposed to increase the number and the diversity of the members of the association, including improving the AEA-Europe website to make joining, renewing and paying for membership a lot easier.

AEA-Europe has a number of both individual and corporate members. However, benefits of the different membership packages need to be made clearer. This work has started and will continue. There is now also a possibility for corporate membership reflected on the size of the institution or company.

The number of student members is still low. Membership needs to be made more attractive for post-graduate students and young researchers, and the activities planned within the PhD network will contribute to this.

Members remain in the association once they have joined, and the covid pandemic that has proved a challenge to associations like AEA-Europe has not affected us as much as could have been anticipated. This is seen as an indication that they are happy with being members of the association, and can see its value and importance.

Reasons for joining AEA-Europe

Members join AEA-Europe for a variety of reasons:

- Members emphasise the importance of forming part of a community of practice that enables them to share ideas, research and thoughts with individuals from different European countries.
- The Association also provides a good platform for networking and meeting colleagues and working on new ideas with people from across Europe.
- The conferences are well organised and provides a friendly, comfortable atmosphere where one can meet old friends and make new ones.
- The Annual Conference is currently one of the main reasons why people join the association. Even if it seems online format can work very well for presenting research and networking, it will be important to provide opportunities to meet in person in future years. However, the familiarity with meeting online and the platforms available for such meetings will be beneficial as it provides opportunities to meet online between annual conferences.

Benefits of being a member of AEA-Europe

There are a number of benefits of belonging to AEA-Europe. These benefits enhance the professional development of members. The benefits include:

- Being part of an assessment community and belonging to a group with an interest in assessment.
- Networking with colleagues from different European countries.
- Keeping up with research and developments in assessment.
- Being able to attend the annual conference which is friendly and welcoming.
- For accreditation.

Discussions are continuous with regard to ideas about how to increase membership. The ambition is to place the annual conference in different parts of Europe to increase membership and offer new perspectives, since the annual conference will have a special focus on the assessment research, policy and practice in the hosting countries, by invited keynotes et cetera. The plan is currently to have the annual conference in Dublin in 2022. However, since the situation in the world is uncertain due to the covid pandemic the association will evaluate the situation with regards to safety for the members before further decisions are taken.

Early career researchers

One of the other areas identified for improvement was around early career researchers (ECRS) and attracting more members and considering how best to support them. The Post-graduate reception has become a regular feature of the conference social events and one is planned for the 2021 conference.

Plans

- To continue the discussions and activities about increasing membership
- To determine a set of strategic actions for the next following years
- To engage funding to that purpose if necessary
- To update the constitution around membership if necessary

3. To enhance standards of operationalisation of the Association

Policy and Rules document

This document has been updated as part of our focus on increasing the efficiency and transparency of the organization. It is continually edited and can be referenced by members from the secretariat.

Conference Handbook

The Conference handbook is to be revised based on the experiences learned from the online conference to reflect the use of technology also in future conferences.

Audit committee

The Audit Committee is responsible for auditing the accounts. The audit committee reports to the General Assembly each November on the state of the accounts of the Association. The Treasurer of the Association reports annually to the Audit Committee

AEA-Europe website

In 2020 a new website was set up, with more functionalities than before and a more modern layout. The Publication Committee have been working with BigPig Web Design company to refresh and update the site, in collaboration with the secretariat.

Conference website

The conference website for 2019 was hosted through the AEA-Europe website - this was in direct response to conference attendees feedback suggesting that having two places for information was confusing when booking/registering for conferences etc. The 2020 conference was also set to be hosted through the AEA-Europe website. AEA-Europe continues to work with EasyConferences on supporting conference activities. This has proven to be a solid working relationship with good support for members with regard to annual conference registration etc.

Conference organisation

The contract was renewed with EasyConferences for the conference website, the submission process, the registration process as well as the mobile conference app. This integrated model was used for the 2019 and 2020 conferences and will be used for future conferences. In keeping with this model EasyConferences also supported the work of the Scientific Programme Committee which proved to be very efficient and helpful, especially in production of the programme and timetable and in getting this out earlier to members (more details below). EasyConferences has been engaged again for the next 2 years.

Plans:

- a. To continue updating internal organisation documents.
- b. To set up and confirm roles of Council members in the internal organisation

AEA-E Council Members and Activities

Due to the covid-situation, all meetings during 2020 took place online. The main points discussed during these meetings were:

- Postponing the annual meeting in Dublin to 2022, and practical details to avoid financial loss.
- organisation of the annual conference
- finances and business plan
- internal organization
- communication
- professional development
- aims and strategy

Table 2 shows the members of the AEA-E Council listing the terms of office for the different members and provides comments on changes during the year or for the coming year, where appropriate.

Table 2: Council Members and Terms of Office up to November 2022

Name	Position in the Council	Term of Office: Start	Term of Office: End	Number of Terms Fulfilled	Comment
Christina Wikström (Sweden)	President	Nov 20	Nov 22	0	Term of office finishes November 2022
Therese Hopfenbeck (UK and Norway)	Vice President	Nov 20	Nov 22	0	Presidential term begins November 2022
Alex Scharaschkin (UK)	Executive Secretary	Nov 18	Nov 22	1	
Cor Sluijter (Netherlands)	Treasurer	Nov 19	Nov 23	1	

Andrej Novik (Czech Republic)	Council Member	Nov 18	Nov 22	0	
Deborah Chetcuti (Malta)	Council Member	Nov 19	Nov 23	0	
Elena Papanastasiou (Cyprus)	Council member	Nov 20	Nov 24	0	

AEA-E Committees

Professional Development Committee (PDC)

Members

- Elena Papanastasiou (University of Nicosia, Cyprus). Chair
- Bas Hemker (CITO, Netherlands)
- Shakeh Manassian PSI Services, UK)
- Lydia Townsend (UCL, UK)

Meetings and agenda

Due to the pandemic, all meetings for the year took place via Webex, as well as through email. The main items of business were as follows:

- AEA-E accreditation scheme
- Kathleen Tattersall New Researcher Award
- Activities of the Doctoral Student Network
- Conference Social programme (for PhD network and Accredited members)

Actions

One of the roles of the PDC of AEA-E is to review applicants for the Kathleen Tattersall New Researcher Award in order to select the best new assessment researcher among the applicants. The PDC coordinates the procedure and engages its accredited fellows to assess the New Researcher Award proposals. By unanimous decision, the award for 2021 went to Raphael Pasquini.

A second role of the PDC is to evaluate the applications received from individuals who want to obtain accreditation status through AEA-E's accreditation scheme. The applicants can apply for the Associate, Practitioner or Fellowship status. Once these applications are received, they are assigned to accredited Fellows to evaluate them. In the current year, five applications were received by individuals wishing to obtain accreditation. However, the PDC needs to continue looking for ways to enhance the numbers of members applying for accreditation status, and especially to increase the number of Fellows. This has been a major challenge for the accreditation system due to the dwindling number of active Fellows who are available to evaluate the relevant applications.

Regarding the accreditation scheme, no strict deadline currently exists regarding the evaluation of the applicants. Although there is a general guideline for the applications, a decision was made to set a yearly deadline for these applications. However, the actual deadline date will be decided in the near future.

Within the PDC, a decision was made to create a bulletin board for the doctoral student network. The bulletin board will be a space to share information with other members of the doctoral network, including advertising non-AEA-Europe talks that may be of interest to the membership. This will be a space for members of the network to ask questions and share resources. The student representative of the PDC, Lydia Townsend will be in charge of this

bulletin board which will be based on AEA-Europe's website.

The PDC has also made plans to organize a virtual "social programme" for the conference. Since this event has been co-hosted since 2017 together with the event for accredited members, the same model will be used this year as well. For the 2021 conference, this event will cover the topic of the Imposter Syndrome, and it will be coordinated by Lydia Townsend who is the student representative in the PDC. During this session, the participants will be invited to join one of two break-out rooms. The first room will mainly be for the Doctoral Student Network, in which junior researchers can also join. The second room will mainly be for Accredited Members, although any other conference participant can also attend. However, the participants can self-select the break-out room that they would like to join.

Sincere thanks are due to all members of the PDC, as well as to all Fellows of the organization that have assisted in evaluating the various applications received through this committee. Their efforts are greatly appreciated.

Publications Committee (PC)

Members

Deborah Chetcuti (University of Malta)

Amina Afif (Pedagogue & Intuitive Life Coach)

Judith Gracey (AQA, UK)

Mary Richardson (University College London)

Lesley Wiseman (University of Glasgow)

Meetings and activities

Members of the Publications Committee (PC) had regular online meetings. Meetings were held once a month, in order to discuss activities and actions required. Thanks are due to all PC members who were highly committed and dedicated.

Each of the members of the PC has a specific remit: Amina takes responsibility for developing content for the website; Mary has a focus on communications, through social media; Lesley is responsible for Special Interest Groups (SIGs); and Judith is responsible for communications through the website. A summary of the activities undertaken by members of the Publications Committee is provided below:

The Website

Following the launch of the new website in November 2020, the PC has continued to closely monitor and update the website. Updating of the website is carried out by Judith Gracey and Linda Wye from the Secretariat also helps out. All sections of the website are updated to keep information about the Association, council members, committees and awards. In addition, new material such as slides and recordings from webinars organised by the SIGs, is continually added to the Resources section of the website. There is also a blog, which includes posts by members of the association.

With the launch of the new website, it was agreed that a running 'news feed' would be included on the Home Page of the website. This news feed links to social media pages 'facebook', 'twitter' and to the blog page. Once information about an event, such as a webinar or the annual conference is posted on social media, this also automatically appears on the AEA-E homepage. This has made the dissemination of information to both members as well as non-members of the association more efficient. This updating of social media, as indicated in the section below is carried out by Mary Richardson.

The PC committee also plans to conduct interviews with key members of the Association, who share their experiences with members. Links to these interviews are also from the homepage and are can eventually be accessed through the various relevant links on the website. This year, Amina Afif conducted an interview with Dr. Stephanie Berger, the 2020 winner of the Kathleen Tattersall New Assessment Researcher award. Amina has also conducted an interview with Thierry Rocher, past president of AEA-E, and this will be

published following the November online conference.

The website and social media are also being used by members of the PC to publicise the annual 2021 online conference. Deborah Chetcuti has worked on developing banners that have been posted on social media to provide information about, registration, the programme and keynote speakers. Mary Richardson and Amina Afif have conducted interviews with the keynote speakers that will be posted on the homepage of the website.

Communications

The AEA-E's social media channels continue to thrive and we enjoy a range of discussions, sharing of ideas and communicating our messages online. The social media base for AEA-E is currently very strong with both Facebook (n=388) and Twitter (n=654) being used as a means for sharing information about the Association and, perhaps most importantly, sharing information about our interests, research and work.

Twitter is definitely our most useful means of communication and that is unsurprising as most learned/professional societies find that tweeting out short messages is much more beneficial than posting on Facebook. It is partly due to the fact that for many people, Facebook is their family/friends means of communication and so they don't see it in a professional context. However, it remains important that we retain the presence we have in all new media. These social media platforms were used by Mary to actively promote AEA-E activities and especially its annual conference through a planned programme of publicity for this important event. The connection of the social media to the website has helped to improve members' interactivity.

Special Interest Groups (SIGs)

Over the past year the Association's eAssessment SIG and Assessment Cultures SIG have worked hard to promote interaction and discussion amongst members of the Association sharing those interests. An Inclusive Assessment SIG will be launched at the 2021 online conference, as will a new Postgraduate Student and Early Career Researcher Network. Each of these has a dedicated page on the Association website. The Association welcomes proposals for new SIGs – details of how to do this are on the website – and the existing SIGs are delighted to receive offers of member contributions to their development and activities.

The AEA-E eAssessment SIG was launched at the Prague conference in November 2017. Its Steering Group currently comprises Rebecca Hamer, Caroline Jongkamp, Mary Richardson, Stuart Shaw, Liam Simington, Martyn Ware (Chair) and Lesley Wiseman. They meet regularly, online, to organize conference contributions and a programme of activities between conferences including well-attended webinars and interesting blogs, and to explore other ways to facilitate communication between members with a special interest in eAssessment.

The AEA-E Assessment Cultures SIG was launched at the November 2020 online festival to which it contributed a significant part of the programme, and has continued to develop its activities since then. It has organised successful webinars and online discussions, and encouraged blogging as one means of communicating ideas and stimulating discussion

amongst those sharing their special interest. It is led by a Steering Group comprising Eleanor Andressen, Isabel Nisbet, Stuart Shaw, Lise Vikan Sandvik, Sverre Tveit, Andrew Watts (Chair) and Lesley Wiseman.

These two SIGs made major contributions to the Association's 2020 online festival, each organizing a half-day event comprising varied presentations and discussions. The presenters and discussion panellists for the eAssessment SIG event were Rose Clesham, Irene Custodio, Grace Grima, David Haggie, Graham Hudson, Anand Karat, Nicola Mellor, Anja Sisarica and Lydia May Townsend. Those for the Assessment Cultures SIG event were Cristina Alarcón, George MacBride, Damian Murchan, Isabel Nisbet, Stuart Shaw, Lise Vikan Sandvik and Sverre Tveit. These high-quality and highly successful events were developed to demanding timescales and the Association is grateful to all involved.

SIG blogs and webinars in the past year include:

- Blog by Matt Wingfield, November 2020: 'Leveraging the flexibility of digital assessment technologies, and the cooperation between an awarding organisation and their regulator, to minimise the impact of the Covid-19 pandemic on the assessment of professional qualifications'
- Blog by Lise Vikan Sandvik, January 2021: 'What could foster or inhibit the development of assessment cultures? Experiences from Norway'
- Blog by Anja Sisarica, March 2021: 'Fair assessment for everyone: Reflections on the factors impacting student experience of e-assessment'
- Webinar presented by Isabel Nisbet and Stuart Shaw, February 2021: 'Fairness in assessment: Cultural Issues'
- Webinar presented by Rose Clesham, March 2021: 'Trust, Standards & Technology: Changing the face of Educational Assessment'
- Webinar presented by Dee Arp and Matt Wingfield, April 2021: 'Rethinking Assessment in the 21st Century'
- Webinar presented by Cristina Alarcón Lopez, May 2021, followed by discussion: 'Assessment Cultures: Challenges and Chances of an analytical tool'
- Webinar presented by Amina Afif and Thierry Rocher, May 2021: 'FLIP+, a community for sharing e-assessment experiences, interactive tools'
- Blog by George MacBride, June 2021: 'Popeth yn iawn hyd yma! So far, so good! Wales: changing assessment culture'
- Webinar presented by Raphael Pasquini, August 2021, followed by discussion: 'Constructive grading: Assessment cultures matter'

Thanks are due to UCL for kindly hosting the eAssessment SIG webinars on its online collaborative learning platform, and to the University of Malta for hosting the Assessment Cultures SIG webinars on its online collaborative learning platform. In future, SIG webinars and other events will be hosted by Easy Conferences. Easy Conferences will create a calendar that can be shared amongst the chairs/contact persons of each SIG, into which details of a planned event will be put. Easy Conferences will then liaise with Linda Wye to send event invitations to members of the Association, record registrations, send zoom meeting links to registered attendees and host the Zoom meetings. This new process should greatly facilitate the work of the SIGs.

Thanks are due to all members of the SIG Steering Groups for the energy, creativity, time and effort that they put in to making their SIGs such a valuable benefit for AEA-E members that share a special interest. Association members are warmly invited to join one or more of the Association's SIGs and to consider joining a Steering Group in order to shape the future activities of the SIGs.

Scientific Programme Committee (SPC)

Members

Co-Chair: Stuart Shaw (Faculty of Education, University of Cambridge)

Co-Chair: Andrej Novik (SCIO)

Nico Dieteren (CITO)

Elisa de Padua (University of Cambridge)

Gerry Shiel (Educational Research Centre)

Damian Murchan (Trinity College Dublin)

Meetings and agenda

The main responsibility of the Scientific Programme Committee (SPC) is to ensure the preparation and production of a quality and balanced programme for the annual conference. All business meetings throughout the year were conducted very effectively via Zoom and email.

Actions

The SPC, like other Association committees, is aware of the need to maintain impetus in order for the community of AEA members and supporters to continue to be informed and participate in any future events. Whilst the SPC is hoping that 'normality' will be resumed in the foreseeable future, there is an overwhelming desire on the part of the Association to perpetuate the well-established community of practice in the meantime (in the absence of face-to-face meetings).

After evaluating the very successful festival in 2020, the SPC started preparation for the 2021 annual conference, which for the first time in AEA-Europe history was to be held online.

We were not sure how the community would react to the new situation, whether the interest in an online conference would be at a similar level as in previous years.

We were, therefore, very happy to receive 104 submissions, which is a number comparable to previous numbers.

As a consequence of the online format, the SPC has faced new and interesting challenges in constructing the conference programme this year. For example, the reviewing process was complicated because submissions for the 2020 conference were either retained or withdrawn when the call for the 2021 papers was announced. On top of this, we received a large number of high-quality presentation proposals.

However, it was generally agreed that the reviewing process went remarkably smoothly. Yes,

there were hiccups on the final day of the reviewing window and we are very thankful to those reviewers we approached at the last minute to make up any shortfalls. And, yes there were a great many 'day-to-day' queries from participating reviewers (which is par for the course anyway). The main difference this year was that we had enlarged our pool of reviewers which meant that no one reviewer had an allocation greater than 10 submissions to review, and we also instigated a contingency 'mop up' pool of reviewers to accommodate outstanding reviews.

Another challenge related to the construction of the conference programme. This is, of course, the first year the SPC has created an initial draft of the programme online. The construction process is normally accomplished in a face-to-face meeting (held in Cambridge over recent years). Nevertheless, the SPC engaged in an extremely successful three-and-a-half hour Zoom meeting in June in order to produce an initial draft of the programme.

Due to the fact that all meetings and preparatory work has taken place exclusively online and voluntarily, there has been no need to use the funds allocated in the organization's budget for SPC activities.

As for future plans, the SPC will meet to review the entire online process soon after the November online conference has finished. Amongst other things, we intend to revisit and refine the evaluation criteria reviewers use to judge the quality of submissions. We will also review the way in which we liaise with potential reviewers of future conference submissions.

Annual Conferences

AEA-Europe works constantly on the organisation of the upcoming and future conferences. The last annual conference took place in 2019 in Lisbon. The SPC and the Local Organising Committee - IAVE – had put together an excellent programme and worked relentlessly to ensure that the conference was a great success both professionally and socially. Then in 2020 the COVID19 pandemic hit and the conference that was to be hosted by Trinity College Dublin and Educational Research Centre in Dun Laoghaire Dublin (Ireland) had to be postponed. It was however decided that we should still organise an event where we could meet, share research and discuss topics of interest, even if it could not be a full conference. We also decided that we would offer it for free, and use some of the Associations finances to fund the event. Thus, the 2020 meeting became the online Festival. It proved to be a very successful decision as the Festival gained a lot of interest from the membership, with very positive response from the evaluation by the delegates.

The 2021 Conference

The 2021 conference was to take place in Dublin and Dun Laoghaire, but early in the year we had to accept the fact that the pandemic would make such plans impossible, for practical and safety reasons. It was therefore decided to carry on with the plans to organise an annual conference, with the same format and content as an ordinary online conference, but online instead of on site. Several meetings were held to discuss what could be done regarding bookings and the possibility to postpone the conference one more year, and keep the venue and all the plans that had been made for the arrangements. We were grateful that Advantage, our local organising agency in Dublin, and the conference venue were understanding, and we would like to thank the local organising committee from Trinity College and the Educational Research Centre, Dublin, for good communication with them. When planning the online conference we soon realised that the days we had originally decided on were not ideal for an online conference. The annual conferences regularly begin on a Thursday and end on a Saturday, with pre-conference workshops on the Wednesday before the conference begins. Attending a conference on a Saturday will most likely be complicated for those who are working from home, and difficult to combine with family life. It was therefore decided to move the conference one day back, to begin on a Wednesday and end the conference mid day Friday. Currently the plans are however to move back to the old format when the conference can be held on site again.

The theme of the 2021 Conference is “Assessment for Changing Times: Opportunities and Challenges.” This will give participants an opportunity to discuss a range of issues such as digital assessment, assessing 21st century competencies and obstacles to implementing changes in assessment. With the covid-pandemic hopefully behind us, this theme will be especially relevant for the experiences that have been gained, and the research following this.

Organising the annual conference always takes a lot of time and effort, but this year perhaps more than usual. The AEA-Europe council and active members have a lot of experience from organising conferences on site, and although the Festival was a useful learning experience, a full size online conference brought new challenges and required brainstorming, planning and re-planning by the council and committee members. We are very grateful for all the help from Easy Conferences that has been extremely helpful and done a lot of the practical work.

Easy Conferences has also provided the system for paper submissions and review of papers, the conference website and the platform for the online conference. We are also very grateful to the Scientific programme committee who have worked very hard with making sure that we have a high quality and well planned programme, the Publication committee members for their work with informing members and promoting the conference, and the Professional Development committee for their work with the accreditation scheme and the Kathleen Tattersall New Researcher Award, and for organising the Wednesday evening event for PhD students and accredited members. We are also very grateful for the help from our Irish colleagues for being active in planning not only the future meeting in Dublin and Dun Laoghaire but also the online conference and for organising the social pub event on the Thursday night. We would also like to thank the presenters and the special interest groups for sharing their work.

The Conference Organizing Committee (COC) for the 2021 conference has consisted of Christina Wikström, Chair (President AEA-Europe, Sweden), Therese Hopfenbeck (Vice-President AEA-Europe, UK), Alex Scharaschkin (Executive Secretary, AEA-Europe, UK), Jannette Elwood (former AEA-Europe-president), Andrej Novik (AEA-Europe council member, SCIO, Czech Republic), Linda Wye (AEA-Europe Secretariat), Gerry Shiel (Educational Research Centre, Ireland) and Damian Murchan (Trinity College, Ireland), Natalia Nunes (IAVE, Portugal) and Alina Ivanova (NRU HSE Moscow), and representatives from the Scientific Programme Committee (Stuart Shaw, UK), Publication Committee (Deborah Chetcuti AEA-Europe council member, Malta), and Professional Development Committee (Elena Papanastasiou, AEA-Europe council member, Cyprus). Some meetings have also been attended by representatives from EasyConferences, and Jonathan Wedman (Umeå university, Sweden), for technical advice regarding conference platform and session formats.

Future conferences

The 2022 Annual conference is planned to take place in Dun Laoghaire and Dublin, a venue that has been postponed two years due to the pandemic. The planning of this conference is well underway, especially since the practical planning started already in early 2019. The conference will, as previously mentioned, be hosted by Trinity College Dublin and the Educational Research Centre, Dublin.

Dún Laoghaire is a coastal suburb of Dublin, only a few kilometers from the city centre, and one of many charming towns and villages along the Dublin Bay coastline, with many cultural attractions and some of the best restaurants in Ireland. The venue for the conference, including the pre-conference workshops, will be the Royal Marine Hotel. The hotel is situated in the centre of Dún Laoghaire with a breath-taking view overlooking Dublin Bay. Dun Laoghaire is a perfect location for a conference – it is not only convenient and beautiful as a venue, it is easy to access from the airport, with frequent buses stopping just outside the hotel. There are also frequent trains and buses to nearby towns along the coast and to Dublin city centre (only 20 minutes away), making it easy to travel for conference participants who want to explore the area in their free time. The evening before the conference, participants will be invited to a welcome reception in the iconic Long Room of the Old Library in Trinity College, in the heart of Dublin city centre.

As for the conferences in future years, the plans were to go to Moscow after Dublin. However, due to the pandemic and the unsurity of world politics, we are aware that plans may have to change. We do hope for a positive development and many more on-site AEA-Europe conferences in interesting places around Europe. The new council will eventually put out a call for proposals for hosting future conferences. We very much encourage members to talk with Council over the next year if they are interested in hosting a future conference.

Awards and Accreditations

Kathleen Tattersall New Assessment Researcher Award 2021

Following the process indicated on the website, a call for applications for the New Assessment Researcher Award was sent out with an application deadline set for the 30th of April. Applications were requested from individuals who are currently in the first three years after being awarded their doctoral degree, and who are currently also engaged in an assessment-related field with research of relevance for assessment practices.

The evaluation committee concluded that this year's prize should be awarded to Dr. Raphael Pasquini who is currently an associate professor in classroom assessment at the University of Teacher Education state of Vaud, in Switzerland. Dr. Pasquini will present his research as one of the keynotes at the online conference, and he will receive a prize of €500. The award is sponsored by AQA.

The PDC would like to thank the jury members for their support, who have critically reviewed all applications that were received this year.

Accredited Members 2021

Four accreditations were made this year. The accredited members will receive their certificates by ordinary mail this year since the conference will take place virtually:

Practitioner:

Doreen Said Pace (Ministry of Education and Employment, Malta)

Ragnar Haake (Umea University, Sweden)

Lauren Miller (Pearson, UK)

Fellow:

Deborah Chetcuti, (University of Malta, Malta)

Financial Report

The financial report over 2020 is presented below. First, in table 3, the operating budget for 2020 is presented. The balance sheet is presented next in table 4. These overviews will be explained briefly below. Because the Dublin 2020 conference was postponed, there is no separate table with a detailed conference profit and loss overview. The cost and sponsorship income of the free online festival that was held instead are recorded in the operating budget for 2020.

Note that a direct overall comparison of the results for 2020 and 2019 has to take into account that no conference was held in 2020. Because of this fact, both income and expenditure are much lower in 2020 than in 2019. A comparison on other aspects of the financial report for 2020 with the budget for 2020 and the financial report for 2019 makes clear that the revenues from subscription fees are more or less the same, but that the matter of uncollectable debtors -like previous years- remains unsolved. The reasons for this phenomenon are the same as before. One reason is the fact that messages from the treasury do not always reach members and that renewing membership is never top-of-mind with members. Another reason has to do with imperfections of the registration system on our website. And yet another reason might be that members that are not planning to visit the conference do not see a reason to continue membership because the membership does not offer enough added value next to a reduced rate for the conference. The fact that, according to the financial administration, a lot of memberships fees were paid just before the online festival supports the validity of this assumption. For 2020, the Covid pandemic probably is another motive for members not to renew or to think about renewing their membership.

To solve this issue, we have worked to make the member registration system more user-friendly and to streamline the payment processes. Moreover, the website has been redesigned in 2020 to help increase the added value of the membership. For example, recordings of SIG-webinars held in the past are now available for all members to approach. In addition to this, we have been working on outsourcing the operational financial work. This will take effect per 01-01-2022. EasyConferences, the organization that has been handling the conference subscriptions and logistic and administrative preparations for several years already, will also become responsible for collecting the membership fees. They already are handling the financial administration for several other associations, comparable to AEA Europe and thus are quite experienced in these matters. The council expect that these measures will help to finally close this persistent issue.

Because of the decrease in membership numbers and thus membership fee income, the fact that there was no profit from a conference, the extra costs for yet again renewing the website and the extra costs of organizing the free-for-members online festival for 2020, there is a negative result of € -38.449. This is partly proof of the remarks made in previous financial reports, that the money lost over the years with uncollectable debtors poses a serious threat to the continuity of AEA Europe in the longer run. Hence the decision to outsource the financial administration to Easyconferences who will get a fixed fee for every membership payment collected.

The total income of sponsoring of the online festival comes from AQA (€ 700; € 500 for the Kathleen Tattersal New Researcher Award and € 200 for the company logo on the conference website), Better Examinations (€ 200 for the company logo on the conference website), Cambridge Assessment (€ 240 (inc. VAT) for the company logo on the conference website), GA Partnership (€ 200 for the company logo on the conference website) and Grademaker (€ 200 for the company logo on the conference website).

Table 3; Operating Budget (in Euros)

	Report 31-12-2019	Budget 2020	Report 31-12-2020
Income			
Subscriptions (Corporate)	16.800		16.975
Subscriptions (Individual)	4.830		3.720
Subscriptions (Student)	720		915
Subscriptions	[22.350]	36.500	[21.610]
Uncollectable debtors	-11.610		-14.450
Conference/Online Festival Income	145.775		0
Conference/Online Festival Sponsoring	7.600		1.540
Interest	1		8
	164.116		8.708
Expenditure			
Council Meetings	10.447	3.000	2.759
Administration (Secretariat and	18.959	18.730	18.959
Online Festival Expenditure ¹	126.496		6.426
Conference 2021 Expenditure	0		3.391
Professional Development Committee	0	2.000	0
Communications Committee	120	1.000	0
Scientific Programme Committee	0	0	0
Website maintenance/software	5.419	14.000	13.697
New researcher award	500	500	500
Audit Committee	0	300	0
Promotional activities	0	0	0
Participation fund	0	0	0
Miscellaneous ²	0	100	541
Bank/ PayPal Charges	681	1.000	886
	162.622		47.158
Surplus	1.493		-38.449

¹These are the organizing costs of the online festival (€ 6.426). Because we received an amount of € 1.540 from sponsors, the online conference had a balance of -€ 4.886.

² Consists of a restitution for an overpayment of one of the corporate members for their membership and a payment for a membership of the IAEA (€ -431) that was erroneously transferred to the AEA Europe account by Cito administrative staff.

Table 4; Balance sheet as at December 31, 2020 (in Euros)

<u>Assets</u>	Bank (Rabobank)	14.715
	Deposit	81.725
		96.440
<u>Prepayments and receivables</u>	Debtors	18.755
	Prepayments Dublin	8.391
		27.146
<u>Payables</u>	Conference costs 2019	-2.145
	Secretariat 2020/2019	-20.089
		-22.233
<u>Sundry</u>		-21
Net Assets		101.331
<u>Equity</u>	Retained profits (31-12-2019)	139.781
	Surplus / Deficit 2020	-38.449
<u>Total Equity</u>		101.331

The total amount of assets at December 31, 2020, is € 101,331. At December 31, 2019, the total amount of assets was € 125.312.

The prepayments and receivables consist of outstanding subscriptions for 2019 and 2020 (€ 9.440 for members who have not paid for two consecutive years and € 9.315 for members who have not paid for 2020), a first advance payment made in 2019 for the 2020 Dublin conference (€ 5.000) and a second advance payment to the organizers of the 2021 Dublin³ conference (€ 3.391). The payables entail costs for the 2019 Lisbon conference that were paid for in 2020 (€ 2.145), 2019 costs for the Secretariat that were paid for in 2020 (€ 10.159) and 2020 costs for the Secretariat that should also have been paid in 2020 (€ 9.930). Sundry refers to relatively smaller items that have been paid in 2019 but relate to 2020, or to relatively small items that should have been paid in 2019 but were/are to be paid in 2020. Sundry for 2019 amounts to -€ 21, consisting of interest for 2020 still to be received (€ 8), and bank costs for 2020 that were paid in 2021 (€ 29).

³ Postponed to 2022 without direct negative financial consequences

Proposed Business Plan 2021-2023

The Business Plan as presented in last year's annual report has been updated again. The Business Plan 2021-2023 as presented in this annual report is comparable to the Business Plans of the last years. Like its predecessors, it is based on the principle that the Association has to maintain reserves that are at least equivalent to the funding of 18 months of normal activities (council and committee meetings and a reasonable amount to be used as deposits for conference arrangements). Note however, that, like last year, the budget for 2021 has been updated from the original one because of the corona crisis.

If the assets will increase more than stipulated in this Business Plan, the Council will decide in coordination with the General Assembly how the Association could benefit from the better than foreseen financial results, taking the conservative financial policy into account. The projected budgets for 2021-2023 are based on the structural financial results of the last years and incorporate the effects of the corona crisis in 2021. The assumption is that no major incidents will take place in 2022 or 2023 and that the Corona pandemic will be something of the past.

Table 5 Business Plan 2021-2022; Budgets

	2021	2022	2023
Income			
Subscriptions	30.000	32.000	34.000
Conference revenue		15.000	12.000
	30.000	47.000	46.000
Expenditure			
Council	3.000	6.000	6.000
Administration (secretariat & treasury) ⁴	10.000	19.000	19.000
Scientific Programme Committee	1.500	1.500	1.500
Professional Development Committee	2.000	2.000	2.000
Communications Committee	1.000	1.500	1.500
New Researcher Award	500	500	500
Audit Committee	0	0	0
Website/software	8.000	8.000	8.000
Bank charges/gain loss foreign exchange	1.000	1.000	1.000
Promotional activities	0	2.000	2.000
Participation fund	0	5.000	5.000
Miscellaneous	100	100	100
	27.100	46.600	46.600
Annual surplus (deficit)	2.900	400	-600

⁴ Cito waved their fee for financial operational costs in 2021, because the operational work was done by the treasurer himself. Easyconferences will look at the real costs in 2022 and charge a fixed fee for 2023 onwards.

Note that:

- The income from subscriptions for the three consecutive years has been reduced in comparison with the budgets from earlier financial reports to reflect the decrease in the number of memberships.
- The budget for 2021 has been structurally changed because of the effect of the corona crisis.
- The budget for the council has been structurally decreased because part of the meetings will take place online, resulting in a reduction of travelling and accommodation costs.
- Expectations are that the costs for Easyconferences taking over the financial administration will be the same as the earlier Cito fee.
- Subscriptions and conference revenues for 2022 and 2023 have been relatively increased, because of the higher subscription fees accepted by the General Assembly in Lisbon 2019. We expect, however, a lower number attendees for the 2023 conference which is planned to take place in Moscow.
- Budget for the Scientific Programme Committee has been added for 2021 and onwards in order to facilitate the putting together of the conference programme.
- Since 2017 a provision is made of €5.000 to the Participation Fund that is meant to support attendance at the annual conference for members for whom the costs of attending would otherwise be prohibitive. To date no use has been made of the Participation Fund. One probable reason for this is that it might be not known to part of the membership that such a fund exists. The Council will have to communicate with members to let them know the Fund exists.