

INSA Call for Papers for a Special Issue of Orbis Scholae

Recording, Reporting, and Using School Attendance Data: Variations Within and Across Countries.

Deadline for submitting a proposal is 30th June 2021

Background:

The International Network for School Attendance ([INSA](http://www.insa-network.org)) in collaboration with the academic journal *Orbis Scholae* is hosting a call for papers. INSA's participation in this project helps fulfil its Mission to promote school attendance and reduce absenteeism. It does this by compiling, generating, evaluating, and disseminating information, assessment, and intervention strategies. It also works to improve consensus in the field, accentuate the voices of all stakeholders (including youth, families, practitioners, researchers, and policymakers), and enhance dissemination and implementation. Against this background, *the special issue focuses on improving knowledge of how school absenteeism is defined and measured across different countries or states/regions.*

Aim of the Special Issue:

To improve school attendance, education and government departments around the world engage in some form of monitoring through the recording and reporting of absenteeism. Despite an abundant literature on school absenteeism, we still know relatively little about the different approaches that are used to define, record, and report school attendance across countries or states/regions within countries. This inconsistency is a major limiting factor for research collaboration across countries, for policy alignment, and for identifying best practices. This special issue presents the broadest overview so far on how school attendance and absenteeism is defined and measured. We invite country-specific manuscripts (or state/region-specific) which address the following questions: (1) How is school absenteeism conceptualized in your country? (2) What indicators of absence are being recorded? (3) How is this data reported? and (4) How do schools and central authorities respond to this data?

Invitation to Contribute:

If you are interested in contributing to this issue of *Orbis Scholae*, we kindly ask you to send the title, authors, and overview (100-150 words) for your proposal by June 30th, 2021, to journal editor Dr. Dominik Dvořák at: dominik.dvorak@pedf.cuni.cz. Full manuscripts can be submitted until the end of January 2022. Submitted manuscripts should not have been published previously, nor be under consideration for publication elsewhere. All manuscripts are refereed through a double-blind peer-review process. Accepted papers will be published continuously in the journal (as soon as accepted) and will be listed together on the special issue website (under construction) and in a printed issue at the end of 2022.

Guidelines for Contributors:

To permit comparison across countries (or states/regions), authors are asked to structure their paper as shown below. Please note that the proposed format is required but not exhaustive (e.g., authors might include additional subsections). The manuscript is expected to be 4,000-6,000 words, including references (i.e., to be between roughly 27 to 40 thousand characters, including spaces), and authors are expected to follow [APA referencing guidelines](#). Contributors from the same country/region may be asked to collaborate. If you have any queries regarding the guidelines below, please contact special issue Guest Editors, Dr Gil Keppens and Dr David Heyne, via: Gil.Keppens@vub.be.

1. Introduction

- **Setting the Scene:** Set the scene regarding the recording and reporting of attendance in your country (or state/region). This is open to authors' ideas of what to include (e.g., highlighting current issues in the country regarding attendance; personal experience and motivation for addressing this topic).
- **Educational Context:** Provide a brief description of the characteristics of the educational system within which the recording and reporting of absenteeism occurs (e.g., age range for compulsory education; use of grade retention / 'staying down a grade'; whether students are separated by academic ability into different tracks, schools, or groups within schools). In addition, please provide a brief description of laws/statutes related to school attendance and absenteeism in your country/region.

2. Body: Recording and Reporting of School Attendance and Absenteeism

- **Definitional issues:** How is attendance/absence conceptualized and broken down into categories by the government? Please provide a definition for each category (e.g., are absences categorized as excused and unexcused, and if so, what is defined as excused and unexcused; is late arrival counted as absence, and if so, using which definition). If there are discrepancies between the definitions used by the government and within schools, please indicate what these discrepancies are.
- **Recording issues:** Please describe the registration/recording procedure within schools, addressing the following questions:
 - i. What is recorded, attendance or absence?
 - ii. Which categories of absence are recorded?
 - iii. What is the procedure for recording? (e.g., How and when are the attendance data recorded by schools? Who is responsible for recording attendance/absence?)
 - iv. Are there any automated attendance tracking systems in use?
 - v. How has the recording of attendance/absence changed due to the COVID-19 pandemic? For example, are extra categories being used?
 - vi. Are there variations with respect to recording in your country (e.g., by state or district?)
- **Reporting issues:** How are data transferred from schools to local government, by whom (within the school), and to whom (within government)? What is minimum mandatory reporting of absenteeism (i.e., how frequently)? Are there variations with respect to reporting in your country (e.g., by state or district)?
- **Using attendance/absence data:** What is done with the data? How is it analyzed?
 - i. How do schools use their attendance/absence data? For example, is it only used for monitoring rates of attendance/absence, or is it also used to issue sanctions such as penalties for non-attendance, or to amend policies on school attendance and absence? Are schools obliged to undertake certain actions in the event of a certain number/threshold of absences?
 - ii. How do broader authorities use attendance data? For example, are the data used for evaluation of school policy, or for school funding?
 - iii. Are data publicly accessible or made available to researchers, external organizations (e.g., social workers, mental health professionals) or local authorities?

3. Discussion

- Reflect on what you have written about recording, reporting, and using data in your country (or region/state). For example, discuss the current strengths and weaknesses in recording and reporting, and the steps that you think need to be taken to allow for better comparison of data across countries (regions/states), or to allow for better use of data.