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Welcome to the latest issue of INSTant! It's been a busy start to the year for INSA with exciting work taking place across the national networks. We are also delighted to share a number of great opportunities to learn and connect via conferences and events happening in many countries.

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Introducing NONNA: Network of National Networks for Attendance

A new and exciting initiative to foster collaboration among national INSA networks was brought to life during the latest INSA conference held in New Orleans – Network of National Networks for Attendance, or NONNA. NONNA seeks to address challenges in school attendance by providing a platform for international collaboration and knowledge exchange.



NONNA is led by Carolina Soto-Urbe, with the support of INSA's Education and Policy Committee (chaired by Catriona O'Toole). This key initiative aligns with INSA's overarching vision and purpose to provide a global cooperative space to strengthen school attendance in various contexts.



Reflecting on the beginning of NONNA, Carolina said *“The Network of National Networks for Attendance (NONNA) emerged in October 2024 as a response to the need to foster collaboration among different countries, aiming to exchange experiences, lessons learned, and best practices. We chose this name, which means ‘grandmother’ in Italian, because it evokes the idea of care, guidance, and unity, reflecting the essence of our network: to support and strengthen communities working to improve school attendance in various contexts.”*

The work of NONNA focuses on three key pillars:



NONNA is already undertaking some key projects for 2025 with the aim of sharing best practice and strategies for improving school attendance across the world and support member countries to address school attendance challenges within their national context. The first project, *Strategic Plan 2025*, aims to design the roadmap for NONNA in 2025 with the aim to strengthen the network's

impact. The second project, *Expansion of national networks*, aims to work with INSA National Affiliates and support local groups to establish their own networks.

Carolina shared her vision for NONNA: *“We hope that NONNA will promote the development and expansion of national networks, ensuring that each country has a solid structure that represents its local reality. In this way, we reinforce our commitment to joining forces in the search for solutions that guarantee students' school attendance and success.”*



Does your Country have an Attendance Network?

Would you like your country's network to be affiliated with INSA? Following requests from national groups, INSA has endorsed the establishment of the INSA National Networks (previously referred to as INSA Country Affiliates).

INSA National Networks (INNs) bring together professionals, academics, advocates, and policymakers within a country to collaborate in advancing school attendance, aligned with INSA's mission and values.

Anticipated benefits to establishing an INN include:

- Improved Collaboration and Networking - connect with schools, educators, and policymakers in your country
- Stronger Advocacy and Policy Influence - use INSA's platform to drive meaningful change
- Increased Visibility - showcase your country's work globally via INSA's website and newsletter
- Capacity Building and Training - enhance local expertise with INSA-backed resources

What's expected?

Each INN will:

- Have at least five members who are INSA members

- Appoint a leader and secretary
- Share updates and insights with the global community
- Attend and contribute to INSA's international conferences

For more information, read our [Resolution](#).

If you are interested in establishing an INSA National Network in your country, please complete this [Expression of Interest Form](#).

Mentoring Program: A New INSA Initiative

INSA is pleased to announce the introduction of its Mentoring Program. This initiative is aimed at connecting doctoral students with experienced researchers, enabling collaboration, knowledge sharing, and professional development. Opportunities may also arise for short research visits or collaborative work on short-term projects such as writing research articles.

Applications are now being sought from prospective mentors. As an INSA mentor, you will contribute to establishing a supportive environment that promotes a culture of shared knowledge and collective growth. If you are a Professor or Associate Professor with expertise in school attendance and you are keen to be involved, we'd love to hear from you.

For further information or to sign up as a mentor, please visit the [Mentoring Program page](#) on the INSA website. Applications to sign up as a mentee will open at a later date – stay tuned!



INSA is delighted to support the formation of an Emerging Scholars subcommittee to support our diverse and vibrant community of doctoral students and early career researchers.

Nominations for positions on the Emerging Scholars subcommittee are now being accepted. We are looking to fill the roles of Chairperson, Secretary, and Activity and Communications Coordinator, with each role having both a lead and a deputy position. If you are a financial member of INSA, you are eligible to nominate. Please read the mission and aims of the subcommittee, and familiarise yourself with the position descriptions. If you are willing to commit to the position requirements over a two-year term, please complete the [Nomination Form](#). Nominations close on 30 April 2025.

A key function of the Emerging Scholars subcommittee will be coordinating regular events for doctoral students and early career researchers to promote international collaboration and peer support. These events may include informal networking, writing sessions, sharing research outputs, expert webinars and more. Details of these events will be shared via INStAnt! on a regular basis.

Upcoming Conferences and Events

2026 INSA CONFERENCE - ALICANTE, SPAIN

DATES ANNOUNCED!

30th September - 2nd October 2026

Hotel Alicante Golf

Keep an eye out for further information and be ready to submit your abstracts and book your ticket!



NATIONAL CONFERENCES

USA

Attendance USA: Merged Lanes is the first ever national convening of attendance stakeholders in the USA. This event will be held in Indianapolis on May 20 and 21. Visit the event [website](#) for further information and to register.

Canada

Making Waves in School Attendance: School-Wide Strategies to Support Students with Chronic Absenteeism is an exciting virtual conference hosted by Youth Mental Health Canada on May 30 and 31. Further details and registration information can be found on the conference [website](#).

Australia

The Australian Network for School Attendance (ANSA) is excited to host its inaugural conference in Melbourne on September 4 and 5. If you would like to receive further information, please [contact us](#).

The Netherlands

The *Dutch School Attendance Congress* will be held on September 25 and 26 at De Heerlickheijd van Ermelo. Visit the congress [website](#) for more information and to secure your ticket.

Spotlight on Research

A graphic of a spotlight with a grey body and a yellow lens, emitting three small yellow stars.

Compassion, collaboration and cultural-responsiveness: insights on promoting successful pathways through education for students who face school attendance barriers

Catriona O'Toole and Tara Ćirić

O'Toole and Ćirić's 2024 study explores barriers to school attendance using a trauma-informed framework, EMBRACE. Through focus groups and interviews with educators, allied professionals, parents, and young people, the study identifies factors contributing to school attendance problems, and explores the implications of discrimination and systemic inequalities experienced by marginalized groups. The research highlights the need for an inclusive, flexible education system supported by well-resourced alternative pathways like home tuition and online learning. It advocates for interagency collaboration, compassion, and empowering students to shape their educational experiences, alongside addressing the broader contexts that contribute to attendance problems.

[Read the issue here](#)

Resource Hub: What's new?

CALLOUT: Share your presentations from the 2024 INSA Conference in New Orleans!

Over the coming issues we are excited to share the amazing work that was presented at the recent INSA Conference in New Orleans with our new members and those who weren't able to attend.

If you would like to share your research in INStAnt, please send a 250 word summary of your presentation to [our editorial team](#) by the 31st May 2025.

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