

Annual Report 2025

1. General

1.1 Meetings, gatherings and retreats

The following meetings took place during the reporting year:

1.1.1 Meeting on 17 March 2025 in Bern

The budget and annual financial statements were approved at the first meeting of 2025. Patricia Schmidiger from swissuniversities gave an overview of the new PgB Equal Opportunities 2025/2026. This was followed by presentations of individual projects from the iDEAS members. The iDEAS Anniversary Working Group presented the various ideas and options for the 2026 anniversary.

1.1.2 Meeting on 17 June 2025 online

The meeting on 17 June focused on information from swissuniversities, SERI, the SNSF and the individual universities, as well as the H.I.T. programme. Mihaela Falub, programme coordinator, presented the new programme starting in 2025. The upcoming iDEAS anniversary in 2026 was also discussed again.

1.1.3 Retreat on 21/22 August 2025 in Lugano

On the first day, Sally Baden from Advanced HE (Higher Education) gave a workshop on Athena Swan. Athena Swan is a charter for promoting gender equality in higher education and research. The workshop focused on how the Athena Swan Charter works and is structured, as well as possible ways of introducing and implementing it in Switzerland. The charter was also discussed in the specific case of Ireland, which includes other diversity topics in addition to gender. Sarah Petchey and Karin Gilland Lutz provided an insight into its implementation at the University of Zurich.

On the second day of the retreat, the Athena Swan workshop was discussed internally and the next steps were discussed. Finally, Carine Carvalho and Verena Witzig conducted a workshop on 'Identifying resistance and backlash dynamics, and co-constructing strategies for EDI action' using the fishbowl method. Ideas for speakers for the anniversary event were also collected.

1.1.4 Meeting of 24 November 2025 online

At the last meeting in 2025, the regular board elections were held. Lisa Hattersley from the SNF presented the short survey on the topic of 'Parental Measures'. Helene Fuger informed iDEAS members about the hearing at the WBK-S on the 2027 relief package. Furthermore, smaller projects such as Athena Swan, SHAD 2026 and the 2026 anniversary were discussed and information was provided.

1.1.5 Executive Board meetings

Board meetings were generally held in advance of the iDEAS meetings. Eight regular meetings (all online) were held during the reporting year. In addition, preparatory meetings were held to organise the iDEAS meetings and the retreat. Various matters were dealt with further by correspondence.

1.2 Personnel

In 2025, there were personnel changes in the composition of iDEAS.

1.2.1 Members

Pia Ammann from the University of Lucerne (as of the end of March 2025) and Verena Witzig from the University of St. Gallen (as of the end of October 2025) have left iDEAS. Matthias Luterbach and Fleur Weibel are new to iDEAS on behalf of the University of Lucerne. The University of St. Gallen is represented by Ella Roininen.

1.2.2 Executive Board

There were changes to the Executive Board in 2025. Pia Ammann from the University of Lucerne and Verena Witzig from the University of St. Gallen left the iDEAS Executive Board when they left iDEAS. In November 2025, Muriel Besson from the University of Fribourg was elected to the Executive Board.

1.2.3 Management

Gaia Fortunato continued to manage the organisation's affairs.

1.3 Networks

1.3.1 FH/PH/UH network meeting

On 25 August, the network meeting of universities, universities of applied sciences and universities of teacher education took place at the ZHDK in Zurich. Following an input from swissuniversities, various workshops were held on the topics of 'difference-sensitive teaching', 'SHAD' and "networking", as well as on the topics of 'studying and disability' and 'diversity monitoring' in the second part. Finally, Yuvviki Dioh from the Schauspielhaus Zurich gave an insight into her work as a diversity agent.

1.3.2. «AG Hochschulpolitik»

During the financial year, Karin Gilland Lutz represented iDEAS in the Higher Education Policy Working Group (AG Hochschulpolitik). The main topics of discussion in the working group were the 27th relief package and the future of PgBs.



2. Key topics

2.1 Athena Swan

At the 2025 retreat, Sally Baden from Advanced HE gave a presentation on Athena Swan. This was followed by an internal discussion on how to proceed with the project. Questions regarding financing and concrete implementation in the Swiss higher education landscape remained unanswered. EPFL and ETH are examining whether initial implementation at the Swiss Federal Institutes of Technology is possible.

2.2 Planning for the 35th anniversary of iDEAS

A working group was set up for the 35th anniversary of iDEAS in 2026. Various ideas such as a website, a publication or an event were discussed. Due to limited resources, it was decided to hold an internal event as part of the iDEAS retreat in 2026. This event will be open to team members and will serve as internal training.

2.3 Equal Opportunities Programme 2025-2028

The programme 'Equal Opportunities – Promoting Equality, Diversity and Inclusion at All Levels of Higher Education' was launched in 2025. Funding for the programme is secured until June 2027 (as of January 2026). The universities coordinate various projects or participate in them.

2.4 WBK-S hearing on the 2027 relief package

Christa Binswanger and Helene Füger took part in the WBK-S (Council of States Committee for Science, Education and Culture) hearing on the 2027 relief package. They explained the negative effects of the relief package on the promotion of equal opportunities at Swiss universities. In doing so, they focused on the instrument of project-related contributions (PgB) in accordance with the HFKG (Federal Act on the Promotion of Universities and Coordination in the Swiss Higher Education Sector). The commission decided not to abolish the instrument, but to suspend its funding for the time being.

2.5 Other activities: Consultations

- (1) Consultation on the Federal Act on the 2027 Relief Package
- (2) Consultation on the revision to the Higher Education Council's Ordinance on Accreditation in Higher Education

March 2026

Signed: Helene Füger