UK Society for Co-operative Studies (UKSCS)

58th Annual Conference — Call for Contributions

Co-operation in Uncertain Times: Resilience, Renewal and Democratic Growth

Hosted by the Co-op Group, Manchester, UK

Main conference | Thursday 15 – Friday 16 April 2027
Pre-conference Doctoral colloquium co-organised with the University of Eastern Finland | Wednesday 14 April 2027
Submit by 15 January 2027 | Decisions by 29 January 2027

Call for Presentations, Papers, Panels & Practical Activities

Co-operatives, and other forms of democratic enterprise, are operating in a period of considerable economic, political, environmental, social and technological uncertainty. Climate change, geopolitical instability, widening inequality, economic insecurity, pressures on public services and communities, and the rapid development of artificial intelligence are reshaping the conditions in which organisations operate.

These pressures present significant challenges. They also raise fundamental questions about how economies should be organised, who should own and govern enterprises, and how communities can build resilience through collective action. Across many sectors and countries, interest is growing in democratic ownership, mutuality and co-operative alternatives to conventional forms of socio-economic organisation.

Against this backdrop, the 2027 UKSCS Conference will explore how co-operatives can respond to uncertainty while supporting members and communities and contributing to fairer and more sustainable economies. It will also examine how the co-operative movement can grow and innovate without compromising democratic ownership, meaningful member participation and co-operative identity.

This year, UKSCS is joining forces with the University of Eastern Finland, with a Finnish co-operative research and practice track and a jointly organised doctoral colloquium.



Confirmed keynote speaker
Professor Anu Puusa
University of Eastern Finland

Who can contribute

We welcome scholars from any discipline, co-operative practitioners, policymakers and organisations from the co-operative movement and the wider social economy. Contributions may present research or practical experience, stimulate debate, share emerging ideas or facilitate participatory learning. **We particularly encourage contributions from practitioners and co-operative organisations** on emerging ideas and innovative practices.

We welcome contributions addressing the following topics:

- Scaling the co-operative economy while protecting democratic ownership, member participation and co-operative identity;
- Co-operative responses to economic insecurity, inequality, climate change, conflict and other forms of crisis;
- The opportunities and risks that artificial intelligence, digital platforms and data-driven technologies create for co-operatives, including as democratic alternatives to the corporate control of technology and data;
- Community ownership and the future of energy, housing, land, food systems, local services and businesses;
- Co-operative approaches to strengthen health and social care, address ageing populations, support decent work and sustain community-based provision;
- Financing co-operative development without weakening member control;
- Youth participation, co-operative education, leadership development and succession planning to support the movement's renewal;
- Balancing democratic governance and accountability with organisational growth and professionalisation;
- Public policies, legal frameworks and institutional arrangements that enable or constrain co-operative development;
- Co-operation among co-operatives, mutuals, trade unions, public bodies and other social and solidarity economy organisations;
- Co-operative business and management education, in teaching, research and practice, and its role in building the movement's long-term capacity.

These themes are intended to guide rather than restrict submissions. We welcome contributions on any topic that advances understanding or practice relating to co-operatives and aligns with the Society's objectives.

Finnish Co-operative Research and Practice Track

This year, the conference will feature a dedicated track on Finnish co-operative research and practice. Finland is, in relative terms, the most co-operative country in the world and the track provides an opportunity to learn from the Finnish experience and explore its relevance to co-operative development in the UK and internationally. We welcome contributions examining co-operatives in Finland, including research, practitioner experiences and comparative perspectives. If you would like your contribution to be considered for this track, please indicate "Finnish Track" in your proposal and email subject line, as set out below.

Doctoral Colloquium | Wednesday 14 April 2027

UKSCS will also host a doctoral colloquium co-organised with the University of Eastern Finland. The colloquium will provide an opportunity for doctoral students researching co-operatives to present work in progress and discuss their research with fellow students and experienced researchers. We welcome submissions from doctoral students internationally, from any discipline and at any stage of their doctoral research. Proposals should briefly outline the research question, approach, progress to date and any issues on which the student would welcome feedback. Please follow the submission guidelines below and indicate "Doctoral Colloquium" in your proposal and email subject line.

How to submit

Email your proposal to membership@ukscs.coop
Submission deadline: 15 January 2027
Notification of acceptance: 29 January 2027

1. Prepare your proposal

Submit a single document of no more than 750 words, including:

- Title and submission type (presentation, paper, panel, workshop, other practical activity or doctoral colloquium)
- All contributors' names
- Corresponding author's name and contact details
- Purpose and issue addressed
- Approach or methodology, if applicable
- Findings or contributions to knowledge or practice (or anticipated contributions for work in progress)
- Relevant references, if applicable
- Keywords

2. Use the appropriate email subject line and name file

Main conference

UKSCS 2027 Conference – [Presenter Last Name] – [Submission Type, e.g., Paper, Panel, etc.]

Finnish track

UKSCS 2027 Conference – [Presenter Last Name] – [Submission Type] – Finnish Track

Doctoral colloquium

UKSCS 2027 Doctoral Colloquium – [Presenter Last Name]

Full papers submitted may also be considered for submission to the *Journal of Co-operative Studies.* Submission of a conference proposal does not guarantee publication, and journal submissions will be subject to the journal's usual editorial and peer-review processes.

Presenter attendance

At least one presenter or author must register for and attend the conference or the doctoral colloquium. Please submit a proposal only if you expect to attend the event.

We look forward to receiving your contributions.

UKSCS 2027 Conference Organising Team
Francesca Gagliardi, Janette Hurst, Elisavet Mantzari

UK Society for Co-operative Studies is registered in England and Wales as a charitable incorporated organisation Number 1175295.