

MethodsCon: Futures

Call for contributions



MethodsCon: Futures is a wholly in-person event that will take place over two days in Manchester, UK on 12-13 September 2024. The broad focus of this event is to engage with, explore and develop futures with a particular focus on themes which are likely to have significant impact on humanity's development over the next decades: equity and inclusion, AI, health and the environment, as well as methods for studying futures themselves.

Following the success of the first MethodsCon in 2022, we are excited to be crafting an event focussed on methods for creating, anticipating and understanding futures. Innovation and scholarship in relation to futures is multifaceted, with approaches and epistemic diversity making for an exciting area of exploration.

NCRM will be launching a series of Futures briefs to coincide with the event, that reflect on how sociotechnical changes might impact the way social science is conducted (its methods, approaches, how theories are developed). It is with these broad considerations in mind that we are crafting this MethodsCon: Futures event.

This innovative and cross-sector meet-up is part conference, part learning opportunity, part innovation forum and has been designed to connect and energise people with a focus on futures. We are seeking contributions from forward-thinking, futures-oriented researchers and practitioners, who can contribute to stimulating, developing and advancing this critical (research) development area.

Areas that are in scope include:

- Futures methodologies
- Inclusive and equitable futures

- Health technologies (e.g. neuro-tech, future of health technologies, genetic engineering, genomics research, assistive technology)
- Socio-environmental change
- AI, society, and social science concerns

We are happy for conveners to consider how their proposal crosscuts several areas.

Format

We are encouraging contributions from individuals and/or teams working in inter- and trans-disciplinary ways across the above areas. There are four possible formats for contributions:

1. Provocation Panels (45 minutes) will focus on quick-fire interactivity to take full advantage of the face-to-face nature of this event and be purposely provocative to the panel members and audience. For example, these sessions can focus on challenges to the status quo, dilemmas and debates, sector/disciplinary boundaries and how to break them, or a showcase of 'failures' or curious results.
2. Bite-sized Methods (innovations) (45 minutes) sessions. The future is methodologically diverse; understanding methods outside of one's comfort zone is the order of the day. These sessions aim to provide bite-sized introductions to critical and/or new concepts and methods.
3. Skills Development Workshops (1 hour 30 minutes) will focus on deeper dives into a particular methodological area. The potential scope of the workshops is broad but should focus on delivering against one or two specific learning outcomes for the delegates attending, who should be able to leave with a new tangible skill or insight.
4. Interactive Futures Workshops (3 hours 30 minutes). Are there futures (perhaps driven by technological development, societal change and/or change in the academe itself) which you would like to explore for its impacts on social science; the way we conduct research; the nature of our research questions; the nature of our subject or discipline; what skills we need etc? Then setting up one of our futures workshops might be just for you!

We are also open to suggestions about other forms of contribution. Please see our contact details below.

Finances

- Contributors will receive a pass to the whole of MethodsCon: Futures (without needing to go through the application process).
- We will also provide up to two nights' hotel accommodation (arranged by us) and (standard class) UK travel expenses for session conveners and additional contributors according to the table below:

Session type	Expenses payable for
Provocation Panels	Session convener +2
Bite-sized Methods (innovations)	Session convener
Skills Development Workshops	Session convener +1
Interactive Futures Workshops	Session convener +4

Bursaries

To support contributors from across different sectors, a package of financial support is also available. A total bursary fund of £3,000 is available and can be used to pay for costs that enable participation beyond accommodation and travel expenses. This could include, but is not limited to childcare, BSL interpreters, resources, printing or digital devices.

To access financial support via the bursary, costs must be indicated at the application stage. Requests for bursaries will be competitively awarded following a review by an NCRM panel.

Timeline

- Call for contributions goes live: 4 March 2024
- Deadline for applications: 20 April 2024

- Successful applicants notified: 30 April 2024
- Summary of contributions required for marketing: 17 May 2024

How to apply

To apply for a session, please complete the form here: <http://tinyurl.com/MethodsCon-Futures>

For any queries, contact Sandra Gogacz: sandra.gogacz@manchester.ac.uk