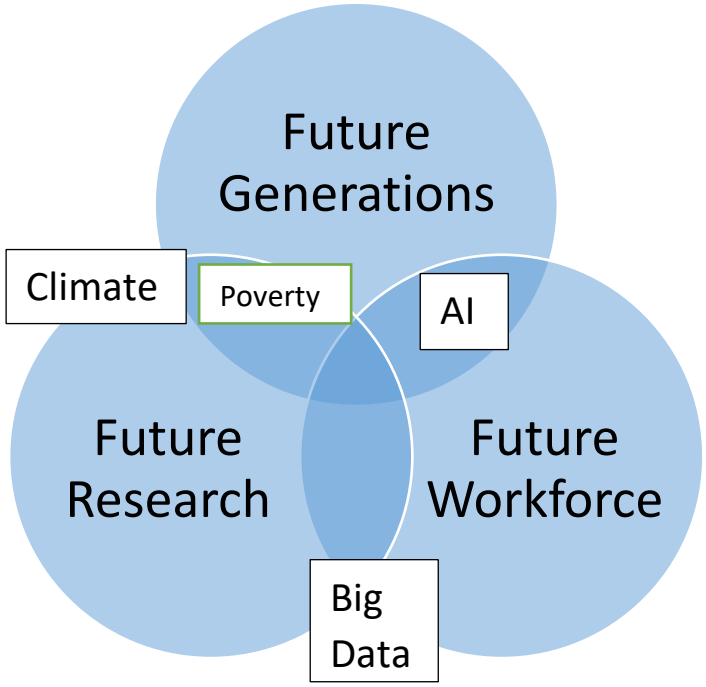
Psychology of the Future: Changing Landscapes

At the start of a new decade, psychology is proving ever more relevant to the landscape of the future. Our conference this year will push the boundaries of that 2020 vision – are we seeing the challenges ahead clearly? And are we ready?

Future generations will use technology in ways that we are only beginning to understand and will benefit from it in ways we can only imagine. But they will do so in a world that is different to today, living the consequences of the global climate emergency that will reshape the physical and political landscapes in which we live. Psychological evidence that helps us to understand these trends and respond to what matters to future generations will be increasingly important. Poverty and social inequality are persistent, multifaceted, cross-generational problems which require ambitious and psychologically informed systemic changes.

The *future psychological workforce* will adapt and change with new skills, new technologies and new therapies. How will the psychological workforce of 2030 be different from today? How will the latest developments in AI, Digital Health and Big Data change our work and the way we work? How can we ensure our workforce reflects our diverse society and meets the needs of a changing population?

Our *future research* must keep pace. Science does not sit still and psychologists must respond to a changing research landscape and the challenges of increasing openness and trust in science. We must work harder to ensure we share our knowledge with those who can benefit and strive for increasing excellence, staying at the cutting edge of research developments.



We invite submissions which explore the following:

Future Generations

The Global Climate Emergency is likely to be the defining issue of the next generation. Young people – from primary school to university students - have been motivated to respond to the emergency in powerful ways. Given that much of climate change is rooted in human behaviour, can psychological

science help us understand these intergenerational differences and offer evidence-based solutions to climate change?

We invite submissions which explore associations between social justice and climate change, as well as psychological factors which are contributing to the global climate emergency, including the psychology of overconsumption and perception and fear of climate change. We also invite submissions which explore psychologically informed solutions to the global climate emergency, including psychological barriers to and facilitators of behaviour change at an individual level (including sense making, appraisal, affective responses, coping and motivation) as well as at a more macro level (e.g. within organisations and communities).

Artificial Intelligence (AI) has implications for the delivery of education, technological skills, technological design standards and their implementation. These changes will fundamentally change the way we educate the next generation, the way we work and the way we care for the health of the most vulnerable members of our society. There is also a well-recognised technology skills gap. Technical education should not just be skills based but should also human centred (encompassing issues such as privacy, security and trust).

Submissions should focus on the important contributions Psychology has to make to the future design standards and regulation policy for the implementation of new technologies across the work, health and home contexts. These policies could include areas such as: how we ethically design and develop the technology, how to certify the technology as safe and reliable in use, its utility to society and the UK economy, how it could support individual wellbeing, and how it could change environments at work and home – for the individual, families and communities. The benefits of use of Big Data also need to be realised - especially in assessing the health and wellbeing risks within organisations.

Poverty: Poverty and social inequality are persistent, multifaceted problems with wide-ranging consequences for individuals and communities. They impact across the lifespan – children and young people, working age adults, older adults and, in particular, those with disabilities and health problems.

Submissions should focus on the important contributions that psychology has to make to challenging these problems, including but not limited to: advancing our understanding of the associations between poverty and adverse childhood experiences; psychologically informed solutions to enabling movements out of poverty (including prevention and intervention at individual, group, community and organisation level); and innovative research to support ambitious and effective policy development and systemic change on a local and national level

Workforce of the Future:

Artificial Intelligence is also likely to play a big part in the workforce of future, which will comprise both highly skilled specialist staff as well as new skills and roles to fill the current workforce gaps. We invite submissions that explore ideas and evidence relating to retention rates (such as wellbeing, job design and job crafting), innovative models/ solutions to the design of new job roles incorporating psychologically informed practice and psychological solutions to filling skills gaps (e.g. through training and education).

We also invite submissions that cover equality, diversity and inclusion in the workplace; what does the future workforce look like; what is the impact of different working styles; are the theoretical

models still applicable in the new world of work; alternative, flexible training and apprenticeships; the efficacy of more flexible approaches to working patterns in a more technologically connected world; as well as challenges and benefits from working older.

Digital health - the convergence of digital technologies with health, healthcare, living, and society to enhance the efficiency of healthcare delivery and make medicines more personalized and precise. It involves the use of information and communication technologies to help address the health problems and challenges faced by people under treatment to aid healthcare professionals and their clients manage illnesses and health risks, as well as to promote health and wellbeing. From hardware and software solutions and services, including telemedicine, web-based analysis and intervention delivery, email, mobile phones and applications, ecological momentary assessment, text messages, wearable devices, and clinic or remote monitoring sensors. Generally, digital health is concerned about the development of interconnected health systems to improve the use of computational technologies, smart devices, computational analysis techniques and intervention delivery, and communication media.

For Psychology, there is a clear role in the design and delivery of training for the healthcare workforce in the digital future; as well as in managing the impact of changing landscape for the delivery of assessments, interventions and outcome measures both on the workforce and for patients. We welcome submissions addressing these areas.

Future Research:

The research landscape is changing.

Big Data: the increased availability and use of Big Data to reveal patterns, trends, and associations, especially relating to human behaviour and interactions presents particular opportunities for Psychology. Big data emerging from large digital sources has the potential to both complement and extend traditional psychological research in the coming decade and beyond. Unlike more traditional data sources and data collection methods (e.g., student populations, face-to-face interviews, laboratory studies, etc.), large-scale digital platforms are highly scalable in their ability to collect data on real-world behaviours for a large number of individuals. Access to broad swaths of the online population also has the potential to facilitate research samples that are considerably more representative of their target population. However, access to Big Data requires appropriate methodological training (such as data management and advanced data analysis) in psychology ensure that usable behavioural data can be sourced.

Moreover, researchers should not assume that simply because their data is “big”, that the insights they generate from it are interesting and publishable. The challenge is ensuring that Psychology does not analyse data just because it is available. The outcomes derived from Big Data must also be significant, rigorous and impactful.

Psychology also has a role in ensuring that the benefits of patient Big Data are realised – especially in its use to drive research. The use of data hubs presents a particular challenge. The hubs are intended to bring together patients, researchers and clinicians to work together to explore the safe and ethical use of health data for research into specific diseases, trialling new treatments and improvements in clinical care. However, there need to be careful handling of such use of patient data particularly in relation to consent and privacy, as well as clear understanding of the use of patient experience in research.

We invite submissions which consider the challenges that Big Data presents, the technological advances to internet mediated research methods and the insights that such research can now bring. We also recognise the ethical considerations that such methodologies require and encourage submissions to highlight best practice in this area.

Open Science represents a new approach to the scientific process based on cooperative work and new ways of diffusing knowledge by using digital technologies and new collaborative tools. Open Science requires the application of the principles of openness to the whole research cycle, fostering sharing and collaboration as early as possible thus entailing a systemic change to the way science and research is done.

Open Science aims to remove the barriers for sharing any kind of output, resources, methods or tools, at any stage of the research process to improve transparency across the whole research cycle and to enhance reproducibility. As such, preregistration of study protocols, open access to publications, sharing of study materials and analysis code, open research data, open source software, open collaboration and open peer review all fall within the scope of Open Science.

We invite submissions which explore the principles of open science and the opportunities and challenges it brings for Psychology.

Public Trust in Psychology: The work of psychological researchers, teachers and practitioners profoundly impacts upon the public's ability to lead good and healthy lives. Public involvement and trust in Psychology is important so that we can be sure that the work that psychologists do reflects the needs and priorities of society, and in so doing, this work is valued and trusted by the public.

Whilst open science has provided the means to allow greater access to research, just because research is available does not mean that it can be easily understood. A wider understanding of research is essential to enable greater reach and impact. Engagement and communication should be seen as an inherent part of the research process, from initial design through to output.

High quality public engagement benefits all those involved. Benefits might include learning, developing new skills, gaining new insights or ideas, developing better research, raising aspiration, or being inspired. We welcome submissions highlighting best practice public engagement and increasingly the accessibility of knowledge and knowledge exchange; challenging misperceptions and misunderstandings of psychology and the valuable contributions that it has to make to people's lives.