

CALL FOR PAPERS

Cricket Research Network Annual Conference

Old Trafford Cricket Ground

Thursday 18 February 2027



What looms on the horizon for cricket in 2027? In England & Wales, the landscape of the game continues to shift as the impact of new ownership of The Hundred teams becomes clearer, while debates around the future of the domestic game, player welfare and the structure of the county system continue. The legacy of the 2026 Women's T20 World Cup raises important questions about whether investment and visibility can translate into lasting change at grassroots level.

Globally, cricket is looking towards its return to the Olympic Games in 2028, bringing new opportunities and new challenges for the sport's international governance and development. The growth of franchise cricket, the changing balance of power within the global game, and questions around sustainability, access and representation remain central to cricket's future.

As we come together in Manchester, a city with a rich cricketing history, this conference provides an opportunity to consider where the sport is heading. What kind of game do we want cricket to become - and who gets to shape its future?

Following conferences at Cardiff (2024), Loughborough (2025) and Cambridge (2026), this will be the fourth conference organised by the Cricket Research Network (see below for a statement of aims), which is chaired by Dr Raf Nicholson.

The conference will include a Q&A panel exploring the question “Is English cricket’s current financial model sustainable?” Keynote speakers TBC.

We are seeking proposals for **individual paper proposals** (max 20 minutes) OR **themed panels** made up of 2-4 presentations, from anyone who has original research into cricket which they would like to share. **We welcome presentations from PGRs, ECRs, independent researchers and non-academics.**

Panels could address the following questions / themes (note: these are not exhaustive and we welcome all proposals):

- The history of cricket
- Issues of EDI in cricket, including sexism, racism, class-based discrimination and ableism
- Will the 2028 Olympics herald a truly global era for cricket?
- Mega-events in cricket: can they create legacies?
- Player welfare & mental health
- Recreational cricket: is it succeeding or stagnating?
- The Hundred: what impact will the new owners have?
- The governance of English and international cricket: does it need reform?
- Media coverage, marketing & sponsorship of cricket
- Cricket and the environment
- Can international and franchise cricket continue to co-exist?
- The future of Test cricket

If you would like to present your research, please email Raf Nicholson on rnicholson@bournemouth.ac.uk with the following information:

- Your name and the proposed title of your presentation
- Your institutional affiliation (university / cricket organisation / other), if any
- A short summary of what you propose to speak about (max 200 words)
- A short biography (max 50 words)

The deadline to apply is **Friday 20 November 2026**.

Bursaries

Presenters with no institutional support will have the opportunity to apply for a CRN bursary assist with travel costs. The amount available will depend on the number of applicants.

Please indicate when you apply to give a paper whether you would like to apply for a bursary.

Cricket Research Network statement of aims:

We are a group of researchers and writers, working on and within cricket. We agree with the ICEC's conclusion that cricket should be a game for everyone, that belongs to everyone - but isn't at the moment. We believe that change within cricket is necessary - and that change should be informed by critical, empirical research.

Our aims are:

- To create conversations and connections between academics, writers, journalists, policy-makers and all those working within cricket;*
- To create a "hub" for research into and writing on cricket, making it easily accessible for anyone interested in engaging with existing work;*
- To provide a space for researchers and writers to showcase their work;*
- To break down myths and misconceptions about cricket;*
- To promote awareness of how to bring about change within cricket, based on empirical, evidence-based research;*
- To bridge the current divide between and bring together academic researchers, cricket writers, volunteers, and all those working in cricket.*