



UKSS conference 4th to the 5th of September 2025

Making Systems Work- breaking down the silos

Theory without practice is empty; practice without theory is blind.

(attrib. Kant)

The UK Systems Society conference is designed to encourage systems theorists and practitioners to showcase their experiences and ideas.

The conference will take place at the **Avenue Campus at Southampton University** and is designed to feature both academic and practitioner presentations and discussions - with opportunities for activities such as a LEGO® room to explore new ways of putting 'systems' together.

The conference is organised as two one-day events with a conference dinner for the delegates who attend both days. The Society welcomes both experienced systems practitioner / theorists and those studying systems such as PhD researchers, postgrads and those undertaking advanced HE L7 systems thinking apprenticeships.

Please note that this conference is F2F only.

Registration: This conference is designed as a 2 x 1 day conference to cater for those who cannot give up the time to attend both days. The cost for two-day attendance is £80 and for one day £60 including refreshments, lunch and a conference dinner on day 1. For those wishing to take advantage of the conference, overnight accommodation is available at several local establishments within walking distance of the conference venue. Contact should be made to the [conference secretariat](#). To book the conference please visit our [Eventbrite page](#).

<https://www.eventbrite.co.uk/e/ukss-conference-september-4th-5th-2025-tickets-1376207767479?aff=oddttdtcreator>

Conference rationale

The UK Systems Society is proud to be a broad church for systems thinking, embracing both ‘soft’ systems and ‘hard’ systems in theory and practice.

The mixture of applications in which systems thinking has underpinned inquiry and design demonstrates systems as a prime medium for interdisciplinary working. The discipline of systems can make sense in our complex world by providing impactful interventions into ‘messy’ situations.

It is axiomatic that theory is enriched from practice and practice from theory but often the two are separated, which creates silos of ‘know how’. But it is in the DNA of the UK Systems Society that thinking and its practice are umbilically attached.

Based upon the notion of holism, systems thinking offers a bridge between the silos of expertise that exist in our quest for understanding. There is synergy between this feature of ‘systems’ and the summary of recommendations of the International Advisory Groups¹ (2023) appraisal of the Research Excellence Framework (REF). They state in their recommendations that the REF should ‘Define, support and develop better processes to incentivise and support inter and transdisciplinary research.’

¹ see (<https://repository.jisc.ac.uk/9146/1/future-research-assessment-programme-international-advisory-group-report.pdf#page3> recommendation N0. 6

