

# Call for Papers

## 35<sup>th</sup> Conference and Annual General Meeting

**Leeds Beckett University, Leeds**  
**2–4 September 2019**

### General Theme

**Productivity, Performance and Quality Conundrum**

### Important Dates

Submission of Abstract	23:59hrs GMT on Friday 11 January 2019
Notification of acceptance of abstract	Monday 18 February 2019
Submission of first draft of paper	23:59hrs GMT on Friday 5 April 2019
Refereeing decision	Friday 17 May 2019
Submission of final paper	23:59hrs GMT on Friday 28 June 2019



ASSOCIATION OF RESEARCHERS IN  
CONSTRUCTION MANAGEMENT

## Productivity, Performance and Quality Conundrum

We are calling on ARCOM research leaders and scholars to share their vision and experience, looking from within and outside of the field of construction. The main conference theme will focus on productivity and performance; this is nothing new for a County steeped in an ability to harness energy, transforming and delivering high quality products and services that extend around the globe. Yorkshire's industrial heritage would not have been so influential if it wasn't for the visionary leaders of the time that stepped outside of their traditional boundaries with technical and social innovation.

Travel and the distribution networks were once extended to the world, by a Yorkshire carpenter, through the invention of John Harrison's timepiece, allowing safe navigation of the seas. Sir Titus Salts of Leeds, still considered a thought leader in modern day manufacture, historically challenged management convention with social and cultural advancement, creating environments to deliver products of exceptional quality from the largest factory in the world at that time. The positive impact on the local area and community, through the Salt's approach benefitting workers health, education and wellbeing is still evidenced today in Saltaire, awarded UNESCO World Heritage status.

We are both encouraging scholars to experience Yorkshire and its welcoming community and to embrace the topic from different angles, stepping outside conventional wisdom, exposing new research and fields of enquiry. Yorkshire is the largest county in England, best known for a strong industrial heritage stretching back to the 18th century when the textile industry grew from cottage-based production to collective, industrialised production. Apart from textiles, Yorkshire was also renowned for the production of steel in Sheffield and shipbuilding in Hull. By returning to the heart of Yorkshire in 2019, the ARCOM community will advance and trade ideas on the productivity conundrum.

The ARCOM Conference is an **inclusive conference** that covers a wide range of topics pertinent to construction work including:

Building information modelling	Offsite construction	Construction design & technology
Equality and diversity	Planning, productivity and quality	Disaster management and resilience
Human resources management	Research and education	Health, safety and well-being
Information management	Sustainability in the built environment	Law and contracts
Infrastructure development		Other related themes considered

## Submission of Abstracts and Keywords

Please submit your abstract of around 300 words and include up to 5 keywords on-line via the MyARCOM portal where you can also select your preferred thematic track (see overleaf). Abstracts will be sent to two referees. Only the authors of abstracts that pass this peer-review process will be invited to submit full papers.

**The deadline for the submission of abstracts is 23:59hrs GMT on Friday 11 January 2019.** Full papers must not exceed 10 sides of A4 (including all references, tables and illustrations) and should adhere to the ARCOM paper template, which is available for download at [www.arcom.ac.uk](http://www.arcom.ac.uk). Each paper will be reviewed by two members of the scientific committee. If the paper is accepted its authors will be invited to present the paper at the conference. At least one of the authors must be able attend the conference. Authors of accepted papers will have a choice to publish their paper as a working paper or an indexed paper.

The concept of productivity has, of course, seen recent renewed policy interest. A decade on from the Global Financial Crisis, governments around the world have paid much attention to raising productivity with a view to increase standards of living. In the UK, the pursuit of productivity growth lies at the centre of the industrial strategy. Yet, as old forms of production industries give way to the rise of new ways of working in the growing service economy, questions remain as to whether traditional notion of productivity is still relevant. We therefore call for papers that address the productivity conundrum in the construction industry. We particularly welcome contributions that address one or more of the following questions, as well as the thematic tracks below:

Notwithstanding recent interest, the problem of low productivity appears to be a perennial challenge for the construction industry. To what extent is this 'problem' really a problem (and not one borne out of political rhetoric)? Are policy-makers, researchers and/or practitioners measuring the appropriate things when defining productivity (if indeed, productivity is measured at all)? Despite a litany of recommended antidotes to the productivity challenge, productivity levels seem to be stubbornly low. What improvement strategies matter? What empirical evidence exists to show that certain strategies work more than others? Is productivity still an appropriate measure, especially in post-industrial societies where the service sector dominates? What are the intended and unintended consequences of refocusing attention on productivity? How do these manifest long after the built asset is constructed?

## Thematic tracks for ARCOM 2019

We invite authors to respond to the following themes and tracks when developing the full papers. Emerging themes include, though not restricted to:

**Track 1 Problematising Building Performance:** Construction management research is too often orientated towards the delivery of built assets as fixed objects. A stronger link is required between construction sector performance and performance of the built environment over its lifetime. However, the debates around building performance tend to be forgotten, only to be re-discovered by each subsequent generation. This track calls for critically reclaiming building performance from its current technocratic avatar, to bridge the gap between demand and supply sides of the construction industry.

**Track 2 Construction is a Highly Productive Industry:** Numerous studies have shown that productivity measures for construction or the construction industry have remained stubbornly low. In this track, we argue that productivity in construction increased rapidly in the second half of the twentieth century due to increased specialisation of construction firms, outsourcing, global purchasing practices, and modern project procurement strategies. Contrary to accepted wisdom, this high level of productivity has been maintained over the last 20 or 30 years in many developed countries as construction firms increasingly utilise digital tools to improve project and company performance. In this track, we welcome papers investigating the data and theories that examine the dissenting view that construction productivity has been optimally positive over the last 2 or 3 decades.

**Track 3 Academia-Industry Engagement:** In this track, we focus on the need to bridge the divide between the logics of academic research with theory-generation and theory-testing; and the more prescriptive, practical needs of industry and practice. The academic community discusses low productivity, performance, and quality issues on construction sites, but has poor understanding of the fundamentals to measure and improve productivity and quality on the job site. Unless research has value, relevance, affordability, and applicability for the industry, there will continue to be low take-up of the ideas. In this track, we welcome contributions that examine the research approaches, methods and mechanisms that bridge the gap between academic research and the international construction sector.

**Track 4 Making Space for Construction Productivity Studies:** Studies of construction productivity have so often relied on self-perception, self-reporting data. This calls to question the rigour that underpins our collective understanding of productivity. At the same time, construction productivity studies have almost always emphasised time; this temporal focus obscures the role that space plays in understanding construction productivity. In this track, we are therefore making space for more rigorous and robust research, and to bring 'space' into studies of construction productivity. We welcome novel contributions that make space for creative theoretical, empirical and/or methodological papers that push the frontiers of our understanding of construction productivity. We are particularly interested in how the changing spaces of construction are altering our conversations about productivity. We are also seeking comparative studies of construction productivity, and studies that highlight the policies and politics of making construction productive.



## Venue Information

Leeds Beckett University will play host to the 2019 ARCOM Conference, returning to Leeds and the great County of Yorkshire. With an evening at Salts Mill and our famous Headingley Campus, the stage is set for an industrious ARCOM 2019.

## Conference Fee

The conference fee for ARCOM 2019 is £465. **Accommodation is not included within the fee.** Information on preferential rates provided by local hotels will be advertised on the conference website. An early-bird discount will apply for all registrations received before Sunday 30 June 2019. The usual discounts for ARCOM members will also apply.



Left to Right: The Carnegie Pavilion, Headingley, Leeds Beckett University Headingley Campus, and Salts Mill, Saltaire

## Best Paper Prizes

Rod Howes Commemorative Award for the Best Paper on 'Innovation in Construction'

Paul Townsend Commemorative Award for the Best Paper on 'Project Management'

David Langford Commemorative Award for the Best Paper on 'Social Issues and Respect for People'

CIOB Award for the 'Best International Paper'

CIOB Award for the Best Paper on 'Innovation and Sustainability'

RICS Award for the Best Paper on 'Sustainability'

Taylor and Francis Award for the Most Theoretically-informed Contribution

Emerald Research Methodology Award

## Organising Committee

Prof Chris Gorse, Leeds Beckett University  
Dr Paul W Chan, The University of Manchester  
Dr Ani Raidén, Nottingham Trent University  
Dr Apollo Tutesigensi, University of Leeds  
Dr Fred Sherratt, Anglia Ruskin University  
Dr Shu-Ling Lu, University of Reading  
Dr Robby Soetanto, Loughborough University  
Dr Chika Udejaja, University of Salford  
Dr Emmanuel Aboagye-Nimo, University of Brighton  
Dr Colin Booth, University of West of England

Prof David Boyd, Birmingham City University  
Dr Vivien Chow, Loughborough University  
Dr Alex Copping, University of Bath  
Dr Patrick Manu, University of the West of England  
Dr Alex Opoku, University College London  
Dr Libby Schweber, University of Reading  
Professor Lloyd Scott, Dublin Institute of Technology  
Dr Simon Smith, University of Edinburgh  
Dr Craig Thomson, Glasgow Caledonian University  
Dr Niraj Thurairajah, Birmingham City University

## Contact and Further Information

Conference Organiser: **Professor Chris Gorse**, Leeds Beckett University. E: [c.gorse@leedsbeckett.ac.uk](mailto:c.gorse@leedsbeckett.ac.uk)

Conference Secretary: **Dr Christopher Neilson**, The University of Manchester. E: [admin@arcom.ac.uk](mailto:admin@arcom.ac.uk)

Email queries should be directed to [conference@arcom.ac.uk](mailto:conference@arcom.ac.uk) in the first instance.