



CALL FOR PAPERS

The Psychological Contract in and Beyond Employment: Ethics, Inclusion, and Collective Wellbeing (5-6 April 2027)

Research on psychological contracts has enhanced our understanding of the unwritten expectations and mutual obligations that shape the employment relationship.

Today, the world of work is evolving rapidly. Advances in technology and the wide-scale implementation of AI in the workplace, globalization, and the continued rise of gig, hybrid, and remote work are transforming not only how people work, but the nature of work relationships themselves. As a result, the relevance of psychological contracts is no longer confined to traditional employment but increasingly extends beyond organizational boundaries to include workers with different relationships to organizations (e.g., freelancers, subcontractors, and volunteers) as well as broader sets of stakeholders (e.g., family and communities) within and beyond work organizations. Indeed, there is an emergence of a psychological contract literature that exists outside of employment settings (e.g., organizations and customers, travel agencies and tourists, doctors and patients). Such relational dynamics may or may not be explicitly framed as psychological contracts, yet nonetheless they may inform psychological contract theorizing and practical impact.

In this changing landscape, questions of ethics, inclusion, and collective wellbeing are becoming central. How are psychological contracts negotiated and maintained in more fluid and less formalized contexts? How do diversity, equity, and inclusion shape reciprocity in these relationships? What responsibilities do organizations and institutions hold in supporting not only individuals, but broader communities? ***We suggest the following themes but also welcome submissions focused on other questions and investigations related to psychological contracts.***

Ethics, Care, and Responsible Contracting

- How can an ethics-of-care perspective enrich our understanding of psychological contract formation, fulfillment, breach, and repair?

- What role do ethics-centered HR systems and practices play in shaping psychological contract fulfillment, and how do they influence employee behaviors such as knowledge sharing, knowledge hiding, citizenship, and innovation?
- How do employees respond when they perceive a gap between an organization's espoused ethical values and its enacted obligations — and when does this lead to perceptions of psychological contract breach?

Inclusion, Fairness and Belonging in the Psychological Contract

- In what ways do people's cultural backgrounds and social identities shape the content of their psychological contracts and their responses to breach and repair efforts?
- How can organizations design psychological contracts that are genuinely inclusive, and what HR practices support the development of high-quality contracts across diverse employee populations?
- How do diversity-related psychological contract breaches — for example, unmet expectations around equitable treatment, belonging, or voice — affect employee outcomes such as turnover intention, engagement, and identity?

Collective, Relational, and Societal Dimensions of the Psychological Contract

- How do psychological contracts intersect with broader societal and community wellbeing — and what collective obligations, if any, do organizations hold beyond their direct workforce?
- What does it mean for a work group or professional community to hold a psychological contract, and how do shared perceptions of breach within teams amplify or buffer individual-level responses to unmet obligations?
- What steps can all forms of stakeholders take to ensure sustainable exchange relationships over time?

This small group conference will provide a forum for invigorating debate and the exchange of ideas. We invite extended abstract submissions that will explore these and related questions to advance the study of psychological contracts in and beyond employment. We welcome empirical and conceptual papers, interdisciplinary and multidisciplinary research, quantitative, qualitative, or mixed-method approaches.

Submission Deadline: 1 December 2026
Date of Conference*: 5-6 April 2027
Venue: Auckland University of Technology (AUT)
 Auckland, New Zealand

** Note: Virtual attendance will be available although we emphasize that sessions will follow the host time zone: New Zealand Standard Time (NZST).*

Monday 5 April in Auckland (NZST) is Sunday 4 April for most other countries.

9am NZST is the previous day 5pm EDT or 11pm CEST. We will endeavor to schedule virtual participants for times that suit their time zone, but please appreciate this constraint.

Meeting Format

This small group conference will take place over two days (**5-6 April 2027**) at the **Auckland University of Technology, Auckland, New Zealand**. The program will include a keynote speaker, traditional paper presentations, digital poster presentations, virtual paper presentations, an incubator session, a collaborative output session, and plentiful networking opportunities.

Keynote Speaker:



Professor Gail Pacheco is the Equal Employment Opportunities Commissioner at the Human Rights Commission and a leading economist with extensive experience in social policy research. She previously served as Director of the NZ Policy Research Institute at AUT and as a Commissioner at the NZ Productivity Commission and has received numerous honors for her contribution to economics and public policy. In her current role, she promotes equal employment opportunities, pay equity, and decent work across Aotearoa New Zealand.

Traditional Paper and Virtual Presentations: We welcome empirical, conceptual, and methodological work. All authors should be prepared to discuss: The purpose, rationale, methods, results, and theoretical and practical implications/value of their work (conceptual pieces do not require discussion of results). Presentations will be 12-15 minutes in length, plus a 5-7 minute discussion (20 minutes total).

Digital Poster Presentations: We welcome empirical, conceptual, and methodological work. All presenters should be present physically at the conference to discuss their poster face-to-face (i.e., virtual attendees cannot present posters). Presenters need to prepare to explain: The purpose, rationale, methods, results, and theoretical and practical implications/value of their work (conceptual pieces do not require discussion of results). Presenters should prepare a 1-page slide containing traditional poster-presentation-type information; this slide will be projected onto a large screen. Following a 3-minute study overview, the presenter should be prepared to discuss (in-person) their work with participants on a one-to-one or small group basis. In total, each poster presentation will last 20 minutes.

Incubator Session: This exciting session will provide all attendees with an opportunity to gain valuable feedback on their work-in-progress from knowledgeable colleagues. Further, this session will enlighten all participants on the cutting-edge psychological contract research being conducted by our colleagues around the globe, opening the door for new international collaborations. All participants should be prepared to discuss a 3-5 minute ‘*elevator pitch*’ about their new or ongoing research ideas.

Collaborative Output Session: Similar to past meetings, PC scholars and other attendees will be invited to collaborate on a submission to [The Conversation](#). Briefly, The Conversation is a collaboration between academics and journalists to publish research-based news and analysis. High impact articles are picked up and republished by other media. The first edition was in Australia, but The Conversation now has various country editions. As a group, we will determine the exact nature of our submission, and which country editions it will be submitted to.

Networking Opportunities: The conference schedule will provide ample time for extended discussions and networking. In addition, a welcome reception is planned for the evening of 4 April and a conference dinner is planned for 5 April. For those interested, a guided tour of the TipTop Ice cream Factory will be held on 7 April. During registration, please be sure to indicate your intention to take the tour so arrangements can be made. The cost will be less than NZ\$100 and include the tour and coach travel to the factory (25 minutes each way, ~1 hour tour).

Awards

As in previous years, we will be presenting two awards: one to the Best Paper and one to the Best Early Career Paper. Winners will be determined by the conference organizing team. Please be sure to specify if you are an early career researcher during registration.

Submission of Extended Abstracts

Submissions of original work will undergo blind review by the scientific committee comprised of the conference organizing team and senior scholars in the PC field.

Submissions should comprise two documents:

(1) Title page including all author details. Please make note of **(a)** the presentation type you are applying to (traditional paper presentation, virtual paper presentation, or digital poster presentation), **(b)** one sentence describing the topic you would like to pitch for the incubator session.

(2) Anonymized structured extended abstract of a maximum of 2000 words, adhering to APA formatting guidelines (e.g., double-spaced, 1-inch margins, 12-point Times New

Roman font). The structured abstract should include: (a) purpose, (b) rationale, (c) link to the conference theme, (d) design/methodology, (e) results (except for conceptual pieces), (f) implications, (g) limitations, and (g) originality/value.

Please email these two documents comprising your submission by **1 December 2026** to samantha.hansen@utoronto.ca. We will start reviewing submissions from 1 November 2026 onwards. Notification of acceptance will be provided on a rolling basis, and no later than approximately eight weeks from the conference date (**1 February 2027**). Note that this is a small group conference and therefore good quality submissions will be accepted until the program is full.

Registration

Registration details will be made available later this year. The registration fee will cover the cost of morning and afternoon refreshments, and lunches on both days of the conference, a welcome reception on the prior evening (Sunday 4 April 2027), and the conference dinner (Monday 5 April 2027). Reduced fees will be made available to those who will be joining virtually and for graduate students. Details to follow.

Conference Organizers

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