

SWOBODA RESEARCH CENTRE

Guidelines for researchers

This guidance is for existing and potential Swoboda Centre research partners, contributors and authors. It aims to explain the Swoboda Centre's objectives and approach and to stimulate interest in working with the Centre.

1. Overarching objective

The Swoboda Research Centre aims to publish academically rigorous research papers and other outputs that will be of practical and actionable help to the Centre's stakeholders. Those stakeholders are primarily the CEOs, volunteer directors and senior staff at our member (and potential member) organisations. Our objective is to help them identify and adopt new services, better engage their communities, improve their business practices, protect their values, mitigate the risks they face, and facilitate their collaboration for the common good.

We also aim to inform and constructively influence regulators, public policymakers and opinion-influencers in the Irish and British credit union and community finance sectors.

2. Themes of research approach

Rigour – the Swoboda Centre wants to be a thought-leader in its field, with outputs respected by practitioner audiences for being evidence-based, well-argued and well-written. The [Research Advisory Board](#) supports the Centre with research methodology, standards and quality, and oversees peer review of publications.

Collaboration – Swoboda Centre research incorporates collaboration with members and other stakeholders to the greatest extent possible, to ensure that ideas and concepts are tested, proven and can be engaged with by the practitioner audience.

Accessibility – the Swoboda Centre also supports secondary research papers which summarise and communicate, as useful guidance to practitioners, insights that have already been published in academic journals our stakeholders are unlikely to otherwise know of or read.

Practitioner focus – the Swoboda Centre prioritises a practitioner audience to maximise engagement and impact, so research methods and outputs need to be expressed in plain English and with action-orientated conclusions and recommendations.

3. Research outputs and distribution

The Swoboda Research Centre is keen to promote a diversity of voices in sector research and does not seek to promote a single or narrow philosophy. The Centre seeks consistency, however, for all outputs under its brand with the Objective and Themes outlined above and therefore retains final editorial authority in this regard.

The Centre's outputs have a simple house style, and we intentionally avoid using a style and format that would be expected by most academic journals. To the contrary, our intended readers are practitioners who would not normally read academic papers.

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Accordingly, we insist on clear, simple and engaging English writing, as would be found in a quality business periodical aimed at an educated, professional audience. We require brevity, accessibility and the lack of academic jargon.

The Swoboda Centre's research is made available first to its members via website or email, and then to the public via website and social media promotion.

The Centre welcomes distribution through research partners' channels.

In the spirit of collaboration and openness, the Swoboda Centre co-brands research with authors, partners and partner organisations, to ensure visibility and the sharing of credit for works produced.

4. Quality assurance and Peer review

The Swoboda Research Centre will review all materials being presented under its name for consistency with its objectives of quality and practicality. This may include review by members of the Centre's Advisory Board or other relevant peers. Materials will not be published until this process is completed, and the Centre reserves the right to not publish materials that, in the Swoboda Centre's sole discretion, do not meet its standards.

5. Benefits of presenting research through the Swoboda Centre for researchers

The Swoboda Centre is the only dedicated research centre for community finance based in Great Britain and Ireland, and has high credibility in its sector with practitioners, trade associations and policy-makers. For research partners the Centre offers:

- Access to a pool of progressive and active practitioners for research activity
- An audience of interested and demanding practitioners for research outputs
- Visibility and credibility by association within the community finance sector
- The Swoboda Research Centre's expertise on the sector, including guidance on current and historic debates, commercial and policy dynamics and intra-sector relationships.

Contact: Dr Paul A. Jones, Director of Research, paul.a.jones@swobodacentre.org, +44 7939 566552.