Being Human festival: 10-19 November 2022

Open Call – Further Information

The Open Call offers a great way to get involved in the festival for anyone with a connection to humanities research, including universities, museums, archives, galleries, publishers, subject associations, societies, libraries and more.

This pathway is all about well thought through activities that are easy to organise and fun for all involved. Activities in this category can make use of existing resources, formats and platforms, while giving them a ‘Being Human festival’ twist. They run without a direct financial contribution from the festival (perhaps using institutional funding, resources from research grants etc.), but benefit from additional support and publicity from being part of the festival.

Activities of this kind form a large part of the festival programme. By submitting an event to the national festival of the humanities, you are helping to make sure access to research continues to thrive and grow, as well as raising awareness about why the humanities are so important to our everyday lives. We also hope taking part in the festival will be fun and rewarding, offering the opportunity to share your work with new audiences.

More information about the festival, the different ways to take part, and the 2022 theme 'Breakthroughs' is available on the Being Human website.

What support is available?

Being Human is committed to supporting everyone taking part in the festival. The festival team offer advice and guidance to all organisers and make resources available to help give activities the best possible chance of success.

Available support and resources include:

- a training “Masterclass” series run throughout the festival year for practical advice with designing, planning, promotion and delivery of your project;
- public engagement toolkits, resources and helpful advice from the festival team;
- guides to promoting your event that contain hints and tips about marketing and press;
- copies of Being Human print and digital materials geared towards promoting the national festival and access to other marketing materials (e.g., banners and badges) to promote your activity;
• templates you can use to produce your own marketing materials (posters, banners, digital and PowerPoint templates etc.); and,
• support from the central Being Human social media accounts.

You may also be invited to take part in centrally organised festival activities such as the festival launch.

**What formats are suitable?**

Open Call activities typically make use of tried and tested formats that produce fun, impactful and easy to deliver activities, with a Being Human twist. The formats below are examples of types of activities that can still successfully run within Covid-19 guidelines (should these be in place in November 2022).

Please use our [planning toolkits](#) that give tips on how to create a successful public engagement activity – including advice on building hybrid, Covid-secure activities.

Some examples of good formats that can run in person, online, or in hybrid forms include:

• performances (theatre, music, comedy, storytelling);
• food and drink (cookery lessons, cook-alongs, themed meals, tastings);
• screenings and ‘watch together’ (film screenings with introductions, listening parties, DJ sessions);
• walks and tours (walks, audio walks, treasure hunts, behind the scenes tours);
• ‘have a go’ events (learn a skill, try an instrument, make something);
• museum lates or museum takeovers (online or in-person);
• exhibitions and installations (outdoor art, public art, crowd-sourced activity);
• a special iteration of a recurring event (e.g. object handling or local history walks);
• and,
• activities coordinated by post or other ways of connecting with people at home.

If you are unsure about where to start, or want a toolkit with guidance on an easy to achieve format, you might want to consider holding a Being Human Café (find out more on our [website](#)).

Whatever the format, it is important to remember that we are looking for ‘public engagement with research’ projects, not simply cultural activities or academic seminars/lectures. This means that audiences, communities and participants should have opportunities to contribute their own experiences and knowledge as part of the project. They should also come away having learnt something clear and understandable about new humanities research.

We do not include academic lectures, seminars or workshops in the Being Human programme. However, through the Open Call pathway we are open to proposals for public talks, so long as they are held off-campus, in venues/on platforms that are accessible, and interesting to non-specialists. Talks should address interesting and
relevant topics pitched at the right audiences and at the right level, and include opportunities for interaction.

We are open to activities that feature interactive digital activities such as podcasts, a daily newspaper, films, radio stations, exhibitions. These activities would be supplements to a programme, rather than the heart of it. They would need to be interactive, feature aspects of co-production, and be firmly rooted in public engagement with research.

What are the eligibility criteria?

Open Call applications stand a good chance of being accepted into the festival programme. However, all events must meet the general eligibility criteria for taking part in the festival. They must:

- demonstrate aspects of humanities research in ways that are entertaining, accessible and relevant for non-specialist audiences;
- have direct involvement from a humanities researcher in delivering (not just planning) the activity, to ensure that research expertise informs the activity that audiences encounter*;
- be held during the festival dates (10-19 November 2022);
- be free to attend - this includes free access to venues where events are being held, such as heritage sites or museums that charge an entrance fee;
- respond to the interests and needs of a clearly defined audience;
- be well thought through and achievable within the timeframe;
- be held off-campus wherever possible (on-campus, public focused university venues such as public theatres and arts centres are suitable);
- be representative and inclusive, giving consideration to the diversity of speakers and researchers represented within their programmes; and,
- give serious consideration to accessibility in choice of venue, platform and format, with all activities taking place in accessible venues.

* See our FAQs for our definition of a professional researcher. This could mean simply inviting a university researcher to speak at an event.

If your proposal includes subject matter that is highly sensitive or emotionally triggering, appropriate handling of these topics must be considered and evidenced in your application. Please note the review panel reserve the right not to accept such topics in the festival programme.

Are there any priorities?

We actively welcome festival content which celebrates inclusivity, equality and diversity. We are particularly keen to receive applications which engage with underrepresented groups in your community, and/or groups who share a particular protected characteristic (defined under the Equality Act 2010). Please be specific about your intended audiences in your application. We will not knowingly accept applications for events which include
speaker line-ups that lack appropriate diversity, including all-male or ‘about us, without us’
activities – where a subject is explored without representation from those affected by it.

We endeavour to keep learning and improving our processes, so please contact us at
beinghuman@sas.ac.uk if you have any feedback or would like to discuss this with us.

We are also particularly keen to receive applications which do one or more of the
following things:

• explore innovative and realistic approaches to public engagement;
• engage with communities who are under-represented within universities or within
  AHRC recognised Independent Research Organisations (IROs), or people who have
  never engaged with a university or IRO;
• engage with under-served communities (See the ‘Young participation by area
  information on the Office for Students website)
• engage with communities in areas without a university;
• provide programming for families and young people (16-25 year olds);
• are relevant to communities local to your institution (for example, place-based
  activity highlighting unexpected aspects of local history and/or contemporary
  culture, addressing topical debates with local communities);
• feature an element of co-production;
• have potential to make a small change happen locally and/or leave a legacy
  beyond the duration of the festival; and,
• respond in a topical way to our 2022 theme of ‘Breakthroughs’.

**What don’t we want?**

Activities that are not suitable for the festival programme are ones that:

• have only a tenuous link to humanities research (see our FAQs for our definition);
• feature ‘about us without us’ type content – where a subject is explored without
  representation from communities and individuals affected by it;
• are not designed to appeal to a clearly defined non-specialist audience;
• make use of platforms, venues or formats that have not been carefully chosen, are
  inaccessible, or are unlikely to appeal to a public audience;
• are over-ambitious and at high risk of not meeting the festival’s objectives; and,
• are deemed to be unlikely to succeed in the context of ongoing
  uncertainty/restrictions around Covid-19.

We also do not want to include any event that is similar in format to an academic seminar
or workshop. Very long, discussion-based workshops are not popular with public
audiences, and we would class these as an ‘academic’ format.

**Should I apply?**

The Open Call is a great way to get involved in the Being Human festival if you have an
idea or format that’s good to go and fits in with the festival’s ethos. We would love to hear
from you!
This year we are particularly keen to hear from people who want to get involved in Wales, Scotland and Northern Ireland. This includes big cities such as Edinburgh, Glasgow, Cardiff and Belfast – but also smaller cities, towns and rural areas.

**Application process**

The Open Call application form and activities grid is available on our [website](#). Letters of support should be provided from any cultural and community partners named on your application. Applications should be made on the correct form and returned via email to: [apply.beinghuman@sas.ac.uk](mailto:apply.beinghuman@sas.ac.uk).

- Deadline for Open Call applications - 5pm, Friday 24 June
- Notification of outcome of applications – by Friday 15 July

Further information about the festival and the level of support available when organising your activity can be found on the [FAQs section of our website](#). If you have any questions, please email [beinghuman@sas.ac.uk](mailto:beinghuman@sas.ac.uk).