Being Human festival: 10-19 November 2022

Hub Awards – Further Information

Hub Awards are the largest and most competitive funding awards made by Being Human. These awards are institutionally focused, supporting locally relevant programmes of activity involving multiple researchers from different disciplines. Hub Awards are intended to support the development of institutional capacity for public engagement activity in the humanities (e.g., by offering opportunities for public engagement teams to do something humanities focused, to try something new or to work with new communities).

Festival Hubs offer highly visible concentrations of best practice public engagement activities within the festival programme. They provide coherent, imaginative and eye-catching programmes of events that raise the festival’s profile nationally as well as regionally.

A key condition of Hub Awards is that they are match funded by the institution awarded them, leaving scope for more ambitious programming.

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

What support is available?

Universities can apply for grants of up to £5,000 for Hubs. Typically, we make around four Hub Awards a year.

Hub coordinators will be invited to meet virtually (or in-person if appropriate) with the Being Human team at agreed points during the development of their festival programmes. These meetings will provide opportunities to discuss and develop ideas for collaboration, such as around programming and communications strategies, which will be of benefit to both Hubs and the festival as a whole.

In addition to this Hub-specific support, organisers will have access to the support and resources offered to all participants in the festival. This includes:

- 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); 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 does a successful Hub programme look like?

A Hub award offers a university an opportunity to plan a coherent, curated approach to the Being Human festival, bringing together a range of perspectives into a programme that connects research to the histories, cultures and communities of an area. Successful Hubs typically use aspects of a city, town or place’s identity (local industries, the geography of an area, famous residents or locations) as a point of departure for an exciting programme of activities.

Hub programmes should demonstrate a high level of community partnership. They might, for example, be based entirely at a local museum (or on a local museums’ digital platform) or they might take place across a range of community venues and platforms.

It is important to remember that Hub programmes should maintain a strong focus on public engagement with research and shouldn’t just be a few good public engagement activities supplemented by less ambitious events. A programme should offer a range of exciting and engaging activities designed around the needs and interests of diverse local audiences. Festival Hub programmes should be made up of approximately 6–10 separate events or activities, in a range of formats. As a requirement, all Hub programmes must include:

• one large scale or particularly eye-catching ‘headline’ event and,
• at least one activity aimed at families or young people.

What formats are suitable?

The best Hub programmes feature a range of event and activity formats that have been designed to meet the needs of different participants and audiences. This might range from larger scale activities featuring partnerships with museums and theatres to much smaller scale programming working with grassroots and community organisations.

We do not want to include activities within Hub programmes that would not be accepted to the festival in their own right. Audiences, communities and participants should have opportunities to contribute their own experiences and knowledge as part of the project. They should also leave having learnt something clear and understandable about humanities research.
We expect all activities to involve communities in their production, via 'co-curation' and 'co-production'. This might mean, for example, that workshops, postal packs or phone calls take place in advance, feeding into a main activity during the festival.

We encourage applicants to be creative, whilst proposing activities based around tried and tested formats. Some examples of suitable formats, which can work in-person, online, or in hybrid formats, 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);
- activities coordinated by post or other ways of connecting with people at home; and,
- exhibitions and installations (outdoor art, public art, crowd-sourced activity).

We are open to programmes that feature interactive digital activities such as podcasts, a daily newspaper, films, radio stations and 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.

Public talks and panel discussions are not funded by Being Human and should not be included as part of Hub programmes unless they feature a very strong public engagement aspect (e.g., an element of performance). We don’t want to include any event that is similar in format to an academic seminar or workshop.

Please use our planning toolkits that give tips on how to create a successful public engagement activity – including a toolkit on how to put together a successful hub. We also advise you to look at our case studies of previous festival events for inspiration.

What do you mean by a ‘headline’ event?

We expect Hub programmes to build in one ‘headline’ event that has a large capacity of over 100 and has a particularly inventive and eye-catching format. This helps to provide a focus for a Hub’s programming and to distinguish festival Hubs from areas where there are simply a lot of individual Being Human activities. Examples might be a museum takeover involving multiple researchers or a large capacity performance event. This is an opportunity to be ambitious.
What costs can a Hub Award cover?

Hubs are expected to match-fund to at least the cost of the award offered. For example, if the Hub award is for £5,000, the overall project budget should be £10,000. We do not count salaried staff time as part of the match funding.

Funding from Being Human is intended to support expenditure that cannot be easily absorbed into existing institutional budgets. For example, eligible costs include using funding to pay for:

- payments to performers/musicians/artists who are not salaried members of staff.
- production costs (filming, audio, streaming, web design (if essential to the activity).
- props, costumes, and materials.
- production costs for things like exhibition panels, work packs, pamphlets.
- postage costs (e.g., for mailing packs to attendees).
- reasonable promotional costs that will help you to reach your intended participants/audiences (e.g., flyers, local paid advertising).
- venue hire or essential transport (e.g., hiring a coach for a bus tour).
- catering/consumables that are essential to the activity (e.g., for themed meals, tasting sessions).
- reasonable documentation costs (e.g., filming, photography).
- accessibility costs (e.g., captioning, transcribing, BSL interpreter).

Being Human cannot make any contribution to:

- existing staff members’ costs, whether academic or professional staff.
- catering unless it is essential to the format of the event (i.e., we may support food costs for a historic meal, but not a wine reception after an event).
- supporting academic conferences and symposia, or any event that has been designed primarily for the benefit of academics, students, stakeholders or others already engaged with the world of research.
- international travel or accommodation.

Match funding

Match funding should be provided from institutionally held budgets (e.g. marketing or event budgets, research grant budgets) to support and amplify Hub programmes. Examples of costs that might be covered by match funding include:

- the use of an off-campus exhibition space or venue, or use of digital platforms;
- documentation of activities (filming, photography);
- paid student internships run in conjunction with the programme;
- marketing and promotion costs; and,
- use of university studio space or other production costs for films, podcasts or streaming.
What are the eligibility criteria?

Hub proposals will be looked at both overall, as a full programme, and individually with regard to each proposed activity. All activities featured in the festival programme 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 activities;
- be held during the festival dates (10-19 November 2022, with the option to have lead-in and post-activity aspects to the project); and,
- 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).

All Hubs must:

1. be led by a UK university or an AHRC-recognised IRO;
2. commit to support activities through additional funding and in-kind support to at least match the value of the awarded amount;
3. have direct involvement from a humanities researcher in delivering (not just planning) the event, to ensure that research expertise informs the activity that audiences encounter (see our FAQs for our definition of a professional researcher);
4. be held off-campus wherever possible (on-campus, public focused university venues such as public theatres and arts centres are suitable);
5. respond to the interests and needs of clearly defined non-specialist audiences.
6. engage with carefully chosen cultural or community partners (for example a school, a charity, or an arts organisation);
7. be representative and inclusive, giving consideration to the diversity of speakers and researchers represented within their programmes; and,
8. give serious consideration to accessibility in choice of venue, platform and format, with all activities taking place in accessible venues.

In 2022 we are not accepting applications for ‘joint Hubs’ coordinated by more than one university. The only exception to this is in the case of closed calls that may be issued for Hubs specific to a particular region or particular thematic area. However, universities can collaborate more informally with other local institutions on specific activities within Hub programmes.

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.

Alongside the relevant eligibility criteria, the review panel will be assessing your proposal’s capacity according to:

- quality and originality of individual events and overall programme.
- overall fit with the festival’s core aims and objectives.
• evidence of fit between planned activities and intended audiences.
• evidence that diversity, inclusion and accessibility have been considered across programming, venues and platforms.
• evidence of institutional ‘buy in’ and match funding.
• evidence of support from any cultural or community partners.
• evidence of achievability and team capacity to deliver the project.

Are there any priorities for funding?

Funding for Hubs is generally prioritised outside London and the South-East. London-based universities are welcome to apply, but it may be worth contacting the Being Human team for an informal chat about chances of success before submitting an application.

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 the institution bidding for funding (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’.

All funded activities must show evidence in the application that diversity, inclusion and accessibility have been considered across programming, speakers/researchers, venues and platforms.
What don’t we want?

You will significantly reduce your chance of being funded if proposed programmes:

- feature activities 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;
- feature activities that 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 not deemed by the review committee to be good value for money, or comprise standard activity that is being topped up with Being Human funding;
- 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/potential restrictions around Covid-19.

If an application for Hub status is unsuccessful, the panel may decide to offer to fund parts of the proposed programme with a Small Award.

Should I apply?

A frequent comment from organisers who have received Hub Awards is that they were surprised by how much work was involved. It is therefore essential to consider whether you will have the necessary support in place to see the project through should a funding bid be successful. It is worth asking:

- Will you have the time, on top of existing commitments, to oversee planning, delivery and evaluation of a number of ambitious festival activities?
- Do you have previous experience of delivering public engagement activities? It is important to understand that this will involve a lot of admin, as well as work on coordinating, promoting and delivering the programme.
- Will you be able to draw on the support of marketing and other professional teams within your organisation in order to deliver a successful programme?
- Do you have existing and tested relationships with the cultural or community partners you would like to work with? Will they help you reach your intended audiences and communities?
- Have you spoken to these partners before putting in an application? Do they understand the project and their role?
- Why do you want to run a Hub? Successful Hubs in previous years have aligned Being Human programmes with broader strategic objectives and priorities, which offer a longer term pay-off for the amount of work involved.
Everyone organising a Hub must have professional events and public engagement support in place to see the project through, rather than relying on PhD students or on academic staff to deliver on top of competing priorities.

**Application process**

The Hub Award application form and activities grid are 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).

The review panel will review how the applicant will steer the programme as a whole and how they will advise those running events as part of the Hub. Shortlisted applicants for Hub Awards may also be invited to take part in an interview, which can be conducted virtually, with the festival team. This is to allow an opportunity to explore the application in greater depth and address any questions raised by the review panel.

- Deadline for applications for funding – 5pm, Friday 29 April
- Notification of outcome of applications – by Wednesday 8 June

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).