

About this pathway

Every year, the Being Human festival partners (the School of Advanced Study, University of London, the AHRC and the British Academy) make available funding to support festival activities under the Small Awards pathway.

Small Awards are designed to support creative and exciting festival activities that wouldn't run without financial support from the festival. Awards can be used to fund either a single event or a small series of activities that offer a very close fit with our ethos and with the festival theme.

As well as being impactful in their local area, Small Award funded activities add significant value to the festival programme as a whole: as eye-catching 'best practice' activities. Activities are typically built around a strong 'hook', and are ambitious and creative whilst still well thought-through and achievable.

Examples of activities funded under this pathway over the past four years can be seen in the [case studies](#) section of our website. Activities have spanned numerous formats – from specially-convened wrestling matches to recreations of historic protest marches, to H.G Wells-inspired 'Martian Autopsies'.

What support is on offer?

In 2018, funding is available to allow Higher Education Institutions (HEIs) and AHRC recognised [Independent Research Organisations](#) (IROs) to bid for support of up to £2,000 under this pathway.

Grants are competitive. Being Human has a limited amount of funding to award each year and, whilst £2,000 is the maximum that can be applied for, there is no need to bid to this upper threshold.

In addition to funding, organisers under this pathway will have access to the support and resources offered to all participants in the festival. This includes:

- guides to promoting your event that contains marketing advice as well as template press releases;
- 'best practice' [case studies](#) containing hints and tips to delivering successful festival activities;
- copies of Being Human print and digital materials geared towards promoting the national festival as a whole;
- templates that will allow you to produce your own marketing materials (posters, banners, digital and power-point templates etc.);
- support from the central Being Human social media accounts;
- access to other marketing materials (e.g. banners and badges) to promote your activity.

Being Human organisers also have access to specially arranged training events, and may be invited to take part in centrally organised festival activities. We also have a 'Being Human Organisers' Facebook group which allows organisers to talk to each other directly.

What formats are suitable?

We encourage applicants to build their proposed activities around tried and tested formats, with a creative twist for the festival. Successful formats have included (but are not limited to):

- performances: events featuring creative elements of performance that are relevant and help meaningfully to illustrate topics (e.g. screenings with live accompaniment, performance lectures)
- feasts and festivities: activities involving food and drink (e.g. shared or themed meals, tastings, café encounters)
- workshops/ maker events - activities featuring a strong creative or hands-on aspect (e.g. creative writing, craft activities, cookery workshops, hacks)
- pop-up activities/exhibits: that engage a larger, passing audience (e.g. based in museums, galleries or in busy public spaces)
- participatory and project-based activities with a strong element of co-design from community partners
- exhibitions and installations (although it should be noted that exhibitions put together on a low budget are unlikely to be of professional quality and audience expectations need to be managed accordingly)

Can I apply?

There are some restrictions around who can apply for Small Grants and eligibility criteria that do not apply to the Open Call pathway.

To be eligible for funding, activities must be:

- 1) led by a UK Higher Education Institution (HEI) or an AHRC recognised [Independent Research Organisation](#) (IRO), or cultural organisation in partnership with a HEI or IRO
- 2) have at least one HEI researcher in the humanities directly involved -- not only in planning but in delivering the event
- 3) demonstrate aspects of humanities research in ways that are entertaining, accessible and understandable for non-specialist audiences
- 4) have direct involvement from a humanities researcher
- 5) be free to attend
- 6) be held during the festival dates

Public talks and panel discussions are not normally fundable by Being Human unless they feature a very strong public engagement aspect (e.g. an innovative format or element of performance).

What is funding for?

Funding is intended to support expenditure that cannot be easily absorbed into existing institutional budgets or found from other funding sources. For example, eligible costs include using funding to:

- Pay performers/musicians/artists who are not salaried members of staff but who will add significant value to an activity
- Pay for venue hire or for essential transport (e.g. hiring a coach for a bus tour)
- Pay for catering/consumables that are essential to the activity (e.g. for themed meals, tasting sessions, etc., but not receptions)
- Pay for essential equipment, props, etc.

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
- Supporting academic conferences and symposia, or any event that has been clearly designed primarily for the benefit of the humanities research community.

Funding is also not intended to 'top up' or upscale events that would happen anyway and which have not been specially planned for the festival.

What criteria are applications judged against?

When making awards, the review panel will be assessing the proposal's capacity to:

- fit closely with the festival's core aims and objectives
- respond in an engaging and creative way to the festival theme, 'Origins and Endings'
- respond to the interests of a clearly defined, non-specialist audience
- be staged at a suitable time and in a suitable venue to reach that audience
- engage with a carefully chosen cultural or community partner
- be well thought through and achievable within the budget and timeframe
- be impactful and engage a significant number of people
- add value to the festival programme as a whole, either as a particularly eye-catching piece of programming or as an activity that is a particularly close fit with the festival's objectives and priority areas.

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

- have only a tenuous link to humanities research;
- are not designed to appeal to a non-specialist audience;
- are not tailored to an audience's needs and interests;
- have the capacity to engage only a small number of people (e.g. under 50);
- work with subject matter that is niche and not rendered accessible;
- have venues that have not been carefully chosen, or are inaccessible;
- are planned in a timeslot that is not accessible for the intended audience;
- are unlikely to fit in a public festival context (i.e. if subject matter is likely to be highly sensitive or emotionally triggering);
- are not deemed to be good value for money, or are thought likely to be able to run without funding from Being Human;
- are over-ambitious and at high risk of failure.

Are there any priorities for funding?

In 2018 we are particularly keen to receive applications which demonstrate capacity to do one or more of the following:

- engage with BAME audiences
- reach genuinely disengaged or under-served audiences (e.g. audiences in areas of high deprivation or low educational attainment, areas without a university or with a sharp town/gown division). [HEFCE's map of youth participation areas](#) may be useful here;
- engage with people affected by disability;
- provide programming targeted at families and younger audiences;
- involve early career researchers in their planning, organisation or delivery;

Applications that reflect one or more of these priorities will be viewed favourably. However, activities will still be scrutinised for achievability, value for money, and the other core festival criteria above.

Should I apply?

Small awards are competitive, and typically only around a third of applications are successful. Before applying, it is worth exploring other funding resources within your own institution which might enable your project to move forward, thinking carefully about whether funding is required and how much money is really needed. Some smaller projects might be better suited to the Open Call pathway.

Should you decide to apply, it is worth considering how much money you actually need. Excellent public engagement activities can be run on vastly varying budgets and there is no need to bid for the maximum amount available. For example, an award of £500 might be sufficient to cover performance fees for a one-off music-based event, or catering costs for a historically-themed meal.

If a Small Award application is unsuccessful, the festival team may contact you to ask whether it is possible for the activity to run in a less ambitious format on an unfunded basis.

Further information about the festival and the level of support available in organising your activity is available in the [FAQs](#) section of our website.