

2019 festival call for participation

14–23 November 2019

Festival overview

Led by the School of Advanced Study, University of London, in partnership with the Arts and Humanities Research Council (AHRC) and the British Academy, Being Human is the UK's only national festival of the humanities.

Founded in 2014, the festival is all about making academic research in the humanities accessible and relevant to non-specialists and audiences beyond academia and informed individuals. Particularly it is about illustrating how and why research in the humanities is relevant to peoples' everyday lives and interests.

Opportunities to run an event are for researchers at any career stage, background, disciplinary expertise or experience of delivering public engagement events. [Our definition of 'humanities research' can be found here.](#)

The core objectives of the festival are:

- to demonstrate the value and relevance of humanities research to society in the UK and globally;
- to encourage, support and create opportunities for researchers to engage with non-specialist audiences;
- to embed and join together public engagement activities in the humanities across the higher education (HE) sector.

In 2019, the festival theme is 'Discoveries & Secrets'. (See below for details).

We will also be reflecting this year on the fifth anniversary of the Being Human festival itself, and the voyage of discovery that we have been on between 2014 and 2019. This year we'll be exploring, among other things, how we've grown as a festival and some of the discoveries we've made along the way.

Getting involved

There are three ways to get involved in the Being Human festival.

1. **'Small Award' pathway:** apply to Being Human for funding of up to £1,500 to enable activities.
2. **'Hub Award' pathway:** apply for a larger grant of £2,000-£4,000 to coordinate activities as festival hub. (Only a small number of these awards are made every year).
3. **'Open Call' pathway:** organise an activity that does not require a direct financial contribution from Being Human, but will be supported and promoted as part of our programme.

Across all pathways, what we are really looking for are activities that provide different answers to the same hypothetical question from audiences: **'Why is research in the humanities relevant to my day-to-day life and interests?'**

Eligibility

Eligibility criteria vary across the pathways above. However, *all* activities featured in the festival programme must:

- demonstrate aspects of humanities research in ways that are entertaining and accessible and relevant for non-specialist audiences;
- have direct involvement from a humanities researcher in delivering the event;
- be free to attend if funded by Being Human, and no more than £5 to attend if self-funded;
- be held during the festival dates.

Application process

There is a separate application form for each of our three pathways. All forms are available on our website at www.beinghumanfestival.org/apply. Applications should be made on the correct form and returned via email to: beinghuman@sas.ac.uk.

The timetable is as follows:

Monday 8 April (5pm)	Deadline for applications for funding
By 31 May	Notification of outcome of applications
Monday 3 June (5pm)	Deadline for open call event applications
Friday 2 August (5pm)	Deadline for submission of final event details for print
September	Deadline for final event details for website

Evaluation and case studies

Applicants are advised to look at our [programmes from previous years](#) to get a sense of potentially suitable activities. The [Being Human 2014, 2015, 2016 and 2017 festival evaluations](#) also contain useful information on fundable and successful events. A number of [case studies](#) of successful Being Human activities reflecting the three pathways above are also available on our website.

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

Small Awards

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. 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 five years have spanned numerous formats – from specially-convened wrestling matches to recreations of historic protest marches, to H.G Wells-inspired 'Martian Autopsies', to historical themed meals and sensory experiments.

What support is on offer?

Funding is available to allow researchers and/or professional staff at Higher Education Institutions (HEIs) and AHRC recognised Independent Research Organisations (IROs) to bid for support of up to £1,500 under this pathway.

Grants are competitive. Being Human has only a limited amount of funding to distribute each year and, whilst £1,500 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 hints and tips 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 PowerPoint 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:** activities featuring creative elements of performance that are relevant and help to meaningfully illustrate topics (e.g. screenings with live accompaniment, performance lectures, comedy nights).
- **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. craft activities, cookery workshops, hacks).
- **Pop-up activities/exhibits:** activities that engage a larger, transitory audience (e.g. activities based in busy museums and galleries or in public spaces).
- **Participatory and project based activities:** such as re-enactments, archaeology digs, projects with a strong element of co-design from community partners.
- **Exhibitions and installations:** these activities can be great, 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.
- **Walks and tours:** activities that connect research to physical environments through walking tours, bus tours, behind-the-scenes access to buildings and institutions.

Can I apply?

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 an 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) be free to attend;
- 5) 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). However these may be suitable under the 'Open Call' pathway.

What is funding for?

Funding is intended to support activities that wouldn't happen without it, and expenditure that cannot be easily absorbed into existing institutional budgets or found from other sources. For example, eligible costs include:

- payments to performers/musicians/artists who are not salaried members of staff but who will add significant value to an activity;
- 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, etc., but *not* receptions);
- essential equipment, props, etc.;
- marketing or documentation costs.

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 designed primarily for the benefit of the humanities research community.

Funding is not intended to sponsor, '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?

The review panel will be assessing the proposal's capacity to:

- fit closely with the festival's core aim of making humanities research accessible, engaging and relevant to non-specialists;
- respond to the interests and needs of a clearly defined 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 number of people proportionate to the size of the award;
- 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;
- respond in an engaging and creative way to the festival theme.

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 clearly defined non-specialist audience;
- are not tailored to an audience's needs and interests;
- work with subject matter that is niche and not rendered accessible;
- have venues that have not been carefully chosen, or are inaccessible;
- 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?

We are particularly keen under this pathway to receive applications which demonstrate capacity to do one or more of the following things:

- 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 BAME audiences;
- provide programming targeted at families and younger audiences;
- are relevant to communities local to the institution bidding for funding (for example highlighting unexpected aspects of local history and/ or contemporary culture, addressing topical debates with local communities, etc.).

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 possible funding avenues 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 our **'Open Call' pathway**.

If you 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 might cover catering costs for a historically-themed meal.

Value for money is a factor in the decision making process for funding awards, so it is important to demonstrate why your project is a good use of funding. Activities that reach only a small number of people and are expensive to run are unlikely to be funded (unless, for example, they are extremely carefully targeted at a very high priority audience or likely to have a legacy beyond the festival itself). To get a rough sense of scale, it might be helpful to think of the funding as subsidising ticket prices at a cost-per-head. When you divide the cost of the activity by the numbers you are likely to engage, does this seem like a good use of money? Is there a way to increase your reach?

Hub Awards

About this pathway

Hub Awards are the largest and most competitive awards made by Being Human. Universities can apply for grants of between £2,000-4,000 under this pathway from funding made available by the festival's core partners (the School of Advanced Study, University of London, the AHRC and the British Academy).

Hubs are required to commit to support activities by means of additional funding and in-kind support, to at least match the value of the sum awarded.

Festival hubs funded by these awards offer highly visible concentrations of best practice activity for the festival. They achieve this by providing particularly coherent, imaginative and/or eye-catching programmes of events that raise the festival's profile nationally as well as regionally.

We ask all applications for Hub Awards to include one particularly high profile and/or large scale 'headline' event to act as an anchor to a series of activities.

What support is available?

A limited number of grants of between £2,000-4,000 are available under this pathway.

Additionally, hubs will have access to resources including:

- guides to promoting your programme of activities that contains marketing hints and tips 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 PowerPoint 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.

Hubs typically play a slightly more central role in our communications strategy for the festival – for example there may be possibilities for hubs to participate in Being Human media partnerships and opportunities. It is expected that hubs would be open to opportunities of this kind and respond quickly to any opportunities arising.

Hub coordinators may be invited to meet with the Being Human team at agreed points during the development of their festival programmes. These meetings (which can be via phone/Skype) will provide opportunities to discuss and develop ideas for collaboration, for

example around communications strategies, which will be of benefit both to hubs and to the festival as a whole.

What format should hubs follow?

Hubs can take various forms, from a tightly curated series of activities brought together around a specific theme, to a broader, university-wide series of activities. Successful hubs typically have a strong sense of place, however, and connect strongly and clearly to their local environment, communities, etc.

We do not necessarily expect or encourage Hub Award holders to attempt to organise mini festivals as such. Instead, what we are looking for is a number of activities (typically 5-8) that significantly enhance the festival programme and offer an exceptionally close fit with our mission.

What do you mean by a 'headline' activity?

We expect hub programmes to build in one 'headline' event that has a large capacity and/or has a particularly inventive and eye-catching format. This helps to provide a focus for programming and to distinguish festival hubs from areas where there simply happen to be a lot of individual Being Human activities.

Examples might include:

- a museum takeover-style event involving multiple researchers;
- a large capacity performance-style event;
- a particularly innovative and or/high profile activity in any appropriate format with a capacity of 200+.

Can I apply?

Any UK university can apply to be a festival hub. We will also consider joint applications from up to two universities based in the same city, although in the interests of coordination one of these institutions will have to be designated 'lead' and we will need a single point of contact to be in touch with. Universities can of course also collaborate more informally on specific activities within hub programmes.

If we receive hub applications from two universities in the same city, we may contact both to see if there is any interest in joining forces.

As well as responding to the festival theme, and providing a programme that is relevant to the needs and interests of local communities, hub programmes should include:

- one large scale or particularly eye-catching 'headline' event;
- around 5 smaller thematically-related events;
- at least one activity aimed at families or younger people;

- one or more activity aimed at BAME audiences **or** one or more activity aimed at an under-served community within the local area;
- one activity exploring health and wellbeing;
- capacity to match fund to at least the value of the award.

Judging criteria

Hub applications will also be judged according to:

- quality and originality of individual events and overall programme;
- overall programme's fit with the festival's core aims and objectives;
- overall programme's fit with the festival theme;
- evidence of fit between planned activities and intended audiences;
- evidence that issues of accessibility have been considered across venues;
- evidence of institutional 'buy in';
- evidence of support from any cultural or community partners;
- value for money and capacity to engage a significant number of people (including potential for media interest);
- evidence of achievability and team capacity to deliver the project.

Shortlisted applicants may also be invited to take part in an interview – which can be conducted via Skype – with the festival team. This is to allow an opportunity to explore the application in greater depth and address any questions raised by the assessment panel.

If an application for hub status is unsuccessful, Being Human may offer to fund parts of the proposed programme with a Small Award.

Examples of previous Being Human hub programmes can be found on the [festival website](#), and these may give some pointers to potential hubs.

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.;
- marketing costs (although not staff).

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.

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 eligibility and chances of success before submitting an application.

Should I apply?

A frequent comment from organisers who have received Hub Awards in previous years has been that they have been surprised by how much work is involved. It is therefore essential that you consider realistically *before* putting in an application whether you will have the necessary support in place to see the project through should a funding bid be successful.

It is worth asking yourself:

- Will you have the time, on top of existing commitments, to oversee 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 public engagement, events, 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? Have you spoken to these partners before putting in an application? Do they share your vision and enthusiasm for the project?
- Why do you want to run a hub? Successful hubs in previous years have carefully aligned their Being Human programmes with broader strategic objectives and priorities, which offer a longer term pay-off for the amount of work involved.

We strongly recommend that anyone organising a hub has 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. The best hubs have a team behind them and this is something that will be taken into account as part of the judging criteria for these awards.

Open Call

About this pathway

The Open Call pathway is all about events and activities that are well thought-through, achievable, easy to organise and fun for all involved, and can run without a direct financial contribution from the festival. Activities in this category typically make use of existing resources, formats and platforms whilst giving them a 'Being Human festival' twist.

Activities of this kind form a large part of the festival programme and will be promoted equally with all of our other events, with organisers receiving the same support in terms of marketing, resources and advice.

If you have an idea for an activity which doesn't require additional funding (perhaps using institutional funding, resources from research grants, etc.), which fits the Being Human ethos and which might benefit from additional support and publicity, the Open Call pathway is the best way to get involved.

What support is on offer?

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

This includes:

- guides to promoting your event that contain marketing tips 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 PowerPoint 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.

What formats are suitable?

Activities that run without direct funding from the festival typically make use of tried and tested formats that produce activities that are fun, impactful and easy to deliver.

Some examples might include:

- a special iteration of a recurring event (e.g. museum lates, off-campus talks or workshops);
- walks and tours;
- museum or gallery tours and object handling sessions;
- film screenings with introductions;
- 'research in the pub' or pecha-kucha style events;
- Special public access to archaeology digs, heritage sites, etc.;
- Readings, talks, activities or performances in publically accessible places;
- Public talks (see below).

We do include some public talks in the Being Human programme, although we don't typically allocate funding to these activities. We don't include academic lectures of any sort, but will consider public talks that are held off-campus, in venues that are accessible and interesting to non-specialists, address interesting and relevant topics pitched at the right audiences and at the right level, and which include opportunities for interaction, activities, etc. To give an example: a talk in a pub or a public library might fit the bill.

Can I apply?

The 'Open Call' pathway is open to anyone involved in or with a connection to humanities research. This includes, for example, researchers in universities, museums, archives, galleries, publishers, subject associations, societies, libraries and more. We're open to all applications and activities submitted through the Open Call pathway stand a good chance of being accepted into the festival programme. However, applications are still reviewed by the festival's selection panel to ensure that they fit Being Human's core criteria.

What criteria are applications judged against?

To be included in the festival, projects put forward under this pathway 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;
- be held during the festival dates;
- fit the festival theme;
- be free or if absolutely necessary cost no more than £5 to attend.

Open Call activities do not automatically have to be free to attend, although this is strongly encouraged wherever possible. Being Human is not able to coordinate payments for events via our central website, and we will not include any event in the Being Human programme with a ticket price of over £5.

Should I apply?

The Open Call pathway 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 ethos. We'd love to hear from you! The deadline for Open Call applications is in June. However, applications will also be accepted and reviewed if submitted for the earlier April deadline. (See timeline above).

Please note that if an application for funding is made, and is unsuccessful, the festival team may ask whether it is possible for the activity to run in a less ambitious format on an unfunded basis.

Festival theme: 'Discoveries & Secrets'

The theme for the 2019 Being Human festival is 'Discoveries & Secrets'. The theme is there as a prompt and a guide to help draw together a very diverse programme, but is primarily intended as a jumping off point to help you share your enthusiasm for research in the humanities.

About the theme

'Discoveries & Secrets' links to some major anniversaries in 2019, from the moon landing to the 300th anniversary of *Robinson Crusoe*. The theme is also suggestive of the actual process of research in the humanities. Researchers make discoveries large and small every day, often in what are to the wider public 'secret' spaces (libraries, archives, and indeed universities themselves). Whether it's art historians uncovering painted-over masterpieces, archaeologists excavating ancient burial sites, classicists exploring lost civilisations, historians making discoveries in archives, linguists exploring languages, dialects and cultures, literary scholars discovering lost texts, philosophers discovering new ideas and concepts... discovery is key to the thrill of the research process but can often feel like something that we keep to ourselves.

Applicants are invited to respond creatively and in ways that probe the many possibilities of the theme. Possible starting points include (but are certainly not limited to):

- new research discoveries across disciplines;
- discovering lost worlds, cultures, civilisations;
- making new discoveries about yourself and others;
- discoveries in collections, archives, libraries;
- untold stories and secret histories;
- secrecy and censorship: spies, surveillance, espionage;
- fictional secrets and discoveries in literature, film, TV;
- discoveries in local communities and cultures: how can research help to find new sides to seemingly familiar, everyday contexts?

Being Human's fifth anniversary

In 2019 we will also be using our 'Discoveries & Secrets' theme to reflect on the fifth anniversary of the Being Human festival itself. Starting in 2014, we've been on a voyage of discovery as a festival and have learnt a huge amount about incredible research happening across the UK and beyond. We also hope that we've helped to uncover 'best kept secrets' in everything from university collections to the histories of places and communities. The festival has helped to bring stories to light, helped research careers to flourish, helped to forge new collaborations and partnerships and led to thousands of people discovering new ideas, concepts, histories and cultures.