

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](#).

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.