Being Human festival: 12–22 November 2020

Small Award application guidelines

About this pathway

Small Awards are designed to support ambitious, ‘best practice’ activities that would not run without financial support from the festival. These projects are usually led by researchers, unlike more institutionally led Hub Awards. Awards can be used to fund projects culminating in either a single event or a small series of activities that offer a very close fit with our ethos. Activities are typically built around a strong ‘hook’, and are ambitious and creative while still well thought through and achievable. Above all, Small Awards are intended to support excellent two-way public engagement with humanities research, reaching priority audiences.

Small Award funded projects often incorporate elements of activity outside the festival dates, working directly with communities. For example, workshops might run in the lead up to the festival gathering material to feed into a festival performance, or further collaborative activity might happen after the festival. We are particularly keen to support this type of project, which integrate aspects of community collaboration and co-production.

In 2020, the festival theme is ‘New Worlds’ which can be used as a jumping off point for you to share your research and helps draw together a very diverse programme (for further details about the theme see the last section of this document).

What support is available?

Funding is available to allow researchers at higher education institutions (HEIs) and Arts and Humanities Research Council (AHRC) recognised independent research organisations (IROs) to bid for support of up to £2,000 under this pathway. Grants are competitive as Being Human has only a limited amount of funding to distribute each year.

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 contain marketing hints and tips
- copies of Being Human print and digital materials geared towards promoting the national festival
• templates you can use 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 such as the festival launch.

**What does a successful Small Award event look like?**

We strongly advise that you look at our [training resources](#) that give tips on how to create a successful public engagement event. We encourage applicants to be creative with their events while proposing activities based around tried and tested formats (e.g. walks and tours, performances etc.).

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*, *historically-themed meals* to *sensory experiments*.

Public talks and panel discussions are not 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.

Whatever the format, it is really important to remember that we are looking for ‘public engagement with research’ projects, not simply cultural activities. This means that audiences and participants at all events should come away having learnt something clear and understandable about humanities research.

**What costs can a Small Award cover?**

Small Award funding is intended to support activities that would not happen without it, rather than upscaling already planned activity. It is intended to cover expenditure that cannot be easily absorbed into existing institutional budgets. 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)
• essential equipment, props, costumes
• 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

What criteria are Small Award applications judged against?

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 the event
• be held during the festival dates
• be completely free to attend (please note that in 2020 all activities need to be free, not just those funded by Being Human). This includes free access to venues where events are being held (such as heritage sites or museums that charge an entrance fee)

In addition to the eligibility criteria for taking part in the festival, to apply for this particular funding stream, activities must:

1. be led by a UK Higher Education Institution (HEI), an AHRC recognised independent research organisation (IRO), or cultural organisation in partnership with an HEI or IRO
2. have direct involvement from a humanities researcher in delivering the event (see our FAQs for our definition of a professional researcher)
3. be held off-campus wherever possible (excluding campus-based theatres etc.)

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

• respond to the interests and needs of a clearly defined non-specialist audience
• engage with a carefully chosen cultural or community partner
• be well thought through and achievable within the budget and timeframe;
• be good value for money

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
• have venues that have not been carefully chosen, are inaccessible, or are campus based
• are unlikely to fit in a public festival context (i.e. if subject matter highly sensitive or emotionally triggering)
• are not deemed to be good value for money, or are thought likely to be ‘business as usual’ activity topped up by Being Human funding
• are over-ambitious and at high risk of failure

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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). The Office for Students’ map of youth participation areas may be useful here
- engage with black, Asian and minority ethnic (BAME) audiences
- provide programming targeted at families and younger audiences
- give serious consideration to issues of accessibility in choice of venue and format (including, importantly, accessibility for people with disabilities)
- 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 with local communities
- have potential to make a small change happen locally and/or leave a legacy beyond the duration of the grant

We are also keen to see evidence of all funded activities considering diversity in the speakers and researchers represented at events within their programmes (e.g. in terms of gender, age, ethnic diversity).

Should I apply?

We only have a small amount of funding to give out, so awards are competitive. Before applying, it is worth exploring other possible funding avenues within your own institution which might enable your project to move forward. If funding is not necessarily needed, your activity 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 varying budgets and there is no need to bid for the maximum 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.

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 as part of the ‘Open Call’ pathway.

Application process

The Small Award application form and activities grid is available on our website at https://beinghumanfestival.org/get-involved-2020/. 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.
• Friday 24 April (5pm) – Deadline for applications for funding
• By Monday 1 June – Notification of outcome of applications

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.

2020 festival theme: ‘New Worlds’

The theme for the 2020 Being Human festival is ‘New Worlds’. The theme is there as a prompt and a guide to help draw together a very diverse programme. It is primarily intended as a jumping off point to help you share your enthusiasm for research in the humanities. We want you to respond imaginatively to the many possibilities of the theme. All research opens up a ‘new world’ of some sort!

Engaging with the theme

Possible starting points include (but are certainly not limited to):

• New worlds in local or global contexts: discovery and exploration on either macro or micro levels
• New worlds in fiction: sci-fi, fantasy, utopias and dystopias
• What new worlds do we want? Thinking about the future in relation to climate change, contemporary politics, global issues
• New worlds and old worlds – could looking back offer solutions for the future?
• New worlds/ new horizons – for example, opening up new possibilities for people with disabilities, people affected by social exclusion and stigma, opening up access to education and resources
• Discoveries and developments, events and landmarks that have changed our world

If you want to read more about the theme check out our blog announcing the 2020 festival here.