Being Human festival: 12–22 November 2020
Hub Award application guidelines

About this pathway

Hub Awards are the largest and most competitive funding awards made by Being Human. These awards are more institutionally focused, supporting locally based programmes of activity involving multiple researchers. 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. 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.

In 2020, the festival theme is ‘New Worlds’ which you can be used as a jumping off point for your Hub programme 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?

Universities can apply for grants of between £2,000–5,000 under this pathway. Typically, we make around four to five Hub Awards a year.

Hub coordinators will 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, such as around communications strategies, which will be of benefit to both Hubs and the festival as a whole.

In addition to this Hub-specific support, 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
• 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 activities such as the festival launch.

**What does a successful Hub programme look like?**

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

Hub programmes are not meant to be mini festivals in and of themselves. Instead, what we are looking for is a number of activities (typically 8–10) in a range of formats that significantly enhance the overall festival programme and offer an exceptionally close fit with our mission.

Hub programmes should include:

• one large scale or particularly eye-catching ‘headline’ event
• at least one activity aimed at families or young people
• one or more activity aimed at black, Asian and minority ethnic (BAME) audiences or aimed at an under-served community within the local area
• one activity exploring health and wellbeing

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

**What event formats are suitable?**

We strongly advise applicants to look at our [training resources](#) that give tips on how to create a successful public engagement event. We do not want activities included as part of a Hub programme that wouldn’t be considered good public engagement with research activities in their own right.

We encourage applicants to be creative with their events while proposing activities based around tried and tested formats (e.g. walks and tours, performances). Public talks and panel discussions are not funded 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 vital to remember that we are looking for ‘public engagement with research’ events, 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 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 style event involving multiple researchers or a large capacity performance style event. This is an opportunity to be ambitious.

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

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

- performers/musicians/artists who are not salaried members of staff but who will add significant value to an activity
- venue hire or for 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, etc.
- marketing or documentation costs (although not staff 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 Hub 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 Hubs must:

- be led by a UK University
- commit to support activities through additional funding and in-kind support to at least match the value of the awarded amount
- have direct involvement from a humanities researcher in delivering the event (see our FAQs for our definition of a professional researcher)
- be held off-campus wherever possible (excluding campus-based theatres etc.)

In 2020 we are not accepting applications for ‘joint Hubs’ coordinated by more than one university. Reflecting a renewed institutional focus for Hub Awards, and focus on building capacity for activity in the humanities at universities, for this year’s festival we want Hub programmes to be designed and delivered by a team at a single institution. However, universities can of course collaborate more informally with other local institutions on specific activities within Hub programmes.

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 programme’s fit with the festival’s core aims and objectives
- 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

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 is likely to be 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

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.
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 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, highlighting unexpected aspects of local history and/or contemporary culture, addressing topical debates with local communities, etc.)
- feature an element of co-production with local communities
- have potential to make a small change happen locally and/or leave a legacy

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 for a Hub Award?

A frequent comment from organisers who have received Hub Awards in previous years is that they were surprised by how much work was involved. It is therefore essential to consider 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?
• Why do you want to run a Hub? Successful Hubs in previous years have carefully aligned 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.

**Application process**

The Hub Award application form and activities grid is available on our website at [www.beinghumanfestival.org/get-involved-2020](http://www.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.

Shortlisted applicants for Hub Awards 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.

• Application deadline: Friday 29 May (5pm)
• Notification of outcome: June*

*We hope to inform applicants of the outcome of their application as soon as possible and are working hard to minimise any delay. However due to the ongoing Coronavirus (COVID-19) crisis it may take us longer than usual.*

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](#).