Being Human festival 2021

Being Human festival returns in November 2021. Amidst continued uncertainty, we still aim to deliver a national celebration of the humanities that inspires people and shows the resilience, creativity and imagination in communities across the UK. To enable planning to begin, we are committing to a hybrid-delivery festival this November that combines the best of online engagement with safe in-person activities. Together we will build on the best elements of Being Human 2020 to offer a national festival of public engagement taking place both in-person and online.

Although digital delivery helped expand the festival's horizons, it will continue to champion its core principles: Being Human remains a place-based festival that emphasises interaction, working with communities outside academia and those less typically engaged with humanities culture (people who might not normally go to a public university event, or an exhibition in an art gallery, for example). Whether digital, or in-person (socially distanced), we will support innovative, participatory, and creative activities that foster genuine, two-way connections with people not usually engaged with academic research. As ever, events should be designed to facilitate mutual learning between researchers and publics.

Our festival theme in 2021 is ‘Renewal,’ which can be used as broad inspiration for shaping events around research and will help promote connections within a very diverse programme. More on the theme can be found in the final section of this document.

We are especially interested in how humanities research might help us to ‘renew’ our understanding of what it means to be human in 2021, including our relationships with the places around us, how we work and play, how we understand identity and culture, and how we interact with the planet and nature.

Being Human festival is led by the School of Advanced Study at the University of London, in partnership with the Arts and Humanities Research Council and the British Academy.

About Hub Awards

Hub Awards are the largest and most competitive funding awards made by Being Human. These awards are institutionally focused, supporting locally relevant programmes of activity involving multiple researchers from different disciplines. 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 within the festival programme. 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.

**What support is available?**

Universities can apply for grants of up to £5,000 for Hubs. Typically, we make around four 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 (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 will have access to the support and resources offered to all participants in the festival. This includes:

- a training “Masterclass” series run throughout the festival year for practical advice with designing, planning, promotion and delivery of your project;
- public engagement toolkits, resources and helpful advice from the festival team;
- guides to promoting your event that contain hints and tips about marketing and press;
- copies of Being Human print and digital materials geared towards promoting the national festival and access to other marketing materials (e.g. banners and badges) to promote your activity;
- templates you can use to produce your own marketing materials (e.g. posters, banners, digital and PowerPoint templates);
- support from the central Being Human social media accounts.

You may also be invited to take part in centrally organised festival activities such as the festival launch.

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

A Hub award offers a university an opportunity to plan a more coherent, curated approach to the Being Human festival, bringing together a range of perspectives into a programme that connects research to the histories, cultures and communities of an area. Successful Hubs typically use aspects of a city, town or place’s identity (local industries, the
geography of an area, famous residents or locations) as a point of departure for an exciting programme of activities.

Hub programmes should demonstrate a high level of community partnership. They might, for example, be based entirely at a local museum (or on a local museums’ digital platform) or they might take place across a range of community venues and platforms.

It is important to remember too that hub programmes should maintain a strong focus on public engagement with research. Hub programmes should not be a few good public engagement activities supplemented by less ambitious events. Rather, a programme should offer a range of exciting and engaging activities designed around the needs and interests of diverse local audiences. As a requirement, all Hub programmes must include:

- one large scale or particularly eye-catching ‘headline’ event;
- at least one activity aimed at families or young people;
- one or more activities aimed at BAME audiences or aimed at an under-served community within the local area;
- one activity exploring climate change/ the climate crisis.

What formats are suitable?

The best Hub programmes feature a range of event and activity formats that have been designed to meet the needs of different participants and audiences. This might range from larger scale activities featuring partnerships with museums and theatres to much smaller scale programming working with grassroots and community organisations.

We do not want to include activities within Hub programmes that would not be accepted to the festival in their own right. This means that it is important to remember that across the whole programme we are looking for ‘public engagement with research’, not simply cultural activities. Audiences, communities and participants should have opportunities to contribute their own experiences and knowledge as part of the project. They should also come-away having learnt something clear and understandable about humanities research.

Some of the best activities involve communities in their production, via ‘co-curation’ and ‘co-production’. This might mean, for example, that socially distanced workshops, postal packs or phone calls take place in advance, feeding into a main activity during the festival.

We encourage applicants to be creative, whilst proposing activities based around tried and tested formats. Some examples of suitable formats, which can work in person, online, or in a hybrid fashion, include:

- performances (theatre, music, comedy, storytelling);
- food and drink (cookery lessons, ‘cook-a-long’, themed meals, tastings);
- screenings and ‘watch together’ (film screenings with introductions, listening parties, DJ sessions);

Being Human festival 2021: Hub Award application guidelines

3
walks and tours (walks, audio walks, treasure hunts, behind the scenes tours);
'have a go' events (learn a skill, try an instrument, make something);
(virtual) museum lates or museum takeovers;
activities coordinated by post or other ways of connecting with people at home;
exhibitions and installations (outdoor art, public art, online exhibitions, crowd-sourced activity);
other interactive online or hybrid activities;
interactive digital content (podcasts, films, animations).

We are open to programmes that feature activities such as podcasts, a daily newspaper, films, radio stations, exhibitions. These activities would be supplements to a programme, rather than the heart of it. As above, they would also need to be interactive, feature aspects of co-production, and be firmly rooted in public engagement with research.

Public talks and panel discussions are not funded by Being Human and should not be included as part of Hub programmes unless they feature a very strong public engagement aspect (e.g. an element of performance). We also do not want to include any event that is similar in format to an academic seminar or workshop. Very long, discussion-based workshops are not popular with public audiences and we would class these as an 'academic' format.

We strongly advise that you look at our planning toolkits that give tips on how to create a successful public engagement activity – including advice on building hybrid, Covid-secure activities.

**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 involving multiple researchers, a large capacity performance style event or a particularly innovative and exciting art commission. This is an opportunity to be ambitious.

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

Hubs are expected to match-fund to at least the cost of the award offered. For example, if the Hub award is for £5,000, the overall project budget should be £10,000. We do not count salaried staff time as part of the match funding.

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

- payments to performers/musicians/artists who are not salaried members of staff;
- production costs (e.g. filming, audio, streaming, web design (if essential to the activity);
- props, costumes, and materials;
- production costs for things like exhibition panels, work packs, pamphlets;
- postage costs (e.g. for mailing packs to attendees);
- reasonable promotional costs that will help you to reach your intended participants/audiences (e.g. flyers, local paid advertising);
- 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);
- documentation costs (e.g. filming, photography, captioning, transcribing).

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 (i.e. we may support food costs for a historic meal, but not a wine reception after an event);
- supporting academic conferences and symposia, or any event that has been designed primarily for the benefit of academics, students, stakeholders or others already engaged with the world of research;
- international travel or accommodation.

**Match funding**

Match funding should be provided from institutionally held budgets (e.g. marketing or event budgets, research grant budgets) to support and amplify Hub programmes. Examples of costs that might be covered by match funding include:

- use of university studio space or other production costs for films, podcasts or streaming;
- the use of an exhibition space or venue, or use of digital platforms;
- documentation of activities (e.g. filming, photography);
- paid student internships run in conjunction with the programme;
- marketing and promotion costs.

**What criteria are Hub Award applications judged against?**

Hub proposals will be looked at both overall, as a full programme, and individually with regard to each proposed activity. 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 activities;
- be held during the festival dates;
- be free to attend. 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:

Being Human festival 2021: Hub Award application guidelines
1. be led by a UK university;
2. commit to support activities through additional funding and in-kind support to at least match the value of the awarded amount;
3. have direct involvement from a humanities researcher in delivering (not just planning) the event, to ensure that research expertise informs the activity that audiences encounter (see our FAQs for our definition of a professional researcher);
4. be held off-campus wherever possible (excluding campus-based theatres etc.);
5. respond to the interests and needs of clearly defined non-specialist audiences;
6. engage with carefully chosen cultural or community partners (e.g. a school, charities, arts organisations);
7. are representative and inclusive, giving consideration to diversity in speakers and researchers represented within their programmes (e.g. gender, age, ethnic diversity), and making use of inclusive venues, formats and platforms.

In 2021 we are not accepting applications for ‘joint hubs’ coordinated by more than one university. The only exception to this is in the case of closed calls that may be issued for Hubs specific to a particular region or particular thematic area. 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 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 and platforms;
- evidence of institutional ‘buy in’ and match funding;
- evidence of support from any cultural or community partners;
- evidence of achievability and team capacity to deliver the project.

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 to receive applications which demonstrate capacity to do one or more of the following things:

- explore innovative and realistic approaches to public engagement in the current challenging conditions;
- 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). See The Office for Students’ map of youth participation areas;
- engage with black, Asian and minority ethnic (BAME) audiences;

Being Human festival 2021: Hub Award application guidelines
• provide programming targeted at families and younger audiences;
• give serious consideration to issues of accessibility in choice of venue/platform 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);
• feature an element of co-production;
• have potential to make a small change happen locally and/or leave a legacy beyond the duration of the festival;
• respond in a topical way to our 2021 theme of ‘Renewal’.

What don’t we want?

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

• feature activities that have only a tenuous link to humanities research (see our FAQs for our definition);
• feature activities that are unrepresentative, for example ‘about us without us’ type activity that addresses issues without directly including perspectives from people impacted by them;
• feature non-diverse speaker line-ups such as ‘manels’;
• feature activities that are not designed to appeal to a clearly defined non-specialist audience;
• make use of platforms, venues or formats that have not been carefully chosen, are inaccessible, or are unlikely to appeal to a public audience;
• contain activities that are unlikely to fit in a public festival context (i.e. if subject matter highly sensitive or emotionally triggering);
• are not deemed by the review committee to be good value for money, or comprise standard activity that is being topped up with Being Human funding;
• are over-ambitious and thus at high risk of failure;
• are deemed to be unlikely to succeed in the context of ongoing restrictions/uncertainty around Covid-19.

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.

Should I apply?

A frequent comment from organisers who have received Hub Awards is that they were surprised by how much work was involved. It is therefore essential to consider whether you will have the necessary support in place to see the project through should a funding bid be successful. It is worth asking:

• 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 and communities?
• Have you spoken to these partners before putting in an application? Do they understand the project and their role?
• Why do you want to run a Hub? Successful Hubs in previous years have 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.

Application process
The Hub Award application form and activities grid is available on our website at www.beinghumanfestival.org/apply. 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.

• Tuesday 4 May (5pm) – Deadline for applications for funding
• By end 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

2021 festival theme: ‘Renewal’
The past twelve months have brought enormous challenges across the globe. The impacts of the Covid-19 pandemic, in particular, have been world-changing and are far from over. Whilst we continue to live through a moment of unprecedented challenge, strain, and change, however, one thing is clear for many people: whatever follows on from Covid-19 must, if nothing else, be an opportunity to do things differently. Whether in relation to our political systems, the cities in which we live, the ways in which we work and spend our
leisure time, our relationship with the planet and the natural world, the current historical moment offers an opportunity to rethink, to do things differently, to renew.

In 2020 Being Human festival imagined ‘New Worlds’. In 2021 it is time to renew our sense of Being Human.

This year’s Being Human festival will focus on ‘renewal’. Across the humanities we are interested in new ideas, new generations, new ways of doing things, new responses. This year sees a new president take office in America; Britain and Europe embark on a new relationship; and the COP26 Climate Conference in Glasgow will focus the attention of the world on finding new solutions to the climate emergency and ways to address it, from renewable energy to a renewed social contract between humans and the world that they inhabit. Cityscapes are being renewed, with monuments and public history being interrogated and interpreted in new ways. Different ways of living are being considered, different identities are being explored, and the pandemic has pushed people all over the world to invent new ways of being social, being professional, and being human.

Of course, ‘renewals’ don’t have to be only contemporary. Renewals can also revisit past times of change or disruption, discoveries that altered our world, or renew our ideas about the past. They can be about breakthroughs in art, literature, film. They can be moments in which national cultures and identities were reconsidered, reimagined, realigned.

Across all the disciplines of the humanities, we are keen to support projects that help us think of ways of renewing approaches to:

- Health
- Faith
- Work & play
- Identity
- Climate

These are just starting points to get you thinking, though. Surprise us! The main thing that we are looking for are projects that help us to demonstrate why the humanities are relevant to people’s lives and how they help us understand what it means to be human.