



Being Human Festival: 9–18 November 2023

Application Guidelines

About the festival

Being Human Festival is the UK's national festival of the humanities and returns in November 2023, delivering a celebration of the humanities that inspires people and showcases the creativity, resilience, and curiosity in communities across the UK. We are looking for a range of online, hybrid and in-person activities to be part of this year's festival.

Whilst digital delivery has helped to 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 or academic research (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, we will support innovative, participatory, and creative activities that foster genuine, two-way connections with such communities. Events are expected to take place off-campus (exceptions will only rarely be permitted) and be designed to facilitate mutual learning between researchers and publics.

We are especially keen to support projects that respond in innovative, creative ways to the challenges of planning research-led public engagement.

We welcome applications that show evidence of collaboration with internal colleagues or external partners, or of building on successes of past collaborations.

Being Human Festival is led by the School of Advanced Study, University of London, with generous support from Research England, in partnership with the Arts and Humanities Research Council and the British Academy.

2023 festival theme: 'Rhyme or Reason'

Our festival theme in 2023 is 'Rhyme or Reason,' which can be used as broad inspiration for shaping events around research and will help promote connections within a very diverse programme. We invite researchers to think about rhyme or reason, or rhyme and reason, in relation to their research, and to key anniversaries in 2023.

More information and guidance on the theme can be found on our [website](#).

How to take part in Being Human Festival

There are four different ways to take part in the festival:

1. Festival Hub

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. Hubs must engage with carefully chosen cultural or community partners (e.g., a school, a charity, an arts organisation).

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. Festival Hub programmes should be made up of approximately 6 – 10 separate events or activities, in a range of formats.

A key condition of Hub Awards is that they are match funded (up to £5,000) by the institution awarded them, providing scope for more ambitious programming. **Universities can apply for grants of £3,000 - £8,000 for Hubs.** In previous years we have made up to five Hub awards.

More information about Festival Hubs and on how to apply is available on our [website](#).

2. Small Award

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 individual researchers, unlike institutionally led Hub Awards. Awards can be used to fund projects culminating in either a single event, a small series of activities, or other interactive content that offers a very close fit with our ethos. Activities are typically built around a strong 'hook' – a simple but concrete idea that has potential for public appeal – and are ambitious and creative while still carefully thought through and achievable. Small Award activities must engage with carefully chosen cultural or community partners (e.g., a school, a charity, an arts organisation).

Above all, Small Awards are intended to reach our priority audiences (find out more on our [website](#), or in the 'Small Awards Further Information' document) and to support excellent two-way public engagement with humanities research.

Whilst the main activity should take place within the festival dates, funded projects can incorporate elements of activity outside the festival dates, working directly with communities. For example, workshops or crowd-sourcing activities 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 keen to support projects

which integrate aspects of community collaboration and co-production and help embed and sustain civic engagement activities. We welcome projects which may leave a legacy beyond the duration of the festival.

Funding of up to £3,000 is available to researchers at Higher Education Institutions (HEIs) and [AHRC recognised Independent Research Organisations \(IROs\)](#).

More information about Small Awards and on how to apply is available on our [website](#).

3. Open Call

The Open Call offers a great way to get involved in the festival for anyone who is not seeking additional festival funding, and has a connection to humanities research, including universities, museums, archives, galleries, publishers, subject associations, societies, libraries and more.

This pathway is all about carefully thought-through activities that are easy to organise and fun for all involved. Activities in this category can make use of existing resources, formats and platforms, while giving them a 'Being Human festival' twist. They run without a direct financial contribution from the festival (perhaps using institutional funding, resources from research grants, etc.) but benefit from the development, support, publicity, and synergies that Being Human can offer.

Activities of this kind form a large part of the festival programme. By submitting an event to the national festival of the humanities, you are helping to make sure access to research continues to thrive and grow, as well as raising awareness about why the humanities are so important to our everyday lives. We also hope taking part in the festival will be fun and rewarding, offering the opportunity to share your work with new audiences.

More information about the Open Call and on how to apply is available on our [website](#).

4. Being Human Café

Being Human Cafés offer a simple, fun and 'ready to go' format for people to get involved in the festival. Based around the idea that even the most complicated research can be encountered in the time that it takes to have a cup of tea or coffee, Being Human Cafés are all about offering an effective way for people to encounter some new ideas in the humanities. Whether in digital form or in-person they can be really simple: just tea, coffee and a chat. Alternatively, they can be more creative, bringing in elements of performance, storytelling, games, art classes and quizzes.

We've created a toolkit as a guide, and there will be Being Human Cafés popping up across the UK. You can theme them, add appropriate food and drink, and make them exciting and locally relevant. The toolkit tells you everything you need to know to plan a successful event! More information about Being Human Cafés and on how to apply is available on our [website](#).

What support is available?

Different levels of financial support are available depending on how you take part. For specific support relating to each pathway, please visit the [festival website](#).

In addition to this specific support, all festival organisers will have access to the following support and resources:

- a training programme 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 (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.

Application process

Application forms for all activities must be submitted online using Survey Monkey Apply. Application guidance for all pathways can be found on our website, including links to the application forms.

A Word version of the application form is available on our website, which can be used for reference when preparing your application. However, please note that applications will only be accepted through Survey Monkey Apply.

Where applicable, please upload a completed activities grid and letters of support when submitting your application. If you have any questions about the application process, please email apply.beinghuman@sas.ac.uk.

The application deadlines are:

Activity type	Application deadline
Hub Award	5pm, Friday 28 April
Small Award	5pm, Friday 28 April
Open Call	5pm, Friday 23 June
Being Human Café	5pm, Friday 25 August

If you have any questions or would like to contact the Being Human team, please email beinghuman@sas.ac.uk.