



Being Human Festival

Being Human Festival: 6–15 November 2025

Festival Event pathway – run an event without festival funding

Events in this pathway run without a financial contribution from the festival, (perhaps using institutional funding, resources from research grants etc.), but benefit from additional support and publicity from being part of the festival.

The Festival Event pathway offers a great way to get involved in the festival for anyone with a connection to humanities research, including universities, museums, archives, galleries, publishers, subject associations, societies, libraries and more. However, please note that all activities should involve an eligible professional researcher – see page 3.

Events should be carefully thought-through activities that are easy to organise. Activities in this category can make use of existing resources, formats and platforms, while giving them a ‘Being Human Festival’ twist.

Activities of this kind form an important part of the festival programme. By submitting an event to the national festival of the humanities, you are helping to ensure 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 engage with new audiences.

More information about the festival and the different ways to take part is available on our [website](#).

The theme for Being Human Festival 2025 is *Between the Lines* – a space of hidden histories, shifting borders, and unspoken meanings. From migration routes that redraw the map to the traces of erased histories, to the margins of a poem, and the frontlines of protest, we invite researchers to explore boundaries, crossings, and intersections—and the spaces in between, where meaning is made and remade. [Read more about the theme.](#)

What support is available?

Being Human is committed to supporting everyone taking part in the festival. The festival team offer advice and guidance to all organisers and make resources available to help give activities the best possible chance of success.

Available support and resources include:

- a training programme run throughout the festival year for practical advice on 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 to promote your activity;
- 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.

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

What formats are suitable?

Activities should typically make use of tried and tested formats that produce creative, fun, impactful and easy to deliver activities, although we encourage innovation.

Please use our [planning toolkits](#) that give tips on how to create a successful public engagement activity.

Some examples of good formats that can run in person, online, or in hybrid formats include:

- **performances** (theatre, music, comedy, storytelling);
- **food and drink-based activities** (cooking lessons, cook-alongs, themed meals, tastings);
- **screenings and 'watch together' activities** (film screenings with interactive elements, listening parties, DJ sessions);
- **walks and tours** (walks, audio walks, street parades, behind the scenes tours);
- **'have a go' events** (learn a skill, try an instrument, make something);
- **museum lates** or museum takeovers;
- **activities coordinated by post** or other ways of connecting with people at home;

- **interactive exhibitions and installations** that allow for two-way engagement (outdoor art, public art, crowd-sourced activity)
- **game-based activities** (escape rooms, treasure hunts, quizzes).

Whatever the format, it is important to remember that we are looking for ‘public engagement with research’ projects, not simply cultural activities or academic seminars/lectures. This means that 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 new humanities research.

We do not include academic lectures, seminars or workshops in the Being Human programme. However, through the Festival Event pathway we are open to proposals for public talks, so long as they are held off-campus where possible, in venues/on platforms that are accessible, and aimed at non-specialists. Talks should address interesting and relevant topics pitched at specific audiences, at the right level and include opportunities for interaction.

We are open to activities that feature interactive digital 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. They would need to be interactive, feature aspects of co-production, and be firmly rooted in public engagement with research.

What are the eligibility criteria?

All activities 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 (not just planning) the event, to ensure that research expertise informs the activity (see our [FAQs](#) for our definition of a professional researcher);
- **be held during the festival dates** (6–15 November 2025, with the option to have lead-in and post-activity aspects to the project);
- **be free to attend** (this includes free access to venues where events are being held, such as heritage sites or museums that normally charge an entrance fee);
- **be held off-campus wherever possible** (exceptions may be made for on-campus public spaces such as theatres, museums and galleries);
- **be representative and inclusive**, giving consideration to the diversity of speakers and researchers represented within their programmes;
- **give serious consideration to accessibility** in choice of venue, platform and format, with all activities taking place in accessible venues where possible (exceptions can be made for venues that are integral to the activity, but additional ways to engage with the activity must be included, and this must be explained in your application);

- **respond to the interests and needs of clearly defined non-specialist audiences;**
- **show evidence in the application that diversity, inclusion and accessibility** have been considered across programming, speakers/researchers, venues and platforms.

Current PhD students are eligible to apply via the Festival Event pathway, with a letter of support from their supervisor at their institution. Festival Event applications from PhD students must be in collaboration with a professional researcher who is named on the application and involved in planning and delivering the activity.

Festival priorities

We seek innovative and exciting programming that has been designed with the needs of audiences firmly in mind.

If your application has fulfilled the eligibility criteria above, your application will be reviewed against the following priorities:

- alignment with the [festival's core aims and objectives](#);
- alignment with the [festival's priority audiences](#);
- the innovation and creativity of individual events;
- evidence of fit between planned activities and specific intended audiences;
- evidence of best practice public engagement (e.g. two-way engagement, co-production, opportunity for legacies beyond the festival).

Equity, Diversity and Inclusion

We actively welcome festival content which celebrates equity, diversity and inclusivity. We are particularly keen to receive applications which engage with underrepresented groups in your community, and/or groups who share a particular protected characteristic (defined under the [Equality Act 2010](#)). Please be specific about your intended audiences in your application. We will not knowingly accept applications for events which include speaker line-ups that lack appropriate diversity, including all-male or 'about us, without us' activities – where a subject is explored without representation from those affected by it.

If your proposal includes subject matter that is highly sensitive or emotionally triggering, appropriate handling of these topics must be considered and clearly evidenced in your application. Please note the review panel reserve the right not to accept such topics in the festival programme.

Organisers will be required to adhere to their institution's, partners' and venues' safeguarding policies for all activities involving vulnerable adults, young people or children. If these organisations do not have safeguarding policies and procedures in place, organisers will be required to adhere to the University of

London's safeguarding policies and procedures. Applicants will be asked to name a safeguarding lead for the event(s) in the application form.

More information about the festival's work on equity, diversity and inclusion can be found on our [website](#). We endeavour to keep learning and improving our processes, so please contact us at beinghuman@sas.ac.uk if you have any feedback or would like to discuss this with us.

Should I apply?

The Festival Event pathway is a great way to get involved in Being Human Festival if you have an idea or format that's good to go and fits in with the festival's ethos. We would love to hear from you!

We want to maintain the distribution of festival activities across the UK, and we particularly encourage applications from Northern Ireland, Scotland and Wales. This includes big cities such as Belfast, Edinburgh, Glasgow and Cardiff – but also smaller cities, towns and rural areas.

Application process

Applications must be submitted online using [Survey Monkey Apply](#). Application guidance can be found on our website, including links to the application form.

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.

Please upload a completed activity grid (where applicable; and using the template provided) letters of support from community and cultural partners (in PDF format), and from PhD supervisors (where applicable and in PDF format) when submitting your application.

We have an equal opportunities monitoring form as part of our application process, which will help us to ensure that Being Human Festival opportunities are accessible to as many people as possible and to continue our commitment to fostering an inclusive environment. More information on how this data will be used is included on the form. The information provided will not be used as part of the application review process.

If you have any questions about the application process, please email beinghuman@sas.ac.uk.

- **Deadline for Festival Event pathway applications – Friday 4 July, 5pm**
- **Notification of outcome of applications – by Friday 25 July**

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.