Being Human Festival: 6–15 November 2025
Festival Event Grant – run single or multiple events

Festival Event Grants are designed to support creative, ambitious, and best practice engagement activities. These projects are usually led by individual researchers, unlike Festival Hubs.

Applicants can apply to this pathway to fund either a single event or a small series of events. Activities should be ambitious and creative while still carefully thought-through and achievable.

All events in this pathway should reach the festival's priority audiences and support excellent two-way public engagement with humanities research. We are keen to support projects which integrate aspects of community collaboration and co-production and help embed and sustain civic engagement activities.

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?
Funding of up to £4,000 is available to researchers at UK Higher Education Institutions (HEIs) and AHRC recognised Independent Research Organisations (IROs). Festival Event Grant applications can be submitted for any amount up to £4,000 and there is no requirement to apply for the full amount. Grants are competitive as Being Human has a limited amount of funding to distribute each year. The review panel may decide to fund a whole programme of activity, or part fund specific activities.

Please note that funding is not available to independent researchers unless in collaboration with researchers at HEIs or IROs.

In addition to funding, recipients of Festival Event Grants will have access to the support and resources offered to all participants in the festival. This includes:

- 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 are the eligibility criteria?
Festival Event Grants 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. engage with a carefully chosen, named cultural or community partner (e.g. a school, charity or arts organisation etc.)
3. not include an event that is a public talk, panel discussion or seminar, as these are not funded by Being Human unless they feature a very strong public engagement aspect (e.g. an element of performance)
4. include letters of support from all community or cultural partners
5. upload a budget template (as provided). Please note: you must use our templates for this document.

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 based on the research of a professional researcher:** see our FAQs for our definition of a professional researcher (please note PhD students are not eligible to apply for Festival Event Grants);

- **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** (all associated 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 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.

Please note that staff at the School of Advanced Study are not eligible to apply for funding through this pathway. Staff members from the School of Advanced Study should email beinghuman@sas.ac.uk for more information on how to take part in the festival.

Collaborative Festival Event Grant applications from up to two eligible institutions are welcome, but the application must be led by one institution, and only one institution can receive the grant. Collaborative Institutions should be HEIs or AHRC-recognised IROs. They should be named in the application and should be jointly involved in both the planning and delivery of the proposed activities.

What does a successful Festival Event Grant application look like?
This pathway allows applicants to apply to run a single event or a small series of events as part of Being Human Festival. The multiple events could all take place during the festival dates, or include lead-in activities with community or cultural partners, with the main event taking place during the festival. 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. Single events must take place during the festival dates. Projects might also extend post-festival, producing additional things like films, podcasts or online galleries, with different types of activity achieving different outputs and reaching different audiences. If running a small series of events, we encourage applicants to think about the events as a

coherent series of related events, and to convey the relationship between the events in your application.

Applications should demonstrate equitable and mutually beneficial partnerships with community or cultural partners. We value and are keen to support partnerships in which the external partners are providing substantial input to the application and activities, such as through co-producing and co-developing the activities.

Funded activities over the 10 years of the festival have spanned numerous formats and approaches. Some successful formats have included interactive performances, museum lates, and walking tours as well as activities run via post or door-to-door delivery to local communities (e.g. activity packs sent through the post). You can find examples of such events in our case studies.

Whatever you choose, it's important to remember that we are looking for 'public engagement with research' projects, not simply cultural activities or academic seminars/lectures. Activities should have an element of co-production, and 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.

We are unlikely to fund activities that have previously been funded by the festival. However, if you are building upon an activity that has previously been funded by the festival, please detail the ways in which you have developed this.

We will consider multiple funding applications from one institution, but we encourage you to liaise with your colleagues internally before submitting, as one coordinated application may be more successful.

Applicants should be ambitious and creative with their proposals. Please use our planning toolkits that give tips on how to create a successful public engagement activity.

What formats are suitable?
Some examples of successful formats, which can work in person, online, or in hybrid formats, include:

- **performances** (theatre, music, comedy, storytelling);
- **food and drink-based activities** (cookery 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** which allow for two-way engagement (outdoor art, public art, crowd-sourced activity)
- **game-based activities** (escape rooms, treasure hunts, quizzes).

We are open to activities that feature interactive digital activities such as podcasts, a daily newspaper, films, radio stations and 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.

Public talks and panel discussions are not funded by Being Human. These tend to only appear in our programme if they feature a two-way public engagement aspect (e.g. an element of performance) and must be submitted through the unfunded 'Festival Event' pathway.

Festival Event Grant applications can either be for a closed event (an invitation only event for a particular group such as a school or specific community group etc.) or events open to public audiences.

What costs can this grant cover?

Funding from Being Human is intended to support expenditure that cannot easily be absorbed into existing institutional budgets and the majority of the funding should go towards engagement activities during the festival dates.

Eligible Costs	Ineligible Costs
• Payments to performers/musicians/artists who are not salaried members of staff • Food and drink that are essential to the activity (e.g. themed meals, tasting sessions) • Reasonable promotional costs that will help you to reach your intended participants/ audiences (e.g., flyers, local paid advertising)	• Researcher time and existing staff members' costs, whether academic or professional staff • Catering for participants or attendees (i.e. we may support food costs for a themed meal, but not a wine reception after an event) • Supporting academic seminars, workshops, conferences and symposia • Supporting any event that has been designed primarily for the

• Postage costs (e.g. sending packs to attendees) • Props, costumes, and materials • Venue hire or essential transport (e.g. hiring a coach for a bus tour) • Production costs (exhibition panels, printing, filming, audio, streaming, web design (if essential to the activity) • Reasonable documentation costs (e.g. filming, photography) • Accessibility costs (e.g. captioning, transcribing, BSL interpreter)	benefit of academics, students, stakeholders or others already engaged with the world of research • Evaluation costs (evaluation forms will be provided by the Being Human team) • International travel or accommodation • Hardware and capital equipment (e.g. laptops, projectors, mobile phones)

Festival Event Grant applicants are encouraged to source match-funding from their institutions, though this is not required. Match-funding should be provided from institutionally held budgets, to support and amplify programmes. This could include things like venue space, filming and photography, catering costs and other production costs.

Festival priorities

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

If your application has fulfilled the eligibility criteria, 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, ambition and creativity of individual events and overall programme;
- 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);
- evidence of achievability and team capacity to deliver the programme.

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?

Festival Event Grants are competitive, and we have a limited amount of funding to award. 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 required, your activity might be better suited to our unfunded 'Festival Event' pathway.

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 on an unfunded basis as part of the 'Festival Event' pathway.

Application process

Application forms must be submitted online using Survey Monkey Apply. Application guidance 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.

Please upload a completed activities grid (as provided), budget template (as provided), and letters of support from community and cultural partners (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 applications for funding – Thursday 10 April, 5pm**
- **Notification of outcome of applications – by Friday 6 June**

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.