Welcome to the festival!

Hello!

A warm welcome to the festival from the Being Human team. We are so pleased to have you on board – thank you for helping us to celebrate and demonstrate the importance of the humanities.

This year’s festival will take place from 10–19 November and will mark the festival’s ninth year! For 2022 we are turning our attention to the theme ‘Breakthroughs’; from the history of pioneering inventions, to ground-breaking literature and art.

With activities taking place across the country, we’re delighted to have six festival Hubs located in Aberdeen, Bangor, Dundee, Newcastle, Wolverhampton, and a dedicated BBC 100 Hub in Bradford!

Being Human is all about providing a platform for creative and innovative ways to engage the public with a wide range of ground-breaking and inspiring humanities research, and we’re looking forward to a programme of activities that will explore everything from DIY publishing to gothic folklore, and women’s history to afrofuturism.

This year, we’re also looking at ways that we can facilitate shared learning and networking between those that participate in the festival, so keep an eye out for opportunities to do that, and in the meantime keep an eye out for those all important emails as we keep you up-to-date over the coming months.

Please do stay in touch with us to let us know how your activities are progressing.

Best wishes,

Sarah, Mark, Amanda and Rose

The Being Human team
Key information

About the festival

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, Being Human festival is the UK’s national festival of the humanities. Founded in 2014, the festival demonstrates the breadth, diversity and vitality of the humanities, and that research in the humanities is vital for the cultural, intellectual, political and social life of the UK and globally. Being Human 2022 will take place Thursday 10 – Saturday 19 November, with the theme ‘Breakthroughs’.

Festival objectives

- To demonstrate the value and relevance of humanities research to society in the UK and globally.
- To encourage, support and create opportunities for researchers to engage with non-specialist audiences.
- To embed and join together public engagement activities in the humanities across the higher education (HE) sector.
- To demonstrate the relevance of the humanities to everyday life.

Key messages

- The humanities are vibrant, interdisciplinary, accessible and relevant to all.
- The humanities inspire and enrich our everyday lives.
- The humanities can help us to understand ourselves, our relationships with others and the challenges we face in a changing world.

What the central team can do for you

The festival is led by the public engagement team at the School of Advanced Study, University of London. The focus of central activity is to develop best practice public engagement, to coordinate the national festival and to promote and support activities as part of the national programme. We are on-hand to assist with any questions you might have. The following are examples of things we can help you with:

- General queries (e.g. timelines, uploading your event copy)
- Advice on developing and delivering events
- Advice on promoting events
- Advice on conducting risk assessments
- Advice on safeguarding
- Assisting with communications and press queries
- Evaluating your activities

Contact details

If you have any questions at all, please do not hesitate to get in touch. The main festival inbox is the best point of contact, as it is monitored by the full team, and we can respond to specific queries from there. Please contact us at beinghuman@sas.ac.uk. Other key contacts are:

- Mark Johnson, Festival Manager: m.johnson@sas.ac.uk
- Amanda Phipps, Programme Developer: amanda.phipps@sas.ac.uk
- Rose de Lara, Communications Officer: rose.delara@sas.ac.uk
Taking part

We have broken the information below into four parts: planning, promoting, delivering and evaluating your activity. This document serves as an overview of taking part in the festival. Please refer to the timeline available to download here for key dates in the run up to the festival. The festival team will be in touch over the coming months via email to keep you up to date at each stage of the process.

Masterclasses

A series of free, online masterclasses will take place in the run up to the festival. These sessions will provide you with useful guidance and tips and will provide the opportunity to hear from the festival team and previous event organisers.

- Tuesday 5 July, 11:00-12:00: Planning your activity
- Tuesday 13 September, 11:00-12:00: Promoting your activity
- Tuesday 4 October, 11:00-12:00: Delivering your activity

Event organisers will be notified by email when booking opens for masterclasses.

Organiser area

The organiser area of the Being Human website is a one-stop-shop for event organisers. Here you'll find resources to help you promote, plan and evaluate your festival activities. We will add more to this page as we move throughout the year – so please keep an eye on it!

Funding

If you have received an offer of funding from the festival, we will issue a purchase order confirming the amount to the finance contact named on your application, which should then be claimed back by invoicing us after delivery of the festival activity. Activity costs should be covered by your own universt/organisation in the interim. If events are postponed or cancelled, we may be in touch with you to ask you for the revised costs of your activity. If you haven’t taken part in the festival before you may need to complete a form so that your institution can be added to our system. The deadline for all invoices is 28 February 2023.

Planning your activity

Our first masterclass on 5 July looked at all things planning. If you were unable to attend, please let us know and we can send you a link to the recording.

Once you’ve confirmed that you’re participating in the festival there are a few important things to consider to kick start your planning:

- Develop and confirm event details and plans with any project partners (see our toolkit on working with a partner)
- Confirm venue(s), date(s) and timings
- Finalise budget (see our toolkit on working on a budget)
- Finalise the team and responsibilities
- Plan promotional strategy (see our promoting your activity guide)
- Consider accessibility requirements
• Conduct a risk assessment
• Consult your organisation’s safeguarding policy

Top tips

Here are a few top tips to keep in mind when planning your activity:

1. Keep your intended audience in mind from the beginning and shape the activity around and with them (see our toolkit on focusing on your audience).
2. Ensure partnerships are equitable and mutually beneficial for all involved (see our toolkit on working with a partner).
3. Ensure research is at the heart of your event and is communicated effectively to audiences.
4. Ensure two-way engagement in your activities.
5. Ensure equality, diversity and inclusion are embedded in every stage of your activities.

Covid-19 guidelines

The last few years have seen huge changes to the ways in which we run engagement activities. As detailed in the application process, we have committed to a hybrid-delivery festival this November that combines the best of online engagement with safe in-person activities. Although digital delivery helped expand the festival’s horizons, we continue to champion the festival’s core principles. Being Human remains a place-based festival that emphasises interaction, working with communities outside academia and those less engaged with humanities culture. We encourage you to be realistic when developing your activities, in order to achieve the best of what is possible and to ensure your approach is right for your intended audiences.

If you are running an online event, we recommend you take a look at our toolkit on running online engagement activities.

If you are planning an in-person activity, please follow all relevant Covid-19 guidance, and be aware that you may need to implement any relevant protocols should Covid-19 guidance change.

If you have any questions about Covid-19 and the Being Human festival, please get in touch with us at beinghuman@sas.ac.uk.

Accessibility and inclusivity

As outlined in our Terms and Conditions and Good Practice Agreement, accessibility and inclusivity is a vital part of what we do at the Being Human festival. All organisers of festival events should:

• Ensure that diversity and inclusion have been considered within programming, venues and platforms.
• Ensure reasonable adjustments are made to make all activities, venues and platforms accessible.
• Ensure all venues are step free and have accessible toilets.
• Ensure venue accessibility information is included on all event listings and audiences are given the opportunity to communicate their access requirements ahead of time.
• Be specific about intended audiences.
• Ensure that any speaker line-ups are appropriately diverse, including no all-male or ‘about us, without us’ activities – where a subject is explored without representation from those affected by it.
• Ensure that activities are welcoming and inclusive for all.

Risk assessments

Every event organiser needs to complete a risk assessment for their festival activity. You should use your own institution’s template and guidance. If your institution does not have a template, you should contact the Being Human team for guidance.

Safeguarding

For all activities involving young people, children or vulnerable adults you must comply with your institution’s, partners’ and venues’ safeguarding policies and procedures. 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.

GDPR

All Being Human activities and events must comply with UK-GDPR guidelines when processing personal data, including bookings, photography and filming. Please consult with relevant staff at your organisation to ensure compliance.

Promoting your activity

You can find out more information about this in our ‘Promoting your activity’ guide and our ‘Working with the press and media’ guide, both of which will be available to download here, and at our second online masterclass taking place on 13 September.

Here are a few key things to note when you are getting started:

• You will be required to submit final details of your event or activity by Friday 12 August. Please see our ‘promoting your event’ guide to find out more about preparing your submission and keep an eye out for more details via email.
• If an event requires bookings, organisers manage this themselves (we recommend Eventbrite or your venue’s or institution’s booking system).
• You should start promoting and taking bookings for your events when the festival programme is launched in early October and no later than 6 weeks before the event.
• Being Human is all about engaging with audiences that do not have an existing relationship to a university/ research organisation, so you should factor this into your promotional planning.

Delivering your activity

More detailed information about this part will be provided at the third masterclass, taking place on the 4 October.

Important things to consider at this stage include:
• The team who will help to deliver the activity
• Liaising closely with your venue
• Tech requirements
• Accessibility requirements
• Covid-19 measures (if applicable)
• Health and safety and risk assessments
• Capturing and documenting the activity (e.g., photography and filming)
• Evaluating the activity (full guide and further information on this will be provided)
• The audience experience (temperature, sound, seating, signage, finding the event)

Take a look at our specific toolkit on doing online engagement.

Evaluating your activity

The festival is evaluated annually and independently by an external company using data gathered by organisers across the country. An evaluation guide and a range of materials will be made available before the festival, including a link to an online audience survey which we ask all organisers to circulate with their audience members.

Festival organisers and stakeholders (including collaborators and event partners) will have an opportunity to share their experiences of participating in the festival via separate online surveys that will be circulated following the festival.

Please be aware that evaluation is an important part of participating in the festival and helps us to learn more about our audiences, improve our work and secure vital funding to ensure events remain free and the festival continues! Ultimately, evaluation data helps to secure the festival’s future. If you have received funding from us, taking part in the evaluation is a condition of your funding. You can find the evaluations from previous festivals on our website here.

Accessing evaluation data from your event

On request, once the data has been processed, event organisers will be able to access anonymised data from the audience survey relating to their event(s) by contacting the evaluators directly. Specific instructions regarding this will be available closer to the festival.

What’s next?

Got a question? Take a look at our FAQs and do get in touch if there is anything we can help with. And remember to keep an eye on your emails and on the organiser area of the website over the coming months.

Thanks once again for being involved in the festival and we wish you happy event planning!