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 9–18 November in towns and cities right across the UK. As you’ll already know, 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. As ever, this year’s festival will celebrate a diverse range of humanities research including everything from Lancashire accents and dialects to queer history in Northern Ireland. We’re looking forward to some brilliant activities including food tasting, theatrical walking tours, creative writing on canal boats, market stall pop-ups, printmaking workshops and kayaking expeditions.

We’re delighted to have five festival Hubs this year, led by Cardiff University, Canterbury Christ Church University, Edge Hill University, University of Essex and University of Nottingham – all with wide-ranging and vibrant programmes of events, connecting with different communities and partners across their regions.

Please do stay in touch with us to let us know how your activities are progressing and thank you for helping us to make this year’s festival happen!

Best wishes,

Sarah, Mark and Rose

Being Human Festival 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 2023 will take place Thursday 9 – Saturday 18 November, with the theme ‘Rhyme or Reason’.

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 our 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 available 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
  - best practice public engagement
  - promoting events
  - conducting risk assessments
  - safeguarding
- Assisting with communications and press queries
- Guidance on 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.
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 festival timeline (available to download on our website) for key dates in the run up to the festival. The festival team will be in touch over the coming months to keep you up to date at each stage of the process.

Communications

Over the coming months we will send a series of email bulletins to the lead applicants (as named on your initial application). If you would like someone else to act as the lead contact for your activity, please contact us to let us know and we will update our records. If you are working with a team of people on your event, please ensure you share and cascade any relevant information from our email updates.

If there are significant changes in relation to your proposed festival activity, please get in touch to let us know.

Training

A series of free, online training sessions 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.

- **Wednesday 26 July, 10:30-12:00**: Audiences and Planning
- **Early September**: Promoting events
- **Early October**: Festival top tips
- **Late October**: Delivering events

Event organisers will be notified by email when booking opens for training sessions. You will also be able to find more information regarding training on our website, which will be updated regularly.

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. The purchase order number must be included on the invoice. Activity costs should be covered by your own university/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 new supplier form so that your institution can be added to our system. The deadline for all invoices is **29 February 2024.**

**Planning**

Our first training session on 26 July will look at planning activities, with a particular focus on audiences.

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

- Read and share the festival Code of Conduct and the Good Practice Agreement and share with anyone else involved in the planning and delivery of your event(s)
- 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 (see our [toolkit on planning for inclusion](#))
- 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 is a key part of your activities.
5. Ensure equity, diversity and inclusion are embedded in every stage of your activities.

**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 Being Human Festival. All organisers of festival events should:

- Adhere to the Being Human Festival [Code of Conduct](#)
- 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 (exceptions can be made for venues that are integral to the activity, but additional ways to engage with the activity must be included).
- 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.

Data Protection

All UK-based 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.

For international events led by either UK-based organisations or international organisations, please consult with your organisation’s data protection team to ensure compliance with all relevant data protection policies.

Promotion

You can find out more information about this in our ‘Promoting your activity’ guide and our ‘Working with the press and media’ guide, and at our second online training session taking place in early 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 Tuesday 23 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 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.
Delivery

More information about delivering your activities will be provided at the third and final training session, taking place in late October.

Important things to consider at this stage include:

- The team who will help to deliver the activity
- Liaising closely with your venue
- Technical requirements
- Accessibility requirements
- 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 etc)

Take a look at our specific toolkit on doing online engagement, and find our delivery checklists on the organiser area of our website.

Evaluation

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 to 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.

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. Taking part in the festival evaluation is a condition of your inclusion in the festival. You can find the evaluations from previous festivals on our website here.

Accessing evaluation data from your event

Once the data has been processed, event organisers will be able to request 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 for being involved in the festival and we wish you happy event planning!