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 7-16 November in towns and cities right across the UK. Being Human 2024 marks our 10th anniversary since the festival was founded in 2014. Since we began, we have seen over 260,000 festival attendees at 2,635 free events in 162 towns, cities and villages across the UK led by 202 different universities. We would love to make 2024 our biggest and best festival yet and look forward to you being part of it!

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 overlooked histories of Cardiff to memories of the British seaside. We’re looking forward to some brilliant activities including museum lates, tidal island explorations, Punch & Judy shows with a twist, soundwalks, photography workshops in a castle, and Parisian vaudeville recreations.

We’re delighted to have five festival Hubs this year, led by Bath Spa University, Cardiff University, University of Birmingham, University of Derby and Teesside University – 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,

Mark, Rose, Jess and Sarah

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 2024 will take place Thursday 7 – Saturday 16 November, with the theme ‘Landmarks’, in honour of our 10th anniversary.

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 festival 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 divided 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 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 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 is taking place in the run up to the festival, which all of those participating in the festival should attend.

These sessions will provide you with useful guidance and tips and are led by expert facilitators with experience in their field, former festival organisers, and the Being Human Festival team. Sessions include:

- **Tuesday 23 April**: Creative Engagement (session recording)
- **Thursday 16 May**: Partnerships (session recording)
- **Tuesday 4 June**: Audiences and Planning (session recording)
- **Tuesday 25 June, 11am-12.30pm**: Marketing and Promotion
- **Thursday 25 July, 11am-12.30pm**: Working with Press and Media
- **Thursday 3 October, 11am-12pm**: Event Delivery and Top Tips

You can book on to any upcoming sessions at the following link: [Training | Being Human Festival](#). We encourage you to pass this information on to partners and other team members who could benefit from this training. All sessions will be recorded and the link to the recording will be circulated with those that sign up to the session. You can share session recordings with anyone involved in your Being Human Festival activity that would find them useful, but please do not share these links more widely.

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 28 February 2025.

Planning

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 (available on the [festival website](#)) 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
- Confirm how you will take bookings for your event(s), if applicable (NB every festival event is listed on the Being Human website, but you will need to make your own arrangements for taking bookings (see our [Promoting your activity guide](#) for further information)
- 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 and follow your organisation’s safeguarding policy, and your partner’s and venue’s safeguarding policies, if applicable

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.
6. Ensure your event is engaging, creative and fun for your audience! In our Being Human Festival Evaluation report 2023 the #1 response from audiences to the question What was your main reason for attending the event? was ‘entertainment/leisure or social reasons’.
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. In the 2023 festival evaluation, 14% of survey respondents identified as D/deaf, disabled or having a long-term health condition and 16% of survey respondents identified as neurodivergent, so ensuring your event is accessible and inclusive is essential.

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, however you do not need to share this with the festival team. 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 found in our organiser area, and our training sessions in June (Marketing and Promotion) and July (Working with Press and Media).

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 16th August. Please see our ‘Promoting your activity’ 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 using 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.

Delivery

More information about delivering your activities will be provided at the final training session, Event Delivery and Festival Top Tips taking place on 3 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)

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

**Key suggestions from audiences for improvements to events from our 2023 evaluation:**

- Provide suggestions on where to find out more information on your topic(s)
- Give more opportunities for audiences to express views or ask questions
- Make sure the content of your activity is clear from the event marketing
- Ensure events for children and young people are tailored to them
- Test all technical equipment in advance
Evaluation

The festival is evaluated annually and independently by an external company using data gathered by organisers across the country. Taking part in the festival evaluation is a condition of your inclusion in the festival.

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. You can find the evaluations from previous festivals on our website.

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 get in touch if there is anything we can help with. 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!