



Being Human Festival

Being Human Festival: 6–15 November 2025

Application Guidelines

About the Festival

Being Human Festival is the UK's national festival of the humanities and returns in November 2025, delivering a celebration of the humanities research that inspires people and showcases creativity and curiosity in communities across the UK.

Being Human is a place-based festival that emphasises interaction, collaboration and engaging with communities outside higher education. We will support innovative, participatory, and creative activities that foster genuine, two-way connections with communities. Events are expected to take place off-campus (exceptions will only rarely be permitted) and should be designed to facilitate mutual learning between researchers and publics.

We welcome applications that show evidence of collaboration with internal colleagues or external partners, or that build on successful past collaborations. 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.

More information about the festival's priorities and audiences can be found on our [website](#).

Being Human Festival is led by the School of Advanced Study, University of London, in partnership with the Arts and Humanities Research Council and the British Academy.

2025 Festival Theme: 'Between the Lines'

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.](#)

How to take part in Being Human Festival

There are three different pathways to apply to take part in the festival:

1. Institutional Grant – run a Festival Hub

Institutional Grants are the largest funding awards made by Being Human. These awards are institutionally focused, supporting locally relevant programmes of activity involving multiple researchers from different disciplines researching different topics and subject areas. Festival Hubs must engage with carefully chosen cultural or community partners (e.g. a school, a charity, an arts organisation). In general, we would recommend that you partner with multiple partners across your programme of events.

Institutional Grants are intended to support the development of institutional capacity for public engagement activity in the humanities (e.g. by offering opportunities for public engagement teams to do something humanities-focused, to try something new or to work with new communities).

Festival Hubs offer highly visible concentrations of best practice public engagement activities within the festival programme. They provide coherent, imaginative and eye-catching programmes of events that raise the festival's profile nationally as well as regionally. Festival Hub programmes should be made up of 4-8 separate events in a range of formats.

A key condition of Institutional Grants is that they are match-funded (to match the total amount of your application, or £5,000, whichever is higher) by the institution awarded them, providing scope for more ambitious programming.

Higher Education Institutions (HEIs) or [AHRC-recognised Independent Research Organisations \(IROs\)](#) can apply for Institutional Grants of £4,000 – £8,000.

More information about Institutional Grants and how to apply is available on our [website](#).

2. Festival Event Grant – run single or multiple festival events

Festival Event Grants are designed to support ambitious, 'best practice' activities that would not run without financial support from the festival. These projects are usually led by individual researchers, unlike Festival Hubs. Grants can be used to fund projects culminating in either a single event or a small series of activities. Activities should be ambitious and creative while still carefully

thought through and achievable. If running a small series of events, we encourage you to think about the events as a coherent series of related events, and to convey the relationship between the events in your application.

Festival events funded through this pathway must engage with carefully chosen cultural or community partners (e.g. a school, a charity, an arts organisation etc.), engage with our priority audiences (find out more on our [website](#)) and support excellent two-way public engagement with humanities research.

Whilst the main activity should take place within the festival dates, funded projects can incorporate elements of activity outside the festival dates, working directly with communities. 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. We are keen to support projects which integrate aspects of community collaboration and co-production and help to embed and sustain civic engagement activities. We welcome projects which may leave a legacy beyond the duration of the festival.

Funding of up to £4,000 is available to researchers at Higher Education Institutions (HEIs) and [AHRC-recognised Independent Research Organisations \(IROs\)](#).

More information about Festival Event Grants and how to apply is available on our [website](#).

3. Festival Event pathway – run an event without festival funding

The Festival Event pathway offers a great way to get involved in the festival for anyone who is not seeking festival funding, and has a connection to humanities research, including universities, museums, archives, galleries, publishers, subject associations, societies, libraries and more.

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. They run without a financial contribution from the festival (perhaps using institutional funding, resources from research grants, etc.) but benefit from the development, training, support and publicity that Being Human can offer.

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 make sure 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, as well as offering the opportunity to engage with new audiences.

More information about the Festival Event pathway and how to apply is available on our [website](#).

What support is available?

Different levels of financial support are available through the Institutional Grant and Festival Event Grant pathways. For specific support relating to each pathway, please visit our [website](#). In addition to this specific support, all festival organisers will have access to the following support and resources:

- 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);
- 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.

Application process

Application forms for all activities must be submitted online using [Survey Monkey Apply](#). Application guidance for all pathways can be found on our website, including links to the application forms.

Word versions of the application forms are 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.

Where applicable, please upload a completed activities grid (as provided), budget template (as provided), letters of support from community and cultural partners (as PDF files), and from PhD supervisors, 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.

Application deadlines:

| Pathway | Application deadline |
|---------------------------|-----------------------------|
| Institutional Grant | Thursday 10 April, 5pm |
| Festival Event Grant | Thursday 10 April, 5pm |
| Festival Event (unfunded) | Friday 4 July, 5pm |

If you have any questions or would like to contact the Being Human team, please email beinghuman@sas.ac.uk.