

Public Engagement Innovators Scheme

About the Scheme

The Public Engagement Innovators Scheme offers small grants to facilitate public engagement with research activities within the School of Advanced Study, and with collections and archives in the Senate House Library. The scheme is intended to offer opportunities for researchers and other eligible staff and students (see below) to engage with non-academic audiences in developing and demonstrating their research. The scheme offers a limited number of grants of up to **£2,000** for engagement activities.

Funded projects will be expected to run either during the [Bloomsbury Festival \(19–23 October, 2016\)](#) or during the [Being Human festival of the humanities \(17–25 November, 2016\)](#). Given the proximity of the two festivals, applications are also welcomed for activities (e.g. exhibitions) that might feature in both programmes. The Bloomsbury Festival theme is **Language**. The Being Human festival theme is **Hope and Fear**.

Background: Public Engagement

The [National Coordinating Centre for Public Engagement](#) (NCCPE) defines public engagement in the following terms:

Public engagement describes the many ways in which higher education institutions and their staff and students can connect and share their work with the public. Done well, it generates mutual benefit, with all parties learning from each other through sharing knowledge, expertise and skills. In the process, it can build trust, understanding and collaboration, and increase the sector's relevance to, and impact on, civil society.

The School of Advanced Study is a signatory of the [NCCPE's Manifesto for Public Engagement](#). As such it recognises a responsibility to contributing to society through public engagement, to learning from and evaluating this process, and to allowing staff, students, and fellows to benefit from public engagement by gaining new perspectives and insights on their work. The Public Engagement Innovators Scheme has been set up to encourage and reward innovation in this area within the School and Senate House Library.

Can I apply?

The scheme is open to all research students (PhD level), fellows and academic members of staff in the School of Advanced Study and Senate House Library (including research librarians). Research students will require a statement of support from their supervisor. Fellows will require a statement of support from their institute director. While the scheme is open to all, particular consideration will

be given to applications from early career researchers (i.e. those within eight years of PhD completion).

To be eligible to apply for funding, activities should:

- be led by a doctoral candidate, fellow, or member of staff in the School of Advanced Study, or Senate House Library
- aim to engage a clearly defined **non-academic audience**
- be held during the Bloomsbury Festival (19–23 October) or Being Human festival of the humanities (17–25 November)
- fit with the aims and themes of the Bloomsbury/ Being Human festivals
- fit with the School of Advanced Study's current [strategy for public engagement](#)

While it is not an eligibility criteria, we particularly welcome applications that **initiate collaboration across institutes/departments within the School**. This year applications are also welcomed which:

- are led by early career researchers (i.e. within eight years of a PhD award)
- engage with diverse audiences (e.g. ethnically diverse audiences, LGBT, young or older people)
- engage with cultural and or/community partners (e.g. charities, advocacy groups, libraries, museums and galleries)
- explore imaginative and unusual venues/outlets for engagement activities
- demonstrate potential for legacy beyond the duration of the grant

What are we looking for?

We are looking to fund events and activities that make humanities research accessible, approachable, engaging and understandable to a non-academic audience. The scheme does not fund conferences and symposia that will be beneficial solely to the research community. It aims to foster meaningful connections between those researching in the humanities and people who do not have an existing relationship with a UK higher education institution (HEI).

Activities can run in various formats, from talks and tours to guided walks, pop-up events in public places, digital tagathons and events incorporating music, film, comedy and live performance. Our most successful activities have found ways to demonstrate an aspect of humanities research in a way that is enjoyable and understandable for a non-academic audience, and which make connections to everyday life.

We are looking above all for activities that:

- demonstrate research in a way that is genuinely engaging, interactive and fun
- select a clearly defined audience for the activity. For example, an event clearly aimed at teenagers, or older people
- match the activity to the intended audience (what are the best venues to reach this audience? What partners can you work with? What is the best day or time of day to reach them?)
- can feasibly be delivered within the timeframe and budget

Examples of supportable events might include (but are not limited to):

- Exhibitions and installations
- Performances (music, theatre)
- Film screenings
- Virtual [digital] activities
- Hands-on activities
- Pecha Kucha or Ignite sessions
- Walks and tours
- Events based around food and drink

Please note that **academic conferences and seminar series are not supportable** by this scheme. Public engagement activities *linked* to conferences or seminars may however be considered if they demonstrate a particularly strong fit with the funding criteria.

Absolute best practice is for engagement to foster mutual benefit for researchers and the public. Examples of previously successful projects can be found on the SAS [Talking Humanities](#) blog and on the [Being Human festival](#) website.

Eligible costs

Sample eligible costs are: room charges/venue hire and equipment hire, materials, consumables; fees for creative practitioners, travel. Although requests for professional fees will be considered (for example fees incurred working with a cultural partner), we will not make any contribution to existing staff members' costs. In other words, staff time is not chargeable to the scheme. Please note that, in line with the policy of both the Bloomsbury and Being Human festivals, any event in either programme should be **free to attend**.

Catering costs will be considered as an eligible cost if they are central to the engagement activity (for example if you want to organise a shared meal or similar).

Judging criteria

Applications are judged by a cross-institute panel of staff from the School and the Senate House Library, as well as a public engagement professional from another college of the University of London. Applications will be judged against capacity to demonstrate:

- clear understanding of public engagement
- a clearly identified target audience
- applicability of activities to chosen audience
- appropriateness of format and partners
- capacity to demonstrate research in a fun and engaging way
- logistical feasibility within timescale and budget
- fit with SAS public engagement objectives
- innovativeness and creativity
- demands on staff time
- potential for legacy beyond the duration of the grant
- fit with themes of Bloomsbury or Being Human festivals

Ethics

If your proposed project raises any ethical issues (for example if you are working with children, older people or vulnerable adults) you will be asked to produce an ethics statement outlining your approach. This will be reviewed by the SAS ethics committee.

Terms and Conditions

Successful applicants to the Innovator's Scheme will be expected to:

- attend one training session in public engagement skills at the School of Advanced Study
- write a simple project plan for the activity
- write a blog about their project for the *SAS Talking Humanities* website
- undertake some basic evaluation of any funded events/activities

Complete a follow-on survey to offer feedback on the Innovator's Scheme itself. We may also be in touch on the completion of your project to see if you would be prepared to be profiled as a public engagement case study on the School of Advanced Study's website.

The full terms and conditions of the grant will be confirmed upon award.

Application timeline:

Deadline for applications: 30 May 2016

Notification of outcomes: June 2016

Final event details for print: late July 2016 (Deadline TBC)

Further guidance

Some further guidance on your proposal can be found below. If you have questions about any aspect of the scheme please contact:

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Further Guidance

What has worked well?

Here are some of the things that audiences have liked about previously funded projects. They have appreciated:

- Interaction with experts and with engaging speakers in the humanities
- Topics and formats that stimulated **debate, discussion and audience participation**
- **Creative elements or performances** that are relevant and help meaningfully to illustrate topics or enhance the audience experience. (This means blending academic and creative components. Not just one or the other.)
- Events where the **venues were particularly appealing**, or not normally accessible to the public

What hasn't worked so well?

Feedback from previous events has highlighted some areas for improvement. Issues included:

- Improving sound equipment or using venues with good acoustics to ensure all attendees could hear
- Selecting venues that are easily accessible, are well sign-posted and well-matched to event formats
- Putting on events at times not best suited to reaching a target audience
- Relying entirely on partners to promote and market an event
- Avoiding the use of speakers who fail to engage audiences or presentations that are not pitched at an appropriate level for a public audience
- Ensuring event descriptions and titles are accurate and meaningful, to avoid disappointment or mistaken perceptions about content and formats

Tips on Partnerships

Partnering with cultural and community organisations can be a good way to broaden the appeal of an activity and reach diverse non-academic audiences. Examples of partners could include an arts centre or arts organisation, an individual practitioner, theatre and film organisations, collectives, galleries, museums, community organisations, libraries and archives.

When thinking of approaching partners to collaborate, we recommend considering the following points:

- Selecting partners who really add value to events or make meaningful contributions (e.g. allowing you to engage in meaningful way with new audiences and communities)
- Seeing the grant as an opportunity to work with organisations that you have not worked with before
- Using partners' connections and network to promote events but not relying on them to do all the promotion

Applicants are advised to look at the Checklist for **Planning Public Engagement** before submitting a proposal.

Further Detail: Being Human festival

Being Human is the UK's only national festival of the humanities, and is the School of Advanced Study's primary forum for public engagement activity. In 2015, the festival featured over 300 events organised by over 70 Universities and independent research organisations across the UK. In 2016, it will be returning between 17–25 November for 10 days of big questions, big debates and engaging activities for all ages. The festival aims to communicate the core messages that:

- humanities research in the UK is vibrant, vital and relevant to all
- the humanities inspire and enrich our everyday lives
- the humanities help us to understand ourselves, our relationships with others, and the challenges we face in a changing world

Being Human coordinates a programme of events from institutions across the country, but also hosts a programme of events in the festival's 'hub' at the School of Advanced Study. The theme for events in 2016 is **Hope and Fear**.

Applicants are invited to respond creatively and in ways that probe the rich intellectual possibilities of the theme. Possible areas of inquiry include (but are certainly not limited to):

- aging, health and wellbeing
- climate change and the environment
- endangered or new languages
- human rights
- human migration/population changes
- new technologies
- terrorism and radicalisation
- urbanism (past and present), Smart Cities
- utopias and dystopias (cultural, social, political)

Applicants are advised to browse the 2015 Being Human programme of events for some good examples of public engagement activities in the humanities: <http://beinghumanfestival.org/events/>

Further Detail: Bloomsbury Festival

Established in 2006, Bloomsbury Festival is a creative festival of arts, science, heritage, and ideas. It takes place throughout the streets, parks, museums, galleries, laboratories and public and private buildings of Bloomsbury. The School of Advanced Study is a partner organisation of the festival.

With an annual theme, the festival celebrates the best of Bloomsbury and its pioneering and extraordinarily diverse community. In 2016, the festival theme is '**Language**'.