



Public Engagement Fund – Call for Applications 2021

ABOUT THE FUND

The SAS Public Engagement Fund offers small grants of up to £1,500 to facilitate public engagement with research activities at the School of Advanced Study, and the collections and archives in Senate House Library. It is intended to provide researchers and other eligible staff and students (see below) the opportunity to engage with non-academic audiences in developing and demonstrating their research.

The fund has been established to:

- incentivise and support public engagement activity in the School and Senate House Library by offering support to projects that would not run without this funding;
- embed a culture of public and community engagement among the School's research community;
- develop activities that will provide examples of best practice in public engagement for the School's benefit and that of the wider humanities research community;
- foster meaningful connections between research in the humanities and people who do not have an existing formal relationship with a UK higher education institution (HEI).

Funded projects can take place throughout the year. However, we encourage applicants to consider timing their initiatives to coincide with either the [Bloomsbury Festival](#) (15-21 October 2021) or the [Being Human festival of the humanities](#) (11-20 November 2021). The theme for the Bloomsbury Festival is 'Shining Light'. The Being Human festival theme is 'Renewal'. [Further information on the Being Human theme can be found here.](#)

***In light of the ongoing Covid-19 crisis, we appreciate that people might want to use this fund to develop activities that respond in some way to the extraordinary circumstances that we find ourselves in. This might either be by planning activities that experiment with / develop new formats for engaging the public under challenging conditions, or by developing a response or a resource which may in some way be helpful to those impacted by the crisis, or both. Responses might also explore – through dialogue and engagement with communities – some of the profound societal issues that have been raised by the crisis. We are very open to applications along these lines,*

Although digital delivery is likely to form a component of activities supported by the fund this year, it is important to emphasise that this fund is designed to support activities that go beyond a 'Zoom' talk. We are looking for activities that are interactive, work with communities outside academia and engage those less typically reached by institutions such as museums, art galleries or universities. Whether digital, in-person (socially distanced), or a hybrid blend of both, we will support innovative, participatory, and creative activities that foster genuine, two-way connections with people not usually engaged with academic

research. Activities should be designed to facilitate mutual learning between researchers and publics. **

BACKGROUND: PUBLIC ENGAGEMENT

The School of Advanced Study is a signatory of the [National Coordinating Centre for Public Engagement's \(NCCPE\) Manifesto for Public Engagement](#). As such, it recognises a responsibility to contribute to society by embedding public engagement with research both locally and nationally. To do this, it uses the [NCCPE's](#) definition of public engagement:

Public engagement describes the myriad of ways in which the activity and benefits of higher education and research can be shared with the public. Engagement is by definition a two-way process, involving interaction and listening, with the goal of generating mutual benefit.

The School's definition of 'public' follows that formulated by University College London (based on guidelines produced by the Higher Education Funding Council for England):

The 'public' includes individuals and groups who do not currently have a formal relationship with a higher education institution (HEI) through teaching, research or knowledge transfer.

As these definitions make clear, public engagement should be a two-way process that generates mutual benefit for all concerned and should be aimed primarily at engaging people with no existing formal relationship with a HEI.

ELIGIBILITY

The scheme is open to research students (at PhD level or above), and research members of staff in the School of Advanced Study and Senate House Library. Professional staff at SAS/SHL whose work involves a strong research component (e.g. librarians, curators) are also eligible. Research students will require a statement of support from their supervisor. Fellows will require a statement of support from their institute director.

To be eligible to apply for funding, activities should:

- demonstrate aspects of humanities research in ways that are accessible, entertaining and relevant for non-specialist audiences;
- be free to attend;
- be led by a research student (at PhD level or above), fellow, or member of staff in the School of Advanced Study or Senate House Library;
- aim to engage a clearly defined non-specialist public audience;
- fit with the aims and themes of the Bloomsbury/Being Human festivals if timed to coincide with these initiatives.

Applications that feature collaboration across institutes/departments within the School will be given priority over applications based solely in one institute or department.

This year, applications are also welcomed which promise to:

- explore innovative, but realistic, approaches to public engagement in the current challenging conditions;
- reach genuinely disengaged or under-served audiences (e.g. audiences in areas of high deprivation or low educational attainment);
- engage meaningfully with black, Asian and minority ethnic (BAME) audiences;
- engage meaningfully with families and younger audiences;
- give serious consideration to issues of accessibility in choice of venue/ platform and format (including, importantly, accessibility for people with disabilities);
- explore issues that are relevant to local communities (for example, place-based activity highlighting unexpected aspects of local history and/ or contemporary culture, addressing topical debates with local communities, etc.);
- feature an element of co-production;
- have potential to make a small change happen locally and/ or leave a legacy beyond the duration of the grant.

We are also keen to see evidence of all funded activities considering diversity in the speakers and researchers represented at events (e.g. in terms of gender, age, ethnic diversity).

ASSESSMENT CRITERIA

Applications are judged by a revolving, cross-institute panel of staff from the School and Senate House Library. Applications will be judged against capacity to demonstrate:

- clear understanding of public engagement;
- a clearly defined target audience;
- applicability of activities to chosen audience;
- appropriateness of format and partners;
- plans to market and promote the activity;
- developmental potential for staff and others involved;
- understanding of ethical issues raised by the project (if appropriate) and plans for addressing these;
- logistical feasibility within timescale and budget;
- originality of project (i.e. would it happen without support, or is it an existing activity that's being 'topped up');
- potential for legacy beyond the duration of the grant.

The panel will be looking for projects that:

- **select** a clearly defined audience for the activity (for example, an event clearly aimed at comedy fans, local history buffs, fans of a particular type of music or performance);
- **match** the activity to the intended audience (for example, what are the best venues to reach this audience? Who are the best partners to work with? What is the best day and time to reach them?);
- **shares** research in a way that is genuinely engaging, interactive and fun, and which speaks to an existing interest on the part of your audience.

Following review, the panel may offer advice on how an event could be reshaped, or how it can be achieved on a smaller budget.

FUNDABLE ACTIVITIES

The scheme exists to fund events and activities that make humanities research or research collections accessible, approachable, engaging and understandable to a clearly defined non-specialist audience. Activities do not necessarily need to be highly ambitious or innovative but do need to be good quality and demonstrate that they have been carefully thought through in their aims and methods of delivery.

The most successful activities demonstrate an aspect of humanities research in a way that is enjoyable and understandable for a non-specialist audience, speaks to the interests of that audience, and generates mutual benefit for both researchers and the public.

Some examples of suitable formats, which can work in person, online, or in hybrid formats, include (but are by no means limited to):

- performances (theatre, music, comedy, storytelling);
- food and drink (cookery lessons, 'cook-a-longs', themed meals, tastings);
- screenings and 'watch together' (film screenings with introductions, listening parties, DJ sessions);
- walks and tours (walks, audio walks, treasure hunts, behind the scenes tours);
- 'have a go' events (learn a skill, try an instrument, make something);
- (virtual) museum lates or museum takeovers;
- activities coordinated by post or other ways of connecting with people at home;
- exhibitions and installations (outdoor art, public art, online exhibitions, crowd-sourced activity);
- other interactive online or hybrid activities;
- interactive digital content (podcasts, films, animations).

Formats likely to appeal more to academics (e.g. formal lectures, seminars, lengthy workshops) are not fundable under this scheme. Whilst activities should be rooted in research, and should share that research with new audiences, we want to fund events/activities that non-specialists will enjoy as a leisure activity. When thinking of ideas for event formats, a good way of approaching things is to start with activities that people might do on a day or evening off (e.g. film, theatre, music, comedy, museum visits, learning a skill, sport).

Wherever possible, we strongly encourage ideas for events that take place off campus and it is unlikely that we would offer funding to campus-based events. The same general advice follows when considering the 'digital campus' of online platforms and promotional channels.

Training resources to help you plan a successful public engagement activity [can be found here](#). Case studies of previously successful Being Human activities are also available on the [festival website](#).

ELIGIBLE COSTS

Eligible costs include:

- payments to performers/musicians/artists who are not salaried members of staff;
- production costs (filming, audio, streaming, web design - if essential to the activity);
- props, costumes, and materials;
- production costs for things like exhibition panels, work packs, pamphlets;
- postage costs (e.g. for mailing packs to attendees);
- reasonable promotional costs that will help you to reach your intended participants/audiences (e.g. flyers, local paid advertising);

- venue hire or essential transport (e.g. hiring a coach for a bus tour);
- catering/consumables that are essential to the activity (e.g. for themed meals, tasting sessions);
- documentation costs (e.g. filming, photography, captioning, transcribing).

This fund cannot be used to make a contribution towards:

- existing staff members' costs, whether academic or professional staff;
- catering *unless* it is essential to the format of the event (i.e. we may support food costs for a historic meal, but would not support a wine reception after an event, or tea and coffee to go with it);
- supporting academic conferences and symposia, or any event that has been designed primarily for the benefit of the humanities research community;
- international travel or accommodation costs.

Please note that should you receive a grant, the responsibility to organise the activity, hire rooms and pay invoices will fall to you/ your institute/department (see 'Requirements of Award Holders' below). It is therefore strongly recommended that you consult with your institute manager or project administrator before submitting an application to ensure that you will have the support necessary to deliver your activity. If you are a Fellow, based remotely from the School, it is essential that you consult and ensure that you will have the cooperation of your institute on all necessary logistics.

If you apply, it is worth considering how much money you actually need. Excellent public engagement activities can be run on varying budgets and there is no need to bid for the maximum available. For example, an award of £500 might be sufficient to cover performance fees for a one-off music-based event or might cover catering costs for a historically themed meal.

REQUIREMENTS OF AWARD HOLDERS

Award holders are required, as conditions of the funding, to:

- attend a meeting (in person or remotely) with the public engagement team;
- supply details in a timely manner for any marketing deadlines (e.g. for SAS events brochure and festival programmes);
- submit an ethics statement or risk assessment if necessary;
- submit a preliminary budget and project plan;
- take part in project evaluation;
- submit a final budget at the close of the project.

At the close of your project, you may be invited to develop a short case study for the SAS public engagement website. This is not compulsory, but is a good way to share what you have learnt with others and to develop a short piece of writing that can be used for your own purposes - e.g. for impact reports, blogs, other funding applications, etc.

ETHICS

Any proposed projects that contain significant ethical sensitivities (such as those which involve working with children or vulnerable adults) will require an ethics statement. A risk assessment may be required as part of the terms and conditions of an award. If the project is funded, the SAS public engagement team will offer assistance and support with this.

If you are unsure whether your project raises any ethical concerns, you are very welcome to contact the public engagement team for advice prior to submitting an application. There is also some good general advice available on the National Coordinating Centre for Public Engagement's [website](#).

If you are planning to incorporate a research element into your project (for example by crowd-sourcing information that will feed into a research project, conducting experiments or interviews, etc.) you should consult the [School's Research Ethics policy](#) prior to submitting an application.

SUPPORT FROM THE PUBLIC ENGAGEMENT TEAM

Following allocation of awards, the SAS public engagement team will be in touch to discuss the support available to enable the successful delivery and evaluation of your activity.

Specifically, they can offer assistance in the following ways:

- provide training and advice on 'best practice' in public engagement;
- offer one-on-one advice in shaping and developing your project;
- offer general advice on marketing and promoting your activity, along with specific marketing opportunities where appropriate (e.g. via Being Human festival marketing channels);
- advise on ethics, health and safety, risk assessments;
- provide materials and guidance on how to properly evaluate your event.

While team members are happy to offer assistance and support along the lines above, responsibility for overall project management and delivery of the project lies with the award holder. Logistical matters such as booking rooms, payment of invoices, and liaising with partners, are the responsibility of the award holder with the support of their institute/department. It is therefore essential that you liaise with your institute manager or administrator before submitting an application to ensure this support will be in place.

APPLICATION PROCESS

The SAS Public Engagement Fund application form and activities grid are available on the SAS website here: <https://www.sas.ac.uk/public-engagement/fund>.

Letters of support should be provided from any cultural and community partners named on your application. Applications should be made on the correct form and returned via email to: engage@sas.ac.uk.

- **Deadline for applications:** Friday 4 June (5pm)
- **Notification of outcomes:** Late June

FURTHER ADVICE AND RESOURCES

If you have questions about any aspect of the scheme, please contact: engage@sas.ac.uk.

Further advice and resources on various aspects of public engagement with research activity, including 'Finding the right format', 'Finding the right venue', 'Working with a partner', and 'Working on a budget' can be found online on the SAS website, [here](#). It is strongly recommended that you take time to read through these short resource packs before submitting an application.

Some examples of the types of activities that are possible even under lockdown-type conditions can be found in [this short film from last year's Being Human festival](#).