Frequently Asked Questions: Event proposals

This document provides answers to frequently asked questions about proposing an event for the British Science Festival 2020 and will help you to shape your idea into a successful proposal.

The FAQ includes guidance about the content and format of events and information on Festival logistics. If you have any other questions, or if you would like to discuss your proposal, please contact Anna Woolman.

What is the date and location of the Festival?
The Festival will take place from Tuesday 8 – Saturday 12 September 2020 and will be hosted by Anglia Ruskin University.

What time will my event take place?
The daytime programme of events will take place between 11:00 and 18:00 at the Anglia Ruskin University campus. Daytime talk and panel events will take place in lecture theatres with full AV facilities. The evening programme will take place from 17:00 onwards in a variety of venues in Chelmsford, such as bars, cafes and theatres. We are particularly interested in events with creative formats, topics and ideas.

What kind of audience should my event be aimed at?
The Festival is free and open to all. The target audience for the daytime programme is non-specialist adults (ages 16+) with a broad interest in science. The evening programme is also aimed at adults, however they may or may not have an existing interest in science or in the particular topic of an event. We continually try to push the boundaries of our audiences and welcome new types of events that attract those who would not typically go to a science festival.

Please note that the British Science Festival does not provide content for children, schools or families.

What length should my event be?
Daytime lecture and panel events should be a maximum of 60 minutes including any Q&A. We also welcome drop-in activities and installations which can run for longer. Evening events are also flexible.
Do I have to be a scientist to propose an event?

No, anyone can propose an event and the Festival celebrates science in its broadest sense. We are looking for proposals from individuals, researchers, industry professionals, artists, writers, organisations, charities, academic institutions, and more.

What kind of content are you looking for?

We are looking for events that showcase cutting-edge science, celebrate the latest developments in science and technology and engage their audience in open discussion about relevant issues that affect culture and society.

Every year we curate a diverse programme that explores new research across varied disciplines including social science, digital innovation, history of science and economics. We are looking for thought provoking events that offer new perspectives on scientific topics and stimulate discussion. Newsworthy content will be viewed favourably.

What type of events are you looking for?

For the daytime programme, we will be looking for a varied programme of talks from individual researchers alongside panel debates and discussions. If you have ideas for another format, please get in touch and discuss this with us.

For the evening programme we are looking for events with creative and innovative formats. Our programme is filled with a variety of different types of events, from talks to workshops, museum takeovers to parties and stuff you wouldn’t necessarily expect to see at a ‘science’ festival such as yoga, life drawing and artistic performances. Events span a diverse range of subjects that encompass science in the broadest sense, promising something for everyone.

Will you support the development of my event?

If you are a researcher at Anglia Ruskin University, we can advise on content and format. There will be opportunities in November and December 2019 to find out more about the Festival and get any questions answered. You will be notified of the dates of these sessions by the University. If your proposal is successful, you will be invited to an Advanced Presentation Skills coaching day in early July 2020. We strongly recommend that you attend as we will help you to develop the content and format of your event.

If you applied through the Open call or are from a BSA Section and would like advice on your event, please do get in touch with Anna Woolman.

Please note, event organisers are responsible for finding speakers and we are looking for events that will be fully organised by spring when the Festival programme will go live.
When will I find out if my event has been accepted?

We will let applicants know in March 2020.

Will journalists be invited to my event?

There is a strong media presence at the Festival. If accepted, we will ask for more detailed information about your speakers that will be provided to the media.

Will you provide a fee or cover any expenses?

We do not cover expenses, fees or direct costs unless explicit in your proposal and agreed with the British Science Association. Please note that any such costs might affect the success of your proposal. All our events are free to attend.

Is accommodation provided?

No, you will need to organise this yourself, but we can provide you with a list of local hotels with preferential rates.

What onsite assistance will I receive during the Festival?

There is a Speakers’ Lounge where lunch and refreshments are provided throughout the day. In your event venue, you will have access to up to two Festival staff who will assist with the operation of your event, including AV support, queue management and distribution of the Festival evaluation forms.

Please note that our staff members will not be able to help you facilitate your event’s content; you will need to source your own assistants/volunteers for hands-on help with the event’s activities.

Can I get sponsorship or fundraise for my event?

Please contact us before applying for any sponsorship or fundraising to discuss the possibilities.
Questions in the event proposal form

This is a summary of the questions you will be asked in the proposal form. Please read through these before completing the form to help you prepare your answers.

Event organiser details

This section includes question on your basic information such as name, organisation and contact details.

Area of research

This section helps us to understand the wider societal relevance of your research, as well as if there is anything about it that may be newsworthy.

Much of the talk programme of the Festival involves showcasing current research, however there is scope for people of all backgrounds to be involved in the Festival. If you are not an active researcher, please put N/A where appropriate.

If you are filling the form on behalf of the speakers, please provide answers where possible.

- What are the most exciting advancements coming out of your research area at the moment? You can use this is an opportunity to also tell us 1) the wider societal relevance of your research; 2) how your research is cutting edge; 3) how your research is impactful. Max. 1000 characters
- Who funds your research? (optional)
- Is your research part of a collaboration? If yes, who with? (optional)
- Do you expect to have any newsworthy research or book publications in September 2020? If yes, please elaborate. (optional) Max. 500 characters

Your Festival proposal

We will be looking for a varied programme of events and formats from individuals and groups of researchers.

- What kind of event are you proposing? (i.e. Talk, Conversation, Panel discussion, Drop-in activity, Workshop)
- What element of your research would you like to present to the festival audience? Max. 500 characters
• Please describe the format of your event, including any audience interaction.
• Please suggest a draft title. *Max. 10 words*
• Please suggest a draft blurb for your event. *Max. 100 words*

**About the speakers/facilitators**

In the final sections, you will be asked to detail who will be speaking at/facilitating your proposed event. For these sections, please gather information on all participants’ personal and contact details, online profile, and availability during the Festival dates.

You will also be asked to detail the public engagement experience of yourself or your speakers/facilitators, including any relevant links to videos, blogs, websites, etc. *Max. 2500 characters*