

Festival of Social Science

FAQs

Is the Festival public engagement training mandatory?

Yes, the training is mandatory for all event leaders as attendance at the training is a requirement for running a festival event. If an event leader is unable to attend one of the sessions the festival team is happy for them to send a deputy from their event team.

Do we need to collect evaluation at our event?

Evaluation is mandatory for each event delivered during the festival. Event leaders should offer the opportunity to participate in the evaluation to all attendees and any non-academic partners and/or teachers who have collaborated on the event – of course, it is up to the individuals in these groups whether they choose to take up the offer to participate. Event leaders should also complete the event leader evaluation questions themselves. Festival leads to provide partner institution feedback. Templates will be provided by the festival manager to institutional festival leads.

What do I do if an event leader wishes to postpone or cancel their event?

Please prioritise the safety and wellbeing of all involved in the event – both delivering and attending – including their ability to travel safely and reliably to and from the event. Please postpone or cancel your event if anything puts this in doubt.

If you need to cancel an event at short notice, there is the option to reschedule the event to a later date outside the festival period and still receive festival funding and use festival branding if all the following apply:

1. The event had already been scheduled and advertised
2. The cancellation is for reasons that couldn't have been foreseen at the time the event was planned, and for which there is no viable workaround, for example:
 - Adverse weather conditions
 - Illness or family emergency of a key figure in the event who can't be replaced/managed without
 - Local or national emergency
 - Strike action likely to significantly affect the delivery of or attendance at the event
 - World, national or local events that would make the delivery of the event in question at that time insensitive/inappropriate
 - Your venue or a key supplier cancelling on you at the last minute
3. The postponement isn't for the convenience of those delivering the event, or because of poor publicity for the event
4. It's not possible to reschedule for a date that's within the festival period
5. Permission to postpone is sought from the Festival Manager, with clear details given as to why the request fits the above criteria.

What do I need to do if I need to request exceptional circumstances for accommodation?

Events should be planned in ways that avoid the need for accommodation costs and ensure that alternative options are explored first – for example in terms of time of day and who will be involved in the event. If you still need to request accommodation costs as exceptional circumstances, please

contact the Festival Manager as early as possible (so you have time to change tack if they are not granted) and provide her with:

1. Full details of your event, including its expression of interest form and any further details subsequently decided, clearly outlining the specific target audience for the event in question and what their motivation/need for attending is understood as being.
2. What the costs are (and if relevant how they compare with the cost of alternative options).
3. What alternatives you have considered that would achieve a similar end and why they are not viable.
4. What the specific public engagement benefit is in the context of this event and this target audience that would be created as a result of these costs being paid.

Can you provide some examples of what could be approved?

Examples of exceptional circumstances with a good chance of granted

1. **The event, target audience and their motivation to attend:** Performance of folk songs about the lives of Yorkshire miners in the 19th century at a city centre pub in York. To be held in a regular folk-night slot at the pub that runs 8pm-11pm on Thursdays. Target audience is folk music fans and people with an interest in local history living in the York area, including but not limited to regulars at the folk night, motivated to attend to enjoy a night out with new music and new insights into local social history. *Expression of interest form for the event attached with full details.*
2. **The request and costs involved:** Overnight accommodation (£80) for a musician who has worked with a social history researcher to write these folk songs and plans to perform them at the event.
3. **Alternatives explored and why they are not judged to be appropriate:** It wouldn't be practical to run the event in this format without the musician, and alternative formats such as a talk by the researcher by himself would be a lot less engaging. The musician lives 25 miles away, doesn't drive and the folk night ends too late for her to get home by public transport. The cost of accommodation is £80, versus £150 for a taxi. Running the event earlier in the day to allow her to get home by public transport would mean missing the opportunity to hold it in the pub's folk night slot (and as such access to a ready-made, engaged audience) and potentially be too early for target attendees to want to start a night out.
4. **The public engagement benefit of this cost:** Allows the event to be run as a music performance at the folk night rather than in a format or in a time/venue less appealing to the target audience.

Do you have any examples of what would not be approved?

Examples of exceptional circumstances unlikely to be granted

1. **The event, target audience and their motivation to attend:** Talk + Q&A on challenges in achieving net zero, held in person in a lecture theatre on a London campus. Target audience and their motivation to attend not included in original request; subsequently given as "general public, policymakers, anyone with an interest in achieving net zero" motivated "to learn more about the challenges in achieving net zero". *Expression of interest form for the event not attached.*

2. **The request and costs involved:** Accommodation for two nights for a researcher based in Aberdeen who specialises in the economics of recycling to join three other researchers as speakers at the event. Cost £300 total.
3. **Alternatives explored and why they are not judged to be appropriate:** No alternatives given in original request. Responses received following suggestions that the event could be run online or hybrid to allow him to join remotely, or that the event could run without him/with a different 4th speaker that “we don’t think there’s much appetite for online events any more” and “he was a key collaborator on our most recent research project and we wouldn’t want to run the event without him”.
4. **The public engagement benefit of this cost:** None given. No indication given that the target audience would have heard of the researcher in question or that his presence would be draw to them or increase their satisfaction with the event beyond what could be achieved by researchers based locally.

Can I work with non-IAA holding Universities to be involved with FOSS?

Festival partners are very welcome to hold joint events with institutions that are not festival partners. However, every festival event must be “owned” by a festival partner and treated as their event. This includes:

- The festival lead at the partner institution needs to ensure that all festival requirements for festival events are fully adhered to, including but not limited to those around the selection of appropriate events and use of the EOI form, provision of appropriate public engagement and comms support to plan and promote the event, ensuring attendance of the event leader at the festival public engagement training sessions, uploading of event details to the festival website and full participation in the festival evaluation.
- The festival lead at the partner institution should also ensure that the joint event meets the same standards as their other events in terms of adherence to legal requirements and best practice, for example with respect to health and safety, data protection, accessibility and safeguarding.
- Events must be tagged on the festival website as being run by the festival partner.
- Joint events should include at least one researcher based at the festival partner institution.
- The festival partner needs to pay any necessary costs out of their existing festival budget, ensuring that the requirements on eligible costs are adhered to. No additional funding is available.

Can I hold my event somewhere other than my university city or town?

- Yes; decisions about where to hold an event should be led by considerations around which groups of people the event is targeting, and what location and venue would be best to reach those people, make them feel comfortable, and remove barriers to access.
- Ideally it would be preferable - if holding events outside of your city/town - to have them in locations that would not otherwise have any festival events (thus increasing the geographical and possibly demographic reach of the festival) rather than in locations where there is already another festival partner running events of their own (unless it’s a joint event with that partner).