The Great Exhibition Road Festival

Proposals Process Guidance

The Imperial Festival is changing for 2019. As our popular, flagship event heads into its 8th year, we are taking the opportunity to lead on a major new Festival that will take place along Exhibition Road on 29/30 June 2019.

The Festival is a partnership between 20 of the National Museums and cultural institutions on and around Exhibition Road. It will mark the bicentenary of both Queen Victoria’s and Prince Albert’s birth and will reinvigorate Albert’s original vision for Albertopolis – the world’s first planned cultural quarter for research, learning and creativity, created following the Great Exhibition in 1851.

The Festival is targeted at Londoners, and we will work hard to engage communities from our local boroughs who wouldn’t normally engage with our Institutions to involve them in the Festival. We will also be welcoming teenagers and families who are inspired by the arts and sciences and could consider a career in our industries, as well as interested adults.

The Festival will have many of the elements that we know and love from our own Imperial Festival, integrated with many new elements from various partners including the V&A, Royal Albert Hall, Science Museum, Natural History Museum, the Goethe Institut and the Royal Geographic Society. The potential for collaboration across our world-leading institutions for this Festival is perhaps the most exciting aspect and we expect it to build a legacy of rich collaboration for future projects with Imperial.

With Imperial playing the lead coordinating role of this major new event, we will maintain our commitment that this new Festival continues to give the thousands of Imperial staff and students who help make it happen a platform to develop skills in public engagement, and experience a range of new perspectives on their work. You can read the full set of aims behind The Great Exhibition Road Festival below.

The heightened interest that will come from this new collaborative Festival places an even greater emphasis on ensuring our visitors can access content from Imperial that is exciting and engaging. As a result, it is more important than ever that teams read through this guidance document to understand what we are prioritising, before starting your proposal.

Please note we may not be able to guarantee a place for every Imperial researcher, staff member of student who expresses an interest in taking part.
**Festival aims**

1. To create a unique festival that connects some of the World’s most iconic institutions, in an inspirational fusion of the arts and sciences.
2. To deliver a dynamic range of participatory visitor experiences that generate curiosity and a pioneering spirit among our audiences and among our institutions.
3. To engage c.100,000 (TBC) people through events taking place on Exhibition Road and across partner institutions over the three days.
4. To engage communities and audiences who do not usually access our institutions through co-created projects that are part of the Festival weekend.
5. To celebrate diversity – the diversity of our communities, but also the diversity within the arts and sciences.
6. To reinvigorate the vision of Albertopolis, during the bicentenary of the birth of Victoria and Albert.

**Festival Partners**

The full list of Great Exhibition Road Festival partners is as follows: Imperial College London, Royal Albert Hall, Science Museum, Natural History Museum, V&A, Royal College of Music, Royal College of Art, Royal Geographical Society, Royal Society of Sculptors, Goethe Institution, Kensington Palace, Ismaili Centre, RBKC Art Weekend, Institut Francais and possibly Japan House, Royal Parks and the Design Museum.

**Type of visitor experiences:**

The Festival proposals form lists six different types of experiences that we could offer visitors in 2018.

1. **Exhibit** – This is a permanent activity that occupies a space within a Festival zone throughout the weekend. These are staffed by the teams who create them, and bring visual and/or interactive components that will help to tell the story of their research. This could be a demonstration related to a specific area of research or something creative or attention-grabbing aimed at drawing people in to find out more. Having members of the teams staffing the exhibits over the weekend means that the public can ask questions and meet the people carrying out the research - our evaluation shows this is something our visitors particularly value.

2. **Installation** – Similar to an exhibit, an installation is a permanent feature of the Festival but doesn’t need to be constantly staffed. As a result it might require some extra descriptive materials or interpretation to explain the piece in the absence of its creators. Installations might include immersive sculptures, art or photography displays linked to Imperial research.

3. **Discussions** – the Festival delivers popular talks programmes which are hosted in the College’s largest lecture theatres. They give a predominantly adult audience (14+) a chance to hear about a particular subject in a bit more depth. Talks are generally 20-30 minutes in length with additional time for discussion and questions. They must be developed and delivered in a style
that will be interesting and engaging for non-experts with a publically appealing title. The best
talks answer a particular pertinent, intriguing or highly topical question, or explain a well-
known or current phenomenon through the latest research in the field. Our hope for 2019 is
many researchers already proposing other types of experiences might also put forward ideas
for one of our talks programmes outlined below, during their Festival weekend.

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<tr>
<th>Spotlight on Science</th>
<th>Research focused talks which focus on high profile or engaging topics with a clear public interest</th>
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<tr>
<td>Great Expeditions</td>
<td>Exploration is a key commonality between the institutions that make up Exhibition Road and the wider Albertopolis cultural quarter. From Imperial researchers we want to hear the stories of your travels, your work outside the lab and the office. This could be extreme, exotic adventures far away from the realities of campus life or a surprising discovery made closer to home!</td>
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<tr>
<td>Ideas exchange</td>
<td>In keeping with the collaborative Festival we would welcome ideas for discussions that give the audience different perspectives on the same topic - bringing together experts from different participating institutions together to discuss a topic of mutual interest – i.e. future foods / architecture/ fashion / plastics / Intelligent Design....etc</td>
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<td>A day in the Life of</td>
<td>Short, lively and personal talks/stories helping our audience discover what it’s like to be a … ‘rocket scientist’ ‘engineer’ ‘climate scientist … etc. These talks are particularly aimed at teenagers.</td>
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<tr>
<td>The Art of Science</td>
<td>We would welcome talks, discussions and debates exploring how science is creative and/or how art can be scientific. For example, this could be exploring creativity in the scientific method or the beauty of research imagery. Or exploring how science and technology feature across artistic methods and our appreciation of it.</td>
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4. Workshops – Ideally these would run throughout the Festival (or at least repeat several times per day) and give members of the public a chance to get involved in making, creating or contributing to something with guidance from you and your team. These could be ‘drop in’ activities, which run continuously throughout the day, or we could book participants into scheduled sessions. The workshops should be designed with one of these two approaches in mind. Workshops work best when your team is present to have conversations about the research linked to the workshop. We can likely cover workshop material costs and we can also put you in contact with professionals to help develop and/or deliver the activity with you.

5. Tour – Our visitors really enjoy behind-the-scenes tours of our facilities and/or laboratories. Tours are organised by the central Festival Team and tailored to the needs of your particular facility or lab. We will be responsible for registrations and bringing groups of people over at agreed times, so all you will need to do is prepare exciting hands on demos and presentations that can be delivered within the facility and be repeated easily throughout the weekend.
6. **Music and dance performances** – The Festival has numerous stages and tents which are open to proposals from both professional and amateur performers. We are keen for ideas that include audience interaction, and/or where music or dance can be used to illustrate areas of Imperial research.

**What we are looking for in 2019**

Each year we evaluate the Festival and collect feedback from exhibitors, visitors and volunteers to find out what they most valued. Based on this, and the Festival Aims we have the following suggestions for 2019. Whilst we are not expecting each proposal to include all of the elements below, we recommend at least considering how you might incorporate each.

**Collaborations**
The Festival is well-placed to support Imperial’s collaborative philosophy around research and can also host our partners. This could include community partners, creative collaborators (artists, film makers, designers...etc) or research collaborators. With the 2019 Festival celebrating the fusion of art and science and involving such a variety of institutions (see full list above), we are particularly keen for partnerships between Imperial teams and these partners. If you already have relationships with these partners and you want to collaborate with them on your proposal idea, please go ahead and start talking to them. If you don’t have a relationship with these organisations, but would like one, please get in touch with us and we can help facilitate this through our contacts.

**Age specific content**
Feedback we often receive from Festival attendees, particularly from families with young children, is a difficulty in finding activities that were particularly aimed at them. As a result, for 2019 we are asking for proposals to specify which audience groups their activity would be most suitable for, so we can help our visitors to access this.

- [ ] Families with young children (0-5)
- [ ] Families with young children (6 - 12)
- [ ] Families with older children (over 12)
- [ ] Adults

**Participatory engagement**
The Festival aims to create a platform for two-way connections around Imperial’s work. As a result we welcome proposals that include creative ways to illicit, record and/or display public ideas or opinions on issues related to a research topic.

**Data collection**
The Festival can be a great platform to carry out research and we know the public really enjoy getting actively involved in research. Whilst we understand it is not possible for every research discipline to collect data at a public event like a Festival, if you are interested in exploring the possibility of running a live experiment across the weekend, we can advise on best practice and put you in touch with teams who have published data collected at the Festival in the past to discuss your approach.
Science themed music and dance performances
We aim to provide a range of ways to engage the public with our research and often music and dance can be a memorable and fun way to do this. As a Festival organising team we are in contact with a number of musicians, dancers and choreographers who have expressed an interest in working with our researchers, so if you are interested, we can introduce you to professionals to work with. N.B – please bear in mind there may be some costs involved in this collaboration which cannot be covered by the Festival budget and will need to be funded through your budget or through applying for small posts of external public engagement funding
https://www.imperial.ac.uk/be-inspired/societal-engagement/resources/funding/

Engagement activities along Exhibition Road
The 2019 Festival will be focused more around Exhibition Road (which will be closed to traffic) than previous Imperial Festivals as a way to celebrate the link between many of the participating institutions. As a result we would welcome proposals for activities that can easily be run on the road – either as science busking activities that can roam up and down, or ones that are easily transportable out under one of the marquee’s we will erect along the road

If you would like to discuss the development of your ideas, please contact James Romero, Public Engagement Programme Coordinator, on j.romero@imperial.ac.uk or 020 7594 8198 or attend one of two Festival Proposals Clinics in lecture theatre G34 in the Sir Alexander Fleming on:

12:00 – 14:00, 8 October 2018 - https://www.eventbrite.co.uk/e/great-exhibition-road-festival-2019-imperial-proposal-clinic-option-1-tickets-50483557680

There are further FAQs about the Festival which can be read here
https://www.imperial.ac.uk/festival/staff-faqs-2019/

We look forward to working with you on the 2019 the Great Exhibition Road Festival.

Imperial Public Engagement Team