



KEY INFORMATION

Interact, discuss, and engage at the **Great Exhibition Road Festival**, an extraordinary celebration of the arts and sciences in South Kensington.

WHAT IS THE GREAT EXHIBITION ROAD FESTIVAL?

The Great Exhibition Road Festival brings together major museums and institutions to put on a free inspirational weekend exploring, culture, art and science in one of the most famous cultural quarters in the world – ‘Albertopolis’. Albertopolis features Exhibition Road and its surrounding area and is colloquially named after Prince Albert’s vision of an area devoted to the arts and sciences.

In June 2019, over 60,000 people attended the first of this annual Festival that spanned Exhibition Road in South Kensington. Now, every summer Imperial will partner with leading cultural institutions, including the V&A, the Science Museum, the Natural History Museum, and the Royal Albert Hall to inspire audiences over one summer weekend. In 2019 over 1000 staff and students got involved to entertain the crowds and engage them with stories of science and their research.

If you are interested in getting involved in future Festivals, or simply would like to find out more please email festival@imperial.ac.uk.

Aims of the Festival:

- To create a unique festival that connects some of the world’s most iconic institutions in an inspirational fusion of the arts and sciences
- To deliver a dynamic range of participatory visitor experiences that generate curiosity and a pioneering spirit among our audiences and our institutions
- To engage 70,000 people through events taking place on Exhibition Road and across partner institutions over the three days of the Festival
- To engage communities and audiences who do not usually access our institutions through co-created projects that are part of the Festival weekend
- To celebrate diversity – the diversity of our communities, and that within art and science
- To reinvigorate the vision of Albertopolis and enable collective action on issues of importance to partners and participants

WHO CAN TAKE PART?

Anyone from across the Imperial community – research staff, postgraduate and undergraduate students, professional staff and alumni – can take part in the Festival. We also welcome Imperial people’s collaborators or partners to deliver activities if they have an Imperial element to them.

WHY TAKE PART?

- **Be part of something amazing**
The Festival welcomes tens of thousands of visitors to Exhibition Road to enjoy an extraordinary programme of talks, workshops, exhibitions and experiences from some of the most exciting cultural institutions in the world.
- **Meaningful dialogue with the public**
The Festival attracts a diverse audience, whether its adults, families, or anyone in between, you can have meaningful dialogue with different members of the public and learn things yourself, as well as inspiring our audiences with unique insights and experiences.
- **Explore research in creative ways**
The Festival’s core ethos is to bring art and science together so there is a myriad of opportunities to get creative, collaborate with artists, and try something new.
- **For fun!**
Above all, taking part in the Festival is a fun and unforgettable experience that will give you a great sense of achievement and community.



“With all the families having fun and feeling welcomed in the university space, as a scientist I rarely think about the impact science has in society. I could observe that this weekend.”
Imperial researcher

“I am more comfortable with speaking to the public about the research we carry out and have become quite good at explaining it in simple terms. It also helped me re-discover how much I like science!”
Imperial researcher

“[The Festival is] a fun and great way to be and feel involved in the Imperial Community”
Festival volunteer

“It was super festive and fun. I really enjoyed myself. It just had a great carnival atmosphere.”
Festival attendee

“The presenters were just brilliant - enthusiastic, knowledgeable, friendly, and made every one of every age very welcome.”
Festival attendee

OF THE STAFF TAKING PART:

93% rated their overall experience of the Festival as excellent or good

95% felt participating in the Festival was a rewarding and motivating experience

88% felt they gained new ideas for developing future public engagement work from taking part



WAYS TO TAKE PART

The varied Festival programme is made up of exhibits, installations, discussions, workshops, music and dance performances, and more. We welcome proposals from our Imperial community for any type of content, and we try to find a space for every proposal. Our call for proposals is usually open October-December. There is also the opportunity to join our amazing team of volunteers. Recruitment for this usually takes place in the Spring.



Be sure not to miss out on Festival opportunities by signing up to the Societal Engagement newsletter

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| Exhibit | This is a permanent activity that occupies a space throughout the weekend. Exhibits bring visual and/or interactive components that will help to tell the story of your research and are staffed by the teams who create them. 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. |
| Installation | Like an exhibit, an installation is a permanent feature of the Festival but doesn't need to be constantly staffed and often takes a more artistic or creative approach to introducing a research topic. Installations might include immersive sculptures, art or photography displays linked to Imperial research. |
| Talks | The Festival delivers popular talks programmes, which are hosted in the largest lecture theatres around Exhibition Road. They give a predominantly adult audience (16+) a chance to hear about a subject in a bit more depth. Talks are generally 20-30 minutes in length with additional time for discussion and questions. As well as individual speakers, we are always interested in panel sessions that bring speakers from different backgrounds and worlds together to discuss a single topic. |
| Workshops | Give members of the public a chance to get involved in making, creating or contributing to something with guidance from you and your team. Workshops work best when your team is present to have conversations about the research linked to the workshop. We often encourage you to consider workshops by offering to cover costs and connect you with professional creatives to help develop and/or deliver the activity. |
| Tour | Our visitors really enjoy behind-the-scenes tours of our facilities and/or laboratories. The Festival team will handle registrations and bring 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. Why not check out our resource on tours for some great ideas and top tips? |
| 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. |
| And many more! | If you have new ideas for content types, we'd love to hear them |



TIME COMMITMENT AND WHAT TO EXPECT

Time commitment will vary depending on the type of activity you want to run. Our team are able to advise you on what you might be able to achieve with the time you have available.

For a talk / discussion / performance

- 2 hours correspondence and briefings with public engagement team
- Anything from 4 hours to 2 months preparation! If you are putting together a short talk with some slides, you may only need a few hours to prepare and rehearse but if you're writing a script and producing a play or choreographing a dance, the prep time can be longer.
- 1 hour delivery (or more if you're repeating your performance throughout the weekend or need time to set up if you have a set!)

For an exhibit / workshop / installation

- 2 hours correspondence and briefings with public engagement team
- Anything from 1–30 days preparation. Remember if running a hands-on activity to test it well ahead of the big event, ideally with members of your target audience.
- 2 ½ days delivery (½ day set up on Friday, 2 delivery on Saturday and Sunday)

CASE STUDIES

The Sensorium

An immersive installation at the 2016 Imperial Festival:

<https://www.imperial.ac.uk/be-inspired/societal-engagement/resources-and-case-studies/engagement-with-research-highlight-stories/sensorium-at-imperial-festival/>

Energy Futures Lab contribution to the 2019 festival

Energy Futures Lab held 10 tours of its newly commissioned ABB-Imperial Digital Energy Demonstrator, where visitors were able to hear about ways that the electricity grid can be controlled and managed in the near future, as the UK energy system moves towards a more integrated and decarbonised future.

<https://www.imperial.ac.uk/news/192110/energy-futures-lab-joins-great-exhibition/>