

DISCOVER THE AMAZING



Southampton Science and Engineering Festival

FAQs FOR EXHIBITORS | 2024

Content

1. [What is Southampton Science and Engineering Festival?](#)
2. [What is Science and Engineering Day?](#)
3. [Who can contribute to the festival?](#)
4. [What can I contribute with?](#)
5. [Who is the Southampton Science and Engineering Festival audience?](#)
6. [How does the registration process work?](#)
7. [Are there any themes that are highly relevant for the 2024 edition?](#)
8. [What support is available to exhibitors?](#)
9. [How is accessibility considered at Southampton Science and Engineering Festival?](#)
10. [How is Southampton Science and Engineering Festival advertised?](#)
11. [How is Southampton Science and Engineering Festival evaluated?](#)
12. [What other events can I contribute towards?](#)
13. [Who can I contact if I still have some questions?](#)

Q: What is Southampton Science and Engineering Festival?

Southampton Science and Engineering Festival (SOTSEF) is the University of Southampton's annual award-winning interdisciplinary science and engineering festival that allows everyone to explore and discover what the world of STEAM (Science, Technology, Engineering, Arts and Mathematics) has to offer. It is a 10-day programme of digital and in-person events taking place across the University and the City of Southampton.

The Festival is part of the [UK Science Festival Network](#) and currently runs every year in parallel with [British Science Week](#), a 10-day programme of thousands of events running throughout the whole of the UK, with the aim of celebrating science, engineering, technology and maths. More information is available on the Public Engagement with Research unit (PERu) [website](#).

In 2024, Southampton Science and Engineering Festival will run **from Friday 8th to Sunday 17th March**. To be among the first to find out when the exhibitor's registration opens, sign up to the **UoS Festival Exhibitors mailing list** (external exhibitors, please click [HERE](#); UoS students and staff, please click [HERE](#)) and start following UoS Engagement on [Twitter](#), [Facebook](#), and [Instagram](#) to remain updated.

Q: What is Science and Engineering Day?

Science and Engineering Day (SED) is a FREE family-friendly day event packed with more than a hundred interactive activities, workshops, live shows, art performances, talks and laboratory tours.

In recent years, we have welcomed up to 5,000 visitors on the day, coming as far as Devon, Kent, Yorkshire and Greater Manchester area.

In 2024, Science and Engineering Day will take place on **Saturday 16th March 2024**, from 10:30 – 16:30, at Highfield Campus and Boldrewood Innovation Campus.

PLEASE NOTE: This year SED will take place a week after a recruitment Visit Day on campus. **Please make sure to liaise with your School/Department Admissions team to avoid any conflict and support other members of staff and of the student body to contribute to SED if you cannot take part yourself.**

You can find out more about Science and Engineering Day and get a taste of the Festival by watching this [Science and Engineering Day 2023 video](#).

Q: Who can contribute to the festival?

Southampton Science and Engineering Festival and Science and Engineering Day are open to **researchers, technicians, student societies** and **members of**

professional services. National and international collaborators of our researchers are also invited to submit content.

If the proposed content is relevant to the festival's theme and values, we welcome **local community groups, schools, freelance public engagement professionals and artists, libraries, cultural organisations and venues, and other higher education institutions** to contribute to the richness and interdisciplinarity of Southampton Science and Engineering Festival!

PLEASE NOTE: For Science and Engineering Day 2024, we will be expanding our Community Zone launched at SED 2023, where exhibitors can promote activities, wellbeing and personal development opportunities to our local audiences.

We appreciate from experience that different disciplines and groups will have varied approaches to public engagement. Talk to us about how you could best adapt your subject to meet your and the festival's audience needs. For more information about approaches to public engagement, browse the excellent [National Co-ordinating Centre for Public Engagement website](#).

For Science and Engineering Day, we also recruit a substantial team of Student Ambassadors to help with the running of the event. Students will be briefed, trained and co-ordinated by two Student Ambassador Leads (coordination and operations) responding directly to the Public Engagement Manager (Ops). Available roles will range from visitor support (e.g. checking-in, providing directions) to media team and exhibitor support (e.g. setting up venue/stands, van/car loading, managing queues).

Q: What can I contribute with?

We welcome **hands-on activities, interactive talks, workshops, debates, exhibitions, installations, laboratory tours, shows and art performances** for both the wider festival and Science and Engineering Day.

For the wider festival, some suggestions include e.g. a movie night followed by a lively Q&A with the audience, an engaging quiz night with short presentations and Q&A, an online interview with an international host followed by a Q&A, an afternoon workshop with hands-on activities for children or young teenagers, the creation of a collaborative citizen science project with a local community group. Some events might follow a well-known format, such as a laboratory workshop, a school competition, a research café, or a debate.

The activity/event will need to be accessible to a wide array of audiences, including children and adults, with no expectation of previous knowledge or experience. Accessibility will need to be considered, from conceptual design to delivery, to allow participation by all, regardless of ability. Core values of the University of Southampton must be upheld: integrity, accessibility, inclusivity and sustainability.

Q: Who is the Southampton Science and Engineering Festival audience?

There is no single audience for Southampton Science and Engineering Festival, and guests/visitors will differ depending on the nature/format of the activity. They can include students and staff at the University of Southampton, local residents, schools and community groups, and others from across the country and internationally.

Online: with SOTSEF Goes Digital in 2020 and 2021, we engaged with hundreds of people across 5 continents. People were drawn to the online Festival mainly through social media, newsletters and word of mouth.

In-person: during Science and Engineering Day, we welcome people of all ages and backgrounds. Visitors come mainly from Southampton and surrounding areas, but also from other regions in the Midlands and Southern England. As well as families with young children and teenagers, we usually welcome schools, youth and scout groups. Most adult visitors, including senior citizens, often have a keen interest in STEM. In the past our audiences also included prospective students, University of Southampton alumni, teachers, and employees from community groups, charities, research councils, government and professional organisations.

Q: How does the registration process work?

The call to contribute to Southampton Science and Engineering Festival will open **around November 20th 2023**. Announcements will be made on SUSSED, on UoS Engagement social media, on the Public Engagement Network MS Teams channel and through the UoS Festival Exhibitors newsletter. Internal and external exhibitors will be able to contribute content to two strands:

- **Wider Festival** (for online and in-person activities, 8th – 17th March)
- **Science and Engineering Day** (for in-person activities on Saturday 16th March at Highfield and Boldrewood Innovation Campus EXCLUSIVELY)

The registration system will be a single or a multi-stage process.

- **Wider Festival:** Submission will be a one-stage process, ID and password protected.
- **Science and Engineering Day:** Submission will be a 3-stage process, ID and password protected:
 - **Stage 1** | for Basic information about your activity, including space requirements;
 - **Stage 2** | for Logistics, including team requirements, live event key information and supporting material;
 - **Stage 3** | for Risk Assessment submission.

PLEASE NOTE:

- **Registration guidelines**, which include **ID** and **password**, will be provided **after November 20th** at the following:
 - [UoS Festival SharePoint site](#) (UoS users only);
 - [How to Get Involved](#) section on the PERu website (public).

The registration guidelines for SOTSEF and Science and Engineering Day contain a step-by-step preview of the registration process and can help you prepare all required material in advance of your submission.
- After submitting each stage, you will receive an **automated confirmation email** with a summary of your input. Check your spam folder if the email is taking longer than expected and contact the UoS Festival team if the email does not come through.
- The UoS Festival team will review and approve your activity Stage or in some cases request amendments. You will receive an email with a **customised link, password and ID** for you **to continue to the following stage or edit your entry**.

PLEASE NOTE: there are **FIRM DEADLINES** for each of the stages – all dates are available to view and to save to your calendar on the [Festival Registration page](#). These are set in order for us to deliver the best experience we can for both exhibitors and visitors, and to make sure that all requirements and expectations are met for the locations too.

Q: Are there any themes that are highly relevant for the 2024 edition?

The Festival will span STEM disciplines represented across the University of Southampton, and will also include arts and humanities disciplines.

Interdisciplinary events or activities are always welcome, including collaborative projects with arts and humanities researchers, local artists, schools, cultural venues, and community groups.

The national British Science Week's 2024 theme is '[Time](#)'.

Q: What support is available to exhibitors?

The UoS Festival team can provide some support for your event, depending on the demand, resources, and timescale, as follows:

- **Educational resources** (restricted to UoS users): a dedicated series of online resources, from handouts to recorded seminars and interactive resources, spanning from digital platform selection to event organisation and social media marketing are available on the [UoS Festival SharePoint site](#). More

resources can be also found on the [Public Engagement with Research unit SharePoint site](#), including a guide on [planning your public engagement](#).

- **Training:** depending on demand, we offer ad-hoc seminars to UoS members to help craft their event/activity. These are usually advertised on the [Public Engagement Network MS Teams channel](#) (restricted to UoS users).
- **Drop-in sessions:** we offer drop-in sessions in MS Teams (from Wednesday 3rd January 2024, 60 minutes, 13:00 – 14:00) to all UoS members to discuss their event/activity, without the need to book a 1-2-1 meeting. Links will be available on the [UoS Festival SharePoint site](#) in the Upcoming Events section. The sessions will be advertised on the [Public Engagement Network MS Teams channel](#) (restricted to UoS users).
- **Consulting:** we can provide 1-2-1 support for events or activities, from planning and design to delivery and evaluation. Please get in touch at festival@soton.ac.uk if you want to discuss your ideas with us.
- **Technical support:** the PERu team owns a [StreamYard](#) account that is used for live broadcasting on the [UoS Festival YouTube channel](#) and the [UoS Engagement Facebook page](#). We also provide technical support for some online and in-person events. Please get in touch at festival@soton.ac.uk as soon as possible if you want to discuss streaming with us or require further support.
- **Exhibitors' guidelines booklet:** provided to all activity leads for live online or in-person events, with information on how to prepare and what to expect on the day, from accessibility recommendations to safeguarding, marketing and line of conduct. Activity leads and their team must familiarise themselves with all the information provided in advance of the event.
- **Online event package:** for live online events, the booklet will be accompanied by branded material to use and key communications to send out through the chat during your live event(s).
- **Science and Engineering Day:** the UoS Festival team curates the programme, leads on the organisation and coordinates the delivery of the event.
 - Locations and spaces will be assigned after Stage 1 submission has closed. Trestle tables, poster boards, access to main power, T-shirts and lunch vouchers will be provided to all exhibitors who made a formal request through the registration form. Student Ambassadors support will be automatically assigned to activities that require check-in (through the UoS Festival's Eventbrite account).
 - Special requirements for activity location and delivery (e.g. marquee, crowd barriers, access to water, desired alteration to the room/location), must be requested at Stage 1 of the registration process, so these can be assessed thoroughly and actioned.
 - The UoS Festival team can support a few activities that have no access to other funds to cover minor costs (up to £200), but we strongly encourage everyone to seek support first from their School, Department, Institute or Faculty. Any small financial support must be agreed in writing with us before the activity takes place.
 - The UoS Festival team will NOT provide any type of logistic and financial support for a) the employment of student ambassadors/helpers for specific activities; b) for the employment of

photographers or videomakers for specific activities; c) for any type of catering for single activities/events; d) and for the management of competitions connected to single activities.

- PLEASE NOTE: in line with our event being free to all, selling of goodies, including books, CDs and memberships is prohibited at Science and Engineering Day.
- **Eventbrite:** we have a dedicated [UoS Festival Eventbrite](#) account and we invite all UoS exhibitors to advertise their event booking through our channel for ease of management/evaluation and consistency of communication.
 - For all external exhibitors, we will provide the Southampton Science and Engineering Festival banner and some text to include in your Eventbrite page description to match all our other events. In addition, you will receive some customised text for a 'Thank you!' message to send to all registering guests after your event took place.

For enquiries regarding any other type of support, please email the UoS Festival team at festival@soton.ac.uk

Q: How is Southampton Science and Engineering Festival advertised?

The UoS Festival team and the UoS Engagement and Advancement team will advertise the event through several channels to maximise reach locally, nationally and internationally.

Social media will be a major channel for events promotion, counting also on the support of other relevant teams across the University, including Marketing and Communications, Alumni, International Office and Students Communication.

Please note: **we also count on each exhibitor's support to advertise their own activities or events through their social media, blogs, web sites or other communication channels.** This will help marketing the event to different audiences in the UK and internationally.

In-person and digital events will also be advertised through the **UoS Festival mailing list** (2.3K+ subscribers), as well as on **regional event websites**. Some online and in-person events will also be advertised as part of the British Science Week programme on their official website.

Some exhibitors will also be invited to promote Southampton Science and Engineering Festival and Science and Engineering Day on **local radio and television**. These opportunities will be supported by the UoS Media Relations team.

For Southampton Science and Engineering Festival, **posters and flyers** will be distributed in venues across the Southampton, Eastleigh and Winchester area. The

team at Widening Participation and Social Mobility will distribute copies at a few local schools and post announcements on national websites.

Printed copies of poster and flyers can be requested at festival@soton.ac.uk

Q: How is accessibility considered at Southampton Science and Engineering Festival?

We do our very best to make Science and Engineering Festival accessible to everyone whether it is our recent digital version or face-to-face.

The **official website** has tools to enhance contrast, by inverting colours, and increasing/decreasing font size. All the activities will be coded for accessibility and age suitability.

For **online events**, we ask exhibitors to consider suitable options, such as platforms with live captions, and making sure slides are carefully designed to follow best accessibility practice.

We ask all exhibitors to bear in mind accessibility issues with their online or in-person events and activities, and to provide alternative options (e.g. handouts) to make sure no one misses out.

For **Science and Engineering Day**, the website will host a dedicated page focused exclusively on accessibility. Maps, name badges, stickers, ear defenders, a BSL interpreter at some shows and quiet rooms are amongst the series of support measures that will be in place on the day.

If you have further questions or recommendations regarding accessibility, please email the UoS Festival team at festival@soton.ac.uk

Q: How is Southampton Science and Engineering Festival evaluated?

The UoS Festival team has developed a set of tools for the evaluation of the Festival as a whole. If we receive feedback on specific activities or events, we will do our best to gather and share this with the relevant exhibitors. Please note, we will not share any personal data collected throughout these platforms with any third-party provider.

- **Online live events evaluation – “Today’s Event”**: to capture immediate reactions and build knowledge of our audience. By invitation in closing remarks of event host (link posted in the chat) and via follow up email (Eventbrite bookings).

- **In-person events:** feedback form in "Thank you!" email (Eventbrite bookings).
- **Science and Engineering Day:** An anonymous survey sent just after 24 hours in the 'Thank you' email to all visitors that checked-in on the day (online).
- **Exhibitors, event team and student ambassadors:** at the end of the Festival, all exhibitors, student ambassadors and the event team will receive a dedicated Evaluation form, where they can provide useful insights and feedback to the UoS Festival team.
- **Systems/Social Media analytics:** via booking system, Eventbrite, hashtags, platform insights, etc.

Alongside this central evaluation provision, all exhibitors should consider the evaluation requirements for their own activities, and design/run evaluation accordingly (in line with their specific engagement purposes). Explore a few support resources on the [PERu SharePoint site](#) (restricted to UoS users) or on the [NCCPE website](#) for more guidance.

Q: What other events can I contribute towards?

For Southampton Science and Engineering Festival you can contribute with one or more **digital** or **in-person** events or activities.

The UoS Festival team will directly organise **Science and Engineering Day** as an in-person event in 2024. Internal and external exhibitors are welcome to submit one or more activities for the day.

Apart from Southampton Science and Engineering Festival, the UoS Festival team at the Public Engagement with Research unit organises a number of family-friendly events across the year.

Our [Southampton Arts and Humanities Festival](#), formerly called Human Worlds Festival, runs every year in November to coincide with the [Being Human festival](#) and is the University of Southampton's annual celebration of Humanities and the Arts. It is a free series of public events to explore the world of humanities, the arts and beyond. The Festival usually concludes with [Hands-on Humanities Day](#), a free family-friendly event with interactive hands-on activities, workshops, and talks from across our Faculties, taking place at the Avenue Campus.

Together with Southampton Arts and Humanities Festival, you can contribute towards related special events including **Black History Month** (October), **UK Disability History Month** (November-December) and **LGBT+ History Month** (February).

For past events, please watch some of the recordings on the [UoS Festival YouTube channel](#) .

Q: I have another question - how do I get in touch?

Southampton Science and Engineering Festival, including Science and Engineering Day, is organised by the UoS Festival team - part of the [Public Engagement with Research unit](#) (PERu) at the University of Southampton - who curate all sides of the event from planning to evaluation and reports directly to the SOTSEF Steering Group, chaired by Professor Mark Spearing.

If you are a member of the University of Southampton, you can use the [Public Engagement Network](#) channel in MS Teams to get (or share!) advice, tips and suggestions.

Alternatively, and for any external enquiries, please email the core UoS Festival team at festival@soton.ac.uk (inbox monitored regularly from Monday to Friday, 9:00 – 17:00, but response time may be slower at busy times e.g. just before and during the Festival).