

# Becoming part of an active alumni network

## Hints and tips for alumni activities

- Page 1 – Introduction
- Page 1 – Why do alumni want to come together?
- Page 2 – The role of a Group Contact
- Page 2 – Getting started
- Page 3 – Organising a group meeting/event
- Page 6 – Frequently asked questions

## Best practice guidelines for Contacts, Groups and Associations

- Page 7 – Definitions of Contacts, Groups and Associations
- Page 8 – Operational guidelines for Contacts, Groups and Associations
- Page 9 – Becoming a University-recognised Contact, Group or Association

# **Becoming part of an active alumni network**

## **Introduction**

With over 270,000 alumni worldwide, the University of Manchester network is one that we hope you will want to remain connected with, or re-connect with after your graduation – no matter how many years have passed since you left the University.

Whether you just want to get a few fellow alumni together or set up a formally recognised association with a full programme of events, you may find the following information of use.

## **Why do alumni want to come together?**

We find that the most successful organised groups of alumni are those that have a clear idea of why they want to connect, are motivated, self-starting and organise things with the help and support of staff in the Division of Development and Alumni Relations.

You'll probably already know what type of alumni you want to be connected with and why, but here are a few reasons that alumni like to keep in touch:

- To meet with alumni living in the same area
- To be in contact with alumni who studied the same subject
- To meet with alumni who work in the same professional discipline
- To network with fellow alumni for career development purposes
- To socialise with fellow alumni
- To operate as a group in order to support young alumni and/or current Manchester students from your country
- To remain in contact with the University through an organised group

The Best Practice Guidelines (from page 7 of this document) describes the three ways in which the University recognises alumni activity – Contacts, Groups and Associations. Contacts are invaluable in starting any organised alumni activity in an area and are individual alumni who are keen to connect with other alumni. If there are a number of alumni with similar reasons for connecting, these will at first form an alumni Group. Once a group is established, has a number of active members (some of whom are happy to take on positions of responsibility for the group as a whole) and starts to plan a programme of events and initiatives that are of interest to a wide group of alumni, then it is possible for a group to become an Association.

We are aware that many alumni socialise and network together without letting the University know, but if you tell us about your activities we can help and support you along the way. Details of the benefits of forming a group and becoming an Association are detailed in the Best Practice Guidelines (from page 7).

Groups and Associations are a great way to stay in touch with friends and make new contacts. They provide valuable networking opportunities and keep alumni in touch with the University.

## **The role of the Group Contact**

Here are some of the things you may be involved in as a Group Contact.

### **First point of contact:**

As a recognised contact for your group or area, you may be the first point of contact for local alumni, University staff (Division of Development and Alumni Relations (DDAR), the International Office, visiting academics etc) or current students wishing to find out more about working in your special interest area. Having a network of alumni volunteers within your group will help the group run smoothly without too much work for one person and will bring a compliment of skills to the group.

### **Organise and/or promote events:**

With the help of our office and volunteers from your group, you may want to organise social or professional events for alumni in your group (you can find more tips on organising events later in this document). The University may hold official events in your area, which you could promote to your group members. When academics or members of staff from the University are visiting the area, you may want to promote this to your group so relevant connections are made.

### **Keep in touch with DDAR:**

Some groups need limited support from DDAR but we'd love to know the latest developments and activities of your group so we can promote this to other alumni or current students in your area or soon to move there and ensure we have the most current contact and business details for alumni in your group.

### **Promote DDAR activities:**

You may like to let your group members know about supporting the University. This could be through volunteering activities (providing career profiles for prospective students, hosting internships, attending recruitment events) or donating to the University (supporting scholarships, research or student experience initiatives).

## **Getting Started**

If you would like to set up a formally recognised group, email [alumni@manchester.ac.uk](mailto:alumni@manchester.ac.uk) and we will then work with you to set up the group, provide advice and help to promote your group to other alumni in your special interest area.

### **Having a social media presence**

Setting up a LinkedIn profile, Facebook page, Twitter account or a presence on social media particular to your geographical area such as Weibo, may be a good way to gather alumni interested in your special interest and enable you to contact them easily. This may also help you find enthusiastic volunteers that you can call on to support group activities, and find out what kind of activities/involvement your members want from the group. If you decide to do this, we can help promote your page to other alumni.

### **Deciding your Group objectives**

This can be aided by using social media platforms or organising an initial meeting with interested alumni to find out what activities the group's members are interested in. Are they interested in an annual social, informal meet up, a monthly professional networking opportunity, or meeting travelling academics to talk about the University's research? It may be one, or a combination of activities your members are interested in.

## ***Are members interested in being an active member and assisting with the Group? If so how?***

- Help organise alumni events and activities.
- Help with communications for the group such as newsletters or the website.
- Welcome and orientate alumni who are visiting or newly re-located to the area.
- Help new graduates with career advice and how to find jobs locally.
- Volunteer to help The University of Manchester International Office staff during recruitment events.
- Help to keep addresses up to date for alumni in your area.
- Arrange membership benefits for alumni such as discounts with commercial companies.
- Fund a scholarship for a deserving student to study at The University of Manchester.

We can also help you decide on your group objectives and in finding volunteer alumni by distributing a survey to alumni in your area.

### **Organising a Group meeting/event**

#### **Type of meeting/event**

Based on feedback from your members, decide on what type of event you may want to organise. You may want to keep the first few events quite simple and informal while interest gathers for your group, e.g. a chat in a cafe or bar or informal meal.

When, and if, you do want to organise something more elaborate you should have an idea of a budget for the event – remember to consider all costs such as transport, car parking, and accommodation, and carefully consider how many people you expect to attend and how much they would be willing to pay.

#### **Set a date and time**

We recommend that you set a date at least two months in advance, especially if this is the first meeting of the Group. You may want to think about clashes with popular national, religious or sporting events and school holidays that may affect attendance at your event. Previously weekday events straight after work have been successful, however this may be different for your special interest group.

#### **Choosing a venue**

It is likely you will have the best knowledge of venues in your area, however if you would like advice we may be able to suggest some venues. Think of a venue that is easily accessible to the majority of alumni in your area and suits the needs of your event e.g. if you are having an informal chat, you may want a side room in a hotel or restaurant which will allow alumni to identify each other easily and won't be too loud. You may want to find a venue that will not charge to hire, to simplify your event.

#### **Who to invite**

The reunion should be open to all alumni from The University of Manchester who are interested in your special interest. However, you should also consider whether the invitation is open to friends, partners and children.

#### **Inviting alumni**

Once you have decided on a date, the alumni team can help promote the event to other alumni who may be interested in attending. Depending on the event and amount of notice we are given we may be able to:

- Put a message on the Your Manchester Online website
- Include the event on our online events calendar
- Send an email to alumni in the area
- Promote the event on social media (Twitter, Facebook, LinkedIn, etc)
- Include the event in the monthly e-newsletter

Those invited will be asked to RSVP to you directly and to let you have their contact details should you need to contact them for any reason. Please remember to let the alumni team know who is attending your event.

### **Confirmation email**

Two weeks before the meeting/event arrange for the alumni relations team to send out a confirmation email of time and venue and any other necessary details.

### **Other points to consider**

You may need to check with the authorities in your country to see whether or not the Group needs to be formally registered with them before you can hire venues.

### **At the event**

You may want to consider the following in advance of your event:

- Take pictures – capture the event so you can populate your social media page and increase interest in future events. You may want to tweet pictures on the evening, or send them to DDAR to use online.
- Business cards – you may want to collect business cards to share with DDAR so we can update alumni details to support your future events and activities.
- Capture memories – asking alumni about their time with the University can be a great conversation starter and deepen their engagement with your group. You could use quotes on your social media page or send them to us to put in alumni publications and promote your alumni group.
- Promote volunteering and giving – some alumni may want to know how they can support the University in additional ways. Alumni can give their time and expertise or donate to the University. They can visit Your Manchester Online for more information or email [alumni@manchester.ac.uk](mailto:alumni@manchester.ac.uk).
- Feedback – you may want to ask your alumni group members at the event what activity they would like to see in the future, and also if any of them are keen to volunteer to help you organise future events.

### **After the event**

Congratulations, you've organised a successful alumni event for your group! It would be great if you could consider the following:

- Let us know how it went! Write up a short paragraph on the event and send to us with a photo – we can promote the success of your event in our communications.
- Send us updated alumni contact and business details, along with an attendance list, so we can update the database to support you in future events and activities.
- Send a follow up/thank you email to those that attended. This is also an opportunity to ask for feedback and suggestions if you didn't manage to ask at the actual event.

## Frequently Asked Questions

### **If alumni live outside of the UK, can they still volunteer for the University?**

Yes there are lots of ways alumni all over the world can support current students. Some suggestions are below:

- Provide a Career or University Experience profile – we can share these with prospective and current students to help them make degree and career decisions.
- Provide internships or work placements for current students.
- Facilitate business or research links with the University.
- Mentor current students on the Manchester Gold Mentoring Programme. This can be through mentoring one student over the course of a year.
- Attend recruitment events organised by the International Office, or answer questions from prospective students on your experiences.

### **I live internationally, can I donate?**

Alumni from around the world support scholarships, research and student experience through donations to the University. Large or small, all donations are very important to us and collectively make a huge difference to students at The University of Manchester. For more information on donating to the University, [please click here](#) (if reading this electronically) or visit this web page <http://www.yourmanchester.manchester.ac.uk/netcommunity/support-manchester>.

### **Can I collect data myself?**

DDAR will send out invitations and communications to alumni on behalf of group contacts, to abide by UK data protection laws. If a group becomes an association, it is possible to share alumni data with formally recognised contacts if the appropriate paperwork is in place. The easiest way to communicate with your alumni directly should you wish is to use a social media page, such as LinkedIn or Facebook.

### **Is there any funding available?**

The University of Manchester will not routinely fund alumni groups and their activities – you may want to consider events that are free to run, or sell tickets to events.

# Best Practice Guidelines for Contacts, Groups and Associations of the Alumni Association

**These guidelines should be read in conjunction with the Constitution of the overall University of Manchester Alumni Association and any relevant Memorandum of Association and Confidentiality Agreement.**

## Definitions

The University, its Board of Governors, the overall Alumni Association and its Advisory Board, recognises three types of representation within the alumni body. These are detailed in paragraph 10 of the Constitution of the Alumni Association and are the following – **Contacts, Groups and Associations:**

- **Associations** are formally constituted with and recognised by The University of Manchester  
Definition - A collective of alumni who regularly meet and/or engage with each other and the University, with at least three members willing to take office as President, Secretary and Treasurer (or equivalent). All the Officers of the Association will act as 'Contacts' for the Association (see below).
- **Groups** are formally recognised by the University of Manchester.  
Definition - A collective of alumni who regularly meet up and/or engage with each other and the University. At least one person acts as a 'Contact' for the group (see below).
- **Contacts** are individual alumni who are formally recognised by the University as alumni contacts.  
Definition - An alumna/us who acts as a contact point for both other alumni and the University in a given city, region or country.

A Contact's primary University connection for the purpose of alumni activity will be staff in the Division of Development and Alumni Relations, but he or she may be contacted by staff from other parts of the University such as the International Office or academic staff planning on visiting their area.

The Contact's details (including name and email address) will be displayed on Your Manchester Online.

The three types of representation are sub-divisions of the overall Alumni Association based on their own 'special interest' category, for example geography (local, regional or international), professional discipline, subject of study, hall of residence and so on.

All three types of representation must be formally recognised by the University and it is the responsibility of the individual 'Contacts' to contact the Division of Development and Alumni Relations with their request to be formally recognised.

## **Operational guidelines for Contacts, Groups and Associations**

### **All three types of representation, once formally recognised, are subject to the following guidelines:**

- Will receive administrative support from the Division of Development and Alumni Relations commensurate to the size and activity of the group/association/event/initiative.
- Will receive regular news and updates from across the University via email newsletter
- Will receive help in publicising events and initiatives to alumni in their particular special interest category.
- Will allow the Division of Development and Alumni Relations to promote group and association activities as widely as practicable using electronic and postal services.
- The University will not routinely fund the activities of alumni such as paying room hire or catering charges for events not organised by the University.

### **Associations have additional guidelines as detailed below:**

- Associations are able to use The University of Manchester name and logo on promotional materials, including on the internet, subject to University branding guidelines.
- The University is able to share relevant alumni details with an Association, subject to an Officer of the Association signing a Confidentiality Agreement and will only be shared in line with the University's UK Data Protection registration and all relevant EU and national laws.
- Any data shared may only be used for agreed purposes and must not be used for fundraising purposes without the express permission of the University.
- The University will only formally recognise and publish the details of one association per geographical area.
- The University will engage the help of the Association to support its promotion and organisation of University-sponsored events or initiatives.
- Associations should demonstrate continuing activity by holding at least one event per annum that is promoted to all alumni in their country/region/special interest group via the Division of Development and Alumni Relations.
- Associations should consult with the alumni in their country/region/special interest group at least once per annum, via the Division of Development and Alumni Relations to ascertain the types of activities and initiatives wanted by the alumni.
- Associations should submit a written report to the Division of Development and Alumni Relations for presentation to the Advisory Board each year on request.
- Associations should submit a planned schedule of events/activities to the Division of Development and Alumni Relations for presentation to the Advisory Board each year on request.
- Associations should submit annual Financial Statements to the Division of Development and Alumni Relations for presentation to the Advisory Board on request.
- The University of Manchester will not routinely fund alumni associations – associations may wish to consider how they will fund activities and whether to charge alumni a subscription fee and/or sell tickets to events.

## **Becoming a University- recognised Contact, Group or Association**

### **Contacts**

Alumni wishing to become individual Contacts should email staff in the DDAR at [alumni@manchester.ac.uk](mailto:alumni@manchester.ac.uk) expressing their request. A member of the Alumni team will then respond in order to answer any questions and organise this. Contacts will be asked to sign a 'Contact Agreement' which should be returned to the Division of Development and Alumni Relations. The contact will then be deemed formally recognised by the University.

### **Groups**

Groups of alumni wishing to form a University-recognised Group should nominate a Contact to email [alumni@manchester.ac.uk](mailto:alumni@manchester.ac.uk) expressing their request. A member of the Alumni team will then respond in order to answer any questions and organise this. That Group Contact will be asked to sign a 'Group Agreement' on behalf of the group. The Group will be deemed formally recognised on the acceptance of the signed 'Group Agreement' by the Officers of the overall Alumni Association

### **Associations**

Alumni wishing to establish an Association should submit a written proposal to the DDAR (emailed to [alumni@manchester.ac.uk](mailto:alumni@manchester.ac.uk)) detailing the following:

- The Association's Objectives
- The Association's structure including proposed positions of Office and possible candidates
- Proposed activities/initiatives for the following 6-12 months. This might include a consultation process, actual events and a meeting of interested individuals.

You may also wish to consider how any activities are to be funded, e.g. by alumni subscription or selling tickets for events.

This proposal will then be reviewed by Alumni Relations staff to make sure it adheres to the University's strategic goals and if all is in order will ask the Association representative (usually the President) to sign and 'Association Agreement' that will be submitted to the University Board of Governors and the Officers of the Advisory Board for consideration. Once this agreement has been accepted the Association will be deemed formally constituted and recognised by the University.

**If a contact, group or association is unable to adhere to the above guidelines (detailed on pages 6 – 8 of this document) or wilfully brings the University into disrepute, formal recognition will cease and the University will cease to provide support.**