

Checklist/tips for an international alumni relations and events

Messaging that can be shared with alumni:

The University is currently seeking to increase its contact with and support of active alumni around the world, and has a goal of having an alumni group or association in every country or region where there are alumni who want to connect with each other and the University.

With this in mind we have developed a document on guidelines and hints and tips aimed at alumni groups, which details the types of support an alumni group can expect from the Division of Development and Alumni Relations, and also details the level of commitment and responsibilities that alumni groups have in relation to their activities conducted under the name of the University. (This document can be found on the alumni web pages but is also attached).

The University is focussing on its internationalisation and is looking to its alumni to support its international activities when appropriate. Details of how this can be done can be found within the aforementioned guidelines.

There is an annual alumni magazine, and a monthly e-newsletter sent out to alumni. If they are not receiving these, then we do not have up to date contact details for them, so please encourage alumni to update their details online at <http://www.manchester.ac.uk/alumni/>.

Services that DDAR can offer to travelling colleagues who will be meeting with alumni for the purposes of engagement or recruitment:

- Emails to alumni inviting them to an event
- Biographical data on the alumni registered to attend the event (age, degree details, etc)
- Information on prior activity of individual alumni and alumni groups in the city/region/country
- Information on business/career details of attending alumni

Preparing for an event:

- Know who is attending, and a little bit about them (including whether they are already active with the University).
- Prepare a guest list with name and degree details on it (year and subject).
- Name badges at an event help, especially if they also have their degree details on them. It will help alumni find each other, and will help the organiser recognise people they really wish to speak to. Use sticky labels for badges, they are easy to print on and light to carry when travelling.
- Enlist the help of existing alumni volunteers to staff registration desks, they are great advocates for being involved alumni.
- If you can use a venue you know, or can visit beforehand, this will help in your planning. However, always arrive early to sort out any unforeseen problems, so you can spend time networking/meeting alumni at the event itself rather than organising tables and chairs, etc.
- Take light Manchester branded freebies (pens, etc), alumni love these.
- Make sure the venue has a large bowl that you can collect business cards in at the reception desk (you can also use these to do a prize draw if you like – the prize is an incentive for them to put their cards in the bowl). Have spare pieces of paper handy to write people's contact details on in case they haven't brought business cards. Collect the cards at the end and bring back to DDAR so we can update our alumni database.
- Don't worry, it's normal for up to 30% of registrants to be 'no shows' on the day, especially if an event is free. There are usually some people who attend, who did not register as well.

At the event:

- Know which alumni you absolutely need to speak to and make sure that happens.
- Open an event with a welcome that includes a message about how important they are to the University and how you hope this event will begin or continue a fruitful relationship between alumni of the area and the University. Also, make sure you ask alumni to make themselves known to you if they are particularly interested in volunteering for recruitment events, or becoming part of an active alumni group.
- Definitely take charge of the event, especially if there is no organised alumni group in attendance. At the end of your welcome, invite alumni to use the opportunity to network with each other, make new contacts, share business details, etc)
- We find that informal drinks (alcoholic or otherwise depending on the region and time of day) reception style events work best (and they are usually cost effective), but they must have a focus (networking, informal presentation on University developments, volunteer recruitment).
- If you see an alumnus/a standing alone, introduce them to another alumnus (name badges with degree details are worth their weight in gold under these circumstances as you will know who would be a good introduction without referring to your guest list.
- If someone hands you a business card and asks a particular question about the University that you can't answer straight away, write the question on the back of the card and promise to get back to them. Keep these cards separate to those from the reception table bowl as they will need specific action. You can also pass them on to the member of staff back at the University who is best placed to answer the question, or action the query.
- Attendees who have not registered should put their details on the guest list so you have a complete record of attendees.

After the event:

- Gather business cards to bring back to DDAR/other colleagues
- Let DDAR know who attended and who did not turn up (indicate to DDAR who might be good alumni group organisers).
- Follow up any particular questions/queries from alumni, or pass them on to other University colleagues.