



Volunteer Toolkit

A guide to help alumni set-up a network

The University of Wolverhampton celebrates our alumni and encourages individuals to remain connected with the University and each other post-graduation.

We are pleased that you have expressed an interest in setting up a network in your area; you may find the following information of use in helping you do so.

Alumni & Development Office

1. Before you start

First of all, your commitment to the University is voluntary and we understand that you have other commitments and may be unable to fulfil your role after a period of time.

Dedicated alumni are instrumental to our success and help the University of Wolverhampton build real relationships and connections with fellow alumni in purposeful, exciting ways. By volunteering your time and energy, you have joined a group of dynamic alumni network volunteers who are committed to supporting the University and linking alumni with each other. Thank you for taking this first step in the journey.

2. How our volunteers make a difference

Benefits for Alumni

Alumni networks provide a fantastic social and professional networking opportunity for you to network with other alumni in your area. A few reasons that alumni want to come together include:

- socialising with alumni living in the same area
- connecting with alumni who studied the same subject
- career networking with alumni who work in the same professional discipline
- staying in contact with the University through an organised group
- giving back to support the University

Alumni network volunteers are invaluable in starting any organised alumni activity in an area and are individual alumni who are keen to connect with other alumni.

Benefits for the University of Wolverhampton

The University wants to maintain a close relationship with alumni and help foster relationships with other University of Wolverhampton graduates. Our alumni are our greatest advocates. Alumni network volunteers help the University:

- to stay connected to alumni across the world
- to keep alumni data up to date
- with student recruitment
- with student placements and employment

Our alumni networks are spread across the world and we value the diversity of our alumni. Each group and each region is different, which will be reflected in how the group is organised. Many groups are quite informal, arranging one or two social events or reunions per year; whilst others choose to be more formal, meeting more regularly to network professionally.

If there is no alumni network in your area and you would like to start one, the Alumni & Development Office can offer support and advice to get you started. 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.

Volunteer Responsibilities

As a University of Wolverhampton volunteer, we require your commitment and help with some of the following:

- Act as a recognised contact, as Ambassador/Head of network, for the University, students and alumni in your area, using your local knowledge to provide advice on local culture, geography, travel etc.
- Support with international recruitment in your country by promoting Wolverhampton to friends and acquaintances and to serve as a point of contact for prospective students seeking an informal source of information about the University and life in the UK. Support the International Office staff at recruitment events.
- Promote University of Wolverhampton activities to alumni in your area e.g. when members of staff from the University are visiting your area or hosting official events. You will receive updates on recent developments and news from us to disseminate to alumni in your area.
- Promote our activities to alumni in your area, letting them know about ways to support the University through volunteering activities such as providing career profiles for prospective students, providing student placements/ internships, speaking at events, e-mentoring students, supporting at recruitment events, facilitating business or research links with the University or donating to the University.
- Organise at least one event/activity per year. We can help promote your event by sending invitations and using our social media channels.
- Keep in touch with and let us know the latest development and alumni activities in your area.
- Keep alumni details up to date, encourage alumni in your area to update their details by completing the [online update form](#).

Our office will work with you to highlight the key activities and duties most relevant to the alumni in your area.

3. Setting up a network – how to start

Getting Started

Notify us – Visit our webpage and complete a request to start a new group [form](#).

Survey alumni - If you would like to set up a formally recognised alumni network, we recommend that there are at least 100 alumni in your target network (we will confirm the approximate number of alumni living in and around your area). We will then send a survey to relevant alumni to ascertain interest in joining and participating in the network. The response to the survey will determine whether the network receives approval to be formed.

Appointed as a volunteer - Once you agree to become a University of Wolverhampton volunteer, with your permission, we can publish your email address on the alumni network webpage as a recognised contact for your network. Alternatively, those wishing to contact you can email the Alumni & Development Office and we forward the initial queries on to you. It will also be great to add your photograph on the alumni network webpage if you happy to.

Be social - We recommend you have a social media presence. This may also help you find other enthusiastic volunteers that you can call on to support network activity. We can set up a social media page as suitable. Typically, the Alumni Office would be a co-administrator of any social media page (for oversight), alongside the ambassador(s) volunteer, who is responsible for page content and engagement.

Announcement – we will then announce your appointment to alumni associated with your network via email, social media, and other marketing means as appropriate, promoting the network's social media page as a way to connect professionally and socially.

4. Plan a launch event

There are several different types of events that you can organise based on your group objectives. 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. You can also coordinate an event to coincide with a visit from University of Wolverhampton staff. We can let you know if anyone from the University will be travelling to your area.

Budget - 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. The events should be self-financing. Often alumni are quite happy to pay for their own food, drinks, etc.

Date and time – we recommend that you set a date at least three months in advance, especially if this is the first meeting of the group. You may want to think about working hours, clashes with popular national, religious or sporting events and school holidays that may affect attendance at your event.

Location – think of a venue that is easily accessible to the majority of alumni 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. You may also 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.

Format – The format of your event should be bespoke to your audience. We recommend you consider your budget when planning the format and activities. The event format should consider objectives, catering, refreshments and whether any entertainment is required. For special occasions, we will consider requests for University branded gifts to be provided.

Bookings – consider how alumni guests are going to book and pay (if applicable). You may wish to provide a receipt and have a refund policy (possibly in the form of email).

Inviting alumni - The next step is to promote the event to alumni, via invitations and advertising. We will send an email on your behalf to alumni (for data protection reasons, initial contact need to be made through our office). Also, we shall promote the event via relevant University social media channels, our event webpage, University stakeholders and other relevant resources. Hopefully there will be sufficient interest and some may also offer to assist in the organisation of the event. In addition, you may have alumni contacts to approach on a personal/professional basis and invite them to attend an event.

*Remember, you know your area better than we do—plan what you think would attract the most people.

5. At the event

You may want to consider the following at your event:

Take a register – Capture a record of who has attended to share with us.

Welcome – Be on hand to meet and greet guests. Also, we recommend making a formal speech once guests have arrived, providing a welcome, association updates and talking about future plans and the important role alumni can play supporting the University, and how.

Take pictures – capture the event so you can populate our social media page and increase interest in future events. You may want to post pictures on the evening and tag the alumni social media channels in, or send them to us to use online.

Business cards – you may want to collect business cards to share with us so we can update alumni details to support your future events and activities. These will also be useful for your networking and future event planning purposes.

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. Latest volunteer options can be viewed [here](#).

Feedback – you may want to ask your alumni group members at the event what activity they would like to see in the future.

We are always on hand in the office to support you and offer advice.

6. After the event

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 it to us with photos to promote the success of your event in our communications.

Send us alumni contact details – including an attendance list, along with copies of any business cards you acquire, so we can update the database to support you in future events and activities.

Thank you email - send to those who attended. This is also an opportunity to ask for feedback and suggestions if you didn't get to ask at the actual event.

Thank you

Thank you for volunteering your time to represent the University, we value your support.

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A message from the University of Wolverhampton Hong Kong Alumni Association

Through the participation in the Hong Kong Alumni Association, our alumni members can continue to benefit from our lifelong education journey through the continued interaction with and support from our alma mater. This fulfils the prophecy of our life.

Anthony Kam
Chairman

