



Connecting with alumni

A guide for student clubs and societies

University of Bristol alumni



The University of Bristol alumni community is made up of more than 260,000 graduates who were once students like you. Our alumni live all over the world, and many of them enjoy staying connected to the University. They do this in a range of ways, from subscribing to our newsletters and attending events, to volunteering for our mentoring programmes or donating towards scholarships.



Alumni volunteering creates a powerful cycle of support within the University community. Alumni can share real experiences, practical advice and lessons learned from their own journeys, helping students feel more confident about their futures. In return, volunteers stay connected to the University and continue growing through those relationships themselves.

Hsu Yati Khin
(MSc 2025)



The benefits of engaging alumni in your activities

Another way some alumni stay connected is by getting involved in student club and society activities, particularly with those they were members of during their time at the University, or ones which are relevant to their current job or hobbies.



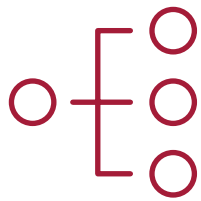
By engaging alumni in your activities, you can:

- find interesting speakers or panel members for events to help boost attendance
- create amazing networking opportunities for your members and enable alumni to reconnect with the University community
- hear their stories and learn from their experiences and expertise
- gain career advice and support, such as opening doors to mentoring possibilities
- have help organising reunions and other events for alumni of your group.

How we can help you engage with alumni



We can help you engage alumni in your activities in various ways, which may include:



- identifying alumni for specific roles and events, such as:
 - a speaker for a panel event
 - mentors for a mentoring scheme
 - attendees for a networking event
- inviting your alumni audience to attend your events or updating them on your activities via email
- advertising your events on our [alumni events webpage](#)
- promoting your event on our [LinkedIn group](#)
- helping fund your event through an [Alumni Association Initiative Grant](#) (AAIG) – see below.

Ready to engage with alumni?



Once you've got the details of your event or activity together, please complete the [Working in Partnership form](#).



Please submit your form at least eight weeks before an action is required, and remember to factor in the additional time between sending an event invitation and the event itself.

Example: If the event is on 8 April, you may want an email invitation to go out on 2 March, but we would need your completed form eight weeks before that email date, around early January.

If your request has a short turnaround time, please get in touch with the team directly before submitting the form.

To help us understand how we can best support you in engaging with alumni, please provide as much detail as possible in your responses. Consider gathering the following information (where relevant) before completing the form:

- 1. A clear message or update that you want to send to your alumni audience.**
 - For example, the wording for an event invitation, or a newsletter with photos and short news items. Our Marketing and Communications Team can help with small edits and proofreading.
- 2. Details of the event or activity**, including date, time and venue.
- 3. Details of who you would like to invite** (for example, ex-society members or alumni working in a specific industry) and how they will RSVP.
- 4. We recommend you ask people to register for an event**, even if it's free to attend. This will give you an idea of numbers and the ability to ask for information such as access or dietary requirements. We will ask you to share the list of attendees with us after your event or activity, so please ask them for their graduation year and the course they were on.
- 5. Information that would help attract alumni to your event or activity.**
 - For example, will refreshments be provided? Is there an interesting keynote speaker? Is there any budget to cover speaker travel costs? Are there opportunities to tour your school or department?
- 6. A list of social media channels** that you have available to further promote your event or activity.
- 7. A plan for how you are going to thank the alumni who attend.**
 - We recommend sending a follow-up email within three days of the event or activity – we can assist you with this. You may also want to consider thank you cards or even small thank you presents.



- 8. When inviting alumni as speakers, we advise the following:**
 - For your initial request, summarise what you'd like them to do in just a couple of sentences.
 - Consider what detailed information you will need to provide them with as part of a longer brief, such as:
 - who the audience will be
 - what the venue is like
 - what theme/topic you'd like them to cover
 - how long they should aim to speak for
 - whether there will be other speakers at the same event
 - whether there will be a Q&A session and if these questions can be submitted in advance.
 - Decide who the point of contact will be for the speaker at the event. That person should provide an email address and phone number for questions, and reply to any queries promptly.
 - Think about what you can do to make it a nice experience for the speaker(s). For instance, can you provide refreshments or take them for a meal, or cover travel expenses?
 - Consider how to thank them on the day. This could be a thank you card and small gift such as flowers, chocolates or a [Bristol gift](#). A follow-up email with some photos or nice comments from the event will also be appreciated.

Alumni Association Initiative Grant

Do you need extra funds for a project or activity?
Perhaps you're planning an event or a reunion?



If the primary purpose of your event or activity is to bring alumni together to help build an engaged and supportive community, then you are eligible to apply for an **Alumni Association Initiative Grant**.

Here is some key information about the grants:

- Grants are not capped, but the average award is between £500 and £1,000.
- Grants are there to support events which bring alumni and students together, and which foster community among Bristol graduates. Alumni must be involved in your event for you to be eligible to apply.
- Grants cannot be used for activities which directly support other charities or entrepreneurial projects.
- Grants must be for upcoming activities – no retrospective funding can be granted.
- The Alumni Association Committee will prioritise new ideas and activities in its decision-making.
- Repeat funding is not usually awarded.
- Grants must only be used for the purposes included in the grant application.
- Funds must be returned if a grant is awarded for an activity which does not go ahead – please inform the Alumni Association Committee if circumstances change.



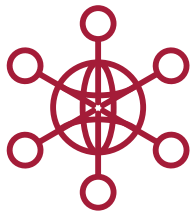
Your grant application should:

- be clear and easy to understand
- be inclusive and for events/activities open to University of Bristol alumni
- include details on what the grant will be used for (for example, venue deposits or digital services)
- include a breakdown of expected costs (for example: 'Venue hire at £400' or 'Catering at £10 a head').



Who are we?

We are the Alumni Engagement Team of the Global Engagement Division (GED). Our aim is to build an active Bristol alumni community that partners with, supports, and advocates for the University.



The Alumni Engagement Team leads on the **alumni volunteering programme** and specialises in bringing the alumni community together through hosting special events and by supporting people volunteering their time, knowledge and experience for our current students and recent graduates.

We're always happy to help and support students who are interested in working with alumni or exploring volunteering opportunities. If you have an idea, a question, or would simply like to chat things through, please don't hesitate to get in touch with us at alumni-volunteers@bristol.ac.uk.



Engaging with alumni

– event checklist

Event planning and administration	
Pre-event planning	
Must dos	Comments
✓ Consider your event purpose – how will your event improve your relationship with alumni, boost alumni engagement, and ensure alumni have a positive experience so they are more likely to engage again?	
✓ Determine what demographics of alumni you want to invite (eg subject studied, degree type, year of graduation, geographic location, SU society etc), while ensuring a diverse audience.	
✓ Seek marketing support from the Alumni Engagement Team. Consider email invitations to alumni and advertising on the University events page. Contact the team.	
Nice-to-haves	Comments
✓ Consider inviting alumni as guest speakers, and involving them in a panel discussion or Q&A.	
✓ Consider applying for an Alumni Association Initiative Grant (AAIG) to financially support your event. Find out more about grants.	
✓ Anticipate and plan networking opportunities between students and alumni. You could create a pre-event questionnaire to determine shared interests and plan conversation starters.	
Event admin	
Must dos	Comments
✓ To anticipate numbers and keep track of which guests are Bristol alumni, set up a ticketing system for the event, even if the event is free to attend; a simple online registration form is sufficient.	
✓ Please use the following text on your registration form, to ensure that all registrants and attendees are aware of how their data will be processed and used: <i>When you join an event supported by the University of Bristol, your data will be held by [NAME OF PERSON OR SOCIETY ORGANISING THE EVENT] (the organiser) and managed in accordance with the Bristol SU Privacy Policy. The organiser will also share this information with the University's alumni team for their records. This will be stored confidentially within the alumni database. You can find out more here: bristol.ac.uk/alumni-your-data</i>	
✓ Communicate efficiently by responding promptly to emails and messages.	
✓ Provide guests with all the information they need about the event and ask if they have any special dietary or access requirements that you should be aware of.	

✓	Brief guests if you require them to fulfil a specific role/task (see the event brief template on the final page).	
✓	Check in with alumni guests three days before the event to make sure they are still attending, feel prepared, and can ask any questions.	
✓	Send a reminder to all guests attending 24 hours before the event (some ticketing platforms will do this for you).	
Nice-to-haves		Comments
✓	Advertise the event through multiple channels and platforms to reach a wide audience, for instance on social media, listing on the alumni events webpage , email invitations, or shout-outs in lectures.	
✓	If possible, offer to cover expenses such as travel, refreshments and food on the day.	
✓	Offer support with transport to and from the event, such as making taxi bookings, providing bus and train timetables or maps.	
On the day of the event		
Must dos		Comments
✓	Assign someone the role of meeting and greeting alumni guests on the day.	
✓	Ensure alumni are comfortable by offering refreshments and providing breaks.	
✓	Have a thank you card and small gift for any special alumni guests or speakers.	
Nice-to-haves		Comments
✓	Provide name badges (or sticky labels) for all guests.	
✓	Encourage and facilitate networking by introducing current students to alumni.	
✓	Offer support with transport to and from event, including booking taxis or providing bus/train timetables.	
Post-event		
Must dos		Comments
✓	Follow up with attendees within three days of the event – send a thank you email and ask for feedback or provide a post-event questionnaire.	
✓	Send any special alumni guests a personalised thank you email. You could include some photos of the event, or positive feedback.	
✓	Send a short event report, including a list of alumni attendees and any photos from the event, to alumni-volunteers@bristol.ac.uk	

Societies we have worked with

University of Bristol Netball Club

We worked with the University of Bristol Netball Club (UBNC) to support their reunion event, helping them to draft invitations to send out to alumni members on our database. They were also awarded a grant from the Alumni Association Committee to support some of the costs of the event. We provided goody bags for the organisers as a thank you for all their hard work.

The day of the event started with a students v alumni netball match, a fantastic way to reconnect with alumni and play with former teammates. They then had an evening social which was a great opportunity for them to network and reminisce on memories of UBNC.



“We received incredibly positive feedback from both alumni and current students that attended. Many alumni wish to attend any future events, and many students have already expressed a wish to engage with UBNC alumni following graduation.

Event organiser from the University of Bristol Netball Club

Chaos Society PhysFest

We supported the Chaos Society’s PhysFest, an annual event to showcase the physics department with in-depth talks, panels, academic discussions and tours of the building.

We assisted the organisers by finding alumni speakers with degrees in physics to speak on the panel and answer questions from the audience, and promoted the event by email to our physics graduates. We also sent the organisers branded decorations for the event.

The organisers received an Alumni Association Initiative grant which went towards training committee members in first aid and supporting costs for alumni tours, which the alumni guests really enjoyed.



“I absolutely loved the whole experience. You have reignited my love of the subject and reminded me why I chose to spend three years studying physics at Bristol from 1989 to 1992.

Alumni attendee of PhysFest

Event Brief Template

You can use this template to create an event brief.

Sections may be deleted as appropriate

Event brief Event name and date/time here	
Venue	Include full address and the name of the room(s) being used
Host	Insert host name (add Bristol degree details if appropriate), job title (business position and company, if appropriate for event)
Speaker	Insert speaker(s) name(s) (add Bristol degree details, if appropriate), job title (business position and company, if appropriate for event)
Number of attendees	Add in number of tickets available, including any breakdown (eg X cheaper tickets for recent grads). Also include any organisers, speakers etc for total numbers
Timings – examples included	Time [Organiser] to arrive at the venue. Locate toilets, fire exits and confirm evacuation protocol with the venue Set up for the event • Check AV • Set up registration desk • Add in whatever else you need to set up eg check water for speakers/check layout of room is correct, put banner up etc
	Time [Speaker] to arrive. [Organiser] to meet, show venue, do sound check and run through timings
	Time [Photographer/musician] to arrive. [Organiser] to show venue and brief
	Time Guests to arrive. Welcome drinks and canapes to be served
	Time [Committee] to encourage guests to take their seats
	Time [Host] to welcome guests, introduce themselves and introduce speaker/event [xx mins]
	Time [Speaker] Lecture/presentation/discussion [xx mins]
	Time [Host] to wrap up, thank speaker, thank guests for attending, advertise next event(s), invite guests to stay for further refreshment [xx mins]
	Time Reception begins. Drinks and canape service resumes
	Time Event ends and guests to depart
	Time [Organiser] and [committee] to pack down event
Disabled guests/ access	Add in any details of guests with access requirements here Add in details about accessibility at the venue such as whether there is a lift, accessible toilets etc
Fire safety	Add in details of the fire evacuation procedure at the venue including where the muster point is
First Aid	Is there a first aider? Does the venue have one?
Photography	Do you need a photographer for your event? Are any committee/organisers able to take photographs or do you need to engage a professional photographer? Are there any particular shots you want to brief your photographer to take? Eg Guests, speakers, organisers or the committee?
Contact numbers	Add in telephone numbers for team helping with event and all host/speaker/student numbers

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www.bristol.ac.uk/alumni

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