OUR ALUMNI COMMUNITY

Thank you for getting involved with the University of Kent’s global alumni community!

There are more than 142,000 Kent alumni living in more than 180 countries worldwide, approximately 110,000 of whom are contactable by either post or email. Our alumni community is one of the University’s biggest assets, particularly important in terms of our international outreach. Our global network of alumni groups is expanding and we have plans to further develop online services for alumni to ensure that our graduates have considerable opportunities for social, career and business networking. You can help by engaging with existing groups or starting one of your own.

Any former student who has studied at Kent for one term (or semester) or more is part of our alumni community. We currently have formal alumni groups in Hong Kong, Malaysia, and Nigeria, and our University of Kent in America (UKA) colleagues are in the process of setting up chapters in Boston, New York, Indiana, Los Angeles, Chicago and Washington D.C. See our Alumni Group case studies on page 21 or our ‘Get Involved’ pages at www.kent.ac.uk/alumni for more information.

The work you do is invaluable to us. Our alumni work tirelessly, both on and off campus, to promote Kent, to assist us at recruitment events, and to help develop our students through employability initiatives, scholarships and bursaries – we just couldn’t do it without you! In return, alumni volunteers can benefit from being part of the University community by expanding your own networks, both personally and professionally.

With sincere thanks for your continued support,

Alison Coles
Director of Development
University of Kent
The University’s 50th anniversary celebrations commence in September 2014 and we need your help! We are building an archive of material, from old course booklets and transcripts to posters, photos and even your memories! Have something to contribute? Email 50years@kent.ac.uk. We don’t want any of our alumni to miss out so encourage your friends to get in touch too!

Here are just some of the many exciting events and activities you could participate in:

1st October 2014
Opening ceremony, Canterbury

2nd October 2014
Opening ceremony, Medway

11th October 2014
School of History Alumni Reunion

29th November 2014
School of English Alumni Reunion

Autumn 2014
USA, Belgium, Asia, Spain visits

Winter 2014
India, South America, Kenya, Nigeria, Middle East, France visits

Spring 2015
UK, Greece, Asia, USA visits

13th June 2015
Kent Law School Reunion

4th – 6th September 2015
University of Kent Alumni Reunion Weekend

Can’t get back on to campus for the 50th anniversary? Don’t worry – you can still get involved!

50th anniversary History Projects
A team of students from the School of History are running 11 projects to document the incredible journey Kent has taken over the last 50 years and you can help by sending them your memories and artefacts.

We are Kent
Make some new memories! Get some friends together and show your Kent pride by downloading one of our We are Kent boards for the perfect Kent photo opp!

The Footsteps Project
Become part of the very fabric of Kent and engrave your memory, message or name on a brick in our new Crab and Winkle Path at the heart of our Canterbury campus. The path recognises the hundreds of thousands of people who have made the University what it is today and is positioned right above the original tunnels of the infamous Crab and Winkle line, the first regular passenger railway route in the UK. All donations received through the project will help build the Kent Opportunity Fund, providing our students with much-needed bursaries, scholarships and student project funding. Get your brick at www.kent.ac.uk/footsteps.

Find out more about our 50th anniversary programme of events and activities at: www.kent.ac.uk/50
WE ARE KENT: GET INVOLVED!

KEW-NET Mentors
Our alumni community have a wealth of expertise and experience to share and the Kent Experiences of Work Network (KEW-NET) is a great way to connect with current students and other alumni and friends and be an informal mentor through our intuitive and easy to use system. Help the next generation of graduates develop their skills and expand your own networks and knowledge base. Learn new skills and get access to our talented alumni and students by join the network here:
www.kent.ac.uk/alumni/getinvolved/advice

Alumni Ambassadors
Alumni Ambassadors represent the University at a variety of recruitment events and activities across the world. If you think you could spare some time to promote Kent to prospective students and strategic partners email us at alumni@kent.ac.uk.

Start your own alumni group
Want to connect with old friends? Expand your networks and develop your skills and expertise? Or maybe just have fun with like-minded Kent alumni? If there isn’t an alumni group near you, or one that shares your interests, then start a new one! All you need is an idea of what kind of group you want (location or interest) and maybe a few alumni friends who can help out. This guide is designed to help you with the next steps to get your group started.

Inspire the next generation
We work very closely with our Careers and Employability Service and with all of our academic schools to help them source skills development and networking opportunities for current students. You can help by hosting talks, providing work experience or industrial placement opportunities, or even just connecting us to people or organisations that would like to get involved.

Find out more about all of the opportunities

www.kent.ac.uk
WHAT IS AN ALUMNI GROUP?

Alumni groups bring together former students of the University who are located in a specific region or have a special interest. Groups are run by a committee of alumni who direct activities and liaise with the University on behalf of their members. Any member of our alumni community can set up a group and no experience of sitting on a committee is required. The University’s Alumni Office is here to help you in establishing the group, inviting members, and to provide help and guidance where required. Most of what you need to know is in this pack but every group is different and if you need more help or advice, just get in touch with us.

Why do we have alumni groups?

The University of Kent is proud of its students and the careers they go on to build. Alumni groups are a chance to celebrate our graduates’ accomplishments and continue their engagement with each other and with Kent. Forming alumni groups helps us to provide former students of the University of Kent with social and professional networking opportunities. Groups also benefit the University by raising its profile in the region in which they operate, acting as a contact point for University staff and prospective students and their families, and by promoting goodwill among alumni. We also turn to our alumni groups for advice and feedback on alumni engagement strategies, recruitment activities and other relevant University initiatives.

Benefits for alumni:

• Providing careers advice, guidance, internships, and otherwise enhancing the employability of current students and recent graduates
• Networking opportunities for social and/or career advancement opportunities
• Knowledge sharing
• Useful contacts when travelling for business or tourism
• Maintaining a relationship with the university and impacting on its development

Benefits for students and recent graduates

• Help in finding a job and progressing in your career
• Introduction to a network of friendly individuals
• Help and advice with dissertations and/or final year projects
• Possible site visits and/or work placements/internships and career information
• Access to scholarships and bursaries provided by alumni group fundraising
Benefits for the University

• Enhanced profile and reputation
• Increased student applications and registrations
• Creation of partnerships and other collaborations between the University and interested parties
• Assistance with fundraising and employability initiatives
• Generating goodwill and keeping the University in the minds of alumni

Group, association, or chapter – what’s the difference?

Alumni groups refer to all collections of alumni working with and on behalf of the University of Kent.

An alumni association is an alumni group which has been recognised by the University of Kent. It acts on behalf of the University and therefore has a formal structure and set of objectives and requirements. This could be a set of targets or simply the proper recording of activities.

A chapter is a subsidiary of an alumni association. For example, the University of Kent in America (UKA) is the alumni association in America, but it has a number of ‘chapters’ around the country, so that as many of our alumni in the US can get involved. Chapters have their own committees but feed into an overall association board, and even vote on relevant matters when they arise.

A chapter will be able to feed back to the main association committee through their group rep, someone from the association board or from the University, who will be assigned to their group depending on their location or expertise. Special interest alumni groups are separate from the country’s alumni association so they will have their own objectives and structures.

Alpha and Beta Chapters

Some chapters are split into ‘alpha’ and ‘beta’ if the area is too large for our alumni to easily connect – for example, the Los Angeles Chapter is an alpha chapter, whereas the Pasadena Chapter is a sub-group of this, and is known as a beta chapter. Beta chapters also have a committee and their own activities but they work towards the same objectives and targets as the alpha chapter, and report to the Chair of the alpha chapter.

Can I be involved in multiple chapters/groups?

Of course! There is no limit to how many groups you may join, or found! A list of current groups is on our website www.kent.ac.uk/alumni – if you would like to be put in touch with them just let us know by emailing alumni@kent.ac.uk.

What do they do?

Alumni groups volunteer their time, talents and passion to drive a number of events and activities to
assist the University in achieving its goals, to stay connected to their peers and friends, and to help the next generation of alumni leaders. Every group is different and has different priorities, but all groups share a passion for their time at the University of Kent and aim to do one or more of the following:

Connect the community
• Networking with fellow alumni and University volunteers
• Organising events to re-connect with other former students and staff, and to keep them up to date on the University’s activities and news

Support recruitment
• Promotion and representation of the University at fairs and in schools
• Talking to prospective students

Provide opportunities
• Use networks to find internship and placement prospects for current Kent students
• Offer work experience or shadowing opportunities to Kent students or new alumni

Share skills
• Hosting open lectures, workshops and training programmes on or off campus
• Mentoring current students and fellow alumni – find out more about our new mentoring online platform, KEW-NET on page 5

Support the next generation
Fundraising is an important part of many alumni groups’ activities. Many of our students have benefited greatly from the generous support of alumni donors and group-led events and activities. Here are just some of the campaigns and funds alumni have given to:

Kent Opportunity Fund:
This fund supports student hardship grants, student projects funding and the Alumni Postgraduate Research scholarship.

Find out more here: www.kent.ac.uk/giving/opportunityfund

Kent Law Campaign:
www.kent.ac.uk/giving/lawcampaign

Hong Kong Alumni Scholarship:
www.kent.ac.uk/giving/hkcp

New!
Hong Kong Alumni Prize (further information available soon)

University of Kent in America Scholarship:
www.kent.ac.uk/scholarships/postgraduate/international/fulbright_commission.html

You can help us sustain these vital student support initiatives by hosting fundraising events and by connecting us to potential donors from your group’s networks.
HOW TO: SET UP AN ALUMNI GROUP

Every group will evolve in a slightly different way and at different speeds, but the process is really simple.

1. Email the Alumni Office at alumni@kent.ac.uk and tell us what sort of group you would like to establish (for example, a regional group). We will advise you of any other groups in your region or interest area which you may wish to join. If you would still like to start your own group then we will contact other alumni who may be interested.

2. If there is enough interest (even two or three alumni can start a group) we can, with their permission, give you their details so that you can set up an inaugural meeting.

3. The group should then hold its inaugural meeting to determine your objectives and elect a committee.

You can then apply to become an approved University of Kent Alumni Association or Chapter by emailing alumni@kent.ac.uk.

The inaugural meeting

The inaugural meeting is a very important part of your group’s structural process. The Development Office can help you to arrange this as the location and timing must allow for maximum attendance where possible. Until the committee has been elected, the person (or persons) who approaches the Development Office to request the group will be asked to arrange the inauguration meeting and will be considered the acting group lead (Chair or President, depending on the type of group).

At your inaugural meeting, we advise the following:

- Decide on the aims and objectives of the group – you will need to check whether there are specific rules or laws in your country for clubs and societies.
- Select your committee officers, or at the very least provide information on the roles and gauge interest for later election.
- Put together a small number of social events and meetings.
- Agree on a name for your group. There may be certain naming conventions applicable to your group – check your ideas with the Alumni Office to be sure the name can be used.

- A written report of the meeting should be sent to the Alumni Office, along with a list of members/officers of the committee.

If possible a member of staff from the Development Office will attend the inaugural meeting to answer any questions and to assist with elections.

Group objectives

Groups will need to pick between three and five objectives from the four categories below. These can be taken from the below list or can be selected by the group after approval from the Development Office. After one calendar year the Development Office and the group committee will agree on achievable targets for your objectives.
If the group would like to increase or decrease the objectives, this can be done in discussion with the Development Office or, if you are a chapter, with the association of which you are a part.

**Fundraising**
- Increase funding for student scholarships, bursaries and student projects through Kent Opportunity Fund
- Sponsor students on JYA (exchange) or other one-year programmes
- Fundraise towards community and outreach activities

**Engagement**
- Increase number of alumni and friends engaged with/volunteering for Kent
- Community and outreach activities
- Use networks to increase strategic corporate partnerships for research or enterprise development

**Employability**
- Provide work experience, mentoring, or professional development opportunities for students and alumni
- Increase engagement in Kent employability initiatives through networks
- Sponsor students engaging in unpaid work experience

**Recruitment**
- Use networks to increase educational partnerships
- Represent the University at careers and recruitment events
- Mentor prospective students to assist with applications/interviews

**The committee**

The committee is an integral part of your group. They will be making the major decisions on what the group will prioritise and how it will run. Make sure each role-holder knows exactly what is expected of them and that they report any concerns or issues about fulfilling their responsibilities to the chairman or directly to the Alumni Office if appropriate.

We would advise you to confirm your committee as soon as possible. Perhaps send out information about the roles along with the invitations to inaugural meeting and hold elections at the event. Please do ask us if you would like advice about the election process or the officer responsibilities.

All officers of the committee should be aware that they are expected to attend the majority of committee meetings. The number of meetings is up to the group lead to decide, although we suggest that a meeting every two months is more than sufficient. Taking this example, we suggest that each officer must attend at least four of the six meetings.

The number of people on the committee is a matter of choice, but it is recommended that five officers are appointed:

**Chair**
- Carries overall responsibility for the smooth running and development of the branch
- Chairs meetings
- Maintains regular contact with the University of Kent (and Alumni Association if appropriate) and ensures required records are submitted where necessary
- Has co-responsibility for the finances of the branch

**Secretary**
- Manages the general correspondence
- Informs members of the committee meetings
- Maintains the minutes of the committee meetings
- May also be responsible for holding and updating membership data, unless the group gets big enough for its own membership officer (can also be the publicity/communications officer)
Treasurer
• Has co-responsibility for the finances of the branch
• Has day-to-day management of the branch accounts
• Makes payment of the branch’s bills
• If appropriate, ensures that any gifts given are passed to the University so that the donor can be thanked and the gift processed in a timely manner

Events Secretary
• Organises events: booking venues, liaising with caterers etc.
• Works with the publicity officer to promote events and manages registrations and any payments if required

Publicity/Communications Officer
• Responsible for communications with members of the club about events/general news, via the Development Office in the first instance
• Produce a newsletter/regular events listing and/or and be responsible for a group Facebook page if appropriate
• Is responsible for publicity of the branch’s events
• May also be responsible for holding and updating membership data, unless the group gets big enough for its own membership officer (can also be the secretary)

You may also decide to have general officer on the committee, who holds no official office but can vote and join discussions as any other elected officer would.

ELECTING THE COMMITTEE

Once we have sent the original email to alumni in the area, we should be able to gauge how much interest in the group we will get. You can then determine how big the committee will need to be. We suggest that you send information on the different committee positions available with the invitation to the inaugural event.

Candidates can be nominated or can nominate themselves, but multiple nominations do not count as additional support for their candidacy. Nominations should be sent to the acting group lead (Chair or President, depending on the type of group), who will need to add the nominees and their profiles to the ballot form and send this out to all group members, or anyone who has expressed an interest in the group.

The ballot form will need to be returned to the Alumni Office by the specified date and the elected positions will be announced.

See our alumni group resources page on the website for nomination and ballot form templates: www.kent.ac.uk/alumni/groups/start-group

After you have selected your officers you may wish to arrange for the first committee meeting to get to know one another.

TERMS OF OFFICE FOR COMMITTEE MEMBERS

Each group committee member is asked to take on the role for 18 months. The election of the new committee must be completed three months before the end of the member terms to allow for a smooth transition from the vacating and the newly elected members. For this reason, for the first year of the group only, elections will take place 15 months after the committee is set up. For every other year they will be every 18 months.

All committee members may request to be re-elected to their current post, but cannot complete more than two terms in succession. This means you could be treasurer for three years (two terms) but must then resign the post for one term before putting yourself up for re-election.

Any committee member can resign at any time within their term, but we ask that you give us at least 6 months’ notice (where possible) before you step down so that we can arrange a suitable replacement.
HOW TO: SET UP AN ALUMNI GROUP (CONT)

Misconduct in office
If at any time the group lead (Chapter Chair or Association President) has reason to believe that a committee member has acted inappropriately or receives complaints of misconduct from a third party, the group lead must bring it to the attention of the Alumni Office, who will then investigate the accusation. If it is deemed to be credible, the Alumni Office will address the matter with the parties involved and may issue a written warning to the member. If further misconduct is reported within three months, the Alumni Office will investigate and, if appropriate, may suspend the member for a stated amount of time or request that the committee hold a closed ballot to determine whether the member should be dismissed from their position. The Alumni Office has the last say in the matter and will inform the committee of its decision.

If a committee member is requested to resign their position they will be ineligible to stand in the next committee elections for any position. A new committee member must be selected to replace the dismissed member within three months, but their position is considered to be ‘acting’ until the next round of elections takes place, where they may request to be considered for a full term as an official member of the committee.

Appeals against dismissal must be submitted to the Alumni Office in writing within one month of the official statement of the decision. It is the joint responsibility of the group lead and the Alumni Office to ensure that any records or data held by the dismissed officer are properly handed over.

If the nature of the misconduct is considered a serious infraction, then immediate dismissal from the committee may be appropriate. This will be decided upon by the Alumni Office, but may be formally requested by the group lead if seconded by another committee member.

Disbanding the group
Should the group committee decide, for whatever reason, that they would like to disband the group completely, an official request must be submitted to the Alumni Office by the group lead. They will then ballot the group’s members and, if appropriate, ask for new officers to stand for an emergency election to continue the group. If this is not possible then the group will be officially disbanded and members will be given details of another group that they may wish to join.

If the University decides to disband the group for whatever reason, a period of consultation between the Alumni Office and the group committee will commence.

'Chapter and verse'
Setting up and managing alumni groups
HOW TO: CO-ORDINATE EVENTS

It is important that the Development Office is informed of all group meetings and events, whether these are regular informal meetings or more formal events. For events expecting 20 or more attendees, the University will need to agree the proposals put forward by the event organisers, and be kept informed of all the details.

You may wish to time an event to coincide with a visit by our Vice-Chancellor or another senior member of the University staff. This can be an excellent way to raise the profile of your Group, provide an interesting activity (i.e. a lecture by an academic) recruit new members, catch up with University news and perhaps meet former lecturers. It can also generate good publicity.

It is useful to meet in a small group to brainstorm and also to gauge the level of interest for the gathering/reunion and what preferences there are towards location and the type of event. Don’t forget to consider how the event will help you achieve one of your core objectives.

What type of events?
Any group member can put forward an idea for an event – either for all members or for those with a particular interest or hobby. If the idea is adopted by the group, either the individual who made the suggestion or the lead contact will then take on project management of that event and recruit volunteers to assist.

Examples of events include:
• a send-off reception for students who are about to go to University for the first time (in conjunction with the University’s International Development Office)
• provide help to University of Kent staff at Student Recruitment Fairs
• have a get-together around a visiting Kent staff member or guest speaker
• an informal get-together in a pub, café or restaurant
• a business breakfast or networking event
• a sporting/family event/outing – eg golf day, family oriented BBQ, boat trip, etc.

Logistics
Decide on the group that you would like to invite - former course mates, members of a sports club or society, fellow residents of a student house or a mixture of all of these and more. You should consider opening the invitation to partners, children and friends, as people are more likely to attend if they can bring people with them!

When you have selected the group you wish to invite, we can send the invitation on your behalf. We are unable to pass details of alumni for data protection reasons, but we can encourage alumni to be in contact with you directly. We can also search for groups of alumni from our database – just let us know who you would like to contact by emailing alumni@kent.ac.uk.

Consider timing for the gathering; if you are inviting people from overseas the date should be set early (perhaps up to a year in advance) to allow people to arrange travel, etc.

You should have an idea of a budget for the event - remember to consider all costs such as travel, accommodation and so on. It is useful to find out how much people are prepared to pay before any final arrangements are made.

Another factor to consider is the format of the gathering/reunion; for example, an informal meal and an evening at a pub, an outing or a weekend full of activities.

Remember to include a contact person (including contact number and email address) and an RSVP date on the invitation to ensure that everyone replies in sufficient time.

Be realistic about response rates to invitations - don’t be discouraged if attendance appears to be low. On average, 10% of those you invite will attend. However, there are ways to improve attendance figures:
• Make it as easy as possible for people to reply to you – provide email contacts, telephone and fax numbers for replies and give plenty of notice about an event
• Always include a deadline for replies (you will still receive replies after this!)
HOW TO: CO-ORDINATE EVENTS (CONT)

• Email or phone people a few days before an event – this often encourages more attendees and reduces the chance of people forgetting
• Consider encouraging members to bring friends/family members to your events – especially children who may be prospective Kent students!

Don’t forget that we are here to help! If you would like any assistance with your event ideas please contact us or use the alumni group resources on our website: www.kent.ac.uk/alumni/groups/start-group.html. You may even consider having your event at one of our UK campuses or European centre!

All member activities and events must be self-financing. This means all costs for your regular meetings and activities must be funded entirely by your group. You may wish to consider a pay-by-event structure or think of other creative ways to fund activities. We would be happy to hear your suggestions. Please email alumni@kent.ac.uk for further assistance with your events.

Invitations

An invitation is an important part of organising an event and ensuring its success. It is important to get the tone of the invitation right, and this will very much depend on the nature of the event. Once you have drafted the text we can send it out to the selection of contacts that you define. This is because we cannot give you the personal details of members on our system, although it also means you won’t have to deal with all of the ‘out of office’ notifications!

The first few lines of the invitation should contain the host’s name, the event title, the date and time of the event, and the location – do not leave this information until the very end of the correspondence, it is important that the key information is given at the start of the invitation.

You should then ensure that the following paragraph refers to any guests which will be in attendance, or any lectures which will be held, and news/information which will be given during the event. This is so that the invitee, once they have established their availability from the details in the first paragraph, can then find out the content of the event itself.

The third paragraph should offer information on how to register for the event (and whether it is by invitation only), and any RSVP dates.

The fourth and final paragraph should contain a sentence which expresses your hope that they are able to attend the event, and an offer to contact you (providing your details) should they require any further information.

Sign off the invitation with “Yours sincerely”, and then enter your first name and family name in the line below.
Registering and paying for events/activities

The Alumni Office will set up an online registration page for all your events through our database, and take any payments required. All we need to know from you is:

- The name of the event
- The type of event (lecture, networking dinner, concert etc.)
- Date and start/end time
- Location
- Maximum capacity of attendees
- Price of ticket (unless free)

Email this information to alumni@kent.ac.uk. We can then help you invite guests, promote it and keep track of the number of attendees.

Some payments, those relating to donations or sponsorship, may be subject to tax benefits. You will need to contact the tax service of your country to find out exactly what the guidelines and processes are. For the UK, the Gift Aid scheme is for gifts of money by individuals who pay UK tax. Gift Aid donations are regarded as having basic rate tax deducted by the donor. Charities or CASCs take your donation – which is money you’ve already paid tax on – and reclaim the basic rate tax from HM Revenue & Customs (HMRC) on its ‘gross’ equivalent - the amount before basic rate tax was deducted.

Basic rate tax is 20 per cent, so this means that if you give £10 using Gift Aid, it’s worth £12.50 to the charity. For donations between 6 April 2008 and 5 April 2011 the charity or CASC will also get a separate government supplement of three pence on every pound you give.

Useful links:
www.hmrc.gov.uk/individuals/giving/gift-aid.htm
www.gov.uk/donating-to-charity/gift-aid

Contracts and agreements

Supplier or venue contracts will be different from country to country and even from company to company. Remember that the contract is between the company/supplier and your alumni group, not with the University of Kent itself. If you feel at all concerned about a contract that has been issued to you, please seek advice from the Alumni Office by emailing alumni@kent.ac.uk.
THE ALUMNI RELATIONS TEAM

Canterbury campus in the UK. We keep our 135,000 alumni updated on the University’s activities and news, help them connect to friends and staff, and get them involved in events and initiatives wherever possible.

Being part of an alumni group is supposed to be a fun and rewarding experience. It is not intended to be too time-consuming. We know there will be times when your working life is very busy, so contacts are welcome to recruit other alumni or set up a sub-group to share the workload and assist with the running of the group, or you could join up with a similar group in your regional or interest area.

How can we support you?

Do please ask for our help! There are many ways the University can support your group:

• Providing dedicated support and advice on all aspects of establishing and running your group
• Contacting group members or possible new recruits by letter or email, on your behalf, where appropriate
• Putting you in touch with other alumni groups so you can collaborate on events and projects. You may even wish to speak to other groups to find out how they set themselves up
• We can connect you to departments and people around the University – perhaps you would like to run an event and invite relevant academic speakers or current students. If you are hosting the event in the UK, you could even invite student activity, music, or sports groups to provide the entertainment for your event, for example the Salsa, Live Music, or Kent Dance societies
• Provide advice on your strategic plans, event ideas, or any new documentation you may be considering, including supplier contracts etc
• Assistance with the promotion and publicity of group events, for example in our alumni e-newsletters, magazines and on our alumni website (www.kent.ac.uk/alumni) and social media channels
• In some cases the University may be able to support individual events attended by Kent staff, these will be decided on a case-by-case basis
What do we need from you?

You will need to provide the Development Office with some information on a quarterly basis. We will need:

- Dates of all future events so we can publicise them on the University website as appropriate
- A detailed plan/schedule for proposed larger events, ideally a year in advance
- Reviews and photographs of past events – we may wish to use these in our publications, on social media, and on the website
- A copy of all minutes/notes from meetings
- A typed list of attendees for all group meetings and events
- Any change of address, telephone, email or other contact details for group members

- Copy of any publicity articles your group attracts in local magazines, newspapers, etc.
- A copy of the group’s core objectives and any plans to fulfil them

Once the group has been running for one calendar year, the University will work with the group committee to analyse its activity and set achievable targets

Alumni Office top tips

Here are some of our best bits of advice for setting up and running your group:

- **Don’t expect immediate results!** Alumni who get involved in groups are volunteers and may have varying levels of available time. Groups can take anything from a few weeks to several months to set up but have patience – it’s worth it in the end!

- **Interested volunteers are engaged volunteers!** Everyone has different interests – make sure you know your group and what they are passionate about. If you are in charge of putting the committee together assess not only their strengths and experience but their level of interest in the role and the overall group.

- **Make connections!** There is definitely strength in numbers – stay in touch with other alumni groups in your region or interest area and try to collaborate when you can. We can help you contact these groups if you don’t have their details already. You should also make an effort to work with other organisations relevant to your group, even if they are not Kent affiliated – you never know when you might want to work together!

- **Use the resources you can!** If you happen to have expert speakers in your group then brilliant, but if you don’t, connect with academics or students here on campus, or with alumni in different areas or groups. We can help you make these connections where possible.

- **Thank your volunteers!** Any time alumni commit to getting involved contributes not only to the group but also to the University as a whole. We are incredibly grateful for all the help we get so please help us thank and reward them.
HOW TO: PROMOTE YOUR GROUP

Promotion can take many guises, from hard copy invitations to electronic email invitations and informal postings on social media websites. The method you should use is dependent on the audience demographic which you are trying to reach. You will need to remain aware of differences in generation and culture. Whilst social media is an excellent tool to help promote your event in a more immediate manner, and encourage interactive discussions surrounding the event, it is important to remember that not all alumni will use social media sites. It is therefore important to ensure that your initial invitation is always by formal invitation, either in writing (for those who do not have internet access) or via email.

When your group is established, you need to ensure that you promote it to alumni, to ensure that they are aware of it and of any events you may be running. The best way to do this is via a Facebook group. The Alumni team can help you to create one of these, and link it to it from the University’s webpages. Always ensure that your Facebook group details are contained in your alumni group email signatures – this is a quick and effective way to spread the word!

You should regularly update your Facebook page with information on what the alumni group is currently planning, as well as details of any upcoming events or photos/feedback from previous reunions.

Always remember that social media is an interactive tool – not only must you regularly maintain your Facebook page with the latest news, you should also encourage your alumni members to post comments and photos to it, and interact with each other. An active Facebook page is one which people want to become involved with and be part of!

Don’t forget that, whilst the Alumni Office may re-post news and events relating to the group, it is not University news and, as such, you must not infer that you or anyone affiliated to your group are speaking on behalf of the University or any of its staff or students.

Social media

The University makes extensive use of social media to connect with alumni, students (both current and prospective), staff and friends. In May 2014 Kent was announced as one of the top 10 UK universities on Twitter, and we are proud that so many of our alumni and friends interact with us in this way. However, you will get to know your group the best and how they like to communicate, so choose the method that best works for you. The University does provide guidelines on the naming of your social media channel. Following these will ensure that your group is easily found and that it is recognisable as a University of Kent affiliated group. More details on this can be found in the alumni groups resources at www.kent.ac.uk/alumni/groups/start-group.html.

Facebook

Facebook is very useful for hosting group information, events and photos. It is a fairly informal platform and the language you use in your posts should reflect this. You should create the group yourself (you will need a personal account to do this), but the Alumni Office must be informed as soon as it is live so that we can keep informed of the group’s activities.

Make sure you set up an ‘open’ group – this means that members do not need to be invited to join, which will make it easier to reach out to as many people as possible.
Why not have a look at some of our existing alumni group pages to get some ideas? Try searching for University of Kent Malaysia Alumni Association, University of Kent Greece Alumni or University of Kent Hong Kong Alumni Association.

**Twitter**

Twitter makes it easy to interact instantly with followers, and identify and create ‘trends’ so that followers can search for a topic or event as well as for individual groups or members. Twitter has a short character limit so ‘tweets’ must be short and catch the attention easily. Try linking to Facebook or web pages to provide further information. Tweeting images of events creates a good buzz and you may just get a few last-minute attendees.

Remember that twitter feeds are not closed to just the group members so your tweets can be seen globally. Followers may also ‘retweet’ your posts, which could get your message to alumni all over the world that you may not have known about. Make sure your language and content is both appropriate and interesting to increase the chance of getting ‘retweeted’.
HOW TO: PROMOTE YOUR GROUP (CONT)

LinkedIn
LinkedIn works best for professional networking and to better understand your members. Most LinkedIn profiles focus on their career history, skills, and experience. LinkedIn will be useful when identifying the right people to invite to speak at or attend specific events.

You can post information on the group, directly message individuals, and start discussions. You might find it useful for collecting opinions on issues before a committee meeting or to keep updated on members’ career activity and skill-sets. You can also see who is contributing to your group the most – they might be good people to approach when it comes to committee elections!
ALUMNI GROUP CASE STUDIES

Hong Kong Alumni Association

Established: 18th June 2009

Members: 1,224

Social media channels: Facebook group: University of Kent - Hong Kong Alumni

Annual events: Formal reception hosted in April by the Vice-Chancellor, Professor Dame Julia Goodfellow

Profile: The University of Kent Hong Kong Alumni Association was formally established in 2009 by Professor Eddy Fong and Dr Kennedy Wong, both alumni and honorary graduates of the University.

The Association set up the Hong Kong Alumni Postgraduate Scholarship in 2005 to assist students from mainland China and Hong Kong studying a range of disciplines at Kent. The scholarship offers help towards tuition fees and living costs and is provided by generous donations from alumni through the Association.

Find out more:
www.kent.ac.uk/alumni/groups/hongkong.html
University of Kent in America

Established: 2005

Members: 14 official Board members

Social media channels:
Facebook page: University of Kent in America
Facebook groups: Boston, New York, Chicago, Indiana, Los Angeles and Washington DC

Annual events: Regular mixers, plus board meetings four times a year (2 in person)

Profile: The University of Kent in America is a charitable organisation made up of alumni from all over the United States with expertise and skills in a range of areas and sectors. The Board focuses on fundraising to assist students and connecting alumni to expand their networks and is quickly branching out with chapters emerging in Boston, New York, Chicago, Indiana, Los Angeles and Washington DC

Find out more: www.kent.ac.uk/alumni/groups/UKA
THANK YOU!

Thank you for your interest in becoming an alumni volunteer, we hope that this document has outlined some of the many ways in which you can help, and inspired you to find out more. If you would like further information, please do get in touch at alumni@kent.ac.uk or view our ‘Get Involved’ pages on the website at www.kent.ac.uk/alumni.

Our alumni are amongst our best advocates and our most loyal supporters. We are tremendously proud of, and hugely grateful for, the contribution that you make to the life of the University.

We are Kent!