



## Alumni Relations Office

### The Creation and Running of Alumni Groups

Last updated June 2022

The University of Buckingham's Alumni Relations Office welcomes the formation of Alumni Groups with the aim of connecting groups of alumni who are based in the same geographical region or who share a particular interest. This policy outlines how Alumni Groups may be created and how they should be run.

#### **Formation of an Alumni Group**

It is important for both Alumni Groups and the University to understand and recognise the relationship they are entering once they become officially recognised:

- The University relies upon Alumni Groups to act in the best interests of the University, as its ambassadors, advocates and supporters.
- The University and Alumni Groups should work together to ensure mutually beneficial outcomes for both parties.
- The University has the discretion to remove an Alumni Group should they act in a way that could be construed as inappropriate or damaging to the University.
- Alumni Groups should focus on a geographical location or a special interest.
- Only alumni of the University of Buckingham should be members of, or hold positions within, Alumni Groups.
- Alumni Groups should be known as Groups only.
- The University has no responsibility for the financing of Alumni Groups.
- The University is not able to intervene in disputes between alumni in relation to an Alumni Group.
- Alumni Groups are responsible for their own governance.

#### **Application and Terms, Expectations and Standards**

We ask alumni who wish to form a new Alumni Group to complete an application form, and if the new group is approved by the Alumni Relations Office, to sign a Terms, Expectations and Standards document.

There are three indispensable components for the successful start (or revival) of an Alumni Group, which should be considered prior to submitting an application:

- 1) The enthusiasm and commitment of several individuals, who can initiate the process, create a sustainable organisational structure, promote the idea to other alumni and liaise with the Alumni Relations Office.
- 2) A reasonable number of alumni willing to support and participate in that group's activities.
- 3) Interest in the University of Buckingham and the willingness to co-operate to the benefit of its entire alumni community.

The Terms, Expectations and Standards document outlines how the University and Alumni Groups can best work together, establishing expectations for both the University and the Group in order to secure a supportive relationship.

Terms, Expectations and Standards document has been created to define the relationship between the University and its officially recognised network of Alumni Groups. Official recognition is granted to an Alumni Group upon agreeing to the terms, expectations and standards outlined.

To become an officially recognised Alumni Group of the university, the Group must agree to and sign the Terms, Expectations and Standards document. In return, the university provides a range of services to support and promote the activity of officially recognised Alumni Groups.

### **Purpose and responsibilities**

Alumni Groups should aim to unite University of Buckingham alumni either via a special interest or a geographical location. Additional responsibilities of Groups include:

- To promote lasting ties between alumni and the University by keeping group members informed of activities and new developments in the University.
- To strengthen personal and professional relationships among the University of Buckingham alumni community by presenting professional, educational, social and cultural opportunities for group members.
- Enhance awareness of the University locally.
- Groups focused on a geographic location should assist the Alumni Relations Office with planning events if University representatives are travelling to the location of the Group.
- Assist and encourage prospective students to apply to the University.
- Help the Alumni Relations Office to maintain up-to-date information on its alumni by gaining consent from Group members to update their details within the central alumni database.

## **Membership**

All members of Alumni Groups should be alumni of the University of Buckingham.

'Alumni' are defined by the University as people who have studied at Buckingham for six months or more. They do not need to have been awarded a qualification.

All members of Alumni Groups should be validated with the Alumni Relations Office at the University before being awarded membership.

Family and friends of alumni may attend events held by Alumni Groups (should the Group choose to allow this), however they should not be formal members.

## **Suggested Group Roles**

For all Alumni Groups, we suggest the below roles are filled. This is not essential, however filling these roles provides a solid foundation for Group growth.

### **President - Duties might include:**

- Presiding at all meetings of the Group, its executive committee and board of directors.
- Representing the Group in its dealings with other organisations or people outside the group.
- Serving as the Group's liaison with the Alumni Office and the University.
- Overseeing and coordinating activity of other officers and committee chairpersons, including monitoring of planned events and collected monies.

### **Vice-President - Duties might include:**

- Performing the duties of President or Chairman in his/her absence and assisting as needed.

### **Secretary (in smaller Groups, this role could be combined with that of Treasurer) - duties might include:**

- Responsibility for handling communications between Group officers, and recording of minutes of meetings, communicating them to each committee member.
- Preparing agendas for meetings in consultation with the President.
- Ensuring that notices of meetings are sent to Group members as required.
- Ensuring all new members are validated with the Alumni Relations Office, and liaising with the Alumni Relations Office re. updated contact information.

### **Treasurer (in smaller groups, this role could be combined with that of Secretary) - duties might include:**

- Responsibility for the finances of the Group, for maintaining accurate records and for preparing periodic and annual statements of the group's accounts.
- Setting up systems to deal with the Group's finances.
- Overseeing annual membership drive (if applicable) in conjunction with the Alumni Relations Office.

### **Events Officer - duties might include:**

- Suggesting possible activities and events to the committee, investigating costs and venues.
- Responsibility for event planning and co-ordination.

### **Communications Officer - duties might include:**

- Managing communications with the Group members and advertising upcoming events to them.
- Providing the Alumni Relations Office with news of upcoming group events for posting on social media and within the Alumni Newsletter, as well as provide a post event round-up, preferably with photos, for publication in same.

### **Elections**

For all those holding positions of Office within Alumni Groups, (e.g. President, Secretary), it is recommended that re-elections should take place every 2 years. This is to ensure equal opportunities to all alumni participating in the Group.

Elections should be open to all members of the Group and should preferably take place via secret ballot. The Alumni Relations Office should be informed of election results as soon as possible.

If a new President is elected, the person taking over the position will be required, as the new primary contact, to sign the Terms, Expectations and Standards document with the University of Buckingham for and on behalf of the Group.

### **Support from the Alumni Relations Office**

The Alumni Relations Office at the University will provide:

- Assistance in identifying and contacting fellow alumni. The Alumni Relations Office cannot share contact details, but they can verify members of Alumni Groups and contact alumni on behalf of Groups.
- Advice on creating a programme of events, organising events (and, when possible, will attend events)
- Advice on membership recruitment.
- Support in contacting staff on behalf of the Alumni Groups for the purpose of arranging their participation (speaking, attendance) at Group events.
- The Alumni Relations Office will endeavour to keep Groups informed when University of Buckingham staff are visiting their area to maximise opportunities for groups to arrange events around these visits.
- Publicity for Groups. Groups are encouraged to supply information and photographs of events and activities for publication in the quarterly Alumni Newsletter and on alumni social media sites.
- Guidelines for Groups. These Guidelines are provided and will be updated by the Alumni Relations Office, whenever necessary.

### **Financing**

Alumni Groups are financially independent from the University. It is up to each Group to choose how they finance their activities. This could involve charging a small membership fee or charging for tickets to events.

We advise Groups to keep a written record of all their income and expenses. You may wish to nominate or recruit a member with experience in handling basic accounts to act as Treasurer. Some Groups have their own bank account for dealing with income and expenditure related to Group activities.

Alumni Groups should not be run for the purpose of generating profit. We recommend that Groups try to run their events on a break-even basis.

### **Insurance**

As each Alumni Group is legally independent of the University, Groups are not covered by the University's public liability insurance.

It is recommended that Groups investigate whether acquiring insurance is necessary. You may wish to consider insuring the Group's assets and activities or insuring members of the committee against personal liability relating to issues such as negligence claims.

### **Constitution**

Each Alumni Group should have a constitution that is available for all members to see. It should clarify the purpose and objectives of the Group.

Suggestions of things to include within the constitution are as follows:

- Name of the Group
- Objective/purpose of the Group
- Membership criteria (if there are any specifics relating to the group e.g. location)
- Officers required (e.g. President, Treasurer)
- Process of management
- Meeting information and regularity
- Amendments of rules
- Procedure for dissolution of the Group
- Disputes and dismissal of members

## **Data Protection**

As Alumni Groups are independently managed, the University does not take responsibility for any breaches in GDPR (General Data Protection Regulation). We advise all Alumni Groups to research GDPR and ensure any data they hold is handled and stored correctly.

You can find out more about GDPR here: <https://gdpr.eu/>

We are unable to share any alumni data with Alumni Groups as alumni have not given their consent to this. We can, however, help to promote alumni Groups using social media, the University of Buckingham website and our quarterly newsletter.

## **Events**

We recommend a diverse programme of events to help retain existing members and attract new ones. Below are some event types that you could consider:

- Academic – a lecture or presentation by a Buckingham academic.
- Collaborative events – working alongside the Alumni Relations Office, e.g. overseas trips, dinners.
- Networking – giving alumni the opportunity to make connections and learn more about career opportunities and experiences.
- Social – drinks receptions, informal get-togethers and dinners.

The Alumni Relations Office will help to promote your events on various platforms.

## **Communications**

It is advised that regular meetings take place between the alumni managing the Group. The frequency and format of these meetings can be determined by the Group.

Alumni Groups should keep in regular contact with the Alumni Relations Office, verifying membership, informing them of changes in the leadership of the Group and of any event plans. Meetings are suggested at least every 6 months.

Keeping in regular contact with the alumni within your Alumni Group can be challenging. Some groups create a designated email address for communication, others use WhatsApp groups or social media.

However you choose to communicate with your Group, ensure that you are complying with GDPR, and the Terms, Expectations and Standards document held with the University of Buckingham.

## **Breach of Agreement and Group Dissolution**

As mentioned throughout this document, in order to be a recognised Alumni Group, the primary contact will need to sign the Terms, Expectations and Standards document.

Although we try to give as much freedom as possible to our Alumni Groups, should a situation arise where a Group is deemed to be acting in a way that breaches the Terms, Expectations and Guidelines document, the Alumni Relations Office will need to intervene.

The process for intervention is as follows: The Group in question will initially be asked to attend a meeting with the Alumni Relations Office to discuss the matter and work towards a resolution. If a resolution cannot be agreed, it is likely that legal advice will be sought.

Although a solution is always the desired outcome, should this not be possible the Alumni Relations Office reserves the right to close any Group that breaches the 'Terms, Expectations and Guidelines' document.