

Reunion Checklist

This checklist is provided to help you plan, organise and run your own reunion. You may want to form an organising committee. This helps to share the workload and gives attendees someone they know to contact. The alumni office is also available for advice and guidance, or to assist in any way required.

The list below is designed to help you make the choices and decisions that will allow the smooth planning, organising and running of your reunion.

Type of reunion

- Is it a “milestone” reunion (e.g. class of “XX” 20th, 30th or 40th), or a general reunion by subject (e.g. all Pharmacy graduates), or a reunion by geography (e.g. all graduates from country “Y” or city “Z”) or a combination of these?
- Is it to be in the UK or another international country?
- Do you want a full weekend or just a lunch/dinner?
- Is it to be linked with another type of event (e.g. graduation ceremony, recruitment fair, country visit)?
- Do you want a guest speaker?
- Do you want involvement by the University e.g. the presence of the Chancellor, Vice-Chancellor or Head of University Campus?

Contacting attendees

- There is a number of social networking sites that can be used (e.g. Facebook, LinkedIn, etc) along with the alumni CRM that the University uses. We can contact people on the CRM on your behalf but we cannot divulge any personal details.
- Contact by the University can only be made by email or posts on the social networking sites. It is up to you to decide whether you wish to send any paper invitations. We suggest only VIPs, guest speakers, etc be sent paper invitations and that all other communications are done electronically.
- A dedicated page on a social networking site could be set up for attendees to “opt into” the event, which is owned and managed by you and your team.
- The event page should contain not only details of the event, but tentative costs and how to express a firm interest. Responses will give you an idea of numbers and help you with the rest of your planning.
- You need to establish how to take monies if there is a cost involved. This could be a deposit with the remainder to follow by a specific date or paying the full amount up front.

Event activities

These vary according to the type of reunion being organised but they should be “inclusive” (i.e. not discriminate, even unintentionally). Activities could involve:

- An early bird activity – e.g. a BBQ or cocktail function the night before the main event (e.g. attend a graduation ceremony).
- Do you want a formal dinner or would you prefer it to be very informal and casual, or a mix of the both?
- A tour of some of the attractions of the location.
- A “reunion booklet”. Requests for information and pictures need to go out with the first emails with clear instructions. Remember to include release forms to allow publication of information and contact details.
- A campus tour - taking in the changes since attendees were last there.
- Attendance at a football game, cricket game or a golf activity.
- A concert or performance of some kind.

Venue

This will depend greatly on some of the above decisions. Things to take into account:

- Make sure that the venue will accommodate the numbers you anticipate attending. Check that you can change the room choices close to the event date if numbers alter.
- Check to see if the whole group will fit into the one room.
- Does it meet the needs of the type of reunion you have chosen e.g. is it suitably formal or alternatively, not too formal for a casual lunch/dinner?
- Does it allow for a variety of activities e.g. BBQ; brunch; dinner?
- Is there plenty of parking available at the venue or alternately within an easy walk?
- Is it close to sporting fields – to cater for any activities planned?
- Check to see if the venue has disabled access and facilities.
- If you plan an outdoor activity, make sure wet weather facilities are also available.

- Depending on your location – check for either heating and/or air-conditioning.
- Check that the venue can provide microphones, lecterns, sound system for playing of CDs, equipment for PowerPoint presentations, overhead projectors, etc.
- You may want access to a piano – check that the venue can provide one.
- Check the (alcohol) licensing arrangements.
- When getting quotes, make sure they include VAT and that there are no “hidden extras”.
- Does the venue have accommodation attached or within easy access – factor in “drinking and not driving”?
- Transport – remember not everyone has or can drive a car:
 - ❖ Check that the venue is accessible by public transport.
 - ❖ Make sure it doesn't require too long a taxi ride from train/bus stations.
 - ❖ Think about providing transport (a bus) between accommodation and venue, if not within easy access.
 - ❖ Remember to provide directions from train/bus stations to the venue.

Accommodation

- It is often best to let people choose their own accommodation. You can provide a guide and suggest places close to the venue.
- Alternatively, you can make block bookings at accommodation providers near the venue and this can often get a better rate. With this option - it is best to let people make their bookings with and pay directly to the providers quoting a specific code number to obtain the negotiated rate.
- Again, make sure that all of the accommodation choices have disabled facilities.

Catering

- Remember that you could be catering for a very diverse group of individuals.
- Factor in the age range and ethnicity of your group.
- Decide which menu option best suits your event:

Buffet

- Offers a wide variety of choice.
- Allows opportunity for attendees to mingle and chat.
- People can help themselves to what they want.
- May take longer for everyone to get their meal.

Fixed tables

- Good for a more formal dinner and has the extra benefit of table service.
- Has the disadvantage of constraining people to their table.
- Can be plated – one meal per course served to each guest; or
- A la carte – full menu choice.
- Always make sure there is a vegetarian option.
- On your registration form, give people space to identify any special dietary requirements/allergies, etc.

Find out the date by which you need to advise the venue of numbers. Remember to check if this can be altered as **all** venues will charge according to the number advised regardless of how many turn up.

- If the event is a lunch – lighter meal is more suited. Remember to factor in the season.
- In terms of alcohol:
 - ❖ Do you want wine/soft drink/water/orange juice on the tables – make sure this is included in reunion registration fees.
 - ❖ Would you prefer a cash bar (attendees buy own drinks); or
 - ❖ A dry till (a set amount of money is allocated to cover the cost of drinks) – what happens if the money runs out?

Speakers/other programme items

- Decide early if you would like to have a special guest speaker e.g. an old lecturer and/or vice-chancellor, chancellor or head of campus from the University. These people will need to be booked early.
- Decide on an MC.
- The running order of the event can often help to decide the meal choice.
- Remember to factor in any presentations e.g. for “milestone” reunions.
- Music – decide on either background sound or a live band/DJ and dancing – remember to factor in the cost of any live music into the registration fees.
- Organise someone to prepare any souvenir programmes for placement on tables.

Photographs

You may like to book a photographer to attend your reunion to take everything from table shots, session photos as well as large and small groups.

- The alumni office has a list of photographers available.
- Alternatively, you may like to appoint someone from the group to act as official photographer.
- With either option you will need to liaise with your photographer of choice as to how and which method they will use to distribute copies of photos to those requiring them.

Names of potential attendees

These can be obtained through the alumni office. The alumni office can contact by email any of those registered on its CRM system asking interested people to reply to an email address. Under the data protection act, it cannot disclose those details to anyone. There are a number of social networking sites that can also be used, contact the alumni office for details.

Collection and payment of monies

- When setting the costs of activities, make sure to factor in the VAT (or equivalent) and all the other extra costs that will be added by the venue, caterers, bus providers, music providers, etc. As well as an amount to cover expenditure such as postage and phone calls of the organising group.
- Make sure that when booking the venue, etc that you discuss with all providers their preferred method of payment and discuss when deposits are due (this will determine your payment date on the registration form) as well as when they want final payment. Also ask if they will provide invoices and receipts.
- Keep a spreadsheet or similar to record all expenditure and payments for activities that each attendee wishes to take part in. This is also a good place to record apologies.

Remember, the alumni office is available to assist at any time. Please do not hesitate to contact us on:

Telephone: +44 (0)1484 472241

Fax: +44 (0)1484 516151

Email: alumni@hud.ac.uk

Good luck and happy reunion planning!