



UNIVERSITY OF  
BIRMINGHAM

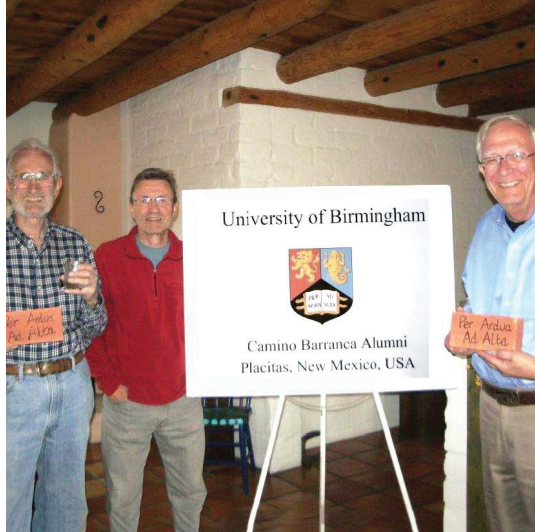


# ALUMNI ASSOCIATION

TOOLKIT









# BEFORE THE EVENT

## What type of event do you want?

A varied programme of events and activities will help to strengthen your alumni group by engaging existing members and attracting new ones.

Try gathering feedback from alumni on what type of events they would be interested in attending and any preferences towards location, date and time – you could do this in person or through a social media poll or online survey site. You can then use this feedback to plan your first event. Don't forget to consider how the event will help you achieve one of your group's core objectives.

We advise you keep the first few events simple and informal while interest gathers for your group. Once you have a more established group, you can get more creative.

**Informal events** – organising an informal get-together in a pub, café or restaurant is a wonderful way to connect with alumni and encourage new members to get involved

**Academic events** – a lecture or presentation by a visiting Birmingham academic or a senior member of staff. The Development and Alumni Relations team can let you know if any academics or staff are travelling to your area

**Sporting and cultural events** – a trip to a sports game, movie, wine tasting, museum, garden, theatre or art gallery. This often involves a guided tour, followed by a social gathering at a nearby café or local pub

**Networking events** – these are aimed at encouraging members to find out more about the careers and experiences of their fellow alumni. Alumni can take turns leading informal seminars or giving presentations drawn from their work, interests and background. These can be very popular with recent graduates

**Student and alumni events** – this could be helping out at a student recruitment event or organising a send-off or welcome home reception for students who are about to go to/return from University

## Date

The date and venue for your event should ideally be set about two months ahead to give you enough time to plan activities and send out invitations. Consider which day of the week is most suitable for your event, whether it's after-work drinks, a family picnic, a formal dinner or an informal get-together. You will also need to consider any clashes with school holidays, sporting events and national or religious holidays, as these may affect attendance at your event.

## Venue

You will likely have the best knowledge of venues in your area, but we may be able to suggest some alternatives. Before selecting a venue consider: how many attendees are you expecting? Where do your chosen demographic live or work? Is your chosen venue central with good transport links? Will your chosen venue cater for all tastes? Does your chosen event format require a reserved area for private use? Many coffee shops and cafés can reserve a small area for you free of charge, however, if you require a larger area for your exclusive use you may need to meet a minimum spend or pay a deposit.

Please note, in some countries you may need to check with the authorities to see whether the group needs to be formally registered with them before you can hire venues.

## Cost

Remember to take into account how much the event will cost, both in terms of money and time, and how much attendees will be paying for their drinks and any activities. The more affordable the event, the more likely it is that people will attend. You can either ask alumni to pay for their own expenses on the night (eg, dinner and drinks) or charge a registration fee to cover the cost of a venue deposit and any activities. If you are charging attendees, then we recommend that money be collected in advance to ensure commitment and prevent any misunderstanding.

Please note that the Development and Alumni Relations (DARO) team cannot take any payments on your behalf, or fund/subsidise alumni events. All member activities and events must be self-financing.

## Guest list

Decide who you would like to invite to the event. You could invite all alumni in your country or focus on those living in a particular region or city. It's helpful to consider how far people will be willing to travel to attend the event. You should consider also whether partners, children and friends are welcome to attend. Please send your criteria to the International and Events Officer at [alumnierevents@contacts.birmingham.ac.uk](mailto:alumnierevents@contacts.birmingham.ac.uk) to create an invitation list.

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## Promoting the event

Once you have decided on a date, time and venue, the DARO team can help promote the event to other alumni interested in attending. Please contact us a minimum of eight weeks before the event. With enough notice, we can:

- Email an invitation to alumni in the area, ideally six weeks before the event
- Send a digital toolkit and event pack containing pin badges, magnets, name badges, etc,
- Include your event on our online events calendar [www.birmingham.ac.uk/alumni/events](http://www.birmingham.ac.uk/alumni/events)
- Set up an event page on the University of Birmingham Alumni Office Facebook group
- Promote the event on our social media channels including Facebook, LinkedIn, Twitter and Instagram

   [@birminghamalum](https://www.birmingham.ac.uk/alumni)  [University of Birmingham Alumni and Friends](https://www.birmingham.ac.uk/alumni)

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## Invitations

An invitation is an important part of organising an event and ensuring its success.

Due to the UK Data Protection Act, we are unable to give out alumni contact details. However, we can send emails on your behalf to your chosen audience. Please send the event details and your email invitation text to [alumnierevents@contacts.birmingham.ac.uk](mailto:alumnierevents@contacts.birmingham.ac.uk) and we will send it to alumni.

Your invitation email should include:

- The date, time and venue for your event. You might also consider including a link to the venue's website or a map to help people find it

- A short description about what will happen at the event
- Your email address if you would like responses to come directly to you, or we can include a link to our online booking system should you want us to manage RSVPs on your behalf
- An RSVP date as this will ensure everyone responds in sufficient time to confirm numbers with your venue

Finish the email by expressing your hope that they can attend the event and invite them to contact you should they require any further details (remember to include your contact number and email address). Don't make the email too formal – use a welcoming tone.

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## Responses

Responses will either come directly to you, or through our online booking system.

If coming directly to you, then we ask that you respond to emails in a timely manner and keep a list of those alumni attending. The Development and Alumni Relation team will need to know the names of those attending and any new contact details so that we can keep our records as up to date as possible.

If you would prefer for RSVPs to go through our online booking system, we will update you regularly. Closer to the event, we will provide you with a list of all attendees, including their degree details, should you wish to produce name badges.

Please don't be discouraged if attendance appears to be low. On average, only 10% of those invited will register to attend the event and of that 10%, some will still drop out or not show up on the night. If your group is new, it will take some time to build up healthy attendance numbers.

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## Confirmation email

One week before the event you can arrange for the DARO team to send out a confirmation email to all those that have registered confirming the time, venue and any other necessary details.

You might also like to use this time to confirm arrangements with the venue.



# AT THE EVENT

- Be there at least 15 minutes early to set up and ensure there is someone there to greet alumni on arrival
- Encourage networking and introduce newer members to the group
- Collect business cards to share with the DARO team so we can update alumni details to support your future events and activities
- Gain feedback from attendees. Did they enjoy the event? What events would they like to attend in the future? Would they be interested in helping you organise future events? Are they interested in finding out how they can support the University through volunteering and giving?
- Take pictures – you could share them on social media during the evening (using relevant hashtags **#wearebrumalum** **#weareinternational**) or send them to us so we can share online

## Top tips for great photos:

- Make sure there is enough light and no background distractions
- Capture shots of alumni in action, but don't be afraid to pose the group
- Take multiple shots to get the best picture
- Designate someone as photographer

Taking a great photo means we can share it on our social media accounts and alumni publications, getting more exposure for your alumni group! You will also need photos for future event invitations so it really is worth spending some time getting some great photos while your group is new.

# POST EVENT

- Let us know how it went! Send us your photos and a short paragraph on the event. We can then add an event report to our website and share details in our alumni publications.
- Send us the attendance list and any new contact details or business cards received, so we can update the database to support you in future events and activities.
- Consider sending a follow up/thank you email to those that attended. This is also an opportunity to ask for feedback and suggestions if you didn't ask during the event. Please contact the DARO team if you would like us to co-ordinate this on your behalf.

## Help and advice

Don't forget the DARO team is here to offer advice, guidance and support, however large or small your event is. We enjoy receiving news of your activities and will do everything we can to assist making your event a success (see back page for details).

Thank you and good luck!



# EVENT PLANNING CHECKLIST



(to print out)

## Two-three months to go

### Prepare the Guest List

- ☐ Decide who you would like to attend the event and decide if you are having speakers

### Consider Speakers/Host

- ☐ If appropriate, research potential speakers and send them a formal invitation, with details of the event
- ☐ Ensure the speaker/host is kept aware of timings and arrangements for the event – send them a briefing with all the information they need about the event and their role

### Marketing

- ☐ Send the DARO team event details for publicising on the University website
- ☐ Arrange to send an invitation mailing through the DARO team to alumni in your region
- ☐ Set up an event page on Facebook and share the event on LinkedIn
- ☐ Contact alumni you are already in contact with and encourage them to attend
- ☐ Monitor replies

## One-two months to go

### Manage Risks

- ☐ Consider what you will do if the event is cancelled (How will you let everyone know? Will there be venue cancellation charges? Ticket refunds?)

### Prepare audio/visual requirements

- ☐ If appropriate, agree audio and visual requirements, such as projectors and screens the event and their role

### Organise Parking

- ☐ If appropriate, reserve parking at the venue

### Accessibility Issues

- ☐ If appropriate, check with the venue regarding accessibility issues

## One week to go

- ☐ Confirm number of attendees, room set-up and catering choices (if any) with your venue
- ☐ Finalise the attendee list
- ☐ Send out a reminder to all attendees (including the full details of the event, venue, venue map and dress code)

## On the day

- ☐ Prepare registration materials including sign-in sheet and name badges
- ☐ Arrive early to check space and signage, set up AV if required
- ☐ Meet and brief helpers/volunteers if using
- ☐ Set up table with name badges and event materials
- ☐ Take photos

## Immediately following event

- ☐ Let us know how it went – we love to hear about the events organised by our alumni!
- ☐ Thank attendees, speakers, chair or host
- ☐ Collect feedback from attendees
- ☐ Create final attendee list with updated contact details and send to the DARO team
- ☐ Send your event write-up and photos to DARO so we can put it on social media and/or our website











## Find out about our Global Alumni Network

[www.birmingham.ac.uk/alumni/our-alumni/  
international-alumni/index.aspx](http://www.birmingham.ac.uk/alumni/our-alumni/international-alumni/index.aspx)

## Contact us for more information at:

t: +44 (0)121 414 6679

e: [alumnievents@contacts.bham.ac.uk](mailto:alumnievents@contacts.bham.ac.uk)



University of Birmingham  
Alumni and Friends



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#wearebrumalum



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