



THE UNIVERSITY OF  
MELBOURNE

# ALUMNI ASSOCIATION GUIDELINES

A LIFE-LONG RELATIONSHIP



# ALUMNI ASSOCIATION GUIDELINES

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## HOW TO CONTACT THE ADVANCEMENT OFFICE

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Telephone: +61 3 8344 1751

Facsimile: +61 3 9348 0013

Email: [alumni-office@unimelb.edu.au](mailto:alumni-office@unimelb.edu.au)

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## THE UNIVERSITY AND ITS ALUMNI

Former students, or alumni, are important members of the University of Melbourne community. There are more than 230,000 alumni of the University around the world, living and working in over 120 countries.

The University welcomes significant numbers of students from interstate and overseas, many of whom return to their home state or country after completion of their courses. This geographic distribution of alumni and the increasing mobility of graduates in professional employment strengthen the need for alumni associations.

At present around 80% of University of Melbourne alumni live within the state of Victoria in Australia. Approximately 12% live overseas, with the remainder residing interstate within Australia. The largest groups of Melbourne alumni outside Australia are found in the United States of America, Malaysia, Singapore, Hong Kong and China.

In addition to country-based alumni associations, there are also discipline-based groups operating within Australia and internationally.

## ALUMNI ASSOCIATIONS

Alumni Associations are groups of University of Melbourne alumni, usually self-managing, which offer regular opportunities for University of Melbourne alumni to renew and maintain their contact with each other and with the University, for personal and professional reasons.

Alumni Associations may be organised as:

- regional groups (focusing on alumni in a given city, country or region), or
- on the basis of faculty or academic discipline, or as interest groups.

Alumni Associations may choose to become involved in the following:

- supporting alumni who wish to keep in touch with each other
- fostering an active interest in the University of Melbourne across their constituent group
- organising professional, networking and social activities for alumni
- promoting University based continuing professional education opportunities for alumni
- communicating alumni views, needs and interests to the University
- playing an active part in sending off new students and welcoming returning graduates (in cities/areas where this is appropriate)
- administering a messaging group/bulletin board to enable alumni to keep in touch with each other despite geographical boundaries
- mobilising alumni to support the University (for example, advising prospective students about aspects of study or life on campus, or by contributing to scholarships and other philanthropic activities)
- offering voluntary assistance to the University with organising events (reunions; interstate and overseas functions)
- representing the University at profiling and recruitment functions

## THESE GUIDELINES

These guidelines aim to support alumni volunteers in forming and managing alumni networks. The University recognises the value of such networks and aims to provide volunteers with as much assistance as possible.

However alumni associations are ultimately responsible for the conduct of their associations. Individuals should seek independent legal advice in relation to the specific requirements of their association such as liability and registration. For more information on this matter, please contact the Advancement Office.

## THE ADVANCEMENT OFFICE

Some alumni associations work closely with the faculty or department with which they are affiliated. Others, grouped by region or interest, are more likely to work with staff from the Advancement Office. In either case, the first point of contact for alumni who wish to form an alumni association is the Advancement Office, the staff of which will then assist them to identify the appropriate people within the University to provide ongoing support.

The Advancement Office is responsible for enhancing the relationship between the University and its alumni and working towards mutually beneficial outcomes. Part of this work is facilitating the relationship between alumni associations and the University and supporting alumni volunteers in their work.

Alumni are encouraged to contact the Advancement Office with any questions, comments or suggestions.

Post:  
The Advancement Office  
University of Melbourne  
Victoria 3010  
Australia  
Email: [alumni-office@unimelb.edu.au](mailto:alumni-office@unimelb.edu.au)  
Phone: +61 3 8344 1751  
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## FORMING AN ASSOCIATION

Alumni associations can be initiated by any member of the alumni community or a University staff member, faculty or department.

The Advancement Office will assist individuals as much as possible in the initiation, formation and ongoing management of an alumni association. In some cases this support may be provided by staff in a faculty office.

Experience has shown that the most important elements of a successful alumni association include its volunteers and the enthusiasm and level of interest of its members. Without significant numbers of volunteers and members, the association is unlikely to succeed.

The Advancement Office can assist in gauging the level of interest amongst the target group in the proposed association via letter, email or telephone consultation.

Suggested steps for forming an association:

1. Contact the Advancement Office to discuss the proposal
2. Define the target membership/participant group (eg: all alumni in Shanghai, Arts alumni in Brisbane, all Physiotherapy alumni, recent graduates in Bangkok)
3. Define the purpose and proposed activities
4. Discuss possible funding models with the Advancement Office
5. Gauge the level of interest of the target group (the Advancement Office can assist)
6. If significant interest is registered, consider and decide the best structure for the association and seek professional advice if necessary
7. Select and appoint members of a management committee (volunteers)
8. Launch the Association

## THE STRUCTURE OF YOUR ASSOCIATION

Choosing the right structure for an association is important. Most alumni associations are unincorporated associations – meaning they are not legal entities, but rather a group of people who come together to promote a common interest or group activity.

An incorporated association is a legal entity which is created under the appropriate legislation of the state, territory or country in which the association is formed.

Within Australia there is no legal requirement to incorporate an association, although it may be a good idea to do so if membership fees are charged and the association's volunteer management committee is responsible for members' funds. The Advancement Office can assist volunteers in making a decision regarding incorporation.

In some countries there are legal requirements that any kind of association must be formally established and registered with the appropriate authorities. Alumni who wish to establish a new association overseas are advised to seek professional advice in-country.

An association may choose to formally elect office bearers such as a President, Vice-President, Secretary and Treasurer. A number of existing associations also have Patrons – usually distinguished alumni who can offer advice but are not involved in the 'hands-on' organisation. It is also recommended that volunteers are assigned particular areas of responsibility such as maintaining the website, editing the newsletter, maintaining the membership list or planning events.

## CONSTITUTION

Some associations wish to develop a constitution, whereas others feel it is unnecessary. This decision should be made by the volunteers or members of the association. If an association wishes to develop a constitution, the Advancement Office can provide advice and support including sample documents.

## FUNDING

There are a variety of funding models available for alumni associations, depending on the needs and resources of each group. Please note that associations are expected to be largely self-funding, but may on occasion apply to the University for additional funds. These applications will be assessed on a case-by-case basis. Examples of funding arrangements are:

- Some associations choose to charge a membership fee to fund their activities;
- Some associations seek sponsorship for events from external sources; and
- Some associations do not require funding as they have no overheads and participants pay for events and activities

Please contact the Advancement Office to discuss the best funding model for the proposed association.

## VOLUNTEERS

Successful alumni associations rely on the time, energy, interest, organisational skills and practical help of volunteers.

The volunteers who drive and manage an association are invaluable to the ongoing success and survival of the group. These volunteers are usually responsible for:

- Organising communications and events
- Managing finances and administration
- Communicating regularly with the University
- Recruiting and supporting new volunteers
- Increasing membership
- Meeting mutual obligation requirements with the University

The organisation and structure of volunteer roles will depend on the structure and formality of the association. However it is important to note that generally volunteering requires commitment and time. It is a good idea to involve enough volunteers in an association so that the workload can be shared.

Associations are asked to provide the Advancement Office with an updated list of office bearers and volunteers with specific roles every time there is a change. It is important that the Advancement Office is aware of who is volunteering in each association so appropriate recognition can be organised.

It is also important that current volunteers consider how to recruit and support new volunteers in order to ensure the ongoing success of the association. The Advancement Office can offer advice on methods of recruiting and supporting volunteers.

A limited term for office bearers is recommended to ensure that the workload is shared. Alumni often are encouraged to volunteer their time when expectations are clearly defined. For some volunteers, it is also important that they see future opportunities for more senior roles.

## MEMBERSHIP

Any individual who has successfully completed a full year of study, or a study abroad/exchange program of one semester of study at the University of Melbourne is automatically a member of the University's alumni community. There are no joining fees, nor any need to 'sign up'. Unless the University is advised otherwise, all alumni who keep their contact details up-to-date with the University will be treated as active members of the University's alumni community.

Associations may choose to charge membership fees, and to 'sign-up' members. However most existing associations choose to keep membership informal and do not charge membership fees. Please note that administering membership fees can be a time-consuming process for volunteers.

There are a number of ways the Advancement Office can assist new associations in signing up members/participants. The Advancement Office can also assist in promoting the association.

## COMMUNICATIONS (TO ALUMNI)

The Advancement Office communicates regularly to alumni. Communication includes GradNet (a free electronic newsletter sent to around 36,000 alumni worldwide), the Melbourne University Magazine (sent regularly to all alumni), the Alumni Website ([www.unimelb.edu.au/alumni](http://www.unimelb.edu.au/alumni)), various faculty and department newsletters, and invitations to events. Alumni associations can have access to University communications to publish news, events and articles related to the association.

Some alumni associations publish a newsletter and maintain their own website. The Advancement Office can assist with both these activities. Please note that if the association is using the University of Melbourne name and/or logo, the University Style Guide (<http://www.marcom.unimelb.edu.au/>) must be followed.

## ALUMNI CONTACT DETAILS

The University of Melbourne Advancement Office maintains a database of all University of Melbourne alumni. The names and qualifications of graduates are publicly available. All other personal information, including date of birth, address and other contact details is protected under the Australian privacy laws.

Upon request, the University will provide an alumni association with the name, mailing address, email address and telephone number (where available) of relevant alumni. However, given privacy legislation restrictions, the University can only provide data on the following grounds:

- an Alumni Association Agreement has been signed by the association;
- an Alumni Association agrees to be bound in the same way and to the same extent as the University is bound under the Information Privacy Act (Vic) 2000 in respect of personal information about alumni<sup>+</sup>;
- a Committee member of the association signs a confidentiality agreement accepting full responsibility for safeguarding any information provided and ensuring that it is only used for the purpose for which it was supplied;
- the data is used for a legitimate purpose\*;
- the data is not stored in an ongoing manner in a database, but is used for the stated purpose and then deleted;
- it is inefficient or ineffective for the Advancement Office to undertake the contact on behalf of the association; and
- any updates or changes to contact details in response to the contact are given to the Advancement Office to be updated in the database.

<sup>+</sup>Information about the University's privacy policy can be found on the University's website. The Information Privacy Act (Vic) 2000 can be accessed at :

[http://www.legislation.vic.gov.au/Domino/Web\\_Notes/LDMS/PubLawToday.nsf/a12f6f60fbd56800ca256de500201e54/A318444C40FFD492CA2570CF00042812/\\$FILE/00-98a014.doc](http://www.legislation.vic.gov.au/Domino/Web_Notes/LDMS/PubLawToday.nsf/a12f6f60fbd56800ca256de500201e54/A318444C40FFD492CA2570CF00042812/$FILE/00-98a014.doc)

\* Legitimate uses of alumni data include anything that enhances the relationship between the University and its alumni, the association and alumni, or between alumni. Use of data for personal profit or gain is not legitimate use of alumni data. The legitimacy of the purpose for requesting the alumni data will be judged by the Advancement Office on a case-by-case basis.

## ALUMNI WEB COMMUNITY

The Alumni Web Community ([www.unimelb.edu.au/alumni/awc](http://www.unimelb.edu.au/alumni/awc)) is the University's online community for alumni, allowing users to:

- check and update their details on the alumni database to ensure they are always connected;
- choose the details they would like to share with other alumni (e.g. business phone number or an email address);
- find and network with other alumni via the alumni directory; and
- sign up for a University of Melbourne '@alumni.unimelb' email address to use as a forwarding service to an email account they nominate.

The Alumni Web Community is a useful tool to expand and organise and manage an association. Association volunteers should encourage current and prospective members to register with the Alumni Web Community and to make their details available to the wider community. The ability to access contact details will make it easier for alumni associations to manage their communications and membership drives.

By joining the Alumni Web Community alumni can search for fellow alumni in the Directory. If they have also joined the online community, and opted to share some contact details, they can be contacted directly.

As a default setting, other users will be able to see alumni names and qualifications from the University of Melbourne only. Registrants decide if they would like to share other information, such as an email address or a contact number at work, by ticking the boxes on the 'My Options' page.

In order for any contact information to be shown on the Directory record for an individual alumnus, that person will need to have ticked one or more of the boxes on the 'My Options' page. All Alumni Web Community users are encouraged to share at least one detail that would allow others to contact them, for example, by sharing their 'preferred email'.

Alumni who wish to use their '@alumni.unimelb' address as the contact detail that shows in their Directory record, need to simply cut and paste this into the 'Preferred Email' field on the 'My Profile' page.

For advice on how to best utilise the Alumni Web Community and alumni database to organise or strengthen an alumni association please contact the Advancement Office.

## EVENTS AND ACTIVITIES

Most alumni associations organise events for alumni. However the timing and type of events and activities will depend on the interests of the alumni cohort, as well as practical issues of numbers and geographic distribution.

The University organises numerous events around Australia and internationally, many of which involve the alumni community. The University often calls upon alumni volunteers for advice and assistance in the coordination of such events. Alumni are often invited as special guests to University events in their region. The Advancement Office can also assist associations in planning and running events and activities.

Please note that associations using the University name should not organise events or activities that might bring the University into disrepute. Legitimate activities or events include anything that enhances the relationship between the University and alumni, the association and alumni, or between alumni.

## RELATIONSHIP WITH THE UNIVERSITY

### A mutually beneficial partnership

The University aims to ensure that its relationship with each alumni association works to ensure mutually beneficial outcomes.

Some alumni associations have a very close relationship with the University, sharing ideas, comments and suggestions, co-hosting events and communicating regularly. Other associations work largely independently of the University, simply meeting minimum requirements. The University respects the fact that different associations have different expectations and modes of operation.

### Agreement

Alumni associations are required to sign an agreement which establishes the legal relationship between the association and the University. This agreement deals with use of the University of Melbourne name, use of the University logo, applications for funding and access to alumni data. The agreement officially recognises the association and ensures that it is covered by the University's insurance provisions.

## Communication

A good relationship between an alumni association and the University is dependent on regular and clear communication.

At a minimum, the University will:

- Send nominated representative/s bi-monthly informal newsletters on developments at the University, news from other associations, changes within the Advancement Office and upcoming opportunities;
- Nominate one permanent staff member to be available to answer questions and discuss suggestions;

At a minimum, the association will:

- Send the University an updated list of the association's volunteers (committee members) each time there is a change;
- Send the University a bi-annual report of the association's activities, requests, suggestions and feedback for the University; and
- Nominate at least one representative with whom the University can communicate directly.

## INSURANCE

The University of Melbourne's insurance program is designed to cover any student or other person in the capacity of a member or office bearer of any Alumni association or chapters formed, which function with the consent of and are registered with, the University of Melbourne.

The insurance cover applies to alumni events and activities run by Alumni associations, provided they fall under the commonly held understanding of what an Alumni event or activity is, such as social functions; networking activities; careers events etc. High risk activities, such as sky-diving, mountain climbing and training for, or participating in any professional sports, would not be covered by the University's insurance policy.

Accordingly, this insurance cover only applies to those recognised University of Melbourne Alumni associations which have signed the approved agreement and have no outstanding breaches.

To ensure your association is covered by the University of Melbourne's insurance program, the name of your Alumni association and a list of all its activities and events need to be added to the University's insurance policy. Therefore it is important to advise the University if your name changes, or if you are organising an unusual event or activity.