Alumni event planning checklist

One of the keys to delivering successful events is planning. You should start planning as early as possible, and consider a number of important elements from the outset. This includes:

- **The aim of the event:** What do you hope to achieve?
- **Audience:** Who do you expect to attend? What might they want out of the event? How many people can you realistically expect to attend?
- **Event format:** You could perhaps consider hosting a formal lunch/dinner, a drinks reception, a lecture/talk, informal gatherings/meals, afternoon tea, film screenings or visits/tours. The most important thing is that the event format matches the audience and purpose of the event
- **Venue:** Location, size/capacity, general look and feel, ease of access
- **Date and time:** Are there any other School or alumni events which coincide with your proposed date? Do the timings suit your intended audience?
- **Cost:** Knowing how much you have to spend early in the planning process will help inform your plans. You will need to consider whether to charge attendees, and whether this charge will need to cover the entire cost of the event.
- **Promotion and marketing:** What's the best way to reach your audience? You should consider using a number of methods, including email and social media. The Alumni Relations team is able to help you promote your event to alumni in your country.

Example timeline

When organising any event it is important to leave sufficient time for planning, and to give your intended guests as much notice as possible (especially when working with a global audience).

The Alumni Relations team suggests the following timeline, and can offer advice on any of the below elements of your plan:

10-8 months before the event
- Contact the Alumni Relations team to discuss your event
- Decide what you want out of the event, and use this to define your audience and the format of the event
- Research and decide upon a location/venue
- Book your venue space, if required
- Set up event pages/groups on Facebook and LinkedIn
- Send out an initial "Save the Date" invitation (include the date, timings, intended location and links to social media pages)

6-4 months before the event
- Compile your invite list. The Alumni Relations team can help with this
- Book catering and any AV (Audio Visual) equipment required
- Devise a schedule or programme for the event
- Contact potential speakers/hosts for the event
- Decide what ticket price you will need to charge to cover the cost of the event, if appropriate
- Send out your official invitation

2-1 months before the event
- Send out a reminder invitation to anyone who hasn't booked (for example, you could send out one reminder two months before the event and another three weeks before)
- Use social media to promote your event linking to the LSE Alumni official social media channels as appropriate:

Facebook "LSE Alumni"

Twitter "@lsealumni"

LinkedIn "LSE Alumni – official group"

- Confirm catering choices and other requirements with your venue
- Confirm speakers and event hosts
- Confirm with any other suppliers such as technical equipment and photographers
- Finalise the attendee list

1 week before the event
- Send out a reminder to all attendees (including the full details of the event, venue and dress code.) Consider including a list of alumni attending so everyone knows who will be there. (Note, you will need to seek permission for this from all attendees in advance.) You could include this as a question on the booking form eg, 'Would you like to be included on the event guest list which will be published online/via email before the event?'
- Send your speakers/host a briefing which contains all the information they need about the event and their role
- Produce name badges, if appropriate, to help your attendees meet one another
- Confirm final arrangements with

the Alumni Relations team, catering suppliers and venue

After the event
- Let the Alumni Relations team know how the event went, including photos
- Thank your speakers, chairs or host
- Consider writing a brief wrap-up of the event, which we may be able to add to the LSE Alumni website
- If appropriate, post photos from the event online (perhaps to the social media page(s) you set up
- Contact attendees to thank them for attending, and include links to any online post-event articles or photos

Events on campus

Many special interest groups will hold the majority of their events on campus, benefiting from free room hire and the on-the-day assistance of the Alumni Relations team. It's also a great opportunity to bring alumni back to campus and to physically reconnect with the School. If you choose to have a campus based event the Alumni Relations team will be able to assist with the following:

- Room bookings
- Catering
- Audio visual equipment
- Academic/departmental speakers

The Alumni Relations team can recommend the best options according to the format and size of your event.

Cost

All alumni group events should be self-financing. This is often done through charging a ticket price which covers the cost of the event. Ideally the cost should be realistic for your target group. If your event is based on campus the main cost will be incurred through catering and any add-on you choose to have (such as a photographer, florist etc.) If your event is off campus, there may be other considerations, such as venue hire. It is often possible to gain sponsorship for events, or partner with organisations like the British Council or British Embassy who can often host high profile events with LSE academics as speakers.

Promotion and marketing

To ensure the success of your event it's important to reach as many of your target audience as possible. Using a variety of channels to promote your event is usually a good way to do this. The Alumni Relations team can help promote and support your event. Remember that post-event promotion is also important, and any of these channels can be used to share the success of the event.

Email
Email is a simple and effective way to contact and invite guests. In this *Volunteer Guide* you will find information about the LSE Alumni website's email marketing tool, which is available for your use. This will allow you to reach all alumni in your particular area (geographical or otherwise) who are listed on our database. Until you have completed the training for this, the Alumni Relations team can assist you in sending out emails on your behalf.

LSE Alumni website
All group events will be listed on the LSE Alumni website's Event Calendar, found at **alumni.lse.ac.uk/eventcalendar**. Please send the relevant information (date, time, venue, how to book) to your contact within the Alumni Relations team, or to **alumni@lse.ac.uk**. This is a great way to reach alumni who may be browsing the website, and particularly for regional groups to reach those who may be travelling and so are not included on the email distribution list for your geographical area.

Social media
Social networks often play a vital part in promoting events. We advise that you set up pages/groups on sites such as Facebook and LinkedIn. You can then use these services, along with Twitter and any other social media sites you use, to promote the event and keep invitees and attendees informed about plans. You may also benefit from connecting with the official LSE Alumni social media channels:

Facebook "LSE Alumni"
Twitter "@lsealumni"
LinkedIn "LSE Alumni – official group"

E-newsletter

For many events, we can include details in our monthly e-newsletter, *LSE Alumni Echo*, which reaches an audience of over 80,000. The latest version of *LSE Alumni Echo* can be found on the LSE Alumni website at **alumni.lse.ac.uk/alumniecho**

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