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York St John University Alumni reunion guide

York St John University has grown a lot since it first opened in 1841 as a teacher training college. Whether our alumni graduated last year or 40 years ago, we love to see past students reunite. No matter if you graduated from London, Ripon or York, reconnecting with your old classmates is always important.

The Alumni Team organise university led reunions, open to everyone, on our York campus, but that doesn't mean you can't organise your own.

We are here to support you as you organise your own reunion. Reunions require a lot of organising, so contact the Alumni Team and read this guide for advice! We know that organising any event can take time and effort, so we are here to offer some guidance.

What the Alumni Team can do for you:

- Offer you general guidance on how to plan a reunion
- Complying with GDPR legislation, we can see how many alumni could be reached for your event
- Promote your reunion on social media and send out targeted communications.

Things to consider

Firstly, consider what type of reunion you wish to organise. Reunions are often held for a specific purpose, or for a specific group of alumni.

Most reunions:

- Mark a milestone year, for example 30 years since graduating
- Are subject specific, for example only PE alumni
- Are year group specific, for example, alumni who graduated in 1993
- A combination of all three elements, for example PE alumni who graduated in 1993.

Once you have decided which groups you wish to have at your reunion, contact the Alumni Team. We can then use our database to see how many members of the alumni community we could invite on your behalf.

Next, what type of event would you like to organise? Do you want it to take place over a whole weekend or just an afternoon? Do you want a formal dinner or just a casual drink in a local pub?

Deciding what type of event you want at an early stage will help you create a timeframe of how long you have to make the reunion happen. A formal dinner and weekend activities would require planning up to a year in advance, whereas a trip to the pub would not require as much planning!



Top tips

- Set up an organising committee. Don't leave it all to one person
- Delegate roles
- Leave plenty of time for planning
- Give yourself some leeway for possible problems.

The nitty gritty

Once you have decided what type of event you would like and who you want to invite, the next step is to decide the specifics. Your organising committee will need to consider and organise the following:

What will you eat? Remember when planning and picking venues to consider dietary requirements.

Do you want to book entertainment? Remember to book in advance, especially for weekends or summer, as many DJs, photobooths or similar will be booked months in advance.

Do you want a record of the day? Research photographers early to negotiate the best price for your reunion.

Where will people stay? It's important to consider the practical side of a reunion, such as how far people will have to travel and if they need to stay overnight.

Research local accommodation for availability and price range. If the reunion is taking place in York during the summer, contact our Events Team to check availability on discounted student accommodation. The Events Team can be contacted via email events@yorksja.ac.uk.

How will people get there? Is your venue close to public transport routes and is it accessible? Is there parking available or car parks nearby? If the event is taking place on the Lord Mayor's Walk campus, no onsite parking is available, but there are plenty of car parks nearby. Campus is also near main bus routes and is less than a mile from the train station, which also has a taxi rank.

Virtual reunions

We appreciate that our alumni live across the UK and even across the globe. It is not easy to travel for a meet up but that doesn't mean a reunion can't happen!

A virtual reunion is a convenient way to connect with friends and there are plenty of online platforms to use for a group video call. Examples of group video calling platforms are Facebook Messenger, Microsoft Teams, Skype, WhatsApp and Zoom.

A virtual reunion can be more than just a chat. Hold quizzes, share photographs and videos, or even have someone guest speak or entertain!

Top tips

- Decide which platform you want to host your reunion on and consider which would be the best for everyone attending
- Be considerate of others in a group call. Mute your mic if you are not speaking and raise your hand if you want to speak so you don't interrupt someone talking
- Take screenshots! You may not be able to take a traditional group photo but a screenshot of you all in the call is a good alternative.



Reunion giving

Studying with us brought you all together and allowed you to create some monumental memories. Why not add an extra element to your reunion by giving something to the students of the future?

Make a statement and help future students achieve their dreams and get the most out of their university experience. With the kindness and generosity of our alumni community, we could help more of our students through their studies.

Why not create something extra special and set up your own scholarship for your reunion? If you wish to consider creating your own scholarship to mark the reunion, contact alumni@yorksja.ac.uk and our Fundraising Projects Officer can advise you further.

On the day

- Keep a register of who attended
- Take plenty of photos
- Have fun!

After the reunion

- Record responses from attendees and ask for feedback
- Post photos on social media and share with the Alumni team
- Send thank you emails to attendees

We wish you the best of luck with your reunion planning. Remember to contact the Alumni team at alumni@yorksja.ac.uk or 01904 876741.



Reunion timeline		
Decide on event and notify the Alumni Team	6-12 months before	Necessary
Decide who to invite	6-12 months before	Necessary
Decide what type of event you want to hold	6-12 months before	Necessary
Research venue capacities and catering options	6-12 months before	Necessary
Decide venue (on or off campus?)	6-12 months before	Necessary
Select a date	6-12 months before	Necessary
Organise booking and payment method	6-12 months before	Necessary
Send out invites	3-6 months before	Necessary
Create social media groups	3-6 months before	Optional
Book entertainment	2-5 months before	Optional
Book photography	2-5 months before	Optional
Book accommodation	2-5 months before	Optional
Finalise reunion timings	2-5 months before	Necessary
Record responses of interest	Ongoing	Necessary
Promote event	Ongoing	Necessary
Prepare signage	2-3 weeks before	Optional
Prepare name badges	2-3 weeks before	Optional
Send out final reminders	1-2 weeks before	Necessary
Confirm numbers	1-2 weeks before	Necessary
Balance the books	After the reunion	Necessary
Contact the Alumni Team to feedback on the reunion	After the reunion	Necessary
Share photos	After the reunion	Necessary
Send thank you emails	After the reunion	Necessary

