



Your guide to organising an alumni reunion

Reunions are a great way to reconnect with old friends and reminisce about your time at the University of Leeds.

Whether you want to celebrate a class anniversary, catch-up with former housemates or find out what happened to your society friends, the Alumni & Development Office can help you.

We have put together this organisers' guide to help make things as easy as possible if you're thinking about organising a reunion. Whether you decide to organise a formal dinner or a weekend full of activities, we hope you will find it useful.

We've also included some useful resources and information about things you can do if you decide to hold your reunion in Leeds.

If you are interested in organising a reunion, no matter how big or small, get in touch to see how we can help you.

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Getting started

To begin with it's worth thinking about the following:

- Who is your reunion for? Is it for those on your course or those you knew from a club or society? It could even be for those you lived with during your time at Leeds.
- Think about who you would like to invite – is it just those from your year group or would you like to include those on years either side as well?
- Are you in contact with anyone who might be able to help you with the planning?
- Do you have an idea in mind of what you would like to do?
- Where would you like your reunion to take place? Would you like to come back to campus or meet somewhere more local to you?
- When would you like your reunion to happen? We recommend allowing yourself 6-9 months to plan a reunion to give people plenty of notice.

Top tip: Contact us when you get started so we can help guide you through the best options

Invite list

Once you know who you would like to invite (e.g. alumni who graduated in Medicine in 2002 including those who intercalated) get in touch with the Alumni & Development Office.

- We can search our database – containing over 250,000 alumni – to find those from your chosen group.



- We can let you know how many people we are in touch with and how many we have lost contact with over the years*.
- The list will give you an idea of potential numbers.

**Data protection regulations mean that, we are unable to disclose any personal information on our graduates, but we can contact them on your behalf.*

Sending the invitation

We recommend sending your invitation out about 6 months before the reunion date. Ideally you should have decided on the date, time, cost and location by this point.

If you are undecided on a date and location, you could send out an initial letter asking who might be interested in attending. This could also give you the opportunity to ask their opinion on when and where the reunion should take place.

When writing your invitation ensure the following details are included:

- Date
- Time
- Location
- Cost to attend and whether they need to pay in advance
- How to RSVP and the date by which they need to respond – do you want them to contact you directly or would you like all responses to come to us?
- Whether they can bring a guest
- Let them know if there is a dress code
- Any additional information such as how to book accommodation (guests will normally book their own)
- Include a list of those we have lost contact with to see if anyone else is in touch with them

Once you have written your letter, we will send it out on your behalf. Please note we can send a maximum of two letters and three emails out about your reunion.

We can also publicise it on our website: www.alumni.leeds.ac.uk/reunions

Top tips: If you are asking for pre-payment, why not set up a bank account just for the reunion to ensure all the money is kept separately?

If your reunion involves a pre-ordered meal, remember to ask for any dietary requirements when sending the invitation.

Recording responses

Now the invitations have been sent out, you need to keep track of who would like to attend.

- Make sure that all replies are recorded in one central place
- Keep a note of any suggestions or recommendations that might help with planning
- Let us know how things are going; if numbers are low we can send a follow-up letter to those who haven't replied

Top tip: Create a spreadsheet or paper form to help you keep track of the responses



Final preparations

1 – 2 months before your reunion takes place you should think about:

- If you want:
 - Name labels or badges
 - A guest book for alumni to fill in with details of what they are doing now
 - A photographer
- If you are holding your reunion at a venue, get in touch with them to confirm final numbers and any access or dietary requirements
- Sending out a reminder email/letter confirming all the details of the reunion including the date, time, location and brief description of the format

Top tip: Before the event why not ask everyone to send a photo and brief description of what they have done since leaving Leeds. You could create a short year book with the result and give it out at the reunion.

After the reunion

- We would love to hear how everything went and see any photos. It would be great to include these on our website to encourage others to hold reunions
- Please provide us with a full list of who attended

Top tip: Why not create a Facebook group so you can keep in touch even after the reunion has taken place?

Useful resources

On campus dining and accommodation

Did you know you could have a three course dinner followed by a night in your old hall of residence without leaving campus?

Meet in Leeds offer a range of dining spaces in the heart of campus that are ideal reunion dinners. They can also arrange accommodation at the 4* graded Storm Jameson Court for just £44 per person per night.

For more information visit www.meetinleeds.co.uk/ or contact the Meet in Leeds team on 0113 343 6100.

Weetwood Hall

A former student hall of residence and now a 4* Conference Centre & Hotel, Weetwood Hall is a popular choice for Leeds alumni reunions. To discuss your requirements please contact the Group Reservations Office on 0113 230 6000.



Visiting Leeds

Here are just a few of the things you could enjoy if your reunion is taking place in Leeds:

University of Leeds campus

Come back on campus and see what's changed since you were last here, you can visit the Parkinson Building, Brotherton Library and Union Building including the Old Bar any day of the week. You might even be able to visit your old department, contact us to find out.

While you're here don't forget to visit the new state-of-the-art Laidlaw Library which was officially opened in July 2015. The library features over 900 new study places, 150,000 books and 50,000 bees living in hives on the roof!

To find out more visit: http://www.leeds.ac.uk/info/4000/around_campus

Stanley & Audrey Burton Gallery

Located within the Parkinson Building, the Stanley & Audrey Burton Gallery is a hidden gem right at the heart of campus. Displaying innovative contemporary exhibitions and treasures from the University Art Collection and the University Library Special Collections, it's well worth a visit.

Find out more: <http://library.leeds.ac.uk/art-gallery>

M&S Company Archive

Marks & Spencer celebrated its 100th birthday by opening the M&S Company Archive which contains more than 70,000 items from the companies past. The collection includes clothing, food packaging, merchandise, photographs, films and letters from the days of the Penny Bazaar to the present.

Find out more: <https://marksintime.marksandspencer.com/home>

Walking routes

There are many different walking routes to enjoy in Leeds including the new [Public Art Trail](#) which takes in the public art displayed across the University of Leeds campus.

If you would like to see how Leeds has changed since your student days, you can book a walking tour with former staff member Dr Rachael Unsworth. See <https://www.leedscitywalkingtours.co.uk/> To get in touch directly, email her on leedscitywalkingtours@gmail.com or call 0771 2739153. She can offer both tours of the campus and of parts of the city centre - elements of nostalgia and surprise.

Local attractions

There are many interesting places to visit outside of the city centre including Kirkstall Abbey, Temple Newsam, Thackray Medical Museum, Tropical World and Harewood House.

Find out more: <http://www.visitleeds.co.uk/#>