

SURREY ALUMNI

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The
Alumni
Reunion
Guide



UNIVERSITY OF
SURREY



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Trudy Monk
Head of Alumni Relations

Welcome to the *Reunion Guide*

Welcome to the Surrey Alumni Reunion Guide. Over the years the Alumni and Development Office has helped many graduates organise their own reunion for classmates, their wider year group or their previous student society. Often it is to celebrate a special anniversary, but sometimes it is just because they are such a great way to catch up with friends. They are always wonderful occasions filled with much fun, laughter and reminiscing, as well as a chance to network and to learn more about your department or the University today.

We hope this guide inspires many more Surrey graduates to create their own special day – it provides step-by-step advice on how to plan your reunion, whether large or small. The alumni events team will be with you all the way to provide support and guidance.

We celebrate 50 years in Guildford in 2017 and so it is a fantastic excuse for extra special golden anniversary celebrations! (See page 15).

We look forward to working with you to plan your next reunion.

With warm regards

A handwritten signature in black ink that reads "Trudy Monk."

How to use the guide

There are no hard and fast rules for how long it takes to plan a reunion. If you are hosting an informal gathering in a bar then a couple of months should be enough notice, but if you are keen to organise something bigger we would recommend at least six months. The more notice you give your guests the better, especially if they're travelling from abroad to attend. Remember that all reunions are different, and depending on how much time you have, you might want to add some of the special touches suggested or skip parts of this guide – it's up to you!

Whether a small or large gathering, this guide will help you keep on track. We're using the following symbols to highlight important and useful information:



Draws your attention to the ways the Alumni and Development Office can support you

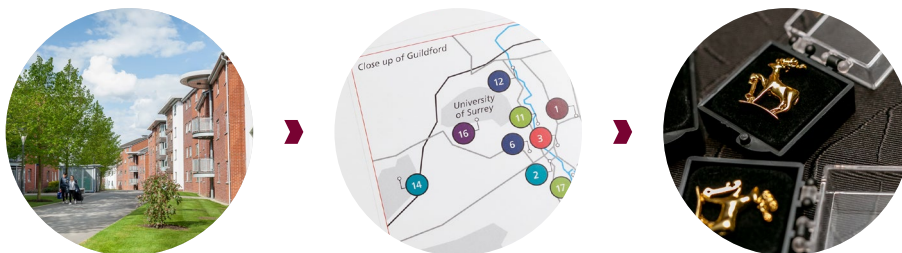


Signposts that more information is available on our website surrey.ac.uk/reunions



Reminds you of essential actions and useful tips

How we *can help*



-
- » Guide you through the reunion process
 - » Advise on contactable alumni
 - » Provide information about venues on campus
 - » Book venues on campus
 - » Provide event publicity before and after the reunion
 - » Send out 'save the date' and invitations to contactable alumni
 - » Book Student Ambassador for complimentary guided campus or departmental tours
 - » Support in booking off-campus accommodation
 - » Provide maps, directions and signage for campus events
 - » Prepare guest badges
 - » Support in sourcing Surrey-branded merchandise or in making your own reunion merchandise
 - » Arrange a University representative to support and provide an update on Surrey to your guests (where possible)


Getting started... *in 7 simple steps!*

A reunion doesn't have to be a formal event. For those causal get-togethers, all you need to do is book a centrally located venue – such as a bar, café or restaurant – and invite your classmates. But, if you are celebrating a special anniversary – for example 10, 20 or even 40 years post-graduation – or you wish to organise a bigger networking event, you might want to consider a more formal occasion.

Parts of this guide, for example 'Special touches', is mainly relevant to these formal reunions. But, the guide is written to help you prepare any size and style of event.


Remember, no matter what kind of reunion you choose to organise, the Alumni and Development Office is very happy to support.

1. Contact the Alumni and Development Office

 Reunions are a great way to celebrate your time at the University of Surrey and we are here to support you. We have a dedicated Alumni Events Officer who is always happy to go through your ideas and help ensure your day is a success.

2. Decide who to invite


A great first step is to consider who the reunion is for: a particular year? Or maybe a course, club or society? Are partners invited?


 Once this is decided, get in touch with us and our Alumni Events Officer can advise on the number of alumni we're in contact with.¹

3. Decide on the type of event you want to hold

Whether a formal dinner at the University or a casual gathering at a bar in Guildford – or even at your home – prepare an event you feel reflects your group. Remember the number of guests and activities can influence the style of event you plan: a buffet might be more appropriate for larger groups or if you want to allow people to mingle.

4. Research venues and food options

 Many alumni choose to hold their reunions on campus – and there are plenty of options available. Keep in mind that these venues are easier to book during University holidays. We can guide you through the different options available.


 However a campus reunion is not the only route you can take. There are obviously a wide range of venues off campus, including those on our recommended Guildford venues list.

Remember that popular venues – on and off campus – can be booked out months in advance, so plan ahead and choose a day of the week you believe your guests are most likely to attend. If you are planning your event on a short timescale, you may need to be more flexible on date or venue.


 Have a look at our checklist for questions to ask when booking venue and catering.

You've done your research, so you are now ready to set the date and time, and make your venue booking!

5. Decide on booking and payment method

 Based on your chosen venue you can develop a basic budget and cost per head – any special touches (see overleaf) will of course increase the overall budget. To help you with this, we've prepared a draft budget sheet.


Remember to think about your audience and what they realistically can and will pay, and what is included in the price.

 **It's useful to decide now on how your classmates can pay and how you'll track movement of money. One option for a bigger reunion is to set up a separate bank account.**

1. The Data Protection Act means we're unable to disclose any personal information on alumni, but we can contact them on your behalf.

» 6. Set up a social media group

Social media – whether a Facebook event, LinkedIn community, Twitter hashtag or just a WhatsApp group – is a good way to communicate and create excitement about your event.

 This is also an easy way for your classmates to communicate and share information.



facebook.com/surreyalumni



twitter.com/surreyalumni



bit.ly/surreyalumni



Remember to connect with us via our social media channels so we can support your event!

» 7. Send out 'save the date' or invitation

You are now ready to contact your classmates!



Forward your information to the Alumni and Development Office for us to circulate. The sooner you let people know the date the more likely they are to be able to attend.

Your 'save the date' should include your contact details so you can manage the responses.



Once you have finalised all your details – food, drink, and entertainment – you can send out a full invitation to all your guests. Remember to include the cost per head and be clear about what this covers – for example 'wine with dinner' or 'open bar'.

Aim to circulate your invitation no later than eight weeks before the event, but ideally much sooner.



Have a look at our draft 'save the date' notices and invitations.



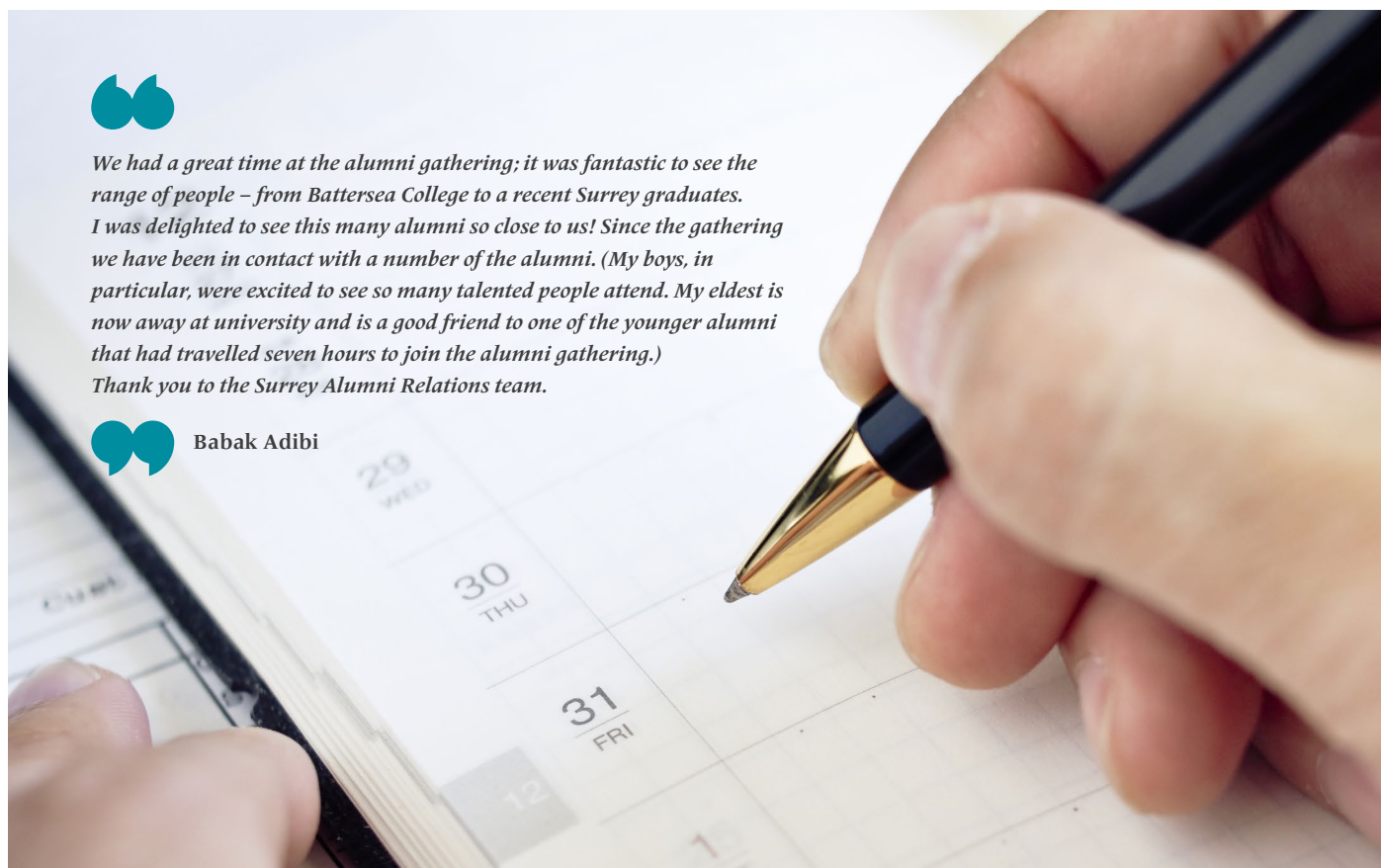
Why not get together with some of your fellow alumni to share the organising?



We had a great time at the alumni gathering; it was fantastic to see the range of people – from Battersea College to a recent Surrey graduates. I was delighted to see this many alumni so close to us! Since the gathering we have been in contact with a number of the alumni. (My boys, in particular, were excited to see so many talented people attend. My eldest is now away at university and is a good friend to one of the younger alumni that had travelled seven hours to join the alumni gathering.) Thank you to the Surrey Alumni Relations team.



Babak Adibi



Special touches



It was a really memorable day. It was fantastic to catch up with fellow students (some now professors and business leaders in their own fields) and even some of our lecturers! After the initial working out of who was who (without all that 1970s hair!!) it was amazing how the years fell away and we chatted like we last saw each other yesterday. Everyone had a great time – we had a lovely lunch, the Physics department did a fact-packed update on how the University had changed over the years and the student ambassador did a great job of reintroducing us to the campus! Thank you, you helped make the day really special for us.



Janet Preston

› Entertainment



A guest speaker or host with knowledge on your course subject can provide a professional or general interest component to the reunion. Where possible we are happy to provide a representative to provide an update on University news.

Alternatively, you can book in a performer or some live music.



If you choose to provide entertainment, remember to book necessary equipment such as microphones, projectors and screens and to build in the cost when setting a price per head.



› Photographer

Whether you hire a professional photographer or ask everyone to capture their favourite moments on their phones, remember to take photos!

And don't forget to get a full group photo.



› Campus tour



For a trip down memory lane we have Student Ambassadors who can take you on a complimentary guided campus tour of Stag Hill or your department.



Alternatively, we have a self guided tour which takes 45-60 minutes.



› Room decoration



Whilst many venues are attractive, events often feel more special with decorations such as flowers, balloons and banners. You could even ask your classmates to provide memorabilia or photographs and create a display.



› Decide on a schedule or programme



Creating a schedule or programme – which can form part of the invitation – is an easy way to ensure you have time to do all the activities you've planned. It will also let your classmates know where to be when. Have a look at our example programmes.

Remember to set aside time to relax and mingle.



› Accommodation



The University has a limited number of rooms on Stag Hill Campus and Manor Park for visitors staying for short periods of time. Booking in advance is recommended.



There are also plenty of hotels and B&Bs in and around Guildford.



› Branded Surrey reunion merchandise



Our design and print shop can create branded T-shirts, cups or other Surrey reunion memorabilia.

Making your event *a success*

Being organised and keeping track of key deadlines is the key to success.



Stay in regular contact with the venue and other suppliers to ensure they have what they need and payment is progressing.

» Record responses

These might trickle in or you might have a flood of responses. Either way, keep track of who is coming and let them know you've received their reply and their payment (if relevant).

Now that you know they're coming, encourage your classmates to stay in touch with you via social media.

» Send out final reminder, with directions

Send everyone a final reminder a week or so before the event with updates and key information, such as event details, how to get to the venue and contact details.



For on-campus events, we can provide maps, directions and information on parking, plus organise signage.

If organising an event off-campus, ask external venues for maps, directions and details of parking options.

» Keep promoting the event



The Alumni and Development Office can help promote your reunion on our website, through Facebook and Twitter. Let us know how the event is progressing – new entertainment booked etc. – so we can shout about it on your behalf! We can also send out a reminder email and we may even be able to include it in our e-newsletter.

Don't forget to promote the reunion through your own social media or email channels – stay in touch and let your fellow alumni know about exciting new developments.

» Confirm numbers and details with your venue

Get in touch with the venue no later than one week before the event to let them know final numbers and dietary requirements.

» Prepare guest badges



To avoid awkward moments, it's useful to provide all your classmates with name badges – especially if names have changed.

» Enjoy your reunion!



Have a wonderful time reminiscing and rekindling old relationships. If you need help from a member of the Alumni and Development Office or would like a University representative to attend on the day please let us know and we will do our best to help.



After the *reunion*

The event is over and it's now time to tie up any loose ends.



You've made a vital contribution to the University of Surrey, for which we are grateful. As a thank-you, you'll be named in our annual supporter report and you'll be invited to relevant supporter events.

» Balance the books

Close your reunion bank account if one was set up. If you have any funds left, why not make a class gift to the University? This is a special way to commemorate your class. Please see the Supporting Surrey section overleaf for more information.

» Share photos



Share your photos or create an online reunion album. If you send your photos to the Alumni and Development Office, we can create a Flickr album for you to share.

» Contact the Alumni and Development Office

Please send us an updated list of those who attended your reunion – with their contact details – so we can update our records, **if they have given their consent**. This will make it easier to prepare a reunion in the future or send out relevant University or department news.

» Send thank-yous

Send out a thank-you email to all those who attended as well as those who supported the running of your reunion.



Every year I organise an alumni reunion in Korea. It is always great to reminisce about Surrey and the reunions provide a valuable opportunity to connect and network with fellow graduates. The personalised message from the Pro Vice-Chancellor – updating on University developments – really adds to the occasion.



Won Kim



Reunion checklist *and timeline*

What	When	✓
Contact the Alumni and Development Office	6 months to a year before	
Decide who to invite	6 months to a year before	
Decide on type of event you want to hold	6 months to a year before	
Research venues and food options	6 months to a year before	
Decide on booking and payment method	6 months to a year before	
Set up a social media group	6 months to a year before	
Send out 'save the date' or invite	3-6 months before	
Book entertainment	2-5 months before	
Book photographer	2-5 months before	
Book campus tour	2-5 months before	
Prepare room decoration	2-5 months before	
Decide on schedule or programme	2-5 months before	
Book accommodation	2-5 months before	
Record responses	On going	
Promote the event	On going	
Prepare signage	A week before	
Prepare guest badges	A week before	
Send out final reminder	A week before	
Confirm numbers and details with your venue	A week before	
<i>Enjoy your reunion</i>	On the day	
Balance the books	After the reunion	
Contact the Alumni and Development Office	After the reunion	
Share photos	After the reunion	
Send thank-yous	After the reunion	

Supporting Surrey students *through your reunion*



Donations from our alumni are playing an increasingly important role in helping our current students. Gifts to the University annual fund provide crucial support to Surrey students; helping them meet their true potential and enabling those with financial hardship to carry out their studies. Individual scholarships and prizes reward those students who have demonstrated excellence.

A reunion is a fantastic opportunity to raise money, give back to your University and contribute to the success story of current and future

generations of students. Every penny goes towards providing the very best student experience in a positive learning environment, with world-class facilities.

And, as the University of Surrey has charitable status, it means that if you are a UK tax payer, for every pound you give we will receive an extra 25 pence from the Inland Revenue, helping your donations go even further.

► Some ideas

Class gift

Ask members of your class or year to contribute in honour of a special anniversary. You could start your own prize or scholarship fund or make a one-off donation towards student welfare, improving library facilities or enhancing the campus.

Society or club fund



Give back to your old society or sports team by clubbing together to purchase a much-needed piece of equipment. A crowdfunding campaign is a wonderful and fun way to do this.

Make fundraising part of your event

A raffle, auction or additional proceeds from ticket sales all add up and make a big difference to the life of Surrey students.

► Encourage your classmates to buy a personalised brick



Another wonderful way to celebrate your time at Surrey is through buying one of the personalised bricks that make up our Surrey Alumni Brick Path. We can arrange for you and your classmates' bricks to be placed together, immortalising your part in Surrey's history, whilst helping future generations of Surrey students. The path is in one of the most beautiful parts of campus, overlooking Terry's pond.

We have already funded many worthy projects thanks to generous donations to the Brick Path. With your help we can do a whole lot more.



Fifty years in Guildford

*A golden
opportunity
to celebrate
in 2016–17*

September 2016 marks 50 years since the University of Surrey received its Royal Charter. Throughout the academic year 2016–17 the University will celebrate this landmark occasion and the many ways its staff, students and alumni contribute to the University's success and positive impact on global society.

As we mark five decades in Guildford we'll also reflect on our 125 year-long history — back to when the University began its life as Battersea Polytechnic — and our legacy of nurturing leaders, innovators and problem-solvers.

**So, join the celebrations
this special year. Organise
a golden reunion or
celebrate your own Surrey
milestone — be it five, 10
or 40 years' graduated.**

We'll be creating a golden toolkit to help make your event extra special. For more details contact our Alumni Events Officer on alumnierevents@surrey.ac.uk

*We look forward to
celebrating with you!*

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