

Speakers Bureau Guide for Alumni Groups

Overview

The Speakers Bureau is a service for recognised Alumni Groups to access Cambridge academics to talk at a Group event. The bureau contributes to alumni remaining connected to the research and intellectual life of the University. This service will also help Alumni Groups enhance alumni engagement in their catchment/interest area.

Speakers have been advised that lectures delivered through the bureau are provided free of charge, though Groups may be able to cover travel expenses and accommodation should this be required. If a Group does not have the funds to cover these costs, they might consider applying to the Alumni Groups Award Scheme, set up to provide Groups with financial support for certain categories of events and to help cover speaker travel costs. An outline of the Scheme is provided at the end of this guidance and further details on the scheme can be provided by emailing networks@alumni.cam.ac.uk.

Throughout the year, the Alumni Engagement team will contact Development and College colleagues, to promote the sharing of scheduled travel plans. In the instances of where there is enough lead time and the travelling academic indicates they would have time available, the Alumni Engagement team will inform the local Group in order to give them the opportunity to organise an event.

How to apply

Groups that have signed the Memorandum of Understanding can request one or two speakers per calendar year. Please submit your request using the Speakers Bureau Request Form, found online: www.alumni.cam.ac.uk/get-involved/run-a-group/speakers-bureau-speaker-request-form or request a copy of the form by emailing networks@alumni.cam.ac.uk.

It is recommended Groups identify first, second and third choices in case the first-choice speaker is not available.

Cambridge academic colleagues are extremely busy, especially during term-time, it is advised to make your speaker requests with as much notice as possible. Requests are accepted all year round, however due to the busy nature of academic schedules, please follow the minimum lead times for speaker invitations:

- Digital: 2 months
- UK and European Groups: 3 – 6 months
- Rest of the World: 6 – 9 months

Please note, it may be necessary to plan events ahead of these minimum lead times as the diaries of certain high-profile academics and Heads of House are often booked more than a year in advance. As much prior notice is welcomed to maximise the chances of requests succeeding.

Alumni Group Responsibilities

The Alumni Group will:

1. Appoint an event contact who is responsible for managing the communications between the Alumni Engagement team and the speaker and the logistics of the event.

The event contact should also either act as the host or designate a host for the speaker throughout their time with the group.

2. Upon the speaker's acceptance, send a confirmation letter/email. Confirmation details should include:
 - a. Name and contact information of the host
 - b. Event date and time
 - c. Expected event format and attendance
 - d. Whether the invitation is extended to a speaker's companion
 - e. Arrangements for booking travel and accommodation
 - f. Refreshments provided e.g., lunch or dinner
 - g. Dress code – if applicable
 - h. Event location and address (this may not be available at the time of first contact, in which case an updated message should be sent when confirmed)
 - i. Suggested event timings, including information on who will be introducing the speaker
 - j. Ask for audio/visual needs, dietary requirements and any other special arrangements
3. Guarantee an audience of at least 25 alumni and guests to ensure the speakers' participation is valuable to both the Group and the University. If at any point a Group is concerned that attendance numbers may be lower than anticipated, the event contact should email the Alumni Engagement team on networks@alumni.cam.ac.uk.
4. Market the event as soon as possible. Below are suggestions on ways to advertise the event to members and alumni in their region or area of interest:
 - a. Send a save-the-date email to your members/contacts as soon as the event date and speaker is confirmed.
 - b. List the event on the alumni website (send details to networks@alumni.cam.ac.uk) and their website if there is one.
 - c. Post the event on their social media channels: Facebook, LinkedIn, etc, if applicable.
 - d. As soon as sufficient details have been confirmed (venue, precise timings, pricing) send a more formal invitation to your members/contacts and update the Alumni Engagement team so that the entry on the alumni website can be updated.
 - e. Request an event promotion mailing to alumni in their catchment area/interest, which may also provide an opportunity to expand membership/contact base. Contact networks@alumni.cam.ac.uk for more information.
 - f. Send out reminders via email, text and social media channels as the date of the event approaches.
5. Provide a provisional attendance list at least 10 days prior to the event to networks@alumni.cam.ac.uk.
6. Make a timely application for a grant, if the event falls into the scope of the Alumni Groups Award Scheme.
7. Endeavour to help a speaker make travel and hotel arrangements. The Group will know of suitable accommodation and booking a hotel directly may remove the need to refund a speaker.
 - a. A Group member may offer to provide accommodation at their home, this may be appreciated by many speakers. However, the speaker should be offered the alternative of hotel accommodation.
 - b. Arrangements for the reimbursement of travel and hotel expenses, where these are paid for by the speaker, should also be confirmed directly by the Group.

8. Discuss directly with a speaker should they wish to be accompanied by a guest, or extend their stay, particularly for international locations. While it is encouraged that speaker guest's costs directly relating to the event (meal, refreshments) be covered by the Group. Costs relating to additional nights' accommodation or guest travel costs should be agreed with the speaker prior to the event.
9. Shortly before the event, the event contact should confirm the key arrangements and that any special requirements for the speaker have been met. For example, audio/visual needs, dietary requirements.
10. Endeavour to make the speaker's visit both enjoyable and rewarding. The Group may consider the following recommendations:
 - a. Pick up the speaker from the airport or train station
 - b. Arrange for transport to and from the speaker's hotel to the event venue (if applicable)
 - c. Offer to pay for drinks if there is a cash bar
 - d. If the speaker has family, friends or colleagues in the area, consider inviting them to the event
11. Following the event, arrange a thank you note to be sent to the speaker on behalf of your Group. The recommendation is to send this within two weeks of the event.
12. Following the event, complete the event summary survey. Please attempt to complete the survey within two weeks of the event. The survey is vital in ensuring the Bureau is successful and provides the opportunity for the Alumni Engagement team to review speakers and improve the Bureau.
13. Notify the Alumni Engagement team (networks@alumni.cam.ac.uk) if a direct invitation to a speaker is made and endeavour to copy them into correspondence.

Alumni Engagement Team's Role

The Alumni Engagement team will:

1. Provide guidance to Groups on how to request a speaker and the Alumni Groups Award scheme to help cover costs of the event and speaker expenses.
2. After receiving a speaker request from a Group, issue an invitation to the speaker(s) requested to ascertain their availability.
3. Following the speaker's acceptance, introduce the speaker to the Group's event contact so they can exchange directly on the logistics of the event. The Alumni Engagement team are available to provide support throughout the process.
4. Make sure the pool of potential speakers is kept up to date and to seek new speakers.
5. Post the event on the alumni website: www.alumni.cam.ac.uk/events , and, on a case-by-case basis, provide event marketing to support to the Group. This could be through electronic direct mailings or social media posts.
6. Work closely with the speaker and the Group, should a speaker no longer be able to attend an event, to arrange an alternative speaker.
7. To send out the Speakers Bureau event summary survey to event contacts.

Speakers' Role

1. To share their expertise, enthusiasm and academic interest with the Group they are visiting through the form of a lecture. Normally presentations last 25-45 minutes, with questions afterwards.
2. To participate fully in the event and socialise informally with the Group if there is a lunch or dinner element.
3. Should a speaker no longer be able to attend an event, it is the responsibility of the speaker to inform both the Group they are visiting and the Alumni Engagement team

as soon as possible. Where possible, the speaker will try to assist with the identification of a replacement speaker for the event.

4. Arrange directly with the Group if they require any audio or visual equipment for their lecture.

Alumni Groups Award Scheme

Groups who have signed the Memorandum of Understanding have the opportunity to apply for funding which will further develop and enhance alumni engagement in their country/city or area of interest.

The Alumni Groups Award Scheme offers awards of up to £1,000 in support of a specific Group activity. The scheme is not intended to contribute to Group events that are the standard, normal activities of the Group, but aims to allow Groups to organise an event that they otherwise would not be able to. This could involve costs of a nature that is not usual for their Group's events (e.g., speaker travel), and also attempts to increase the Group's membership or where the event marks a celebratory milestone in the Group's history.

To learn more, or to find out whether your event may qualify for funding and how to apply, please contact the Alumni Engagement team on networks@alumni.cam.ac.uk.

Contact Information

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