

Guide to Connecting Online

SOCIAL MEDIA GROUPS, WEBPAGES AND TOP TIPS

Our alumni community is global. And we know it's nearly impossible to connect with everyone face to face. So, we've put together a guide on different ways you can connect and reach out with alumni in our online world.

This includes:

- Social Media platforms such as Facebook or LinkedIn
- Communications platforms such as WeChat, WhatsApp or KakaoTalk
- Digital platforms for a homepage (Macquarie University alumni page or independent webpage)

SOCIAL MEDIA

Social networks, like Facebook and LinkedIn, bring together a community and make it easy to stay in touch and exchange ideas. They do not replace emailing but are an excellent tool to reach additional members.

Not all social networks are available in all areas of the world. For some countries, certain social networks may have a better reach. We recommend that you select one with a user-friendly mobile version (eg responsive website and/or apps for common operating systems), as more than half of internet traffic now takes place on mobile devices.

As with many IT systems, it is often the case with social networks that you get out what you put in; maintaining your channel well usually leads to a good level of engagement by your members. Remember, however, that functionality may be developed or removed without much warning. It is good practice to have more than one administrator, where possible, so that your group retains easy access to administrative controls.

Below are some suggestions, but remember, whatever platform you choose, the same principles apply.

FACEBOOK GROUPS

Facebook groups make can reinforce a sense of community and make it easy for people to stay in touch and swap ideas. They are not a substitute for emailing members directly. We recommend you always use both email and Facebook messaging.

Why are they useful?

Many Macquarie alumni have Facebook accounts; Facebook is the most popular social network in the world currently and is mostly used for social and personal reasons, as opposed to professional networking.

This makes it easy for alumni groups to verify new members. When you join Facebook, you create a public profile. People's profiles may show the university at which they studied, location and/or employment, depending on the what the individual has chosen to make visible. On Facebook, you can also see the contacts that you have in common.

Facebook makes it easy to grow and promote Alumni Groups. Alumni tend to be on Facebook friends with other alumni. When one friend joins a new group that they that may be advertised to other friends, who can also apply to join the group. Members may invite others to join the group too, unless he says being disabled in the group's settings.

Most younger people rely on Facebook, and it even may be the first place that they think to search for an alumni group. If there is someone in your group who is willing to consider new applications to join, you should have a Facebook group - even if you don't know how to use it, your members will!

How do they work?

Facebook groups are like a community noticeboard on the internet. The creator(s) of a group decides who can see it and who can post messages.

Facebook calls these people the group's 'members' and the creators are its 'administrators'. There are

several types of messages that you can post to the board: notices, photos, questions and event invitations.

In a typical group, every member can see the name and photo of every other member and send each other messages directly (depending on individuals and privacy settings).

How do you create a group?

You need a personal account to use Facebook. You should read Facebook's group information before you create a group.

The Alumni Relations Office can support by creating an official Facebook group and give you administrative rights.

As a Facebook group administrator, you can choose how easy it is to find the group and who can join. There are three broad settings: public, closed and secret. We recommend going with closed so group administrators can approve applications to join. Once people have joined the group, any member can post a notice.

When someone applies, the group sends them a message to check their Macquarie degree and year of graduation. It's unlikely that you'll want to open an open group because this gives you no control over who joins and who can read the messages.

Managing a private group on Facebook and its membership applications might be a more intensive effort than your alumni group is able to sustain. An alternative option is a Facebook page which offers a different set of functions and is more like the profile (or landing page) of your alumni group as an entity than a community of users. Pages tend to be used by organisations and businesses and users connect by liking or following the page. Pages can have multiple users as their administrators and contributors, can be customised to showcase particular features and offer statistics on audience engagement.

LINKEDIN GROUPS

LinkedIn is mostly used by active professionals who use this as a platform for keeping in touch with their professional network and, increasingly, with fellow alumni. Groups are used for exchange about professional copies, finding jobs and promoting events.

Why would you create a LinkedIn alumni group?

A LinkedIn alumni group can enable you to create a unique and up-to-date network for alumni, because the data LinkedIn uses is updated by its members. You can therefore find alumni close to where you live, who may not appear in information from other sources.

Another benefit of searching local alumni on LinkedIn is that you find alumni in interesting roles and with great experience, which can provide ideas for events. You can also organise events quickly because of the speed of communication and the fact that people use the network on their mobile devices, so getting members together and short notice to meet a visiting alumnus, for example, can be successfully achieved.

Events can be publicised with a direct link to Eventbrite or an equivalent service, for easy booking on the internet.

The group can also be used as a bulletin board for helping members with specific questions, as other members of the network can easily provide answers and information.

How do you create a group?

Creating a successful LinkedIn group from scratch is not easy; it requires a significant work to build up, but it is very worthwhile. And we're here to help.

The Alumni Relations Office can create an official LinkedIn group for you and give you administrative rights. You will need your own personal account to use LinkedIn. We recommend that you become familiar with LinkedIn and build your own network by connecting with users you know and joining groups, before you create your own group. One way to recruit members via LinkedIn is to invite local alumni to connect with you, telling them about the alumni group and its activities, and once they connect, inviting them to the group.

LinkedIn groups can be public, which means anyone can join, or unlisted, which means people can't find and join it just by searching LinkedIn. Alumni groups are typically unlisted, so that the administrator and other members can decide who joins.

MANAGING GROUPS TOP TIPS

Here's a few top tips that will help you manage your Facebook and LinkedIn groups.

Manage



Approve members frequently when they ask to join.



Welcome new members with a post to acknowledge newly joined members. You could share their MQ degree details and industry they are working in.



Post weekly and relevant content – share your own thought leadership insights as well as valuable content that you discover online. Ask questions, or for ideas/feedback on activities. Don't forget to encourage everyone to share too!



Share what's happening from Macquarie University by sharing news and stories from the Lighthouse (<https://lighthouse.mq.edu.au/>), Macquarie Matters (<http://www.mq.edu.au/macquariematters/>) or posts from Macquarie University's LinkedIn page (<https://www.linkedin.com/school/7763>)



Comment on existing discussions – this will almost always create activity.



Grow the group by scanning LinkedIn and your other networks for likely members and invite them. Or get introductions from members. Encourage members to invite their MQ connections.



Encourage engagement through questions and feedback requests



Moderate all posts and remove spam.

Engage



Think of other ways to connect people as the group grows. Think meetups, teleconferences, online chats, networking events, casual dinners, etc.



Brainstorm with your key community members within and outside of the group to get new ideas flowing

Share



Make connections and suggest connections between users where appropriate



Share a short profile of a member – ask them 3 simple questions

Promote



Promote your LinkedIn or Facebook group by sharing it with your LinkedIn/Facebook network and ask members to do the same. Post the group URL in personal posts.

And lastly...



Have fun. The whole idea behind starting a group is to create a safe space for Macquarie alumni to connect.

GROUP WEBSITES

Macquarie Alumni Website – Group Webpage

The University's alumni website contains information about alumni benefits, events and university news, as well as a full directory of all our Alumni Networks/Chapters.

All Alumni Networks/Chapters can be provided with an individual web page and we strongly encourage your group to take advantage of this. In addition, the alumni website contains a list of upcoming alumni events from the University and events organised by each of our Alumni Networks/Chapters. If you need some inspiration for your next event, this list may be helpful.

To take advantage of these pages, please ensure we have details of your latest news, events and activities. You can add photos and/or links to other sites as appropriate.

You can find the Global Alumni Network pages by visiting mq.edu.au/alumni/global-alumni-network and the Alumni Events page by visiting mq.edu.au/alumni/events. Email us with your Group's information at alumni@mq.edu.au.

Independent websites

Why have any independent website? Many Alumni Networks/Chapters find developing their own website, which they may maintain themselves, has useful benefits:

- attracting new members
- keeping existing members informed and engaged with the events and activities the Network/Chapter is organising
- giving more control over the site and its appearance than free networks or online services, like LinkedIn or Facebook
- less likely to be unavailable in certain territories.

From the outset it is important that your Alumni Network/Chapter identifies a member of your committee/volunteer team who would be happy to develop and maintain your independent website.

What should be included?

At the very least, your website should include:

- an introduction to your Alumni Network/Chapter
- details of your upcoming events and how to book
- contact details for the Alumni Network/Chapter
- links to any additional online platforms you use, eg Facebook, LinkedIn, WeChat, WhatsApp etc
- link to the University's alumni website: mq.edu.au/alumni

The following functions may also be useful:

- an automated 'join the group' form
- a facility for members to update the details online. We recommend awc.alumni.mq.edu.au/update
- subscription to the group's newsletter
- events calendar

The Alumni Relations Office cannot take responsibility for Alumni Network/Chapter's independently created websites. It is at the discretion of each group how they run and maintain their website; we can only intervene in exceptional circumstances, for instance, if the Alumni Network/Chapter is perceived to be damaging the reputation of the University.

Collection of alumni data

If you're collecting data from your members through your website, it is important that the Alumni Network/Chapter's data protection statement is feasible on your website, so alumni are aware of how you will use their personal data. See [Macquarie University's privacy policy](#) for further information.

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