

CSC Alumni Association Toolkit



COMMONWEALTH
SCHOLARSHIPS



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Introduction

Commonwealth Scholars and Fellows have been funded by the UK government through the Commonwealth Scholarship Commission in the UK (CSC) since 1959.

CSC alumni associations provide a vibrant, country-based platform for Commonwealth Scholars and Alumni to connect, share their scholarship experiences, spark new ideas, and collaborate on initiatives that drive progress in their communities. Alumni associations support a dynamic, local network dedicated to fostering growth, lifelong friendships, and development impact in their home countries.

Being an alumni association leader is a unique opportunity to shape the alumni community in your country and be an ambassador for the CSC.



This toolkit is designed to:

- Support alumni association leaders in setting up, managing, and maintaining an alumni association
- Provide an overview of the support and resources available
- Outline the CSC's expectations for alumni associations and the role of leaders as CSC ambassadors
- Share ideas on ways to engage with Commonwealth Scholars and Alumni



The primary objectives of CSC alumni associations are to:

- Create an active and engaged community of Commonwealth Scholars and Alumni at the national level
- Foster lifelong connections between Commonwealth Alumni and the CSC
- Facilitate networking, mentorship and knowledge sharing among members
- Deliver events and activities showcasing the expertise and contributions of Commonwealth Alumni across a range of sustainable development issues
- Promote Commonwealth Scholarships and the power of higher education in achieving sustainable development
- Support the work of the CSC in reaching out to the next generation of scholars

Coordinating an Alumni Association: the essentials

Alumni associations do not follow a single model. Each association is unique, shaped by factors such as its membership size, country context, and geographical spread of alumni to name a few.

There are some essential components which need to be in place to establish a successful association:



Vision, mission and goals which outline what the association hopes to achieve, how it will achieve this, and the measurable steps to stay focused and on track.



A core team of volunteers who will form the association leadership. Each volunteer should have a clear role and responsibilities to help achieve the vision, mission and goals of the association.



Constitution or Charter outlining the governance of the association, including membership eligibility.



Association name and logo to provide recognition, branding and visibility.



Communication channels to ensure members can join and contact the association.



Regular engagement with the Alumni Team to ensure associations receive the support they need to succeed and to report on activities.



Regular engagement with fellow alumni association leaders, facilitated through the [CSC Alumni Association Leaders LinkedIn group](#) and ongoing training and workshops.



Setting your vision, mission and goals

Each association should have a vision, mission and goals which the leadership is committed to achieving through its engagement activities and events.

The vision, mission and goals should be used to incentivise Commonwealth Scholars, Alumni and other stakeholders to get involved, and most importantly, stay involved in the association.



Vision

is what you want the association to achieve.



Mission

is a general statement on how you will achieve the vision.



Goals

are specific, measurable steps identified to fulfil the mission.

Creating a vision statement

Vision statements should be concise (14-15 words), clear, memorable, and describe a unique outcome. The statement should also be clearly linked to your membership.

Setting the mission statement

The mission should outline the association's purpose and how it will achieve its mission. This could be through specific activities and engagement with selected stakeholders and audiences.

Identifying goals

Goals are the practical steps the association will take to achieve its mission. You should follow the SMART approach to develop your goals- Specific, Measurable, Achievable, Relevant, and Time bound.

Each association's vision, mission and goals will be promoted on the CSC website and should be made available to members.

Building an effective leadership team

To create, manage, and sustain a successful association, it is essential to have a dedicated team of volunteers who support its vision, mission, and goals. Clearly defining leadership roles and structures ensures that each volunteer's unique strengths and qualities are utilised effectively.

Leadership roles and structures

There is no 'perfect' leadership structure. You should develop a structure that works best for what you want to achieve and the skills and knowledge and number of those volunteering.

All associations should have an overarching leader, such as a President or Coordinator.



Leadership roles

- President/Coordinator sets the vision of the association and provides strategic delivery and operational leadership.
- Chairperson provides governance oversight and is responsible for Board/Committee meetings.
- Vice-roles provide additional support where required and step-in should the lead role holder not be available.
- Treasurer has oversight of the association's finances and is responsible for implementing robust financial processes, as per legal requirements.
- Secretary supports the running of the Board/Committee, maintains effective records and processes, and is responsible for communications and correspondence.
- Events Officer manages events and activity delivery to attract and retain member engagement.
- Communications Officer manages communications channels and develops content to promote the association and its activities to a range of stakeholders.

Each role should be supported with a role description which outlines the key responsibilities, expectations and skills/knowledge required of the role holder. For more details on leadership roles, see page 33.

Managing your leadership

There are many benefits of having a leadership team. These include broadening participation, delegating tasks and workload based on skills and talent, supporting informed and group-led decision making, and providing skills development opportunities.

With these benefits also come challenges. These can include recruiting too many roles with overlapping and/or ill-defined responsibilities, lack of engagement and participation, managing expectations, recruiting the right volunteers, and lack of accountability.

Defining the vision, mission, goals of the association and implementing role descriptions outlining accountability and expectations for all leaders, will help reduce these challenges.

This could involve holding leadership meetings every two or three months, setting up clear communication channels, and developing annual engagement plans so leaders understand their commitments and can manage their time effectively.

Characteristics of good leaders

Leadership is developed through practice, experience and feedback. Everyone has their own leadership style and there are some key characteristics that all good leaders embody.



Integrity



Emotional intelligence



Good communication



Vision



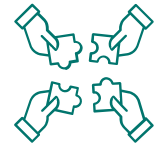
Confidence



Positivity



Being present



Collaborative



Implementing good governance

Clear guidelines for running the association help everyone understand their roles and responsibilities, and keep the group focused and organised.

All associations should:

- **Have a constitution or charter** which outlines the association's objectives and governance structure, including short descriptions of leadership positions, and a set length of term for each position. This must be communicated and accessible to all members. You can view an example on page 29 and download the template from the CSC website.
- **Return a signed Terms of Reference.** A copy is available on page 22 and you can download a copy from the CSC website.
- **Create role descriptions** which outline the key responsibilities, expectations and skills/knowledge required of the role holder.
- **Attend the annual Alumni Association Leaders Conference** and additional training opportunities offered throughout the year.
- **Develop an Annual Workplan** for events and activities, and/or other planned deliverables. This should be shared with the Alumni Team. You can download a copy from the CSC website.
- **Hold one event or activity per year and an Annual General Meeting (AGM).**



Registering your association

There is no requirement from the CSC to legally register your alumni association, however in some countries this is a requirement and/or opens additional opportunities for the association.

If you choose to register the association, you must notify the Alumni Team and provide information on the process and costs to register. You should also outline how this may affect the running of the association as per the information in this toolkit.



Supporting the Commonwealth Scholarship Commission

The [CSC's Alumni Advisory Panel](#) provides a platform for Commonwealth Alumni to support the future of the programme and its Scholars by sharing personal insight and expertise to contribute to the development of CSC activities. Panel members are appointed for a two-year term and represent the multitude of knowledge and expertise within the CSC alumni community, with members selected from across the Commonwealth and CSC Scholarship and Fellowship schemes.

Each association will be invited to nominate a member of its leadership to sit on the panel and participate in activities, as well as feedback on panel activities to association members. Leaders will be notified when nominations open.

Chapters

For larger countries or those where alumni are geographically spread, associations may wish to consider creating more localised groups or chapters. These will also need to be supported with a clear leadership structure.

Chapters must report to the core leadership team and are responsible for delivering to the same vision, mission and goal of the main association, although the approach may be different due to alumni numbers, engagement and context/resource setting.

Associations considering creating chapters should seek guidance from the Alumni Team.

Maintaining and growing an engaged membership

CSC alumni associations must be open to all CSC-funded Commonwealth Scholars and Fellows.

We encourage associations to open membership to Commonwealth Scholars and Alumni not only from the association country but who may be living and working in that country.

Associations may also be open to scholars and fellows funded through the wider Commonwealth Scholarship and Fellowship Plan (CSFP). CSFP alumni are those who were awarded a Commonwealth Scholarship to study in other Commonwealth countries (not the UK). Current scholarship programmes under the CSFP include the [Queen Elizabeth Commonwealth Scholarships](#) and [King's Commonwealth Fellowship Programme](#).

Member motivations

Understanding what motivates people to join a membership organisation will influence how you engage your members and the types of activities offered. The CSC has identified the following motivators for its global alumni engagement:

- Contributing and feeling immersed in a community
- Knowledge exchange
- Building personal and professional networks
- Developing skills and knowledge not available through other networks or employment
- Being part of a prestigious community
- Participating in volunteerism and community engagement

Once you have identified your member motivations, you can develop 'offers' (such as events, activities, communications) that you feel will address these and attract members.

You should consider:

- In what ways the 'offer' fulfils the motivation
- To what extent it will be valuable to members
- How you will measure its success
- To what extent it contributes to the vision, mission and goals of the association
- Can you realistically deliver the 'offer'



Keeping members engaged

Sustaining a membership is not easy and sometimes things will work initially and then stop working. Membership of any organisation fluctuates and it's important to expect this and not be deterred by changes to your membership.

When designing your membership offer, such as activities, events and opportunities, you should consider the following engagement tools:

A mixture of expectation and anticipation. This can include regular, scheduled communications with a clear and known structure that members expect, interspersed with one-off or semi-regular activities and opportunities which members are encouraged to anticipate.

Variety. Members will be attracted to different things. It's therefore important to offer a variety of activities designed for different audiences. This includes changing activity formats, speakers, locations, and themes.

Objective and outcome driven. Always ask the question, 'so what?', when developing activities. There should be clear objectives and outcomes driving activities and ensuring members understand why they are being asked to engage and what to expect.

Informative and interesting. This is key in both designing and communicating activities to capture member curiosity.

Simplicity. Sometimes, simple activities that require minimal effort from both organisers and members are the most effective. Planning within your available resources and keeping activities straightforward can enhance their overall quality.

Milestones. Embrace existing points in the Commonwealth Scholar and Alumni life cycle to plan activities and use international days where you can capitalise on themes and resources to engage members.

Accessibility. Every member of the CSC community should be able to join in your activities. Ensure these are inclusive and meet the requirements outlined in the CSC's Inclusive Communities Policy (page 27).

If you're not sure where to start, go to your membership and ask for ideas. You should also request feedback post-activities to assess their value and support future delivery.

Onboarding members

Between January and March, completing Commonwealth Scholars (or new alumni) will be invited to Welcome Home events hosted by the British High Commission in their home country. These events offer an opportunity for them to re-connect with each other, meet alumni and share their UK study experience. Alumni association leaders should be invited to these events to introduce the association and encourage new alumni to engage in opportunities.

Alumni associations should also have an onboarding process in place for both completing scholars and existing alumni not currently engaged in the association's activities. This can include:

- Welcome messages and information on membership (we recommend posting these messages in September/October)
- List of benefits in joining the association
- Upcoming activities, or a round-up of recent activities
- Clear and engaging invitation for new members to get actively involved
- Leadership and policy information

Building a member database

Under the General Data Protection Regulation (GDPR) 2018, the CSC **cannot** share its scholar and alumni database with external parties, including CSC Alumni Associations.

Having clear policies and processes to build a local member database is critical to the success of the association. You must follow the Data Protection Best Practice guidance on page 26.

You should consider the following pathways to build your local member database:

- Send information to scholars and alumni inviting them to join the association or register for events. The Alumni Team can send mailings to scholars and alumni on behalf of the association. Associations should provide the mailing text and clearly state how recipients can reply directly to the association.
- Keep your association information up to date on the CSC website. This page lists how scholars and alumni can contact their local alumni association directly.
- Capture scholar and alumni contact details at your events and activities.
- Invite members to share information about the alumni association with their Commonwealth Scholar and Alumni contacts to reach more members.

Access and visibility

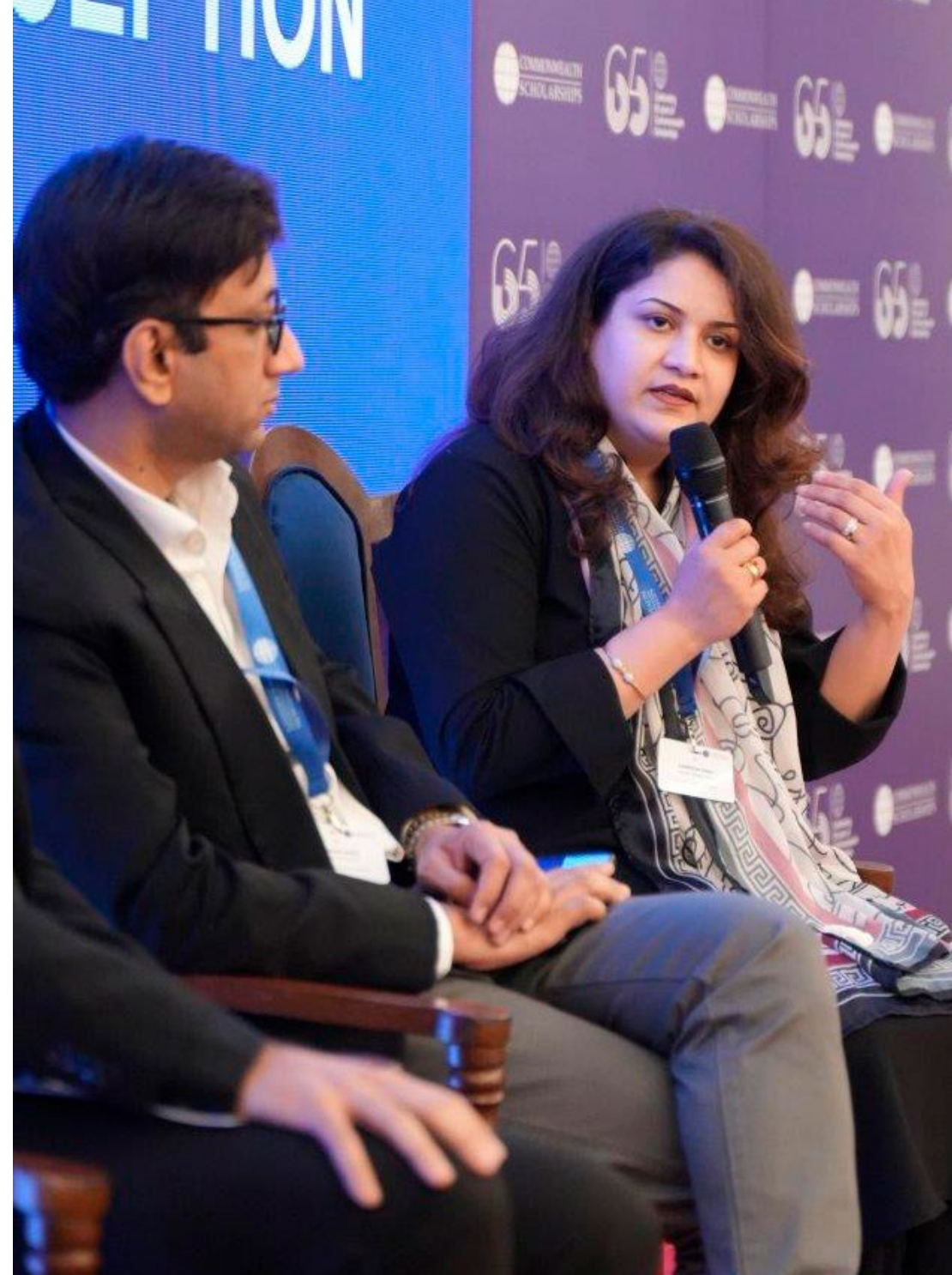
- Alumni associations must ensure scholars and alumni can contact them directly, either via social media or an official association email address (**not** a personal one). We advise all associations have a generic email address as their primary contact point.
- The CSC cannot promote or share WhatsApp groups for associations. Please use one of the approved methods above to engage with scholars and alumni first and only invite them to join a WhatsApp group after obtaining their consent.
- Remember, scholars and alumni will want to communicate in different ways. You will need to develop a couple of different mechanisms for members to stay connected to your in-country network.
- Associations must submit information to feature on the [CSC website](#).

Creating your association brand

Creating a brand for your association will help communicate your identity, foster loyalty among members, increase recognition, and provide credibility.

Your branding should include:

- **Alumni association name** - this should be clear and help Commonwealth Scholars and Alumni identify the group.
- **Logo** - please note, the CSC logo cannot be used. If you require support to develop a logo, please contact the Alumni Team.
- **Your mission statement**
- **Brand voice and messaging** - this is the style of communication used to share information about the association, encourage new members and keep current members engaged.



Training and development

The CSC wants to make sure associations are supported year-round. In addition to any day-to-day contact and support, association leaders will receive:

- The newsletter, **Alumni Association Quarterly**, containing news and opportunities for leaders. This will include information from fellow alumni associations on their activities.
- An exclusive [LinkedIn group](#) for association leaders to connect and network.
- Early notification of the [Alumni Community Engagement Fund \(ACEF\)](#) and [Mentoring Programme](#), including application dates and eligibility. Additional opportunities may also be shared in advance, where appropriate.
- An annual **Alumni Association Leaders Conference**. The conference will provide an opportunity to network and learn from fellow alumni association leaders, take part in refresher sessions on CSC policies, and promote and celebrate success stories.
- Additional **training workshops and networking opportunities** on topics including creating inclusive communities, designing and planning successful events, implementing good governance structures, CSC policies, and developing a vision, mission and goal.
- **Triannual meetings with the meetings with the Alumni Team** to discuss events and activities, feedback on successes and challenges, and keep contacts up to date.
- A **funding allowance** to enable you to deliver at least one event and AGM per year.
- Dedicated [resources page](#) with access to toolkits and templates.



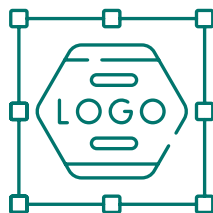
Policies and guidelines

There are 5 CSC policies and best practices all alumni associations must follow:



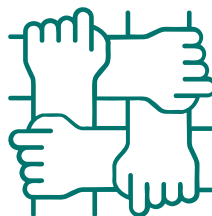
CSC Code of Conduct for Alumni Associations

This is a formal statement of the CSC's expectations for alumni associations. All association leaders and those in leadership roles must read and agree to follow the Code of Conduct.



Data Protection Best Practice

This outlines top tips about how to collect, use, and store data.



Inclusive Communities Policy

Alumni associations are open to all CSC-funded Commonwealth Scholars and Alumni and represent the diverse backgrounds of those within the CSC community. This policy outlines CSC expectations on the ways in which alumni associations can ensure they are inclusive and recognise and celebrate all alumni.



Social Media Policy

The CSC has clear rules for its social media groups which outline the behaviour and procedures we expect Commonwealth Scholars and Alumni to adhere to as members. We expect alumni associations to follow and, where supported by the platform, display these rules on their social media groups.



Sponsorship and External Funding Principles

Sponsorships and external funding can be an important part of your association's operations, offering access to networks and external individuals and organisations who share your values and want to support the association's vision and mission. These principles offer guidance on seeking sponsorship.

These policies are outlined on pages 20-34.

Events and activities

Alumni associations must deliver a minimum of one event or engagement activity per year and an Annual General Meeting (AGM).

There are several types of events you may wish to organise and some examples are given below. You can find guidance on event and activity planning on the next page.

Pre-Departure or Commencement events for scholars

These events provide a chance for new scholars to connect with the CSC community and receive advice from alumni about studying in the UK or by distance learning.

Welcome Home events

Welcome Home events enable recently returned Scholars and new alumni to connect, share experiences, and receive advice. Organised by the British High Commission, alumni association leaders and alumni should be invited to participate.

Annual General Meeting (AGM)

All associations must hold an AGM to update members on activities, discuss future plans, and allow members to contribute to the association's management.

Panel discussions and topical lectures

Alumni are experts on a range of topics and panel discussions. Topical lectures are an effective way to gather alumni to address key issues from different sectors and disciplines.

You may choose to address the CSC development themes, UN Sustainable Development Goals, FCDO or national priorities, or current topics of interest. These sessions can be open not only to Commonwealth Alumni, but also to external audiences such as local schools, universities, and the wider public, helping to raise awareness of important issues and enhance the profile of Commonwealth Alumni.

Social and networking events

Informal opportunities allow alumni to connect, network, and strengthen the local CSC community.

Promoting wider alumni activities

You do not always have to organise an event to bring alumni together. Alumni may give public presentations or talks, book readings, or performances which others can attend out of interest, or to provide support. You should encourage members to share these opportunities.

Scholarship promotion

Alumni associations can inspire future scholars by promoting Commonwealth Scholarship and Fellowship opportunities during application periods. Share details at schools, universities, community events, or via local media—whether in person or online. Be sure to highlight what the scholarship offers, tips for applying, and your own experiences as a Commonwealth Scholar to encourage potential applicants.

Alumni Community Engagement Fund

The Alumni Community Engagement Fund (ACEF) is an annual fund which seeks to support alumni in raising awareness of key development issues through a community engagement activity.

Alumni associations may submit a proposal to deliver an activity, utilising member strengths and contacts. You should also encourage members to submit individual applications and support them in their activity delivery, if successful.

Planning your activities

To plan successful, meaningful, and engaging events and activities, there are essential criteria you should consider during your activity design and development:

- **Activity design:** Outline clear and achievable outputs that meet the strategic objectives of the event/activity.
- **Viability of the activity:** The activity should be realistic to its objectives and be implementable.
- **Audience:** The activity should be realistic and appropriate for the target audience.
- **Value for money:** Keeping to the budget, outline a detailed and reasonable budget breakdown. Try to get 2-3 quotations from vendors to find the best value for money for activity costs.
- **Recruit experts:** To support an impactful and effective activity, invite external experts as panellists and speakers to deliver the activity. You should also draw on members' expertise and knowledge to support the activity delivery.
- **Stakeholder engagement:** Outline how you will engage and manage appropriate stakeholders to ensure effective and impactful delivery. Examples of stakeholders include: community leaders, religious leaders, government officials, and school/university heads.
- **Safeguarding:** The CSC is committed proactively to safeguard and promote the welfare of our beneficiaries, and to protect its staff, Commissioners, beneficiaries, and all those with whom the CSC comes into contact. Read the [CSC safeguarding policy](#) for more information. You must proactively safeguard and promote the welfare of all those associated with alumni associations' events and activities and seek advice and guidance from appropriate sources to ensure you meet all safeguarding requirements.
- **Risk assessment and management:** Identify all risks relevant to the activity and ensure control measures are in place to reduce and control the risks identified.
- **Access and inclusion:** All activities and events should be accessible to anyone who wishes to take part or is invited. Consider accessibility to any venues or use of any online platforms, as well as the set-up of any activities.
- **Promotions:** Ensure you factor in time to promote the activity as part of the planning and identify relevant and appropriate channels to reach the target audience.
- **Keeping a record of participants:** Ensure how you will monitor how many people are engaging in your activity by keeping a record. You will be asked to share this information as part of the activity/event report.
- **Monitoring and evaluation:** Outline how activity outputs are evaluated when developing the activity to measure short-and-or long-term impact.



Keeping in touch

You must stay in contact with the Alumni Team throughout the year and share updates on your activities. You can also reach out at any time for guidance and support. All alumni associations must respond to requests for information from the Alumni Team. Failure to respond may result in the withdrawal of CSC support.

Email us at alumni@cscuk.org.uk

Reporting on your activities

Associations are encouraged to plan their activities on an annual basis and should submit an Annual Workplan to the Alumni Team in April/May to discuss these in more detail.

To help the CSC share your association's activities on its communications channels, please submit details using the Event Communications Plan (ECP). We will use these reports to post content on the CSC website and communications channels and share your activities with the wider CSC community.

These resources are available on the [CSC website](#).



Appendix

CSC Code of Conduct for Alumni Associations

As a CSC Alumni Association leader, you are expected to adhere to both the [CSC Code of Conduct for Alumni](#) and CSC Code of Conduct for Alumni Associations outlined below. You are expected to ensure that the actions, outputs, and communications of the alumni association meet these high standards of conduct and uphold the reputation of the CSC.

As a Commonwealth Alumnus, you are an ambassador for both the CSC and your home country, and your actions and communication will have an impact on the reputation of both. You are therefore expected to adhere to high standards of conduct and behaviour and to always show respect to others and your surroundings. Commonwealth Alumni should familiarise themselves with the [CSC Disciplinary Policy and Procedure](#).

The CSC is committed to proactively safeguarding and promoting the welfare of Commonwealth Scholars, Fellows, and Alumni and to protecting all those with whom they come into contact. The CSC requires Commissioners, Secretariat staff, and Scholars, Fellows, and Alumni to fulfil their role and responsibilities and conduct themselves in a manner consistent with requirements for safeguarding. This is covered under the [CSC Safeguarding Policy](#).

The CSC operates a zero-tolerance attitude to fraud and will investigate all instances of actual, attempted, and suspected fraud, bribery, or corruption committed by Commonwealth Alumni in relation to any activities conducted with support from – including promotional and financial – or on behalf of the CSC. Any such instances will be considered under the CSC's anti-fraud policy, which is available on the [gov.uk website](#).

Commonwealth Alumni are expected to treat all staff engaged within the CSC Secretariat, or within any other organisation contracted to provide services to the Commission, with courtesy and respect. It is expected that such staff will show you the same consideration in return.

Events and activities

Alumni associations are open to all Commonwealth Scholars and Alumni and represent the diverse backgrounds of those within the CSC community. Associations are expected to adhere to the principles of inclusivity as outlined in the Inclusive Communities Policy (page 28) and ensure their activities enable a free exchange of ideas.

Association events and activities must be consistent with the requirements for safeguarding outlined in the CSC's policy. Where associations are requested to complete risk assessments or other documents related to safeguarding measures, they must do so in a timely manner and follow any further recommendations or guidance.

Alumni associations must deliver a minimum of one event or engagement activity per year and an Annual General Meeting (AGM). These activities must be reported to the CSC.

Communication

Associations are expected to report their activities to relevant contacts within the CSC, as outlined in the CSC Alumni Association Toolkit and respond to communications received from the CSC in relation to the alumni association. Recognising the diversity of backgrounds of those within the CSC community – including in terms of race, religion, gender, sexuality, age, cultural values, and disability status – you are reminded to always be respectful to others and to behave professionally. All communication should be appropriate for an audience of people from many different backgrounds and sensitive to the diversity of lived experiences. Harassment and sexist, racist, or exclusionary comments or jokes are not appropriate, nor is discrimination either direct or indirect.

The same considerations apply to social media and electronic communications, and the provisions of this Code apply as they would to speaking in public or writing something for publication, either officially or in a personal capacity. When engaging with social media you should always respect confidentiality, financial, legal, and personal information. Social media and electronic communications, whether public or private, addressed to a group or an individual, should never be used for harassment, bullying, defamation, or any behaviour that makes another individual feel threatened or uncomfortable.

Governance

Associations must be transparent in their governance and ensure that all those engaging in the association have access to documentation regarding the structure and management of the association, including leadership details (name and role), association constitutions/charters, and registration information (where associations are legally registered in-country).

Any associations which collect fees must be transparent in how they intend to use these, the management of fees and persons responsible, and the security of any personal or banking details collected. All financial statements and transactions must conform to the law of the country wherein the association operates, and financial records must be accurate and reliable. Associations must report how fees will be and have been used as part of the association's Annual General

Meeting and in any communication pertaining to fees. Fees must not be used as a means to prevent scholars and alumni from participating in the association.

Sponsorship and external funding

Where associations may agree to sponsorship with external organisations or accept funds from external sources, selections must be made on the basis of quality, reputation, and suitability for the activity through a process that is fair and transparent. Due diligence checks must be completed before entering into any agreement and reported to the CSC. This includes the identification of any conflicts of interest, direct or indirect, amongst association members, as well as any appearance of conflict by way of connection to external organisations or sources. Associations must follow the Sponsorship and External Funding Principles (page 35).

Data management

Associations in possession of data including but not limited to membership, personal information, and financial information have an obligation to ensure the safety of that data. Associations must follow the Data Protection Best Practice (page 26).

Associations must ensure all possible precautions are taken to protect data and that access is limited to key association leaders. Information about who will manage data and how it will be kept must be made available. Associations must not disclose data to a third party, or those not listed as managing or accessing any data held.

Any complaints received or issues related to the behaviour of a CSC Alumni Association brought to the Commission's attention will be taken very seriously and any behaviour that does not adhere to the above values and expectations will be investigated by the CSC. CSC support to an alumni association may be terminated at any time for reasons of unsatisfactory conduct, as outlined in this Code and the [CSC Disciplinary Policy and Procedure](#).

Terms of Reference between the CSC and CSC Alumni Associations

All CSC Alumni Association leaders are asked to agree to the Terms of Reference outlined below. A copy is available for download on the [CSC website](#).

1. Introduction

This Terms of Reference (TOR) outlines the framework for collaboration between the Commonwealth Scholarship Commission in the UK (CSC), CSC Secretariat and CSC Alumni Associations. It sets out the shared vision, responsibilities and expectations of all parties to foster a mutually beneficial relationship.

2. Purpose

The purpose of this TOR is to:

- Define the roles and responsibilities of both the CSC, CSC Secretariat and CSC Alumni Associations
- Promote effective communication and coordination
- Strengthen alumni engagement in support of the CSC's overarching mission and objectives

3. Scope

This TOR covers:

- Alumni relations and engagement
- Communication and information sharing
- Governance and institutional representation

4. Guiding principles

All parties agree to uphold the following principles:

- Mutual respect and recognition of each party's autonomy
- Transparency and accountability in operations and financial matters
- Collaboration and shared purpose in advancing alumni and CSC interests
- Inclusivity and diversity in alumni participation and representation

5. Roles and responsibilities

5.1 The CSC and CSC Secretariat shall:

- Recognise the alumni association as the national representative of Commonwealth Alumni in the home country.
- Promote the alumni association to Commonwealth Scholars and Alumni to support its growth and engagement.
- Provide logistical, administrative and advisory support as appropriate (for example communications, promotion and training on alumni engagement).
- Include a nominated representative from each alumni association's leadership group on the CSC Alumni Advisory Panel to represent the association and its national members and provide strategic input on areas of the CSC's delivery.

5.2 The CSC Alumni Association shall:

- Foster national level engagement for UK-based Commonwealth Scholars, home country-based Distance Learning Scholars and Commonwealth Alumni.
- Act as a liaison between its members and the CSC.
- Organise at least one alumni event or activity per year and an Annual General Meeting (AGM).
- Nominate one member of the alumni association's leadership group to the CSC Alumni Advisory Panel to represent the association and its national members and provide strategic input on areas of the CSC's delivery.
- Maintain a member database following the CSC's Data Protection Best Practice guidance.
- Promote the work and impact of Commonwealth Scholarships at the national level to advance the CSC's mission and objectives and help recruit the next generation of Commonwealth Scholars.

6. Governance and Communication

- All parties shall designate official points of contact.
- Major announcements and general updates from the CSC will be communicated via the newsletter, Alumni Association Quarterly, and email communications.
- Confidentiality will be maintained on sensitive institutional and alumni matters.
- Alumni association leaders will engage in training and development opportunities delivered by the CSC to support associations in their role and to foster collaboration between alumni associations.
- Alumni association leaders will follow the guidance outlined in the CSC Alumni Association Toolkit to ensure best practice and that association activities support the CSC's objectives for associations.

7. Financial management

- Any financial contributions or fundraising must be governed by transparent accounting practices. Alumni associations must declare to the CSC where they are in receipt of financial contributions for their activities.
- Funds raised for specific projects, events or activities shall be used solely for their intended purposes.
- The CSC may provide financial support, subject to availability and budget.

8. Use of CSC brand

- Alumni associations may not use the CSC logo in their branding and activities unless permission is granted by the CSC.
- Alumni associations must acknowledge the CSC and its work in their events and activities.
- Use of the CSC brand in commercial or external partnership contexts must receive prior written approval.

9. Dispute resolution

- Disputes or disagreements shall be addressed by the Alumni Team in the first instance.
- If unresolved, the matter may be escalated to the CSC's Chief Executive Officer (CEO) and the alumni association's Chairperson/leader for final resolution.

10. Duration and review

- This ToR shall remain in effect for a period of 2 years, subject to annual review.
- New alumni association leaders must agree to the TOR in writing on taking up their position.

11. Termination

Either party may terminate this agreement with three (3) months' written notice, provided all obligations are settled and any ongoing initiatives are responsibly concluded or transferred.

Terminating the TOR will result in the alumni association no longer receiving support from the CSC as outlined in section 5.1 and the association will be disbanded until new leadership is appointed.

12. Signatures

For CSC/CSC Secretariat:

Name: _____

Title: _____

Date: _____

For [CSC Alumni Association]:

Name: _____

Title: _____

Date: _____



Data Protection Best Practice

Under the General Data Protection Regulation 2018 (GDPR), scholar and alumni contact details cannot be shared with alumni associations. It is therefore important that associations offer different routes for Commonwealth Scholars and Alumni to connect and join the association.

The CSC will promote alumni associations and can share information about events and activities with Commonwealth Scholars and Alumni for whom they hold contact details.

Managing member data: the essentials

You may choose to ask Commonwealth Scholars and Alumni to share their contact details with you so that you can contact them directly, however not all will agree to this.



If you hold personal, membership, financial and/or any other sensitive data of Commonwealth Scholars and Alumni, you must ensure their data is protected by:

1. Only collecting data you need.

- Assess what data you need to contact members.
- For example, if you don't send information by post, you do not need to collect postal addresses. You may wish to collect county or city instead to help organise events.

2. Confirming how you will store personal data.

- The easiest way to do this is electronically, such as a spreadsheet. In deciding on the storage device, you must consider data security and whether this is a secure and reliable option.
- If the data is kept electronically the computer and data file must be password protected.
- If you keep a hard copy of the data this must be stored in a lockable drawer or cabinet.

3. Developing a clear policy on who will have access to this data.

- If the association is coordinated by a committee, will all members have or need access to this? This should be included in any role descriptions.

4. Outlining how data will be securely transferred to any new association leaders.

- Members must be notified if their data is to be managed by a different or new committee member and given a period of time to ask for their data to be deleted if they are not comfortable with this change.

5. Not sharing personal data with a third party.

- If for any reason you are required to do this as part of an activity or event delivery, you must gain explicit consent to share data.
- Explicit consent is where an individual has actively done something to give consent, such as ticking a box on a form.

6. Deleting data when requested.

- If a member requests that you no longer contact them you must delete their contact information from your records immediately.

7. Communicating all the above. You must inform members:

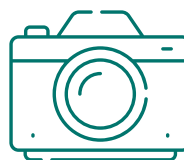
- How their data will be stored for the purposes of managing and operating the association.
- Who in the association can access their data. This includes the role they hold and their name.
- How you will use their data, for example sending association newsletters and event invites.
- How and when their data is transferred to the management of new association leader(s).



Sending emails

When group emailing members, you must ensure that email addresses are not inadvertently shared. You should do this by:

1. Send group mailing using email mail merge.
2. Using mailing tools to create newsletters which will send emails out individually. Examples include mailchimp and campaign monitor.
3. Blind carbon copying email addresses (writing email addresses in the BCC address field.
4. Sending individual emails to each recipient.



Photography

You may gather images as part of your events and activities. All attendees must be notified in advance if photographs are to be taken and how they will be used. If you intend to share images with the CSC, national newspapers, and other media outlets, you must inform attendees. Attendees must be given the option to opt-out of having their photograph taken and appropriate measures put in place to support this.

All images must be securely stored and where possible labelled with the alumni and other attendees featured.

When submitting reports and updates on your activities, please also share images so the CSC can use these in its promotional materials and on the CSC website. The CSC does not accept images of children and those under 18 years of age who attend alumni events or activities and we strongly advise that you consider all safeguarding risks where those under 18 attend events and may be captured in photos.

Inclusive Communities Policy

The CSC has a policy of **equal opportunity and non-discrimination**. Alumni associations must make every effort to ensure their events and activities are accessible to all members and foster a free exchange of ideas.

Creating an inclusive alumni community in-country

To ensure compliance with the CSC's policy of equal opportunity and non-discrimination, alumni associations are expected to annually report on the ways in which they will incorporate inclusive practices within their operations as part of their annual activities plan.

Associations should aim to meet **at least two** of the inclusive practices outlined below, as well as any additional practices developed by the association:



Delivery of a hybrid and/or virtual activity, enabling alumni in different locations to engage in an association event.



Recruitment of a recently returned scholar to an association's leadership committee to represent the cohort of new alumni in their country and ensure alumni associations address their needs. They will also help engage new members to the alumni association from their cohort.



Use of accessible venues for all alumni association events and activities. When engaging in activities, association members and activity guests should be asked to share reasonable adjustments they require to participate. This could include sign language interpreters and options for carers to attend.



Creation of sub-leadership committees in different cities in countries where alumni are geographically spread.



Fixed tenure periods for leadership roles to enable opportunities for more alumni to be actively involved. This should be stated and agreed in constitutions or charters and in leadership role descriptions.

Social Media Policy

The CSC has clear rules for its social media groups which outline the behaviour and procedures we expect Commonwealth Scholars and Alumni to adhere to as members. We expect alumni associations to follow and, where supported by the platform, display the rules below on their social media groups.

- This group is a safe space for its members, where anyone can relax and express themselves, without fear of being made to feel uncomfortable, unwelcome, or unsafe on account of their ethnicity, sexual orientations, gender identity or expression, cultural background, religious affiliation, age, or physical or mental ability. All members should follow the [CSC Code of Conduct for Alumni](#).
- Oppressive language and behaviour are NOT welcome within the group. Members should avoid making negative comments that reference specific individuals either within or outside the group. If you believe a post is inappropriate and would like to inform someone, we strongly encourage you to first notify [Facebook/LinkedIn].
- If a comment has offended you and you feel strongly that it should be taken down, you should politely ask the member to take their comment down. If they do not respond in a timely way, you should message the Group Manager directly with your request.
- You should aim to assume that other members have good intentions. Make sure that you read posts carefully to avoid unnecessary confusion, and ask other members to elaborate if the meaning is unclear. If you are the author of a post and others are reacting negatively, consider if there is a better way of making your point. If one person has expressed offence, it may be that others are feeling the same.
- If you receive complaints about posts made to the group, you should notify the CSC. If you feel unsure how to handle a complaint, please seek advice from your contact.



Example constitution

This is an example template only and can be amended as necessary to match the needs and objectives of each alumni association. A copy is available for download on the CSC website.

Name

Name:

Logo (if applicable, not a requirement):

Objectives

The objectives of the Association shall be:

- [List objectives]

Membership

An eligible member shall be:

- [List eligibility requirements]
- [If you intend to charge fees for membership, you should mention this here]

Membership shall terminate on:

- Demise;
- Resignation;
- Termination [provide details, if applicable];
- Expulsion [provide details, if applicable].

All members shall be treated in accordance with the [CSC Code of Conduct for Alumni](#) and CSC Code of Conduct for Alumni Associations.

Management of the Association

The bodies of the Association shall be:

- [Committee title]
- The Annual General Meeting

The Committee

- The [Committee title] shall comprise XX members.
- The following positions shall be elected by the Annual General Meeting:
 - [List of all committee positions]
- All Committee members shall serve a term of XX years [and will be eligible to stand for re-election for a maximum of XX consecutive terms holding the same position].
- The election of Committee members will be effective immediately and communicated to alumni association members and the CSC/BC.
- If, due to illness or other reasons, a Committee member resigns, the remaining Committee members may replace that individual with another group member, or the position will remain empty until the next AGM.
- The Committee shall meet at least XX times a year.
- XX out of XX members of the [Committee title] shall constitute a forum to hold committee meetings.
- The function of the Committee is: [list all functions/oversights to achieve objectives and overall aim]
- The Committee shall be in charge of: [list]

The Annual General Meeting

- The Group shall hold an Annual General Meeting (AGM) in XX.
- All members shall be given at least XX notice of the AGM and shall be entitled to attend and vote. [Outline alternative engagement mechanisms]
- The quorum for an AGM shall be XX of the members.
- The business of the AGM shall include: [list core reports and areas]
- The Committee must submit a report on the AGM to all members and the CSC/BC.

Special General Meeting

- A Special General Meeting may be called by the Committee or by any members to discuss an urgent matter.
- The XX shall give all members XX notice of any Special General Meeting together with notice of the business to be discussed.
- All members shall be entitled to attend and vote.

Election

- [Election rules and requirements]

Finances

- The Committee may open bank accounts to support the running of the Association.
- Committee members responsible for overseeing and managing any accounts will be:
- The financial year will be from XX to XX.

Alterations to the Constitution

- Any changes to this Constitution must be agreed by at least two-thirds of those members present and voting at any General Meeting.

Dissolution

- The Association may be dissolved at any time if agreed by two-thirds of those members present and voting at any General Meeting. In the event of winding down, any assets remaining after all debts have been paid shall be given to another agreed Group with similar aims.

This Constitution was adopted at a general meeting of the Group on:

Signed by:

[Committee position; name; signature; date]

Leadership roles and responsibilities

To create, manage, and sustain a successful alumni association, it is essential to have a dedicated team of volunteers who support its vision, mission, and goals. Clearly defining leadership roles and structures ensures that each volunteer's unique strengths and qualities are utilised effectively.

While leadership roles are voluntary, the organisational structure will help to outline the essential role each leader will play in organising and carrying out the objectives of the alumni association.

Some example roles and responsibilities are outlined below.

President/Coordinator

- Serve as the main spokesperson and leader of the association, overseeing all aspects of its operation.
- Provide strategic direction and ensures the association is working towards its set vision, mission, and goals.
- Lead association meetings such as the Annual General Meeting, and activities and events, through strategic planning.
- Ensure compliance with CSC Code of Conduct for Alumni and CSC Code of Conduct for Alumni Associations.

Chairperson

- Provide governance oversight on all association activities.
- Manage Board/Committee meetings, working closely with the association secretary.
- Attend all association meetings to ensure orderly business.



Vice President/Coordinator

- Support the President/Coordinator and acts up when they are unavailable to attend meetings and events.
- Lead on specific initiatives such as events and activities and offer crucial oversight and executive direction.

Secretary

- Prepare agendas and maintain meeting minutes and records.
- Serve as the main point of contact for communication between the association, its members, and other relevant parties.
- Maintain membership information.



Treasurer

- Manage the association's finances, including financial planning and budgeting, tracking income and expenses, and preparing financial reports.
- Main a record of costs spent, such as receipts and invoices.
- Ensure compliance with tax reporting and nonprofit regulations.

Events Officer

- Lead organiser for events and activities.
- Coordinate event logistics within an allocated budget.
- Ensure compliance with CSC guidelines and policies while planning and delivering events and activities.

Communications Officer

- Develop and execute communication plans to promote the alumni association and its activities.
- Manage communications such as newsletters, social media, and association website.
- Promote and highlight the association and its impact for members and key stakeholders such as the British High Commission, community leaders, government ministers, and nominating agencies.

Sponsorship and External Funding Principles

Sponsorships and external funding can be an important part of your association's operations. Alongside financial support, sponsorships can offer access to networks and external individuals and organisations who share your values and want to support the association's vision and mission.

It is important that you identify the right sponsor for your activities and that there are clear agreements in place as to what each party is willing to provide and any limitations/boundaries.

If sponsorships are not managed effectively, this could pose serious risks for your association and the CSC, including but not limited to reputational damage, audience disengagement, financial loss, legal and ethical concerns, and loss of other sponsorships and partnerships.

The following principles are designed to support associations in identifying and engaging in successful and effective partnerships.

Vision and mission alignment between the association and sponsor.

Transparency regarding roles and responsibilities, expectations and objectives of both parties and the sponsorship.

Inclusion through the encouragement of sponsors from different sectors, regions and backgrounds to diversify and enrich the experience for association members.

Mutually beneficial partnership that provides a win-win for both parties.

Ethical standards are agreed and implemented to ensure sponsors adhere to the CSC's and the association's expectations on good governance and practice.

Branding will acknowledge both parties, as agreed.

Feedback will be gathered to assess the success and effectiveness of the partnership and inform renewal of the sponsorship terms, if required.

Crisis management will be agreed by both parties with a clear plan to address any potential issues affecting the sponsorship.

ESG factors will be considered to promote sustainability and environmentally and socially responsible practices between both parties.



Example guidelines

Associations may wish to use the example template when entering a sponsorship with a third party. This is an example template only and can be amended as necessary. A copy is available for download on the [CSC website](#).

1. Purpose

Define the objective of the sponsorship, for example to support events, initiatives, community engagement.

2. Eligibility Criteria

This is relevant if you are inviting sponsors to apply to support the association and should also be used to assess and inform the types of sponsors you seek and accept support from.

Specify who can apply to sponsor the association. For example, individuals, groups and organisations, geographic or demographic limitations, alignment with association vision, mission and goals.

3. Type(s) of sponsorship

Outline the forms of sponsorship agreed. For example, cash contributions, in-kind services, grants, event or project funding.

4. Application process

This is relevant if you are inviting sponsors to apply to support the association.

Detail the steps and criteria. For example, application form requirements, supporting documents, application deadlines, and contact information for enquiries.

5. Evaluation criteria

This is relevant if you are inviting sponsors to apply to support the association and should also be used to assess and inform the types of sponsors you seek and accept support from.

Outline how sponsorship applications and requests will be assessed. For example, alignment with the association's vision and mission, impact and reach of the sponsor, extent to which the sponsor can effectively meet the needs of the association, and completion of due diligence checks*.

*Completing due diligence checks for all potential sponsors is important in ensuring you know who are agreeing to work with and that they are a legitimate sponsor.

6. Approval and agreement

What will happen after you have accepted the sponsorship.

For example, sponsorship agreement or contract, use of sponsor branding and logos, payment schedule and terms, compliance and accountability expectations.

7. Obligations

7.1 The [Alumni Association] shall:

- [List the association's responsibilities]

7.2 The [name of sponsor] shall:

- [List the sponsor's responsibilities]

8. Duration and renewal

Clarify how long the sponsorship lasts and any conditions for renewal, extension or re-application (if relevant).

9. Termination

State the grounds for ending the sponsorship. For example, breach of agreement or contract, misuse of funds, failure to meet objectives and/or other obligations as agreed.

10. Contact

Provide a clear point of contact for all sponsorship-related communication.