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Manual

Alumni relations

Manual for working with alumni relations

Why work with alumni?

Every year a new batch of international talents complete their studies or research at Swedish universities and university colleges and become Sweden alumni. After having spent everything from a few months to a couple of years in Sweden these international students and researchers have a special connection to Sweden and become our international ambassadors.

Staying in touch with each other and with Sweden is both socially and professionally rewarding for the alumni, and an important part of Sweden's work with public diplomacy. Alumni often want to maintain a connection to Sweden after returning to their home countries. They have a feeling of wanting to give something back. Many end up in influential positions with vast professional networks. They are connectors and as such a great potential resource for Swedish Foreign Missions and Swedish companies abroad.

The alumni also add credibility when promoting Sweden as a study destination. As former students and researchers they know better than any Swede what it's like to be a foreign student at a Swedish university. Their contribution when attracting new talent to Sweden is invaluable.

Alumni contact information

The Swedish Institute keeps a database of SI alumni (former SI scholarship holders). To date this database consists of more than 10,000 alumni, reaching back to 1997. At the end of each year's spring semester we update our lists with new alumni, and through a reminder email we encourage Swedish Foreign Missions to order an updated list for the country in which they operate.

Swedish Foreign Missions may get an updated list of SI-alumni by sending an email to [alumni\(a\)si.se](mailto:alumni(a)si.se)

Please note that in accordance with the Swedish Privacy Protection Law (PUL) you may not pass this information on to a third party.

The information in the SI alumni database is based on information provided by alumni when applying for a scholarship. SI continuously updates the information; however, keeping updated contact information is one of the biggest challenges for anyone working with alumni relations. Thus, we cannot guarantee that email addresses and other information are still valid.

Forming an alumni network

There are currently almost 20 Swedish alumni networks of different sizes around the world (not counting Swedish universities' own alumni networks). How to best operate an alumni network depends on the local context, but here are a couple of general recommendations:

- An alumni network should preferably be as self-sufficient as possible and should not be dependent entirely on efforts from Swedish Foreign Missions. Embassies and consulates should however support alumni in *establishing* alumni networks and keep good relations with the networks.
- It's generally best if the network is run not only by one alumnus but rather by a board consisting of several alumni. The motivation and conditions for a single alumnus to run an alumni organisation may change over time. By involving more alumni we minimise the risk of decline in activity in the network due to lack of motivation of one individual.
- To stimulate interaction within the network, create a platform for alumni to meet, discuss and post information. Most people already use a number of different social media platforms. We believe it is best to use a platform which is already used by the alumni rather than adding a new platform which they need to follow. Be where the alumni already are.
- Many alumni networks chose to start a Facebook group. Here are some examples: [Belarus](#), [Nepal](#), [Russia](#), [Ukraine](#) and [Thailand](#). Others prefer to use other platforms which are more relevant for their local context. For example the Sweden Alumni Network in China (SANC) interacts mainly through WeChat, which is currently the most popular social media platform in China. [The SANC website](#), however, is mainly used for general information about the network and as a portal for registering membership and signing up for a SANC newsletter. [Indonesia](#) and [Turkey](#) are other examples of countries where websites have been created for the local alumni networks.

More recommendations for Swedish Foreign Missions

Alumni can be a great resource when organising your activities. They are connectors with often large professional and social networks. When you organise an activity, see if there's anyone in the alumni network who may be able to help you find relevant speakers, partners, venues, etc. **Alumni are often not only willing to help but feel honoured to be asked.**

Are you organising a Swedish film screening, a national day celebration or holding a reception for a Swedish delegation? Make sure to invite alumni to your activities! There might be alumni active in a field of interest to the delegation.