



## **Alumni Relations Policy**

<b>Reference number</b>	6P_6.5
<b>Accountable executive manager</b>	Executive Director: Corporate Relations & Marketing
<b>Guideline Owners</b>	Director: Stakeholder Relations
<b>Responsible division</b>	Corporate Relations and Marketing
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<b>Approved by</b>	Council
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<b>Date of amendments</b>	
<b>Review date</b>	2023

## ALUMNI RELATIONS POLICY

### 1 Preamble

Against the background of the dream to be an internationally recognised university in Africa, distinguished for engaged scholarship, social responsiveness and an ethic of care, the council of the North-West University (NWU) has adopted this policy on 18 March 2021 to regulate the university's management of alumni relations.

### 2 Interpretation and application

This policy must be interpreted and applied in a manner consistent with the –

- 2.1 Higher Education Act, 101 of 1997;
- 2.2 Statute of the North-West University (2017)(“the Statute”); and
- 2.3 All related policies of the NWU, particularly the brand, communication and behavioural policies of the NWU.

### 3 Definitions

In this policy-

- “**alumni**” refers to all graduates and diplomates of the NWU and any of its predecessors;
- “**the convocation**” refers to the association of alumni of the university established in terms of paragraph 30 of the Statute;
- “**the executive director**” refers to the executive director corporate relations and marketing.

### 4 Policy statement

It is the policy of the NWU that mutually beneficial relationships between the university and its alumni must be fostered, in particular by means of –

- the creation of alumni awareness and promotion of the university;
- arranging activities and events;
- alumni communication;
- promoting alumni giving; and
- alumni recognition.

### 5 Responsibility and accountability

- 5.1 The executive director is entrusted with the responsibility of managing the alumni relations of the university as a whole and on each of the campuses of the university;
- 5.2 The executive director must ensure that the management of alumni relations occurs in close liaison with the executive committee of the convocation, its associated structures and the student structures concerned.

### 6 Management structures

The executive director must ensure that sufficient provision is made for the effective management and coordination of alumni relations on all campuses of the NWU, including database management, disseminations of communication to alumni and the administration of projects and events intended to promote mutually beneficial relationships between the university and its alumni.

## **7 Establishment of structures within the community of alumni**

- 7.1 The executive director must provide the convocation and its office bearers with the necessary infrastructure and administrative assistance relating to meetings of the convocation provided for in paragraph 34 of the Statute and the Constitution of the North-West University Convocation.
- 7.2 The convocation may make rules in consultation with the executive director relating to establishment, structure and authority of alumni interest groups for the purposes of building relationships, facilitating communications and maintaining the long-term loyalty of alumni.
- 7.3 The convocation must lay down written guidelines consistent with this policy and the rules provided for in 6.2 for the operation.

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## *Corporate Relations and Marketing*

### **1 Alumni Relations Rules and Processes**

#### **1.1 Preamble**

To align with its strategy, the university has revised and adopted the Alumni Relations (AR) Policy on 18 March 2021. These Alumni Relations and Processes derive from the policy content.

#### **1.2 Purpose of the Alumni Relations Rules and Processes**

The Alumni Rules and Processes should be read in line with the Alumni Relations Policy (ARP). The ARP aims at clarifying the various functions and responsibilities of the AR role players at the NWU with regard to managing a wide variety of alumni undertakings. It also provides a description of the elements of an integrated NWU Alumni Relations model and differentiates between the respective roles of the internal and external AR structures.

#### **1.3 Scope of Application**

These Alumni Relations Rules and Processes apply to the NWU, their graduates and any structures that impact the relationship between the NWU alumni and their alma mater.

#### **1.4 Definitions**

##### **1.4.1 Alumni**

Alumni of the NWU are defined as a group of graduates and diplomates of the University or any of its predecessors.

Alumnus and Alumni will be used for both genders singular and plural.

##### **1.4.2 NWU Convocation**

The NWU Convocation refers to a statutory university body, established in terms of the Higher Education Act (101 of 1997) through which alumni of the institution enjoy representation on the NWU Council through a formal application process. This body comprises all eligible graduates, diplomates and permanent staff members of the University and its overall purpose is to foster a mutually-beneficial relationship between the parties, as well as to promote the general well-being of the University.

##### **1.4.3 NWU Alumni Associations and its Chapters**

The NWU Alumni Association (AA) is established by the Convocation and comprises of all graduates and diplomates of the University or its predecessors, with the overall objective of linking the alumni to their alma mater.

The AA establishes clusters of alumni- referred to as chapters – along commonly shared interests, such as in the professional, regional, historical, faculty/department, residential, sport, social or cultural spheres. Membership of a chapter is thus not geographically determined, and each cluster determines its own objectives as well as arranges its own activities in line with the overall purpose of the Convocation and the approved alumni chapter Alumni Relations Rules and Processes of the University.

##### **1.4.4 The Campus Alumni Committee (CAC)**

Members of the Campus Alumni Committee (CAC) are recommended by the Alumni Relations Practitioners and ratified by the Alumni Association Executive Committee. The aim of the CAC is to support and advise Alumni Relations Practitioners at the three campuses of the NWU. In addition, members of the CAC link the university with its alumni. The chairperson and deputy chairperson of the CAC serve on the Alumni Association Executive Committee.

## 1.5 NWU Internal Alumni Relations Structures

The University's internal AR structures consist of:

- Director for Stakeholder Relations
- Section Head: Alumni Relations
- Three Alumni Relations Practitioners servicing the three sites of delivery of the NWU

The Alumni Relations office based on the Potchefstroom campus is responsible for database management including dissemination of communication to alumni and organisation of special projects such as the NWU Alumni Awards of Excellence.

## 1.6 The NWU Alumni Relations Model

The NWU Relations model consists of five major elements:

- **Alumni Awareness and Promotion:** Creating awareness about the alumni office and its functions to current students. Generally referred to as alumni recruitment among current students. The process commences early in the welcoming of new students to the institution, thus fostering the notion of "young alumni". The Alumni Relations office is also promoted during the different graduation ceremonies of the NWU.
- **Activities and Events:** This category includes activities such as the chapter events, final-year farewell functions, sports days, social gatherings, cultural events, regional events, reunions and homecoming events, career empowerment workshops, public and guest lectures aimed at supporting the NWU to achieve its dream and purpose.
- **Alumni Communication:** Alumni communication is facilitated through the dissemination of information through various channels such as online magazine, mobile text messages, emails and social media. The aim is to keep alumni informed about the developments taking place and opportunities available to alumni to contribute to the future of the NWU.
- **Alumni Giving:** There are various ways alumni can give to the NWU, including the following – providing financial support, giving their time to pre-determined causes, providing training, public lectures, mentorship programmes, Work-Integrated Learning and linking the NWU and students with opportunities.
- **Alumni Recognition:** Alumni are recognised for their personal and career achievements and contributions to society by means of the Biennial Alumni Rewards of Excellence ceremony. The award system consists of three types of awards:
  - Lifetime Achievement Award;
  - Alumni awards of Excellence (seven categories namely, Research, Education, Community Involvement, Business Leadership, Arts & Culture, Sport and Public Service);
  - Young Alumnus Award.

To maximise resources, the Alumni Relations offices continuously communicate with internal structures such as the faculties, support department and student structures to establish partnerships when organising different activities. Communication and partnerships between the different internal structures are encouraged for coordination purpose and for the Alumni Relations offices to provide support to the same structures.

## 1.7 Roles and Responsibilities

### 1.7.1 Internal Stakeholders and External Governing Structures

The following stakeholders jointly fulfil an important role in implementing the AR function at the NWU:

Structure/Position	Function
Vice-Chancellor	Custodian of all engagements of the University and its alumni and should be invited to alumni engagements.
NWU Convocation	Is the Governance Structure responsible for establishing and developing mutually beneficial relationships between the NWU and its alumni to promote the welfare of the University.
NWU Alumni Association	The Alumni Association is the structure established by the Convocation to help establish beneficial relationships between the NWU and its alumni.

Structure/Position	Function
Campus Alumni Committee (CAC)	Campus-based structure established by the Alumni Association Executive Committee in collaboration with the Alumni Relations Practitioners. The aim of the committee is to provide advice and support to alumni relations offices. The chairperson and deputy chairperson of the CAC serve on the Alumni Association Committee.
Executive Director: Corporate Relations and Marketing	Accountable to the University Management Committee regarding stakeholder engagements including the alumni.
Director: Stakeholder Relations	Provides strategic direction to the AR office regarding alumni relations.
Section Head: Alumni Relations	Development and Management of the Alumni Relations Operational Plan and day to day management of activities.
Alumni Relations Practitioners	Implement the Alumni Relations Operational Plan.
Potchefstroom Campus Alumni Relations Office	Responsible for the maintenance and upkeep of the alumni database and dissemination of communication to alumni.

## 1.8 Related policies and other relevant documents

The Alumni Relations Rules and Processes must be read in conjunction with related policies, including but not limited to Brand, Communication and Behavioural policies.

## 2 Rules for establishing alumni interest groups

### 2.1 Purpose of Chapters

The establishment and effective functioning of alumni groups (chapters, reunions, etc) are particularly important in building relationships, facilitating communication and maintaining long-term loyalty among NWU alumni.

The typical goals of interest groups include the following:

- Supporting the purpose and dream of the University
- Acting as ambassadors for their alma mater
- Facilitation of networking and relationship-building with external stakeholders
- Recruiting alumni for the chapter
- Promoting the particular interests and activities of the group
- Facilitating fellowship/interaction among chapter members
- Providing the relevant data for updating alumni records in order to facilitate effective communication between the University and its alumni
- Providing feedback from alumni to the University
- Facilitation of alumni giving
- General promotion of the University and its numerous activities, also among potential future students
- Arranging chapter activities and conducting the necessary administration relevant thereto

It is understood that each chapter will determine its own specific objectives, related to its particular purpose, interest or reason for having been established, as well as the content of its own programmes or activities.

Chapter initiatives are to be undertaken in accordance with the alumni interest groups Alumni Relations Rules and Processes. In general, all alumni activities should remain aligned with the rules, regulations, policies and disciplinary codes of the University. Chapter goals or activities may thus not be in conflict with those of the NWU as an institution.

### 2.2 Criteria for establishment

Alumni of the NWU are entitled to convene a group of alumni with a view to formally establishing a recognised NWU chapter. Such initiation and organising are done on a voluntary basis. Recognition of an alumni interest group (chapter, reunions, etc) is granted to groups that meet the following criteria.

- The chapter/interest group must comprise a group of NWU alumni with a programme of ongoing activities
- The formation of the structure should have a specified intent/purpose, thus focussing on a particular target group, along with declared objectives

- Seven members are stipulated as a requirement for the establishment of a chapter
- The structure is required to register with the AR office
- Each chapter should organise an annual programme of events, which should include at least one activity per annum
- Each chapter does require a coordinating/management structure to plan, organise, coordinate, manage and report on its activities
- Chapters are also required to enter into an agreement with the relevant AR office

**Annexure B** to these Alumni Relations Rules and Processes represents a template for the chapter agreement to be entered into between the chapter and the relevant AR office.

### 2.3 The process of establishing a Chapter and/or Interest Group

The following serves as a broad outline of the process to be followed in establishing a chapter/interest group.

- The first step is to identify interest among potential members by an initiator/coordinator
- The next step entails contracting the relevant AR office in order to consult, obtain guidance/support and to establish the procedure from here
- Next follows the registration of the chapter, which will provide formal recognition in the form of an agreement being signed between the chapter and the AR office
- The chapter then proceeds with the organising of a coordinating structure to coordinate/manage its activities
- The chapter facilitates communication with the alumni target group by means of the AR office contacting the potential members
- The chapter proceeds with arranging its planned events
- The structure obtains the required/relevant support from the AR office
- Feedback is provided to the AR office after events and annually in the form of a short feedback report

### 2.4 Coordination and Chapter management structures

Each chapter is required to establish a Management Committee (MC). Such a coordinating committee typically consists of a Chairperson, Deputy Chair and Secretary. The roles and responsibilities of these office bearers are broadly defined as follows:

- **The Chairperson:** this leadership role entails the general coordination of the chapter and management of its activities, the chairing of meetings and oversight/good governance of the structure
- **The Deputy Chairperson:** acts as the direct support to the Chairperson and fulfils his/her role when the Chairperson is unable to do so or when the Chairperson asks the Deputy Chair to assist with implementing the chapter's programme
- **The Secretary:** this administrative role maintains the chapter's administrative records/files, records any financial matters/budgets and minutes the decisions taken at meetings
- **Ex officio members:** chapters are at liberty to invite a member of the relevant AR office to serve in an *ex officio* capacity on their MC, should they wish to obtain the input from such university representative

The relevant AR office should be informed of any changes in terms of the office bearers from time to time. A chapter MC meets at least twice per annum and a set of minutes relevant to these meetings should be kept on file.

### 2.5 Functioning and activity boundaries of Chapters

Each chapter determines its own programmes/activities and in so doing, is required to generate specific benefits for its members. In general, the functioning of these structures relates to the following activities:

- Planning, organising and implementing events, according to their own programme, including purely social gatherings
- Liaising with the relevant AR office for information, assistance/support and financial administration
- Communication with members based on contact data obtained from the AR office "in reverse order" (that is, by the AR office making contact with the target group and requesting interested parties to contact the MC of the chapter)
- Creation of institutional networks and arranging continuous professional development opportunities
- Submission of contributions for the publication of events in the AR communication channels
- Reporting back to the relevant AR office on the year's activities

While the communication between the members of a chapter is considered to be an internal chapter matter (including activities such as the distribution of invitations, providing feedback to members, dissemination of short newsletters, etc), any formal communication on behalf of the University should be done in collaboration

with the relevant AR office. Communication with members is furthermore to be branded correctly in accordance with the NWU Branding Policy and a template to be used for distributing written communication by chapters can be obtained from the AR offices.

In line with the NWU's compliance with the Protection of Personal Information Act (POPIA), the contact details of alumni on the University's central database are kept confidential. No lists or contact details relevant to alumni of the University will thus be supplied to chapters that wish to arrange an event without the approval of the target audience. The AR offices hence implement the "reverse order" contact approach, in which the AR office contacts the target audience and requests them to get in touch with the coordinator of the event, should they be interested.

Once a chapter has been established and the contact details of members are known to the group, the MC should ensure that such contact details are handled with care by the chapter and that no details are provided to any third parties without the explicit consent of the members involved.

It is furthermore vital for all chapters to ensure that their activities and the nature/style of their programmes do not cause any reputational risk or damage to the NWU. While the "informal" encouragement or recruitment of future students of the University is welcomed, chapters may not embark on any fundraising or sponsorship activities under the auspices of being an NWU structure that seeks to mobilise funding resources.

Alumni or a chapter that wish to raise funding to support the University should follow the correct procedure in this regards as stipulated by the Development & Fundraising Policy of the NWU.

## **2.6 Chapter membership fees and banking accounts**

The notion of charging membership fees for belonging to a chapter is strongly discouraged and the practice of creating or building a reserve fund (for example, from profits made through organising events) is not allowed.

In addition, all banking/financial services are to be provided by the University AR offices and chapters should thus not open their own banking accounts.

## **2.7 Support form Alumni Relations Structures to chapters and reporting**

AR offices situated at the various campuses of the University provide support and advisory service to their recognised chapters. Such assistance takes the form of:

- Helping interested volunteer/group to establish a chapter
- Providing advice and assistance with arrangements/ events management, as well as administrative support
- Communication and contacting of alumni (via the "reverse order" approach)
- Administration of funds/fees deposited by chapter members and/payable to suppliers/service providers on behalf of the chapter, provided that all deposits are clearly referenced and that all payments are based on the presentation of valid notices in line with the chapter's budget, as agreed to between the AR office and the respective chapters

Chapters are expected to assist the AR offices with regard to the need for updating the contact information of alumni on the University's centralise database, as well as to provide input or material for the purpose of publications of alumni events in the respective alumni communication channels of the University.

Chapters that specifically wish to arrange a reunion should consult with the relevant AR office well in advance of the event in order for them to obtain the required guidance and support in organising such an undertaking.

Chapters are also expected to report on their activities to the relevant AR offices, once an event has taken place. The purpose of such feedback is to keep track of all the NWU alumni undertakings, as well as to publicise the various alumni events in order to continuously grow the University's network of stakeholders.

A template that facilitates such reporting is attached to these Alumni Relations Rules and Processes as **Annexure C**.

In addition, chapters are requested to submit a short annual report to the relevant AR office at the end of each year, summarising the activities of the group over the past year.

## **2.8 Conclusion**

The interest groups Alumni Relations Rules and Processes aim at directing the various NWU alumni activities in a user-friendly manner in order to facilitate purposeful and efficient functioning, rather than attempting to enforce strict control mechanisms.

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## NWU ALUMNI INTEREST GROUP AGREEMENT AND REGISTRATION

Agreement entered into between _____ (Chapter Name) And _____ (AR Office Name)
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<b>Name of the Chapter:</b>
<b>Main Aim/Goal of the Chapter:</b>
<b>Management Committee Contact Information:</b>
Name:
Contact Number:
E-Mail:

The parties to this agreement agree that the NWU Alumni Relations and Alumni Interest Group Alumni Relations Rules and Processes, will serve as the guide to managing the activities of the chapter and that any amendments thereto will be effected after consultation and agreement between the parties stipulated above.

The parties furthermore confirm that the criteria for the establishment of a chapter have been met and the office bearers undertake to fulfil their respective duties with due diligence as defined in the Alumni Relations Rules and Processes.

Signed at \_\_\_\_\_ on this \_\_\_\_\_ day of \_\_\_\_\_ 20\_\_\_\_\_

<b>Signatures of Chapter Office Bearers</b>
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**Chairperson:**

Name: \_\_\_\_\_

Signature: \_\_\_\_\_

**Deputy Chairperson:**

Name: \_\_\_\_\_

Signature: \_\_\_\_\_

**Director: Stakeholder Relations:**

Name: \_\_\_\_\_

Chapter Reference Number: \_\_\_\_\_

Signature: \_\_\_\_\_



*Corporate Relations and Marketing*

## NWU ALUMNI INTEREST GROUP EVENT REPORT

<b>Chapter Name</b>	
<b>Chairperson</b>	
<b>Contact Number</b>	
<b>Event Date</b>	
<b>Event Venue</b>	
<b>Number of Attendees</b>	
<b>Relationship to NWU</b>	
<b>Nature/Purpose of Event</b>	
<b>Main Activities</b>	
<b>Feedback on event</b> Please also submit any visual material (such as photographs) of the event for publication	
<b>Updating of Alumni Contact Details</b> Please provide the relevant information in order to update any alumni records by filling out the attached cards	

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