



Listening to alumni
voices at
programme level:
Building meaningful
dialogue beyond
feedback

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Edinburgh Medical School

Who are you?



wooclap.com Event code YKITDM

Session aims

- Importance of listening to alumni
- Our learnings from engaging with alumni at the programme-level
- Hear from alumni participants on the value of being listened to
- Discussion on practicalities of how to engage with and learn from alumni

Do alumni have more to say and how should we listen to them?

“I would hope alumni voices shape — not just inform — how programmes evolve.

..requires sustained, programme-level conversation that takes seriously what graduates carry into their practice, what they still need, and where they could meaningfully contribute back.”

Avita Rath, Clinical Education Alum

“Measuring the impact of an educational intervention is crucial to assessing how well its objectives have been achieved. Evaluating an online MSc programme through alumni feedback improves both the quality of teaching and the overall student experience.”

Antonio Pedrotta, Global Health and Infectious Diseases Alum



Alumni represent longitudinal student voice, have less agenda and different, delayed perspective

“Reflecting a few years after completing the MSc, I can clearly see the positive impact it has had on my life, and I still feel grateful to those who contributed to that experience.”

Antonio Pedrotta, Global Health and Infectious Diseases Alum

“Being invited to reflect as an alumna recognised that ongoing impact, and that felt important to honour.

...a chance to make visible something that often goes unspoken in postgraduate education: that the work of a programme keeps unfolding long after the formal relationship has ended.”

Avita Rath, Clinical Education Alum

Listening to and acting on alumni perspectives completes the feedback loop

“...institutional guidance and practical recommendations to continually advance the quality of studies.

...more prospective students choose to study at the University of Edinburgh, and that they leave highly satisfied with their academic and professional growth.”

Antonio Pedrotta, Global Health and Infectious Diseases Alum

“Dialogue feels most meaningful when it stays connected to the programme community rather than only to broad, university-level alumni communications.

The shift I would most value is the one from alumni as data points to alumni as continuing partners in the life of the programme.”

Avita Rath, Clinical Education Alum



How did we engage with our alumni?



Survey

- Circulated to 3 online programmes in CMVM
- Common questions to allow comparison + programme-specific sections
- High response rates (%) – motivated to engage
- Mainly quantitative data with open-ended questions

Semi-structured interviews

- Conducted by academic not associated with programme
- Common questions to allow comparison + exploration of programme features
- In-depth qualitative data for thematic analysis

How do you engage with alumni?



“Being heard, for me, is not the same as being surveyed.”

Avita Rath, Clinical Education Alum

What 3 things do I want my alumni to answer?

Spend 3 minutes talking to the person to left or in front of you



“Even small forms of contact can feel significant when they are relational, reciprocal, and tied to the programme that shaped us.”

Avita Rath, Clinical Education Alum

How confident are you in creating an alumni activity?



“I highly value being involved in practical initiatives like this project or similar ones.”

Antonio Pedrotta, Global Health and Infectious Diseases Alum

What barriers to engaging with alumni?

Spend 3 minutes talking to person to left or in front of you



“My preferred way to stay connected is continuing the dialogue through targeted mentoring sessions or collaborative workshops.”

Antonio Pedrotta, Global Health and Infectious Diseases Alum

The value of being asked



Nadia Niyonizeye, Biodiversity, Wildlife and Ecosystem Health Alum

The value of being asked



[James Sinclair, Biodiversity, Wildlife and Ecosystem Health Alum](#)

What would you want in an alumni engagement toolkit?



“What I value are occasional, purposeful opportunities to stay in touch — alumni conversations, mentoring, shared teaching or research collaborations, or spaces where former and current students can learn from one another.”

Avita Rath, Clinical Education Alum

Our lessons on alumni engagement across diverse programmes



Spend time identifying questions

- Surveys better representation & useful numerical outputs, interviews richer insights & dialogue
- Is enabling comparison important? E.g. temporal, cross-programme
- Value of using conceptual framework

Plan implementation

- Data Protection – relevant demographics for questions? What data will you store, how?
- Ethical approval – find out process for your School
- Contact Data – allow time to request from Development & Alumni
- Who and how often communicate to alumni? Send from programme inbox
- Who will conduct interviews? Potential bias if programme-led
- Incentives – necessity and funding? Check county eligibility for receiving vouchers



Final reflections on programme-level alumni engagement

- Emerging cross-programme themes on long-term online learning impact
- Insights for programme review - not possible without alumni feedback
- Not all alumni want active connections at university or programme level...
- ...but engagement suggests all appreciate having their voice heard
- What support is needed to make programme-level engagement sustainable?
- Non-financial driven alumni interaction – long-term benefits for programme and university?

Thanks

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Full alumni co-author testimonials here:



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