

Data Protection Recommendations for European University Alumni Groups, Clubs, and Societies

Version 4 – Updated September 2025

Introduction and Context

This note provides data protection recommendations to University alumni groups, clubs, and societies that conduct alumni relations or fundraising and are based in the European Economic Area (EEA) or have members resident in the EEA. It is not aimed at groups run by students, for students.

The General Data Protection Regulation (GDPR) has been in force since 25 May 2018 and continues to apply across the EEA. In the UK, GDPR has been retained post-Brexit under the UK GDPR framework, aligned with the Data Protection Act 2018.

Key Compliance Requirements

To remain compliant with current data protection legislation, Alumni Groups must:

- publish a data protection statement that meets GDPR requirements, ensuring transparency about the personal data held and processed
- provide the data protection statement to members, making it easily accessible
- hold records of consent for members to receive electronic direct marketing, including volunteering opportunities, event invitations, benefits and services, fundraising requests, and newsletters.

These are the minimum steps required for compliance. Additional best practice guidance is available from your National Data Protection Authority. A serious breach of GDPR can result in fines of up to €20 million or 4% of global annual turnover, whichever is higher.

What Is Personal Data?

Personal data refers to any information that directly or indirectly identifies a living person.

What Is Electronic Direct Marketing?

Electronic direct marketing includes communications such as volunteering opportunities, event invitations, offers of benefits and services, fundraising requests, and newsletters sent via email, text, social media, or telephone.

Updating Your Data Protection Statement

Use the University's data protection statement for alumni and supporters as a template (available at <https://alumni.cam.ac.uk/data-protection>). Ensure it accurately reflects:

- the personal data you store
- third parties with whom you share data
- how you process data
- the purposes for processing.

These categories are required under GDPR.

Providing your data protection statement

You should:

- Publish the statement on your website
- Link to it in all relevant emails, newsletters, and postal communications

Collecting consent for electronic direct marketing

Under GDPR, consent must be:

- Freely given, specific, informed, and unambiguous
- Provided through a clear affirmative action (e.g., unticked opt-in boxes)
- Easy to withdraw, using simple and accessible methods

You must be able to demonstrate that consent was obtained and provide a withdrawal mechanism in every marketing communication.

Example Consent Form:

We'd love to stay in touch with you. However, you are in control: tick the box next to the options you wish to receive:

- Volunteer to help us
- Receive invitations to our events
- Receive our monthly e-newsletter
- Provide us with financial support

You can change your preferences at any time by emailing us at leader@group.com.

Further information

For general questions, contact: networks@alumni.cam.ac.uk. Please note we cannot provide advice specific to individual Alumni Groups, Clubs, or Societies.