

Alumni Communication Guidelines

Handbook

Key communication messages and goals of the Alumni Hungary Network, that we want to emphasize and accomplish, through these contents:

Messages:

- Be proud of your Hungarian stay and studies
- The Hungarian higher education is one of the best you can get
- With a Hungarian diploma you are a unique candidate
- The Hungarian memories are worth to share
- You can be part of a unique international and professional community
- Hungary connects us
- Your success and achievements matters
- Having a professional network is key regarding your future
- Build your career and self-brand
- Make a step further with the Hungarian Alumni Community.
- Share experience. Share stories. Establish new partnerships.
- Meet new people across the globe

Goals:

- the promotion of the opportunities offered by Hungary and Hungarian higher education institutions
- the promotion of Hungarian-international ties and cooperation in the field of: diplomacy, economy, business, culture and science
- the promotion of the Alumni Hungary Network among international students
- enhance the active participation of international students and alumni related to international alumni activities

Types of activities you can choose from

- Writing Facebook posts
- Writing blogs or sharing already existing, self-written blogs
- Making interviews with senior alumni members
- Press monitoring in different topics
- Making videos

Writing Facebook posts

In this activity category, you write Facebook posts on a regular basis (1-2 per week, depending on the type and length of the content) about general, daily issues and maybe about yourself, related to your studies, professional career, Hungarian memories, or common activities and events with other international alumni.

Possible topics and examples:

- positive and interesting news about the relationship between your home/residence country and Hungary (economic issues, education, events, travel, diplomacy, research and educational opportunities)
- short posts about yourself (good memories about Hungarian studies, professional achievements, meeting with other alumni etc. with a photo/video and short text)
- longer texts related to your professional career or studies (research summaries, tips for studying, networking, job search based on your personal experience etc.)
- etc.

(If you choose to write longer texts, articles or blogposts, please also read the blog section of the Handbook)

Writing blogs or sharing already existing, self-written blogs

In this section we await classic blog content in written, or in video format, in the following topics:

- stories (personal or professional) related to your job or professional field (summaries about conferences, experiences, tips about career development, research findings etc.)
- stories about Hungary and Hungarian memories from a personal perspective, Hungarian language, culture etc.
- thoughts about the next steps in your career after graduation, or about your PhD experiences

- other topics that you love, you're good at, and are at least partly professional (for example global issues, challenges, SDG goals, innovative projects, initiatives etc.)

If you already write blog/blogs and you want to share it with other alumni, then you can show it to us, and we can share it on our platforms if the topic is relevant.

Editorial requirements for blogs:

- personal perspective (if possible)
- 1300+ words
- short paragraphs 200-300 words, with multiple subtitles, sub-headings
- the topic has to be understandable for a bigger crowd too (your choice of topic should be not too specific)
- use your own pictures and photos if possible (if you do not have these, we can help you with the visual concept)
- write blog posts on a regular basis (weekly, in every 2 weeks or monthly), and you can add multiple blog pieces to one topic
- vlogs should be recorded in high quality, and also on a regular basis, as mentioned above
- always include and pay attention to use official references if you use third-party materials for your content (mentioning one, referring to one, in the case of quotation etc.)

Making interviews with senior alumni members

In most cases, this is a more formal way of making an interview. The goal is to find those senior alumni members, who

- are already at the peak of their careers or after that
- are highly appreciated in their fields
- are core personalities of a community
- take part in important community and social activities or important research
- have active relationship with Hungary or with a well-known Hungarian institution
- etc.

Finding the right match is sometimes difficult, so if you want to conduct an interview, but you do not know where to start, who to choose, you can contact the alumni team and we try to find you an interviewee among our senior alumni members.

Pre-interview tasks:

- you should do a research to get to know your interviewee (CV, publication, news, social media pages etc.)
- you should make a list of questions depending on your collected information
- you have to contact the Alumni Hungary Team to agree on the list of questions

- you should contact the person to find out if she/he is open for an interview, which form would be ideal for the interview (e-mail, skype, personal meeting), when and how much time she/he has for the interview
- you should also send your questions before the interview to her/him so he/she can prepare

Post-interview tasks:

After you have conducted the interview:

- you should send your final version to the Alumni Hungary Team (the team has the right to edit your piece, but they will always discuss the amendments with you)
- if the team approved a final version, you have to send this final version to your interviewee and you should inform her/him about the publication date, and the platforms where the interview will be published (see the list in the *Communication on behalf of the Alumni Hungary Network* section)
- if she/he asks for amendments, you have to do it, and after that you should send the article again to your interviewee and the Alumni Hungary Team

Suggested structure and content of the interview (main sections and questions):

1. section: Study in Hungary and career development

- Why did you choose Hungary?
- What were your first impressions, how did you start your Hungarian life?
- Tell about studying at the university, did you have any inspirational teachers, professors etc.
- Questions related to Hungarian language
- What happened after your graduation?
- Milestones of your career and future plans
- Relationships with Hungarian professional and institutions (professional)
- Why it is good to have an international alumni network, especially the Alumni Hungary Network?

2. section: Abstract questions related to professional and everyday life

- How do you assess success, what was your biggest success?
- What motivates you in life?
- What are you passionate about?
- Tough decisions that you had to make related to career and life
- Would you do some things differently if you could go back?
- Suggestions for young international students studying in Hungary

3. section: Rapid questions – Fun facts

- favourite Hungarian food
- favourite Hungarian place
- favourite Hungarian word
- etc.

Important: you are free to add other questions and topics, and to choose the focus of the interview. These are just a few suggestions that can help you building up a structure, but you can build up the interview also differently if you have a good idea.

Important suggestions and requirements:

- number of characters: 5000-8000
- build up your questions and also the answers and the final interview in a chronologically way if it is possible
- it is always suggested to ask more questions to have enough information, but of course you do not have to use all the answers in your final version
- devote enough time writing the interview – it is a long and difficult process, so it takes time, it needs patience
- ask your questions so, that the interviewee can feel, that you are prepared, refer to the CV of the interviewee too, for example: You have studied in Szeged. What was it like?; I know you received a prestigious award in... can you tell a little bit more about that?; You have a very impressive career path. What will be your next step? etc.
- always ask for good quality photos of your interviewee and related to the questions and answers
- examples of previous interviews: <https://alumninetworkhungary.hu/portraits>
- check out the **Communication on behalf of the Alumni Hungary Network** section for more information about communication during the interview process

Press monitoring in different topics

This activity is based on a simple internet research about Hungary related news which appear in your home country press resources (national online news portals, blogs etc.). You have to send the news on a regular basis, in a given period of time (2-3 month long).

Possible topics:

- positive and interesting news
- innovation, research, economy, social life, culture, education, travel, business
- cooperation, bilateral agreements, events, fairs, conferences
- scholarships and research opportunities
- etc.

You should rather send us news packages than single news. Of course, keep actuality in mind!

Making videos

Videos are the best way to engage followers and members in different topics. Suggested topics are:

- introductory videos about yourself as a volunteer
- short summaries about conferences, events
- summaries about alumni meetings (formal, informal)
- vlog (as mentioned above)
- Hungarian education experiences, why you would recommend to study in Hungary, why it is a good opportunity to be an alumni member
- etc.

Editing and technical suggestions:

- pay attention that your voice is also well recorded, maybe you can use a microphone or you should just hold your phone or camera close if possible
- say the words loud and clear, and please send it also in a text format, because we will add subtitles to the video
- create your thoughts in advance – there is no time for useless sentences
- hold your phone in a horizontal way
- hold your phone/camera steady or ask someone to do that for you prepare before you record (if it is possible)
- hold the camera/phone physically closer to yourself, because this ensures better image quality and focus
- record it in a silent place/room/environment to avoid background noises (if it is possible)
- try to choose high resolution options on your device before recording
- the length of the video depends strongly on the content and message that you want to impart (for example introductory videos should not be longer than 1,5 minute, summaries are between 1-3 minutes, vlogs can be much more longer)

Communication with the Alumni Hungary Team

Contact information and e-mail requirements

- please always use the Alumni Hungary Team's volunteer mail address when you send communication materials: volunteer.alumni@tpf.hu

- you will be invited (if you are not already a member) by our senior alumni officer, Ms. Emese Zolnai, to be a member in our volunteer Facebook group, so please follow it closely, because sometimes we share important information in the group too
- always address your letters to Ms. Emese Bátki (emese.batki@tpf.hu), the senior alumni officer of the Alumni Hungary Team
- please write the exact topic of your e-mail in the subject field, for example if you send Facebook post materials indicate it so: *Communication - Writing Facebook posts + (the topic of your content)*

Publication of contents:

- contents have to be always sent first to the Alumni Hungary Team in order to check it and to make amendments if necessary
- after that, in most cases the Alumni Hungary Team will share the content on the online platforms
- in other cases, if the volunteer have access to publishing rights on the platforms, she/he can also share the given content, with the permission of the Alumni Hungary Team

Note: the Alumni Hungary Team have editing rights related to all contents that you write or make, but will not edit your content without discussing it first with you.

Communication on behalf of the Alumni Hungary Network

In case you are organizing an interview with a senior alumni, or in case of other similar activities, you will be using your own e-mail address to send e-mails out. But, you have to make sure that

- you mention, that you are an alumni volunteer of the official Alumni Hungary Network
- always introduce yourself in short and tell about what kind of activity you are responsible for in the network as a volunteer
- always refer to the fact, that the request was pre-agreed with the Alumni Hungary Team and add the contact information of the senior alumni officer, Ms. Emese Bátki (emese.batki@tpf.hu) to your e-mail message
- you have to place the Alumni Hungary logo in your digital signature
- you have to CC emese.batki@tpf.hu in your e-mails

Platforms where your content can be published by the Alumni Hungary Team without further notice or permission:

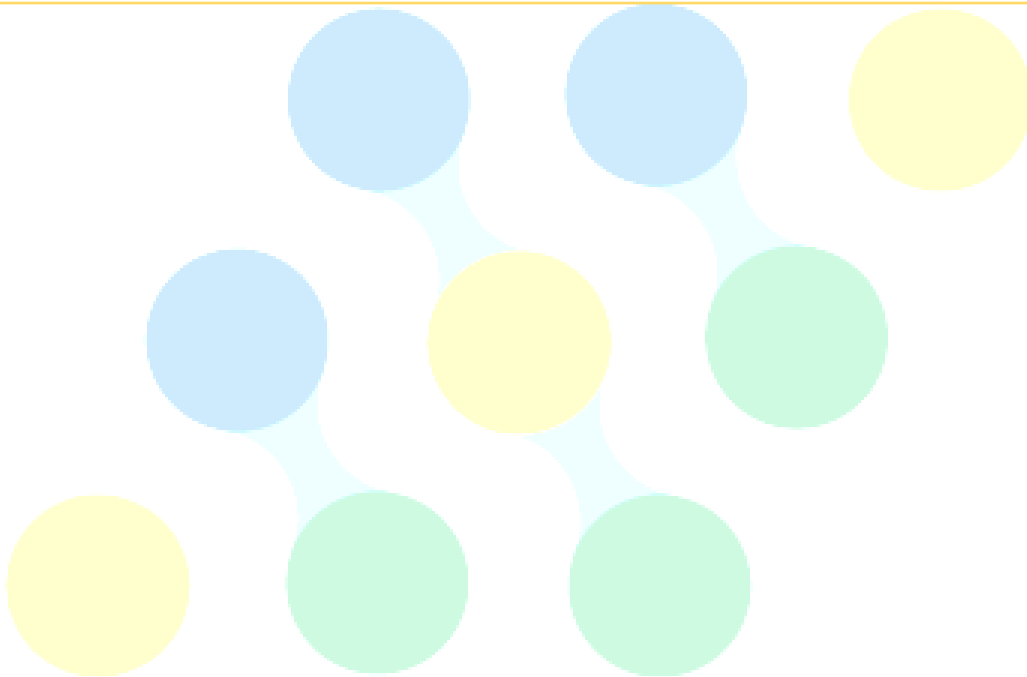
- [Alumni Hungary Portal](#) – main channel
- [Alumni Hungary Facebook page](#) – main channel

- [Alumni Hungary volunteer group – International alumni volunteers](#) (closed group)
- [Study in Hungary Facebook page](#)
- [Study in Hungary Portal](#)
- [Tempus Public Foundation homepage](#) (Hungarian and English)
- [The magazine of the Tempus Public Foundation](#) in Hungarian language (in this case the Alumni Hungary Team is responsible for the translation)

In any other cases, we will discuss further publishing opportunities with you strictly.

Beside the above-mentioned points and topics, you are free to add your own suggestions and ideas to the alumni communication and activities!

For any further questions, we kindly ask you to contact Ms. Gyöngyi Laufer
gyongyi.laufer@tpf.hu.



Comprehensive communication principals

Basic problem with our communication:

Most people spend the majority of their time each day in some type of an interpersonal situations. We have tons of meetings, we write and read hundreds of emails, we talk on phones and end of the day we assume: Large number of problems occur as a result of poor communications. The reason is very simple: Our message doesn't arrive to our audience. Or our audience has different meaning. Among the reasons we can find some important: The message contains errors, those kind of words which have more than one meaning (ambiguities), misinterpretation or misunderstanding. It is very frequent when a listener hears not what was said but thought was said. This kind of behaviour comes from the listener feelings, purposes, intuitions and expectation. How can we avoid or reduce this? With clear, strong messaging and preparation. There is no effective communication without preparation. During the preparation process you have to find an answer for the following questions:

Who is your audience?

The message is not about the messenger. It has nothing to do with messenger; it is however 100% about meeting the needs and the expectations of those you're communicating with.

Before any kind of presentation, interview or simple meeting we have to know who our audience is. How old are they? What do they want to hear? What is their pre-existing knowledge and fears about the topic?

How much do they know about Hungary? Have they ever been in Hungary? What kind of news do they have about the country? The magic secret of our communication is skilled at reading a person by sensing the moods, dynamics, attitudes, values and concerns of those being communicated with.

The purpose

In every situation, we have to know, why we talk... What is the purpose of the conversation, presentation or the short FB/ Tweet message?

In this special case we would like to talk honestly about the scholarship experiences. We do not want to hide the accidental difficulties, cultural differences, because they would face with it. The reason why an alumni member talks about the programme is obvious. You are the most authentic person with your own experience. And the purpose is to fulfil the curiosity of those who are thinking of or interested about the programme. You can accomplish it with relevant and interesting information, talking about the benefits and what have you gained by the programme.

Relevant and interesting information

Your personal knowledge is crucial for those who would like to attend in the TEMPUS programmes. But above the general information you have to give some personal highlights. Those kind of things which you experienced through the process and during the scholarship. And how can you make it interesting? Tell stories which fit the needs of your audience.

The power of the stories

Why do we need stories instead of information? The best way of telling something is creating stories. We got used to it. Fairy tales from our childhood, songs, books, articles all say some important and useful message in a colourful way and makes it memorable, because of the personal engagement, feelings.

What can we learn from the media?

The media has some principles and tricks what we can use as well. The most important is the structure of the message. Every news contains the answer for the following basic questions:

Who? What? When? Why? How? If you managed to summarise your message with these relevant information, it means you gave the basic answer. But this is not enough for an unforgettable knowledge. You have to find the way how it can be connected to the listener. Is there any connection to the personal interest? Is it clear and simple enough to achieve the same meaning? And is there any unique selling proposition in it which helps us to feel – we got some custom made information? All medium customises its message to the audience. You can read the same news in different ways in different papers, platform, and every journalist want some unique information within the same news. So you have to build your message according to your audience's needs and platform.

In the news the average length is no longer than 1 minute. Some cases less, only 20 seconds. It seems a bit exiguous, but not. This is the average length we can focus on something. We live in a very fast changing environment, we have to get what we want and concentrate on the next topic. The solution for this is using clear examples, pictures and making emotions.

The power of emotions and words

Many of you have probably seen the virus video about a beggar, who was sitting on the street, beside him was a notice, handwritten on a scrap of board, which read: I am blind. It has happened on a beautiful sunny morning. His begging bowl was empty. This information had not given any personal involvement for those who passed by him. A young lady asked him if she could change some words on his notice. She wrote a new message: "It's a beautiful day and I can't see it." This new message has proved effective at opening the hearts and wallets of passers-by.

She has managed to find the connection with his audience. (I am blind – no connection. And it's a beautiful day - this is the common feeling. After the cold winter feeling the sun it is lovely and faces with the situation someone cannot see the colours - heart-breaking.)

In every sentences we have to find the best way, how can we reach our audience. When you talk about the programme, you can do the same - create a unique message which is linked to the audience.

How can we recognize the needs of our audience?

The short answer is: with active listening and questioning. Active listening means we do not finish or interrupt the other person's sentences. We do not say conclusion in the middle of conversation and we do not think about our reply while the other is still speaking. Try to use as many open questions as possible; it helps you to get closer to your communication partner's problems, needs. If you know what she or he would like to know, you can formulate your message according to it.

The power of pictures, examples

"A picture is worth a thousand words" - this is a very important English idiom. It refers to the notion that a complex idea can be conveyed with just a single still image or that an image of a subject conveys its meaning or essence more effectively than a description does. Please use as often as you can. If you have no chance to demonstrate your thoughts with picture, use examples for the easy interpretation. Example: Macworld 2008. Steve Jobs: "This is the new Macbook Air, you can get a feel for how thin it is. It fits inside the envelope, it's that small."

When you are talking about the programme, give pictures (my first day, my university, my professor, my team) or give examples for the situations you had to face with.

The main topics – create your communication tools:

"If you don't know exactly what outcome you want, your speech won't have the tangible value it could have" (*Speak your way to a better life – William Benko, 2016*). I totally agree with this quote and I encourage all of you to build and prepare your own message boxes about the programme and experiences. If you spend time for it, you will have more effective and better communication. Find the personal stories and the way how you would answer right now for those questions you had before you joined to the programme like:

- Why Hungary? Which University?
- Language Scientific life, possibilities
- Accommodation Healthcare
- Safety Leisure

It was interesting for you before you joined. Those who are thinking about it, have very similar questions.

Platforms driven communication

The way of the communication is changing according to the audience as you remember. But not only the personal aspect is variable, the channel what we use also makes differences.

Facebook:

Think about how you use your FB. What do you read? Among the thousands of posts, you stop if the content has some relevant information for you. If you would like to share something, please grab the attention with a strong title, interesting picture and write lead (is the opening (leading) paragraph of an article, essay, book chapter, or other written work that summarizes its main ideas) which relevant for your audience.

I would like to underline the magic power of the FB contents. All of them should be coherent to the overall picture of you. This is the self-branding platform, make it so as you would like to be judged by others.

Twitter:

This is the fastest communication way. According to this, a tweet is only one sentence, like breaking news in the media.

Video message:

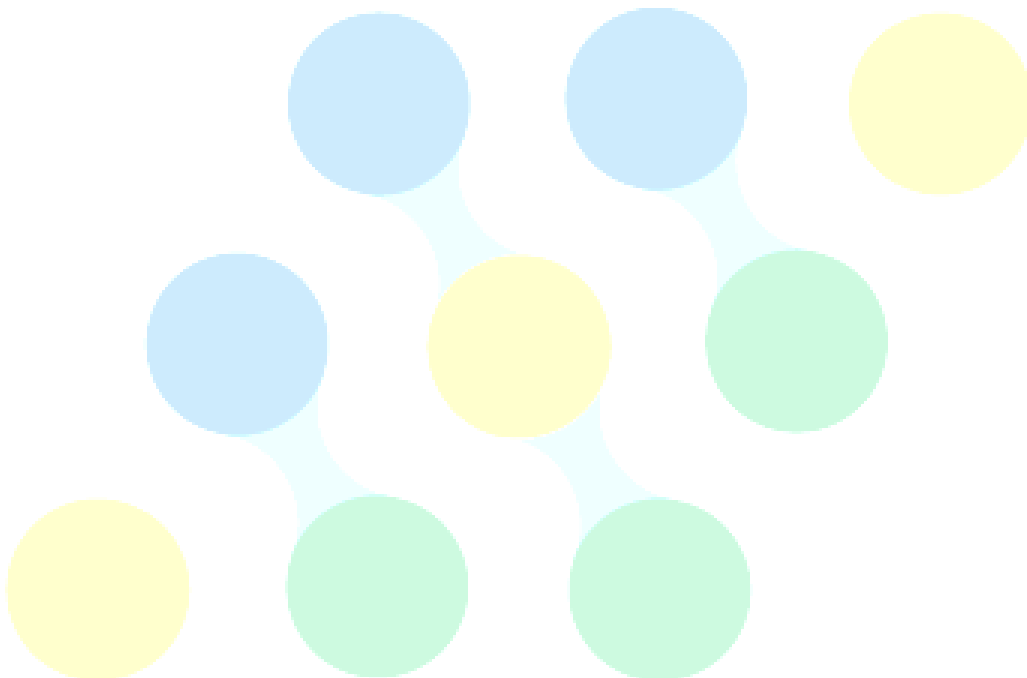
As technical equipment got the everyday possibilities to record or create video messages to anyone, we got use to watch them instead of reading. You can use this tool, making short films, messages with your smart phone but follow some principles.

- Install the camera horizontal at eye level
- Use max 1-minute-long films
- Create your thoughts in advance – there is no time for useless sentences
- Even in one minute build a structure: Grab the attention with the first sentences, say your message in solid way and close it with feelings or strong ending. Build story which is unforgettable.

Summary

- Why are you talking? Because as an Alumni member, your personal experiments are the most authentic source of information.
- Without preparation there is no good communication.
- Allocate time for finding the right stories, formulate them in an effective and solid sentences.
- Build your message.
- Explore the other's needs – what is important for her or him.

- Open your mind and recognise your body language which gives 55 % in understanding.
- Answer to every questions and do not be afraid to say something you do not know.
- You can help the applicant with connecting her/him with the right person.
- Believe in the power of the community – build alumni organization, this is the best information hub for all of you.
- Be courageous and try yourself in different situations, this community will help you.
- Do not underestimate the networking (*Never Eat Alone – Keith Ferrazzi, 2005.*)



Alumni Hungary

