



The  
University  
Of  
Sheffield.

Sheffield  
Alumni  
Volunteers.

## Sheffield Alumni Volunteers 2017/18 Report

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## 1. Executive summary

The alumni volunteering programme at The University of Sheffield was established in January 2014.

The aims of the programme are to:

1. Increase the number of engaged alumni volunteering with the University
2. Ensure alumni have an exceptional experience volunteering with us

Alumni volunteering provides an opportunity for alumni to engage with the University in a meaningful way whilst supporting the University in achieving its mission.

Alumni volunteer within five key areas of activity:

- Student employability
- Learning & teaching
- Student recruitment
- Strategy & governance
- Alumni engagement

## 2. Volunteer programme overview

- Volunteering programme strategy reviewed and updated
- Database configuration reviewed to continue aligning volunteer activity to University strategic priorities
- 'Working with Volunteers' resources/ toolkit and staff resources webpage reviewed and updated
- New alumni volunteer and donor thank you event held, attended by over 100 alumni
- Successful social media campaign run during National Volunteering Week to recognise volunteers and raise awareness of the programme
- Volunteer newsletter and thank you mailing sent to all volunteers

## 3. 2017/18 Key findings

- 979 alumni volunteered in the 2017/18 academic year
- 10,277 hours were volunteered, averaging 10 hours per alumnus
- There were with 1,195 instances of volunteering, supporting over 100 volunteering activities
- 4,901 students benefitted from alumni volunteering
- 52% of volunteers had previously volunteered with the University
- Alumni from 45 countries volunteered
- There were slightly more male volunteers than female

- Most volunteers fell in the 20-30 age group, with nearly 67% of all volunteers being under 40 years old. 37% of volunteers graduated in the last 10 years
- Alumni who had studied in the Faculty of Social Sciences made up the largest group of volunteers. The Faculty also has the largest student and contactable alumni population. The Faculty of Arts & Humanities and Engineering both had a higher proportion of volunteers than student and contactable alumni population
- Every faculty has received alumni support, including 57 academic and professional departments
- 76% of volunteering activity supported the “Student Experience”, the majority of which being student employability activity (60% of all activity)
- 30% of volunteers participated in the Careers Service eMentoring programme
- 14% of 2016/17 volunteers had also made a financial gift to the University

## 4. Volunteer engagement

### 4.1 2017/18 Engagement statistics

Engagement	Number of volunteers	%
Total number of volunteering hours	10,277	Average 10 hours
Total number of alumni volunteers	979	
Number of instances of volunteering	1,195	
Number of alumni new to volunteering	467	48 %
Number of repeat volunteers	512	52 %

### 4.2 Volunteering and philanthropy

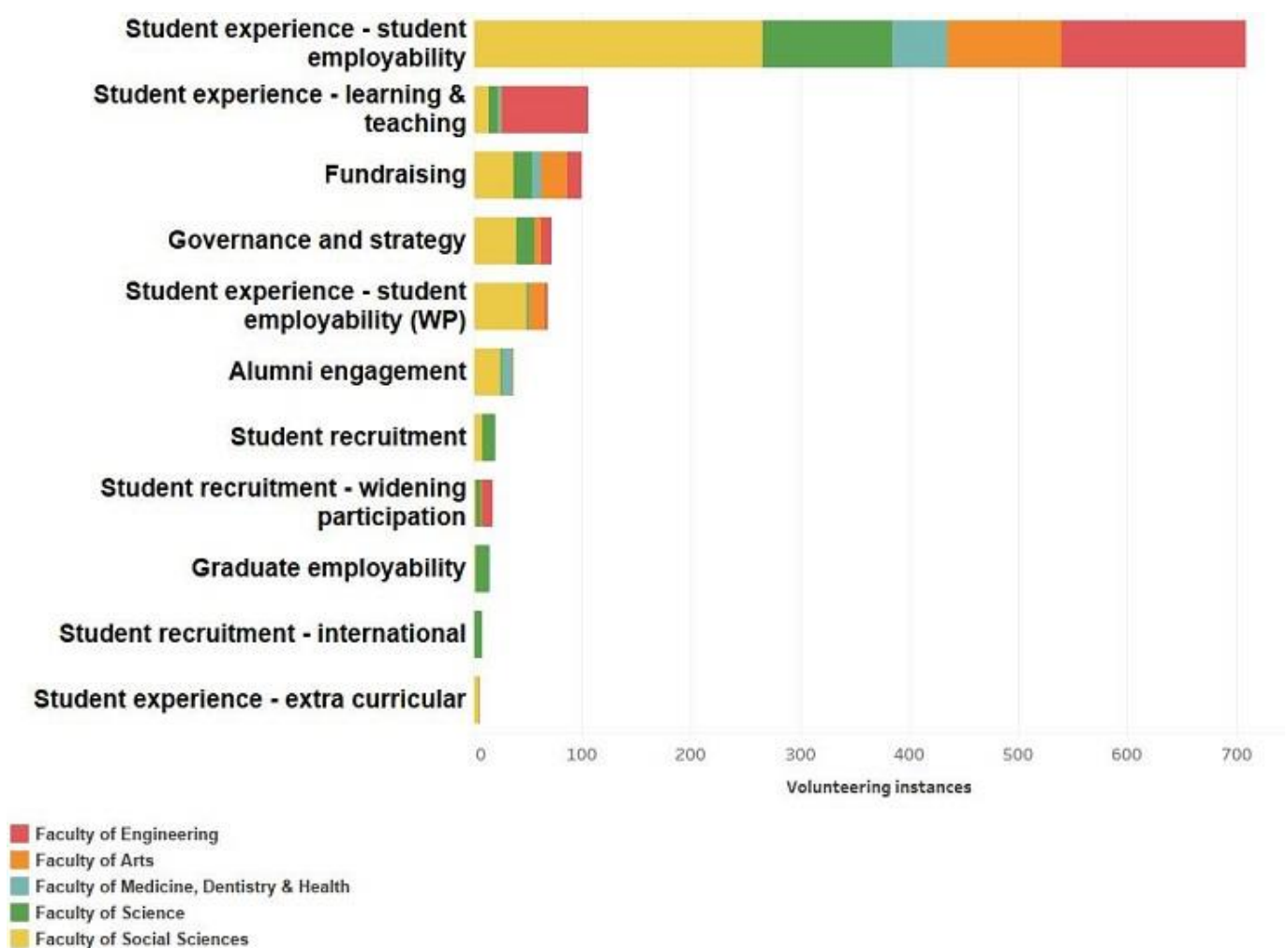
Engagement	Number of volunteers	% of total volunteers
2017/18 volunteers who are also donors	141	14%
Volunteers who are Major Gift prospects or donors	119	12%

## 5. Volunteering activity

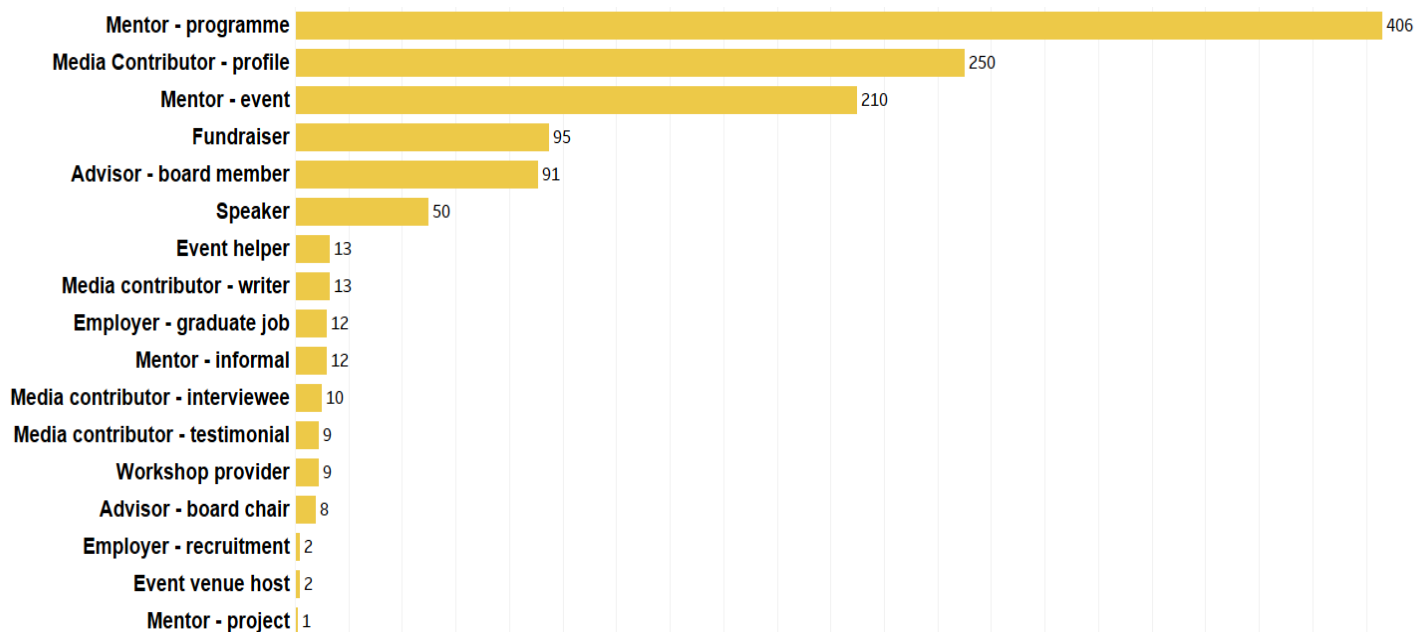
### 5.1 Strategic area supported

Strategic Area	Instances	% of total
<b>Student experience</b>	<b>901</b>	<b>75%</b>
<i>Student experience - learning &amp; teaching</i>	<i>108</i>	<i>9%</i>
Student experience - student employability	721	60%
Student experience - student employability (WP)	72	6%
Alumni engagement	38	3%
Student recruitment - general	20	1.67%
Student recruitment - widening participation	18	1.5%
Student recruitment - international	8	0.7%
Fundraising	108	9%
Governance and strategy	78	7%

### Strategic area supported by faculty



## 5.2 Volunteer roles



### Top 10 roles completed by alumni volunteers

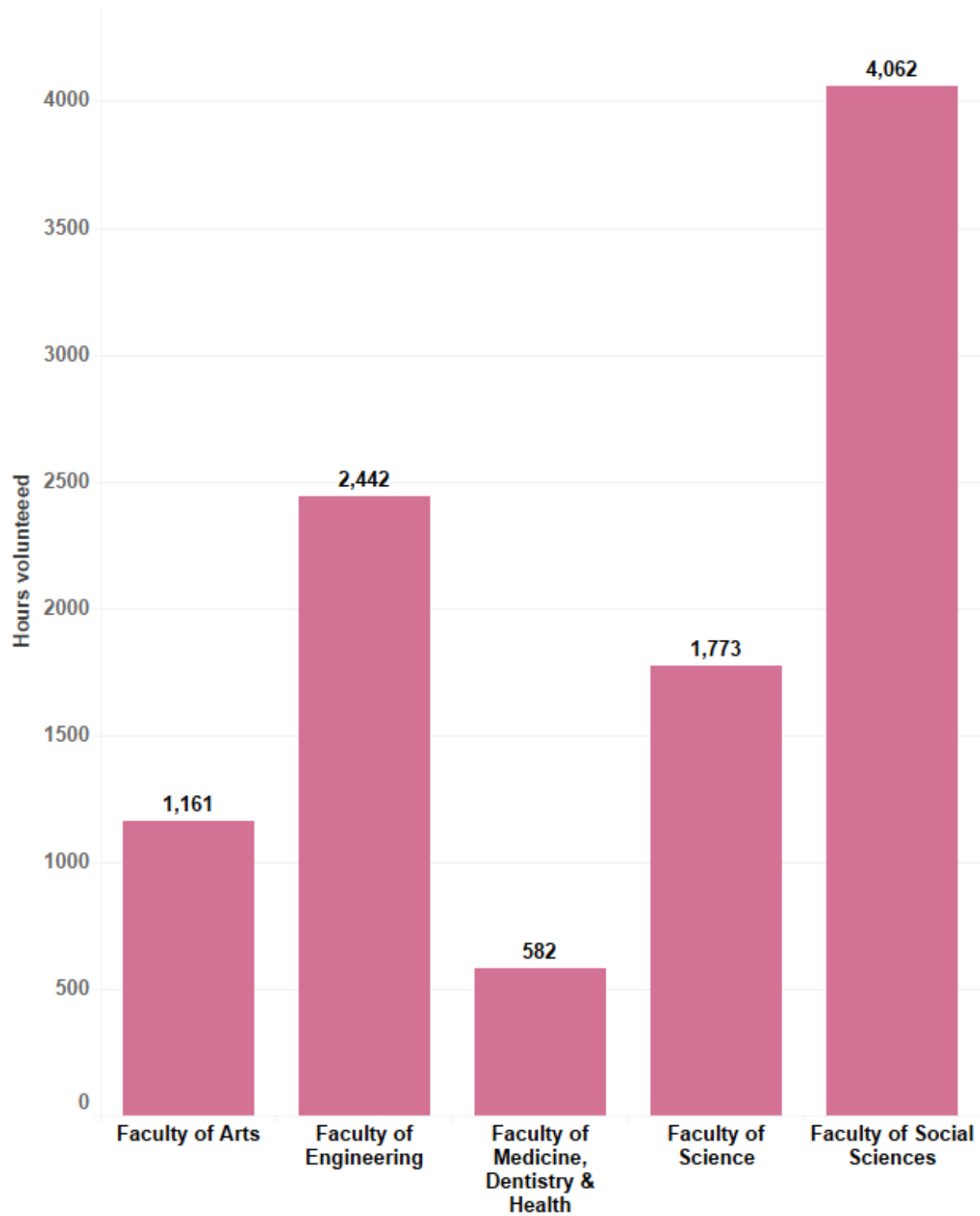
Role	Instances	% of total activity
Mentor - programme	406	34%
Media Contributor - profile	250	21%
Mentor - event	210	18%
Fundraiser	95	8%
Advisor - board member	91	8%
Speaker	50	4%
Event helper	13	1%
Media contributor - interviewee	10	1%
Employer - recruitment	2	1%
Event venue host	2	1%

## 5.3 Activity Supported

### Top 10 volunteering activities supported

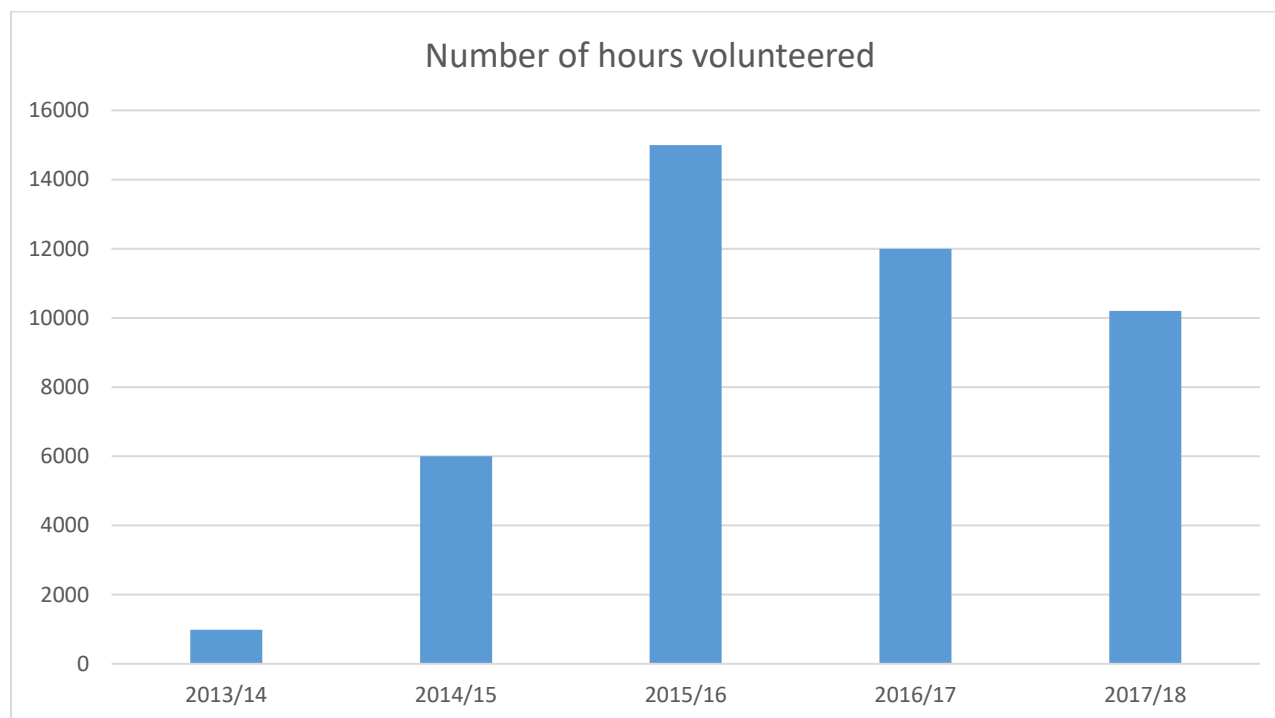
Volunteering Activity	Strategic Area	Instances	%
Careers Service eMentoring Programme	Student experience - student employability	360	30%
Careers Service Graduate Case Study	Student experience - student employability	152	13%
Big Walk 2108	Fundraising	86	7%
City Connections	Student experience - student employability (WP)	61	5%
Engineering You're Hired	Student experience - learning & teaching	56	5%
Vista PhD Mentoring	Student experience - student employability	46	4%
Alumni Board	Governance and Strategy	41	3%
Career Profile	Student experience - student employability	39	3%
Global Engineering Challenge	Student experience - learning & teaching	30	2%
Board of Directors TUoS in America	Governance and Strategy	17	1%

## 5.4 Volunteer Hours by Faculty



## 6. Five-year overview

### 6.1 Volunteering hours



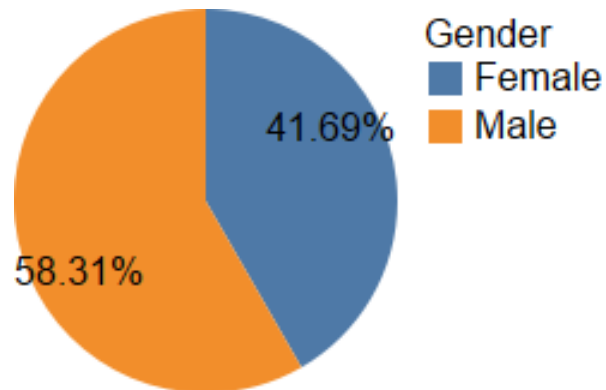
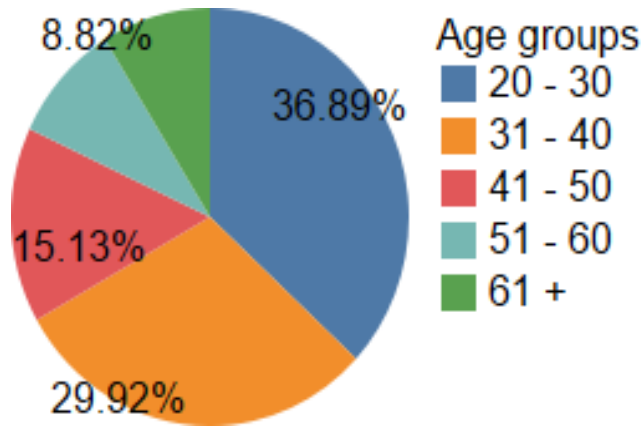
#### Volunteering hours by faculty

Volunteering Hours	2013/14	2014/15	2015/16*	2016/17	2017/18
Faculty of Arts & Humanities	123	1,088	2,726	2,108	1,161
Faculty of Engineering	417	1,634	2,941	3,206	2,442
Faculty of Social Sciences	296	2,984	6,369	4,917	4,062
Faculty of Medicine, Dentistry & Health	55	291	1,256	781	582
Faculty of Science	94	864	3,058	2,718	1,773

\*There was a spike in hours in 2015/16 due to a) alumni volunteer support as fundraisers for the Big Walk 2016 (unlike other one day events this year was a 15-day walk across the Pennine Way) and support for University Charter Day- a series of alumni engagement events across the world organised by alumni volunteers – this was co-ordinated by an additional 100 hours placement in DARE.

## 7. Volunteer demographics

### 7.1 Gender and Age



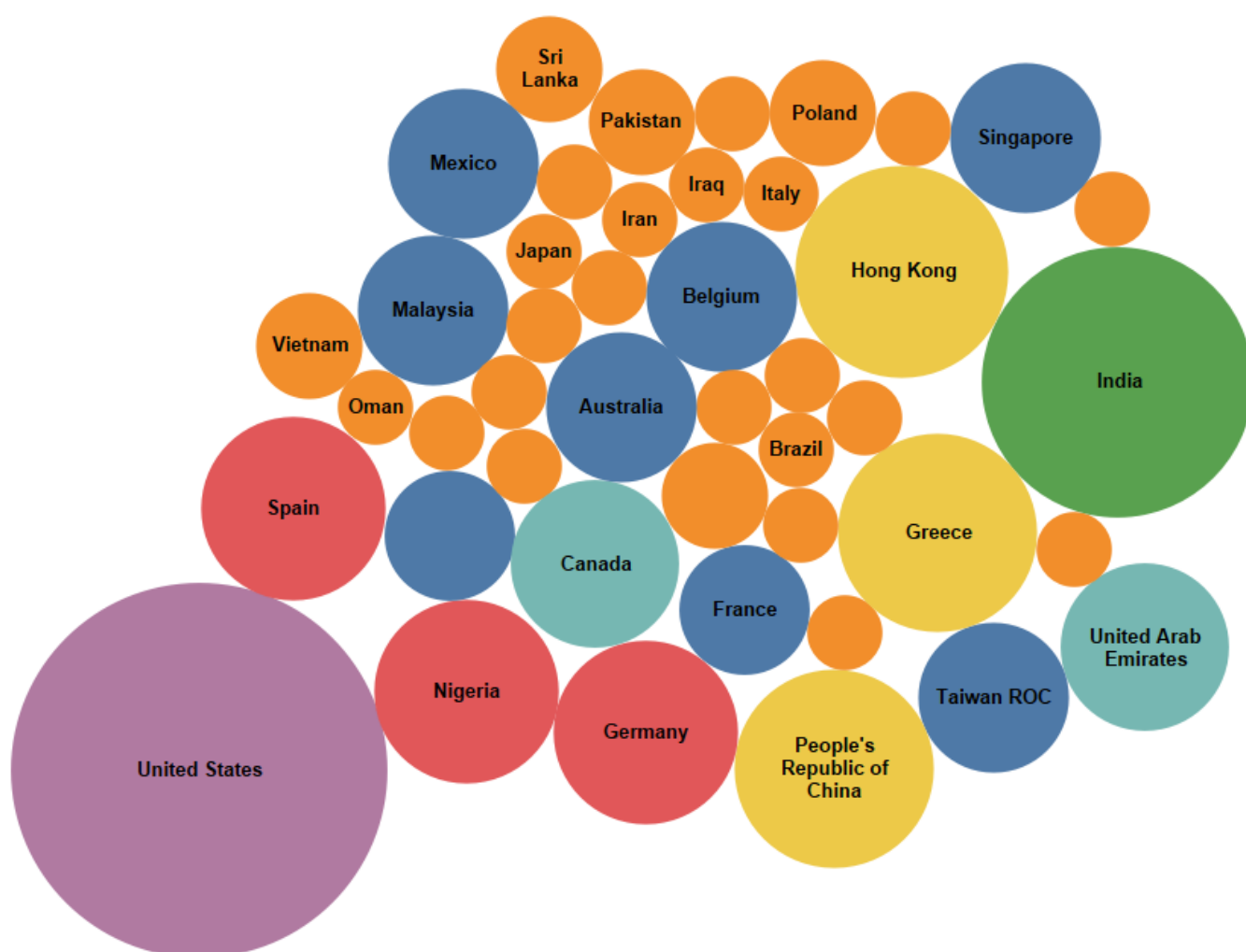


## 7.2 Location

Preferred address of volunteers	Number of volunteers	%
UK	837	85%
International	142	15%

### Top 5 largest International geographical groups

Location	Number of volunteers	% international volunteers	% total volunteers
USA	25	18%	3%
India	13	9%	1%
Hong Kong	8	6%	0.8%
China	7	4%	0.7%
Greece	6	4%	0.6%



## 8. Volunteer Impact

### 8.1 eMentoring Programme (Careers Service)

The Alumni eMentoring programme is led by Careers in collaboration with DARE. The programme matches current students to alumni working in job roles of interest to them, for a period of on line mentoring. There are two schemes per year in autumn and spring. 422 alumni volunteered as mentors on the eMentoring programme this academic year, over both semesters.

Overview of student feedback questionnaire results:

96% students found the programme beneficial, in one or more of the following ways:

- ✓ Clearer about career options
- ✓ Improved confidence
- ✓ Better equipped to apply for jobs and attend interviews
- ✓ Developed networking skills
- ✓ Gained insight into an occupational area

96% students would recommend the programme

22% students secured further work experience as a result of their mentoring

#### **Student Feedback**

*"I really enjoyed the eMentoring experience and am so glad I took part. Talking to someone who actually works in the industry I'm interested in really helped me build my confidence and helped me learn about new potential areas for me, which I'm now thinking of applying in!"*

*"Absolutely brilliant and could not fault my mentor who was very uplifting, organised and informative. Finding out about their career path has broadened my knowledge in what a 'graduate' job looks like and how to get there. Through my mentor I have updated my CV, been to talks regarding postgraduate study and my confidence has improved massively."*

#### **Alumni Feedback**

94% of alumni mentors found the scheme beneficial in one or more of the following ways:

- ✓ Enjoyed getting to know a student
- ✓ Helped me/my company strengthen links with the university
- ✓ Enhanced my skills/personal and/or professional development

93% of alumni mentors felt more engaged with the University as a result of mentoring

97% of alumni mentors would recommend the scheme

### 8.2 v i s t a (Research Services)

v i s t a is the University of Sheffield's suite of resources for supporting post-PhD transitions into careers beyond the academy. It comprises seminars, blogs and mentoring, and draws on the vast experience and expertise of our PhD alumni.

*v i s t a has gone from strength to strength this year with seminars welcoming 362 researchers to hear from 18 speakers over 10 lunchtime seminars representing different career themes.*

*Feedback was excellent and reflected the vibe in the room — one of high energy and enthusiasm for career planning and development (of 177 responses: ‘the learning I gained was immediately useful in my career planning’ = 94 / ‘the learning will be useful for the future’ = 79) with the most frequently cited learning points variations on: ‘I have hope for my future employability’ — and — ‘I feel much more like I understand my options.’*

*v i s t a also maintained over 45 new PhD-grad mentors from as many roles and industries to the online platform, and have posted 78 career blogs to date which have collectively received more than 10,000 views (and growing).*

Dr Kay Guccione, Researcher Mentoring and Coaching

## 8.3 City Connections (DARE/Faculty Outreach - Social Sciences and Arts and Humanities)

City Connections is a unique employability event now in its sixth year. It is run by DARE in collaboration with the faculty outreach teams in Social Sciences and Arts and Humanities. We take 40 widening participation students to London to visit alumni businesses and network with alumni. The event aims to raise the confidence and aspirations of students, develop their commercial awareness, and introduce them to a network they may not otherwise have access to. The highly successful programme was nominated for a Times Higher Education Award for 'Outstanding Support for Students' in 2016.

### Social Sciences City Connections (March 2018)

Students were surveyed before the event, and again after. The below chart shows the increase in confidence that the students experienced as a direct result of the programme.

Question:	Pre event	Post event	Increase
I have a good understanding of what careers, roles and sectors interest me and those that don't	51%	85%	34%
I have a network of people to ask for careers advice and guidance	31%	85%	54%
I am motivated to take advantage of opportunities that improve my career prospects (work experience, extra-curricular activities)	97%	100%	3%
I know what careers options are available to social science students	40%	92%	52%
I have a good understanding of the concept of commercial awareness and why it is important to employers	51%	92%	41%
I know what employers are looking for in a graduate employee	40%	85%	45%
I feel excited and optimistic about future career options	78%	100%	22%
I am aware of the University of Sheffield alumni community and how graduates can stay involved with the University	32%	96%	64%

I understand what skills and knowledge are required to pursue my career interests	63%	81%	19%
I feel more confident about my careers prospects (chance for future success in a profession) following graduation?	20%	96%	76%
I feel more confident about networking with professionals	34%	100%	66%
I feel more confident about my understanding of commercial awareness and why it is important to employers	29%	92%	63%
How far do you feel you met the personal objectives you set for yourself	N/A	100%	N/A

### **Student feedback**

*"City Connections has given me the initiative to focus more on my future after university and increased my confidence in doing so."*

*"I know now that I can talk to people from different industries and I can express myself, and my interests, to people at a higher level."*

*"I now feel more confident in applying for jobs and internships due to the advice I have received."*

### **Alumni Feedback**

Question	Percentage of alumni who agreed
I enjoyed participating in the event	100%
I believe my involvement had a positive impact on the students	100%
I was well-informed about my role and how I was expected to help the students	100%
I believe in what the University is trying to achieve	100%
I felt my contribution was valued by the University	100%
I would recommend volunteering with the University to other alumni	100%

*"Felt great to participate at the event and give something back to the University. Also great to see the University is alive and well and continuing to develop the next generation of well-prepared graduates!"*

Bryan Walker, BA Economics, Principle, Dfin Ltd.

*"The pressure on students today is far, far greater than when I was at university. I was delighted to share some of my experiences and to give an idea of what employers today are looking for in a new graduate."* Sarah Evans, BSc Natural Environmental Science, Chair of The Wine Society.

*"I always find it a great experience to meet with so many smart, talented and enthusiastic students. To be able to offer them advice and support is a real privilege."* Joe Twyman, BA Politics, Head of Political and Social Research, YouGov.

## Arts & Humanities City Connections (May 2018)

### Student Feedback

Question:	Pre event	Post event	Increase
I have a good understanding of what careers, roles and sectors interest me and those that don't	30%	91%	61%
I have a network of people to ask for careers advice and guidance	13%	87%	74%
I am motivated to take advantage of opportunities that improve my career prospects (work experience, extra-curricular activities)	96%	100%	4%
I know what careers options are available to arts and humanities students	35%	100%	65%
I have a good understanding of the concept of commercial awareness and why it is important to employers	35%	91%	56%
I know what employers are looking for in a graduate employee	48%	96%	48%
I feel excited and optimistic about future career options	74%	100%	26%
I feel motivated to do well academically	100%	100%	N/A
I am aware of the University of Sheffield alumni community and how graduates can stay involved with the University	43%	96%	53%
I understand what skills and knowledge are required to pursue my career interests	48%	96%	48%
I feel more confident about my careers prospects (chance for future success in a profession) following graduation?	22%	70%	48%
I feel more confident about networking with professionals	26%	83%	57%

*"I wrote about my City Connections experience on my cv and applied for lots of media companies in Manchester for work experience and in September I will be doing two weeks of work experience at True North TV Production Company at Media City. City Connections was really life changing for me and has definitely helped me with understanding what kind of career I want in the future."* Amy Clarke, second year English Literature student.

### Alumni Feedback

Question	
I enjoyed participating in the event	100%
I believe my involvement had a positive impact on the students	100%
I was well-informed about my role and how I was expected to help the students	100%

I believe in what the University is trying to achieve	100%
I felt my contribution was valued by the University	100%
I would recommend volunteering with the University to other alumni	100%

*“City Connections continues to offer an effective way of getting the experience of Alumni together with students who are developing ideas for their future. I find that the time I give is valued by the University and the students. It was great to see a couple of students who are in their final year, and had been to City Connections last year, back as student helpers this year”.* Susan Belcher, BA Business Studies, Associate Hospital Manager, North East London Foundation Trust.

*“This was a bright and articulate group of students and I felt it a privilege to meet them.”* Brian Pearson, BEng Civil & Structural Engineering, Managing Director, Azorok Ltd.

*“A great opportunity to share our own experiences and to give young people a chance to hear from people in work about the realities of their experiences. I will definitely volunteer again and would recommend it to other alumni.”* Mark Atherton, BA Economics, Business Analyst & Business Architecture Community of Practice Lead, Lloyds.

## 8.4 Sheffield Connections (DARE)

We welcomed nine of our successful alumni back to campus to support our Sheffield Connections programme, where small groups of students meet with an alumnus to talk about their time at Sheffield and their aspirations following graduation. These sessions are aimed primarily at widening participation students who are the first in their family to attend University, from areas where few people progress to Higher Education, are on financial aid to attend University, or are from under-represented backgrounds such as black and minority ethnic, disabled, young carers or have experience of being in care. Sheffield Connections is a way for students to learn where a degree from Sheffield can take them, receive tailored career advice and develop their networking skills.

68 students attended over the nine events with each event having an average attendance of 7 or 8 students.

### **Student Feedback:**

- 94% Agreed or Strongly Agreed that their confidence in networking with professionals increased, an increase from 86% last year.
- 100% Agreed or Strongly Agreed that their knowledge and understanding of different career sectors and roles increased, an increase from 89% last year.
- 100% Agreed or Strongly Agreed that they felt inspired by the graduate, an increase from 97% last year.
- 100% Agreed or Strongly Agreed that talking to a professional that studied at Sheffield was helpful, an increase from 95% last year.
- 100% Agreed or Strongly Agreed that they felt motivated to take action regarding their career, an increase from 97% last year.
- 100% Agreed or Strongly Agreed that they enjoyed the event, an increase from 97% last year.
- 100% Agreed or Strongly Agreed that they would recommend this event to others, an increase from 95% last year.
- 100% Agreed or Strongly Agreed that alumni contribute to the University in a meaningful way, an increase from 97% last year.
- 100% Agreed or Strongly Agreed that the event has helped them to understand what it means to be part of the Sheffield alumni community, an increase from 95% last year.

*"I got an internship in British Business Investments at the British Business Bank. I spent ten weeks working there, I really enjoyed it. My team had some very senior and experienced people and worked with investing across a range of areas. It was great to get exposure to such a variety and learn from experts. Thank you for putting BBB on my radar, and for your advice on applying for an internship. I wouldn't have even known that such a great place existed without your advice."* Jacqueline Kaminsky, BSc Economics, MSc Data Analytics

*"Meeting with successful past alumni proved an invaluable experience, not just on the day! By following up my meeting with them, they used their connections to secure me a summer internship in a field of Biology that really excites me."* Madeleine S Roberts, BSc Biology

*"I liked the candid and informal feel to the event. I feel it helped facilitate more in-depth and quality questions because students weren't nervous about asking "stupid" questions. I feel more confident in networking and pursuing experience now I see that major players in a company are human and relatable."*

## 8.5 Global Engineering Challenge and Engineering You're Hired Faculty of Engineering / DARE)

During January and February, the Faculty of Engineering held their annual week-long events for both first and second year students. Each week sees more than 1,300 students work in small groups to tackle real-life issues, developing their project management and problem solving skills. 70 alumni from all Engineering disciplines joined us as mentors and assessors.

### Student feedback

<b>Global Engineering Challenge</b>	
As a result of GEC I better understand the challenges and benefits of working in teams to address complex engineering projects	89%
I have a better understanding of the likely team working environment I will face in a professional environment	83%
I have a more systematic approach to solving problems by following an engineering design process	82%
I have a more systematic approach to solving problems by following an engineering design process	81%

<b>Engineering, You're Hired!</b>	
I have a better understanding of the potential complexity and scope of real engineering projects	92%
I better understand the difficulties but also the benefits of working in teams to address complex engineering projects	90%
I have gained valuable experience in using some industrial decision making, project planning and researching of ideas and concepts	88%
I feel better prepared for applying for jobs and/or performing well at job interviews	76%

### Alumni Feedback

I received enough information in advance and understood my role	100%
I believe the students benefitted from this activity	100%
I felt my time was well spent	100%

I enjoyed participating in the activity	100%
I feel more connected to the University	100%
I would recommend volunteering at the University to other alumni	100%
I would recommend recruiting students from Sheffield to my employer	93%

*“This year was my first going back to the University as part of the alumni, I had often thought what could they learn from me. I found the experience very rewarding and felt as though I was adding value to the hundreds of students I talked to that day.”* Craig Wreglesworth, BEng Chemical Engineering, 2002, MScEng Process Safety, 2005.

*“Volunteering as an alumnus is something I really enjoyed. It was great to be back in Sheffield again and the event served as an important part in my professional development towards Chartership.”* Samuel Hunting, MEng Mechanical Engineering, 2012.

*“Activities like GEC are so valuable, and provide so many of the skills that are what employers are looking for in the modern world. Students need more opportunities like this - chances to work on the non-technical skills that today's and tomorrow's engineers need - and it was a privilege to be involved and contribute.”* Ross Peel, MEng Mechanical Engineering with French, 2007, PhD Nuclear Engineering, 2011.

## 8.6 Speed Networking

We supported a number of speed networking events in academic departments during 2017/18 welcoming 48 alumni from a range of industries to speak with current and potential students, helping them with their career decision making and skills development. Alumni also joined us for a speed networking session on the Discover STEM programme, aimed at school/college students to encourage them to consider undertaking a degree in science, technology, engineering or maths.

Speed networking events took place in the following departments:

- Automatic Control & Systems Engineering
- Economics
- Urban Studies & Planning
- ScHARR
- Geography
- Philosophy
- Discover STEM (central outreach team)

### Student feedback

*“The alumni were all very informative and helpful. It came across that they genuinely cared about our careers.”* Jack Verity, BA Geography.

*“I gained an insight as to what work experience I should have and I gained useful contacts.”* Katie Fong, MA Urban Design and Planning.



*The event opened up ideas about different areas of planning which I hadn't thought about. (The alumni) gave tips on how to gain experience and further my career."* Daniel Hibberd, MA Town and Regional Planning

## 9. Recognition

### 9.1 Thank You Event and Awards

In March we hosted our annual Thank You evening to show our appreciation to our 2016-17 volunteers, and our donors.

The evening included the announcement of the Volunteer of the Year Awards winners; Michael Conroy, MA Town and Regional Planning 2016, who won the Pioneering Alumni award and Andrew Williams, BEng Metal Science and Engineering 1989, who won the Alumni Leadership award, for their work during the 2016-17 academic year.

Recent graduate and participant of the City Connections 2017 programme, Nellie Wanyama, gave a touching and inspiring speech about her academic journey and how important alumni support had been in helping her achieve her goals.

### 9.2 Steel Circle

The Steel Circle, launched in 2016, is a special group of outstanding volunteers who have given a significant amount of time in volunteering for the University. We invited 92 alumni who had volunteered during the previous academic year to join. Membership of the Steel Circle is for one academic year and alumni received exclusive benefits, such as priority alumni event invitations. With their consent, the names of Steel Circle members were published on our website and shared with academic departments to publicly thank and celebrate their volunteering.

## 10. 2018/19 Targets and objectives

### Priorities

- Deliver a programme of volunteering opportunities for alumni to support the University, with a particular focus on student recruitment, employability and advisory roles
- Expand current project activity into faculties /departments where there is less engagement
- Identify new opportunities for volunteers to engage with the University

### Targets

- Engage 950 alumni volunteers
- Solicit 10,000 hours of volunteering
- Maintain over 40% of repeat volunteers
- Ensure 10% of volunteers are major gift prospects or donors

### Objectives:

1. Work with the Faculty of Science to:

- Scope alumni placements for year in industry programmes (working with the Careers Service), by February 2019
- Facilitate networking/additional alumni for careers days (APS, BMS, Chemistry), by July 2019
- Develop science PGT case studies, by January 2019
- Scope possibility for a faculty wide networking event for Science, by March 2019

2. Work with student recruitment to facilitate alumni involvement in University open days, by July 2019
3. Co-ordinate working group to develop a central hub and guidance to improve the quality and multi-purposing of alumni profiles to support student recruitment and employability, by January 2019
4. Deliver and evaluate new Northern City Connections event for Arts and Humanities, by March 2019
4. Write 2018/19 volunteering evaluation report, demonstrating impact of alumni support for University strategic areas, by October 2019
5. Review volunteering strategic plan and ensure in line with University/DARE/Faculty and departmental priorities, by January 2019