

Starting a network or club

Fantastic news, you want to start a network or club at Aston.

But how to get started? Here's a few handy hints:

Get a shout out in Aston Connects



Welcome to today's Aston Connects bulletin, keeping you up to date with the latest University news.

Staff news

- **USS Briefings**

The USS pension scheme is currently undertaking a valuation which is likely to result in some significant changes in terms of the design of the scheme including member and University contributions and potential outcomes for members. In March 2021, the USS Trustee said that the cost to maintain current benefits would need to increase substantially, by at least 11% and possibly by up to 25% of salary. Universities UK (UUK) is now consulting with employers seeking views on ways of creating a valuable, affordable, inclusive, and sustainable scheme for their staff for the long term.

We have arranged some briefing sessions to provide information for our USS members about the current landscape including how the pension scheme works, the possible impacts on member benefits and to explain the valuation as a process.

If you are a USS member, or are eligible to be a member, you can join one of the sessions arranged for next week.

The sessions are scheduled for the following times:

Aston Connects is the weekly staff newsletter that goes out every Tuesday or Wednesday (with a short break in the summer). This is a good way to see if other staff members are interested and would like to help you to either set up the network or club or be an active member. You can also put your shout out in your college or department newsletter.

What should I write?

Provide a brief overview of the name and purpose of the network or club e.g. "photography lovers at Aston".

- Describe how it will operate e.g. online via Teams or Yammer with a monthly face to face meeting on campus.
- Be inviting and enthusiastic and make sure people know everyone is welcome.

Remember, not everyone works on a laptop or has the confidence to use technology so a blend is more inclusive.

- Detail who they can contact if interested in joining.
- Once set up, you may want to set some ground rules and inform HR by emailing them (hrsystems@aston.ac.uk) so they can add your network or club to the [staff networks intranet page](#).

Connecting with your network members



When you have all these details finalised, email your shout out to internalcomms@aston.ac.uk

Once you have members you can connect by using digital channels such as Teams or Yammer.

Teams enable you to create groups where you can share documents, plan events and see the availability of your colleagues. You can also schedule meetings using Teams and create break out rooms for group discussion.

[Yammer](#) is a social networking site for Aston employees and is similar to Facebook in how it looks and operates. To find out more about using Yammer, check out this [handy guide](#).

Yammer makes it easy to generate interest and increase engagement. Staff members can post updates, polls, events, photos and announcements; to which their colleagues can like, vote and comment. You can also post gifs, mems and emojis.

Yammer can be accessed through your web browser while it also has an easy-to-use mobile application. The mobile app keeps employees, groups connected no matter where they are.

Face to face meetings are great opportunity to come together and spend time with colleagues. Why not schedule a meeting in Café Tierra or a local café or pub, grab lunch and share ideas and experiences?