



# Notification Procedure for a student or staff death

September 2021

Date	September 2021
Status	Final (V1) 01/01/2018 Updated August 2019 (V1.1) Updated November 2019 (V1.2) Updated July 2020 (V1.3) Updated September 2021 (V2)
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Circulation	Staff intranet and SharePoint site

## **SUMMARY**

**On notification of a staff or student death, regardless of the circumstances of the death, immediately contact:**

### **DURING NORMAL OFFICE HOURS:**

- For a student death contact the **Director of Student Services & Academic Registrar** on 2404 from within the University or phone 0131 455 2404 from outside; or
- For the death of a member of staff contact the **Director of People and Services** on 6277 from within the University or phone 0131 455 6277 from outside.

### **OUTWITH NORMAL OFFICE HOURS:**

Contact:

- **The Central Security Control Room** dial 4444 from within the University or phone 0131 455 6119 from outside. Security will then inform the relevant staff.

**No further action is required or should be taken until facts are established and this procedure is implemented. Staff should NOT share details with colleagues, other students, post/respond to social media, or engage with external organisations.**

## 1. INTRODUCTION

- 1.1 In the event of a student or staff death the following procedures should be observed to ensure that there is the correct level of response and there is no confusion in areas of responsibility or communication.
- 1.2 The University is required to notify the police if the death occurs on campus. This will be undertaken in all cases by either the Director of Student Services & Academic Registrar (for students) or the Director of People and Services (for staff). A sudden death is required to be reported to the Procurator Fiscal's Office and it is important that staff working in the University do not pre-empt the Procurator Fiscal's verdict on the cause of death. **Notifying the next of kin is not a University duty; it is normally actioned by the Police or Hospital staff.**
- 1.3 The actions outlined in the document aim to:
- ensure facts are established before any further action is taken;
  - create a supportive environment for those affected to adjust and recover from the news of the death;
  - ensure that the University acts in a responsible, compassionate and sensitive manner;
  - ensure that no routine administrative procedure is continued which may cause additional distress to the relatives and friends of the deceased or embarrassment to the university; and
  - ensure that follow-up enquiries, internal or external, are channelled to the appropriate staff for action.

## 2. KEY STAFF & RESPONSIBILITIES

- 2.1 On the discovery of the death of a student or member of staff, including an on campus death, the following senior managers should be contacted immediately:
- Director of Student Services & Academic Registrar for a student death; and
  - Director of People and Services for the death of a staff member.
- 2.2 They will liaise with the person who has reported the death/acknowledge receipt of notification in the first instance recognising that there may be occasions when the death is reported by someone who is not listed as the next of kin.
- 2.3 A guidance note to assist with the important initial stage of accurately confirming a student death is available in **Appendix 1**.
- 2.4 On learning of a death on campus the appropriate senior manager will co-ordinate the activities to be undertaken by key staff members detailed below and in Section 4 depending on the circumstances and location of the death, until the incident is closed:
- Principal and Vice Chancellor;
  - Dean of School;
  - Senior responsible officer for Student Wellbeing & Inclusion;
  - Senior responsible officer for Student Administration;
  - Senior responsible officer for Marketing & External Relations;

- Senior responsible officer for Health & Safety (if the death was as a result of an accident on university premises);
- Senior responsible officer for Student Accommodation (if the death occurred within university or rented accommodation); and
- Lead contact at partnership college/institution if appropriate.

2.5 If required, a small team may be formed to help manage the situation and the role of that team will be, as far as practicable, to:

- establish the facts accurately;
- inform people in the university and externally of the event as appropriate;
- ensure the University meets any legal obligations; consult and/or involve appropriate people with the further inputs that the university may wish or need to make;
- make available the appropriate help and support;

### 3. SECOND LINE CALL OUT & RESPONSIBILITIES

3.1 The following staff may also have responsibilities resulting from the death of a student or member of staff depending on the circumstances:

- Director of Information Services (if access to records are required out of normal hours);
- Director of Property & Facilities; and
- Director of Finance & Operations.

### 4. SPECIFIC TASKS TO BE UNDERTAKEN AND RESPONSIBLE PERSON

#### 4.1 Student Death

4.1.1 In the event of a student death the **Director of Student Services & Academic Registrar** will:

- Notify the Principal
- Notify and liaise with the police if required – including the provision of personal details from the student’s record;
- Liaise with the **Head of Wellbeing & Inclusion** to ensure a staff member speaks with the next of kin to ascertain the facts (if appropriate) and offer condolences and support. (See 4.1.2);
- Liaise with the **Dean of School** and other staff as appropriate to assist with informing staff and students connected with the deceased. In addition, consideration will be given to any awards that may be made. (See 4.1.3);
- Liaise with the **Director of Marketing and External Relations** so the Communications Team they can handle any media enquiries as appropriate. (See 4.1.4); and
- Liaise with the **Director of Property and Facilities** to ensure any action required by Property and Facilities staff is provided (see 4.1.5); and

- Liaise with the **Head of Student Administration** to ensure that the student's record is immediately updated so no communications including invoices are sent to the deceased's address. The Head of Student Administration will also alert other responsible staff to further actions required (see 4.1.6).

#### 4.1.2 **The Head of Wellbeing and Inclusion will:**

- Consider the provision of appropriate guidance to students depending on the circumstances and consider whether Chaplains' input is needed;
- Co-ordinate information to appropriate staff and students including the implications for ongoing support in relation to academic matters;
- Arrange and disseminate the availability of counselling for students; and
- In discussion with the Dean of School, arrange agreed actions for University input to a funeral service or any other appropriate actions required.

#### 4.1.3 **The Dean of School will:**

- Follow-up with the next of kin on University input to a funeral service including University representation and/or tribute at the funeral service if the family feels that is appropriate. This may also include discussion with the next of kin on the desirability of a memorial service or commemorative tribute and the desirability of a private Graduation Ceremony.
- Liaise with relevant academic colleagues on informing appropriate staff and students about the death in the university community

#### 4.1.4 **The Director of Marketing and External Relations will where appropriate:**

- Arrange the handling of all media enquiries;
- Brief Information Office, Reception and Security staff; and
- Assist with the dissemination of information to the university at large.

#### 4.1.5 **The Director of Property and Facilities:**

- to provide appropriate security and portering services where required
- Provide support to Property and Facilities employees who may be involved (if required).

#### 4.1.6 **The Head of Student Administration will:**

##### **Applicant**

- Amend SITS to status deceased and address field to a University address to stop any future mailings.

### **Current Student**

- Amend SITS to status deceased and address field to a University address to stop future mailings.
- Inform the SAAS/LEA or other awarding body of the death and provide details as required for grant purposes.
- Liaise with the Dean of School over the arrangements for the conferment of an appropriate posthumous award and any arrangements associated with a graduation ceremony

### **Alumni:**

- Liaise with Development and External Relations to ensure alumni records are updated as appropriate to stop any future mailings.

#### **4.1.7 In addition, the Head of Student Administration will advise the following staff in Professional Services so the actions set out below can be taken forward as appropriate:**

- **Senior Responsible person for Student Accommodation to:**
  - Liaise with student accommodation service with regard to termination of University accommodation arrangements as appropriate
- **Director of for Information Services to:**
  - Arrange for the provision of access to student records;
  - Ensure that the appropriate IT protocols are followed in relation to email accounts etc;
  - Ensure student library records are updated; and
  - Arrange for termination of fees owed to University.
- **Director of Finance & Operations to:**
  - Ensure student finance records database is updated;
  - Ensure student fees are re-credited; and
  - Ensure that no communications from Partner Institution including invoices are sent to the deceased's address.
- **Vice Principal International for International Programmes to:**
  - Liaise with partner institution as appropriate to ensure appropriate action is taken overseas;
  - Liaise with the Student Recruitment Team as appropriate regarding visa and immigration matters; and

- Ensure that the database entry is amended to stop any future mailings.

## 4.2 Staff Death

4.2.1. In the event of the death of a staff member the **Director of People and Service** will:

- Notify the Principal and Chair of Court, if appropriate;
- Notify and liaise with the police if required – including the provision of appropriate HR details;
- In consultation write a letter of condolence to the family of the deceased;
- Liaise with appropriate staff in the Department where the staff member worked and assist with informing staff and students connected with the deceased if required;
- Ensure that the staff member's record is immediately up-dated and that no university communications are sent to the deceased's address;
- Arrange follow-up contact with the next of kin and consult on University input to a funeral service including University representation and/or tribute at the funeral of the deceased, if the family feels that is appropriate, and consult on the desirability of a memorial service or commemorative tribute;
- Consider with other HR staff the provision of appropriate guidance to colleagues depending on the circumstances and consider whether Chaplains' input is needed;
- Liaise with Payroll Supervisor on final salary arrangements and any other benefits due; and
- Make provision for current work/research to be assumed, retained, preserved or secured.

4.2.2 In addition, the Director of People and Services will advise the following senior responsible staff in Professional Services so the actions set out below can be taken forward as appropriate:

- Liaise with the **Director of Marketing and External Relations** so the Communications Team they can arrange the handling of any media enquiries as appropriate, brief Information Office, Reception and Security staff and assist with the dissemination of information to the University at large.
- Liaise with the **Director of for Property and Facilities** to provide appropriate security and portering services where required and provide support to Property and Facilities employees who may be involved

- Liaise with the **Director of Information Services** to arrange for the provision of access to staff records and to ensure the IT Sudden Death Procedure is followed in relation to email accounts and to disable access to the staff member's systems.

## **5. CONCLUSION**

A copy of this contingency plan along with call out lists and contact numbers will be held by those listed in **Appendix 2**

This procedure note will be reviewed on an annual basis by the Governance Officer and revised as necessary to take account of changes in external and internal requirements and to ensure that the call out lists and numbers are up-dated regularly.



## Confirming a Student Death

These notes are intended to help University staff who may have to deal with a reported student death before the relevant procedures are invoked.

### Initial notification

In all circumstances the University will wish to verify that information provided is accurate and factually correct. Staff should immediately contact the **Director of Student Services & Academic Registrar** and should NOT share details with colleagues, other students, post/respond to social media, or engage with external organisations.

Outwith normal hours contact the **Central Security Control Room** dial 4444. Security will then inform the relevant staff.

The Director of Student Services & Academic Registrar will liaise with the person who has reported the death/acknowledge receipt of notification in the first instance recognising that there may be occasions when the death is reported by someone who is not listed as the next of kin.

Once the facts are established the Head of Wellbeing and Inclusion or the Student Safeguarding and Equality Manager will liaise with the family as directed by the School Support Manager & Academic Registrar. Other actions identified in Notification of Death procedure will be initiated as appropriate.

### Death on Campus:

The police will always be involved if there is a death on campus and the police officer handling the case should be able to confirm the identity of the deceased.

### Death away from Campus notified by:

#### *The Police*

If notified by the police in person, simply note the name and number of the police officer. If notified by telephone, take their details and either call them back or ask them to send official confirmation on headed paper confirming the details to ensure that you have made the necessary identity checks.

#### *Embassy Officials*

If notified in person, take a note of the name, job title and identity number of the official. This will normally be sufficient. If there is any reason to be suspicious, check those details with the embassy. If notified by telephone, take the caller's details and either call them back via the embassy switchboard or ask them to send official confirmation on headed paper confirming the details to ensure that you have made the necessary identity checks.

#### *Family (of UK student)*

Confirm the full name of the student, their date of birth, and the parental home address for the record. This will normally be sufficient to ensure that the report is genuine and will ensure that there can be no mistakes in processing the data. If the police are involved or a religious representative is working with the family, take a note of their details and if necessary contact them afterwards to check that you have the details correct. If you have any remaining doubts, request a copy of the death certificate for the record. A photocopy will suffice. At all

times, be sensitive, use your judgement and work on the assumption that the call is likely to be genuine.

*Family or family friends (of international student)*

Request information as above but be aware that it may be more challenging to confirm absolutely the death abroad of an international student. If they have died in the UK confirm the details via the police and/or a hospital if possible. Where appropriate, enlist the help of the relevant embassy, and the university may in any event be required to notify the borders and immigration authority. Staff in Recruitment & Admissions may also be able to offer advice or assistance.

*Partner Institution (Overseas and UK programme student)*

In the majority of cases the Overseas Programme Support Unit will be notified direct via the partner institution. Staff in the International Operations Office may also be able to offer advice or assistance should the initial notification not come via their office. For UK Partner Institutions contact should be made with the designated Lead contact for that Institution.

**Out of Hours:**

Security will likely be the first point of contact if a death occurs on campus out with the normal University opening hours. Communications with key staff should be followed in line with Notification of Death Procedure.

**Governance Services  
September 2021**

## Contact Numbers

Director of Student Services and Academic Registrar	2404
Director of People & Services	6277
Head of Student Wellbeing & Inclusion	2902
Dean, Business School	4310
Dean, School of Engineering & Built Environment	3209
Dean, Applied Science	5302
Dean, Health and Social Care	2226
Dean, School of Arts & Creative Industries	2515
Director of Marketing & External Relations	6258
Director of Property and Facilities	6016
Head of Student Administration	2543
Student Accommodation Manager	3497
Director Information Services	4202
Director of Finance & Operations	6016
Head of International Operations & Admissions	2473
Head of International Partnerships & Student Recruitment	3491
Lead contact at partnership college/institution	As appropriate
Central Security Control	6119