

Guidelines in the event of a student death

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November 2019



UNIVERSITY OF
WINCHESTER

Document Title:	Guidelines in the event of a student death
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Approving Body:	Planning and Resources Committee
Date of Approval:	3 December 2019
Date Effective From:	3 December 2019
Review Date:	2 December 2024
<p>Indicate whether the document is for public access or internal access only</p> <p>Indicate whether the document applies to collaborative provision?</p> <p><i>(Strikethrough text, as appropriate)</i></p>	<p>Public Access</p> <p>Applies to Collaborative Provision</p>
<p>Summary:</p> <p>These guidelines are intended to assist staff to know what to do in the event of a student death.</p>	



Guidelines in the event of a student death

1. Introduction

1.1 The death of a student is at all times a sad and difficult event. Family, staff and other students are helped by having clear guidelines informing them of what will be done in the event of a student death. Guidelines cannot account for every eventuality, but provide a framework that will address most circumstances and establish the principles that apply to every case.

1.2 The document is for all University staff, Student Union Staff and Sabbatical Officers. It is divided into sections that deal with:

- (i) Where a student death, for example on University premises, is discovered by a member of staff or a student
- (ii) Where the University is informed of the death after it occurs
- (iii) Where the University is informed of an alumni death

2. Where a student death, for example on University premises, is discovered by a member of staff or a student

2.1 Any person on discovery of a body should immediately:

- contact the police and by dialling 999
- Not touch or move the body or any part of the scene
- record any others present and notify security of their names so that they can be called as witnesses if required
- contact site security on 02392 827666, who will immediately inform the Security Manager or, in their absence, the Head of Housing and Security

2.2 The Security Manager will immediately:

- Ensure the police and emergency services are informed and in attendance
- Ensure the preservation of evidence at the scene
- Maintain an incident log
- Prepare a private area for the police to interview witnesses if necessary
- Ensure the Senior Management Team (SMT), the Director of Communications and Marketing, the relevant Dean, the Business Continuity Manager (BCM) and the Director

of Student Services (DoSS), the Dean of Spiritual Life and the University Chaplain (UC) are informed.

2.3 The police/emergency services will normally contact the next of kin, and arrange for the removal of the body and a post-mortem. The Head of Security will provide contact details for the police/emergency services if needed, and will check whether and when the next of kin have been informed, in order for the University to take forward its own procedures, as below. Wherever possible, information of the student's death beyond the immediate 'need to know' should be shared only after the next of kin have been informed. However, it may be necessary to share limited information sooner than this to avoid rumour and further distress to the family.

2.4 Under no circumstances should information be provided to any external agency or person (including students, local and national press, or posting on any form of social media). Any such communication will happen either routinely, as described below, once the family are aware; or exceptionally, through the Director of Marketing and Communications.

2.5 If there is a business continuity issue that results from the nature of the death, the BMC will take this forward using the established procedure

2.6 Following on from these immediate actions, the University will then progress as below.

3. Where the University is informed of the death after it occurs

3.1 Unless a person has died in hospital, the police and the Coroner will normally be involved to investigate and establish the cause of death. Until the Coroner's court concludes, the cause is not known and should not be the subject of speculation.

3.2 As soon as the death has been reported to the University, the person receiving the report must inform the following people:

(i) The Senior Management Team, who will decide whether the Business Continuity Manager needs to be informed

(ii) The Director of Student Services, or the Head of Wellbeing in their absence, who will immediately contact:

- The Dean of Spiritual Life and the University Chaplain, who will normally be the first point of contact for liaison with the family, and may be called on to support students and staff.
- The Director of Communications and Marketing, who will normally be responsible for all external communications relating to the student's death
- Any others with responsibility towards the student or staff affected, with appropriate guidance on actions they should take.

A list of those who should be informed, along with details of their consequent responsibilities, is given in Appendix 1.

3.3 There is an additional process in terms of closing the student's IT account; this is included as Appendix 2.

3.4 If it is appropriate to tell students of a fellow student's death as a cohort, the DoSS and DoCh will assist the Faculty in doing this, if desired.

4. Where the University is informed of an alumni death

Alumni deaths are dealt with through the Alumni Office, together with the Director of Student Services. The Director will make a judgement as to who needs informing, using the list in Appendix 2 as a guideline; the Alumni office will be responsible for managing communications with the family and any further contact with the University.

5. Where the University is informed of a possible death

On occasion the University may receive an unconfirmed report of a death, for example of a current student, which if true would require immediate attention. Should this be the case, the Senior Management Team will lead on making any necessary enquiries and should be approached, where possible, through the First Deputy Vice-Chancellor.

5. Posthumous Awards

The University can at its discretion make posthumous awards to students. Posthumous awards are recommended by the programme to the appropriate Departmental and Faculty Examination Board and formally approved by Senate. They can be presented to the family at the appropriate graduation ceremony, should the family members wish to attend, in which case the programme will take responsibility for making the family welcome on the day, before and after the ceremony. If the family prefer not to attend, the award will be sent through the post by Registry.

Appendix 1

This lists those who should be contacted by the Director of Student Services, and the responsibilities they bear from this contact.

Contacts made	Actions required
The Chancellor and the Vice-Chancellor	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • In consultation with the Director of Student Services, to write a letter of condolence to the family/partner • To arrange an appropriate University tribute at the funeral or cremation of the deceased (taking advice from those in contact with the family and/or Dean of Spiritual Life, and with particular attention to cultural sensitivities)
Both Deputy Vice-Chancellors and the Assistant Vice-Chancellor	For information, and so that they may act in the place of the Vice Chancellor if required
The Chair of the Board of Governors	For information
The Director of Finance	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • To ensure that no financial communications, including invoices, are sent to the deceased's address • To deal sensitively with any monies owing • To ensure all charges are adjusted to the date of the student's death, making any refunds to the payer of the original transaction. In cases where this is the student, the refund will be issued to the Executor of the Will.
The Dean of Spiritual Life and the University Chaplain	<p>To provide support for students, staff and family members/partner of the deceased:</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> • to contact the mortuary (if necessary); to liaise with the funeral directors and other clergy who are responsible for funeral arrangements • to consult with the family, the Director of Student Services and Dean of Faculty on possible University inputs to a funeral service • to liaise with the family, friends, the Director of Student Services and Dean of Faculty on a suitable memorial and/or memorial service • to disseminate information to staff and students on memorial service/event arrangements
The Director of Communications and External Relations	<p>To handle all media enquiries and, where practicable and relevant, to assist with shielding the relatives from unwanted media coverage.</p> <p>To lead on internal communications required with staff and students</p> <p>To monitor social media and other channels for any activity that may require a response</p>

The Academic Registrar	To ensure that the student's record is immediately up-dated and that no institutional communications are sent to the deceased's address
The Director of Communications and External Relations	For information and, should the student be in the pre-enrolment stage, to adjust any further records and communications accordingly
The Director of Estates and Facilities Services and the Head of Housing and Security	<p>To consider the situation and whether the following need to be informed:</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> • the Student Housing Services Manager (on campus and/or off campus) • the Duty Wardens • the Residential Assistants and other students in Halls <p>To arrange support for resident staff and students if the deceased was a Hall resident, in consultation with the Housing Services Manager.</p> <p>To liaise with the landlord in order to attempt to protect the deceased's next of kin on issues relating to unpaid rent or other bills and to attempt to protect other students with shared responsibilities relating to the accommodation, and generally to act as an intermediary and adviser on housing-related issues.</p> <p>To ensure that the student's housing record is immediately up-date and that no institutional communications are sent to the deceased's address.</p>
The Dean of Faculty and Faculty Manager/Director of Operations	<p>To collaborate in the following areas:</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> • to assist the HoD/PL with informing staff and students connected with the deceased • to liaise with the Director of Student Services on support for affected students • to arrange and assist with appropriate representation by staff and students at a funeral and/or memorial service, in consultation with the Dean of Spiritual Life • to ensure that the relevant course team, tutors, and department admin/technical staff have been informed as necessary • inform fellow students in conjunction with the Director of Student Services • in consultation with the Director of Student Services and the Dean of Spiritual Life, liaise as required with the family/partner of the student • arrange for professional bodies and/or placement providers to be informed, if appropriate • to confirm the availability of follow-up support for staff with HR
The Head of Department and Programme Leader	<p>To collaborate with the Programme Team:</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> • to ensure that students on course are informed in a timely and sensitive manner, and that questions are answered openly. Staff

	<p>from Student Services and Chaplaincy can be present to help with this.</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> • to ensure availability (if appropriate) of the Programme Team to any student who wishes to talk • to inform students of arrangements/availability for support • to minimise interruption to the programme whilst remaining sensitive to possible distress of some students <p>To inform the Faculty Wellbeing and Employability/Personal Tutor, who shall ensure his/her availability to students in the deceased's tutor group, and contribute to the Department's discussion on funeral arrangements, memorials, and contact with the family/partner.</p>
Health, Safety and Business Continuity Manager	<p>To take a view on whether there is a Business Continuity impact of the death and, if so, take the lead on the appropriate action.</p> <p>To implement as appropriate immediate closures or modifications to premises in the light of any Health and Safety concerns.</p> <p>To represent the institution at any inquest and to obtain a copy of the transcript of proceedings, obtained from Coroner's Clerk, reporting back to SMT and the DoSS.</p> <p>In consultation with the DOSS/Head of Operations (Student Services) , to take any action required by law as the result of a possible death by reason of infectious disease and to collaborate as appropriate with the local Health Authority.</p>
The Planning Officers	<p>For information, and to ensure that any relevant systems are updated and no communications are sent to the deceased's address. Additionally to inform the institutional insurance company as appropriate.</p>
The Head Receptionist	<p>To ensure that all external enquiries from the Media are channelled to the Head of Communications or other named person as agreed, and to field other enquiries to the appropriate channels. If unclear, they should be referred to the DoSS.</p>
The Director of Library & IT Services and the User Services Manager	<p>To ensure that IT registrations in the name of the student are cancelled and no communications are sent to the deceased's address, implementing the IT specific procedure in relation to the closure of the student's university email account (see Appendix 2).</p>
The Director of Library & IT Services and the Deputy Librarian	<p>To ensure that the Library registration in the name of the student is cancelled and no communications are sent to the deceased's address.</p>

Careers Service Manager	To ensure that no institution communications, including destination survey information, is sent to the deceased's address.
The Director of Human Resources	To ensure that appropriate arrangements are made for staff to seek help or support, internally or externally, if required.
The President of the Student Union and the Student Union General Manager	To ensure SU registrations and memberships are cancelled. To help arrange travel for students to the funeral in liaison with the Director of Student Services and Chaplain. To ensure others in the SU Sabbatical team and/or relevant societies are informed if required.
Student Services staff	To ensure that no communication is sent to the deceased's address. To prepare for the additional support needs that may be presented by the student body, and to make these widely known as appropriate. To assist students with concomitant financial hardship that may have resulted from shared financial responsibilities relating to accommodation.
The Alumni Office	To ensure that no communication is sent to the deceased's address, now or in the future. If the deceased was an alumni of the University, to provide the Vice-Chancellor with a draft letter of condolence to the family, and to consider whether anyone else should be informed in terms of alumni relations.
The International Student Adviser (if applicable)	To liaise with Embassy, High Commission, Consulate as necessary. To advise the DoSS on the next of kin and consider any cultural implications in contacting them. To establish next of kin's wishes regarding personal effects.

Appendix 2

Death of a student or member of staff – IT Services actions

In the event of a staff or student death, IT Services - acting on instruction from the Director of Library & IT Services, Director of SS or SMT - need to ensure that:

- No emails or notifications are sent out from the IT account/email
- Data is preserved in case a Coroner's inquiry or other legal or internal investigation requires specific information
- The account and all associated data is deleted on notification by Director or SMT

As there are some differences between a staff and student account, two processes are required:

Staff account

- a. Systems team are notified directly by the Director of Library & IT Services (or designate), Director of SS or SMT.
- b. Change the user password
- c. Log into the account and remove all existing rules in Outlook
- d. Delete any messages in the Outbox folder in Outlook (messages waiting to be sent)
- e. Logon to Outlook Web App and remove any rules from there
- f. Incoming messages to be sent an automated rejection message to the sender with the text "This mailbox is now closed".
- g. Hide the user account in Exchange global address book so that nobody can find it
- h. Disable Outlook Web App and ActiveSync (used by mobile devices)
- i. Disable the user account in Active Directory to prevent any other logons, with note added to WAV to contact Systems Team prior to unlocking or altering the account
- j. Optional step: create rules on spam filter to prevent any messages to/from the user going to/from campus without a rejection message.

At an appropriate time after the above has been completed, the Director of Library & IT Services, Director of SS or SMT to inform IT Services that the account can be deleted in its entirety (in the same way we do for staff leavers).

Student account

- a. Applications team disable the IT account to avoid access by friends or relatives
- b. Applications team remove all of the email addresses from the account to stop all email activity. This will prompt an "undeliverable" response back to the sender. This step will also stop Canvas from generating unwanted messages.

At an appropriate time after the above has been completed, the Director of Library & IT Services, Director of SS or SMT to inform IT Services that the account can be deleted in its entirety. This action will delete not only the IT account but also the O365 email account.

Appendix 3

Deaths during a Pandemic

During a pandemic it is highly likely that restrictions will be placed on mass gatherings, other forms of close social contact and travel. This has implications for the provision of education within a traditional university. Consideration will need to be given to:

- Management of deaths on University premises
- Communication of deaths to the University community
- Possible death of a member of Senior Management
- Supporting staff and students through a large number of deaths
- Recovery and moving beyond the initial impact

The University will follow the usual guidelines in the event of a student death and Business Continuity procedures.

COVID-19

Management of deaths on University premises

The Government has issued specific guidance for those involved in managing COVID-19 deaths. This can be found on the [GOV.UK Coronavirus webpages](#). Staff managing a death suspected to be as a result of COVID-19 should refer to this guidance; specifically [the Guidance for first responder and others in close contact with symptomatic people with potential COVID-19](#)

Key points for first responders are:

1. Ask others present to stay at least 2 metres away, stay in their rooms
2. Those in the room or vicinity should wear PPE - disposable gloves, apron and fluid repellent face shield. Hands should be thoroughly washed before putting on PPE and after taking it off.
3. The room should be sealed and screens used if necessary
4. If considering resuscitation, above PPE must be worn and no rescue breaths given
5. Collate the details of anyone who has been in direct contact with the deceased
6. Cleaning of the area should follow the [advice on non-healthcare settings](#). A spills kit should be used for blood or body fluid spills.

Communication of deaths to the University community

The Director of CER and Head of Communications will ensure that a robust, agile communications plan is in place. At its heart this will ensure that the University community is notified of student (and staff) deaths in a sensitive manner, keeping true to the University's value of *individuals matter*.

