

Purpose of Guidance

Student Death Protocol: This procedure should be followed to ensure the University responds sensitively and professionally, and appropriately to the death of a student both on and off campus.

Scope

All Students, Staff in student-facing roles, including but not limited to Student Support Teams, Student Advisers, Wellbeing Advisers, Supervisors, , Heads of Student Services, Directors of Professional Services, Heads of Schools/Deaneries, Residence Life, SWAY, Security and Student Experience Services staff.

Contact Officer	Rebecca Shade	Senior Policy & Project Adviser- Students	Rebecca.Shade@ed.ac.uk
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Document control

Dates	Approved: April 2023	Starts: April 2023	Equality impact assessment: April 2023	Amendments:	Next Review: 2025/26
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Approving authority	University Executive
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Consultation undertaken	Deputy Secretary, Students, and representatives of the following departments: Student Wellbeing Service, Chaplaincy, Student Counselling. Security, Residence Life, Academic Registry, Legal Services.
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Section responsible for guidance maintenance & review	Student Experience Services
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Related policies, procedures, guidelines & regulations	N/A
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UK Quality Code	N/A
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Guidance superseded by this guidance	Replaced on website
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Student Death Protocol

1. Introduction

1.1 When the tragic event of a student death occurs, it is essential that formal procedures are in place which observe the following principles:

- an appropriate level of response from the University, with help as appropriate from relevant external agencies;
- a sensitive and compassionate approach which recognises the level of distress for students and staff involved, as well as family and contacts;
- clear lines of responsibility to support coherent and valuable contributions in response to the death made by University staff and students; and
- an appropriate approach to care for all students and staff impacted by the death.

1.2 This procedure provides a high level overview of the responsibilities and actions required by a range of staff to respond to a student death. Protocols local to internal departments may be available, please contact the Director of Service.

1.3 This procedure applies to all current student deaths reported to the University from all sources, this includes but is not limited to internal services such as Residence Life, Security, Schools and Deaneries and external organisations such as the Police, University Health Centre, hospitals or directly from a student's family.

1.4 In all cases, the [Deputy Secretary Students](#), [Director of Student Wellbeing](#) and [University Chaplain](#) should be notified immediately by email.

1.5 In the case of the death of an alumnus, the Deputy Secretary, Students and Executive Director of Development and Alumni should be notified immediately.

1.6 In the case of the death of an applicant, the 'Applicant Death Protocol' should be followed. Please email the SRA Admissions team sra.adteam@ed.ac.uk

2. Procedure principles

2.1 The aims of the procedure are in all cases to ensure:

- that appropriate people in the University, and external to the University, are informed of the event of a death of a student and are involved in making an appropriate response;
- those charged with the management and response to a death act in a responsible, reasonable, compassionate and sensitive manner;
- to create time, space and appropriate support for those affected to begin to adjust to and recover from the news of the event and;
- to ensure that confidence in the University's response is maintained and that all necessary actions are completed.

3. Out of hours information and emergency information

3.1 In an emergency, staff should call the Emergency Services on 999. Following this, Security should be contacted. See below.

3.2

For out of hours assistance, contact University Security on 0131 650 2257, internal phone 2222 or security@ed.ac.uk

4. Roles and responsibilities

4.1 Note that these responsibilities should be actioned immediately or as soon as practically possible following the death. Those activities considered less urgent are noted as secondary.

Role	Responsibility
Deputy Secretary, Students	Convene a case coordination meeting with relevant staff at the earliest opportunity
	Inform University Principal, Secretary, Director of Student Wellbeing, Head of Chaplaincy, Head of Security and Director of CAM
	Make contact with individuals such as Head of College and School and doctoral supervisor
	In the unlikely event that the Police/NHS do not undertake to inform the relevant next of kin or other Trusted Contact, responsibility falls to the Deputy Secretary, Students or nominee. If out of hours and Security are informed first, they should contact Deputy Secretary Students through Critical Student Welfare Procedure
	Inform Academic Registrar to take actions outlined below
	Monitors actions completed from the case coordination meeting
	<i>Secondary</i>
	Commissions a Student Case Review, if appropriate.
	Work with the University Secretary and Legal Services on any legal requirements
Director of Student Wellbeing	Primary liaison with NHS
	Informs University Health Centre in case of student referrals or registration of the deceased
	Operational lead to ensure that staff in Student Counselling, Disability & Learning Support Service and Student Wellbeing Service are notified
	Work with all relevant staff to ensure support is offered to the University communities affected by the student's death
	Where death occurs outside the UK, undertake protocol for trusted contact approach in liaison with SWAY/Edinburgh Global on FCO guidance
	<i>Secondary</i>
	Lead debriefing session with staff supporting this activity, as required
Head of Security	Primary liaison with Police and Procurator Fiscal

University Chaplain	Primary family liaison contact (after family notified by Police/NHS)
	Work with School/Deanery to communicate the death & offer support to students & staff
	Work with School/Deanery on provision of a book of remembrance, or alternative
	Contact flatmates and/or friends of the student who are known to staff/family for support
	<i>Secondary:</i>
	Consider feasibility & benefits of a gathering or memorial event and arrange appropriately
	Work with the Director of Student Wellbeing on a staff debriefing session if needed
	University contact with local undertaker
Principal	<i>Secondary:</i> Writes to the family with advice provided by Chaplain and School
Head of School/Deanery	Work with Chaplain on support for staff and students
	Consider cohort's academic requirements and needs of those directly affected
	<i>Secondary:</i> With permission from student's Trusted Contact or other, review the credits awarded & seek to award the achievements posthumously
Academic Registrar	Arrange for the records team to update the student record
	Ensure that all internal administrative enquiries are deferred to ensure that no University communications including invoices, are sent to the deceased's address
	Ensure that library card, and registrations are cancelled and IT account archived
	If student a Tier 4 visa holder, notify the Home Office
	If student in receipt of a student loan, notify the Student Loans Company or Student Awards Agency for Scotland (SAAS)
	<i>Secondary:</i> If requested by the College, make arrangements for posthumous award
Director and Heads of Residence Life	In the case of a student death in University accommodation (including PBSAs), inform Deputy Secretary Students, Director of Student Wellbeing and Head of Security
	Lead on support for staff affected and flatmates, working with Chaplaincy
	<i>Secondary:</i>
	Organise for family accommodation if visit to institution occurs. Decide on any charges to be waived and other support such as meals, laundry.
	Contact local ACE financial department on any debts occurred
	Appoint family liaison officer, establish contact with Trusted Contact, via Chaplaincy as Family Liaison, on collection or

	sending of deceased student's belongings & liaison with undertaker
Representatives of Communications & Marketing	Handle all media enquiries, and liaising with Deputy Secretary, Students on official statements
	Jointly with Deputy Secretary, Students advise on wording, templates for internal communications
	If necessary, advise family/friends about media
	Liaise with Protocol and Chaplaincy on flags and other protocol activity
	<i>Secondary: Review and cease use of the deceased in any marketing materials</i>

4.2 In cases where the post-holder is on annual leave or uncontactable, they should nominate a deputy and clearly communicate this via email out of office.