

# **Student Death Procedure**

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## Version Control History

<b>Version Number</b>	<b>Date of Change</b>	<b>Summary of Revisions Made</b>
3	January 2015	Published 1-Apr-16 - delayed due to lack of feedback from CMT. HOSS advised Feb 16 when external audit taking place that this should have been published. Logged as version 3, because previous versions never brought forward for publication.
3.1	July 2016	Footer updated to reflect new template model Role Title added: Sector Manager/SM
3.2	December 2018	Change of role to Quality Manager. Updated footer.
3.3	March 2023	Rebranded

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# Student Death Procedure

## 1 Purpose

In the tragic event of the death of a student it is vital that there are clear and coherent procedures in place.

1.1 This procedure specifies the action to be taken if a current student dies during an academic session. The procedure aims to facilitate a response that is both compassionate and efficient and has been set down with the aims of:

- Providing a clear process for staff to follow when dealing with such a situation;
- Ensuring an appropriate, and consistent college response;
- Offering appropriate and timely support for other students and staff affected.

## 2 Scope

2.1 The procedure applies in relation to all college students except attending school pupils. (See 5.1.10)

2.2 This procedure also accommodates the essential elements and protocol stated within the UHI Student Death Procedure.

## 3 Definitions

3.1 None.

## 4 Responsibilities

4.1 The Head of Student Experience is responsible for reviewing and updating this procedure.

4.2 The Head of Student Experience is responsible for coordinating the actions and protocol detailed in this procedure.

4.3 The relevant Sector Development Director holds overall responsibility for ensuring the procedure is carried out, as detailed in section 5.

4.4 The Sector Development Director: Applied Life Studies is responsible for coordinating action, in relation to school pupils.

4.5 Quality approval check of the policy is the responsibility of the Head of Human Resources and Organisational Development who will arrange for the policy to be posted on the College's website.

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## 5 Procedure

### Notification:

#### (Initial Response)

- 5.1 Notification of a death can happen in a number of ways. It is most common for the deceased's family to contact a member of staff, or news to reach students and staff via social media. It is important that death-related information is verified before any further action is taken. This is to ensure that the UHI Perth Student Death Procedure is enacted so any member of the College community who is made aware of a death should contact the Head of Student Experience (as the nominated named member of staff or a member of SMT).

In the event of a body being found, telephone 999 for the police and as before notify the College by contacting the Head of Student Experience or a member of the SMT.

If the event happens out of normal college working hours, then the Duty Manager will be informed (if it's between 5-9 pm) and they will take appropriate action as directed above. They can notify the Head of Student Experience or a member of SMT or report it at the start of the next working day.

**A flow chart highlighting the College protocol in the event of Student Death is attached at the end of the Procedure.**

#### (What happens next?)

**Any member of staff can be notified that a student has died, and the following actions should be undertaken immediately.**

- 5.1.1 Regarding the student's contact details, obtain the name, address and DOB and course of study if possible.
- 5.1.2 Notify the Head of Student Experience (as the named nominated member of staff) or a member of SMT immediately who will coordinate and arrange for all relevant staff to be notified of the death and pass on the contact information. The Principal will write to the student's family to formally pass on the College's condolences.

The Student Services Manager or SMT member will notify the appropriate Sector Development Director, and the appropriate Sector Manager (SM)/Subject Leader (SL)/Personal Academic Tutor (PAT) of the death of the student..

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- 5.1.3 It will be the responsibility of the Head of Student Experience, (or SMT member) liaising with Sector Development Director to coordinate all further action. The SDD may identify a relevant member of their academic staff to do this if appropriate.
- 5.1.4 Student Services Manager or (SMT member) to notify the following departments and staff of the student's death; the Executive/Principal's Office, Depute Principal, Vice Principal External Engagement, SDD, Student Services, Marketing, Finance, Student Records Manager, Quality Manager.  
(see points 5.1.6 – to 5.1.18).
- 5.1.5 Check to see if the deceased has any siblings or family at UHI Perth. This is a priority and notifying them of the death should be done in person and in private. Every effort should be made to ensure this is done before departments/staff are notified.
- 5.1.6 If the Student was an international or overseas student see Appendix 2.
- 5.1.7 If the Student was living in residences then see Appendix 3.
- 5.1.8 If the death was through an accident or illness see Appendix 4.

**The Sector Development Director must:**

- 5.1.9 Liaise with teaching staff to ensure that the student's classmates are informed quickly and appropriately. (See Appendix 1 for guidelines on this).

Where possible, the student's classmates, and other students affected should be given the opportunity to go home for the rest of the day. Alternatively, students affected may wish to spend time together away from the teaching situation but within the College as appropriate. However, any such arrangements should be agreed with the Sector Development Director before being offered to students. Advice and support on the most appropriate way forward can be obtained from the Student Services department through the Counselling and Student Support Team. **Please see Appendix 1 for further guidelines on "Breaking the News of the Death of a Student to Other Students".**

- 5.1.10 Liaise directly with the Sector Development Director – Applied Life Studies if the student was a school pupil, as schools will have their own procedure to follow in these circumstances.

- 5.1.11 Inform the School Office to ensure that no inappropriate correspondence is sent out to the student's address.
- 5.1.12 Inform the Head of Student Experience (or SMT member) of the arrangements and who has been notified on an ongoing basis.
- 5.1.13 Liaise with the Student Records Manager to make arrangements for correspondence relating to the student's qualifications to be sent appropriately.

The Student Records Team have in place specific procedures in relation to a situation of this kind but generally certificates will be re-directed from awarding bodies in the first instance and sent to the College. The Head of Student Experience will then re-send to the student's next of kin with their standard covering letter at an appropriate time.

- 5.1.14 Liaise with the Vice Principal External Engagement who will brief Marketing staff so that any press enquiries and related communication issues can be dealt with appropriately and timeously. **Staff must not** give out information to any external enquirer, or communicate any information related to the situation through social media sites or other mediums.
- 5.1.15 Inform the Vice Principal External Engagement in order for arrangements to be made for any correspondence from Information Services and Learning Resource Centre to be sent appropriately.
- 5.1.16 Liaise with the Head of Student Experience, and specifically the Counselling and Student Support Team to organise support for any student who wishes it.

The Student Services Team will have specific arrangements in place to allow counselling and emotional support to be offered immediately if required and will work with students on an on-going basis where necessary.

- 5.1.17 Liaise with the Senior HR Adviser to organise counselling or Spiritual Care support for any staff member who requests it.

## 6 **Linked Policies/Related Documents**

- 6.1 Student Mental Health, Well-being and Counselling Policy.
- 6.2 UHI Student Death Procedure

## 7 **Relevant Legislation**

None.

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## Appendix 1: Breaking the News of the Death of a Student to Other Students

### Who should tell them?

It is best that this is done by an appropriate member of teaching staff (or Sector Development Director) who is known to the class or student group. However, where possible the Student Counsellor and Student Support Team Leader should also be present.

### What should I say?

It is important that students are given the facts as honestly as possible.

Tell them what you know, and also be honest about what you don't know.

Use the correct words such as 'death' and 'dead' rather than euphemisms such as 'lost' or 'no longer with us'.

Recognise the full tragedy. Do not try to comfort with comments such as 'at least it is not as bad as...!'

Encourage students to express their emotions and do not be afraid to share your own feelings of sadness.

It is normal for people to be in shock and to feel overwhelmed.

Following a sudden and tragic death, people experience a whole mixture of emotions, including disbelief. The brain often reacts to bad news by trying to push it away.

Don't assume that a lack of reaction means that they do not care. Initially the full reality may not sink in. Also some people feel that they have to be seen to be coping.

### Is there anything else I should do?

A room that is private, and as comfortable as possible should be arranged and made available to any students who wish to be together to process the news.

### What about Counselling, Emotional or Spiritual support?

Whilst it is common to hear of the need for bereavement counselling at such a time, counselling is not appropriate in the early stages of sudden loss. What people require is simply to be able to express their feelings of eg horror and confusion. Talking about the event, the person who has died and the way that they heard the bad news allows them to slowly begin to take in what has happened. This listening role can be filled by anyone who has the patience to allow the bereaved person time and space to talk, and who will not interrupt, or be shocked by some of the frequently strange responses they may hear.

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Grieving really starts when the horror of the event has merged into reality that the person has died and is not coming back. Grief is a normal part of life for everyone, even after a sudden or violent death, most people will come through their grief with the support of family and friends.

However, when the grieving process gets stuck – when people find that after a few months they are still having severe symptoms of grief on a daily basis, then they may require some extra support.

If you feel a student is at such a point, they should be referred to Student Services where they will then be supported in being further referred to a specialist, external agency to get help that will enable them to move forward again.

### **What Other Help is Available?**

The Student Services Department also provides a wide selection of support and information resources about bereavement that are available for both staff and students. Information is available on the following topics:

- Understanding Your Grief.
- When Someone Dies.
- Talking About Bereavement.
- Talking to Bereaved People – a Rough Guide.
- A Teenage Guide to Coping with Bereavement.
- After Someone Dies.
- Bereaved by Suicide.
- My Father Died.
- My Mother Died.
- Anniversaries and Reminders.
- Contact details for local support and counselling agencies.

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## Useful Contacts

Head of Student Experience	77899
Student Records Team	77357
Principal's/Executive Office	77664
Curriculum Administration Team: Team Leader	77704
Student Services	77379
Student Services Manager	77374
Student Funding Adviser	77375
Senior HR Adviser	77211
Depute Principal	77411
Marketing Team Leader	77209
Head of Finance	77221
Vice Principal External Engagement	77554
Schools Link Coordinator – HOC Skills for Life, Learning and Employment	77620

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## Appendix 2

In the event of a death of an International Student: the Head of Student Experience will work with the Vice Principal External Engagement, other appropriate SMT member to coordinate all appropriate responses and arrangements.

- The Vice Principal External Engagement is responsible for the International Centre and will act as a bridge between Perth College UHI and all known groups and organisations likely to be affected by the student's death.
- The named contact will liaise with:
  - 1 Members of the deceased's family.
  - 2 Relevant embassy/high commission.
  - 3 The deceased's student's sponsor or employer.
  - 4 The relevant British Council Office.
  - 5 The relevant HOC.
- Inform the host institution; liaise with UKBA and relevant individual(s) at the host institution.
- Liaise with Counselling and Student Wellbeing Support Team regarding appropriate support to be provided. This would include supporting any Spiritual Care needs or protocol to be followed depending on religious or cultural background.
- Contact the student's family to ensure they are aware of insurance cover available for travelling and repatriation.
- Inform and liaise with the appropriate foreign or commonwealth office or relevant embassy in the UK if the student is an EU national.

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## Appendix 3

If the deceased student was living in UHI Perth student residences:

The Vice Principal External Engagement (or College Duty Manager (if outwith normal 9-5pm College working hours) will work with Head of Student Experience (or identified person from SMT) to:

- Notify others of the death, as directed in section 5 and work with the relevant HOC regarding notification to relevant departments/staff internal and external.
- Liaise directly with family about access to room/flat for personal effects and belongings.
- Help gather and collate personal effects (if appropriate and required).
- Notify immediate flatmates (together if possible) regarding the circumstances.
- Liaise with the Student Resident Warden regarding the provision of generic support offered to any student in residences affected.
- Notify the Student Resident Warden of any arrangements that are being made with regards to family, access, funeral arrangements or related etc.
- Liaise with Student Services regarding arranging support for the other students directly affected.
- See Appendix 4 if the student's death was due to an accident, an illness that may be contagious, or if the cause of death is unknown or seems unnatural or suspicious (eg – suicide).

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## Appendix 4

The Head of Student Experience will work with relevant staff such as Vice Principal External Engagement or identified SMT member, Head of Estates or Health and Safety Officer to coordinate all appropriate responses and arrangements if:

If the death of a student is through an accident, contagious disease or if the death is unknown or suspicious:

- No one should interfere with the body or the scene.
- Inform (phone) police, ambulance, include caretakers, and College Duty Manager if relevant.
- Notify Head of Estates and the Health and Safety Officer of situation.
- Depending on time of day – the Duty Manager may have to follow the protocol highlighted in section 5 regarding notification and informing Head of Student Experience and/or SMT and liaise with external agencies as appropriate.
- Liaise with local Health Authorities and Health and Safety Officer regarding the protection of the wider student population and for support of classmates and friends.
- If an enquiry is required the police will make necessary arrangements.
- If the death is caused by an accident on campus the Health and Safety Officer should notify the Health and Safety Executive and work with the relevant HOC to initiate an internal enquiry.

### Finally:

The college may consider the following on a case-by-case basis:

- 1 Letters of condolence to be coordinated on behalf of the college? Do we want a single (relevant) contact name for each case?
- 2 Coordinating Funeral arrangements – regarding who from college should attend – numbers, details (appropriateness).
- 3 Any appropriate memorial considerations and arrangements eg – plaques, gardens, grounds.
- 4 How do the students wish to get involved? Do we help them mark the life of the deceased in a separate event etc or allow let them to do something on their own?

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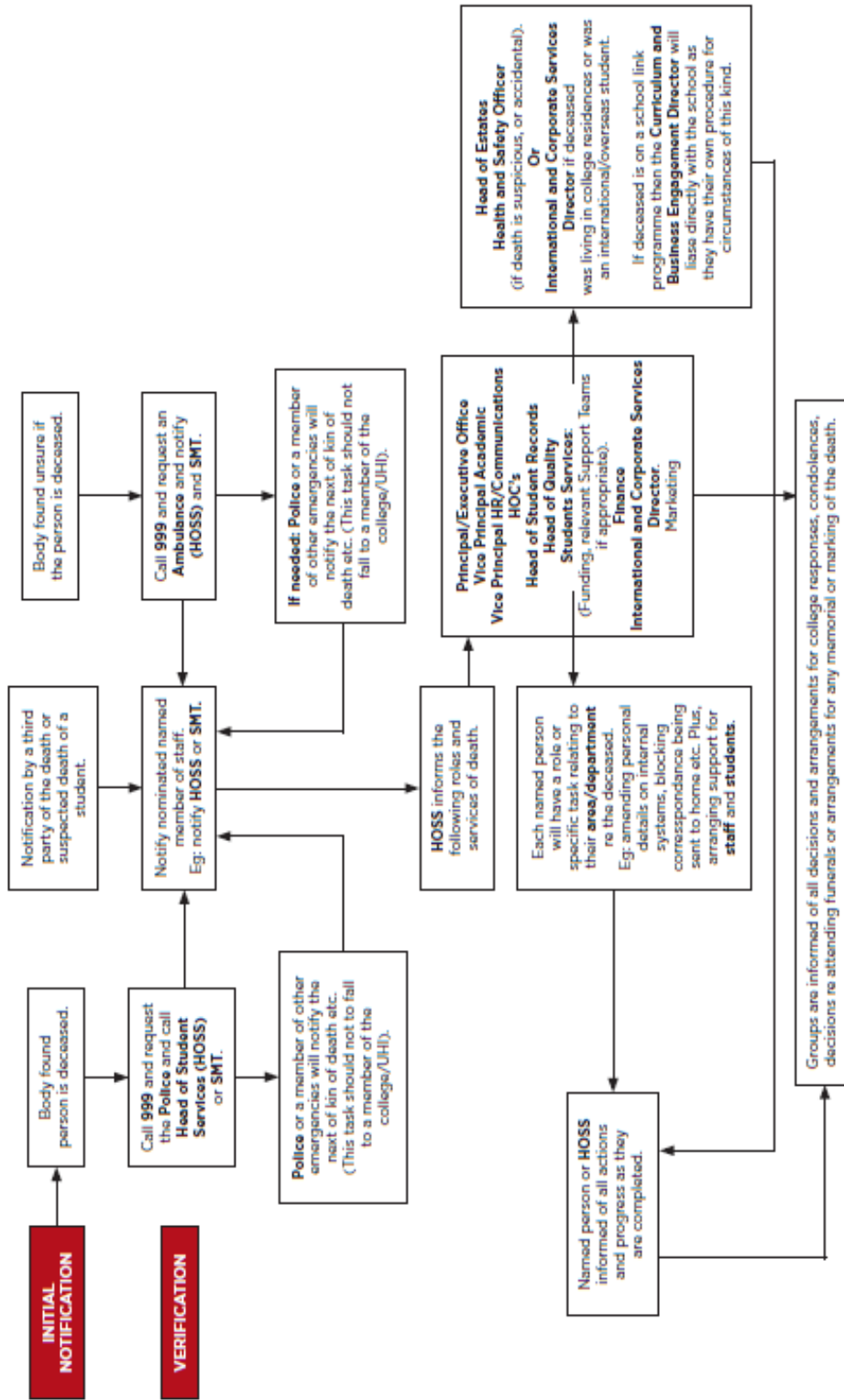
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# Protocol in the Event of the Death of One of Our Students on Our Campuses.



**Remember: Any member of College staff may receive notification of a student death.**



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