

## DEATH OF A CURRENT STAFF MEMBER

Policy Category:	Human Resources
Subject:	Death of a current staff member
Approving Authority:	SMT
Responsible Officer:	Director, Human Resources
Responsible Office:	Human Resources
Related Procedures:	<a href="#">Procedures in the event of the death of a current staff member</a>
Related Policies:	<a href="#">Special Paid Leave including Compassionate Leave</a>
Other guidance:	<a href="#">Employee Assistance Programme</a> <a href="#">Occupational Health</a> <a href="#">ACAS Guide to Bereavement in the Workplace</a>
Effective Date:	5 December 2019
Supersedes:	N/A
Next Review:	31 July 2023

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### 1. Purpose & Scope

- 1.1 The death of an employee may be a traumatic experience for managers and colleagues of the deceased. This policy and its related procedures provide guidance to ensure that processes followed are as effective and sensitive as possible to both the family of the deceased and colleagues.
- 1.2 This policy applies in the case of the death of a current member of staff.
- 1.3 The death of retired staff should be reported to the Principal's Office in the first instance.
- 1.4 There is a separate policy concerning the [death of a student](#).

### 2. Definitions

- 2.1 Staff are deemed to be anyone working for the university, including contractors, agency staff, etc.

### 3. Responsibilities and authority

- 3.1 The Director of HR has primary responsibility for the overall management of the university's response in the event of the death of a staff member, whether that death occurs on or off campus.
- 3.2 The Director of HR will work in close consultation with the Executive Dean/Director of the deceased's workplace, the Principal's Office, Corporate Communications, and as warranted Health & Safety Services and Security Services.
- 3.3 In the event of a situation in which there are multiple deaths on campus, a silver team will be stood up by the Senior Vice-President (Operations)

#### **4. Policy**

- 4.1 It is recognised that the circumstances of an employee's death in service will be unique and that approaches will need to be individually tailored, though within the parameters set out in this policy and its associated [procedures](#).

##### **Notifications and communications**

- 4.2 Notification of the death of a staff member off campus may be received through any number of channels. Any individual receiving such information should communicate it first to the Director of Human Resources.
- 4.3 In the event of a death of a staff member on campus, the university will be guided by police and emergency services with respect to notification of colleagues of the deceased. In no case will colleagues within the university be informed of the death or its circumstances before next-of-kin have been notified.
- 4.4 Ideally, colleagues should be informed within 24 hours of the university being notified of the employee's death, with those in the deceased's immediate workplace being informed first. The Director of HR in consultation with the relevant Executive Dean/Director will determine how best to communicate the news and the level of detail to be provided. Assistance may be provided by the College Chaplaincy.
- 4.5 It is of vital importance that only known facts are communicated in the first instance. Care should be taken to minimise distribution of initial information to only those that need to be aware.
- 4.6 Messaging with respect to the death of a current staff member to the wider community or to the public is the responsibility of the Principal (or designate) supported by Corporate Communications.

##### **Funeral or memorial service**

- 4.7 The wishes of the family of the deceased with respect to the funeral are paramount and representatives of the university may only attend with their permission.
- 4.8 Staff members who wish to attend the funeral should seek approval for leave from their line manager, which shall not reasonably be denied. Information on special paid leave including compassionate leave can be found on the [HR web pages](#).
- 4.9 Colleagues of the deceased may wish to hold a memorial service at the university in parallel with or following the funeral. This should be planned in consultation with the Principal's Office and the Chaplaincy.

##### **Supporting staff and students**

- 4.10 The university has a range of support services to which affected staff and students may be referred including the Employee Assistance Programme, the Chaplaincy and student counselling services.
- 4.11 Managers should be sensitive to the fact that the impact of a colleague's death may be felt and manifested for some time after the event and that staff may require continued support.
- 4.12 Academic and counselling staff and personal tutors should be aware of potential impact on a student's studies in the event of the death of an instructor or other individual working closely with students and refer appropriately to student services.

##### **Reporting**

- 4.13 The Director of Human Resources will provide a report to the Senior Vice-President (Operations) with respect to the university's response to a staff member's death, including any

lessons learned and proposed amendments to university policy and procedure. In the event that the death occurred on campus, any such report shall include input from Healthy & Safety, Campus Security and other directorates as appropriate. The Senior Vice-President (Operations) will determine whether presentation of report findings to SMT is warranted.

**5. Review**

- 5.1 This policy will be reviewed at least every three years.