



UNIVERSITY OF
PLYMOUTH

Death of a Student Policy

Version number 1.1	Status (draft/final) Final	Owning Directorate / Faculty Academic Registry		
Summary of any amendments: Updating the former Death of a Student Policy including: <ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Updating names and contact details • Outlining the link with the University's Emergency Plan • Formatting changes to insert this front page 				
Document objectives: To outline the procedure the University will follow in the event of a death of a student (or recent graduate), taking into account the need for: <ul style="list-style-type: none"> • An appropriate response from the University in conjunction with the University's Emergency Plan (where appropriate) • A sensitive and compassionate approach, encompassing any requirements of the student's religion and the needs of any affected students and/or staff • Clear lines of responsibility • Any legal requirements 				
Intended Recipients: Staff				
Approving Body and Date Approved			Not applicable (minor changes in 2019; noted at Student Process Group September 2019)	
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Contact for review:			Head of Student Services	
Version	Date	Author(s)	Replaces	Comment
1.2	May 2020	Head of Student Services	v.1.1	Updated changes to personnel & location of Student Hub, added statement re Covid-19
1.1	August 19	Head of Student Services	Former 'Death of a student procedure'	Minor changes including updating changes in personnel

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Statement regarding Covid-19, as at May 2020

The University is conscious that the world is currently facing a serious global pandemic where many lives have been lost.

In the event of a student death due to Covid-19 (“Coronavirus”), this policy will apply however there may be changes to our response. For instance, it may not be allowed for members of staff to attend the funeral. The primary coordinator will provide advice in such instances, taking account of Government guidance in place at the time.

The University has prepared a dedicated webpage providing advice and support about dealing with loss as a direct result of the coronavirus pandemic, which you can access here: <https://www.plymouth.ac.uk/about-us/about-us/coronavirus-faqs/covid-19-and-bereavement>

1. Our approach

- 1.1. It is rare that any university experiences the death of a student however it is essential to have a clear procedure in such circumstances. This enables an appropriate and sensitive response, clear demarcation of responsibilities, observation of any legal requirements and appropriate support to all students and staff.
- 1.2. In all cases, once we are notified of a student death, one University of Plymouth employee will act as the primary coordinator in relation to the student’s death. This will usually be the Head of Student Services or nominee. Where relevant, this person will work closely with University Security to establish the circumstances of the death, and to support with any police enquiry.
- 1.3. In the event of the circumstances of the death requiring a tactical or higher level response in conjunction with the University of Plymouth Emergency Plan, the

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primary coordinator will contribute to that command team to represent this policy and ensure actions are aligned with it, as appropriate given the circumstances.

- 1.4. All media, press and external enquiries will be referred to the Media and Communications Team (see 2).
- 1.5. In the event of the death of a student at a partner college, Academic Partnerships will notify the Head of Student Services or nominee, who will in turn notify the University Executive Group and External Relations team, acting as a point of liaison.
- 1.6. News of a student death is sensitive and the next of kin will be notified by the police. Only once the University has been informed that the next of kin have been notified, will any further notification take place. In the meantime, only those who “need to know” will be informed, including the Vice Chancellor.
- 1.7. The primary coordinator will inform people who need to know, acting in a responsible, respectful and compassionate manner, and will support the relevant Faculty to inform staff and students who knew the student. The primary coordinator will support Student Accommodation (if the student lived in University-managed halls of residence) to inform other flatmates.
- 1.8. Through this procedure, the University aims to provide time and support to those affected, to provide confidence in the University’s response, and to ensure relevant administrative systems and processes are updated/utilised.

2. Reporting the death of a student

- 2.1. A flowchart is provided in Appendix 1.
- 2.2. In the event there is a suspected death on campus, anyone discovering this should call 999, requesting an ambulance and the police. They should then contact Security on 3333.
- 2.3. It is the role of police and emergency services to confirm the death of any person and these services arrange for the next of kin to be notified. The University (Security or a manager within Student Services/Academic Registry) may provide next of kin details to the police/emergency services.
- 2.4. **Outside normal working hours**, Security may be the first department notified of a student death. In such instances, Security must immediately notify the Student Support Duty Manager who will assume the role of primary coordinator.
- 2.5. **During normal working hours**, depending on the circumstances, Security or the student’s Faculty office may be the first department notified (the Faculty

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may be notified where the death is not unexpected, for instance following an illness). If a Faculty office is notified by a third party of a student death, they should notify Security and the Head of Student Services, the latter (or nominee) will act as the primary coordinator.

2.6. The University's Executive Team and Silver Command will be notified in all instances of a student death, as per the University's Emergency Plan.

2.7. Contact details are provided in Appendix 1 and 2.

3. Notification to relevant departments

3.1 The primary coordinator completes the communication and liaison with relevant departments as outlined in this section.

3.2 There are a number of important administrative actions, to avoid generating inappropriate listings or correspondence which may cause distress to the student's next of kin, family or friends.

3.3 Notification to the following departments should happen through one initial email from the primary coordinator, who can introduce themselves, attach this policy and follow up as required. Contact details are provided in Appendix 2.

3.4 The notification email should confirm the student name, student registration number and the date of death.

3.5 In accordance with data protection requirements, this email should not be shared further without agreement of the primary coordinator.

Department	Their role
Data Support Team	<ul style="list-style-type: none">• Update the student record• Enter a flag on the system to exclude the student from reports as necessary• Send withdrawal form to Student Finance England• Amend student tuition fee on Student Record System
Disability Services Team	<ul style="list-style-type: none">• To contact the Disabled Students Allowance team at Student Finance England regarding any DSA support
Doctoral College	<ul style="list-style-type: none">• For doctoral students, to liaise with the Faculty regarding administrative actions
Faculty Dean, Business Manager and Registrar	<ul style="list-style-type: none">• Notify the personal tutor and other academic staff who may have known the student• Contact other students to inform them and offer support (with advice from the primary coordinator)• Amend the student's enrolment status to withdrawn and generate a withdrawal form to be sent to Data Support• Ensure the results list is worded sensitively so that the deceased student does not appear as 'withdrawn'

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	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> Review the appropriateness (based on timing) of any aegrotat degree/posthumous award
Health and Safety	Only where the death may be related to an accident on campus, to take appropriate action
Senior HR Partner	To contact the Faculty and offer support to staff
Media and Communications Team	To be aware of the death and manage any external enquiries including media-related
Pastoral and Spiritual Support Coordinator	Offer emotional and spiritual support to the students, regardless of their own faith and religion
Statutory returns	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> To notify relevant bodies and update records
Student Wellbeing Services	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> Notify other members of Wellbeing Services as appropriate Inform the Bereavement Officers of the student death and engage their support for people affected Offer other student support where appropriate, in conjunction with Student Counselling
Student Accommodation	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> Where appropriate, notify students who reside in the same flat Ensure the interim security of the student's possessions Liaise with the Pastoral and Spiritual Support Coordinator for additional student support, where appropriate
Student Funding	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> To notify the Finance Teams Contact the Student Loan Company as appropriate to inform them of the student's death and request amendment of records Return any cheques for the student to the originator
TIS and Library Services	To update the student's library and IT accounts and hide their DLE profile
UPSU	To offer support to officers who may have known the student and find out whether the student is a member of any clubs or societies, supporting accordingly.
Vice Chancellor's Office	Monitor the situation (by receiving updates from the primary coordinator) and write to the next of kin to convey sympathies, at an appropriate time.

4. Notification to other students on the programme or the same module(s) or who may be affected due to another connection

4.1 The Faculty should provide the primary coordinator with a list of names of students on the same programme and/or on the same module(s). The primary coordinator will email these students notifying them of the student's death and signposted to University support services. A template wording is provided in Appendix 3.

4.2 Where other students are known to have a relationship with the student who has passed away, a similarly worded email can be sent. For example, those in the same club or society.

5. Notification to students in the same accommodation

- 5.1 If the student resides in University-managed accommodation, the Student Accommodation Team and Student Wellbeing Services will notify the flatmates and signpost them to University support services. Student Wellbeing Services will also notify the Faculty Registrar of the Faculty where the flatmates are studying.
- 5.2 If the student resides in private student accommodation, University Wellbeing Services will try to identify the names of the housemates so that they can be notified and signposted to University support services.
- 5.3 If the student resides in non-student accommodation or lives at home, there will not be a notification from the University as it is likely that fellow residents, who may be the student's family, are already aware.
- 5.4 Where there are students who didn't live in the same flat but who may be affected by the death, a similarly worded email can be sent.

6. Ongoing support

- 6.1 Experiencing the loss of a student will impact fellow staff and students differently and we want to ensure people who wish to access support through the university are able to.

For staff, we recommend the Grief and Bereavement Staff Network, more information about this can be found here: <https://www.plymouth.ac.uk/about-us/university-structure/service-areas/equality-diversity-and-inclusion/grief-and-bereavement-network> and all other support options are described on the HR site:

<https://liveplymouthac.sharepoint.com/sites/u114/SitePages/Site%20Home.aspx>

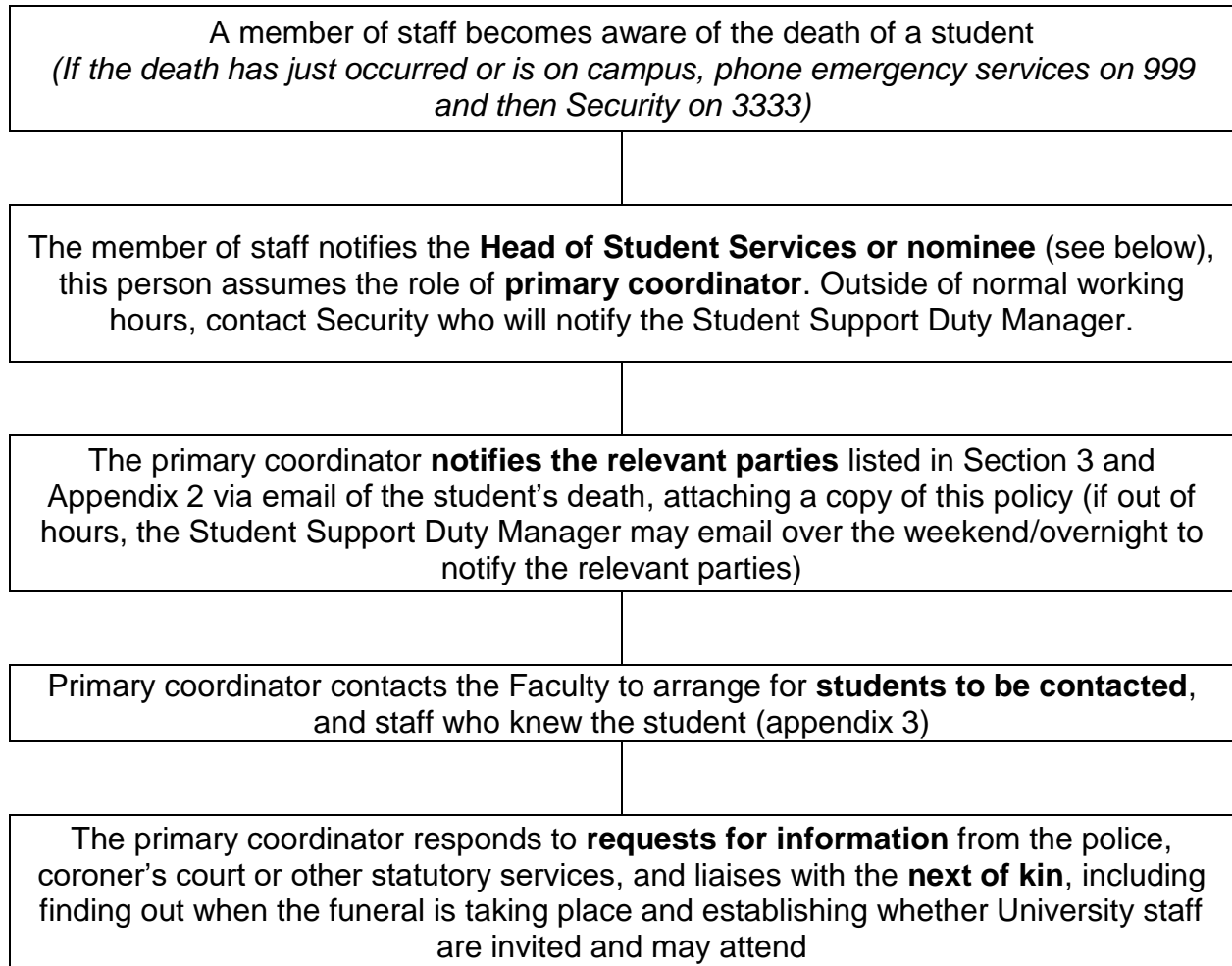
Students will be contacted by the primary coordinator and signposted to student support services.

- 6.2 The primary coordinator will manage liaison with the police, coroner and other services as appropriate, coordinating with university departments (including Media and Communications).
- 6.3 Where there are questions about the death and circumstances, the next of kin will be referred to the police, although the primary coordinator will offer support and guidance, where appropriate.

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- 6.4 There is limited information the University can provide to the next of kin about the student, but we will try to accommodate all requests for information within the boundaries of confidentiality.
- 6.5 Staff who knew the student may wish to attend the student's funeral, subject to the agreement of the family, which the University will support.
- 6.6 In the event of the death of an apprentice, Academic Partnerships will work with the primary coordinator for any liaison which may include with the employer.

Appendix 1 – Flowchart for reporting the death of a student



Those people who act as the University's primary coordinator following a student death are:

Alice Ludgate, Head of Student Services
01752 588229 or 07834 772825, Alice.ludgate@plymouth.ac.uk

Anne Bentley, Student Wellbeing Services Manager
01752 587676, Anne.bentley@plymouth.ac.uk

Neil Gillett, Student Services Manager (Advice and Hub)
01752 586389, Neil.gillett@plymouth.ac.uk

Christie Pritchard, Student Learning Manager
01752 587755, Christie.pritchard@plymouth.ac.uk

If you are struggling to reach one of the above, phone the Student Hub on 01752 587676 or contact the Academic Registrar's Office on 01752 587770

Appendix 2 – Key departments’ contact details

Security are contactable internally via phone on 3333, externally via phone on 01752 588400, or email security@plymouth.ac.uk

The **Student Support Duty Manager** for urgent enquiries, outside of usual working hours and on weekends is contactable via Security. During office hours, Student Services are contactable as per Appendix 1. The Pastoral and Spiritual Support Coordinator will be notified of any deaths, in all cases, to provide support.

Those departments who need to be notified of a student death are listed below:

Department	Contact details
Vice Chancellor’s Office	Amanda.hughes@plymouth.ac.uk
Media and Communications Team	Karen.mason@plymouth.ac.uk
Faculty Dean, Business Manager (FBM) and Registrar (FR)	<p>Faculty of Arts, Humanities and Business Dean: David.Finkelstein@plymouth.ac.uk FBM: Rachel.goodsell@plymouth.ac.uk FR: Jessica.knapman@plymouth.ac.uk</p> <p>Faculty of Health: Medicine, Dentistry and Human Sciences Dean: Sube.banerjee@plymouth.ac.uk FBM: Paul.braund@plymouth.ac.uk FR: Emma.spiers@plymouth.ac.uk</p> <p>Faculty of Science and Engineering Dean: Kevin.jones@plymouth.ac.uk Head of Faculty Operations: J.brenen@plymouth.ac.uk FR: P.shepperd@plymouth.ac.uk</p> <p>Doctoral College C.rivas@plymouth.ac.uk</p>
Academic Partnerships (not Apprenticeships)	Gemma.peacock@plymouth.ac.uk
Academic Partnerships (Apprenticeships)	Jacqueline.franklin@plymouth.ac.uk
Data Support Team	Student.records@plymouth.ac.uk
Disability Services Team	Disabilityadvice@plymouth.ac.uk
Doctoral College (for relevant students)	C.rivas@plymouth.ac.uk
Senior HR Partner	<p>Faculty of Arts, Humanities and Business Chris.howes@plymouth.ac.uk</p> <p>Faculty of Science and Engineering Chris.howes@plymouth.ac.uk</p> <p>Faculty of Health K.ellis@plymouth.ac.uk</p>

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Multi-faith Pastoral and Spiritual Support	spiritualsupport@plymouth.ac.uk
Mental Health Team	mentalhealthadvice@plymouth.ac.uk
Student Accommodation	Hallofficers@plymouth.ac.uk
IT and Library Services	ServiceDesk@plymouth.ac.uk
Student Funding	Studentfundingadvice@plymouth.ac.uk
Health and Safety	Safetyoffice@plymouth.ac.uk
UPSU	Sarah.gibson@su.plymouth.ac.uk

Appendix 3 – Sample wording for notification to other students

Dear Students,

I am writing to let you know of the unexpected and tragic death of [student's name], who was studying [name of programme]. I am very sorry to make you aware of this news.

I realise that this may leave you feeling shocked, distressed or confused and it might be hard for you to deal with the feelings and emotions that you experience as a result. Everyone will have different reactions and needs at a time like this. I hope that you will feel able to access some support and help should you feel you need it and in your own time. This email outlines some guidelines on what might help you at the moment.

Your Reactions

Everyone will react differently to stressful or traumatic incidents. Some people may feel neutral or numb, while others may feel quite overwhelmed with emotions and be tearful and upset. You may wish to initially avoid thinking or talking about what has happened or you might feel the need to discuss events. You might also find that you have physical reactions which could include headaches, loss or increase in appetite and sleep disturbance. There is not a right or wrong way to react, but you may find your need for help or support changes over time in relation to this.

Help in coping

There are some things that you can do to help yourself:

- ✓ Spending time with others and talking to another person
- ✓ Engage in pleasant, distracting activities e.g. listening to music, TV, moderate exercise
- ✓ Getting adequate rest and eating healthily
- ✓ Trying to maintain a normal schedule
- ✓ Focus on something practical that you can do right now
- ✓ Use relaxation methods

Things to avoid

- × Alcohol or substance misuse
- × Withdrawal and isolation from others

Should you be concerned about something relating to these things to avoid please contact us immediately so we can help and support you.

Information about support available

In the first instance, you might wish to draw on your own support networks of family, friends, colleagues and staff. However, this might be difficult or they may not be available at the moment. University and faculty staff are on hand to support you. Please contact your personal tutor if you wish, who is already aware of this sad news. In addition, the following support options at the university are available for you:

University Bereavement Officers

The University has specially trained Bereavement Officers who are available to speak to students following the death of another student.

They can provide listening and compassionate support to students and signpost to counselling and mental health support, bereavement services and charities outside the University, and to online resources. The Bereavement Officers work closely with Revd Jonathon Ross-McNairn, the University's Pastoral & Spiritual Support Coordinator, to ensure students are supported after a bereavement.

You can ask to speak with a Bereavement Officer in one of two ways during usual office hours (Monday to Friday, 8.30am to 5pm, except Fridays when services close at 4.30pm). Call the Student Hub on +44(0)1752 587676 or email studentservices@plymouth.ac.uk. Alternatively, you can contact the UPSU Advice Centre on advice@su.plymouth.ac.uk.

The University's Pastoral and Spiritual Support Coordinator

Revd Jonathon is an experienced Anglican priest with personal and professional experience in the areas of loss and bereavement.

Contact him to make an appointment: spiritualsupport@plymouth.ac.uk or 07773 575 394. Revd Jonathon would normally be available in the Pastoral and Spiritual Support building at 1 Kirkby Terrace.

Jonathon can also put you in touch with a University faith advisor if you need faith-specific advice. We have faith advisors from Jewish, Islamic, Catholic, Hindu, Humanist, Buddhist, Orthodox and Quaker communities.

Online support

If you would be interested in accessing some online support for difficult feelings and shock the University has a dedicated webpage 'SHINE' (Self Help INspiring E-resources) which includes a link to the 'Big White Wall' (which is an anonymous online community offering support for your mental health) and also a link to the University's webpages on loss and bereavement. You can access SHINE by clicking [here](#).

We want to support you and reassure you that you are not alone. I would really recommend that if you feel that you are struggling, that you get in touch with us as early as possible.

Best wishes,