

Student Death Policy	
Operational Owner:	Chief Student Officer
Executive Owner:	Chief Operating Officer
Effective date:	April 2020
Review date:	March 2023
Related documents:	This Policy should be read alongside: Student Death Policy – Supporting Procedures Student Death Policy - Stakeholder Analysis and Communication and Implementation Plan

Version History

Version	Reviewed by	Brief reason for review	Approved by	Date
1	Lucy Evans, CSO	Formal update on Policy first created in April 2014	Lucy Evans	6/1/20
2	Head of Security	Review	Lucy Evans	10/1/20
3	Head of Wellbeing and Welfare	Review	Lucy Evans	10/1/20
4	Academic Registrar	Review	Lucy Evans	23/1/20
5	Head of Student Experience	Review	Lucy Evans	20/1/20
6	Head of Student Data and Records	Review	Lucy Evans	15/1/20
7	University Secretary and Legal Counsel	Review	Lucy Evans	28/1/20
8	Head of Communications and PR	Review	Lucy Evans	28/1/20
9	Director of Health and Safety	Review	Lucy Evans	5/4/20
10	Final sign off	Review and approval	University Executive Board	
11	Laura Smythson	Brief amend resources and logistics	Lucy Evans	30/4/21

1 Introduction

1.1 Purpose

It is rare that the University is faced with the death of a current student while they are in University controlled premises however, it is essential that formal procedures are in place which observe the following principles:

- (i) an appropriate level of response from the University, with help as appropriate from relevant external agencies;
- (ii) a sensitive and compassionate approach which recognises the distress for the person finding the body, the next of kin, and the distress or potential for distress for staff and students close to the deceased student;
- (iii) clear lines of responsibility to support a set of coherent and valuable contributions in response to the death made by University staff and students;
- (iv) the observation of legalities to protect the interests of the University in cases where negligence might be alleged;
- (v) an appropriate duty to care for all staff and students.

1.2 Scope

1.2.1 The policy provides a high-level overview of the responsibilities and actions required by a range of stakeholders to respond to student deaths in University controlled premises. It therefore focuses on a broad range of responses undertaken across the University.

1.2.2 This Policy applies to all current student deaths that occur outside a controlled environment such as a hospital. In the case of the death of a student outside of University controlled premises, the Chief Student Officer should be notified immediately, and necessary actions taken, which are expected to be a tailored version of the principles below. In the case of deaths of alumni, the Chief Student Officer and the Vice-President (External Engagement) should be informed in the first instance.

1.3 Definitions

1.3.1 Phases

Phase 1

Initial period of response during which the Silver Command is established and frequent meetings occur to direct a co-ordinated University response.

Phase 2

Period of response following Phase 1 when responsibility is transferred to the Chief Student Officer (or designate) during which departmental teams offer immediate aftercare to help those affected under the direction of an Incident Response Manager (IRM), a Family Contact Officer (FCO) and a Students Contact Officer (SCO).

Phase 3

Period of longer-term response and support, following Phase 2, usually after the funeral incorporating feedback and review.

1.3.2 Roles

Silver Command – A rota of Senior University Managers enables a weekly cover for the role of Silver Commander. Silver is the middle tier of the University’s major incident response team (Gold, Silver Bronze). The Silver Commander takes a tactical approach to incident management. Specifically, to formulate tactical plans to achieve aims, activating threat specific and consequence management plans and approving communications.

Incident Response Manager (IRM) - The operational manager leading the overall coordination of the operational response to a student death. Normally, the IRM will be (i) the Chief Student Officer or (ii) Head of Wellbeing and Welfare

Family Contact Officer (FCO) - The individual appointed to act as the sole liaison point from the University with the family following a sudden death. Normally, the FCO will be (i) the Head of Wellbeing and Welfare) (ii) the University representative of the relevant faith.

Student Contact Officer (SCO) - The appointed staff member who acts as co-ordinator and identified as the ‘go to’ person for closely affected students. Normally, the SCO will be the Head of Faculty Student Services or Senior Administrative Officer in the relevant Faculty. Other examples would be the Senior Warden or Warden.

The Head of Security (or designate) is the contact for the Police throughout the management of the incident. This is independent of the Silver Command structure.

In cases where the post-holder is on annual leave or uncontactable for other reasons, an alternative will be the persons nominated Deputy.

2 Policy Principles

2.1.1 This Policy sets out the aims in all cases to ensure:

- (i) 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
- (ii) those charged with the management and response to a death act in a responsible, reasonable, compassionate and sensitive manner
- (iii) to create time, space and appropriate support for those affected to begin to adjust to and recover from the news of the event
- (iv) to ensure that confidence in the University’s response is maintained and that all necessary actions are completed

2.2 Procedures

There are three phases governing the University’s response to the death of a student. Procedures to be followed in Phase 1 are noted in full in this Policy document. Actions in Phases 2 and 3 are noted in the Student Death - Procedures document under the lists prescribing actions to specific staff.

2.2.1 Phase 1

Phase 1 is the period immediately after identification of a body, or, immediately after a student or a member of staff has been informed of a student death.

Action on discovery of the death of a student

- (i) Any student or member of staff who discovers a body should:
 - Provide CPR if trained to do so
 - do not touch or move the body or any object connected with the scene
 - immediately notify the Security Office by telephoning 01483 683333. . Security will then immediately notify the Head of Security (or nominee)
 - take note of any witnesses (any other persons present at the time of discovering the body) and forward this information to Security
- (ii) Any student or member of staff who is notified of a student death should immediately notify the Security Office by telephoning 01483 683333. Security will then immediately notify the Head of Security (or nominee).
- (iii) The Head of Security (or designate) will immediately notify all of the individuals listed below:
 - Chair of Silver Command
 - Chief Student Officer
 - Head of Communications or Duty Communications Officer (telephone: 07773 479911)
 - Head of Wellbeing and Welfare
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- (iv) The Head of Security will ensure that if there are witnesses who the Police will wish to interview, they are taken to a private area removed from the immediate scene as soon as possible and provided with appropriate support (e.g. crisis counselling provision)
- (v) Silver Command will be established by the Silver Commander on rota at that time and will coordinate initial responses and communications.
- (vi) The Chair of Silver Command will ensure a record is taken of actions agreed by Silver Command.
- (vii) Silver Commander will immediately appoint an Incident Response Manager (likely to be the Chief Student Officer).
- (viii) Immediately on appointment, the Incident Response Manager will inform:
 - The Vice Chancellor's Office
 - University Secretary and Legal Counsel
 - Head of Wellbeing and Welfare
 - Executive Dean of the relevant Faculty
 - Academic Registrar
 - The President of the Students' Union
 - Senior Warden / Court Warden (as appropriate)
 - Head of the Accommodation Office
 - Business Continuity Manager
 - Head of Student Experience
- (ix) The Chief Student Officer (who may be the IRM) will then inform all other colleagues in student support facing roles and ensure the commencement of procedures, outlined in the accompanying Student Death – Supporting Procedures document.
- (x) The Head of Security will ensure that steps are taken to secure and preserve any evidence at the scene, including any CCTV footage.

- (xi) The Head of Security will open an incident log and ensure that all actions and policy decisions taken by Security are recorded.

Background information

- (xii) Death, unless it occurs within a controlled environment such as a hospital, must always be notified to the Police. The Police will normally arrange for the removal of the body and any necessary post-mortem.
- (xiii) The Police (or Hospital) will normally arrange that the next of kin are informed. In the event of a death taking place abroad, the Foreign and Commonwealth Office will normally have this responsibility. The Chief Student Officer (or designate) must check with the Police whether this has been done and which person(s) have been informed. The University may need to assist the Police by making next of kin information available on request from its student records system (SITS <https://sits.surrey.ac.uk/>). As noted above, the Head of Security is the University contact for the Police.
In the unlikely event that the Police do not undertake to inform the next of kin, responsibility falls to the Chief Student Officer (or designate).
- (xiv) An apparent or alleged suicide is not a suicide until confirmed by the Coroner. It is important that people acting in an official capacity within the University know this and do not pre-empt the Coroner's verdict and this should be made clear by the IRM in appropriate communications.
- (xv) Where there is an attempted suicide, or death occurs in relation to a terrorist incident, a referral to the Local Authority Prevent Coordinator will be considered by the Chief Student Officer (or designate)

2.2.2 Phase 2

The Phase 2 response is the period when responsibility for responding to the incident is transferred from the Chair of Silver Command to the Chief Student Officer and operational designated University teams are directed to follow up agreed actions.

The actions to be taken and the responsibilities of staff during Phase 2 are listed in the Student Death - Supporting Procedures document.

2.2.3 Phase 3

Phase 3 is the longer-term response from the University to those affected by a student death which follows Phase 2 and usually the funeral of the deceased.

The actions to be taken and the responsibilities of staff during Phase 3 are listed in the Student Death - Supporting Procedures document.

3 Governance Requirements

3.1 Implementation / Communication Plan

3.1.1 Overall responsibility for the University's response to a student death rests with the Chair of Silver Command during Phase 1 and the Chief Student Officer in Phases 2 and 3.

3.1.2 This policy together with the associated procedures (Stakeholder Analysis, Communication and Implementation Plan) sets out overarching responsibilities,

definitions and principles of the University's approach to handling student deaths.

Implementation will be publicised via the Leaders' Alert, SurreyNet and directly to colleagues in relevant support offices as outlined in the aforementioned Plan.

3.2 Exceptions to this Policy

3.2.1 Providing a safe environment and response to known risks in order to reasonably protect students from harm is underpinned by significant legislation. Therefore, exceptions to the principles outlined in this policy are not expected.

3.4 Review and Update

3.4.1 This Policy shall be reviewed every three years.

3.4.2 Any interim minor changes will be made by the Operational Owner.

3.4.3 Any interim substantial changes or full reviews will be approved by the Executive Board.

3.5 Legislative context

3.5.1 The following legislation is, or may be, relevant to a student death:

Public Law Duties – general duty to act reasonably, fairly and lawfully in relation to students
Law of Tort - Duty of Care
Consumer Legislation
Health & Safety at Work Act 1974
Occupiers Liability / Defective Premises Act
Counter Terrorism and Security Act 2015 (Prevent Duty)

3.6 Stakeholder Statements

3.6.1 Equality: The University is strongly committed to equality of opportunity and the promotion of diversity for the benefit of all members of the University community. The University's approach is to promote equality across the full range of its activities, in employment, teaching and learning and as a partner working with and within local, national and international communities. Equality Analysis is a process which examines how the impact of the Policy has been considered on the diverse characteristics and needs of everyone it affects.

This Policy has been reviewed and no negative impact on equality has been identified.

3.6.2 Health & Safety: The Director of Health and Safety has reviewed this Policy and is satisfied with its content.

3.6.3 Other:

3.6.3.1 The Head of Security has reviewed this Policy and is satisfied with its content.

3.6.3.2 The Data Protection Officer has reviewed this Policy and is satisfied with its content.

3.6.3.3 The Head of Wellbeing and Welfare has reviewed this Policy and is satisfied with its content.

3.6.3.4 The University Secretary and General Counsel and the Commercial Lawyer have reviewed this Policy and are satisfied with its content.

3.6.3.5. The Business Continuity Manager has reviewed this Policy and is satisfied with its content.

4. Logistics and Resources

4.1 The main resource requirement for the death of a student focuses on personnel and time, there are no specific resource requirements or logistics in relation to the student death policy outside of staff time.