

## University procedure in the event of a student death

### 1. INTRODUCTION

#### Purpose of Procedure

To ensure the University responds sensitively, professionally and appropriately to the death of a student, providing adequate support and postvention. Upon the death of a student there will be multiple actions to be completed by the University. This procedure is supported by more detailed departmental checklists kept on a [Teams site](#). As each situation will be uniquely different the university responses will depend on the specific circumstances of each incident. In all cases the priority is being respectful of family/supporters' wishes and in ensuring our students and staff are safe and supported.

### 2. NOTIFICATION OF A DEATH

Any student, or member of staff, on hearing about the death of a student must notify the Security Office on **Ext 666** or **01225 383999** or through the **SafeZone** app. If the person making the discovery has already contacted the emergency services, they should still notify the Security Office immediately afterwards. This is vital, as Security will need to direct the emergency services, attend the scene of the incident, and coordinate the University response.

**Under no circumstances must the staff or student contact the deceased friends or family, nor report anything on social media.** In the event of a student death, it is imperative it is the Police that make first contact with the family.

Upon being informed of a confirmed or suspected death, **Security Services** will

- Liaise with emergency services as required, including to confirm the death
- Check that the individual in question is a University of Bath student and check where the student is resident
- Notify the **Head of Security** and the **Director of Student Support** and the **Director of Campus Services** (if the student lives in a university residence)

#### 2.1 ACTIONS ON THE DAY OF A STUDENT DEATH

<b>Director of Student Support</b>	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>• Assume the role of primary coordinator (maintaining a log of actions, receiving updates on actions completed, ensure student support is provided, liaison with academic department, external services, and be the point of contact for the family)</li> <li>• Begin the staff notification process</li> <li>• In the event of a <u>sudden</u> student death, convene a Postvention Team</li> </ul>
<b>Head of Security Services</b>	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>• Liaise with emergency services</li> <li>• Provide any immediate tactical response to the situation</li> </ul>
<b>Deputy Director Communications and Engagement</b>	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>• Prepare all internal communications (for both students and staff) and liaise with media if required</li> <li>• Monitor social media</li> </ul>

<b>Director of Campus Services</b>	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>• If within University accommodation, ensure room of deceased is kept secure</li> <li>• Work with Student Support to identify which students need immediate support</li> <li>• If appropriate support students with finding emergency accommodation</li> <li>• If required arrange accommodation for any relatives coming to Bath</li> </ul>
<b>Faculty Director of Operations</b>	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>• Identify academic/departmental colleagues best placed to work with Student Support to identify which students and staff need immediate support</li> <li>• To work with colleagues in managing how to communicate the news</li> </ul>

## **2.2 ACTIONS DURING THE FIRST WEEK FOLLOWING A STUDENT DEATH**

<b>Director of Student Support</b>	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>• Liaison with the family as appropriate</li> <li>• Continue to work with colleagues in Communications, Campus Services, the Students' Union, the Academic department(s) and Human Resources to identify and support impacted students and staff</li> <li>• If convened, Chair the Postvention Team in managing the postvention response</li> </ul>
<b>Assistant Registrar, Academic Registry</b>	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>• Update the student record system (SAMIS),</li> <li>• Follow the student records notification process so relevant staff/departments can carry out any necessary actions.</li> <li>• Review the student's details regarding their progression or possible eligibility for an exit award</li> </ul>
<b>Lead Faith Advisor</b>	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>• Provide pastoral and faith support for students and staff affected by the death.</li> <li>• If appropriate offer/arrange spiritual support for the family</li> </ul>
<b>Faculty and Academic Departments</b>	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>• Work with Student Support, Communications and HR work on a notification plan to students and staff and prepare staff with resources to help support students</li> <li>• Alert Student Support to any students who may be particularly impacted by the news</li> <li>• Consider how to manage any forms of mitigation for students most affected by a student death (IMCs, extensions, etc)</li> <li>• If a placement student, or previously been on placement, consider notification to the placement team/provider</li> </ul>
<b>Student Support Advisers / Mental Health &amp; Wellbeing Team</b>	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>• Identify students who may be affected by the death and require additional support</li> <li>• Provide advice and guidance to students particularly if approaching examinations or other deadlines for assessed work</li> </ul>
<b>Human Resources Business Partner</b>	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>• Work with Student Support, Communications and the Academic department on a notification plan for impacted staff</li> </ul>

	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>• Provide support to staff affected (usually led by departmental Business Partner)</li> </ul>
<b>Students Union CEO</b>	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>• CEO will notify officers of the identity of the student</li> <li>• Collate information about any clubs or societies of which the student was a member</li> <li>• Work with Student Support and Communications on a notification plan for SU club/society members impacted by the death</li> </ul>
<b>University Medical Centre</b>	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>• Update own records</li> <li>• Be alert to any patients impacted by the student death</li> </ul>
<b>Doctoral College</b>	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>• Update own records and provide support to students and supervisors as needed including signposting to relevant services</li> </ul>

### **2.3 ACTIONS IN THE WEEKS FOLLOWING A STUDENT DEATH**

<b>Vice Chancellor Office</b>	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>• Send a letter of condolence which will be drafted by Communications (in conjunction with the Postvention Team Chair)</li> </ul>
<b>Director of Student Support</b>	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>• Maintain contact with the student's next of kin/family and, if appropriate, notify students and staff of funeral arrangements</li> <li>• If required support any Coroners investigation</li> <li>• Close the Postvention Team and summarize the response</li> </ul>
<b>Student Support</b>	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>• Provide ongoing support to students affected by the death</li> </ul>
<b>Faculty and Academic Departments</b>	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>• Support the family if they wish to visit the University</li> <li>• Consider posthumous recognition of a student's work</li> <li>• Be mindful of any continuing impact of the death on staff and students</li> </ul>
<b>Human Resources Business Partner</b>	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>• Facilitate access to ongoing support for staff affected by the death</li> </ul>
<b>Coordinating Faith Leader</b>	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>• Liaise with colleagues if the family, staff or friends ask about arranging a memorial</li> <li>• If appropriate support staff and students wanting to attend the funeral</li> </ul>

Owner	Director of Student Support and
Last updated	September 2025
Version	1.6
Due for review	Three years from the above (but reviewed after every death)

## **Appendix A - Notification Protocol**

To be actioned by the Director of Student Support once confirmation has been received of a student death.

- Vice Chancellor
- University Secretary and Registrar
- Chief Operating Officer
- PVC Education
- PVC Student Experience
- If a PGR student, notify the PVC Research as well
- Faculty Dean
- Faculty Director of Operations
- Head of Security Services
- Director External Relations
- Deputy Director Communications and Engagement
- Co-ordinating Faith Leader
- Chief Executive Officer Students' Union
- University Medical Centre

## Appendix B - Postvention Team

It is recognised as important preventative work to deliver excellent postvention support to a community after a sudden death. Unless the University's Emergency Plan is activated the Postvention Team will lead the University's response to a sudden death in our community.

The Director of Student Support will convene a Postvention Team (PVT) usually within the first 24 hours of the University learning of a student's death.

The make-up and responsibilities of the PVT are described below.

Role	Nominated person	Scope of responsibilities	Cover if nominated person is absent
<b>PVT Chair</b>	Director of Student Support	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>• Leads the postvention response.</li> <li>• Stand up the PVT by co-opting relevant staff, chairs the meetings and stands down the PVT when support is back to business-as-usual levels.</li> <li>• Oversees the enactment of the University Student Death Procedure</li> </ul>	<i>Deputy Director Student Support &amp; not already on the PVT</i>
<b>Care for Students Lead</b>	Deputy Director (Mental Health)	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>• Ensures students specifically impacted by the death are identified and provided with support.</li> </ul>	<i>Mental Health &amp; Wellbeing Manager</i>
<b>Care for Staff Lead</b>	HR Business Partner for relevant Faculty	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>• Engages with staff following a critical incident and facilitates support (including access to external services)</li> </ul>	<i>Deputy Director HR</i>
<b>Family Liaison Lead</b>	PVT Chair	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>• Provides a single, consistent point of contact</li> </ul>	

		<p>for family throughout the process.</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>This may become a dual role if there is someone in the department who knew the student well and is comfortable with having a direct line of communication with the family.</li> </ul>	
<b>Communications Lead</b>	Head of Internal Communications	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>Leads on internal (notification wording for students and staff) and external communications (including any interest from the media)</li> </ul>	<i>Associate Director Communications</i>
<b>Department Representative</b>	To be advised by the Faculty Director of Operations	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>Provides departmental knowledge of the deceased and on their cohort</li> </ul>	
<b>Administrator</b>		<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>Keeps a detailed written record of all actions taken and decisions made by the PVT</li> </ul>	

<sup>[1]</sup> <https://www.universitiesuk.ac.uk/sites/default/files/uploads/Reports/postvention-guidance-forming-a-postvention-team.pdf>

Example agenda for a Postvention team meeting.

- Welcome –objectives PVT Chair to be clear from the outset as to what is to be achieved. Confirm group roles
- Incident update What do we currently know? Informs single source of truth
- Support for students affected update. Potential students of concern. Gaps in knowledge identified
- Support for staff affected. Potential staff of concern
- Family liaison update
- Communication plans
- Potential risks to consider
- PVT to remind colleagues to take care of self and each other
- Any other business
- Schedule next meeting