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## **Management Guidance on Responding to the Death of a Member of Staff**

### **Introduction:**

1. This paper provides guidance to Heads of Department and line managers on dealing with death of a member of staff or ex-member of staff and confirms who will carry out specific responsibilities.
2. Responding to the death of a member of staff requires managers and staff to combine practicality and sensitivity to ensure that information and arrangements are organised quickly, helpfully and respectfully for the member of staff's next of kin, that colleagues receive appropriate support and that the dignity and wellbeing of all those involved is maintained throughout.

### **Death on Campus:**

3. A member of staff who discovers someone on the University Campus or its immediate vicinity showing no signs of life or appears to be seriously injured should immediately contact the Security Office. The Security Office will:
  - Notify and liaise with the emergency services
  - Notify the Head of Security or Security Manager
  - Notify the Director of HR and the Deputy Director (HR Services) and copy in the HR Business Partner for the staff member's department.

The Police and Ambulance Service will:

- Attend the scene of the incident
- Contact the Coroner, if appropriate
- Notify the next of kin/family

4. Under the Reporting of Injuries, Diseases and Dangerous Occurrences Regulations (RIDDOR) 1995 (SI 1995/3163), all fatal accidents at or arising out of work, or deaths related to reportable diseases, must be reported immediately to the Health and Safety Executive. If there is any question of the death having been the result of an accident at work or a reportable disease then the line manager should seek advice immediately from the Safety, Health and Environment Unit at <http://www.bath.ac.uk/internal/safety>

### **Death Off Campus:**

5. When a member of staff becomes aware of the death of another member of staff (or former member of staff) which occurs off campus or ex-member of staff they should notify the Director of Human Resources and the Deputy Director (HR Services) without delay and copy in the HR Business Partner for the staff member's department.
6. On receiving a notification of a death of a member of staff, the Director of Human Resources or Deputy Director (HR Services) will carry out the following actions in liaison with the line manager of the member of staff:

- i. Check the source and veracity of the report, (including date and time) and establish a point of contact (name, address, relationship, phone number) with the deceased's family if possible.
  - ii. Notify the employing Department, if they are not already aware. The Head of Department will then inform the Vice-Chancellor directly without delay.
  - iii. Contact the next of kin / family of the deceased as appropriate and support them with all the administrative actions necessary.
  - iv. Arrange in conjunction with the employing Department and Communications & Engagement Services, that notices are placed on the web once it is certain that family members have all been notified.
  - v. Notify the Payroll and Pensions Office. The Pension Office will ensure that the relevant documentation is sent without delay to the next of kin. Annual Leave that has been accrued by the deceased member of staff but not taken will be paid to the estate. Overpayments of leave or salary will not be recovered.
  - vi. Notify others internally who may be able to offer assistance to colleagues and friends of the deceased: the University Chaplain; other internal support agencies, especially counselling service (EAP); and, if applicable the relevant trade union.
  - vii. Prepare a letter of condolence, working with the deceased staff member's line manager - to be sent by the Vice-Chancellor.
  - viii. If needed to prepare, in conjunction with the employing department, a brief résumé of the career of the deceased for an internal obituary, funeral or memorial event purposes.
  - ix. Arrange with the family of the deceased member of staff about collection of personal effects from the University.
  - x. Inform friends / colleagues of funeral arrangements in liaison with and ensure appropriate University attendance at the funeral or memorial event.
  - xi. Ensure the Home Office / UKVI is informed, if the staff member is a sponsored worker.
  - xii. Support employing department about covering deceased's workload and supporting the mental health and wellbeing of colleagues affected by the death. To liaise with Student Support & Safeguarding to support students affected by the death of the member of staff.
  - xiii. If the deceased is a former employee awarded the status of Professor Emeritus, notify the Governance team to remove deceased's name from mailing list for papers relating to Court.
7. In the case of the deaths of former members of staff, it may be necessary for the Director of HR or Deputy Director (HR Services) (or in their absence the HR Business Partner) to undertake a number of those actions set out under 6 above, depending upon individual circumstances.
8. Dealing with these issues of the death of a member of staff is likely to be highly emotionally demanding for the staff involved. It is therefore vital that these staff are

properly supported and that where possible the supporting role is shared amongst both the department and the Department of Human Resources teams and not focussed on any one individual.

9. Staff should be encouraged to seek support and help through the University's staff counselling and support services which are provided by [Health Assured](#). Staff counselling is provided 24 / 7 every day of the year by counsellors who are fully trained and registered to BACP standards. The service is free and completely confidential. Please click on the link above for more details and how to contact them.
10. It is important for managers to consider and make allowances for the impact of a death on fellow workers and to carefully handle continuity of work.

**September 2024**