



Procedure for responding to significant incidents overseas which may affect University of Bath students and staff

1. INTRODUCTION

1.1. At certain times, the University may need to respond to the needs of students and staff when an emergency situation arises overseas. It is possible that, at any one time, the University will have staff travelling overseas on University business and students on placement or studying in a country affected by natural disasters, political/social crises and major accidents or terrorist activity. The University may also be hosting students from the affected countries. There may also be staff and students who are indirectly affected by the incident. In such circumstances, the University will want to confirm the safety of students and staff and identify any students for whom particular support arrangements will be necessary.

Purpose of procedure

1.2 To ensure the University responds appropriately and effectively to a significant incident overseas which may affect one or more of our students and staff.

Scope

1.3 All current students and staff of the University.

Roles and responsibilities

1.4 The Pro Vice Chancellor (Learning and Teaching) is responsible for overseeing the procedure. He/she may liaise with the University Secretary and/or the Deputy Vice Chancellor and Provost as appropriate.

2. PROCEDURE

Initiating the procedure

2.1 The University's response to a significant incident overseas will be dependent upon a number of factors, not least the perceived magnitude of the incident and the potential impact on students and staff at the institution.

2.2 If, at any point during the implementation of this procedure, the situation is deemed to be particularly serious and high risk and/or has an impact on a significant number of students or staff, the University's Emergency Management Plan should instead be invoked.

2.3 Upon hearing of a significant event overseas which may affect our students and staff, the Pro Vice Chancellor (Learning and Teaching) will take on the role of Executive Lead responsible for managing the University response for the particular incident. In his/her absence, the University Secretary or the Deputy Vice Chancellor and Provost will assume this responsibility.

2.4 Any member of staff who becomes aware of significant event overseas which may affect University of Bath students and is not widely reported by the media or knows of a student involved in a significant incident overseas, should alert their Head of Department/Head of Service who will determine if the issue is to be escalated to the Executive Leads for this procedure.

2.5 Students who undertake study or placements abroad are provided with a number of University contact details for use whilst they are away. One of these is the 24 hour security phone number to be used in case of an emergency out hours. If a student contacts security to report a significant event overseas, security office staff will immediately notify the Head of Security or Security Manager who will determine if the issue is to be escalated to the Executive Lead.

Gauging the University response

2.6 The Executive Lead will, as soon as possible, notify the following members of staff:

- Vice Chancellor
- All Faculty/School Deans
- Pro Vice Chancellor (Internationalisation)
- Director of Marketing and Communications
- Director of Academic Registry
- Head of International Relations Office
- Director of Student Services
- Head of Security Services
- Director of Human Resources
- Chief Executive, Students' Union
- President, Students' Union

2.7 The Executive Lead should also provide a verbal update on the incident and any actions taken to date at the next meeting of the Vice Chancellor's Group (VCG).

2.8 Additionally, the Senior Officers indicated in Table 1 below will be asked to co-ordinate the gathering of the necessary information in order to ascertain the number of staff and students who may be affected by the incident. This should be done in liaison with Key Contact Officers and other colleagues such as Heads of Department/Division, Directors of Studies, as appropriate.

Table 1

Student/staff groups	Key Contact Officer	Senior Officer Responsible
Students on placement abroad	Placement Managers	Dean of Faculty/School
UG Students on Erasmus or study abroad	International Mobility Manager	Head of the International Relations Office/Deans of Faculty/School

EU/International students studying at the University of Bath	Undergraduate Managers/Graduate School Managers	Dean of Faculty/School
Any student living in University accommodation	Residential Life and Wellbeing Service Manager	Director of Student Services
PG students studying abroad	Heads of Department/Graduate School Managers	Dean of Faculty/School
UG and PGT Exchange and Visiting students studying at the University of Bath	International Mobility Manager	Head of the International Relations Office
PGR Visiting students studying at the University of Bath	Graduate School Managers	Dean of Faculty/School
Staff travelling overseas on University business	Heads of Department/Division	Dean of Faculty/School

Implementing the University response

2.9 Should the nominated Executive Lead for the procedure determine that the University needs to respond to the incident, they should ask the Senior Officers to ensure that all reasonable steps are taken to make contact with all students and staff who may be affected. It is envisaged that Senior Officers, in conjunction with Key Contact Officers, will have developed their own local procedures (which include the appropriate members of staff) for responding to a request of this nature. The request should be accompanied by a timeline by which the Executive Lead expects to receive information on action taken and responses received. This process should be iterative and updates should be provided regularly.

2.10 The Key Contact Officers should, at the earliest opportunity, take all reasonable steps (via email or telephone) to make direct contact with students and staff who may be affected.

2.11 In the case of staff, the Executive Lead may also request that the Insurance Services Manager and the University's Travel Management Company advise if their records suggest a member of staff is in the affected area.

2.12 Where students and staff are confirmed safe from harm, this information should be gathered and communicated to the appropriate Senior Officer who reports to the Executive Lead. If, after a number of attempts, Key Contact Officers are unable to make contact with students or staff, they should escalate the issue to the appropriate Senior Officer. The Executive Lead, in liaison with the Senior Officer, will determine the course of action to be taken. This may include contacting the relevant next of kin.

2.13 To avoid multiple points of contact for any affected students the Key Contact Officers identified in Table 1 should be responsible for co-ordination of direct contact with students.

This should be in liaison with the relevant Head of Department and Director of Studies as appropriate. Key Contact Officers are responsible for keeping Senior Officers regularly updated.

2.14 The Executive Lead, in discussion with relevant colleagues, should determine the key messages to be communicated to students who may be affected. This will usually involve asking the student to confirm that they are safe from harm (if they are in the affected area), signposting support available to them including that provided by the Foreign Office, student support services provided by the University's Student Services such as Counselling and Chaplaincy support and the Students' Union Advice and Representation Centre and to provide a University contact number. Students should also be reminded of the support available to them through other organisations such as Nightline and the Samaritans.

2.15 Where students or staff need or would like to return home quickly, Key Contact Officers should discuss what action is to be taken with the appropriate Senior Officer (who will liaise with the Executive Lead if appropriate) and then help facilitate any arrangements that need to be put in place.

2.16 Where students' academic progress is likely to be affected, the Key Contact Officers should ensure that the student is contacted by their Director of Studies who will advise on University procedures, liaising with the Director of Academic Registry as appropriate and signposting to the Students' Union Advice and Representation Centre as necessary.

2.17 Students and staff directly or indirectly affected by the incident may have need for counselling or other support in the days/weeks after the event. In the case of students, follow up communication should be initiated by the Key Contact Officer or if more appropriate, the relevant Director of Studies or Personal Tutor to remind students of the support available to them including that available through Student Services, the Students' Union Advice and Representation Centre and other organisations such as Nightline and the Samaritans. In the case of staff, the Executive Lead should work with the Director of Human Resources to ensure co-ordination of subsequent support and guidance for staff within the University. Staff should contact their line manager and/or their Human Resources Manager for guidance and consider seeking support through the University's staff counselling and support services.

2.18 Following a significant incident overseas, any member of staff wishing to organise an official University act of remembrance or any other similar event, should liaise with the Executive Lead in the first instance.

3. COMMUNICATIONS

3.1 The Executive Lead will, if possible, liaise with the Director of Marketing and Communications to determine if, and by what means, the University should make a statement regarding the incident. This may be limited to an internal message to all University staff and students or it may be accompanied by a public statement released via official University social media accounts and/or the University website.

3.2 Should the incident take place out of reasonable working hours, the Director of Marketing and Communication (as a member of the University Emergency Management Team) has the discretion to issue a public statement on behalf of the University.

3.3 The statement should briefly outline the steps the University is taking in response to the incident, signpost to advice and support provided by the Foreign Office, inform students of the support services available to them through their Director of Studies/Personal Tutor and Student Services and inform staff of the support available to them through Human

Resources. Any official communications should take into account the fact that some staff/students may be indirectly affected by the incident (e.g. family member or friends overseas may have been affected by the incident) and therefore messages should be aimed at all staff and students who may need further support, not just those in the immediate vicinity of the incident.

3.4 A statement would normally be based on the following:

The University has become aware of an incident/tragedy in xxx.

If you have concerns about friends or family who may be in xxx please contact the Foreign Office directly (www.gov.uk/foreign-travel-advice).

Please be assured we are taking all possible steps to contact staff and students whom we know may be affected to establish their safety and to offer support.

Our thoughts are with all those affected by this incident/tragedy.

Any current student affected by this incident and in need of support or advice, should contact their Director of Studies, Personal Tutor and/or Student Services (<http://www.bath.ac.uk/departments/student-services/>).

Any member of staff affected by this incident and in need of support or advice, should contact their line manager and/or access the support available through Human Resources (<http://www.bath.ac.uk/hr/stayingsafewell/health-wellbeing/occupational-health/index.html>).

3.5 Communication with agents in the area affected by the incident should be channelled in the first instance, through the Head of the International Relations Office.

3.6 Any member of staff who is contacted directly by a concerned parent of a University of Bath student or a member of the public or someone from the media, should refer the enquiry to the University press office (press@bath.ac.uk or +44 (0)1225 386883).

4. CLOSURE OF PROCEDURE

4.1 When the Executive Lead receives confirmation from the Senior Officers that the procedure has been fully implemented and all actions completed, the Executive Lead should notify all members of staff listed in paragraph 2.7 to inform them the procedure is now closed. An update should be provided at the next VCG meeting.

4.2 If, after all reasonable steps have been taken, a student cannot be contacted the Executive Lead should invoke the University's Missing Student Procedure. If there is a suspected student death or serious injury, the Executive Lead should invoke the University's procedure for the death or serious injury of a student (Procedures available at: <http://www.bath.ac.uk/guides/responding-to-a-report-of-a-missing-student/> and <http://www.bath.ac.uk/guides/responding-to-the-death-or-serious-injury-of-a-student/>)

4.3 If the Executive Lead is informed there are a significant number of students who cannot be contacted and/or a significant number of suspected student deaths or serious injuries, the University's Emergency Management Plan should be invoked (Details of the University's Emergency Management Plan can be found at: <http://www.bath.ac.uk/university-secretary/secretary/business-continuity/index.html>)

5. DOCUMENT CONTROL INFORMATION

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