

Death of a Current Student Policy



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Student Experience Committee

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Death of a Current Student Policy

1. Purpose

- 1.1. The death of a current student is fortunately a rare occurrence, but naturally a very distressing one to have to respond to.
- 1.2. This policy and its related procedure provide guidance to ensure that processes are followed to:
 - Ensure a rapid and flexible response where care, compassion and sensitivity is maintained at all times.
 - Give consideration to the level of support required by the student's immediate family and friends, as well as the wider University community who may be affected.
 - Ensure that external agencies are involved, as appropriate.
 - Ensure that the University complies with any legal obligations it may have and that potential issues are monitored appropriately.

2. Scope

- 2.1. This policy and related procedure apply in the case of the death of a BIMM University student either on a BIMM University campus or off-campus.
- 2.2. Where the student is registered with a Partner, the relevant Partner staff should be notified immediately, and partner procedures followed where appropriate.

3. Responses

- 3.1. Notification of a student death may be reported by any member of staff, other students, family or friends, police or doctors, or we may become aware via the media.
- 3.2. The location and individual circumstances surrounding a death will naturally have a bearing on the response and level of involvement of BIMM University and its staff.
- 3.3. Each death will be nuanced. It is recognised that each case will be different and the University's approach will need to be considered on a case-by-case basis and adapted where necessary including, for example, when incidents happen out of hours.
- 3.4. The accompanying Death of a Current Student procedure outlines the key actions to be taken and identifies role responsibilities. Flexibility will be required when specific role holders are not available but it is important to ensure that all key tasks are covered.

Death of a Current Student Procedure



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- Appendix 6 – Protocol for cases of suspected suicide
- Appendix 7 - Sample email to all students within the School

1. Purpose

1.1. This procedure is intended to support of the Death of a Current Student Policy.

1.2. The purpose of this document is to:

- Ensure a rapid and flexible response where care, compassion and sensitivity is maintained at all times.
- Give consideration to the level of support required by the student's immediate family and friends, as well as the wider University community who may be affected.
- Set out clear lines of responsibility.
- Ensure that external agencies are involved, as appropriate.
- Ensure that the University complies with any legal obligations it may have and that potential issues are monitored appropriately.

2. Initial disclosure

2.1. News of a student death may be communicated to BIMM University from a wide variety of sources. Such a disclosure can originate from discovery of the scene; a family member; Police or other agencies, including the media. Upon such a disclosure, all staff are required to:

- Make a note of all information provided and details of the reporting party/situation
- If the death has just occurred on campus, call the emergency services to request an ambulance (UK and Ireland – call 999; Germany – call 112).
- Contact the Campus Information Hub:
 - Berlin: (+49) 3031199186
 - Birmingham: 0121 6473633
 - Brighton: 01273 626 666
 - Bristol: 0117 980 7060
 - Dublin: 01 513 3666
 - Essex: 01375 672053
 - London: 0209 749 3131
 - Manchester: 0161 244 8210
- Maintain confidentiality and avoid unnecessary sharing of information.

2.2. Guidance for responding to the report of a student death is available in appendix 2.

2.3. It is important to note that University staff should not inform next of kin of a student death, as this is the responsibility of the Police or hospital. Once the Next of Kin has been informed by the relevant authority, a University named contact liaison will be appointed to liaise with the Next of Kin (see appendix 5).

- 2.4. It is imperative that accurate information is relayed quickly and to the correct people and in the right order, as set out below, and that this protocol is followed from that point forward.

3. Death of a student on a BIMM University campus (including external teaching venues, where appropriate): Initial actions (in the first few hours)

- 3.1. In the event of a sudden student death on a campus, the following should be informed as soon as possible by the individual who is first aware of the death:
- Emergency services (to request an ambulance).
 - Campus Information Hub.
- 3.2. No one should be allowed to interfere with the body (unless first aid is being administered) or the scene of the incident until police authority is given. Arrangements for formal identification of the body and notification of next of kin are the responsibility of the relevant police force.
- 3.3. Campus Information Hub will:
- Call the Emergency Services (if this hasn't already been done)
 - Inform Campus & Technical Services who will **direct the operations at the scene.**
 - Inform the Campus Dean, Head of School and Student Wellbeing Manager. **The Building & Technical Services Manager and Student Wellbeing Manager (or their nominees) will attend the scene as soon as possible.**
- 3.4. The Building & Technical Services Manager (or nominee) will:
- Notify any first aiders, if appropriate (if none already on the scene).
 - Clear the area so it is not visible to others and ensure no one is able to access the area apart from emergency services. In some situations, it may be appropriate to evacuate the building. This should be done in a calm manner so as not to panic any students or staff and ensure they are at a place of safety.
 - Instruct a member of staff to station themselves outside the building's main entrance to direct the emergency services as they arrive.
 - Liaise with emergency services and other agencies at the scene.
 - Gather any immediately attainable information about the circumstances of the incident to assist the authorities.
 - In the case of an accident, initiate BIMM University's [Accident & Incident Procedure](#).
- 3.5. The Student Wellbeing Manager (or nominee) will:
- Immediately inform the Head of Student Wellbeing of the incident.
 - Lead on the non-operational aspects of the response, in particular, providing any known background information to the Police and supporting other students at the scene.

- Check on Unit-e that the individual is a student.

3.6. The Head of Student Wellbeing (or nominee) will:

- Immediately inform the Vice-Chancellor / Chief Executive Officer and Pro Vice-Chancellor Student Experience.
- As soon as possible on the day of the incident, but after the initial situation has been responded to and contained, update the Campus Dean and Head of School, and inform relevant colleagues of the death (see Appendix 4 – sample notification email), to include, for example:
 - Deputy Vice-Chancellor & Provost
 - Chief Marketing Officer
 - Associate Director of Campus and Technical Services
 - Chief People Officer
 - Relevant Course Leader
 - Director of Academic Services
 - Head of Student Data and Academic Administration
 - Revenue & Debt Co-ordinator
 - Head of International Student Compliance (if the deceased was on a Student Visa)
- Ensure that those receiving the initial notification of the student death are reminded that the information is confidential and must not be circulated to a wider audience until approval is given. Also to be noted that any information that is appropriate for sharing has been included and that it is not appropriate to engage in any dialogue about the circumstances surrounding the death of the student at that point.
- Where the deceased is an under 18-learner (for example, on a Trinity Diploma programme) contact the local authority.
- Convene a Case Coordination Meeting (see section 6 below).

See appendix 1 for Procedure checklist for responding to an on-campus death.

4. Death of a BIMM University student NOT on a BIMM University campus: initial actions (in the first few hours)

4.1. In the event of a student's death off campus, Student Wellbeing should be informed immediately by the staff member who is first made aware of the death. The Student Wellbeing Manager, Campus Dean and Head of School will then lead the response on campus (in consultation with the Head of Student Wellbeing).

4.2. The Student Wellbeing Manager (or nominee) will:

- Immediately liaise with the Campus Dean, Head of School, and Head of Student Wellbeing regarding the incident.
- Gather as much information as possible from relevant parties to ensure that the report is accurate. To achieve this, it is important to speak as soon as possible to

the person who informed the University of the death of the student and/or someone closely associated to the student.

- Ensure support is available to the students most immediately affected.
- Inform relevant colleagues of the death. Sample list below:
 - Chief Executive Officer / Vice-Chancellor
 - Deputy Vice-Chancellor & Provost
 - Pro Vice-Chancellor Student Experience
 - Chief Marketing Officer
 - Associate Director of Campus and Technical Services
 - Chief People Officer
 - Head of School
 - Relevant Course Leader
 - Head of Student Data & Academic Administration
 - Revenue & Debt Co-ordinator
 - Head of International Student Compliance (if the student was on a Student Visa)
- Ensure that those receiving the initial notification of the student death are reminded that the information is confidential and must not be circulated to a wider audience until approval is given. Also to be noted that any information that is appropriate for sharing has been included and that it is not appropriate to engage in any dialogue about the circumstances surrounding the death of the student at that point.
- Where the deceased is an under 18 learner (for example, on a Trinity Diploma programme) contact the local authority.
- Convene a Case Coordination Meeting (see section 6 below).

5. Managing the University's response

5.1. The Head of Student Wellbeing; Campus Student Wellbeing Manager; Campus Dean; Head of School; Course Leader; Buildings & Technical Services Manager, and a representative from the Communications team will work as a co-ordinating team to manage the University's response. Others from the list in section 3.6, most notably the Vice-Chancellor / Chief Executive Officer and Pro Vice Chancellor Student Experience may also be involved and/or will be kept informed throughout.

5.2. After the initial tasks above, individuals/teams will be responsible for the tasks listed in section 7.

6. Case Coordination Meeting

6.1. As soon as possible after the initial response to the incident (usually the next day), the Head of Student Wellbeing should convene a case coordination meeting (online) to ensure a co-ordinated and appropriate response. The members of the case coordination meeting should include the following (or their nominee):

- Head of Student Wellbeing (Chair)
- Associate Director of Campus and Technical Services
- Campus Dean
- Head of School
- Student Wellbeing Manager
- Student Wellbeing Co-ordinator
- Student Wellbeing Adviser
- Course Leader

Other members of staff may be included, depending on the specific case, such as:

- Pro Vice-Chancellor Student Experience (and other members of Executive Management Group as appropriate)
- Buildings & Technical Services Manager
- Chief Marketing Officer (or nominee)
- Head of International Student Compliance (if the deceased was on a Student Visa)

6.2. The chair of the case coordination meeting will identify the full name of the student who has died, establish the circumstances surrounding the death; review actions taken to date and agree further actions to be taken.

6.3. An overview of the circumstances, together with actions agreed should be recorded following all case coordination meetings (see appendix 4).

6.4. The case conference team will reconvene regularly, as necessary, following the incident to report on actions taken.

7. Individual Roles and Responsibilities

7.1. Head of Student Wellbeing (or nominee):

- Ensure that the protocol is followed as set out in this document and monitor each incident, with a view to ensuring a compassionate response to all affected parties, as well as consider wider institutional implications.
- Convene a case coordination meeting as set out in section 6 (above).
- Offer assistance to any of the above-mentioned staff in order to help them carry out their responsibilities.
- Contact the family and/or partner of the deceased to offer condolences and to establish a point of contact (but only after the Coroner / Police have informed the relevant persons). There is some useful guidance on making the first phone call to a family following a student death [here](#) and appendix 5 lists some of the issues that might need to be discussed.
- Ensure practical and pastoral support is in place for family members as appropriate. (For example, support with finding local accommodation; liaison with BIMM University departments etc.)

- Liaise with appropriate parties to provide support and/or input for the funeral and/or commemorative service and, when a period of time has elapsed, an appropriate memorial to the student (with the agreement of the family of the deceased).
- Email all stakeholders with regular updates confirming what has taken place, what actions are being taken and by whom.
- Ensure that the Pro Vice-Chancellor Student Experience is kept informed throughout.
- Relay to the Head of Technology Applications the next-of-kin's wishes regarding the student's email and OneDrive content.

7.2. Buildings & Technical Services Manager (or nominee):

- Continue to ensure the security of the scene for as long as is necessary.
- Continue to liaise with Police, if relevant. It is not unusual for the scene of a sudden death to be initially treated as a potential crime scene until forensic work has been completed. However, it is important that this does not result in any speculation about possible cause of death.
- If it is suspected that the death has arisen from a communicable disease then the local Health Protection Team must be contacted. (In Germany, this an organisation called ZIG who run the GHPP (Global Health Protection Company.) This can be considered at the scene with the Police.
- Alert the Health & Safety Executive within 24 hours of a death on campus (UK). Fatal accidents must be reported immediately to the Health & Safety Authority (HAS); Gardaí in Dublin or Polizei (Federal Police Bundespolizei), in Germany.

7.3. Chief Marketing Officer (or nominee):

- Liaise with relevant colleagues to ensure that all enquiries from the press or media are directed to the Marketing Team. This is to ensure that they can be dealt with in such a way as to protect the bereaved relatives, fellow students or staff and to safeguard the interests of BIMM University.
- Monitor social media and other channels for any activity that may require a response.
- Support the Vice-Chancellor (or nominee) in drafting a letter of condolence to the family and/or partner of the deceased.

7.4. Campus Student Wellbeing Manager

- Ensure that emergency drop-in support can be provided by the Student Wellbeing Advisers.
- Ensure that an appropriate Student Wellbeing Adviser follows-up directly with any affected student for whom it is recognised that the incident might have a particular impact (for example, those who found the deceased student; known friends and housemates. In the case of housemates, check whether they might need to seek temporary alternative accommodation). Provide details of relevant out-of-hours support services including [Togetherall](#).
- Liaise with the Counselling Services Co-ordinator regarding the provision of emergency counselling sessions for affected students.

- Check for any engagement by the student with Student Wellbeing (via CPOMS records) and ensure appropriate support for any affected staff.
- Liaise with relevant Course Leaders and the Head of Student Data and Academic Administration in relation to any impact on the academic work of the students being supported by Student Wellbeing, without breaching confidentiality relating to the circumstances. This is particularly relevant if students are approaching examinations or other deadlines for assessed work.
- If the student is known to live in a private hall of residence, liaise with the provider as appropriate, without breaching confidentiality related to the circumstances.

7.5. Head of School:

- Liaise with relevant Course Leaders to ensure any academic aspects have been considered, without breaching confidentiality related to the circumstances.

7.6. Campus Dean:

- Communicate the news regarding the student death to relevant staff and students in the School, supported by the Chief Marketing Officer; Head of Student Wellbeing and Student Wellbeing Manager (see sample email – appendix 7).
- Consider, in consultation with the above members of staff, whether any communications should be sent to students and academic and professional services staff, for information, more widely within the School and Campus.
- Confirm the availability of follow-up support for students (via Student Wellbeing and Togetherall).
- Work with People Partner to ensure co-ordination of any available support and guidance for affected staff (including via EAP).

7.7. Head of Student Data and Academic Administration:

- Ensure that the student's record is updated in the Student Records System and inform the Head of Technology Applications accordingly.
- Ensure that no routine administrative procedure is continued which may cause additional distress to relatives / friends of the deceased.
- Ensure that IT and other registrations in the name of the student are cancelled.
- Refer to relevant award procedures to ensure that suitable awards are made, and where possible, commemorations are made at Graduation ceremonies.

7.8. Head of Technology Applications:

- Manage all IT-related actions identified by the Head of Student Data and Academic Administration to include:
 - Cessation of any automated emails to the student's email address.
 - Cessation of the student's access to Digital Learning Platforms, primarily Canvas, Panopto and Pebblepad. Access arrangements to any personal folders to be arranged
 - Cessation of student's BIMM Microsoft 365 account and license. Access arrangements to any personal folders to be arranged.
 - Cessation of the student's timetable.

- Action the wishes of the next-of-kin regarding all email or OneDrive content, as communicated by the Head of Student Wellbeing.

7.9. Revenue & Debt Co-ordinator:

- Ensure that no financial communications, including invoices, are sent to the deceased student's address.
- Arrange for any outstanding debt to be written off.
- Ensure the Student Loans Company is notified of the student death.

7.10. Information Hub Supervisor:

- Be alert to calls that may come into the switchboard from distressed callers and/or members of the public/media who are seeking information and ensure that those calls are directed to Student Wellbeing or the Marketing Team, as appropriate.
- Report any calls that cause concern to the Student Wellbeing Manager or Campus Dean.

7.11 People Partner

- Liaise with relevant managers to ensure that staff wellbeing is considered and to highlight any support that is available (including the Employee Assistance Programme (EAP)).

8. Subsequent co-ordination and support

8.1. After the immediate response phase, other practical steps which may need to be taken include:

| Task | Staff involved |
|---|---|
| Liaise with the family and Embassy of international students, particularly in relation to their travel to the UK, Germany or Ireland; immigration and other legal formalities; cultural needs and repatriation of the student. Liaison will also be needed with UKVI if the deceased was on a Student Visa. | Head of Student Wellbeing; Student Wellbeing Manager & Head of International Student Compliance |
| Consider which groups of students, beyond those identified in the immediate response, might also be affected. | Student Wellbeing Manager; Head of School. |
| Liaise with landlord and other contacts outside BIMM University | Student Wellbeing Manager |
| Agree who will attend the funeral and other memorial events on behalf of BIMM University (depending on wishes of the family). | Head of Student Wellbeing; Student Wellbeing Manager; Campus Dean; Head of School |
| Arrange coach travel for groups of students and staff wanting to attend the funeral, subject to the wishes of the family. | Student Wellbeing Manager; Information Hub Supervisor |

| | |
|---|--|
| Liaise with family, staff and friends about a memorial event at BIMM University. | Head of Student Wellbeing; Student Wellbeing Manager; Campus Dean; Head of School |
| Two to three weeks after the event, contact all staff and students directly involved to check on their welfare and signpost to further support. | Head of Student Wellbeing; Student Wellbeing Manager; Campus Dean; Head of School |
| Send a final letter to the family, signed by the Vice-Chancellor | Head of Student Wellbeing; Student Wellbeing Manager; Campus Dean; Head of School; Chief Marketing Officer |
| Communicate with Academic Services and family as to the possibility of posthumous degree titles or awards. | Head of School; Director of Academic Services |

9. Review Stage

9.1. At an appropriate time after the event, the Head of Student Wellbeing should convene a review meeting of those most closely involved in responding to the student death. This meeting should aim to:

- Review the circumstances of and the University's response to the death. If the death was the result of any unnatural means, it is likely that a serious incident review will need to be conducted, to support learning to minimise the chance of a recurrence, or a similar incident involving another student. The procedure is aimed at:
 - Analysing what happened, to whom, when and where.
 - Identifying any learnings or reflections that can be drawn from what has happened.
 - Developing a clear action plan and owners for improvements, including how any learning can be implemented. Universities UK has produced [guidance on Carrying out a serious incident review](#).
 - Provide an opportunity for staff attending to debrief and raise any queries or concerns.
 - Review any potential changes to these procedures, which should be done on a continuous basis to ensure that it is effective for those who may need to be involved in a response and that it achieves the aim of a compassionate and coherent response.

9.2. Where appropriate, the Postvention section of the Suicide Safer Strategy and Action Plan should also be followed.

9.3. Any request from the Coroner (or *Gerichtsmediziner in Germany*) for a report from the University, will be provided by the Head of Student Wellbeing, who will gather the required information from the relevant parties, and seek legal advice, if required.

9.4. Universities UK have produced [guidance on Giving evidence at an inquest](#) and there is a [Guide to coroners services on the Gov.UK website](#).

9.5. There is [information about the Irish Coroner Service here](#).

Appendix 1: Procedure checklist for responding to an on-campus death

This procedure starts from the discovery of any individual on a BIMM University campus who is deceased and is not responding to first aid.

| | | |
|----|---|--|
| 1 | Call an ambulance, if this has not been done already, providing as much detail about the condition of the person involved. If you are told that an ambulance has been called by someone else, take steps to verify this: do not assume it has been done. | |
| 2 | Call the Police or assure yourself that the Police have been called already. It is important to remember that any sudden or suspicious death is the immediate responsibility of the police, acting as 'Coroner's Officer' and the Police will therefore take charge at the scene. | |
| 3 | Unless there are urgent reasons for doing so the body should not be touched or moved. Possessions should not be touched or removed, including mobile phones. | |
| 4 | Where possible the premises should be secured until the Police arrive. | |
| 5 | Contact the Campus Information Hub who will inform: <ul style="list-style-type: none">• Campus & Technical Services who will direct operations at the scene• Campus Dean• Head of School• Student Wellbeing Manager See section 3 of these procedures for further details. | |
| 6 | Try to provide as much assistance as possible to the Police in identifying the person involved. This may involve help from other staff and students who know the person. | |
| 7 | Consider whether a private room or space for staff, students or witnesses is necessary to wait for the Police to speak to them or in case they want to remain close to the scene. | |
| 8 | Head of School and Campus Dean to consider whether any (or all) classes should be cancelled. | |
| 9 | Do not confirm to anyone enquiring that a death has taken place. | |
| 10 | It is for the Police or Hospital to inform Next of Kin of a death: University staff must not undertake this themselves. Once the Next of Kin has been informed by the relevant authority, a University-named contact liaison will be appointed to liaise with the Next of Kin (see appendix 5). | |
| 11 | If the person is pronounced dead at the scene then the Police will make arrangements for, or give direction on, the removal of the body. | |
| 12 | If it is suspected that the death has arisen from a communicable disease then the local Health Protection Team must be contacted. (The German equivalent is ZIG who run the Global Health Protection Company.) This can be considered at the scene with the Police. | |
| 13 | Do not place any messages on social media regarding the incident. | |
| 14 | The death of any individual on campus will cause significant upset for most individuals and some immediate support for them may be required. Staff should be given the EAP number and students directed to Student Wellbeing or Togetherall. | |

| | | |
|----|--|--|
| 14 | Retain notes of the incident in order that a report can be written: this should include information about times, places, individuals involved, the names and numbers of Police officers involved etc. The University's lead officer dealing with the matter will decide where these are to be submitted. | |
| 15 | Once the immediate incident is over the University will initiate the actions outlined in sections 7 onwards in these procedures above. | |

Appendix 2 – Guidance for responding to the report of a student death

Please use the following guidance/script on receiving the news of the death of a BIMM University student

"Firstly, can I say that the thoughts of the University are with you and your family and friends at this tragic time."

[pause and listen]

"Please can I check if you feel able to provide me with some information about [name (if known) the deceased]. This will only take a few minutes."

Request the following details:

- Student's full name
- Student's date of birth
- Who in the family is the main point of contact
- The best email and address and phone number to use

[At the end]

"Thank you once again for calling us at what must be a very sad time for you. One of my colleagues will be in touch in the very near future."

Appendix 3 - Sample notification email (senior level communication)

To: <Vice-Chancellor>, <Deputy Vice-Chancellor & Provost>, <Pro-Vice-Chancellor Student Experience>, <Chief Marketing Officer>, <Head of School>, <Director of Academic Services>

CC: <Campus Student Wellbeing Manager>, <Campus Dean>

Subject: Sad news <Student's name>

Dear colleagues,

Sadly, I am writing to let those of you know who are not already aware of the death of one of our students. The student is <Name and Student ID>, <Student's first name> was a <year 1/2/3 student> studying on the <Name of student's course and school> at the <name of campus>.

Student Wellbeing are in contact with the student's family to offer support at this difficult time, and we are the primary contact point with the family at this point.

We will ensure that the family have every opportunity to talk directly to relevant colleagues within the School and other relevant services in due course.

We are convening a case conference <tomorrow> to coordinate the University's response to this sad news and ensure that those students and colleagues who knew <student's first name> are offered support. Those areas required to be present at the case conference will receive the details separately.

In accordance with the University's Policy and Procedures for Responding to the Death of a Student (weblink), we will also be notifying relevant teams to ensure that Unit-e and other systems (including IT), are updated in order, for example, to avoid communications being issued to the student's address or family at this time.

If you have any questions, or if you have any information which might be helpful for us to know to aid our coordination of this matter, please do not hesitate to contact me (my contact details are shown below) or the campus Student Wellbeing Manager (<name and contact details>).

Kind regards,
<Head of Student Wellbeing>

Appendix 4 - Case Conference Record for Death of a Current Student

This record, and related files, will be stored securely in a shared folder with ownership limited to attendees of the meeting, and other relevant staff, to enable appropriate follow up action.

| | |
|---|--|
| Case number (eg 2024-001) | |
| Date of case conference | |
| Name of deceased student | |
| Student number | |
| Date of death | |
| Cause of death (if known) | |
| Faculty of deceased student | |
| Campus | |
| Level and year of study at time of death (eg UG year 1) | |

| | |
|---|---|
| Home or international student? | |
| | |
| Case conference attendees | Attending: Apologies: |
| Overview of initial activity and facts known | |
| Confirmed next of kin (name and contact details) | |
| Other key liaison person – name and contact details (eg police officer) | |
| | |
| AGREED ACTIONS (Detail the action, who owns the action, the date the action has been completed and any reference eg to a file or other relevant information) | |
| Agreed actions for letter of condolence | Action: Owner: Date completed: |
| Agreed action for communication to students and staff directly affected (eg contacting course mates; course lecturers) | Action: Owner: Date completed: |
| Agreed action for communication with person who notified University if not next of kin / named contact | Action: Owner: Date completed: |
| Agreed actions for Student Data & Academic Administration (eg updating Student Records, informing other services to update records etc) | Action: Owner: Date completed: |

| | |
|---|---|
| Agreed actions for Immigration Compliance (if applicable) | Action: Owner: Date completed: |
| Agreed actions related to fees (eg if a refund of fees is required) | Action: Fees paid ... refund possible? Yes / No (if yes, how much and name of person approving refund) Fees owed? Yes/No If yes, amount be written off: Name of person approving write off: Date completed: |
| Is communication to wider campus community needed? (Yes / No) If yes, please provide details of sender and date | Yes: Details of sender and date: No: |
| Memorial & funeral plans (Eg details of memorial at BIMM for student, attendance at funeral, posthumous award granted) | Yes: Details of coordinator for these No: |
| Posthumous award and offer of graduation ceremony | |

Appendix 5 – Next of kin / named contact liaison

As part of the case conference, an individual member of the University will be appointed as the next of kin / named contact liaison for the purposes of continuity; to reduce the number of separate contacts they have within the University and to avoid unnecessary distress and the need to repeat the same information a number of times to different people. However, it is important to note that it is for the Police or Hospital to inform Next of Kin of a death and the University named contact liaison person should only get in touch once the Next of Kin has been notified of the death.

This will usually be the Head of Student Wellbeing.

That person may wish to discuss issues including:

- Whether university representation at the funeral would be welcome and who can/should attend.
- How any personal belongings of the student held within the University should be dealt with, including emails and OneDrive storage.
- Whether the family wishes to visit the campus and, if so, whether they need help finding accommodation and who they would like to meet.
- Whether a book of condolences should be opened for students and staff to sign and/or whether there should be any other form of memorial.
- Whether the family or a student eligible for an award 'in memoriam' if they were close to completing a qualification would welcome such an action.
- Informing the student of any reimbursement of fees and relaying to the family the logistics of this.

If the student is from overseas, arrangements may also need to be made for repatriation.

If necessary, take advice on any cultural or religious observances related to the student and their next of kin / named contact which should be respected or taken into consideration.

It is important to note that any contact with the next-of-kin/trusted contact should be based on the facts as they are released and not speculation. It is especially important to respect the privacy of the family or other named contact.

Appendix 6 – Protocol for cases of suspected suicide

There are important legal reasons and other sensitivities that mean that it is important not to speculate on the cause of death which may be particularly relevant in cases of suspected suicide. However, there are also other issues that mean additional action should be taken if it is suspected that a student has died by suicide.

In particular, staff should be aware of additional resources available via the [Samaritans Step by Step service](#) which provide information and support to universities after a suspected death by suicide.

If a death is confirmed as a suicide, the terms and phrases used when communicating it to others are important. The Samaritans make the following recommendations regarding the language used:

- *Inappropriate or careless use of language can perpetuate stigma or sensationalise a death, while careful use can help minimise distress to bereaved family members and friends.*
- *Avoid labelling a death as someone having 'committed suicide'. The word 'commit' in the context of suicide is factually incorrect because it is no longer illegal.*

With this in mind, Samaritans recommends:

| | |
|-----------------|-------------------|
| Phrases to use: | Phrases to avoid: |
|-----------------|-------------------|

| | |
|----------------------------------|--|
| <i>A suicide</i> | <i>Commit suicide</i> |
| <i>Take one's own life</i> | <i>Cry for help</i> |
| <i>Person at risk of suicide</i> | <i>A 'successful' or 'unsuccessful' suicide</i> |
| <i>Die by / death by suicide</i> | <i>Suicide victim</i> |
| <i>Suicide attempt</i> | <i>Suicide 'epidemic', 'craze' or 'hot spot'</i> |
| <i>A completed suicide</i> | <i>Suicide-prone</i> |
| <i>Suspected suicide</i> | <i>Suicide 'tourist'</i> |

When communicating with the University community, it is important to convey the message that people may have a range of reactions to suicide, including guilt, anger and sadness amongst others; that this is normal and, with support, they will cope. Asking for help can be a positive step towards moving on.

As the [UUK report on Suicide-Safer Universities](#) makes clear, universities should have a robust 'postvention' plan in cases of suspected suicide in order to provide any additional support that might be needed and to avoid 'contagion'. See also BIMM's Suicide Safer Strategy and Action Plan.

Suggested Dos and Don'ts for communications

Do:

- As soon as the next of kin/named contact have been informed, if at all possible, first let close contacts know in person and ensure that a follow up is scheduled to check that they are ok.
- As soon as possible after that, inform the wider cohort with basic factual information about what has happened. A decision on the appropriate cohort will be taken on a case-by-case basis.
- Establish clear lines of responsibility and communication within the campus/School.

Don't:

- Minimise the impact by appearing to hide any information away. This is only likely to arouse anger and speculation.
- Describe a death as 'suicide' or give the cause of death until this has been confirmed by the Coroner even if this is suspected.
- Give excessive detail about the time and method of death or give information in a way that others may identify with the person who died.
- Disclose the contents of any communications left by the deceased.
- Leave the communication of the news, or the follow-up support, to the student body.

Appendix 7 - Sample email to all students within the School

Dear <student>,

As some of you may be aware, we recently learned of the very sad news of the death of <name of student, if appropriate>, a student on Year (<year of course>) of our <course name>. We wanted to let you know this news, as we know that many of you will have known <student's name>.

The University is in touch with <student's name>'s family to offer any we can at this extremely difficult time, and our thoughts are with them.

We know that it can be a shock to hear news like this, and that it can be very difficult to lose someone we knew so suddenly. We can be left with a strong mixture of feelings. We therefore wanted to let you know about the support that is available to you, now or in the future, should you find it helpful.

<Insert details of support available> (include, for example: campus Wellbeing Team; Togetherall; Samaritans; SHOUT 85258; other local services)

Please do make use of the sources of support available to you. And, if you know anyone else who might find it helpful to access support, we encourage you to speak to them about the support available to them. If you ever have concerns about the wellbeing of another student, you can contact <relevant details>.

We are asking everyone to play a part in ensuring that we, as a community, respect the privacy of <student's name>'s family by being careful about how we share information, especially on social media.

We want you to feel able to talk about how you are feeling, as this is important. However, posting information about someone's death on social media can add to the distress of family members or other people, and so we are asking everyone to avoid doing this. If you have any concerns about anything you have seen or read on social media, you can contact <contact details>.

At this stage, we do not know about the arrangements for any memorial or funeral service for <student's name>; however, we are likely to know more soon. If you want to make sure that you are informed about any such arrangements, please email <contact details> and we can make sure we forward you the details.

We will also arrange an opportunity for anyone who wishes to express their condolences to do so, and we will share information about this in the next few days.