

A Handbook of the Student Support & Development Services for DCU staff



DCU - STUDENT SUPPORT &
DEVELOPMENT

2024 / 25

Contents

ACADEMIC SUPPORT	3
INTERNAL TRANSFER:.....	3
DEFERRAL OF YEAR / POSTPONEMENT OF EXAMS:.....	3
WITHDRAWAL FROM UNIVERSITY:.....	3
ACADEMIC SKILLS	4
WRITING CENTRE:	4
INFORMATION LITERACY:	4
EXTENUATING CIRCUMSTANCES:	4
CONFIDENTIALITY AND ITS BOUNDARIES.....	5
LOCATION AND CONTACT DETAILS OF SERVICES.....	5
THIRD PARTY PARTICIPATION IN A MEETING - GUIDELINES.....	6
FINANCIAL DIFFICULTIES / FEES.....	8
STUDENT ASSISTANCE FUND:.....	8
WAIVER OF FEES ON MEDICAL GROUNDS:	8
INTEGRATION INTO UNIVERSITY LIFE	9
CLUBS AND SOCIETIES:	9
CLASSROOM CONTACT:	9
PARTICIPATION IN WORKSHOPS / EVENTS:.....	9
THE ROLE OF STUDENT SUPPORT & DEVELOPMENT	10
DEALING WITH STUDENT PSYCHOLOGICAL AND/OR MEDICAL EMERGENCIES.....	12
POLICY, PROCEDURE AND PROTOCOLS.....	13
COORDINATION OF INCIDENTS/ACCIDENTS INVOLVING STUDENTS	13
UNIVERSITY PROTOCOL FOLLOWING THE DEATH OF A STUDENT	14
STUDENT COMPLAINTS PROCEDURE	15
SEXUAL HARASSMENT / ASSAULT	15
OUT-OF-HOURS EMERGENCIES	16
Emergency 24/7 Phone & Text Helplines	16

STUDENT SUPPORT & DEVELOPMENT

ACADEMIC SUPPORT

The primary point of contact for students experiencing academic difficulties in their studies is, of course, the academic staff in the School itself. We advise students to speak to their lecturers in the first instance; the Personal Tutor or Year Head, if the difficulty is arising in more than one module; and the Chairperson of the programme, if the Personal Tutor, Year Head or the student themselves deems this most appropriate. The following may be of assistance if you are advising students with academic difficulties:

INTERNAL TRANSFER:

Although this should not be the first option for the student, there *may* be a possibility of students transferring programmes within DCU if they are unhappy with the programme they have chosen. There are, of course, conditions attached to this option. Further information regarding internal transfers can be found on the webpages below. Please alert students to 'cut-off-dates' for transfers, as these are rigidly adhered to. http://www.dcu.ie/registry/application_forms.shtml

DEFERRAL OF YEAR / POSTPONEMENT OF EXAMS:

In some situations, students may decide that it is impossible for them to continue with their studies in any given year. The decision to defer a year is not taken lightly, but sometimes personal circumstances in a student's life leave them with no alternative. The University tries to facilitate such deferrals when the student has a genuine reason. Deferrals will have financial implications if not **carried out within the correct timeframe** / if the **correct documentation** is not filled out.

Students who need to postpone examinations (Semester 1, Semester 2 or Repeat Examinations) should fill out an extenuating circumstances form and/or Postponement of Assessment form by the appropriate date (see form below) for *each* relevant sitting. If students defer a full sitting of exams on 'medical grounds', they may be able to apply for a medical waiver. Students who defer before the cut-off date in October should fill out a deferral of year form (details at the link below). **Please refer all deferrals/postponements to the Student Advice & Learning Skills Centre to ensure that students are given up-to-date information on the impact on their fees – or ask them to mail student.support@dcu.ie.**

Full details (and relevant dates) are available at http://www.dcu.ie/registry/application_forms.shtml

WITHDRAWAL FROM UNIVERSITY:

If a student decides that they do not wish to continue with their programme, they need to *formally* withdraw from the University. Information regarding withdrawal can be found at the relevant link at http://www.dcu.ie/registry/application_forms.shtml and via the Student Apps page under 'My Details'.

Kindly bring students' attention to the **cut-off dates** for withdrawal in both semesters, as withdrawing will have financial consequences for students, which need to be clarified for them. These dates are clearly noted on the relevant academic calendar of the University.

Fees Implications: There *will* be Fees implications for students choosing to discontinue their studies for any reason. Please direct students to the Student Advice & Learning Skills Centre for a discussion on Fees and other implications of changing their current student registration status.

ACADEMIC SKILLS

The 'Student Advice & Learning Skills Centre' provides workshops, in-class group work and one-to-one support for students wishing to improve their academic skills during their time at the University. Students may receive assistance with key academic skills such as time management, note-taking, presentation skills – or develop their academic writing skills, effective group-work techniques or revision strategies.

Discover DCU: This is a series of short interactive courses available online via Loop for students. Students can complete the courses throughout the year and will receive invaluable guidance in areas such as organisational skills, study skills, assignment writing and exam success. Students can access this via loop.dcu.ie using their student log in details. Further Information at: www.dcu.ie/studentlearning/index.shtml

WRITING CENTRE:

Academic Writing Centres are located in the libraries on both the St Patrick's and Glasnevin campuses and appointments are also scheduled online via Zoom. Students can simply contact these Centres to avail of assistance with academic writing skills. Tutors, who are employed, supported and trained through the Student Learning team in SS&D, offer assistance. The Centre supports students at all levels of their studies.

Information at: <https://www.dcu.ie/sal/develop-your-learning-skills>.

INFORMATION LITERACY:

The library offers e-tutorials to help students come to terms with using the library and work with academic resources at university. These can be found at <https://www.dcu.ie/library/lets-library-e-tutorial-students>. Apart from this resource, the library can be contacted to organise tailored information literacy classes and workshops to suit your programme and module needs. Full details can be found on the library website - <https://www.dcu.ie/library>.

EXTENUATING CIRCUMSTANCES:

A student's academic performance may be adversely affected by illness (physical or psychological), accident, bereavement or other personal circumstances. If this happens, the student should be advised to fill out an Extenuating Circumstances Form in order to officially highlight this to the Progression and Award Board through the Chairperson. The form can be downloaded at http://www.dcu.ie/registry/application_forms.shtml. This form can allow a lecturer to mark a student as 'deferred through illness' or potentially grant an extension on an assignment.

CONFIDENTIALITY AND ITS BOUNDARIES

As many of you work very closely with students either in a lecturing capacity, as a Year Head or in a student support role, you may find yourselves in situations that students are confiding in you on personal matters. Generally, this is a positive development for the student, as it means that they are not internalising the issues, and they feel that they can turn to you for help. There are, however, times when you may need to pass this student on to a member of staff in Student Support & Development.

The following are indicators as to when it is time to seek professional help:

- When a significant amount of time is being given to addressing the personal issue
- When you are unsure of what to do or how to respond
- When you feel the situation requires specialist intervention
- When you are worried about the student's safety
- When you are covering the same ground with the student and no change is evident

In any of the above cases, you could suggest to the student that you feel that they would be better served by speaking to one of the Student Advisors and/or a GP, Counsellor, Disability Officer.

If you are very concerned about a student but they do not agree to contacting the services, you can contact us confidentially **without** their consent.

LOCATION AND CONTACT DETAILS OF SERVICES

GLASNEVIN CAMPUS HENRY GRATTAN BUILDING (GROUND FLOOR)

Student Advice & Learning Skills Centre:	E: Student.support@dcu.ie	T: 700 7165
Health Service:	E: healthservices@dcu.ie	T: 700 5143
Counselling Service:	E: counselling@dcu.ie	T: 700 5165
Disability Service:	E: disability.service@dcu.ie	T: 700 5927

ST. PATRICK'S CAMPUS (A Block)

Student Advice & Learning Skills Centre:	E: Student.support@dcu.ie	T: 700 9018
Health Service:	E: spd.healthcentre@dcu.ie	T: 700 9215
Counselling Service:	E: spd.counselling@dcu.ie	T: 700 9215
Disability Service:	E: disability.service@dcu.ie	T: 700 9213

THIRD PARTY PARTICIPATION IN A MEETING - GUIDELINES

Under normal circumstances, any communication regarding a DCU student is carried out between the member of DCU staff and the individual student and we are obliged to adhere to the '[Contact with Third Parties Policy](#)'. There may be circumstances, however, when a *student* requests for a third party to be present at a meeting with a member of the University staff. Given the increase in these requests, we have developed some Guidelines to assist members of staff deal with such requests, without breaching our legal obligations to the student.

Guidelines:

Should a student request for a third party¹ to be present at a meeting with a member of DCU staff and if there is no particular reason for this not to take place, the following guidelines may be useful:

1. An email should be sent to the student outlining that, by allowing a third party to partake in the meeting, s/he is waiving his/her right to confidentiality. The student should reply to this email in writing, confirming that this is understood. A sample email is provided below.

Should a student *not* reply to this email in writing but turn up for a meeting with a staff member unscheduled (with a third party), it should be stated at the outset of the meeting that it is understood that the student agrees to waiving his/her right to confidentiality by presenting him/herself with a third party. This should be noted in the minutes of the meeting (see below).

2. The parameters of the meeting should be clearly laid out in an email to the student in order to ensure that the meeting is restricted to a discussion of the agreed topic (e.g. academic matter / health issue etc.). This should also be re-iterated at the beginning of the meeting to ensure clarity. Should the conversation deviate from the subject matter, the staff member should point this out and re-direct to the relevant topic.
3. If a staff member believes that the presence of a colleague at the meeting would be beneficial, they can do so, explaining to the student and third party that this colleague will be keeping a record of the meeting. The colleague may also participate in the meeting, if appropriate.
4. At the conclusion of the meeting, the parties should agree on any decisions made and the DCU staff member should keep a record of this.

¹ For the purposes of this document, 'third parties' means any person or persons other than the two parties to the contract between the University and the student. The phrase includes, but is not restricted to, parents, siblings, spouses, relatives, employers, sponsors, landlords, partner universities, the media and agencies wishing to carry out student surveys.

5. After the meeting, the member of staff should email the minutes and outcomes of the meeting to the student, with a copy to the colleague who took the notes during the meeting.
6. All members of the DCU community, including visitors to the campus, are required to adhere to the DCU [Dignity and Respect at Work and Study](#) policy. This should be referred to in the initial email to the student (see below).

Sample Email to Student confirming Confidentiality Waiver:

“Dear *STUDENT’S NAME*,

Under the Third Party University Policy, members of DCU staff normally communicate with the student directly on matters pertaining to their studies and do not involve a third party. You have requested, however, that your *MOTHER/FATHER/A THIRD PARTY* take part in our upcoming meeting in relation to the matter of your *SUBJECT OF MEETING (academic progression / health etc.)* and I have agreed to this. Please be aware that, as a result of your request, you are waiving your right to confidentiality. Please also note that all members of the DCU community, both staff and students, and visitors to the campus are required to adhere to the Policy to promote Respect and to protect Dignity at DCU, which can be found at <https://www.dcu.ie/policies/policies-a-z>.

The meeting will deal with *SUBJECT OF MEETING* only and not deviate to other matters.

Could you kindly confirm that you are fully aware of this Waiver and are happy to proceed with the meeting on this basis?”

*Should you have any questions regarding this policy, please contact Claire Bohan, Dean of Students – claire.bohan@dcu.ie

FINANCIAL DIFFICULTIES / FEES

STUDENT ASSISTANCE FUND:

During the course of a conversation, students may disclose details of serious financial issues which they are undergoing due to a sudden change in their circumstances (e.g. redundancy in the family / sudden illness of a family member etc.). Student Support & Development administers a [Student Assistance Fund](#) for students who encounter financial difficulties, which may lead to difficulty in continuing with or concentrating on their studies. Students at all level, undergraduate to PhD, can apply for this fund.

Full details can be found at:

www.dcu.ie/students/finance/assistance_fund.shtml

Alternatively, contact

Celine Geraghty, Financial Administrator, SS&D

Email: studentassistancefund@dcu.ie

Tel: 700 6055

WAIVER OF FEES ON MEDICAL GROUNDS:

Students may find themselves unable to complete a Semester or full academic year for medical reasons. If this happens, the student needs to inform the Chairperson of the programme and arrange for exams to be postponed or, indeed, the full year deferred.

Deferring a year or part of a year has *financial* as well as academic implications for the student. Should students wish to have their fees waived for 'repeating' a year or a part thereof, they should apply for a 'Waiver of Fees on Medical Grounds' by filling out and submitting the relevant form, which can be found at <https://www.dcu.ie/students/remission-fees-scheme-financial-assistance-service>. All cases will be considered individually. In all cases, please refer a student who is deferring a year or postponing examinations to the *Student Advice & Learning Skills Centre* for advice on documentation / dates for application for remission. **Students will be charged the full repeat fee for the modules if the Fees Office does not receive the correct documentation on time.**

- The following website is extremely useful as it provides comprehensive details about *all* grants and scholarships available in Ireland: www.studentfinance.ie
- **Student Fees Website:** <https://www.dcu.ie/fees/index.shtml>

INTEGRATION INTO UNIVERSITY LIFE

Many students find it quite difficult to integrate into university life initially. This is usually evident during the first few weeks of semester – and a number of students end up dropping out simply due to homesickness, not making friends or feeling that they do not belong in the new environment. Sometimes a gentle nudge in the right direction can make all the difference. The following are 'points of contact' for the students, which may give them an in-road into a social network:

CLUBS AND SOCIETIES:

There are over 100 [Clubs and Societies](#) in DCU – ranging from Snowboarding to Debating to Juggling to Drama. If a student feels overwhelmed by the choice of activities, a quick chat with the Students' Union sabbaticals may make the process a lot easier for them – or contact the *Student Advice & Learning Skills Centre* on the DCU Glasnevin or St Patrick's campus. For information on joining a society, contact Siobhan.byrne@dcu.ie / Tel: **700 5585**. This is one of the best ways for students to meet like-minded peers and has proven to be a huge source of support and motivation for students through the years.

CLASSROOM CONTACT:

Within the classroom itself, virtual or face-to-face, you may become conscious of some students not mixing well or integrating. There are many ways that you can deal with this, such as organising group activities in class – everybody has their own preferred options.

If you are concerned about a student, get in touch with us in Student Support & Development (Tel: Glasnevin Campus – 700 7165 / St Patrick's Campus – 700 9018 / student.support@dcu.ie) and we will work with you to see how we can best help the student. We offer various interventions and workshops to help students build confidence in themselves and develop networks more easily.

PARTICIPATION IN WORKSHOPS / EVENTS:

Many of the events organised by SS&D involve group work and participants getting to know each other. This can be a very easy way for students to get to know like-minded peers in a safe and supportive environment. Keep an eye on the SS&D / SU Newsletter every Monday for information on these events.

Members of staff are generally very invested in the welfare of the student population and take active steps to ensure that their contribution to the academic, personal, social or professional development of the student is as beneficial as possible.

Making yourself available to students – at reasonable notice and for a reasonable duration of time – is something we all expect of ourselves and our roles at the University. Sometimes, however, a student may require more personal attention, and the extent to which you can offer this may depend on other demands in your working lives or your availability at a crucial time for the student.

If, for whatever reason, you feel that you cannot offer the support or attention which a student needs, please contact the *Student Advice & Learning Skills Centre* and speak to one of the Student Advisors at any time. We will work with you or help the student directly.

THE ROLE OF STUDENT SUPPORT & DEVELOPMENT

The work of Student Support & Development staff can be broken down into two very distinctive categories:

- Development
- Support

DEVELOPMENT

On the **developmental** side, our role is to provide opportunities which will assist the growth of the student into a well-rounded graduate with regard for his/her professional, personal and physical wellbeing. This may include advice on healthy living, one-to-one advice on career progression or personal development, advice on extra-curricular activities and skills' development, academic workshops, preparing students for their work, clinical or teaching placements or encouraging them to take part in the **Uaneen** Module (<http://www.dcu.ie/uaneen/index.shtml>) or in **Engage**, the Student Engagement Award <https://www.dcu.ie/students/about-dcu-engage-student-award>.

Specialised Services include the following:

- Life Coaching & Pathways to Success Programme
- Discover DCU (Transitions to University programme)
- Career Mentoring Programme (Second Year Students)
- Mature Student Pre-Orientation Week (academic skills / personal preparation for university)

These are all advertised directly to the students via email and the Student Newsletter.

SUPPORT

On the **support** side, our work includes helping students in doubt about their programme of study / counselling students with feelings of low esteem / providing financial assistance / clarifying transfer or deferral options / mediating between individuals in situations of conflict etc.

The *Student Advice and Learning Skills Centre* provides a one-stop shop to answer queries on any aspects of students' lives at the University. This may include simply pointing the student in the right direction for relevant information or providing one-to-one advisory sessions.

THE SPECIALISED SERVICES OFFERED BY STUDENT SUPPORT & DEVELOPMENT ARE REFLECTED IN THE TITLES OF THE COMPONENT UNITS:

- [Access Service](#)
- [DCU Autism-Friendly](#)
- [Careers Service](#)
- [Chaplaincy Service](#)
- [Counselling & Personal Development Service](#)
- [Disability & Learning Support Service](#)
- [Student Advice & Learning Skills Centre](#) / [Mature Student Office](#)
- [Student Finance Service](#)

- [Student Health Service](#)
- [Student Learning](#)
- [Student Policy Office](#)
- [Widening Participation Officer](#)

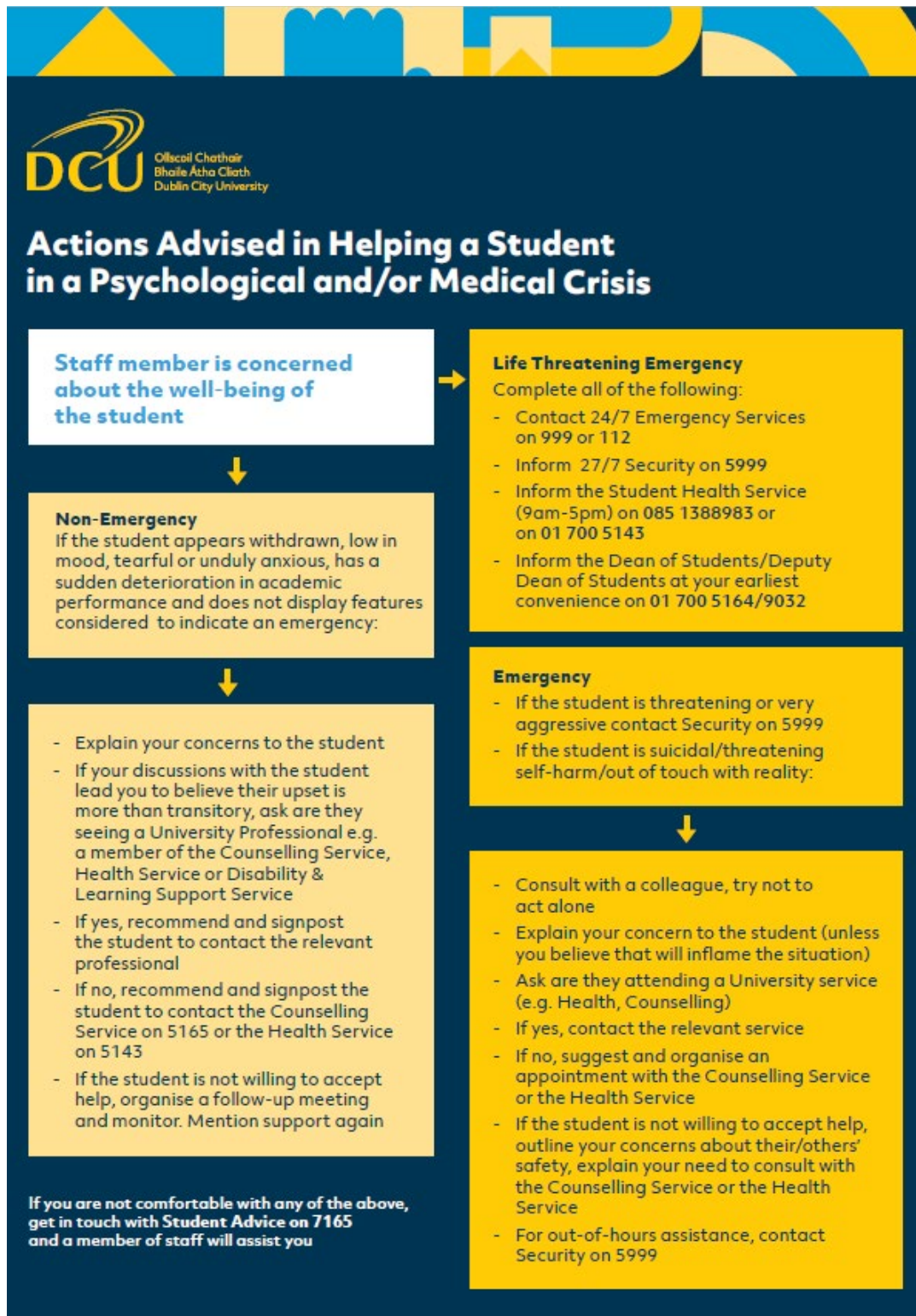
Detailed information can be found at www.dcu.ie/students

Please contact the Student Advice & Learning Skills Centre on the Glasnevin or St Patrick's Campus for information about any of the above services

Glasnevin Campus: student.support@dcu.ie / Tel: 700 7165

St Patrick's Campus: student.support@dcu.ie / Tel: 700 9018

DEALING WITH STUDENT PSYCHOLOGICAL AND/OR MEDICAL EMERGENCIES



If you are not comfortable with any of the above, get in touch with the Student Advice & Learning Skills Centre and a member of staff will assist you.

COORDINATION OF INCIDENTS/ACCIDENTS INVOLVING STUDENTS

In the unfortunate event that a student is involved in an incident causing injury or distress on or off campus and requires assistance, Security and Student Support & Development will coordinate events to assist the student in whatever manner possible. DCU Security is normally immediately involved in such incidences but, should any other member of staff come across an incident involving a student, Security staff should be contacted immediately¹.

1. Security staff follow their normal protocol for dealing with events/incidents and liaise with An Garda Síochána as normal.
2. The Dean of Students or, in their absence, the Deputy Dean of Students, is informed as soon as possible after / during the incident, in order to ensure that the relevant support systems are activated, and that relevant information is collated in a timely fashion. This may include:
 - a. In the case of a missing person, seeking relevant information from the Student Health Centre and/or Counselling Service, which may assist the Gardaí in their search.
 - b. The immediate appointment of a dedicated liaison officer to be a single point of contact between the University, An Garda Síochána and the student and family, as appropriate.
 - c. In the case of an accident or admission to hospital, ensuring that contact is established between the Student Health Centre and the hospital.
 - d. Contacting the family and offering support / providing direct contact details for a time in the future when the student is able to re-enter DCU.
 - e. Contacting the Chairperson / Head of School / Dean of Faculty of the student.
 - f. Contacting the Registry if the student is going to be absent for a period
 - g. Contacting the Director of Communications & Marketing in order to prepare, where necessary, an appropriate media response. No other members of staff should speak to the media unless directed by this Office.
 - h. Briefing the President, Deputy President, Chief Operations Officer, Vice President Academic Affairs/Registrar, as events unfold.
3. At a suitable time, the Dean of Students, or, in their absence, the Deputy Dean of Students will provide [Personal Accident and Injury Insurance](#) Claim details to the student or family of the student.
4. When the time comes that the student re-commences his/her studies at DCU, the Dean / Deputy Dean of Students should coordinate a support plan for the student to ensure re-integration into the university system. All efforts should be made to assist academic progression of the student.

¹ DCU Security staff are available 24/7 at 7005999 on all campuses.

UNIVERSITY PROTOCOL FOLLOWING THE DEATH OF A STUDENT

The death of a student is always a sad and distressing event for all concerned and should be dealt with in a sensitive and appropriate manner by the University. The following protocol lays out the normal University response upon being informed of the death of a student but this may differ depending on the circumstances and the wishes of the family. The ultimate protocol is at the discretion of the President and Dean of Students.

For information on the protocol for staff, Heads and Chairpersons, please go to the [University Policies](#) pages.

Guidelines for Chairperson / Head of School

Should you become aware of the passing of a student, please contact the Dean/Deputy Dean of Students at your earliest convenience.

1. Following the notification by the Dean / Deputy Dean of Students of the death of a student, the Head of School or, if preferable, the Chairperson of the relevant Programme, should inform the members of the Programme Board of the death of the student.
2. Once the funeral details become available to the Chairperson/Head, this information should be passed on to the Programme Board and any other member of staff who may have known the student. Staff members who are available may wish to attend the funeral. The Chaplaincy can provide guidance to staff, if required, in respect of different religious traditions.
3. In consultation with the Dean of Students and only when the funeral details have been made public, the Chairperson or Head of School should email the student class group informing them of the passing of the student and providing funeral details (and a RIP.ie link, if available). The Dean / Deputy Dean will advise whether a bus is being provided through the Students' Union.
4. Staff who notice any level of distress amongst the student body following the untimely death of the student may wish to contact Student Support & Development to arrange support.
5. Following the funeral, students and staff may wish to organize a remembrance service to celebrate the life of their fellow student. The Chairperson / Head of School should contact the Chaplaincy who will work with the students on a religious or ecumenical service, as appropriate. This will be arranged after a respectful period and at a time that suits the family and students.
6. Should the School wish to consider an Aegrotat Award for the deceased student, this can be discussed with the Student Awards Manager. Details of the Award can be found at <https://www4.dcu.ie/registry/examinations/index.shtml>.

STUDENT COMPLAINTS PROCEDURE

The Dublin City University (DCU) community is committed to ensuring that every student has the opportunity to have an excellent university experience. In order to achieve this, members of the community aspire to a high level of competency, fairness and professionalism. There may be circumstances where university systems, processes, human error or sub-standard performance on a specific occasion result in a student having a genuine grievance. It is the policy of the university to provide resolution mechanisms to address issues that may arise. In line with its commitment to excellence and continuous improvement, Dublin City University has adopted this procedure to deal with students' grievances that may arise while they are bona fide registered students at the University. It is the policy of the university that students' grievances should be dealt with in a fair, timely and effective manner.

In addition, information gathered through this procedure will be provided to the University's management so that the student experience at the University can be improved on an ongoing basis. For more information on how to advise a student who wants to make a complaint or has made a complaint, please see [here](#). for a complete and comprehensive outline of how a grievance is dealt with.

SEXUAL HARASSMENT / ASSAULT

DCU has created guidelines to support students who may have been involved in a case of sexual assault or rape. We take such allegations extremely seriously and aim to support the student in whatever way they wish to be supported. Details can be found [here](#).

Please contact Deirdre.moloney@dcu.ie, (Tel: 01-700 6157), the DCU Student Policy Officer, if you wish to speak to a member of staff on behalf of a student about this.

OUT-OF-HOURS EMERGENCIES

Security / Emergency:

Should an emergency arise on campus at any time, please call Security on 700 5999

Emergency 24/7 Phone & Text Helplines

Service	Contact
Ambulance, Garda, Fire Service	999 or 112
50808 anonymous free text support	Text Hello to 50808
Pieta House	1800 247247 or text HELP to 51444
Samaritans	166 123
National Rape Crisis helpline	1800 77888
D-Doc	0818224476

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