

A University Protocol – 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 Director of Student Support & Development.

The following is a summary of the appropriate response of the University when a student dies.

1. Responsibility for coordinating the overall response of the University rests with the Director of Student Support & Development (SS&D) or his/her nominee. S/he will liaise with the Security Services Manager, or his/her nominee, before putting in place any response. The Director of SS&D will appoint a ‘case manager’ to coordinate the response and call upon relevant individuals within the University for assistance with this response, where appropriate.
2. Coordination of a sudden death *may* include:
 - a. Liaising with An Garda Síochána and passing on family contact details so that they can inform the next-of-kin. Contact with the family should, in the first instance, be made by An Garda Síochána
 - b. Arranging flights and accommodation for family flying to Ireland for the period required, if necessary, normally 3-4 days
 - c. Meeting the family at the airport, if required
 - d. Assisting with the arrangements for repatriation, should this be required
 - e. Arranging for the private possessions of the deceased to be returned to the family
 - f. Acting as a contact point for the family for the duration required, once this has been agreed with An Garda Síochána
 - g. Liaising with the Finance Office on insurance matters, if relevant
 - h. Providing support for other students involved in / affected by the incident (counselling or other)
 - i. Liaising with the Inter Faith Centre or Director of SS&D regarding a Memorial Service, at the appropriate time.
3. Upon news of the death, The Director of SS&D should immediately inform the President. Following that, a communication should be sent to all members of Executive Committee, the Head Chaplain, the Director of Registry, the Head of the (relevant) School, the Chairperson of the (relevant) Programme, the Head of Communications and Marketing, each service within SS&D, the Reception Desk and the Security Services Manager.

4. The Reception Desk and Security should be informed that all queries, from the media or otherwise, be referred in the first instance to the Head of Communications and Marketing.
5. The Security Services Manager should ensure that the University flag is flown at half-mast on the day on which news of the death is received and on the day of the funeral.
6. As soon as the removal and funeral details become known, they should be communicated by the Head Chaplain or Director of SS&D to all those listed above.
7. If a large number of students from the class group wish to attend the funeral, it may be desirable to hire a bus for this purpose. This can be organized by the Students' Union.
8. The Director of SS&D should inform the Director of Registry, in writing, that the student has died, and this must be recorded on the student database by the Registry in such a way as to ensure that the student is not included in any subsequent communication. In the case of the University learning of the death of a *graduate*, the Registry, the Alumni Office and the DCU Educational Trust should be informed, in writing, to ensure no subsequent mailings are sent.
9. The Director of Student Support & Development will inform the Director of Finance, who will ensure that any outstanding Fees or Finance issues are appropriately dealt with, including contact with any external agencies should this be required. Finance will also establish whether the Student Personal Accident Policy applies and, if it does, should liaise with the Director of SS&D to ensure that information is conveyed to the family at the appropriate time.
10. The primary consideration in the University's response on these occasions should be the wishes of the family. Therefore, if the family, for example, wish absolutely no comment to be made to the media (even confirming that the deceased was a student here), or if they wish that the death of the student is not officially conveyed to anyone in the University, this wish must be adhered to.

Guidelines for Chairperson / Head of School

1. Following the notification by the Director of SS&D, 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 Director of Student Support & Development 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 Director of SS&D 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 memorial service to celebrate the life of their fellow student. The Chairperson / Head of School should contact the Chaplaincy or Director of SS&D who will work with the students on an appropriate memorial service. 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>.

Director of Student Support & Development
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