

University Protocol

Death of a Staff Member

The University is committed to providing a supportive work environment and contributing to the health and wellbeing of all staff. This protocol is intended to provide guidance and support when the University has been advised of the death of a staff member. In recognition of the stressful impact this news may have, this protocol will be guided by the following principles.

The Principles

- The University will seek to ensure that contact with the staff members family is timely and sensitive.
- The University will ensure that all internal and external communications are managed sensitively in line with the procedures outlined in Appendix 1 and 2.
- The University is committed to the wellbeing of its staff and will seek to provide appropriate assistance to the staff member's colleagues and work area as soon as possible after notification.
- The University will seek to manage the impact on all staff, students and relevant University stakeholders.
- The University will ensure all appropriate benefit entitlements are processed.

The Guidelines

The following guidelines should be followed but may vary depending on the circumstances surrounding the death of the staff member.

1. Responsibility for co-ordinating the overall response of the University rests with the Director of DCU People (HR) in conjunction with the relevant Senior Management Team member and /or Head of Department. The Director of DCU People and the Head of Department will call upon relevant individuals within the University for assistance where appropriate.
2. The death of a staff member will at all times be dealt with sensitively and tactfully and the co-ordination of the University's response may include:
 - a. Liaising with An Garda Síochána (in the case of a sudden death) 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. In the event of death abroad or of an international staff member, the University will endeavour to provide any advice and support it can with any arrangements that the family are making.
 - c. Acting as a contact point for the family for the duration required.
 - d. Informing staff and external contacts /stakeholders about the death of the staff member in line with the communications approach outlined in Appendix 1 and 2.
 - e. Providing support for staff and colleagues affected by the death of the staff member. This may include counselling or other interventions as required.
 - f. Liaising with the Inter Faith Centre, if appropriate, regarding a Memorial Service, at a suitable time.
3. Upon news of the death of a staff member, the Director of Human Resources and all members of the Senior Management of the University should be informed immediately.
 4. DCU Estates / Head of Security will also be informed to ensure that the University flag is flown at half-mast for 3 days on all 3 campuses from the day on which news of the death is received or as and when appropriate.
 5. The primary consideration in the University's response on these occasions should be the wishes of the family. The Director of DCU People and/or the Head of Department will liaise with the staff member's family to offer condolence and to seek their wishes regarding further communication or support from the University. Subject to the agreement of the family, a communication will be issued by the Director of DCU People or the Head of the Department via the all-staff email to inform them of the death of the staff member.
 6. Having regard to the sensitivity of the situation, each member of the Senior Management team will take appropriate action as the death of the staff member relates to their area of responsibility.
 7. The main University Reception Desks and Security should be informed.
 8. As soon as the removal and funeral details become known, they should be communicated by the Head of Department to all those listed above. Again,

subject to the agreement of the family, a communication may also be issued via the all-staff email. Staff will be facilitated in attending the funeral of their colleague.

9. Staff may wish to have a commemorative service on campus. If so, this should be organised by the Head of the Department in consultation with the Chaplains if appropriate.
10. While it is understandable that, in the immediate aftermath of the death of a staff member colleagues might want a commemorative plaque or some other tangible memorial, no undertakings or publicity should be given to such an eventuality until the University has had time to consider it. The University will liaise with the family to ensure any proposals meet with the family's approval. There is a Garden of Remembrance on campus in memory of all deceased staff and students of the University. There is also a Book of Remembrance kept in the Inter Faith Centre, and an annual remembrance ceremony.
11. DCU People will assist the family and designated beneficiaries with matters relating to University benefit schemes and plans.
12. The Death of a retired staff member should be notified immediately to the DCU People Pensions Team so that all the appropriate steps are taken in relation to benefits in payment.
13. Any other arrangements and communications will be determined by the relevant head of department.

Version Control

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End of Protocol.

Note: Appendices 1 & 2 follow below.

Appendix 1 – Internal Communications

The death of a staff member should be communicated internally within DCU before it is communicated externally.

The Director of DCU People (HR) has responsibility for the protocol and should have oversight of this process, not just communications, but all arrangements that need to be made by the University.

It is important that the Director of DCU People (HR) and by extension the Senior Management Team are among the first to be notified of the death of a staff member.

This information can then be cascaded to the relevant Heads and Line Managers if they are not aware. This is detailed below.

Public Announcements

Before any announcement is made on School, Faculty or personal social media accounts it should also be ascertained if the immediate family of the deceased are happy with public commentary being made.

This is to minimise the chances of upsetting the family or of colleagues finding out via social media and to maintain control of what information about the deceased is put out by the University.

Who needs to be informed and by whom

Sometimes the University will be contacted by a family member to inform them. They might contact DCU People (HR) or a faculty/department colleague known to them. It is also possible that the University learns of the death via a social media post by someone close to the deceased.

Regardless of who hears first the following should apply once it becomes known:

If Academic staff member or Professional member of school or faculty staff has died	If a Professional staff member has died
<p>The person notified of the death of a faculty member should in the first instance contact:</p> <p>The deceased's Head of School (academic) and/or Faculty Manager (professional).</p>	<p>The person notified of the death of a professional member of staff should in the first instance contact:</p> <p>The deceased's Line Manager</p> <p>It is the responsibility of the Line Manager to inform:</p>

<p>If Academic staff member or Professional member of school or faculty staff has died</p>	<p>If a Professional staff member has died</p>
<p>It is the responsibility of the Head of School or Faculty Manager to inform:</p> <p>Executive Dean of Faculty</p> <p>The Dean will then inform:</p> <p>Director of DCU People (HR) Faculty manager (if not already aware) Faculty Communications Officer (where this role exists).</p> <p>The Exec Dean is then responsible for informing colleagues within their faculty of the news and subsequent funeral arrangement when made known.</p> <p>In addition, Senior Management Group should be notified (by the Exec Dean).</p> <p>They will then inform relevant teams within their area of responsibility if they have not already been notified (e.g. Communications).</p> <p>It is also the duty of the Exec Dean to inform ISS of the death.</p>	<p>Director of the department</p> <p>The Director will then inform:</p> <p>Director of DCU People (HR)</p> <p>The Director of the department is then responsible for informing colleagues within their teams of the news and subsequent funeral arrangement when made known.</p> <p>In addition, Senior Management Group should be notified (by the Director of the department).</p> <p>They will then inform relevant teams within their area of responsibility if they have not already been notified (e.g. Communications).</p> <p>It is also the duty of the Director of the department to inform ISS of the death.</p>

The death of retired staff would be a matter for School and Faculty only.

Announcements

Public announcements on social media should be made in consultation with the Communications and Digital Communications teams and they can supply a high-res staff profile photo if necessary. They should also be made in consultation with the family of the deceased, so they are aware of what the University protocols are. The family has final say on whether the University comments publicly, through social media or a news story.

In most instances, the death of a well-known or highly regarded member of staff will result in public commentary. When it is agreed that a public announcement/obituary by the University is appropriate, the faculty should make someone available, preferably the Head of School, to review any news story or obituary that would be posted. This will ensure that the story accurately describes and reflects the deceased.

Any such news story would feature a quote from the President and Head of School. News stories would be for current staff and former Presidents.

All media requests should be fielded through mediaqueries@dcu.ie, not by individual faculty members.

Process for announcements

1. All staff email sent by Head of School/ Faculty/ unit or department.
2. A news story posted on the relevant faculty or department's newsfeed - story to be written in concert with Communications team.
3. Social posts, linking to the story, to be made by the faculty or department.
4. Social posts to be reshared by main DCU accounts.

Appendix 2 - Following the Death of a Staff Member

DCU Account

ISS will grant delegated access to the deceased staff member's DCU account (including email) to their Head of School or Head of Unit.

They will have access for 30 days, with provision for an extension if deemed necessary.

It is recommended that an out of office be put on the deceased staff member's account. A template for this is below

Out of Office

It is with great sadness that we inform you that <name> died on <date>. They will be very much missed by all their colleagues and friends here in <department>.

If you would like to have your email handled by another member of staff, please forward your message to <name> at <email address>.

Thank you,

<Sign off with name and title>

Removal of Staff Profile

The deceased staff member's staff profile should be removed from the DCU website between 60 and 90 days of their death.

It is the responsibility of the deceased's line manager or Head of School to action this.

Updating of Webpages (including course pages)

It is the responsibility of the deceased's line manager or Head of School to action the removal of contact details for the deceased from department/ school/ faculty web pages, including course pages.

This may need to be done in conjunction with ISS.

Photographs

The deceased's line manager or Head of School (in possible collaboration with the Faculty Manager) should ensure that all photographs of deceased that are in use in a promotional or marketing capacity are removed from the DCU website and replaced with other appropriate images.

Any photographs of the deceased that are held in shared department, school or faculty Google Drives should be clearly renamed (i.e. DO NOT USE - <name> deceased <date>) so they are not inadvertently used on the website, in presentations etc.

End of Appendices.