

LOUGHBOROUGH UNIVERSITY

IMMEDIATE ACTIONS TO DEAL WITH A SUDDEN STUDENT DEATH

The following gives guidance on immediate action which must be taken in the event of a sudden student death within the University, whether in an accident, by suicide or illness. This sheet has been circulated to all Heads of Departments and Sections, Wardens, Sub-wardens and Departmental Administrators.

The attached table summarises these notes and outlines possible action for follow-up from the various sections. It is intended for reference and as a check list, rather than a blueprint for every occasion.

1. In case of emergency, immediately call:

- .1 An **ambulance** (888 from any internal telephone or 999 from other telephones)
- .2 A **doctor** (University Medical Centre tel: (22)2062)
**Out of hours 18.30-8.00 week days, weekends and bank holidays
telephone 0845 0450557**
- .3 **University Security** (888 from any internal telephone or (22)2141)
- .4 The **Police** (999) – any sudden/suspicious death is immediately the responsibility of the Police who act as the 'Coroner's Officer'.

Give the exact location and brief details of the nature of the incident so that these services can be properly prepared to assist. If necessary, get a helper to direct these services to the right place.

2. If you think that the person is dead, do not try to move the body or interfere with it in any way until help arrives. If possible, try to screen off the area, for example by keeping onlookers away. Do not touch the body.
3. The correct identification of the individual concerned is vital; assist the Police in any way you can.
4. Liaise with and maintain contact with the emergency services for as long as necessary.
5. Inform the appropriate senior member of academic or administrative staff .e.g. Head of Department or Warden. One of these will be designated the key contact person. Also inform the Registrar.
6. Make a note of the time of the incident (if known), and those individuals involved to enable evidence to be gathered and for subsequent care.

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LOUGHBOROUGH UNIVERSITY

GUIDELINES ON HOW TO DEAL WITH A SUDDEN STUDENT DEATH

These guidelines are for any members of University staff finding themselves taking a major role in dealing with a sudden death at the University, whether due to an accident, suicide or illness. This role will involve actions to cope with the immediate emergency, but may also continue for some time afterwards. It is important to remember, however, that any sudden or suspicious death is immediately the responsibility of the Police who act as 'Coroner's Officer'.

These guidelines supplement the **Immediate Actions sheet** held by all Heads of Departments and Sections, Wardens, Sub-wardens and Departmental Administrators.

AT THE INCIDENT

(a) Immediate Actions

1. Be aware that close involvement in a situation in which death has resulted will probably have a numbing and upsetting effect. Although a positive and decisive attitude is needed to deal with the incident, be sympathetic: the incident will affect a lot of people and in many different ways.
2. The following emergency services and University personnel should be contacted straight away (see also the Immediate Actions sheet):
 - .1 **Ambulance** – a priority requirement in case of urgent removal to hospital. When phoning for an ambulance, try and give clear information about what has happened, how many people are involved, the exact location and so on.
 - .2 **Doctor** – the next priority is to call for a Medical Centre doctor who will be able to provide initial care if the patient requires it. In other circumstances the doctor will be required to certify death.
 - .3 **University Security** – to control the situation e.g. keeping other people away from the vicinity, removing/stopping subsequent danger, assisting the emergency services, liaison with the Police and University staff as appropriate.
 - .4 **Police** – in the event of a fatality, whether the circumstances are suspicious or not, a police officer acts on behalf of H.M. Coroner, and will need to attend the scene of death, examine it, including the body and make relevant enquiries in respect of the circumstances of the death. Exceptional circumstances apart, leave the search of the body to a police officer. Do not try to move the body or interfere with it in any way until the police arrive.

The correct identification of the individual is vital, so help the police if you can in this respect. In the case of a dead person a formal identification will be required. Determine someone acquainted with the dead person (not specifically a friend) to take on this role but be aware of the effect it might have on them.

- .5 **Head of Department and/or Warden** or other senior member of academic or administrative staff, as appropriate.

If student is in hall, the Warden can be contacted out of hours if necessary.

b) **Subsequent Actions:**

NB: Head of Department or Warden will be Key Contact Person

3. Once the immediate emergency is being dealt with, inform other people as follows:-

- .1 **Public Relations Assistant tel. (22) 2224**

Notify the communications and Public Relations Office as soon as possible with details of what has happened so that they can deal with media enquiries subsequently. If the press should arrive at the incident or make enquiries subsequently, politely ask them to direct their enquiries through the Public Relations Officer/Police. On no account give personal opinions and instruct those working with you to do likewise.

- .2 **Chaplaincy tel. (223741)**

University Chaplains may also be called out-of-hours at the following numbers:

Anglican	(01509) 237761, 217020 and 821131
Roman Catholic	(01509) 822646
Free Churches	(01509) 211549 and 240315

The Chaplaincy can also advise on other faith communities and leaders in the local area.

- .3 Keep yourself informed as to what courses of action are intended by the emergency services (e.g. to which hospital the casualty is to be taken).
- .4 Maintain contact with anyone deeply involved in the incident. Do not leave them on their own but provide a suitable environment to talk over the incident. This role is a very important one, which will need your time and patience.

AFTER THE INCIDENT

(a) Passing on Necessary Information

- .5 Close liaison with the Security Manager will be essential to ensure the efficient flow of information and decision making. Once the emergency is over and presuming the person has died/is dead, check that all the initial lines of communication have been followed. If not done already, report the incident as soon as possible to the Registrar.

NB. The information given below is summarised on the attached table.

- (a) Registrar's office will confirm that all initial contacts have been made i.e. HOD, Warden, Director of Student Guidance and Welfare, Chaplaincy, and Security.

- (b) Registrar's office will also inform:

Vice-Chancellor
Public Relations
Student Records
Personnel
Students Union
Switchboard

- (c) Director of Student Guidance and Welfare will inform as appropriate:

Careers
Counselling
Wardens
DANS
ELSU
Medical Centre
Students Advice
imago

- .6 Fill out an Accident report Form and pass this on to the University Health and Safety Officer. This is a legal requirement.

(b) Getting the Situation Back to Normal

- .7 When the body is moved away from the site of the incident Security will return/make arrangements to return the site to normal if this is possible. If this is not possible, Security will restrict access to the location, thus preserving evidence.

- .8 It may be necessary to seal the person's study bedroom or office either on instructions from the police or as a prudent security measure. Liaise with the Security Manager over making such an area secure.

(c) Informing Next of Kin

- .9 In most cases of death the police will inform the next of kin by a visit to their home. Ascertain what information they will pass on and to whom. This will be useful in subsequent contact with the next of kin and could be relevant to other agencies. Head of Department/Warden will need to contact next of kin soon after to offer sympathy and support.
- .10 If in an unusual situation outside authorities are not to inform next of kin, decide on how this should be dealt with. It is preferable that this type of news is delivered in person. If necessary seek advice from informed people such as the University Counselling Service and Chaplaincy. Attempt to find out what you can about the next of kin – mother, father, brother(s) and/or sister(s) etc before making personal contact. Choose the environment sensitively. Check that you are speaking to the correct person, warn them that you have some bad news about the individual concerned and then explain as simply and accurately as possible what has happened. Try and ascertain whether the person to whom you are speaking is with someone who will be able to provide sensible advice and offer whatever help you think is appropriate and reasonable. Leave your phone number or other information to enable future contact. Keep details of addresses and telephone numbers; these might be useful later on.

Be prepared to react sensitively to other people's responses to death. Suicide, for example, is viewed in different ways by different cultures and religious groups. See paragraph 15 below for guidance in the event of the death of a person from overseas.

(c) Welfare Considerations of other People Involved

- .11 Bear in mind those who were involved in and who assisted in the incident, and how to contact them to check on their well being. Learning the details of the incident is usually helpful for anyone disturbed by a death. If those closely involved have not experienced a reaction, this might be delayed. It can be helpful for those involved to talk through the incident together, sharing their distress, and they should be reminded that staff from the University Counselling Service are available to help with counselling for individual students or a group of friends.
- .12 Give careful thought to informing other appropriate people who might not yet be aware of the incident (such as other residents in a hall). A clear concise statement to such people will reduce chit-chat and speculation and generally calm down the community involved. Other friends might be associated with the department, accommodation, leisure/club activity or religious groups and it is much better they should learn of the incident in a controlled fashion rather than indirectly. Contact these people as quickly as possible and again give them a point of contact.
- .13 Those involved in the incident should be prepared to be treated warily by certain parts of the community. People will probably be

confused about how to respond. This effect could be particularly disturbing for others involved in the incident e.g. a student who was closely involved. He/she might feel that they are in some way being blamed if people stop talking to them. There may be reluctance to use facilities/space previously used by the dead person, e.g. work space in laboratory or room in hall of residence. A good flow of information to those concerned and a request for responsible behaviour are likely to minimise such reactions.

(d) Guidance Relating to Overseas Students

- .14 The following notes will be helpful in the event of the death of an overseas student. Head of Department or Warden should decide how to co-ordinate the arrangements, depending on the particular circumstances of the incident. The student's funding body must be informed and might wish to take responsibility for the arrangements. Where there is no funding body and the student is privately sponsored, then the Embassy might provide assistance. The funding body/Embassy might also assist with informing the next of kin if abroad. Other points to bear in mind are:
- (a) Funeral arrangements. It might be necessary for the University to make contact with a specialist who arranges for the deceased to be taken back to their country of origin and who is aware of the practices of different religions. The British Council uses a London-based firm, Rowlands Bros. Tel. 0800 854448.
 - (b) Personal effects. The student's belongings might need to be returned home, bank accounts closed etc.
 - (c) Partners and dependants. If the student is accompanied by his or her family at Loughborough, care will be needed to provide a great deal of help and support to these people.

LATER FOLLOW UP ACTION

- .15 Keep the flow of information going to the senior University staff. Maintain liaison with the police/doctor/hospital. Keep a note of the names of police officer/doctors etc. There may be a coroner's inquest – find out when and where. Bear in mind that students/colleagues might be called and could find the occasion disturbing.
- .16 Try to find out about the funeral arrangements. The University would normally send a wreath (or a donation if the family prefer) for the funeral and a member of the student's department might wish to attend the service. Encourage close friends to check with the family whether their presence at the service would be welcome. Pass on information such as a request for no flowers to friends and others. Do not inhibit communication with the

relatives: you would not wish them to feel nobody cared, but try to make sure that their feelings/wishes are taken into consideration.

- .17 A visit to the University by a relative/close friend is quite likely. This could be to collect personal possessions or as part of the follow-up/enquiry into the death. They may wish to talk to you about the incident or the dead person. This is only natural and could be very helpful to them and maybe other relatives/friends. People often assume the worst in such situations. Be thoughtful and offer what assistance you can. The University might be able to help with accommodation – check with the HOD or Registrar.
- .18 A service held locally e.g. on campus might be appropriate and would enable more of the community to express their feelings. Consult with close friends/chaplains as appropriate. Such a service could provide an end to the distress and help the grieving process.

Further advice can be found in the following documents:-

- (a) Social Security booklet “What to do after a death”
- (b) Counselling Service leaflet on bereavement.

This document is based on guidelines produced in 1987 and later reviewed by a small working party in 1999; updated in August 2007.

Reacting to a Student Death – Key Contacts

KEY CONTACTS: Relevant WARDEN; Relevant HEAD OF DEPARTMENT; REGISTRAR’S OFFICE; DIRECTOR OF STUDENT GUIDANCE AND WELFARE; CHAPLAINCY; SECURITY.

ALL key contacts should be informed as soon as possible following the death.

Registrar’s Office will inform: V-C’s Office, Public Relations, Personnel, Student Records, Students’ Union, Switchboard.

Director of Student Guidance and Welfare (SG&W) will inform: Careers, Counselling, Wardens, DANS, ELSU, Medical Centre, Student Advice, imago Services.

	Warden** (see below)	Head of Department** (see below)	Chaplaincy	Registrar’s Office	Security	Public Relations	Counselling	Imago Services	Student records	Students’ Union	Medical Centre
Day 1	<p>Liaise with HoD re contacting family.</p> <p>*Confirm level of publicity desired by family and notify Public Relations.</p> <p>Inform Hall sub-wardens, staff, committee.</p> <p>*Full details of student to Registrar’s office.</p> <p>Arrange meeting to inform Hall (perhaps with Chaplaincy/counselling).</p>	<p>Liaise with Warden (where relevant) re contacting family.</p> <p>*Confirm level of publicity desired by family and notify Public Relations.</p> <p>Inform staff – course leader, personal tutor, year tutor etc.</p> <p>*Full details of student to Registrar’s Office.</p> <p>Arrange meeting to inform year/course group (perhaps with Chaplaincy/Counselling)</p>	<p>Liaise with HoD and Warden to arrange meetings with staff/students.</p> <p>Liaison with family (when informed), hospital, mortuary.</p> <p>Liaise with Security, SG&W, imago re informing flat/house-mates if off-campus.</p> <p>24hour availability for students/staff.</p>	<p>Details of student and next of kin to HoD, Warden, Chaplaincy.</p> <p>Letter to next of kin from Registrar/V-C.</p> <p>Liaise with Publicity re press release.</p> <p>Consider lowering flag – inform Security</p>	<p>Liaise with police and Coroner as necessary.</p> <p>Contact Health and Safety if appropriate.</p> <p>Alert key contacts (at home if out of hours).</p> <p>Put enquirers/press in touch with Public Relations/key contacts as appropriate.</p> <p>Lower flag if required.</p>	<p>Liaise with HoD, Warden, Registrar’s Office, and Director of Student Guidance and Welfare re press release.</p> <p>Inform S.U. media of press releases.</p>	<p>Meeting with students in dept, Hall if needed (liaison with HoD, Warden, Chaplaincy if appropriate)</p> <p>Supply briefing paper on bereavement to Warden, HoD.</p> <p>Check/increase availability for requests for counselling for affected students and staff.</p>	<p>Liaise with Security, SG&W, Chaplaincy re informing flat/house-mates if off-campus.</p> <p>Check Security of student’s possessions.</p> <p>Ensure flat/house mates are aware of other support services.</p>		<p>Alert Exec.</p> <p>Alert student magazine editor & media centre.</p> <p>Liaise with publicity.</p>	<p>Prepare for possible increased anxiety, requests for vaccination etc.</p> <p>Liaise with Security, wardens etc as appropriate.</p> <p>Possible meeting with students to explain &/or reassure.</p>

	Warden** (see below)	Head of Department** (see below)	Chaplaincy	Registrar's Office	Security/switch board	Public Relations	Counselling	Residential Organisation	Student Records	Students' Union	Medical Centre
Within 7 days	<p>Liaison with family re collection of student's personal possessions.</p> <p>*Notify all sections on this paper re funeral arrangements.</p> <p>Consider representation of staff & students at funeral.</p> <p>Discuss arrangements for Memorial service/event/fund with Hall, Dept, Chaplaincy.</p> <p>Amend student records/remove student's name from lists.</p>	<p>Liaison with family and/or Warden/imago re collection of work/personal possessions.</p> <p>*Notify all sections on this paper re funeral arrangements.</p> <p>Consider representation of staff and students at funeral.</p> <p>Discuss arrangements for Memorial service/event/fund with Dept, Hall, Chaplaincy.</p> <p>Amend student records/remove student's name from lists.</p>	<p>Liaise with HoD, Warden re funeral arrangements.</p> <p>Consider visiting other staff/students involved.</p> <p>Assist in collection of student's possessions.</p> <p>Discuss possible Memorial service/event with HoD &/or Warden. Inform Registrar's Office.</p> <p>Possible attendance at/involvement in funeral.</p>	<p>Amend student records. Inform Computing Services, LEA, Student Loans Officer as appropriate.</p> <p>Arrange reimbursement of fees.</p> <p>Consider representation of University at funeral – +flowers or donation (according to family's wishes).</p>	<p>Lower flag on day of funeral if required.</p> <p>Continue liaison with Coroner's office.</p>	<p>Continue liaison with Registrar's Office, Warden/HoD etc.</p>	<p>Availability for individuals and groups.</p>	<p>Deal with rent agreement – arrange return of deposit & rent paid in advance.</p> <p>Liaise with Security/Family re collection of possessions.</p>	<p>Amend student records.</p> <p>Inform Computing Services, Library, LEA, student loans officer etc as appropriate.</p> <p>Arrange reimbursement of fees.</p>	<p>Consider representation at funeral.</p> <p>Letter from President/VP to family (address from Registrar's Office).</p>	<p>Amend medical records.</p>
Continuing	<p>Liaison over memorial service/event/fund</p> <p>Ongoing support for students/staff.</p>	<p>Liaison with Registrar/Faculty over posthumous award/fund.</p> <p>Consider memorial service/event.</p>	<p>Care for students and staff & family.</p> <p>Consider memorial service/event.</p>	<p>Consider posthumous award.</p> <p>Attendance at memorial event/service.</p>	<p>Continue liaison with Coroner's Office.</p>		<p>Issues triggered in existing and new clients.</p>				

**** In the case of the death of a hall student, it is likely that the WARDEN will carry out tasks marked *. The HEAD OF DEPARTMENT is likely to carry out tasks marked * for non-hall students. Initial liaison between Warden and Department where both are involved is crucial to avoid omission or duplication of tasks.**

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