

## Student and Staff Death Policy and Procedure

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### PURPOSE

1. It is rare that the College is faced with the death of a student or staff member; however, it is essential that formal procedures are in place, which observe the following principles:
  - an appropriate level of response by the College, with help from the appropriate external agencies;
  - a sensitive and compassionate approach which recognises the distress for the person finding the body, the next of kin, and the distress or potential for distress for staff and students close to the deceased person;
  - clear lines of responsibility to support a set of coherent and valuable contributions in response to the death made by College staff and students;
  - the observation of legalities to protect the interests of the College in cases where negligence might be alleged;
  - an appropriate duty of care towards all staff and students.

### SCOPE

2. The Policy provides a high-level overview of the responsibilities and actions required by a range of stakeholders to respond to deaths of students and/or staff. It therefore focuses on a broad range of responses undertaken at the central and faculty level.
3. This Policy applies to all student and staff deaths that occur outside a controlled environment such as a hospital.

### COMMUNICATIONS

4. The College is committed to responding to the death in a compassionate and respectful manner. The College will be guided by the following principles when responding to such incidents:
  - 4.1. The College will act in a timely and sensitive manner with respect and compassion. Care will be extended to those closely involved with the individual or the incident leading to the death, including the family or next of kin, friends, fellow students and staff members.

- 4.2. The College will seek to collaborate and cooperate with external officials to facilitate any investigations or administrative activities relating to the death.
- 4.3. The College will act discreetly when dealing with information relating to the individual and the incident. Any public statements made for or on behalf of the College will only be released after they have been checked for accuracy and approved by the Master and the COO. Any staff involved in responding to the incident will use discretion at all times.
- 4.4. All staff should ensure that they do not undertake any external communications, outside of those with emergency services, unless this is sanctioned by the Master or the COO. Staff should continue to strictly observe the same protocols of data protection as set out under the Data Protection Act. Staff should be careful of the language used when communicating with others. The term 'suicide' should never be used as this classification of death can only be used after it has been ruled as such by a Coroner. It can also be incredibly upsetting for family members.
- 4.5. All staff and students should ensure that they do not post any information on social media about the death.

### **STANDARD ACTIONS OF EMERGENCY SERVICES**

5. The Police and emergency services will notify the College of the confirmation of death.
6. The Police will normally arrange for the removal of the body and any necessary post-mortem.
7. The Police will normally arrange for the next of kin to be informed. The Registrar (or nominee) will source the details of a student's next of kin. The HR and Operations Manager (or nominee) will source the details of a staff member's next of kin from their staff file.

### **PROCEDURE FOR RESPONDING TO STUDENT AND/OR STAFF DEATH**

#### **STAGE 1 - DEATHS ON COLLEGE PROPERTY**

##### **Discovery of a death within the Registry:**

8. Any student or member of staff who discovers a body should:
  - 8.1. not touch or move the body or any object connected with the scene
  - 8.2. immediately notify a member of the Senior Management Team (SMT)
9. A member of the SMT will be required to instigate an evacuation of the building excluding those directly involved in the incident.
10. A member of the SMT will call 999 and request an ambulance and the Police; telling the emergency services exactly where they are and who they are; also giving them the relevant mobile or extension number so that they

can be reached directly.

11. If there are witnesses, please ask them to wait until the emergency services have arrived. Please be aware that both you and other people at the scene may be experiencing shock. Please ensure you seek help from a College First Aider if you or others feel unwell.
12. Please do not contact relatives or friends of the deceased as the notification of death should normally be undertaken by the Police.

### **Staff roles and responsibilities**

13. The SMT member(s) should:
  - 13.1. Liaise with the person who has discovered the death and the emergency services.
  - 13.2. Ensure only necessary individuals are at the scene (the person who discovered the death, witnesses and emergency services) - anyone else must be escorted away.
  - 13.3. Instigate an evacuation of the building, in a calm manner so as not to panic any students or staff.
  - 13.4. Inform the Student Wellbeing Coordinator (SWC) (or nominee) who can offer support to students at the scene or the HR & Operations Manager (or nominee) for staff requiring support.
  - 13.5. Discuss with other team members about the closure of the building after the incident has been dealt with.
  - 13.6. Inform any other staff required to support the incident.
  - 13.7. Cooperate with the emergency services to ensure that any evidence is made available and the building is secured once the emergency services have left.
  - 13.8. Notify the Registrar (if not the SMT member initially alerted to the death).
14. The Registrar should:
  - 14.1. At the time of the event:
    - 14.1.1. notify the SWC if they do not already know about the incident so that they can arrange support for students involved.
    - 14.1.2. notify the HR & Operations Manager who should arrange support for staff involved.
    - 14.1.3. Notify all staff members within the Central Office to help support the students and staff enquiring about the incident.
  - 14.2. After the event:
    - 14.2.1. Notify the Financial Controller to ensure no fee notes or other financial communications are sent to the student.
    - 14.2.2. Ensure that the relevant external organisations are

notified: Southampton Solent University, Swansea University, University of London International Programmes and Senate House Library. Notify the relevant Head of Faculty.

14.3. Prepare for Stage 2 of the procedure.

## **STAGE 1 - DEATHS NOT ON COLLEGE PROPERTY**

### **Informing the College of the death of a student:**

15. If you are a student or a staff member informing the College of a death that has not occurred on College property, please call the College and request to speak with the COO or Registrar. If the incident occurs out of office hours, please call the emergency line on 07512 655 442. If the SWC receives a call out-of-office hours they will inform the COO or Registrar as soon as possible.
16. The COO or Registrar should then:
  - 16.1. Liaise with the person who has reported the death and the emergency services (if appropriate).
  - 16.2. Inform the SWC (or nominee), who can offer support to students who were at the scene, or the HR & Operations Manager (or nominee) who can offer support to staff,
  - 16.3. Inform any other staff required to support the incident.
  - 16.4. Notify the Registrar (if the Registrar was not initially alerted to the death).
17. For a student death, the Registrar should:
  - 17.1. At the time of the event:
    - 17.1.1. Notify the SWC if they do not already know about the incident so that they can arrange support for students involved.
    - 17.1.2. Notify the HR & Operations Manager who should arrange support for staff involved.
    - 17.1.3. Notify all staff members within the Central Office to help support the students and staff enquiring about the incident.
  - 17.2. After the event involving a student death:
    - 17.2.1. Notify the Financial Controller to ensure no fee notes or other financial communications are sent to the student.
    - 17.2.2. Ensure that the relevant external organisations are notified: Southampton Solent University, Swansea University, University of London International Programmes and Senate House Library.
    - 17.2.3. Notify the relevant Head of Faculty.

**Informing the College of the death of a member of staff:**

18. For the death of a member of staff, the HR and Operations Manager should:
  - 18.1. Be a point of contact for the person managing the staff member's estate.
  - 18.2. Inform the insurance company to instigate the "Death in Service" policy and organise for any payments to be made.
19. Prepare for Stage 2 of the procedure.

**STAGE 2 - DEATHS ON OR OFF COLLEGE PROPERTY**

**For the death of a student:**

20. The Registrar will contact the family of a student approximately 24 hours after the death has been confirmed by the police and the next of kin have been informed.
  - 20.1. This call will focus on offering the College's condolences and extending support. If the family wish to make the details of the funeral service available, arrange for contact details to be made available to those who the family have agreed can be invited. Ask if it would be acceptable for the College to send flowers or if they would prefer a donation to be made to a charity.
  - 20.2. Arrange for a commemorative event to be held in College if this is deemed appropriate.
  - 20.3. Arrange a date for the collection of personal belongings, if appropriate.
21. The Registrar will liaise with the Master to ensure they inform the rest of the College of the death.
22. The above should be completed by the HR & Operations Manager (or nominee) for staff deaths.
23. The Registrar will liaise with the Student Wellbeing Coordinator to ensure any immediate or ongoing support is organised for friends/fellow students of the deceased student.

**For the death of a member of staff:**

24. The HR and Operations Manager will do the above for staff members.
25. The Registrar will coordinate the closure of the deceased's records with the Academic Services Coordinator and the Academic Operations Officer. The HR and Operations Manager (or nominee) will organise staff files.
26. The Registrar will liaise with the Head of Admissions if the student was on a Tier 4 Visa.
27. The Registrar will liaise with the HR and Operations Manager regarding:
  - 27.1. Any legal or health and safety issues relating to the death and/or the College's response

27.2. Support for staff directly involved in the incident and/or those who taught the deceased.

28. The Registrar will be the main liaison between emergency services and/or coroner’s office in any ongoing investigations until they have finalised and closed their cases. The HR and Operations Manager (or nominee) will be the main liaison for staff deaths.
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Title	Student and Staff Death Policy and Procedure	Author	Student Wellbeing Coordinator
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Related policies	None		
Quality Code			

## **APPENDIX 1 – INSTRUCTIONS CHECKLIST**

### **DEATHS ON COLLEGE PROPERTY**

1. Do not touch or move the body or any object connected with the scene.
2. If during office hours, contact a member of the Senior Management Team (SMT) immediately.
3. If the incident occurs out of office hours, please call the emergency line on 07512 655 442. The Student Wellbeing Coordinator (SWC) will then contact a member of the SMT.
4. A member of SMT must instigate an evacuation of the building, excluding those directly involved in the incident.
5. A member of SMT must call 999 and request an ambulance and the Police; tell the emergency services exactly where you are and who you are, give them your mobile or extension number so that they can reach you directly.
6. Ask any witnesses to wait until the emergency services have arrived.
7. Alert First Aiders of anyone who is experiencing shock, or otherwise feeling unwell.
8. Do not contact any relatives or friends of the deceased. The formal notification will be conducted by the Police.

### **DEATHS OFF COLLEGE PROPERTY**

1. After the emergency services have been called, contact the College and ask for the COO or Registrar.
2. If the incident has occurred out of office hours, call the emergency line on 07512 655 442. The SWC will then contact the COO or Registrar.
3. Do not contact any relatives or friends of the deceased. The formal notification will be conducted by the Police.