

# PROCEDURE IN THE EVENT OF A STUDENT DEATH OR SERIOUS INJURY

FEBRUARY 2024

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<b>Document title</b>
Procedure in the event of a Student Death or Serious Injury
<b>Document author and department</b>
Deputy Director (Specialist Support & Inclusivity), Student Support Services
<b>Approving body</b>
Student Services Operations Group (replaced safeguarding board)
<b>Date of approval</b>
27 February 2024
<b>Review date</b>
February 2026

<b>Edition no.</b>	
3	
<b>ID Code</b>	
201	
<b>Date of effect</b>	
28 February 2024	
<b>EITHER</b> For public access online (internet)? <i>Tick as appropriate</i>	<b>YES</b>
<p>External queries relating to the document to be referred in the first instance to the Student Support Services Leadership team: email <a href="mailto:SSSDirectors@port.ac.uk">SSSDirectors@port.ac.uk</a></p> <p>If you need this document in an alternative format, please email <a href="mailto:SSSDirectors@port.ac.uk">SSSDirectors@port.ac.uk</a></p>	

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# Summary

## What is this document about?

This document outlines the procedure and actions that should be undertaken when the University is made aware of the suspected death or serious injury of a student.

## Who is this for?

University of Portsmouth and Students' Union staff members.

## How does the University check this is followed?

The Student Serious Incident Review Procedure will typically be enacted following the death or serious injury of a student and will review compliance with this procedure.

## Who can you contact if you have any queries about this document?

Student Support Services Leadership Team - [SSSDirectors@port.ac.uk](mailto:SSSDirectors@port.ac.uk)

# 1. Purpose

- 1.1. To ensure the University has effective guidance in place to respond appropriately and professionally to the death or serious injury of a student and adheres to the following principles
  - The University, external partners and other agencies work together to manage the situation effectively, sensitively and professionally;
  - Care, compassion and sensitivity is maintained at all times for all parties involved, such as next of kin, friends, associates and individuals directly involved;
  - Clarity regarding roles, responsibilities and requirements for record keeping of those involved is provided, ensuring a consistent approach is maintained;
  - The University's duty of care in relation to all students and staff is exercised at all times.
- 1.2. This protocol is for all registered University of Portsmouth students.

# 2. Roles & Responsibilities

- 2.1. The Student Support Services (SSS) Leadership team (Director & Deputy Directors SSS) coordinate the University's response to incidents of student death or serious injury; they will nominate an Incident Manager to lead this work.
- 2.2. The Head of Media & Communications coordinates internal and external communications in liaison with the Student Support Services Leadership team (Appendix One).
- 2.3. If the University is required to provide information and evidence at inquest, the Incident Manager will typically be responsible for coordination of any response, in conjunction with relevant colleagues i.e. Faculty staff, Corporate Governance.
- 2.4. The nominated Student Support Services Leadership Team incident lead - Incident Manager - will act as the initial point of contact for the family.

# 3. Notifying the University of a student death or serious injury

- 3.1. **Step 1 - Upon receiving notification of a student death or serious injury:**
  - Record as much detail as possible from the reporting person, including:
  - full name and contact information of reporting party, including relationship with the

- deceased or injured person.
  - full name, DoB, Student ID and address (if known) of the student who is suspected to be deceased or seriously injured.
  - any other details it is possible and reasonable to obtain.
- 3.2. **Step 2 - Immediately Inform Security, 02392 843333:** University Security act as the first point of contact. They are open 24 hours, year round and have access to relevant escalation protocols and contacts.
- 3.3. **Step 3 - Immediately inform the Student Support Services Leadership Team:** email all of the Director and Deputy Directors of SSS via [SSSDirectors@port.ac.uk](mailto:SSSDirectors@port.ac.uk)
- 3.4. The degree of involvement of the University in a student death or critical incident will depend both on the location and manner of the event. The location in which the death or serious injury occurs will have a significant bearing on the degree of involvement of the University and its staff members. The location may be listed as:
- in University halls of residence or private halls of residence
  - on University premises, in a University Department or other non-residential location
  - off University premises, but while engaged in a University activity such as work or school placement
  - off University premises, but while living in local lodgings away from the (family) home
  - off University premises, in the permanent home or in a public place
  - in hospital
  - whilst abroad on placement or an exchange.
- 3.5. If the incident occurs on University premises refer to Appendix 2 “Death or Serious Injury Occurs on University Premises”.
- 3.6. The courses of action to be taken will therefore be dependent on the individual circumstances of each case, but general principles and procedures are outlined in order to assist staff and students who may be involved in such incidents.

## 4. Initial Actions

- 4.1. The Incident Manager (see 2.1) will assess the situation and assume overall control. They will work with colleagues on the ground, such as University Security and Police or Ambulance, following relevant actions in appendix 2.
- 4.2. No member of University staff is expected to inform the next of kin. Those coordinating the situation may need to access the student record system to pass the next of kin details to the Police who have specially trained officers for this situation.
- 4.3. The Incident Manager will make contact with a student's family/supporters as soon as reasonably possible after notification of a suspected death or serious injury.
- 4.4. A specified group of Senior Staff will always be briefed on the same day that a report of a

death or serious injury is received with whatever information is available. They will be updated, as appropriate, over subsequent days. These staff include:

- Deputy Vice Chancellor Global & Student Life
- Executive Dean (of Faculty)
- Head of Media & Communications
- Vice Chancellor's Office
- Student Support Services Leadership team

- 4.5. If the incident has occurred on University premises it may be necessary to notify particular staff, students and/or residents in order to help manage distress and avoid unhelpful rumours. Care must be taken to do this in the most appropriate way possible, making sure people have time to come to their own conclusions about what support they might need. The Incident Manager and Head of Media and Communications should be the only people to authorise such notifications. They will provide advice and guidance to those affected about the range of support on offer and how to access it.

## 5. Incident Management Team

- 5.1. An Incident Management Team will be identified as soon as possible after the incident to oversee the university's response. IMT membership may vary depending on the situation, but core membership will include the following as appropriate or their nominee:

- Incident Manager (Chair)
- Relevant Associate Dean, Students
- Relevant Head of School
- Head of Media & Communications
- Head of Student Wellbeing
- Head of Student Life
- Manager of Chaplaincy Services
- Students' Union CEO
- Director of Sports & Recreation
- PVC Global Engagement (if international student)

- 5.2. The IMT is responsible for ensuring the effective management of the incident and completion of Appendix 3, 'Report & Checklist in the event of a Student Death or Serious Injury'; the checklist describes short, medium and longer-term actions.
- 5.3. The IMT should seek to provide a robust and compassionate response and operate with agility to respond to the dynamic nature of such incidents.

## Appendix 1: Principles of Crisis Communications

### Aim

To reduce distress, provide accurate, timely information to all affected parties, to limit further risk to life and/or damage to infrastructure, and/or to pass on key messages as required / advised by statutory and/or other agencies.

### Objectives

1. Quickly determine who/resource available to work on communications and assign roles and responsibilities.
2. Identify primary and secondary audiences AND the appropriate channels of communication.
3. Ensure all messages are ACCURATE, RELEVANT, TIMELY and CONSISTENT.
4. Ensure all communications are flexible, adaptable, agile and responsive.
5. Communications must inform and reassure, while aiming to contain or mitigate any misinformation.
6. Ensure communications are focussed on encouraging help seeking behaviours from all audiences who may be experiencing distress.

In addition to the general rules outlined above, these instructions should be followed:

- Permission to release the name of the staff member or student MUST be given by the family beforehand.
- There should be one member of staff who acts as University liaison person with the family and all requests should be made via them.
- Offer to act as media liaison on behalf of the family.
- If the police are involved in the case, all statements should be checked by the Media Team of the police force involved.
- Timing of statements must also be confirmed by the Media Team of the police force involved.
- If the cause of death or serious illness is from a contagious disease i.e. meningitis, this will be confirmed by the Health Security Agency who must be liaised with over any statements and timing of any statement.



## Appendix 2: Death or serious injury occurs on University premises

If the death or serious injury occurs on University premises and emergency services have not been called, immediately:

- **Call 999** and request emergency services assistance
- **Inform Security, 02392 843333** and provide your exact location - Security may need to direct the emergency services to your specific location.
- **Secure the area** – the person making the discovery should remain at the scene and not remove anything or allow others to do so until the emergency services arrive. If trained and it is appropriate and safe, the person should administer first aid.
- Request that Security **Inform the Student Support Services Leadership team immediately.**
- **Do not contact family or friends or other third party** – in the event of a student death or serious injury, the Police will make first contact with next of kin and the designated University lead will coordinate the institutional response.
- **Record any references**, from first responders such as crime or ambulance reference numbers, as well as the Student and staff ID numbers of anyone involved.
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**Appendix 3: Report and Checklist to be complete in the event of a Student Death or Serious Injury**  
**STRICTLY CONFIDENTIAL**

Report of Student Death or Serious Injury	
Report By:	
Role:	
Student Name:	
Student ID:	
Term Address:	
Home address:	
Programme of Study:	
School / Faculty:	
Mode of study (i.e. FT/PT/DL):	
Level of study (i.e. UG/PGT/PGR):	
Year of entry:	
Year of study:	
Fee status (i.e. Home/Overseas)	
Student status (i.e. current, suspended)	
Disability declaration:	
Next of Kin / Guardian (not drawn from SITS):	
Personal Tutor:	
Date Report of Confirmed Incident Received:	
Report Received from:	
Report received by	
Circumstances/ Timeline	

<b>UoP Checklist</b>			
<b>Action</b>	<b>Action person</b>	<b>Outcome/note</b>	<b>Date known/complete</b>
1. Has the next of kin been informed by a verified source?			
2. Has a UoP family liaison been appointed?			
3. Has next of kin been contacted by family liaison?			
4. Have known flat mates/friends been identified, informed and provided support? i.e. <a href="#">Help is at Hand</a> , SWS, Chaplaincy			
5. Have course students and staff been informed and signposted to support? i.e. <a href="#">Help is at Hand</a> , SWS, Chaplaincy / HR, EAP			
6. Was the student on work placement?			
7. Was the student known to student wellbeing/ASDAC?			
8. Was the student known to UPSU advice services			
9. Was the student a student rep?			
10. Was the student a member of UPSU clubs/socs?			
11. Was the student a member of any competitive sports?			
12. Has there been any communication on socials?			
13. Have, or is it likely there will be, any press interest?			
14. Will there be a virtual/book of condolence?			
15. Will a letter of condolence be required by VC's office?			
16. Is it appropriate for a UoP representative to attend any related religious or secular ceremonies? (Incident manager to liaise with NoK).			
17. Will the student be awarded a posthumous award?			
18. Has SITS been updated?			

19. Has placement office/system been updated?			
20. Library/IS updated?			
21. Finance systems/account updated?			
22. SSS management team informed/records updated?			
23. SLC database updated?			
24. Removal from all CRM, student, alumni distribution lists, and public imagery			
25. International student - agent/UKVI etc informed			
26. Notification to Public Health, Portsmouth City Council (if appropriate)			
27. Identify Serious Incident Review Lead			
28. Ongoing IMT response			
29. Other actions arising			
<b>Comments (if necessary)</b>			



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