

Death in Service Policy

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1. Introduction

The death of a colleague can be a very emotional and traumatic experience for team members and the wider community. There are several sensitive and pastoral issues to take into account, as well as some practicalities that are outlined in the guidance below.

Don't forget to signpost the University's support services, especially the [Employee Assistance Programme \(EAP\)](#) to colleagues.

In the event of the death of a member of staff, the first person to learn of the death should ensure that their line manager and head of the service are aware at the first opportunity.

2. Manager/Head of Service responsibilities

2.1 As soon as possible

The manager or head of the service will:

- ensure the necessary consent to share details is in place, and phone the person who notified the University to express their condolences.
 - a) The Manager and Head of Service should discuss who would be the most appropriate person to have this conversation.
- speak to the Head of School or Department to share the news. Follow up the call with an email which details the deceased's name, job title, department and the name and address of next of kin (if known).
 - a) Once this information is received, the Head of School or Department should inform the Human Resources team, the relevant Senior Leadership Team (SLT) representative, and the Vice-Chancellor's Office.
 - b) Human Resources will inform the Communications Team.
- ensure the necessary consent to share details is in place, email the Payroll and Pensions Manager with the next of kin's: name, address and contact number.
 - a) The Payroll and Pensions Manager will contact the next of kin to arrange for payment of final salary and any pensions benefits due
- communicate the news to colleagues closest to the deceased (eg those in the same department, team or section). This should be done in person, where possible, and in a private area such as a meeting room.

- a) Make colleagues aware that they can contact the Employer Assistance Programme or their manager for support.
- b) See further guidance below.
- Notify ITS and ask for the deceased person's email account to be delegated to their line manager and an auto-reply should be created to inform colleagues of a new contact. Phone calls should also be redirected to another member of staff.
 - a) Keep the auto-reply general and do not mention a death, just that someone else will pick up their enquiry.

2.2 Within two days...

The line manager or Head of School/service will:

- Email staff and students (if applicable) in the wider School/Department to communicate the news. Provide them with a contact if they require support.
 - The Communications Team can help draft this communication
- Contact any former members of staff and students (if applicable) who may need to be notified.
- Amend School/Department records to prevent the family from receiving post addressed to the deceased. Ensure the employee file is updated.

With permission from the next of kin, the manager may also decide to

- Let staff in the immediate work team know about the funeral arrangements.
- Offer appropriate time off to grieve and to attend the funeral.
- Circulate a condolence card or create an online condolence card. Organise for flowers, or a wreath, to be sent to the family (if appropriate). Where possible, procure from a University supplier.
- Organise an open meeting for any colleagues to share thoughts and memories of their colleague (can be especially helpful online).

3. Communication

- (With permission from the next of kin) An in-memoriam section will be included in the all-staff newsletter (Met Connect) immediately following the death with a link to a virtual condolence book - if one has been established.
- The death will be mentioned in the next monthly email from the Vice-Chancellor.

4. Discretionary actions

- In the case of a long-serving academic/or senior team member, the communications team may produce an obituary and share the news via our social media channels to inform the wider community

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