

# Death in Service Policy

<b>Document Control Information</b>
Version control 3.0 Owned by: Executive Director of People & HR Director Latest amendment on: 14.4.2025 Approved by: The VC on the recommendation of the SLT Approved on: 21.05.25 Coming into effect on: 21.05.25 Review date: 21.05.2027

**Version history**

March 2022: The SLT approved

29 January 2025: The VC approved on behalf of the SLT

21 May 2025: The VC approved on the recommendation of the SLT

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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.

Please remember to signpost the University's support services to colleagues, especially the [Employee Assistance Programme \(EAP\)](#) and our [Special Leave policy](#). Details are set out in Section 5.

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 school or department are aware at the first opportunity.

## **2. Manager/Head responsibilities**

### **2.1 As soon as possible**

The manager or head 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 should discuss who would be the most appropriate person to have this conversation.
- speak to the Head of School or Department (if they are not the Head) to share the news, following 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 Dean/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 [Payroll@londonmet.ac.uk](mailto:Payroll@londonmet.ac.uk) with the next of kin's: name, address and contact number.
  - a) The Payroll 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 (e.g. those in the same school, department, team or section). This should be done in person, where possible, and in a private area such as a meeting room.

- a) Remind colleagues that they can contact the Employee Assistance Programme or their manager for support.
- b) See further guidance below.
- Notify IT services 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. The MS Teams account 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 As soon as practicable...**

The line manager or Head will:

- 2.2.1 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
- 2.2.2 Contact any former members of staff and students (if applicable) who may need to be notified.
- 2.2.3 Amend school/department records to prevent the family from receiving post addressed to the deceased. Ensure the employee's file is updated.

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

- 2.2.4 Let staff in the immediate work team know about the funeral arrangements.
- 2.2.5 Offer appropriate time off to grieve and to attend the funeral.
- 2.2.6 Circulate a condolence card or create an online condolence card. Organise flowers, or a wreath, to be sent to the family (if appropriate). Where possible, procure from a University supplier.
- 2.2.7 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.

#### **5. Staff support**

##### **5.1 Special Leave policy**

Our [Special leave policy](#) includes compassionate leave provisions and time to attend the funeral which might apply following the death of a colleague.

##### **5.2 Employee Assistance Programme**

The University's external confidential [Employee Assistance Programme \(EAP\)](#) provides free confidential advice, counselling and support via the telephone (0800 882 4102) or through their website 24 hours a day. The username is LMU and the password is LMU1.