

Appendix XXXV – Procedure in the Event of a Death



Policy & Procedure Title:

South East Technological University Carlow - Procedure in the Event of a Death

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Form(s)	Responsibilities/ Owner
	Head of Department/Faculty/Campus Vice President for Academic Affairs & Registrar Student Services and Learner Support
Superseded or Obsolete Procedures	
Version 02 – (Dec 2009) - Policy reviewed to reflect requirements under Equality Diversity & Inclusion and GDPR and to include protocol pertaining to international students	
Version 01 – (May 2003) - Policy review to reflect change of procedure in the event of a death	

South East Technological University Carlow Procedure in the Event of a Death

We recognise that it is important that the University perform properly its role in offering support to students when they have been bereaved. This role is part of the University's contribution to the education of the student; indeed learning to cope with bereavement and other traumatic events in life is part of each person's education and growth into the fullness of his or her humanity. However we note that this support is *offered*, and that there is no obligation on the students to access it; furthermore it would be inappropriate for University personnel to suggest to students this link between education and bereavement support. We recognise that the response of the University at the time of the death of a student normally takes priority over other areas of work or involvement.

The main areas are

Information Flow within the University

Normally Chaplain to contact staff by email

Identification of the Role of the University with regard to the family

Chaplain to liaise with family;

Provision of support for the bereaved

Bereavement Counselling made available

Members of Student Services available to offer support if required.

Memorial Service/Mass for deceased in the University if appropriate

Coordination of Departmental Response

Informing classmates of student death

Cancelling of classes in the event of student death

Possible deferral of deadlines/rescheduling of work assignments

Amending class lists in the case of a student death.

Ongoing awareness of bereavement in the case of both a student death and a student bereavement

In any of the following cases, the Chaplain plays a key role in informing the relevant people. Therefore the Chaplain should be informed immediately when it becomes known that someone has died. In the absence of the Chaplain, his role would be filled by the Head of Student Services in the case of the death/bereavement a student, and by the Personnel Officer in the case of the death/bereavement of a staff member.

In the event of the death of a **staff member**, the following people are to be informed:

Chairman of the Governing Body;

President of the University

Heads of Department and of Faculty/Campus

Personnel Officer

University Receptionist

Faculty/Campus Secretary

Chaplain

All Staff

The Chaplain, together with the Head of Department, Faculty/Campus and Departmental Secretaries, will ensure that the relevant people have been informed. All staff will be notified by email of the death. Notices will be placed in suitable positions in the college. The Head of Department may wish to meet with colleagues of the deceased to offer support and/or to discuss an appropriate departmental response. The chaplain will make contact with the family of the deceased, attend the funeral and arrange a memorial service/Mass in the University, if appropriate.

In the event of the death of a **student**, the following people are to be informed:

Chairman of the Governing Body

President of the University

Vice President for Academic Affairs & Registrar

Heads of Departments and of Faculty/Campus

University Receptionist

Faculty/Campus Secretary

Student Services

Chaplain

All Staff

The Vice President for Academic Affairs & Registrar, together with the Chaplain, Programme Tutor and Counsellor, should decide how best classmates of the deceased are to be informed, and should respond appropriately. All staff will be notified by email of the death. Notices will be placed in suitable positions in the college. Management inform Governing Body. It is important that the University Receptionist be informed and kept aware of significant information, as she may be dealing with queries from both internal and external sources. Queries from the media should be referred to the Vice President for Academic Affairs & Registrar.

The Student Services Team may need to meet to plan its response. During this time, someone should be available to the students, class group, if a meeting with the class has not already taken place. It may be appropriate to meet the relevant lecturing staff as a group, to give them correct information regarding the circumstances of the death, to support them, and to discuss how they could best support the students.

A room should be designated as early as possible for the students, friends and classmates of the deceased to gather in privacy. This room should be available throughout the day. It may be necessary to make such a room available for a number of days, leading up to and including the time of the funeral.

It may be appropriate to meet the class as a group, to provide tea or coffee, in an atmosphere in which students can express their shock/grief/emotions. Lecturing staff as well as the Chaplain, Counsellor, Vice President for Academic Affairs & Registrar and Student Services Team should attend if possible.

A short prayer service may be arranged that day, if appropriate. Decisions regarding a class response may be made if the funeral arrangements are known e.g. sending a wreath, attending the wake/funeral etc. Arrangements may be made to hire a minibus to attend the funeral, if necessary. The remainder of classes that day and classes on the day of the funeral should be cancelled; it is recommended that deadlines for coursework be extended and imminent assessments deferred. The loss of the student should be acknowledged at the beginning of class, when class resumes.

The Chaplain and Counsellor may need to cancel their appointments for the day, and possibly for the next few days, depending on the circumstances.

The chaplain will make contact with the family of the deceased, attend the funeral and arrange a memorial service/Mass in the University, if appropriate.

Necessary ongoing support will be provided by Student Services (Counsellor, Nurse esp.) to the classmates of the deceased. The Programme Tutor will be particularly aware of the needs of the class in the period following the death.

In the event that a student was to die at a weekend or during a holiday period, the response will be different. Staff members who become aware of the death should inform the Chaplain, Head of Department, Vice President for Academic Affairs & Registrar, or endeavour to discover if the news has been conveyed to University personnel.

In the event of the University being closed, it may be necessary to open it to provide a gathering space for students and staff. However some central person/place needs to be available; it may simply be that the staff member who first hears the news of the death responds as best he or she can, given the timing.

Contact should be made with the family of the deceased to offer the sympathy and support of the University; funeral arrangements and other significant information should be obtained. Students should be informed insofar as possible; they may be able to inform each other. If it is possible to enter the college, it may be also be possible to gain access to names and addresses of close friends of the student, who may not have been informed. The family of the deceased may be able to offer some help.

In the event of the death of the **relative of a staff member**, the following should be informed:

President of the University

Personnel Officer

Heads of Departments and of Faculty/Campus

University Receptionist

Faculty/Campus Secretary

Chaplain

The Chaplain, together with Faculty/Campus and Departmental Secretaries, will ensure that the relevant people have been informed. All staff will be notified by email of the bereavement. The Chaplain will make contact with the bereaved, attend the funeral, and offer support.

In the event of the death of a **relative of a student**, the following should be informed

Faculty/Campus Secretary

Programme Tutor and Lecturers

University Receptionist

Chaplain

Generally lecturing staff are the first to know when a student has been bereaved; they should inform the Faculty/Campus Secretary, who will in turn inform the relevant personnel.

The Class Tutor and Chaplain have a particular role in offering support to the bereaved student. The Chaplain will make contact with the bereaved, attend the funeral and offer immediate support. Appropriate ongoing support or counselling may be offered by Student Services.

Staff will be aware of the sensitivity of the bereaved student when returning to class, and also to the feelings of classmates who may not know how to treat their colleague.

Classmates play an important role in offering support to their colleague and should be encouraged in this. It should be made possible for them to attend the funeral - cancelling classes, hiring a bus etc. The Class Tutor, Chaplain or Faculty/Campus Secretary should be able to attend to these.

If a staff member becomes aware of the death of another member of staff, of a student, or of a relative of a member of staff or student, he or she is asked to inform the relevant Faculty/Campus or Department Secretary and the Chaplain. The Chaplain will inform Secretaries, if they are not already aware of the news. They in turn will inform relevant members of their departments.

The Mental Health Initiative: A Resource Manual for Mental Health Promotion and Suicide Prevention in Third Level Institutions (Amanda Kracen, T.C.D) is a valuable resource, containing suggestions and guidelines for a college-wide response to suicide. Staff at all levels in the University should be aware of it. It can be accessed at www.tcd.ie/Student_Counselling