



HR GUIDANCE

Death in Service Guidelines (for UK Based staff)

Aim

This document sets out the roles and responsibilities within the University when notified of the death of an employee. The main aims of these guidelines is to ensure that:

- early contact is made with the bereaved family to express sympathy and offer support
- all relevant personnel are informed of the death in order that processes are put in place quickly and sensitively to avoid any inappropriate contact
- colleagues who worked with the employee are offered support in dealing with the loss of a team member

These guidelines are for dealing with the death of an employee. In the case of the death of a retired/ex-employee, the Head of School/Directorate should liaise with the Head of Communications.

Notification

In the event of the death of an employee, it is important that all appropriate personnel are informed promptly. The route by which the notification reaches the University cannot be controlled but thereafter it is the responsibility of Human Resources to co-ordinate the dissemination of information. Therefore, whoever receives the initial notification should ensure that they obtain the contact details of the person informing the University (and their relationship to the deceased) and this information should be passed immediately to Human Resources.

In the case of a death in the workplace, call Safeguarding Services immediately on ext. 3500 who will take appropriate action, including informing Human Resources.

Human Resources will then be responsible for informing the following (or a deputy in the event of their absence): -

- The Principal
- The Vice Principal and Provost
- Secretary of the University
- Global Chief Operating Officer
- Global Director of HR
- Relevant Head of School/Directorate
- Head of Communications (via news@hw.ac.uk)
- Global Director of Finance
- Head of Payroll and Pensions
- IS Help Desk
- Head of Research Support & Resource Services
- Head of Oriam and Sport

- University Chaplain
- Occupational Physician

and, if appropriate:

- Head of Safeguarding Services (*where an internal enquiry might be required*)
- The Head of Assurance (*for any death related to an incident, which has the potential to give rise to a claim against the University*)

Procedure

The following procedure is to be followed in the event of the death of an employee. It is essential that information is disseminated sensitively in order to alleviate any further distress to relatives and colleagues.

Human Resources will:

- inform all relevant contacts (as listed above) on the same day that they are notified of the death
- act as the single point of contact for the employee's next of kin
- amend the employee's records, so that no inappropriate contact is made
- arrange for a letter of condolence to be sent to the next of kin from the appropriate member of senior staff

The Head of School/Directorate will:

- inform staff and students (if the employee was in regular contact with students) Colleagues who are absent from the University, e.g. on maternity leave, should also be contacted. When colleagues are being informed of the death, they should also be made aware that they can contact staff in Human Resources for support should they require it.
- liaise with the Head of Communications on an appropriate obituary, and on notifying staff about funeral arrangements e.g. through staff email
- arrange for representation at the funeral
- ensure that any staff records held in the School/Directorate are amended
- ensure that, in conjunction with Human Resources and the next of kin, any personal belongings held within the University are dealt with sensitively (and arrange for the return of any University property).

The Head of Communications will:

- liaise with the Head of School/Directorate on an appropriate obituary, and on notifying staff about funeral arrangements
- if there is likely to be press interest in a death, the Global Chief Operating Officer and the Head of Communications will liaise to agree a strategy for handling the media. No information should be given to any external enquirer; instead they should be referred to the Media Enquiries team

The Global Director of Finance will ensure that no invoices are sent to the employee's address, and deal with any other financial matters, e.g. if member of staff had a university credit card.

The Head of Payroll and Pensions will:

- arrange for one month's gross salary to be paid to the next of kin or the employee's estate
- arrange for final salary to be paid to the next of kin or employee's estate
- contact the relevant pension provider, if the employee was in a pension scheme, to arrange for death in service benefits to be paid.

The IS Helpdesk will:

- disable the employee's account and remove their name from any directories.
- In conjunction with School/Directorate, ensure that the employee is de-registered from local systems and other lists as appropriate (e.g. School/Directorate web pages).
- hold computer files confidentially until an instruction is received from the Head of School/Directorate to delete them.

The Head of Research Support & Resource Services will remove the employee from library records and ensure that no inappropriate contact is made.

The Head of Oriam and Sport will where appropriate, remove the employee from the membership log and ensure that no inappropriate contact is made.

The University Chaplain will where appropriate, offer support to the employee's family, usually via the HR contact .

The Occupational Physician will arrange for the employee's Occupational Health Record to be updated accordingly.

Special Circumstances

For any death on campus or other circumstances which would make an enquiry appropriate, The Head of Safeguarding Services will notify the Health and Safety Executive and, in conjunction with the Head of School/Directorate involved, initiate an internal enquiry.

For any death related to an incident which has the potential to give rise to a claim against the University, the Head of Assurance Services should be informed and copies of relevant incident report forms and investigation reports should be forwarded to the Head of Assurance without delay.

Out of hours emergency contact details can be obtained from Safeguarding Services on ext. 3500.

Further Help and Support

[HR helpdesk](#)

[HR Hub - Your Wellbeing](#)

[Care First Counselling Provision](#)