

Protocol for when a student has died

Student Services Incident Protocols

Document Control

Author(s)	Head of Student Wellbeing
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For full details of the document approval route and version control, see final page.

Introduction

The death of a student can have a profound impact on family, fellow students, colleagues, and our wider community. It is important that Leeds Beckett University responds sensitively with due consideration for the deceased and their family, and that those affected are offered support.

This protocol applies to all members of our student community, including apprentices, international students, franchise students, and students who are overseas.

The university is often made aware of a student death by the student's family or close contact. It is important that the death is reported to Student Services at the earliest opportunity so that they can ensure the following:

- Appropriate information sharing with colleagues across the university, including the University Executive Team.
- Updating of student records to withhold further communications to the student.
- Immediate support is provided to those affected.

The team within Student Services that is responsible for co-ordinating a response following a student death is Student Wellbeing.

What should you do if you are made aware of a student death?

If you are informed of a student death off campus:

- Reports of a student death can come from a number of sources, such as families, friends, and external organisations such as the Police. Where appropriate, offer condolences and ask for the contact details of the person making the report in case Student Services need to get in touch with them.
- Call the Student Services **Report a Concern Line** on **0113 812 6666**. Student Advice will take the call and ensure that the Student Wellbeing are immediately notified of the incident, so that they can implement a student death response plan.

Having the following information available to give to Student Advice helps to facilitate a timely response, but should you be missing anything from the list below please do not let this delay you from making a report:

- Name of the student who has died
- Student ID number or course details
- The circumstances of the death if you have been offered this information, such as their location
- Name and contact details of the person who reported the death to you and their relationship to the student
- The details of a contact person within your School or Service who will be contacted by Student Wellbeing to discuss a response plan

- Name(s) of any individual(s) affected such as close friends or flatmates, and their contact details (this information can be collected later as part of the student death response plan)

Outside of office hours, the **Report a Concern Line** diverts to LBU Security Services, or you can contact them directly on **ext. 4444 or 0113 812 3165**. Security Services will advise on any immediate actions required and will liaise with other parties, such as the emergency services, where appropriate. Any out of hours incidents managed by Security Services are communicated to Student Services for follow-up, and they will ensure that the Director of Library and Student Services and the Associate Director of Student Services are informed at the start of the next working day. Where the student death requires implementation of Leeds Beckett University's [major incident plan](#), Security Services will contact the Major Incident Team Co-ordinator, usually the University Registrar and Secretary.

If you are directly involved in responding to the sudden death of a student on campus:

- It is helpful to identify one person who will co-ordinate the immediate response. This person should feel able to delegate tasks and to maintain an overview of the situation as it evolves until the emergency services and LBU Security Services take over.
- A death on campus or at a university organised event must always be reported to the police. Where possible and reasonable to do so, the area surrounding the deceased person should be disturbed as little as possible.
- The Emergency Services should be contacted on **999** followed by LBU Security Services on **Ext. 4444** during office hours or **0113 812 3165 out of hours** to advise them of the situation and that emergency services have been called. Security Services will meet the emergency services, support them in managing the immediate environment, and will ensure that Student Services is informed.
- The area should be isolated from other students or unauthorised colleagues, and everything possible done to protect others from viewing the site. Witnesses should be moved to an identified safe location where they can be supported by colleagues until the police have taken statements or advised other actions. Those immediately affected by the death should be offered support from colleagues for as long as required and until family members or friends can take over that care, if appropriate.
- Those immediately affected should be asked to provide their contact details and informed that they will receive contact from the relevant university department within 24 hours to offer support and opportunity to de-brief.
- The Police will notify the next of kin and provide them with practical and pastoral support.
- Once the immediate situation has been managed, call the **Report a Student Concern Line** as described above. If the death occurs out of hours, Security Services will ensure that it is reported to Student Services during the next working day.

What happens next?

In the event of any student death, the Student Wellbeing team will immediately instigate and oversee a student death response plan in collaboration with the student's Academic school. The purpose of

this response plan is to ensure timely and appropriate communication following a student death, and to address the support needs of those affected. Student Wellbeing will inform all relevant departments of the university, including the University Executive Team, and will liaise with the Insurance and Risk Team in all cases where students have died overseas.

The Dean of School, or designated colleague, will identify who is best placed to work through the response plan in collaboration with a School-Based Wellbeing Practitioner from Student Wellbeing.

The Dean of School will identify who will liaise with the family, and this will usually be a colleague who is familiar with the student. Families or those close to a student who has died can have a range of questions for the university, depending on the circumstances. For example, they may ask about support for repatriation costs, or they may worry about how fellow students will cope with the bereavement. Any queries received can be directed to Student Wellbeing who will ensure that an appropriate response is provided.

The response plan remains in place for several weeks, and in some circumstances such as a suspected death by suicide, for up to a year. This is because there is a small amount of evidence indicating that the ripple effects of suicide on the wider university *could* lead to an increased incidence of suicide in that population and this may be mitigated by implementation of a clear support and communication strategy. The role of the Student Wellbeing team is to ensure that those affected receive important information about how a death by suicide can affect people, the signs to look out for that may indicate someone needs support, and where people can get timely help and advice.

Student Services will contact the colleague who reported the death to confirm what action has been taken.

Media interest following a student death:

In some circumstances, such as a death by suicide, the university could receive media requests for information. Any communication with the media will be handled by University's Communication team and will follow relevant guidelines, such as those produced by the Samaritans.

Support for colleagues

Responding to a student incident can be challenging and we encourage all colleagues to make their line manager aware of such circumstances to ensure they have support.

Colleagues can also access free and confidential support from *Spectrum*, the Employee Assistance Programme, on **0800 196 2016**. See our Employee Assistance Programme pages [here](#).

Protocol Guidance

Organisation	Leeds Beckett University
Author(s)	Head of Student Wellbeing (2023)
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