

## Death in Service Procedure

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**From: Human Resources**

**Date: August 2020**

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### PROCEDURE INTENT

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The University of Southampton's Death in Service procedure is designed to outline the practical steps that the University and its employees should take on the death of a fellow employee.

### UNIVERSITY PROCEDURE

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## General principles

- 1.1 The University recognises that the death of a colleague can be a traumatic and upsetting period for those within the University community, but also for our external partners.
- 1.2 The University recognises the need to support its employees during this traumatic and upsetting period.
- 1.3 This procedure applies to any individual who is an employee or worker with the University of Southampton, irrespective of their Pathway, grade or contract length.
- 1.4 It is important that all employees ensure that up-to-date contact details for themselves and their next of kin are on the HR database. Regularly check and update details using '[MyHR dashboard](#)'.

## Procedure

### 1.5 Notification

- 1.5.1 The route in which the news of a death of an employee reaches the University, line management and/or fellow employees can vary.
- 1.5.2 The death of an employee might be sudden or the result of a long illness of which individuals within the University may already be aware of.
- 1.5.3 Notification, normally by the line manager must be made to HR, via the [Ask HR](#) team, by either telephone or email confirming where known; the employees name, employee number, faculty/professional service, and the date and cause of death.
- 1.5.4 HR will ensure that the deceased's employee HR record is updated following the notification.

### 1.6 Dissemination of Information

- 1.6.1 HR will notify the following people/departments of the employee's death; Vice Chancellor, Chief Operating Officer, Dean/Director of Faculty/Professional Service area, Executive Director of HR, HR Business Partner for area, Employee Relations Manager for area, Payroll, Pensions, the Library, and Communications.
- 1.6.2 The line manager or appropriate representative must contact iSolutions either via telephone or email to ensure the deceased employee's IT account is updated and hidden from any relevant services. Any University profiles or accounts that exist on networks such as social media should be sensitively reviewed.

### 1.7 Communication

- 1.7.1 The Dean/Director of Faculty/Professional Service area should communicate the news to those closest to the deceased (i.e. those in the same department/team/section) as promptly as possible.

- 1.7.2 If the individual was grant funded, the Faculty/Professional Service area should also inform the funding body.
- 1.7.3 HR will provide a template letter of condolence to the line manager or appropriate representative to be personalised and sent on behalf of the University to the family/next of kin.
- 1.7.4 The line manager or appropriate representative will continue to liaise with the family/next of kin to ascertain the family's/next of kin's wishes regarding attendance at funeral services and the collection of any personal belongings.
- 1.7.5 The Faculty/Professional Service area should ensure the family's/next of kin's wishes are carefully considered when communicating with third parties, such as students. How the Faculty/Professional Service area communicates with third parties is at their discretion, with individuals being directed to the available support.

### **1.8 Time off and funeral arrangements**

- 1.8.1 Once the date of the funeral has been obtained, the line manager or appropriate representative must notify HR. This will usually be by updating the ticket which was opened upon notification.
- 1.8.2 HR will inform the Security and the Communications department of the following; employees name, job title, Faculty/Professional Service area, the date the employee joined the University, and the date of the funeral.
- 1.8.3 Unless otherwise stated by the family/next of kin, the Faculty/Professional Service area should make arrangements for representation at the funeral on behalf of the University.
- 1.8.4 The Faculty/Professional Service area should make allowances for fellow employees to have appropriate time off to attend the funeral or memorial service where appropriate.
- 1.8.5 Any leave should be discussed and agreed by the line manager in accordance with the University's [Compassionate and Domestic Leave policy](#).
- 1.8.6 If appropriate on the day of the funeral, the Security department will ensure the University flag is lowered, along with placing the above details of the employee next to the flag. The Communications department will post a short obituary on SUSSED, if appropriate.

## **2. Work considerations**

- 2.1.1 The line manager should ensure that appropriate steps are taken to cover the deceased employee's duties to help alleviate any uncertainty amongst fellow employees and allow the University to function as usual.
- 2.1.2 Where the deceased employee has been absent through sick leave, it is likely that their duties may have already been covered by a fellow employee.
- 2.1.3 Any recruitment either short or long-term should be carefully considered and approached sensitively.

### **2.2 Finance**

- 2.2.1 Finance will ensure that the final salary is paid along with any other entitlement and will contact the relevant pension provider, if applicable, to arrange for death in service benefits to be paid.
- 2.2.2 No invoices should be sent to the deceased employees address, and Finance will deal discreetly with any other financial matters, e.g. outstanding overpayments.

### **2.3 Support**

- 2.3.1 The University wants to support its community during what might be a traumatic and upsetting period.
- 2.3.2 The University offers support to all employees through the 'Health and Wellbeing' SharePoint site, including access to the Employee Assistance Programme (EAP).
- 2.3.3 Students should be directed to the available support through Student Services and the Students Union.

## RESPONSIBILITIES

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### **Dean/Director or Nominee on behalf of Faculty/Professional Service area**

- Will communicate the death of an employee to those closest (i.e. the deceased department) within their Faculty/Professional Service
- Will ensure that the Faculty/Professional Service inform any funding bodies or external third party taking in to consideration any family/next of kin wishes.
- Will arrange for representation at the funeral on behalf of the University

### **Line Manager/Appropriate Person**

- Will ensure that all employees personal details, including next of kin are kept up to date on 'MyHR'
- Will inform HR of the death as soon as is reasonable possible
- Will contact iSolutions to ensure that the deceased's IT account is managed sensitively
- Will send a letter of condolence to the family/next of kin on behalf of the University
- Will continue to liaise with the family/next of kin as to obtain any relevant information, such as funeral arrangements and any collection of personal belongings
- Will inform HR once the funeral arrangements have been confirmed
- Will discuss and agree/reject requests from fellow employees to have appropriate time off to attend the funeral
- Will ensure appropriate steps are taken to cover the deceased employee's duties
- Will ensure that any short or long term recruitment is handled sensitively
- Will discuss available support with employees and if necessary seek HR advice

### **HR**

- Will update the deceased's HR record
- Will inform key stakeholders of the death
- Will provide a template letter of condolence to the Faculty/Professional Service to send on behalf of the University
- Will inform both the Security and the Communications department of the funeral arrangements
- Will support the Faculty/Professional Service on accessing available support for employees

### **Finance**

- Will ensure that the final salary is paid along with any other entitlement
- Will ensure that where appropriate the pension provider is informed and any death in service benefit is paid
- Will ensure that any outstanding payments or invoices will be handled sensitively

### **iSolutions**

- Will ensure that the deceased member of staff's IT account is managed sensitively

### **Security**

- Where appropriate will ensure that the flag is lowered on the day of the funeral

### **Communications**

- Where appropriate will ensure a short obituary is published on SUSSED

### VERSION CONTROL

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