



University of
St Andrews

Staff death protocol

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Purpose	This guidance outlines the actions to be taken when an employee dies in service.

Version number	Purpose / changes	Document status	Author of changes, role and school / unit	Date
1.2	Change to review date only.	Approved	Mairi Stewart HR	04/01/2024

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1. Statement

- 1.1 This guidance outlines the actions to be taken when an employee dies in service. It provides information about support available, acknowledging that every circumstance is different, and therefore the University will respond with flexibility, compassion, and sensitivity in all situations.

2. Purpose

- 2.2 The death of an employee can be an upsetting and sometimes traumatic experience for other colleagues and for students. This guidance is designed to provide assistance to the management of such situations and outline the immediate steps that should be taken following the death of a colleague.

3. Notification

- 3.1 There are several ways in which the University might be notified that an employee has died, such as:
- The employee dies whilst on University premises ([Section 4](#));
 - Contact by the employee's family/next of kin or told by another employee who is a close friend of the deceased;
 - The authorities. For example, after a catastrophic event such as a natural disaster/accident.
- 3.2 Whoever is first notified of a death in service must:
- Obtain the name of the deceased and the School/Unit where they worked;
 - Ask for the name and phone number of the notifier and their relationship to the deceased, asking them if the University can contact them, or whom the University should contact, for further information if necessary;
 - Ask if the notifier is able to share with them the cause of death;
 - Ask that the University be notified of the funeral arrangements when they have been confirmed;
 - Immediately notify the Head of School/Unit and the Director of Human Resources either via phone or email;
 - Advise the notifier that the Head of School/Unit or their deputy will be in contact as soon as practicable.
- 3.3 The Head of School/Unit will decide who is the most appropriate person to inform other employees of the death and, if appropriate, to liaise with the next of kin. The Head of School/Unit may find it useful to speak to the Chaplain for advice and support on this issue.
- 3.4 Human Resources will ensure the following are notified (as appropriate):
- Principal's Office
 - Director of Corporate Communications
 - Payroll and Pensions
 - Occupational Health/EHSS
 - Chaplaincy
 - Student Services, particularly where the employee worked in a student facing role
 - Insurance, Audit and Risk Manager (but only if the death is due to an accident that occurred whilst the member of staff was carrying out University related activities)

- Tech Transfer Centre at ustanip@st-andrews.ac.uk to deal with any Intellectual Property issues

4. Death on University premises

- 4.1 If an employee dies on University premises or as a result of a specific 'critical incident', then the Emergency Services should be contacted immediately, followed by the Security and Response Team, the Director of EHSS, the Principal's Office, the Head of School/Unit, the Director of Corporate Communications and the Director of Human Resources. EHSS will advise of any further action required.

5. Responsibilities

- 5.1 The responsibilities of the Head of School/Unit, HR and key Units are as follows:

5.1.1 Head of School/Unit

When	Action
<p>Within 24 hours</p> <p>Due to the sensitivity of the situation, HoS/U are welcome to consult with the Chaplain or HR if they want to talk through any of these steps.</p>	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Contact the person who notified the University to express condolences to thank them for letting the University know and provide them with a point of contact for any questions they may have (e.g. pay or pension arrangements). • Check that Human Resources and the Principal's Office are aware of the death. • Inform colleagues and students, when appropriate, within the School/Unit. The Chaplain is available to consult should you wish to discuss the best way to deliver this news. • Consider if there are any other individuals outside the School/Unit with whom the deceased worked or was close to who should be informed (e.g. clients, suppliers). • Make colleagues aware that support can be provided by Occupational Health, the Chaplaincy and HR. • If appropriate, make students aware that support can be provided by Student Services and the Chaplaincy.
<p>Within 2 – 3 days</p>	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Arrange for a condolence card and, where appropriate, flowers to be sent to the family or make a donation to a charity nominated by the family. The cost of up to £50 can be claimed on expenses. • Decide within the School/Unit who will be the lead contact with the family/next of kin. • Lead person to contact the family to find out about funeral arrangements.
<p>After the funeral</p>	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Organise for any personal belongings to be returned. • Liaise with the Chaplaincy over any memorial service or events.

5.1.2 Principal's Office/Corporate Communications

When	Action
Within 24 hours	<ul style="list-style-type: none">• Contact the School/Unit/HR/Chaplaincy to gather information and prepare the Principal's email to the University community.
Within 2 – 3 days	<ul style="list-style-type: none">• Issue a letter of condolence to the next of kin from the Principal.• Issue Principal's email to the University community including funeral arrangements if known.

5.1.3 Human Resources

When	Action
Within 24 hours	<ul style="list-style-type: none">• Notify relevant parties as outlined in 3.4.• Gather information for processing the end of employment including payroll information.• Inform IT Services to ensure all systems and building access is withdrawn.• Provide core information to Principal's Office/Corporate Communications to assist with the Principal's email to the University community.
Within 2 – 3 days	<ul style="list-style-type: none">• Issue a letter to the next of kin confirming next steps in relation to salary payment and pension (where relevant).

5.1.4 Chaplaincy

When	Action
Within 24 hours	<ul style="list-style-type: none">• Contact the School/Unit to offer support to colleagues and students, when appropriate.• Contact other colleagues from across the University who may be affected by the news.• Contact the family or next of kin, to offer support, to help in preparing the Principal's email, and to liaise over organizing the funeral (if appropriate) unless advised not to do so.
Within 2 – 3 days	<ul style="list-style-type: none">• Work with Corporate Communications over Principal's email

6. Support for Managers and Employees

- 6.1 The death of an employee can have a big impact on individuals and teams. Support can be provided by:

Unit	Contact Details	Email	Telephone
Chaplaincy	https://www.st-andrews.ac.uk/chaplaincy/contact/	chaplaincy@st-andrews.ac.uk	01334 462866
Occupational Health	https://www.st-andrews.ac.uk/ehss/occupationalhealth/	occhealth@st-andrews.ac.uk	01334 462750
Human Resources	https://www.st-andrews.ac.uk/hr/businesspartner/	hr.general@st-andrews.ac.uk	01334 462556

7. Version control

- 7.1 This document will be reviewed periodically in conjunction with the University's recognised Trade Unions. Any feedback on this document should be directed in the first instance to the [HRBP team](#) or via the [HR Feedback Form](#).

Version number	Purpose / changes	Document status	Author of changes, role and school / unit	Date
1.0	New guidance	Approved	Mairi Stewart Director of HR	06/09/2021
1.1	Change to review date only.	Approved	Lisa Stewart HR	17/11/2022
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