



UNIVERSITY OF
LIMERICK
OLLSCOIL LUIMNIGH

STUDENT DEATH POLICY

1 Introduction

1.1 Purpose

The death of a University of Limerick student is a sad event, not only for the student's family and immediate friends but also for other students and faculty. When it occurs on campus, the stress and emotional impact on students, faculty and staff can be significantly increased. Equally important are the circumstances surrounding the death of a student.

The purpose of this policy is to organise in a systematic manner the University's response to the death of a student. There are three stages in the management of such an occurrence:

1. Immediate communication of the news to relevant sections of the University and to appropriate public entities.
2. Actions leading up to and including the memorial or funeral service and follow-up support in dealing with the aftermath of the event.
3. Repatriation procedures, where relevant.

1.2 Scope

1.2.1 *To whom does the policy apply?*

The University's response to a student death can have a dramatic impact on how the student's friends and family and how faculty, staff and students respond to the occurrence and its aftermath. With that in mind, the following policy has been developed to ensure a caring, professional, coordinated and consistent response by University administration. It is therefore applicable to all staff and students of the University who may become aware of a student death under any circumstances.

1.2.2 *In what situations does the policy apply?*

Each situation is unique and will be assessed individually. Some may require one or more Crisis Management Plans to be put in place. Where relevant these include:

1. Incidents involving multiple victims which may result in student fatalities on or off campus.
2. Death of a student on campus in sporting events, isolated accidents and road traffic accidents.
3. Death as a result of an accident involving persons on University business on and off campus (e.g. field trip or workplace accident).
4. Unexpected deaths.

If one or more of these circumstances occur, the appropriate Crisis Management Plan will be put in place and coordinated by the Executive Committee, Safety Officer and Director, Building & Estates Division and the Marketing & Communications Division.

Where unique circumstances warrant (e.g. coroner's investigation, foul play or infectious disease is suspected, public safety concerns, etc.), Crisis Management Plans may require modification and could affect the timing of implementation of some or all of the Student Death Policy. Once the Crisis Management Plans are in place and executed to the satisfaction of the coordinators, the Student Death Policy will then be implemented.

1.2.3 Who is responsible for ensuring that the policy (and any associated procedure) is implemented and monitored?

The responsibility for implementation of the Student Death Policy ultimately rests with the UL Provost/Deputy President. Responsibilities are further devolved from this office to the Associate Vice President Student Engagement and the Director Student Affairs.

See Appendix 1 for other key stakeholders that may have a role to play in the actions associated with this policy, along with their contact details.

1.3 Definitions

n/a

2 Context

2.1 Legal and Regulatory Context

n/a

2.2 Other Context

This policy is derived from the former UL Student Death protocol that resided with the Student Affairs Division. Given the complexity and multiplicity of stakeholders the former protocol was deemed unfit for practice and has led towards the development of a more comprehensive institutional policy document encapsulating the responsibilities across the entire organisation.

3 Policy Statements

3.1 Principles for Student Death Policy

3.1.1 Rapid, effective communication and follow-up action following the death of a student that is sensitive to the unique circumstances of each situation.

The University's response to the death of a student will attempt to uphold the following principles

1. Respect for the student, the student's family and friends, and sensitivity in supporting them, faculty and staff in dealing with the aftermath of the event.
2. Dignity for the memory of the student.
3. Discretion in the use and access to information regarding the student death.
4. Clear and timely communication with the student's family and friends, faculty and staff, and external individuals and groups.
5. Supporting public accountability via cooperation with Gardaí and other public officials.
6. Establishing funeral and repatriation procedures and responsibilities as required in relation to international students, or in relation to Irish students whose death occurs while they are abroad on University business.

4 Related Procedures for Student Death Policy

4.1 Communication of a student death to relevant sections of the University and to appropriate public entities

4.1.1 Information about a student death may enter the University from a variety of sources and arrive on the desk of any one of several people on campus. The information, however it is received, should be immediately communicated to the office of the **Director Student Affairs**, who acts as project manager of this Communications Procedure.

4.1.2 Upon notification of the death of a UL student, the Director Student Affairs seeks to verify the information and the circumstances surrounding the death of the student. The Director will contact the Head of Customer Service in UL Academic Registry to verify student details, ID number etc. from the student records system.

Depending on the circumstances in which the student's death occurs, the student's Emergency Contact (EC) details may first need to be accessed on the student records system, the responsibility for which lies with nominated UL staff only. In any situation which involves the formal emergency services, it is the relevant emergency service (Gardaí, Ambulance Service, Fire Service, Coast Guard) that makes direct contact with the student's Emergency Contact.

4.1.3 Once the student's information is confirmed and verified by Academic Registry, the Director Student Affairs will then notify the Communications Manager. The Communications Manager and Director Student Affairs will, between them, coordinate informing the UL President, Provost/Deputy President, UL Student Life President, Campus Security Manager, Head of UL Éist Counselling Service, UL Chaplain, and Director UL Global where relevant. Depending on the circumstances of the student death and the timing of notification, communication may be made by phone and/or email, as appropriate. The Communications Manager also informs the UL Executive Committee by email and manages all media-related communications, where these are relevant to the circumstances.

4.1.4 The rest of the campus community will be informed via All Staff/All Students email from the UL President at the appropriate time.

Note: The email to All Staff/All Students will not be released to the campus by the President until such time as the UL Chaplain (or other nominated University representative where an international student is involved – this may be someone from the student's academic department), speaks with the next of kin of the deceased student and confirms their consent to the public notification. No other internal or external communications should be disseminated by representatives of the university until such time as family consent is received.

4.2 Actions leading up to and including the memorial or funeral service and follow up support in dealing with the aftermath of the event.

The Office of the Provost/Deputy President will oversee the implementation of the Student Death Policy. Because other key stakeholders play key roles in the University's response to the event, depending on the circumstances, a brief stakeholder summary is presented below.

Provost/Deputy President

1. Determining whether outside services may be needed to assist in managing the student death, e.g. funeral, Coroner, repatriation, etc. and providing financial support for same.
2. In circumstances involving the death of an international student, coordinating with the Director, UL Global on obtaining pertinent information and communicating with international students, embassies and other affected parties.
3. Coordinating with the UL President/Deans regarding attendance at the funeral on behalf of the University and preparing a letter of condolence to the bereaved family.
4. Making debriefing sessions available (to groups) if circumstances warrant and engaging external support services if needed.
5. Coordinating with Faculty Deans regarding possible cancellation of classes, extending course work deadlines and deferring of assessments, where this can be facilitated depending on the time of the academic year.
6. Liaise with the Gardaí to be the single contact point for the University and provide contact details from UL records if required.
7. In the case of repatriation procedures (see 4.3 below) and associated costs, the full responsibility lies with the Deputy President/Provost and/or his/her nominee. In addition to the procedures below for repatriation, the following responsibilities may also need be addressed when dealing with the death of an international student:
 - Confirm deceased student's Irish address in Limerick and home address to funeral undertaker for paperwork
 - Contact Insurance company for student's policy to determine the costs of repatriation
 - If the family are not travelling to UL, written confirmation needs to be received from the family outlining their wishes for repatriation, giving the University of Limerick and Funeral Director authority to arrange details
 - Obtaining student's passport from Henry Street Garda Station (paperwork for repatriation cannot commence until passport is received by funeral undertaker)
 - Repatriation details required: preferred airport and contact person and phone number of contact to release body in home country airport
 - Landlord needs to be contacted and determine outstanding bills.
 - Liaise with UL Chaplaincy to arrange a remembrance service on campus and arrange a memorial service in funeral home for staff and students if desired
 - Clothing for memorial service to be collected from student's home and given to undertaker
 - Student's belongings packed, including personal items and shipped to family
 - Closure of Bank account information to be given to family of deceased
 - Contact Fees Office to arrange repayment of fees (if applicable)

Director Student Affairs

1. Establishing one point of contact between the University and the bereaved family most likely to be the UL Chaplaincy Service. Where it is more appropriate for an international student, the designated point of contact may be a UL Global representative or a representative from the student's academic department.
2. Gathering all relevant information surrounding the student's death as per 4.1 above.
3. Ensuring that appropriate support is made available by UL Éist Counselling Service and Chaplaincy to fellow students, staff, and bereaved relatives if required.
4. Through UL Chaplaincy, consulting with the bereaved family of the student and provide support that may include:
 - a. Organising a memorial service with the assistance of UL Chaplaincy (with the family's consent).
 - b. Make available to the family audiotape of memorial services, cards and messages received in the aftermath of the student's death.

5. Sharing student information within all pertinent University administration offices (e.g. Academic Registry, Library, ITD, Fees Office, Accommodation Office, Cooperative Education and Careers, relevant Student Affairs units) and coordinating all required records management activities associated with the student. Offices are requested to complete a template document to confirm the amendment of all records to note the deceased status of the student.

Communications Manager

1. Coordinating with the Director Student Affairs and UL President on the release of a campus-wide email from the UL President informing the UL community of the death.
2. The preparation of a media statement from the UL President to answer any queries from the media while maintaining the utmost sensitivity for the interests of the bereaved family, students and/or staff.
3. Assessing and managing the flow of information, including early identification of information that has already been shared internally or externally, the parties with whom that information has been shared, and determining what information should be shared and with whom.

Faculty Deans

1. Where appropriate and at the discretion of relevant staff, cancel classes for the remainder of the day to allow students to react to the news.
2. Where appropriate cancel classes on the day of the funeral.
3. Where appropriate extend course work deadlines and defer assessments until after the funeral. The facility to do this depends on the time of the academic year at which the student's death occurs.
4. Liaise with Student Life (SL) or Postgraduate Students' Union (PSU) in relation to costs of transport for attendance of students at funeral, and tea and condolences afterwards.
5. Represent the Faculty at the funeral, or delegate to staff as appropriate.
6. Coordinate preparation and issuance of letters of condolence from the Dean, Course Leader and staff who knew the student, as appropriate.
7. Consideration to students suffering severe grief reactions, with referrals to UL Chaplaincy and UL Éist Counselling Service as appropriate.

UL Éist Counselling Service

1. Head of Counselling to liaise with counsellors in relation to the student death, to be prepared for possible reactions of student clients.
2. Head of Counselling will accompany a Chaplain and SL/PSU representative to meet with the class of the deceased student and outline to them what support services are available.
3. Forward a joint email with Chaplaincy to each of the student's classmates, friends and lecturing staff offering support and professional grief counselling if required.
4. Liaise with the Dean of Faculty to inform him/her that such offers are made available.
5. If an inquest is held at a later date (if known), contact the family and fellow students offering support, irrespective of whether or not University staff is required to be present.

Chaplaincy Service

1. The Head Chaplain confirms the details of the death of a UL student with the Director, Student Affairs.
2. In some cases where the death is anticipated, the Chaplains may already have been in contact with the family, relevant students, friends and staff.
3. If death is unanticipated, contact is made with the bereaved family and students connected with the deceased. When the funeral arrangements are known, the Head Chaplain

communicates these to the Communications Manager and the Director Student Affairs. If available, this information to be included in the President's Office communication to staff and students.

4. Liaising with the SL/PSU to coordinate representation of the student body at the funeral, and collection of information as needed.
5. A Chaplain will accompany a Counsellor and SL/PSU representative to meet with the class of the deceased student and outline to them what support services are available.
6. The Head of Counselling and Chaplaincy send an email of condolence to classmates.
7. Chaplains arrange for Books of Condolence to be set up at the relevant SL/PSU and at relevant Department Buildings and/or online for the campus community to sign. The Books of Condolence are given to / shared with the families at an appropriate time.
8. When possible the Chaplains will visit the family at the time of death or at a time suitable to the family.
9. The Head Chaplain confirms the names of the bereaved family members to the Chancellor who writes a letter of condolence to the family.

Bereavement Support

1. Chaplains are available for bereavement support for students and staff members who are affected by the death of a student. This may consist of one-to-one support or a group ritual of saying goodbye to the deceased around the time of the month's mind.
2. Each year Chaplains contact all bereaved families on the first anniversary of a student death and at Christmas. These families are invited to attend the Annual November Memorial Service where they meet the President and/or their nominee. Many appreciate this as well as the opportunity to meet other bereaved families.
3. Some bereaved families keep in contact with Chaplaincy as part of their grieving process. Where appropriate Chaplains visit their homes and keep in communication by phone, post or email.
4. When families wish to honour their family member's achievement in UL, the Chaplains liaise with the Provost/Deputy President's Office and relevant Department in offering an Aegrotat Award, subject to academic regulations that govern this.
5. Chaplains accompany the bereaved families at the formal gathering where they receive the Aegrotat Award from the President. If a family chooses to receive the award privately it is presented on behalf of the University by the Chaplains.

Student Health Centre

1. If the deceased student was registered with the Student Health Centre, pass on any available information to the doctor who, depending on the circumstances, may be involved in issuing the death certificate, informing the Gardaí, Coroner's office or any other matter needing attention.
2. In the case of death by serious accident on campus, the Medical Director of the Student Health Centre should liaise with hospital nurses and doctors and provide a medical report on the deceased student, if appropriate.

Student Life (SL) or Postgraduate Students' Union (PSU)

1. In the event of a student death on campus or at a SL/PSU related activity, liaise with the Associate Vice President Student Engagement or designated key person prior to taking action.
2. If the student death occurred at an SL/PSU related activity, depending on the circumstances the SL/PSU may be advised to email the student body asking them to contact home to reassure family members as to their safety and provide a telephone number if necessary.

3. Delegate one person to deal with hospital and another to liaise with the Gardaí to collate all information and report back to the Associate Vice President Student Engagement, or designated key person, and the President of the Student Life.
4. Contact class reps to advise them of the death of the student.
5. A SL/PSU Representative will accompany the Head of Counselling and a Chaplain to meet with the class of the deceased student and outline to them what support services are available.
6. Provide minibus to transport family members of deceased student to and from accommodations where appropriate.
7. Provide minibus to funeral for student mourners if required.
8. SL/PSU President or designee to represent student body at the funeral.
9. Offer support to students suffering grief reaction, referring to UL Éist Counselling Service and Chaplaincy Service if appropriate.
10. Mount long-term awareness campaigns to students on improving safety, if appropriate.

Director, UL Global

1. The Director, UL Global, will provide the following information to the Provost/Deputy President, or his/her nominee:
 - Name and address of home university, as appropriate.
 - Name, address and telephone number of agent if applicable.
 - Embassy contact details.
 - Send details of student religion to Chaplain (if known).
 - Contact Socrates or exchange academic coordinator as appropriate.
 - Advise UL Éist Counselling Service on how to contact students from the same country/group.
2. If the student was on study placement/exchange programme at UL from a partner institution, the Director shall contact the International Office of the partner institution to notify them of the student's death and to ensure that no notices/letters are forwarded to relatives.

Director, Cooperative Education and Careers Division

1. If the student was on a work placement at the time of their death, or expected to commence work in the near future, the Director will contact the employers to notify the company of the student's death and to ensure that no notices/letters are forwarded to relatives.
2. If the student already completed their work placement, his/her former employers should be informed immediately of the death of the student.

Campus Life Services

1. If a death or assumed death occurs in the Campus Life Services controlled accommodations, emergency procedures as outlined by Campus Life Services, should be followed.

Campus Security

1. In the event of a sudden or assumed death on campus being discovered by security personnel, emergency procedures for contacting relevant personnel, including emergency services e.g. doctor, Gardaí etc., as outlined by the University Crisis Management Plan, shall be followed.
2. In the event of a sudden or assumed death on campus being advised to security supervisors on duty in the control room at any time 24/7, they should immediately ring the Campus Security Manager for guidance.

3. Ensure that the Director Student Affairs or their designee is informed immediately, whatever the time.

4.3 Repatriation Procedures

Repatriation procedures may be required in two different instances: where a student death occurs in Ireland whose family home is outside the country, and where a student death occurs in another country, but whose family home is in Ireland.

Repatriation procedures are the responsibility of the Provost/Deputy President's Office and may also involve UL Global, depending on the student and the circumstances.

4.3.1 A student death which occurs in Ireland

When someone from another country dies in Ireland there are certain formalities that must be followed before the body can be sent out of Ireland for burial or cremation elsewhere. The purpose of the following information is to set out the general process and rules involved. A Funeral Director in Ireland can help with the formalities and can make the necessary arrangements for 'repatriation'. Assistance is also available from the relevant embassy representing the person's country in Ireland. A Funeral Director from the student's country may also be able to arrange to have the body returned home. It can be very costly to have a body repatriated from one country to another and the family may wish to consider having the body cremated in Ireland and having the ashes sent to the deceased's country.

4.3.1.1 Reporting the death

When a sudden, unnatural or violent death occurs, there is a legal obligation to report the death to the Coroner. The appropriate Coroner is the Coroner for the district where the death occurred.

Contact details can be found on:

<http://www.coroners.ie/en/cor/pages/coronercontactdetails#Limerick>

The death may be reported to a member of the Garda Síochána, not below the rank of sergeant, who will notify the Coroner. The Coroner will arrange for the body to be moved to a mortuary facility and for a medical examination (post-mortem) to be carried out to determine the cause of death. The Garda Síochána will assist the Coroner in arranging a formal identification of the body by a family member or a nominee of the family. Where a person dies from a natural illness or disease for which the deceased was being treated by a doctor within one month of the death, there is no need to notify the Coroner. In this case, the doctor will issue the medical certificate of the cause of death (Death Notification Form).

4.3.1.2 Registering the Death

When someone dies in Ireland the death must be registered as soon as possible. Where the doctor issues the Death Notification Form, the death can then be registered and a death certificate can be obtained from the local Registrar of births, marriages and deaths. A death is automatically registered where a post-mortem is held at the request of the Coroner however, there is likely to be a delay in getting a death certificate.

4.3.1.3 Preparing the body for shipment home

The Funeral Director appointed in Ireland can embalm and prepare the body for repatriation on their premises. Under normal circumstances embalming is only carried out if it is appropriate for the deceased's religion or culture e.g. Jewish and Muslim faiths do not allow embalming unless it is required by law – see [here](#) for general guidance. The Funeral Director and/or the relevant embassy will advise on what is required by law with respect to embalming for repatriation. If a post-mortem has been held, the Funeral Director can obtain the release of the body from the

Coroner so that it can be prepared. It is necessary to have the body formally identified and in some cases it may be necessary for a family member to travel to confirm the identification. International regulations require all coffins crossing international frontiers to be zinc or lead lined and sealed. These coffins are not suitable for cremation and either the lining has to be removed or another coffin provided in the country of destination, if the body is to be cremated.

Advice should be sought from the UL Procurement Office in relation to the procedures to be followed for appointing a Funeral Director in Ireland.

4.3.1.4 Documentation

Before a body can be removed from Ireland the following documentation is required:

- Coroner's Removal Order/Non-infectious Note
- Embalming Certificate (if appropriate; see 4.3.1.3 above)
- Passport or Identity Card
- Funeral Director's Declaration
- Embassy Permit Notarisation or apostilling of documents (where applicable)

The Funeral Director can obtain the Removal Order from the Coroner and the death certificate from the Registrar (if available). The embassy can advise on what formalities and documentation are required. The Funeral Director can liaise with the embassy on any formalities that need to be carried out and assist in obtaining the required documentation.

4.3.1.5 Travel arrangements

The Funeral Director can assist in making travel arrangements for the body from Ireland to the deceased's country. The embassy should be notified of the travel arrangements so that the authorities in the deceased's country can be informed. The Funeral Director normally does this. A Funeral Director in the deceased's country is required who can liaise with the relevant authorities there and arrange the removal of the body for burial or cremation when it arrives.

4.3.1.6 Costs

Repatriation of a deceased person abroad from Ireland can be an expensive process due to factors such as the distance to be travelled and how the body is shipped. Check whether the person had travel insurance or private medical cover which would help cover the costs. If the deceased is covered contact the insurance company as soon as possible. Financial assistance with the cost of repatriating a deceased person abroad **is not available** from the authorities in Ireland, just as it is unavailable from the authorities in many other countries. ***The University may have to cover such costs from the Office of the Provost/Deputy President in such cases.***

4.3.2 A student death which occurs outside of Ireland

Where the death of a UL student occurs abroad, the following sets out the general process and rules involved when bringing a body to Ireland for burial or cremation. Repatriation of the remains of a deceased person to Ireland can be a complicated and costly process. Families may therefore wish to consider having the body cremated abroad and having the ashes returned to Ireland.

4.3.2.1 Notification that an Irish citizen has died abroad

If notified of the death of student abroad by someone other than the Gardaí contact the Irish embassy/consulate for that country for advice.

4.3.2.2 Formal identification of the remains

Before any arrangements can be made to return a body to Ireland, it will be necessary to have the remains formally identified. That is, it is necessary to have the identity of the deceased

officially confirmed in line with the laws in that country. The rules on who may formally identify a deceased person can vary, but usually identification may be carried out by a travelling companion or business colleague of the deceased. Depending on local laws and rules however, it may be necessary for a family member to travel to the place where the deceased is, to confirm the identity.

Further information on the local arrangements for formal identification of Irish citizens abroad is available from the Irish embassy for the country where the death occurred. While the embassy may assist in obtaining documents such as death certificates, etc. it cannot help pay for the cost of relatives travelling to where a death occurs. Neither can the embassy pay the costs of repatriation of bodies back to Ireland except in exceptional circumstances.

4.3.2.3 Appointing a Funeral Director

In order to obtain the release of the body for repatriation from the authorities in the country where the student died, it is necessary to appoint a Funeral Director in that country. A Funeral Director in Ireland can find a suitable Funeral Director in the other country and make the appropriate arrangements. Alternatively, the Irish embassy for the country can provide help to Irish citizens in appointing a local funeral director.

The local Funeral Director can prepare the body for repatriation. The Funeral Director can also prepare the appropriate documentation and obtain the death certificate if possible. Assistance is also available from the Irish embassy in obtaining documents such as the death certificate or medical reports. The local Funeral Director can also make all the necessary flight arrangements.

4.3.2.4 Clearance from the Coroner

The repatriation of a body to Ireland must be notified to the Coroner in Ireland for the district where the body is being flown to. The Funeral Director will contact the appropriate Coroner with the required documentation.

The appropriate documentation in relation to the deceased has to be made available to the Coroner for clearance by the Coroner's office. The documentation required includes:

- Medical certificate giving cause of death
- Certification as to whether a post-mortem examination has been carried out or not
- Authorisation to remove the body from the other country
- Certificate to the effect that the body is not coming from an area of infectious disease

Where there are some concerns as to the circumstances of the death, the Coroner may direct that an examination of the body be carried out.

4.3.2.5 Funeral arrangements

Funeral arrangements in Ireland should not be confirmed until the Coroner's office has cleared the documentation. International regulations require all coffins crossing international frontiers by air or sea to be metal (zinc or lead) lined and sealed. These coffins are therefore not suitable for cremation and either the lining has to be removed or another coffin provided if the body is to be cremated in Ireland.

4.3.2.6 Registering the death

If the death is registered in the country where the person died, it is not normally registered in Ireland. Where a system of registration does not exist in that country or where it is not possible to obtain copies of the relevant civil registration record (death certificate), contact the General Register Office in Ireland to see if the death can be registered in Ireland. A death certificate is an important legal document, evidence of which is frequently required in Ireland in order to deal with the deceased's estate, access money, etc.

4.3.2.7 **Rules**

While Irish embassies provide consular services to Irish nationals abroad, this does not extend to non-EU nationals. Nationals of other countries should avail of consular services from their own countries' embassies and consulates.

4.3.2.8 **Costs**

Repatriation of a deceased person to Ireland can be very expensive, depending on the distance to be travelled and other factors. Check whether the person had travel insurance or private medical cover to help cover the costs. Financial assistance with the cost of repatriation of a dead body is not available from the Irish embassy and in such cases may have to be borne by the University.

5 Related Documents

[Student Emergency Contact protocol](#)

6 Document Control

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7 Appendix 1: Key stakeholders and contact details

Name and Department	Email Address
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