Document Q4.21
DEATH OF A STUDENT PROTOCOL

Publication Date: March 2020
1 Introduction

1.1 Although the death of a student is extremely rare, this protocol outlines the steps the University should take should such a sad incident occur. The protocol is designed to:

- ensure that actions are carried out efficiently with a compassionate and sensitive approach
- give consideration to the level of support required by staff and students who may be affected by the death
- ensure the appropriate level of response
- provide clarity of roles and responsibilities, ensuring consistency of approach
- ensure the University complies with any legal obligations it may have and ensure any potential issues are monitored appropriately

This document will provide guidance rather than being prescriptive – as every incident will be different, actions should be appropriate to the particular case.

2 Procedures

2.1 The processes for responding to the death of a student will vary slightly depending on the circumstances surrounding the death. Although any incident will involve a coordinated response through an identified core team, if a student has died on campus, the following initial steps must be taken immediately;

- inform the Campus Dean or most senior member of staff on site
- ensure the scene is not disturbed
- accompany any witnesses or friends of the student to a quiet area until further instruction is received
- the Campus Dean or a member of the campus management team should inform the emergency services and assign a main contact to liaise with the police when they arrive
- the Campus Dean should follow the Communications Plan for Safeguarding Incidents [Appendix B] if this has not already been invoked
- the Campus Dean should initiate a case conference and inform the Pro Vice Chancellor – Academic Development

2.2 If the University is informed of the death of a student off-campus, the following actions should be taken as soon as possible:
2.3 **Case Conference**
A case conference should take place within 24 hours in order to ensure a coordinated and appropriate response to the death of a student. The members of the case conference should include the following as a minimum:

- Campus Dean (Chair)
- Designated Safeguarding Lead
- Programme Lead
- Head of Student Support Services
- Wellbeing Service Manager
- Senior member of University Communications team
- HR Business Partner

Other members of staff may be included, depending on the specific case such as:

- Director of Estates (where the death of a student has occurred on university premises)
- Head of International Visa Office (where the student is international)

2.4 The chair of the case conference will identify the full name of the student who has died, establish the circumstances surrounding the death, consider the staff and students who may require support and agree appropriate actions to be taken. An overview of the tasks which should be considered can be found in Appendix A.

2.5 An overview of the circumstances, together with any actions agreed should be recorded following all case conferences.

2.6 The case conference team will reconvene regularly following the incident to report on actions taken. At an appropriate time after the event, they should schedule a further call to discuss the case and review any lessons learned.

**Date for next review**

December 2019
## Version history:

<table>
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<tr>
<th>Version</th>
<th>Amended by</th>
<th>Revision summary</th>
<th>Date</th>
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<tr>
<td>V1.0</td>
<td>Head of Student Support Services</td>
<td>Initial Draft</td>
<td>27/10/2017</td>
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<tr>
<td>V1.1</td>
<td>Head of Student Support Services</td>
<td>Incorporate amends from Designated Safeguarding Lead</td>
<td>10/11/17</td>
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<tr>
<td>V1.2</td>
<td>Head of Student Support Services</td>
<td>Include reference to Safeguarding Communications Plan</td>
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<tr>
<td>V1.4</td>
<td>Senior Quality Officer</td>
<td>Further naming convention clarifications</td>
<td>27/03/20</td>
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# APPENDIX A
## Roles of Responsibilities of Case Conference Team

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<tr>
<th>Role</th>
<th>Responsibilities</th>
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| **Campus Dean**               | - Chair the case conference  
- Inform the Pro Vice Chancellor (Academic Development) and Chief Operating Officer  
- Act as the liaison with the police (where appropriate)  
- Inform key campus staff including the management team, Student Services, Employability and Assessments teams and other students who were connected with the deceased  
- Send a letter of condolence to the deceased student’s family/partner on behalf of the University  
- Ensure appropriate University representation at the funeral/memorial service  
- Along with Designated Safeguarding Lead, act as Overall Crisis Leaders in accordance with the Communications Plan for Safeguarding Incidents |
| **Designated Safeguarding Lead** | - Establish that the police have informed the next of kin  
- Task members of the case conference where appropriate  
- Keep a record of the case and tasks allocated  
- Along with Campus Dean, act as Overall Crisis Leaders in accordance with the Communications Plan for Safeguarding Incidents |
| **Programme Lead**            | - Act as key contact for the family  
- Inform the appropriate Personal Tutor and subject tutors, ensuring they are aware of support available (to staff and students)  
- Assist in arranging cover for the Personal Tutor where required to enable them to be available to other students who may be connected with the deceased  
- Assist with informing other students connected with the deceased and be available to support students as required  
- Liaise with the Student Services team and ensure any of the student’s |
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| **Head of Student Support Services**      | • Inform central service teams including the Student Association, Student Finance, Library Services and Student Support Services  
• Ensure the student’s record is updated on all University databases and be the point of contact for any administrative queries  
• Support the Wellbeing Service Manager with arrangements for student counselling  
• Inform Public Health England in the event that the student has died on campus due to a contagious/notifiable disease |
| **Wellbeing Service Manager**              | • Ensure appropriate arrangements are made for students to receive appropriate support through the counselling service or externally  
• Liaise with key campus teams to ensure all are informed of arrangements made |
| **Senior member of University Communications team** | • Inform the switchboard and communications teams  
• Handle any enquiries from the media  
• Monitor and contain any response on social media  
• Ensure enquiries are managed and statements prepared in accordance with the Communications Plan for Safeguarding Incidents |
| **HR Business Partner**                    | • Ensure staff are supported and have access to appropriate counselling  
• Be available to support staff as required |
Communications plan for safeguarding incidents including those falling within the scope of the Prevent Duty

Introduction

We have developed a plan to create a 24/7 emergency response for media enquiries for The University of Law (‘the University’) in relation to safeguarding issues and the Prevent Duty. In accordance with government guidance we are treating the Prevent Duty as part of safeguarding. The plan is designed to be prepared for any urgent media enquiries received within and outside of office hours, which will need to be dealt with promptly in order to provide appropriate support and maintain the University’s reputation.

Please note this document does not replace the University’s Emergency Response Plan or equivalent, but is designed to help the University’s public relations team to manage communications around incidents involving safeguarding responsibilities and the Prevent Duty.

Part of the plan includes the mapping of potential issues and the response needed. These must be reviewed and updated on a regular basis in regard to changing pastoral and reputational threats.

Striking the right legal and moral balance can sometimes be at odds with the immediate reputational concerns of the University. Undertaking regular horizon planning and scenario mapping is essential to make sure that the University has up to date policy documents and can respond quickly to information requests in the event of a crisis. This will help create appropriate and sensitive responses in the event of an emergency.

Examples of potential existing scenarios for safeguarding and the Prevent Duty are outlined under the categories of Red and Amber to indicate the anticipated level of response required.

Potential Red scenarios – the highest level of vigilance – could include:

- Suicide/murder of a student or member of staff
- Serious criminal offence committed against/by a student of member of staff (e.g. student/member of staff charged/convicted with sexual offences against a child)
- Arrest of a student/ member of staff
- Evidence of support among students or staff for banned/proscribed organisations on campus
- Allegations of radicalisation and/or recruitment at the University centres
- Racist or discriminatory incidents
- Harmful activities of students and staff with a current and direct link to the University
- Probe or review by the Government in regard to Prevent Duty
• Student and staff safety threatened as a result of a poorly managed external events at one of the centres

• An attack by an individual (students/staff/ alumni) with links to the University (whether director indirect)

Potential **Amber** scenarios could include:

- Allegation/ suspicion of abuse, harm or other inappropriate behaviour of student/ member of staff

- Concerns of student/ member to staff posing threats to fellow students/ members of staff (i.e. threatening behaviour, downloading, possession or distribution of inappropriate images or extremist material, etc.)

- Concerns that a student/ member of staff is vulnerable to radicalisation or at risk of being drawn into terrorism

- Small-scale event/activity orchestrated by a third-party with a removed link to the University e.g. alumni

- Rumours of activity/tensions involving students or staff' activities on campus

- Controversial speakers on campus

N.B. These incidents can quickly escalate into Red-level issues - and all should be viewed cautiously and in line with compliance of the Prevent Duty.

**Communications Response**

It is important to remember that in a digital 24/7 media environment news can break across a number of channels and spread quickly. It is crucial to react quickly and accurately. Essential to consideration must be verification of the facts and also consideration to the legal frameworks which can impede information flow - for example, around data protection of staff and students and potential defamation.

In a **Red** level scenario, in particular, it is vital that there is absolute clarity around the chain of command and not competing agendas or confusion around approval and direction. We recommend that a maximum of two people – overall Crisis Leaders – have the authority for decision-making. It is vital that these people communicate together effectively. These individuals need to be operating at a Director level and are trusted to make serious decisions, which have corporate and potentially critical implications.
Suggested steps to take in a typical scenario:

**Response Plan:**
- Mobilise response team (relocation if necessary) & clear chain of command for leadership and sign off
- Establish first facts/verify allegation(s)
- Agree initial response and next steps
- Prepare holding and/or reactive statements – social media, internal communications, website and press
- Review communications plan and agree news dissemination approach
- Prepare background statements and Q&As for second phase of questioning
- Log activities/enquiries
- Live scenario mapping/news monitoring
- Assess and review activity across set timeframes e.g. update calls, meetings and public information assessment

**Action checklist:**
- Health & safety assessment of immediate threat
- Engage University emergency response plan
- Liaise with authorities
- Take legal advice if required
- Open an investigation
- Close off appropriate student/staff records
- Alert centre security teams
- Alert all staff who may be approached by the media for comment
- Secure digital assets/access for news updates
- Mobilise pastoral team
- Emergency response line
- De-brief
As part of the response plan, we have included below an out of hours telephone directory across communications team and additional contacts at the University.

**Ongoing planning and preparation**

Ensuring that we are prepared to deal with any potential issues that might arise is an essential part of the plan. This involves undertaking ongoing planning, preparation and reviews of our strategy and approach for communication and media response in case of any incidents. We recommend implementing the following activities:

- **External Speaker Policy** - In conjunction with Campus Deans and estates staff keep a log of events and room bookings taking place which come under the remit of the Prevent Duty and take the relevant assessment and safeguarding measures

- **Undertake scenario mapping/horizon scanning** – Analyse and monitor current environment; discuss and determine potential issues which might affect the University. These should be reviewed on a monthly basis as well as whenever a new development arises

- **Prepare background Q&A documents and update policies regularly** – Collating information on relevant University’s procedures, policies and measures; preparing responses to potential questions media might ask for scenarios previously mapped; and briefing crisis leaders accordingly. These should be reviewed on a monthly basis as well as whenever a new development arises

- **Emergency contacts** – Regularly update emergency contact sheet and if needed, review crisis leaders. These should be reviewed on a monthly basis

- **Access to digital log ins are secure and can be accessed** – regularly perform security checks to make sure access to digital documents is secure and that only authorised members have access to these. This should be done on a monthly basis.
The University of Law and GUS contacts

It is important to have designated crisis leaders and alternative options should they not be available. In the event of a crisis, it is important to have a clear leader.

We recommend that no more than two people have absolute authority for decision-making and it is vital that these people communicate effectively together. These individuals need to be at Director level and are trusted to make serious decisions which have corporate implications.

<table>
<thead>
<tr>
<th>Crisis Leader - Option 1</th>
<th>Lesley Hill, COO</th>
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<thead>
<tr>
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