

A University Protocol – Death of a Staff member

The University is committed to providing a supportive work environment and contributing to the health and wellbeing of all staff. This protocol is intended to provide guidance and support when the University has been advised of the death of a staff member. In recognition of the stressful impact this news may have, this protocol will be guided by the following principles.

- The University will seek to ensure that contact with the staff members family is timely and sensitive
- The University is committed to staff wellbeing and will seek to provide appropriate assistance to the staff member's colleagues and work area as soon as possible after notification
- The University will seek to manage the impact on all staff, students and relevant university stakeholders and
- The University will ensure all appropriate benefit entitlements are processed.

The following guidelines should be followed but may vary depending on the circumstances surrounding the death of the staff member

1. Responsibility for coordinating the overall response of the University rests with the Director of Human Resources in conjunction with the relevant Head of Department. The Director of Human Resources and the Head of Department will call upon relevant individuals within the University for assistance where appropriate.
2. The death of a staff member will at all times be dealt with sensitively and tactfully and the co-ordination of the University's response *may* include:
 - a. Liaising with An Garda Síochána (in the case of a sudden death) and passing on family contact details so that they can inform the next-of-kin. Contact with the family should, in the first instance, be made by An Garda Síochána.
 - b. In the event of death abroad or of an international staff member, arranging flights and accommodation for the period required, if necessary, normally 3-4 days, meeting the family at the airport, if required, assisting with the arrangements for repatriation, should this be required and
 - c. Acting as a contact point for the family for the duration required
 - d. Informing staff and external contacts /stakeholders about the death of the staff member
 - e. Providing support for staff and colleagues affected by the death of the staff member. This may include counselling or other interventions as required.
 - f. Liaising with the Inter Faith Centre , if appropriate, regarding a Memorial Service, at a suitable time

3. Upon news of the death of a staff member, the Senior Management of the University should be informed immediately.
4. DCU Estates /Head of Security will also be informed to ensure that the University flag is flown at half mast for 3 days on all 3 campuses from the day on which news of the death is received.
5. The primary consideration in the University's response on these occasions should be the wishes of the family. The Director of Human Resources and/ or the Head of Department will liaise with the staff member's family to offer condolence and to seek their wishes regarding further communication or support from the University. Subject to the agreement of the family, a communication will be issued by the Director of Human Resources and / or the Head of the Department via the all staff email to inform them of the death of the staff member.
6. Having regard to the sensitivity of the situation, each member of the Senior Management team will take appropriate action as the death of the staff member relates to their area of responsibility.
7. The main University Reception Desks and Security should be informed.
8. As soon as the removal and funeral details become known, they should be communicated by the Head of Department to all those listed above. Again, subject to the agreement of the family, a communication will also be issued via the all staff email. Staff will be facilitated in attending the funeral of their colleague.
9. Staff may wish to have a commemorative service on campus. If so, this should be organised by the Head of the Department in consultation with the Chaplains if appropriate.
10. While it is understandable that, in the immediate aftermath of the death of a staff member colleagues might want a commemorative plaque or some other tangible memorial, no undertakings or publicity should be given to such an eventuality until the University has had time to consider it. The University will liaise with the family to ensure any proposals meet with the family's approval. There is a Garden of Remembrance on campus in memory of all deceased staff and students of the University. There is also a Book of Remembrance kept in the Inter Faith Centre, and an annual remembrance ceremony.
11. The Human Resources Department will assist the family and designated beneficiaries with matters relating to University benefit schemes and plans.