

# Deceased Student or Missing Person Arrangements Procedure

## Section 1 - Summary

(1) The objective of this Procedure is to enable the University to respond in a coordinated and appropriate manner when advised of the death of a student or a missing student.

## Section 2 - Scope

(2) This Procedure applies to:

- a. A student who has died.
- b. A student who is reported as missing.

## Section 3 - Definitions

(3) Nil

## Section 4 - Policy/ Regulation

(4) Nil

## Section 5 - Procedures

### Part A - Summary of Roles and Responsibilities

Role	Responsibilities
Head of Legal Services	In collaboration with Student Services and University Security, verifies the death or missing status Coordinates the University response including the development of the communications strategy for the University Manages any risk implications
Security	Assists with confirmation of the death or official missing status
Executive Dean	Seeks advice from the Head of Legal Services as to the nature and timing of communication with the student's family. This may involve an initial contact with the family from the Head of Legal Services followed by College contact Arranges letter of condolence
Other business units	Await advice from the Head of Legal Services as to the timing and nature of communication required

Role	Responsibilities
Fees	Upon receipt of official documentation, amends the student record to reflect a deceased status in order to cancel enrolment and stop the generation of automatic correspondence Processes refunds, removes debts, remits HECS (Higher Education Contribution Scheme) where the student has an active enrolment in the current semester
Student Services	Ensures that no further correspondence is generated and sent to the student until such time as the student's status can be confirmed Is aware of a possible need for Counselling services Provides Counselling Services to the College and Student cohort
Awards and Graduations	Manages and amends student record in relation to graduations; assesses in relation to possible aegrotat or posthumous award
Library	Stops automated requests for return of library materials
Facilities	Make necessary arrangements in relation to University keys or access cards
ITS	Make necessary arrangements in relation to email accounts and any lab or related IT access
People and Culture	In the event the student is/was also a staff member, follow all protocols regarding deceased staff
VU Global/ Student Enrolment	In the event that the student was an international student, liaises with the <a href="#">Department of Home Affairs</a> and other relevant government bodies regarding the death
Social Media Team	Monitors tribute and other sites
Alumni Relations	Amends membership details
Legal Services	Manages response to external legal practitioners
Marketing and Communications	Manages response to media coverage or an unusual level of public scrutiny

## Part B - Process

### Steps (for Local and International Onshore Students)

#### Verification of the Death or Official Missing Status

(5) The University accepts any of the following as evidence of death:

- a. Notification from a government agency such as the Registry of Births, Deaths and Marriages;
- b. A copy of the death certificate;
- c. A copy of the coroner's report;
- d. A copy of a police report which explicitly indicates the student's death or missing status;
- e. A letter from a solicitor or executor of the deceased's estate;
- f. Other evidence deemed appropriate by the Head of Legal Services.

(6) In the event that the Head of Legal Services cannot obtain the evidence specified for a student's death, Student Connections ensures that no further correspondence is generated and sent to the student until such time as the student's status can be confirmed.

#### Response to Death or Missing Status

(7) A decision is made by the Legal Services office as to the timing and suitability of communication and follow-up actions from the University and/or College to the family. In the event of a missing student, the Legal Services office determines the appropriate actions.

(8) In addition, the Legal Services office coordinates communication and actions to class or cohort groups (particularly in the case of death as a result of notifiable or contagious illness) as well as University staff and business units such as Library, ITS, Enrolments, Student Financials, Completions, Student Wellbeing.

(9) The Head of Legal Services coordinates:

- a. a letter from the Vice-Chancellor offering condolences on behalf of the University; and/or
- b. a letter from the student's Executive Dean.

(10) The letter from the College is to:

- a. be authorised by the Executive Dean;
- b. offer condolences on behalf of the College and University;
- c. provide additional items as appropriate in each instance, such as an academic transcript or testamur, options for graduation, a refund cheque and so on.

(11) The Legal Services office ensures that matters are appropriately documented and stored to ensure that the University's position is legally defensible.

(12) The Legal Services office liaises with Business Units of the University as follows:

- a. Student Financials (Government Reporting and Student Systems to amend student record) to amend the student record to reflect a deceased status in order to cancel enrolment and stop the generation of automatic correspondence relating to fees, processing funds, removal of debts, remit HECS/fees.
- b. Enrolments: If the student is an apprentice/trainee, TAFE must be notified by telephone within 24 (twenty-four) hours of notification.
- c. Awards and Graduations in relation to advice re graduations and possible Posthumous Award.
- d. Library to stop automated requests for return of library materials.
- e. Student Services to be aware of a possible need for Counselling services to students and staff.
- f. Facilities to check if the student had University keys or access cards.
- g. ITS to make necessary arrangements in relation to email accounts and any lab or related IT access.
- h. People and Culture in the event the student was also a staff member.
- i. VU Global/ Student Enrolments (SE) if the student was an on-shore international student to cancel the eCOE through PRISMS and thereby notify [Department of Home Affairs](#); VU Global/SE may also contact the Australian Embassy in the student's home country in relation to assisting the student's family. VU Global/SE may also assist the family with cultural and religious requirements such as a funeral, tribute, repatriation of the body in accordance with country requirements as well as organising flights, cancelling the student's lease and utilities, meeting the family at the airport and organising their accommodation and ensuring counselling support is available for students and staff.
- j. Social Media Team (Marketing and Communications) to monitor tribute or other media sites.
- k. External relations in relation to managing media enquiries.
- l. Alumni if deceased person is a former student.
- m. Student Services or Student Enrolment will ensure that no further correspondence is generated and sent to the student until such time as the student's status can be confirmed.

## Further Context for International Off-shore Students

(13) In the case of international partnerships, where the death occurs off-shore, these steps will be followed to the extent that is reasonable given local partner customs, conventions and processes.

## **Further Context for International On-shore Students**

(14) In the case of International on-shore students, where the death occurs on-shore, the Head of Legal Services in consultation with VU Global/Student Services or Enrolment will determine on compassionate grounds the level of financial support the University can provide. For example, if the next of kin/Parent wishes to have the body repatriated back to their home country.

## **Further Steps for Local students studying off-shore**

(15) Legal Services contact Australian Embassy and request verification of death or missing status if needed.

## **Exceptional Cases**

(16) The Head of Legal Services will consider the sensitivity of the circumstances and may override this procedure if it is at the request of the family/next of kin and/or the University.

## Status and Details

<b>Status</b>	Current
<b>Effective Date</b>	5th June 2018
<b>Review Date</b>	30th June 2024
<b>Approval Authority</b>	Vice-President, Planning and Registrar
<b>Approval Date</b>	17th April 2018
<b>Expiry Date</b>	Not Applicable
<b>Accountable Officer</b>	Lisa Line Deputy Vice-Chancellor Enterprise and Digital Lisa.Line@vu.edu.au
<b>Responsible Officer</b>	Michelle Gillespie Chief Student Officer 9919 5106
<b>Enquiries Contact</b>	Kriss Guidotti Senior Coordinator, Safer Community +61399194865