Enrolments - Deceased Student 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.

Section 2 - Scope

(2) This Procedure applies to all Victoria University (VU) students and staff and covers student death for the duration of their enrolment at Victoria University, including periods of leave from studies and lecture breaks. For International Students, this also includes any periods of their student visa where this is outside of the length of their Confirmation of Enrolment.

Section 3 - Policy/Regulation

(3) Enrolments Policy

Part A - Summary of Roles and Responsibilities

Role	Responsibilities
Critical Incident Convenor	Under circumstances that cannot be reasonably managed through the standard procedures and BAU resources, activates the Critical Incident Response Team as soon as they are notified of the death of a student.
Critical Incident Response Team	Under circumstances that cannot be reasonably managed through the standard procedures and BAU resources, coordinates the University response including safety and security for staff and students and the management of all communications in the event of a critical incident.
Safer Community	Under the oversight of the Senior Manager, Complaints and Integrity Office, receives and coordinates the response to the notification of student death.
Executive Dean	Sends condolence letter to student's family upon recommendation from Safer Community.
Manager, Student Financials & Scholarships	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 & Administration	Ensures that no further correspondence is generated and sent to the student until such time as the student's status can be confirmed.
Senior Manager, Student Counselling and Mental Health	Provides wellbeing services to students.

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Role	Responsibilities
People and Culture	Provides reference to counselling Services to staff via EAP program and activates Mental Health First Aider support and any work health and safety needs for staff as required.
Manager Awards & Graduations	Manages and amends student record in relation to graduations.
Director, Admissions, Enrolments, and 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.
VU Global/Student Enrolment	In the event that the student was an international student, liaises with the Department of Home Affairs and other relevant government bodies regarding the death.
Alumni Relations	Amends membership details and TQ Database.
Media and Corporate communications	Monitors media and manages response to media coverage and internal VU communication or an unusual level of public scrutiny.

Part B - Process

Process for Local and International Onshore Students

Notification of the Death

(4) Safer Community will be notified of a student's death from various university departments and will manage the process outlined in this procedure.

Verification of the Death

(5) Safer Community will seek the following documentation to support the notification of a student death. This may involve an initial contact with the family. Safer Community will decide on the timing and appropriateness of communication with the student's family on a case-by-case basis.

(6) 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;
e. A letter from a solicitor or executor of the deceased's estate;
f. Other evidence deemed appropriate by the Critical Incident Convenor and Integrity.

(7) In the event that Safer Community cannot obtain the evidence specified for a student's death, they will request that Student Services & Administration ensure 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

(8) Safer Community, in line with the responsibilities outlined in Part A, will contact each responsible area and request that they undertake associated actions under their scope of responsibility.

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(9) In cases where the student's death is identified or reasonably suspected to be a suicide, Safer Community will ensure that the VU Suicide Response Plan is enacted and the VU Suicide Response Team is activated. This includes coordinating appropriate postvention support for students and staff and managing communications in line with best practice guidelines for suicide-related incidents.

(10) Safer Community will facilitate this procedure to ensure the following actions are completed:

a. Deputy Vice-Chancellor Enterprise and Digital and Chief Student Officer are to be notified of the matter.
b. Student Financials (Government Reporting and Student Systems) 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.
c. Enrolments: If the student is an apprentice/trainee, TAFE must be notified by telephone within 24 (twenty- four) hours of notification.
d. Awards and Graduations in relation to advice re graduations and possible Aegrotat or Posthumous Award.
e. Library to stop automated requests for return of library materials.
f. Student Wellbeing and People and Culture to activate appropriate Counselling and Mental Health First Aid services to students and staff.
g. Facilities Service Desk to make necessary arrangements in relation to email accounts and any lab or related IT access, to cancel fobs and parking permits.
h. People and Culture to activate EAP, Mental Health First Aiders support for staff involved.
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. Media and Corporate Communications to monitor media and manage internal and external media requests.
k. Alumni if deceased person is a former student.
l. Student Enrolments will ensure that no further correspondence is generated and sent to the student until such time as the student's status can be confirmed.

(11) Safer Community will coordinate:

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.

(12) 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.

(13) Each responsible business unit ensures that matters are appropriately documented and stored to ensure that the University's position is legally defensible.

Additional Process Requirements for International Students

(14) 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.

(15) In the case of International on-shore students, where the death occurs on-shore, Safer Community in consultation with VU Global/Student Enrolments 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.

(16) Where required, VU Global/Student Enrolments will contact the Australian Embassy and request verification of death.

Exceptional Cases

(17) For instances that cannot be managed within the scope and resources of this Procedure, or if there are business continuity considerations then a matter should be escalated to the Critical Incident Response Team to manage the incident.

(18) In the following circumstances, and if the response required exceeds BAU resourcing and procedures, a referral to the Critical Incident Management Team may be made if the student death:

a. Occurs onsite; or,
b. Has significant media oversight.

Section 4 - HESF/ASQA/ESOS Alignment

(19) HESF: Standard 2.3 Wellbeing and Safety.

(20) Outcome Standards for NVR Registered Training Organisations Instrument 2025: Standard 2.6 Wellbeing. Compliance Standards for NVR Registered Training Organisations and FPP Requirements 2025: 20 Compliance with Laws.

(21) ESOS National Code of Practice 2018: Standard 5 Younger overseas students, 6 Overseas student support services.

Section 5 - Definitions

(22) Nil.

Status and Details

Status	Current
Effective Date	12th June 2025
Review Date	12th June 2028
Approval Authority	Academic Board
Approval Date	4th June 2025
Expiry Date	Not Applicable
Accountable Officer	Lisa Line Deputy Vice-Chancellor Enterprise and Digital Lisa.Line@vu.edu.au
Responsible Officer	Darrel Caufield Chief Student Officer darrel.caulfield@vu.edu.au
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