Kingston University London

Student Death, Serious Injury or Illness Procedure

2026-27

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Contents

Purpose and Scope 3
Disclosure 3
On-site incidents 3
Off-site incidents 4
Fieldtrips, placements and other off-site activities 5
Initial administrative action 7
Immediate action by Student Wellbeing 7
Immediate action by Core Group 7
Immediate action by Accommodation team 8
Immediate action by Faculty Dean or delegate 8
Immediate action by Insurance Adviser 8
Immediate action by SAIL 8
Immediate action by Corporate Affairs 8
Immediate action by Risk & Business Continuity 9
Immediate action by Health & Safety Manager 9
Follow up actions and administrative arrangements 9
Records 10
Review and update arrangements 10
Appendix: Follow up actions to consider by Department/Team 11

Purpose and Scope

1. The purpose of this procedure is to ensure that in the sad event of a student becoming seriously ill, suffering serious injury or death, the University responds appropriately and sensitively, with due regard for the student, their family, their friends and others who may be impacted. It sets out the recommended approach to dealing with an emergency, the associated administrative arrangements following a death, serious injury or illness, and provides guidance on postvention support for staff and students. This procedure should be read alongside the *Suicide Prevention Strategy*, the *Mental Health and Wellbeing Framework* and the *Student Safeguarding Policy*.

2. This document provides an overview of roles and responsibilities for university staff and sets out what students, their family or friends can usually expect if a student becomes seriously ill, injured or where there is a sudden and unexpected death. While it sets out a framework for responding to serious incidents and student deaths, the actions taken may need to vary depending on the circumstances of the incident, the involvement of external agencies, legal requirements, and the wishes of the student's family or next of kin.

Disclosure

3. Information about a serious injury or student death should only be shared with those who need it to coordinate the University's response, support those affected, manage risk, or fulfil legal or operational responsibilities. Staff should avoid speculation and should not share unverified information with students, colleagues, external organisations or on social media.

4. Internal and external communications will be carefully coordinated to ensure that information is shared sensitively, accurately and only where appropriate. Communications will avoid providing unnecessary detail about the cause or circumstances of the death, and will include signposting to support.

On-site incidents

5. If a member of staff or a student discovers a serious incident resulting in the injury or death of a student on any campus, at a University Hall of Residence, or any University managed property the following actions should be taken:

    - Do not enter the area of a serious incident unless you are sure that it is safe to do so.

    - Call the appropriate emergency services on 999 immediately and request both Ambulance and Police attendance. You will need to give information about the situation and the exact location. Police must be notified of any death that does not occur in a hospital and have a responsibility to act on behalf of the coroner to establish who the deceased was, to identify the cause of death and to notify the next of kin.

- Contact KUSCO Security (020 8417 6666 or ext. 66666). If the incident is on campus or a KUSCO managed hall of residence, KUSCO Security will help to secure the area and deal with the incident in accordance with their procedures. KUSCO Security staff are all trained in first aid and will evacuate the area as appropriate.

- If the incident takes place at Hall of Residence managed by an external security provider, KUSCO Security should still be notified immediately and provided with as much information as possible so they can alert the relevant senior member of Kingston University staff. However, local security staff will be responsible for managing the scene in line with their procedures.

- Contact Student Wellbeing on studentsofconcern@kingston.ac.uk as soon as possible to notify them of the incident so they can coordinate the response and any follow-up actions. This noticeboard is monitored daily during the normal working week. If the incident occurs outside of normal working hours, KUSCO Security will liaise with the relevant executive staff on duty.

- **Do not attempt to move or touch the body of a student who has died**. You should also avoid disturbing the surrounding area unless this is necessary to preserve life or protect the safety of others.

- If you are qualified in first aid and believe the student to be alive, you should assist by administering first aid within the limits of your training.

- If you are not qualified in first aid you should remain with the student if safe to do so, following any first aid instructions received from emergency services after 999 has been called. Wait for emergency services / KUSCO Security to arrive.

- Any media enquiries, including approaches through social media, must be referred immediately to the University communications office - telephone 020 8417 3034 or email press@kingston.ac.uk. Staff and students should not provide any statements on behalf of the University.

Off-site incidents

6. The majority of cases of a student death occur off campus. The death may be the result of an accident, illness, suspected suicide, or crime. If a student death is reported to a member of staff, the following information should be collected as appropriate (depending on who is reporting the incident):

- Confirmed or reported details of the student, including their name, date of birth, student number (if known), course and any additional information that may help to establish identity.

- Any known circumstances of the student's death (if reported or considered appropriate to ask).

- Name and contact details of the person reporting the student death, and their relationship to the student.

- If the death has been reported or witnessed by other students, collect their details as appropriate, and consider any immediate wellbeing and support needs (students can be directed to support on the Student Hub including details of crisis support: Wellbeing Support - KU SSP).

7. Once as much relevant information as possible has been collected, notify Student Wellbeing by emailing studentsofconcern@kingston.ac.uk as soon as possible (this noticeboard is monitored daily Monday to Friday). Student Wellbeing will attempt to verify the information through the police, hospital, coroner, family or another appropriate source. Once verified, Student Wellbeing staff will notify the relevant departments within the University. **Staff should not act upon a third-party report of a student death until it has been verified and confirmed by Student Wellbeing.**

Fieldtrips, placements and other off-site activities

8. Students undertake University activities away from one of the main sites for a variety of reasons. These can include fieldtrips, placements, exchange programmes, social or sporting activities, can take place in the UK or overseas, and be of varying duration.

9. All activities organised by the University that take students away from one of the main University sites will have procedures governing how emergency situations should be dealt with, and who should be notified in the event of a death or serious incident. This procedure is not intended to duplicate or replace the guidance set out as part of these local risk assessments. However, once staff become aware of an incident, the following actions should be taken:

- Do not put yourself at risk.
- Take immediate steps to support the safety and wellbeing of students affected by the incident and arrange emergency assistance.
- Call the appropriate emergency services immediately.
- Inform the activity leader (if appropriate) who will initiate the specific local procedure.
- During office hours notify the relevant university Head of School or Faculty contact, who must inform Student Wellbeing by emailing studentsofconcern@kingston.ac.uk as soon as possible.
- Outside of office hours, contact KUSCO Security (020 8417 6666 or ext. 66666).
- Refer all media related matters to the University communications officer - telephone 020 8417 3034 or email press@kingston.ac.uk

10. **Fieldtrips:** Detailed arrangements for dealing with an emergency that may arise while on a fieldtrip should be available as part of the safety arrangements and risk assessment for the trip. As part of these arrangements, emergency contact details should be held on the Student Records system (SITS/ OSIS) and be readily available to the fieldtrip leader and Course Support and Administration (CSA) staff. Staff and students may also have been provided with contact information for use, both during office hours and out of hours, to allow them to contact the University in an emergency.

11. **Placements and exchange programmes:** A student may be seriously or fatally injured whilst on a University organised placement. Placements can be with an employer or at another educational institution in the UK or overseas. Liability cover may differ with individual work placements; each organisation will set out their responsibility in terms of any loss of life or serious injury to a student working or studying within their organisation.

12. **Apprenticeships:** If a Degree Apprenticeship student is seriously or fatally injured whilst undertaking course related activities, the University or employer should ensure the other party is informed as soon as possible (depending on where the incident occurs or who this was reported to). The University will liaise with the employer to ensure appropriate actions are taken by each party, in response to the specific circumstances.

13. **Social and sporting activities:** Students may undertake a variety of sporting or social activities organised by the University or by the Kingston Students Union. In the event of a serious incident or death of a student during such an activity, the identified leader of the activity should notify the University immediately by emailing studentsofconcern@kingston.ac.uk. The Kingston Students Union has separate insurance cover.

14. **University activities overseas:** If a student becomes seriously ill, injured, or dies while overseas on a University activity, the University will seek to work closely with the family, insurers, local authorities, police, consular services and other agencies to coordinate an appropriate response. The University's Insurance Advisor should be contacted urgently so medical repatriation and legal assistance can be arranged under the travel insurance policy, if applicable, and to respond to any liability issues arising from the incident. Additional considerations may be necessary such as assisting with travel and accommodation arrangements for family members to travel to the country and arranging for family members to be met at their destination by English speaking representatives or leaders of the trip. Again, the Insurance Advisor should be contacted as this may be covered by the University's insurers. Consideration may need to be given to assist with repatriation to the UK if this is not covered by the University's, or the student's own travel insurance policy.

15. All Kingston University registered students are covered by the University's travel policy for study-related activities although there may be variations in the liability cover for work placements, and students may wish to take out their own travel insurance.

16. **Partner Institutions:** The University runs many collaborative courses with partner institutions in the UK and abroad. In the event of a student death or serious incident at a partner institution, the partner institution may be notified directly. In such situations the partner institution is expected to notify their Faculty contact at the University, who will notify Student Wellbeing and liaise with the partner institution to determine who will undertake the necessary actions.

Initial administrative action

17. An appropriate member of staff in Student Wellbeing (usually the Senior Health Adviser) will coordinate the operational response and ensure that relevant departments are notified. This will normally start with notifying the Head of Department and Faculty Dean who will inform the course team. Once the course team have been told, Student Wellbeing will inform other appropriate University departments who need to know. A confidential record of decisions, actions and communications will be maintained by Student Wellbeing.

18. Depending on the circumstances, some departments may need to be informed immediately to assist those already dealing with the incident or to implement other procedures.

19. In cases of suspected suicide, the operational response under this procedure will be linked to the postvention arrangements set out in the *Suicide Prevention Strategy*.

Immediate action by Student Wellbeing

20. When a student death has been verified, Student Wellbeing will take the following actions:
    - Notify the designated core oversight group about the incident (Executive Director for Students, Student Services Director, Associate Director Student Life, Health and Wellbeing, and Student Counselling & Wellbeing Manager)
    - Ensure relevant senior managers and departments are informed
    - Maintain a confidential record of actions and decisions
    - Implement relevant safeguarding, wellbeing or health-related policies as appropriate
    - Assist in arranging communications for students and staff
    - Coordinate support for students who may be affected
    - Assist in arranging support for affected staff in liaison with HR
    - Liaise with next of kin and external agencies as appropriate

Immediate action by Core Group

21. The core group will oversee the University's response, including communications, family liaison, support arrangements, operational issues and consideration of any review or serious incident process required under the *Suicide Prevention Strategy*.

22. Where the death is a suspected suicide, the core group will consider whether immediate action is required in relation to the safety of any location on the University estate associated with the death, the management of tributes or memorials and the potential impact on other students or staff. Not all members of the core group will always be involved in these decisions.

Immediate action by Accommodation team

23. Where a death occurs in University-managed accommodation, or if the student is a resident in University halls of residence, the Accommodation team will work with Student Wellbeing, Security and relevant external agencies to manage access to the room, support affected residents, and make appropriate practical arrangements such as assisting residents in finding alternative accommodation if they are unable to return to their rooms.

Immediate action by Faculty Dean or delegate

24. Disseminate information to staff immediately affected by incident, when requested by and in liaison with the Student Wellbeing team, so they can respond to student enquiries appropriately.

25. Ensure that information is communicated to staff and, where appropriate, to students in a timely, sensitive and accurate manager following advice from Student Wellbeing and the Communications team.

26. Assist with making any necessary facilities available for students if the incident has occurred in an academic setting.
27. Inform and liaise with the relevant contacts at partner institution as appropriate.

Immediate action by Insurance Adviser

28. Inform and liaise with the University's insurers and coordinate the University's response as required.

Immediate action by SAIL

29. Notify appropriate contact at partner college/overseas institution, and assist with identifying students on the same exchange programme who may need support.

Immediate action by Corporate Affairs

30. Prepare initial public statement if needed, and respond to any media enquiries, avoiding unnecessary detail about the method, location or circumstances of the death.

Immediate action by Risk & Business Continuity

31. Initiation of any relevant Risk or Emergency Procedures, as appropriate.

Immediate action by Health & Safety Manager

32. Notify Health and Safety Executive of incident and complete necessary reporting procedures.

33. Respond to any health and safety issues within the University.

Follow up actions and administrative arrangements

34. The action required after an incident or death on or off campus will be similar once the immediate situation has been dealt with. The table in the Appendix is intended to guide staff through the appropriate considerations in the days following a serious incident or the death of a student. Any follow up action taken should be reported to Student Wellbeing who will maintain a record the University's response.

35. The University will seek to maintain compassionate and appropriate communication with the student's next of kin or nominated family contact. A lead contact in Student Wellbeing will normally be identified to help coordinate communication and reduce the need for families to repeat information to multiple departments.

36. Support for affected students and staff may include wellbeing appointments, counselling, academic support, practical support, signposting to external services, and facilitated discussions for groups significantly affected by the incident. Support may be offered proactively, while recognising that some individuals may not choose to engage.

37. Following any student death by suspected suicide, the University will review relevant prevention, intervention and postvention activity in accordance with the *Suicide Prevention Strategy*.

38. Where a serious incident review is commissioned, it will be led by a person with an appropriate level of independence and experience. Depending on the circumstances, this may include a senior member of staff who has had no direct involvement in the case or an appropriately qualified external reviewer.

39. Bereaved family members will be offered an opportunity to contribute to any serious incident review and to raise questions they would like the University to consider. The University will seek to respond to those questions as far as possible, subject to legal, confidentiality and data protection constraints.

40. Where a death occurs on University premises, an appropriate review of the physical environment and any reasonable safety measures will be undertaken.

41. The University recognises the importance of remembrance and will discuss arrangements for tributes or memorials sensitively with the bereaved family and those most directly affected. The University will usually discourage permanent or prominent tributes at the specific location of a student death.

Records

42. Records of actions, decisions and communications relating to a serious incident or student death will be retained securely by Student Wellbeing in accordance with the University's records retention schedule and data protection requirements. Access will be restricted to those with a legitimate need to know.

Review and update arrangements

43. This procedure will be updated annually, or as required by changes in legislation, national guidance, organisational arrangements, learning from incidents, or recommendations arising from reviews or investigations.

44. Student Wellbeing will coordinate the collection of information to support any review process and will monitor the operational effectiveness of this procedure. Any serious incident review will be commissioned and conducted in accordance with the Suicide Prevention Strategy, including the requirement for an appropriate level of independence and the possible use of an external reviewer.

Appendix: Follow up actions to consider by Department/Team

Department/Team	Follow up actions to consider
Student Counselling & Wellbeing	• Liaise with police, coroner and/or hospital to confirm the student's death. • Ensure the student's emergency contact has been informed. • Identify an appropriate point of contact for family members and inform relevant staff who this is. • Assist where necessary with advising and supporting other students in halls, in private accommodation or on the same course. • Make impacted students aware of availability of pastoral support and counselling. • Organise or provide additional wellbeing and support services.
Faith and Spirituality	• Assist with memorial arrangements if appropriate. • Advise on religious/cultural customs that the University should be aware of and appropriate places of worship or reflection for staff/students/family.
Sport and Active Lifestyles	• Inform the fitness centre provider to ensure membership and associated direct debits are cancelled.
Student Advice	• Update accommodation records and remove the student from mailing lists. • Liaise with Halls Management to assist in finding alternative accommodation for affected students if needed. • Liaise with Halls Management and family regarding return of belongings. • Provide information on suitable accommodation in the area for family members visiting the University and make an initial reservation if needed. • Update and cancel any outstanding funding applications and remove student from mailing lists. • Consider availability of funding to assist family with costs, e.g., travel, accommodation and repatriation. Provision of any such financial assistance would require approval by the Student Services Director and the Executive Director for Students.
IT and Student Records	• Update SITS, making the student's status deceased and change the Master Student Record to a deceased record.

	• Inform Student Wellbeing and the Course and Student Administration office that necessary updates have been made. • Ensure emergency contact details are available on SITS if required.
Credit Control	• Cancel any direct debits or outstanding fees. • Confirm with Student Wellbeing whether a copy of the death certificate is required for refund purposes. • Raise credit for any fees to be refunded. • Arrange for any refund to be paid into student's account or to the next of kin.
Disability and Mental Health Service	• Notify designated Adviser • Close disability records and any outstanding correspondence. • Notify DSA support providers as required.
Kingston Students' Union (Head of Membership Services)	• Ensure KSU and NUS membership is cancelled in the event of a death. • Inform clubs/societies of which the student was a member. • Arrange support for affected students as appropriate.
Dean of Faculty, in liaison with Head of School, Head of Department and Course team as appropriate	• Advise Student Wellbeing of actions to be taken by a partner institution if applicable, including whether a letter of condolence has been sent and other students in the cohort have been informed. • Communicate with staff and students following advice from Student Wellbeing, making them aware of support services available. • Ensure availability of course team to support other students. • Ensure any local records are updated, and the student's name/photo is removed in the event of death. • Liaise with Student Wellbeing regarding staff/student attendance at funeral or memorial service. • In accordance with family wishes, consider an appropriate memorial (liaise with Student Wellbeing and the Senior Faith Adviser as needed). • Liaise with Academic Registry to consider posthumous award or certificate/transcript for the family. • Collate any work submitted by the student for return to the family if appropriate. • Arrange to meet family members if they wish to visit the University. • Send letter of condolence to next of kin (in liaison with the Vice-Chancellor's Office).

KUSCO	• Inform reception and switchboard staff as appropriate. • Ensure staff have appropriate contact details to direct callers. • Notify students of availability of support and counselling services. • Liaise with Student Advice Manager or next of kin regarding return of belongings.
Health and Safety	• Assess health and safety implications of an incident on campus or at a University organised activity off campus. • Implement closures or changes to practices where necessary.
Library and Learning Services	• Update student's borrower account and LLS records as required.
Information Centre	• Ensure student enquiries are responded to appropriately and signpost to support as needed. • Withdraw any outstanding loan items. • Cancel or suspend any outstanding fines.
Vice Chancellor's Office	• In the event of death, send letter of condolence to family/next of kin (in liaison with Faculty Dean).
Risk & Business Continuity	• Liaise with student and Faculty if appropriate regarding any claim.
Corporate Affairs	• Handle all media enquiries. • Produce statement for use across University if appropriate.
Student Engagement team	• Close any outstanding engagement correspondence with the student, informing Student Wellbeing of actions taken as appropriate. • Support students whose attendance and engagement may be impacted by the incident.
Student Casework team	• Close any outstanding casework with the student, informing Student Wellbeing of any actions taken • Support affected students with mitigation procedures as required
Student Recruitment and Admissions	• Ensure student removed from relevant lists and databases.
Study Abroad and International Learning	• Identify contact details of next of kin as appropriate. • Assist in liaising with partner institution regarding repatriation