



Death in Service Guidance

1. Purpose

This guidance outlines the actions to be taken when there is a death in service of an employee. It provides information about the support available to managers and employees affected by the death of an employee.

2. Notification

Whoever is first notified of a death in service must:

- obtain the name of the deceased and the School/Department where they worked
- obtain the name and phone number of the notifier and their relationship to the deceased
- let the notifier know that a senior member of staff will call them soon
- immediately inform both:
 - the Head of School/Director of Professional Services Department (or a deputy in their absence) and
 - the HR Partner for the School/Department where the deceased employee worked.

The Head of School/Professional Service Department will decide who is the most appropriate person to inform staff of the death and to liaise with the next of kin. This person (the 'Manager') can be the Head of School/Director of Professional Services Department, the deceased employee's line manager or another nominated senior member of staff in the School/Department.

3. Responsibilities

The responsibilities of the Manager, the HR Partner and key departments when there is a death in service of an employee are as follows:

Manager	Appendix 1 outlines what the Manager is expected to do when there is a death in service.
HR Partner	Appendix 3 outlines what the HR Partner is expected to do when there is a death in service.
The Principal	The Principal sends a letter of condolence to the next of kin, on receipt of the notification email from the HR Partner.

Chaplaincy	The Chaplaincy will contact the School/Department where the deceased employee worked to offer support to colleagues. They will also contact the family or next of kin, unless advised not to.
Events and Protocol	The Events and Protocol team will arrange for the University's flags to be flown at half-mast on the day of the funeral or memorial service.
Payroll	The Payroll team will pay any final salary payment due along with other entitlements (e.g. outstanding annual leave) to the Estate.
Pensions	The Pensions team will check if the deceased was a member of a pension scheme and pay any benefits due. The Payroll and Pensions team will work together to decide who will contact the next of kin to request the required documentation (e.g. original death certificate, next of kin's birth certificate, marriage certificate etc).
Press Office	If there is press interest in a death, the Press Office will work with the manager to agree a strategy for handling the media.

4. Support for Managers and Employees

The death of an employee can have a big impact on individuals and teams. There are a number of places where support can be found at the University, which are listed in Appendix 5.

Appendix 1

Manager Responsibilities

When	Action	Complete
Within 24 hours	Phone the person who notified the University to express your condolences. Use the checklist in Appendix 2 to guide your call.	
	Email the HR Partner with details of the deceased: name, job title, department, date of death and the name and address of next of kin (if known). Contact the local school/department administrator to obtain next of kin details recorded on People and Money. They will then notify the Principal and relevant colleagues (Appendix 3) of the death.	
	Email the Payroll Manager and Pensions Manager with the next of kin's: name, address and contact number . The Payroll Manager and Pensions Manager will work together to decide who will contact the next of kin to arrange for payment of final salary and any pensions benefits due.	
	Communicate the news to colleagues closest to the deceased (e.g. those in the same department, team or section). This should be done in person, where possible, and in a private area such as a meeting room. Make colleagues aware that they can contact the Chaplaincy, the Staff Counselling Service or their manager for support.	
	Contact the Information Services (IS) helpline to redirect emails and phone calls to another member of staff.	
Within 2 to 3 days	Email staff and students (if applicable) in the wider School/Department to communicate the news. Provide them with a contact if they require further information.	
	Contact any former members of staff and students (if applicable) who may need to be notified.	
	Let staff in the immediate work team know about the funeral arrangements. Offer appropriate time off to grieve and to attend the funeral. See Special Leave policy for guidance.	
	Circulate a condolence card. Organise for flowers or a wreath to be sent to the family (if appropriate). Where possible, procure from a University supplier. If this is not possible (e.g. online orders, florists that are not in the Edinburgh area) then the cost, up to £50, can be claimed on expenses.	

	Amend School/Department records to prevent the family receiving post addressed to the deceased. Ensure the employee file is updated.	
	Ensure the employee's annual leave balance is up to date in People and Money. This is important to ensure that all outstanding annual leave entitlement is paid in the final salary payment.	
	Contact the IS helpline or your local IS support team to ensure that the deceased is deregistered from local systems and other lists (e.g. University telephone list, staff profile on web pages, Finance systems).	
	Take note of any pay or pensions related queries and pass this information to the Payroll or Pensions team. Payroll and Pensions will call the family back with responses to their queries.	
	Arrange for the deceased's duties to be covered in the short term and reallocated, and/or arrange recruitment for a replacement in the longer term.	
After the funeral/memorial service	Organise for any personal belongings held within the University, and any University property (e.g. laptop, mobile phone, keys) at the deceased's home, to be returned.	
	Mark the death, where there is a wish to do so, for example a memorial service. The Chaplaincy can provide support with this. Permission from the family must be obtained before organising and any associated costs must not be passed on to the family.	

Appendix 2

Information to ask the notifier or next of kin

Question	Response
Name:	
Relationship to deceased:	
Phone number:	
Name of next of kin: (if not notifier)	
Next of kin's phone number: (if not notifier)	
Next of kin's address:	
Date of death:	
Cause of death:	
Obtain next of kin's consent to share their address with the Principal.	
Agree a point of contact for any questions.	
Let the next of kin know that further information relating to pay and pensions will follow in the post. If the next of kin has any questions in relation to pay or pensions, take a note of these and tell them that you will pass their questions to the Pensions or Payroll team who will contact them directly with a response.	
Find out if colleagues can attend the funeral or memorial service.	
Obtain the date and time of the funeral or memorial service.	

Appendix 3

HR Partner Responsibilities

When	Action	Complete
Within 24 hours	Use the 'notification of death in service' email template to notify the following: • the Principal's Office • Head of Events and Protocol • Director of HR • Pensions Manager • Payroll Manager • Chaplaincy • Press Office • Cc: Head of College; College Registrar; Head of School; Director of Professional Services Department. If the deceased had been referred to Occupational Health Service (OHS), include OHS.	
	Send a follow-up email to the Principal's Office with the next of kin's address.	
	Contact the Staff Counselling Service to let them know about the death, and that colleagues may contact them for support.	
Within 2 to 3 days	Once notified, the Principal's Office and the Head of School/Director of Professional Services Department will agree who will represent the University at the funeral. The HR Partner will confirm to the manager who the representatives will be so that the manager can inform the next of kin.	
	Email the 'letter of condolence and additional information for next of kin' template to the Head of School/Director of Professional Services Department. The Head of School/Director of Professional Services Department should personalise the letter and send it to the family before the funeral.	
	Email the details, date and time of funeral to the Head of Events and Protocol.	
	Raise a Service Request in People and Money using the 'Death in Service' category, in order that the termination can be processed. Provide the following details: Employee name, employee number and date of death. For more information on raising a service request for this purpose, please see the Employment Separation People and Money User Guide.	

Appendix 4

List of Contacts

Title	Email	Telephone
Principal	Principal@ed.ac.uk	50 2150
Principal's Executive Assistant	Nicola.Helliwell@ed.ac.uk	
Head of Events and Protocol	Protocol.office@ed.ac.uk	50 2093
Pensions Manager	PensionsManager@ed.ac.uk	50 2284
Payroll Manager	Payroll.Manager@ed.ac.uk	50 2277
Chaplaincy	Chaplaincy@ed.ac.uk	50 2595
Occupational Health Service	Occupational.Health@ed.ac.uk	50 8190
Press Office	Press.office@ed.ac.uk	50 9547
Staff Counselling Service	Staff.counsellor@ed.ac.uk	50 2513
Information Services	IS.Helpline@ed.ac.uk	51 5151

Appendix 5

Support for Managers and Employees

Support	Information	Contact details
Staff Counselling	The Staff Counselling Service provides a free and confidential counselling service for all members of staff. Big White Wall (BWW) is an online support network, available 24/7, guided by trained professionals. It is free to all staff at the University.	(0131) 650 2513 Staff.Counsellor@ed.ac.uk
Chaplaincy	The Chaplaincy provides pastoral and spiritual support for students and staff of all faiths and none. They offer one-to-one support, drop-in space, spaces for reflection and provision of events such as memorials for members of staff.	Visit the Chaplaincy Centre in Bristo Square (0131) 650 2595 Chaplaincy@ed.ac.uk
Occupational Health Service (OHS)	If an individual has been particularly affected by the death of an employee, they can be referred to OHS. OHS can provide a confidential assessment of employee's health and advice about support available for the employee. OHS can give advice to the manager on how they can help support their staff at work.	(0131) 650 8190 Occupational.Health@ed.ac.uk
HR Partner	Heads of School, Directors of Professional Services (or equivalents) and Managers can contact their HR Partner for advice.	See HR web page for details

External support	Cruse Bereavement Care Scotland is a charity that provides bereavement support to people throughout Scotland. ACAS provide a good practice guide for managing bereavement in the workplace.	0845 600 2227 (charges apply) Managing bereavement in the workplace – a good practice guide
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