

ASTON UNIVERSITY

DEATH IN SERVICE GUIDANCE

Please be aware that this printed version of the guidance may not be the latest version. Always refer to the intranet for the latest version.

Introduction

The death of an employee can be a traumatic experience for those who worked with them. The following guidelines should be referred to in the event of the death of a current employee (this includes Casual, Honorary and Emeritus) and staff who have retired. Information is also provided in relation to Contractors who are working on site. The information is intended as guidance rather than a replication of support offered by statutory services, to ensure that the University handles the response to the news quickly, effectively and with sensitivity.

Scope

Applies to all employees.

Notification

The location of the death will inform whom you should contact.

Where the death occurs in the workplace

In the event of the death of an employee in the **work place**, please contact:

- Security - they will contact the emergency services and assist you. They will also liaise with the police. Please note: next of kin to be notified by the Police if death occurred **whilst at work** (Head of Security or Director of HR to notify Police and provide them with emergency contact details obtained from the HR system). If the deceased is an overseas national the Police will arrange notification of next of kin and assistance with repatriation via the relevant Embassy or High Commission.
- Human Resources or Executive Dean or Head of Department or Line Manager, (they will notify the other).

A useful checklist for this situation can be found in Appendix 1.

Where the death occurs outside of work

When informed of the death of an employee, **outside of work**, you should take the following information from the person notifying you:

- The name of the person reporting the death, their connection to the deceased and their contact details.
- The name of the deceased and, if known, their role and the School or Department they worked in.
- Date and cause of death.
- Funeral details (if possible).
- Check they have no objections to the University contacting them/are there any times which should be avoided.

Retired Staff

When informed of the death of an ex-employee, the following information is needed:

- The name of the person reporting the death, their connection to the deceased and their contact details.
- The name of the deceased and, if known, their former role and the School or Department they worked in.
- Date and cause of death.
- Funeral details (if possible).
- Check they have no objections to the University contacting them/are there any times which should be avoided.

The death of **retired staff** should be reported to:

- The Pensions Officer/Human Resources.

Contractors

Where the death occurs whilst on Aston premises.

In the event of the death of a Contractor in the **work place**, please contact:

- Security - they will contact the emergency services, and relevant internal contacts such as the On-Call Duty Manager.

You should then contact the following who will lead on a series of actions set out in the guidance.

Guidance for Executive Deans/ Heads of Department / HR

It is important that the Departments and HR are aware of and have oversight of each other's actions. This is to ensure that the communication with the deceased family is handled with sensitivity. Executive Deans and Heads of Department may delegate some of the responsibilities outlined below to a Line Manager as appropriate.

Role of the Executive Deans / Heads of Department

- Ensure that you immediately inform Health & Safety Unit, if the death resulted from an accident at work or a notifiable disease (up to 1 year following the accident) as they have to report this to the HSE with immediate effect and a follow up written report within 15 days. The Strategic Risk and Insurance team will be informed by Health & Safety if the death occurred as the result of a work-related accident.
- Agree how to communicate the information to staff in the area that the employee worked in. You may communicate funeral arrangements depending upon the wishes of the next of kin. The HRBP will support the line manager, offering advice and guidance on the support available to staff. The Line Manager should be aware of the need for staff to grieve and allow time to attend the funeral.

- If it is decided that staff outside the given department need to know, you/HR will discuss the communication with a member of the Marketing News Team. They will advise on the wording and can assist you in letting staff know of the death, the funeral and any commemorative arrangements.
- In some instances a death may engender interest from the media. In these cases the Press Office must be contacted to handle the response. If there is to be any announcement that is likely to attract media enquiries, the Executive Dean or Head of Department must brief the press office so they can agree any statements/relevant spokespeople that may be required.
- The Line manager must inform Payroll immediately of any outstanding overtime payments to be included in the final salary payment.
- Executive Deans / Heads of Department / Line manager should arrange the following using a very sensitive approach:
 - Return personal belongings to the deceased's next of kin.
 - Request from the deceased's next of kin the return of any company property such as laptop, PC, mobile phone, office keys, company credit card, papers and documentation, data etc. which were, or may have been, kept outside of the University.
 - Check there are no library books outstanding.
 - Arrange removal from any internal contact lists.
 - The removal of personal intranet pages from www.aston.ac.uk.
 - Contact Digital Services to set an appropriate 'automatic-reply' on the deceased email account, and for their mailbox to be accessible for a short time to a specified person working in their area to allow them to respond to any outstanding work emails.

Role of Head of Security or Director of HR

- Contact Police to notify next of kin (if applicable).

Role of the Pensions Officer

The following actions apply for existing employees and retired staff.

- To contact next of kin to request a death certificate if it has not already been provided; and notifies the relevant scheme to arrange payment of the 'death in service' lump sum and to activate the pension if applicable. This usually takes place after the funeral.
- If the death is a retired member of staff the Pensions Officer will contact the relevant scheme to arrange payment of the spousal lump sum and pension and will arrange the notification of any other relevant areas e.g. Vice-Chancellor, the School or Department where they used to work.

Role of the HR Business Partner / HR Administration Team

- HR Business Partner to notify Head of School/Department and Line Manager of death.
- HR Admin Team to end the employment on the HR system giving the reason for leaving as 'death' and date of leaving as 'the date the death occurred'. They will let the Payroll Manager know of any outstanding leave for the calculation of final salary.
- HR Business Partner to contact the Vice-Chancellor's office to arrange for the VC to write a letter of condolence on behalf of the University.

Role of Payroll

- Payroll to check for any outstanding expenses, advances, loans (i.e. Travel pass), salary sacrifice agreements, statutory payments in process (i.e. maternity pay). Payroll will calculate cost of any outstanding leave. These should all be considered before a final salary payment is made. In the event of an accidental salary overpayment the University will **not** take steps to recover this.

Role of Finance

- A leavers report is sent every Monday to nominated staff within Finance. They will check whether the deceased has anything in progress on Agresso and will arrange for the items to be reassigned. If they had a corporate credit card they will arrange for this to be cancelled. If the deceased had a PASA, the account will be closed.

Role of Digital Services

- A leavers report is sent to nominated staff within Digital Services who will make sure that any accounts (MAP, SITS and Blackboard) are closed and if they had a mobile phone they will arrange for the contract to be ended.

Role of Marketing News Team

(where applicable)

- Will arrange for internal communication of the death and handle any enquiries from the media.

Support for Staff and Students

- Employees can access free independent, confidential bereavement support from the University's Occupational Health provider through the Employee Assistance Programme (EAP). There is the option to request online counselling via secure video conferencing as well as face to face and telephone counselling at a cost to the local area. All staff have been provided with contact details. Information is also available on the HSU website on this link:

Log in at www.pamassist.co.uk with username: Aston, password: Aston1.

- The University Counselling Service can provide one to one and group support for students affected by the death. Contact is via the Hub ext. 4007, counselling@aston.ac.uk.
- Martin Luther King Multi-Faith Centre can provide support and pastoral care to individuals and groups, both staff and students regardless of background. Contact: 0121 204 4729, chaplaincy@aston.ac.uk.

If it is decided that a form of remembrance should take place such as a memorial service or the planting of a tree the Chaplains can assist with the organisation of this.

Appendices

1. Checklist - Information required when notified of a death.
2. Useful Contacts.

Type of Document (Policy / Guidance)	Guidance
Author and Owner	HR and OD Department
Version	1
Details of changes made	n/a
Operational date	April 2019
Interim review date (for new policy / guidance documents)	October 2019
Review date	April 2020
Document developed in consultation with	Trade Union representatives, University Departments

Checklist – Information required when notified of a death

When informed of the death of an employee, **outside of work**, the following information is needed:

<ul style="list-style-type: none">• The name of the person reporting the death, their connection to the deceased and their contact details. Agreement that the University will be in touch with them.
<ul style="list-style-type: none">• The name of the deceased and, if known, their role and the School or Department they worked in.
<ul style="list-style-type: none">• Date and cause of death.
<ul style="list-style-type: none">• Funeral details (if possible).
<ul style="list-style-type: none">• Ascertain whether they have any objections to being contacted by the university.

Useful Contact numbers:

<p>Health and Safety Unit 0121 204 4742 safety@aston.c.uk</p>
<p>Security 0121 204 4803</p>
<p>Human Resources Office Senior HR and OD Team, HR Business Partners and Administrative Team 0121 204 4584 or 4699 http://www.aston.ac.uk/staff/hr/hr-contacts/</p> <p>Pensions and Benefits Officer 0121 204 4582 pensionsandbenefits@aston.ac.uk</p>
<p>Vice- Chancellors Office Executive Assistant 0121 204 4884</p>
<p>Marketing – News Team https://www.aston.ac.uk/staff/marketing/news-team/index</p>
<p>PAM Assist (for Staff) 0800 882 4102 (Advice 24 hours a day, 365 days per year) www.pamassist.co.uk Username: Aston Password: Aston1</p>
<p>University Counselling and Mental Wellbeing Service (for Students) Tel: 0121 204 4007 counselling@aston.ac.uk www.aston.ac.uk/current-students/health-wellbeing/counselling-and-mental-wellbeing-service</p>
<p>Martin Luther King Centre Tel: 0121 204 4729 chaplaincy@aston.ac.uk</p>