

ACKNOWLEDGEMENT OF DECEASED PERSONS PROCEDURE



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1 PURPOSE

- 1.1 This procedure provides clear guidelines as to the communication and administration processes surrounding a person's death that is directly or indirectly related to CQUniversity.

2 SCOPE

- 2.1 This procedure applies to the death of a person who is a current or past employee or student, alumnus or other stakeholder such as honorary award recipient, committee members, benefactors, donors, friends of the University and industry partners.

3 PROCEDURE

Responsibilities

- 3.1 **Deputy Vice-Chancellor (Student Experience and Governance)** has overall responsibility for:
- informing relevant University stakeholders of a death
 - delivering guidance and support to affected University Managers (the Deputy Vice-Chancellor (Student Experience and Governance) may be assisted in this regard by the Director, People and Culture)
 - providing guidance on the development and distribution of announcements (including designating responsibility for such announcements) relating to the death of any person/s related to CQUniversity
 - calling upon other areas of the University to carry out actions related to the announcement and acknowledgement of a person's death, and

- responding to any external enquiries (including from representatives of the media) related to the person or their death.
- 3.2 **Director, Vice-Chancellor and President's Office and Development** is responsible for:
- coordinating messages of condolence and announcements from the Vice-Chancellor and President (the Director may be assisted in this regard by the Manager, Corporate Communications), and
 - dealing with requests from family or friends of a deceased student for the University to contribute to or support any type of appeal.
- 3.3 **Director, People and Culture** is responsible for:
- providing support for employees in dealing with a death, and
 - managing human resource matters, such as liaison with the family regarding financial and other entitlements (where applicable), amending staff records and related information technology systems.
- 3.4 **Director, Student Experience** is responsible for working with academic, campus managers and other stakeholders in a student-facing role regarding notification of the death of a student.
- 3.5 **Director, Student Governance** is responsible for:
- ensuring the deceased student's records are updated, and
 - advising relevant employees to update information technology systems and email accounts.
- 3.6 **Director, Student Residences** is responsible for overseeing any notification requirements and associated duties concerning the death of a Student Residences tenant.
- 3.7 **Coordinator, Indigenous Student Support** is responsible for overseeing any notification requirements and associated duties concerning the death of a student identified as an Aboriginal and/or Torres Strait Islander.
- 3.8 **University Managers** are responsible for advising:
- team members of a death of an employee and/or
 - school employees, as well as fellow students, where appropriate, of a death of an employee or student.
- 3.9 **Coordinator, Counselling** is responsible for coordinating counselling support for affected students.

Receiving notification of a death

- 3.10 CQUniversity acknowledges there are various ways in which news of the death of an employee, student, alumnus or other stakeholder of the University will reach the University community.
- 3.11 The person receiving the news should advise the deceased person's Manager, who will inform the Deputy Vice-Chancellor (Student Experience and Governance). The Deputy Vice-Chancellor (Student Experience and Governance) will take a coordinating role in advising other employees and ensuring appropriate and timely notification is made.
- 3.12 Where news of a person's death is not brought to the University's attention until a significant period of time after the event (30 days or more), the Deputy Vice-Chancellor (Student Experience and Governance) will make an informed judgement about the appropriateness of acknowledging the death and/or notifying employees.

Communicating details of a death

- 3.13 Under no circumstances should the specific details of a person's death (e.g. cause of death, circumstances surrounding death) be communicated to a wider audience without prior consent from the family.
- 3.14 CQUniversity will not provide comment to the media on the circumstances surrounding a death. Comment will only be made about the contribution a person has made to the University, be positive in nature, and demonstrate the University's empathy for the deceased's family and loved ones.

Counselling services

- 3.15 Managers should provide information on support and services available to employees should they be required. The People and Culture Directorate are available to assist Managers in dealing with this situation.
- 3.16 Students requesting counselling should be referred to the University's counselling team.

Death of a current employee (employed by CQUniversity at the time of their death)

- 3.17 In the event of the death of a current employee, the deceased person's Manager is responsible for informing immediate team/school employees and direct reports in a sensitive manner. Direct colleagues should be the first to know about the death before a wider audience is notified.
- 3.18 The Director, Vice-Chancellor and President's Office and Development will manage the development and distribution of announcements, most of which will come directly from the Vice-Chancellor and President or another senior Manager as appropriate, via the official mailing list.
- 3.19 Depending on the circumstances, a notification may also be placed on StaffNet.
- 3.20 If the deceased employee had direct involvement with students, alumni or other University stakeholders, an announcement should also be considered for distribution among these audiences.
- 3.21 If an employee's death occurred during the course of their regular duties, the Director, Vice-Chancellor and President's Office and Development through the Deputy Vice-Chancellor (Student Experience and Governance) will make a determination about the appropriateness of wider communication.
- 3.22 Flowers and a condolence message may be sent at the discretion of the deceased employee's Manager on behalf of their work group and the wider University. A condolence message will also be prepared by the Director, Vice-Chancellor and President's Office and Development and sent on behalf of the University and the Vice-Chancellor and President.
- 3.23 The People and Culture Directorate will make contact with the deceased employee's next of kin to discuss the University's obligations for dealing with a deceased estate.

Death of a past employee (a person previously employed by CQUniversity, but not at the time of their death)

- 3.24 The announcement of the death of a past employee will be dependent on what the person's previous role with CQUniversity was, their length of employment and their relationship with current employees. All situations should be evaluated on a case-by-case basis.
- 3.25 Flowers and a condolence message may be sent to the deceased person's family on behalf of the University at the discretion of the person's former Manager, if said Manager is still employed by the University. In the absence of a former Manager, the People and Culture Directorate or the Vice-Chancellor and President's Office may elect to send flowers and condolences where deemed appropriate.
- 3.26 The need to notify students, alumni and other stakeholders about the death of a past employee will be evaluated on a case-by-case basis.

Death of a current student

- 3.27 In the event of a student death, the University will refrain from widespread notification of the death, particularly where permission from the deceased's family is not forthcoming.
- 3.28 The Director, Student Governance will request the deceased student's records be immediately updated to record the death to ensure no inappropriate communication or fee charging to the deceased student or his/her family occurs. This process will also include:
 - placing an alert on the student's Customer Relationship Management (CRM) system record

- requesting Technology and Services Assistance Centre (TaSAC) withdraw all electronic access and close the deceased's University student email account
 - alerting the University Librarian to ensure that automatic requests for return of library materials are not sent, and
 - removing the student's name from class lists.
- 3.29 The Director, Student Experience will work with the relevant academic, campus managers (for example, unit lecturers/teachers, Associate Vice-Chancellors) and other stakeholders in student-facing roles to determine which audiences to notify about a student's death (e.g. classmates, students from same country of origin), how this will occur, and any student support needs related to the notification. The relevant Manager (as determined through these discussions) is responsible for informing students affected by the death, where appropriate to do so.
- 3.30 A condolence message should be developed by the Director, Vice-Chancellor and President's Office and Development, with assistance from the Manager, Corporate Communications where appropriate, to send on behalf of the University from the Vice-Chancellor and President and the Manager.
- 3.31 Any requests from family or friends of the student for the University to contribute to or support any type of appeal will be dealt with on a case-by-case basis by the Director, Vice-Chancellor and President's Office and Development.
- 3.32 If a student's death occurs while on campus, or carrying out research or other University business offsite, the Deputy Vice-Chancellor (Student Experience and Governance) will make a determination as to the appropriateness of further communication.
- 3.33 Flowers and a message of condolence may be sent to the student's family on behalf of the University, by the Vice-Chancellor and President's Office.
- 3.34 A condolence letter to the student's family must not include mention of posthumous award unless it has been investigated and confirmed that the deceased student is eligible to receive a posthumous award.
- 3.35 Where the deceased student is a residential student, the Manager, Student Residences will:
- a) inform the Deputy Vice-Chancellor (Student Experience and Governance) (if not already aware)
 - b) inform the deceased's fellow tenants, where appropriate to do so
 - c) lock down the student's room and liaise with Police and/or ambulance services
 - d) ensure all belongings are returned to the student's personal representative. Where there is doubt about the identity of the authorised personal representative the Legal Office will be consulted
 - e) Where required and after consultation with the police, ensure that an appropriate employee is available to escort the student's personal representative to the room if they choose to collect the belongings in person
 - f) following official confirmation from the Police and/or Embassy that next of kin has been informed, notify students within the residence of the student's death in a sensitive manner
 - g) identify students in the deceased student's residence and friendship groups to whom the offer of support from the Counselling Service should be made
 - h) consult with the Coordinator, Counselling regarding the management of information to the student residential community and measures, including psychological interventions that may assist with the expression of a community acknowledgement and possible resolution of grief
 - i) plan a memorial service, in consultation with Chaplains and consistent with the student's religious and cultural background and the wishes of student's family or their personal representative, if appropriate, and
 - j) ensure no further accommodation related correspondence is addressed to the student, cease immediately all automated financial processes, and process all possible refunds after receiving instructions from the personal representative as to the correct account details.

- 3.36 Where the deceased is an international student, the Director, Student Experience will notify the:
- a) International Director
 - b) International Compliance to inform Department of Home Affairs
 - c) relevant Embassy or Consulate
 - d) where the death is of an exchange student, the Registrar (or equivalent) of the home institution to determine the appropriate way to contact next of kin
 - e) the family or personal representative to assist with funeral/repatriation arrangements, the return of personal effects, insurance, travel and accommodation, meet them on arrival, and arrange for them to meet with relevant employees and/or students
 - f) the relevant Overseas Student Health Cover (OSHC) provider (relevant Embassy may assist with this)
 - g) CQUniversity Chaplains or other religious clergy/representatives for funeral/memorial services in accordance with the wishes of family or their personal representative (if the student is both an international and residential student the Manager, Student Residences will action this in accordance with section 3.35(h). If the student identified as an Aboriginal and/or Torres Strait Islander the Coordinator, Indigenous Student Support will action in accordance with 3.38(b)), and
 - h) seek advice from the family/International Office/sponsor with regard to the use of the student's name and permission to disclose details of the cause of death when informing relevant employees and students (those established as knowing the student personally/or whom were a part of the student's community).
- 3.37 The Vice-Chancellor and President's Office has authority to approve financial assistance to a family of an international student with travel, accommodation, and other arrangements (Relevant Embassy and OSHC provider often provide these services).
- 3.38 Where the deceased student identified as an Aboriginal and/or Torres Strait Islander, the Coordinator, Indigenous Student Support will notify and organise:
- a) the family or personal representative to assist with funeral/repatriation arrangements, the return of personal effects, insurance, travel and accommodation, meet them on arrival, and arrange for them to meet with relevant employees and/or students
 - b) CQUniversity Chaplains or other religious clergy/representatives and or other representatives for funeral/memorial services in accordance with the wishes of family or their personal representative
 - c) the Pro Vice-Chancellor (Indigenous Engagement)
 - d) if the incident resulted in death on campus, arrangements may need to be made for the family and/ or personal representatives, including the Traditional Owners to access the site of the incident on campus for spiritual and/or ceremonial purposes. This may be needed at the time of the death and for some time later (a couple of days later through to several years later)
 - e) other family and or community representatives may not be able to visit the site of death for a period of time. If a fellow student is not able to visit the site, arrangements need to be made for the student to continue their studies in the interim, and
 - f) seek advice from the family with regard to the use of the student's name acknowledging that a student's name may need to be withheld for a specific or indefinite time period and/or the student may need to be referred to by another name for a specific or indefinite time period.

Death of a past student or alumnus

- 3.39 The announcement of the death of a past student or alumnus will be dependent on the person's achievements during or after their period of study at CQUniversity, and their relationship with CQUniversity up until that point. All situations should be evaluated on a case-by-case basis.
- 3.40 The Vice-Chancellor and President will normally deliver the announcement via the CQUniversity official mailing list if such an announcement is deemed necessary (e.g. for high profile alumni, or where a past student death is widely known and requires university acknowledgement).

- 3.41 The need to notify alumni and other stakeholders about the death of a past student or alumnus will be evaluated on a case-by-case basis, by the Deputy Director, Development and Alumni Relations through the Deputy Vice-Chancellor (Student Experience and Governance).
- 3.42 Flowers and a message of condolence may be sent to the person's family on behalf of the University, by the Development and Alumni Relations Directorate, depending on the situation and the level of involvement that the person had with the University.

Death of other stakeholders

- 3.43 Communicating the death of a University stakeholder will be evaluated on a case-by-case basis.
- 3.44 The employee responsible for sharing the announcement of a death will be determined by the deceased person's involvement with, service delivered to and contribution to the University. For example, if the deceased was a longstanding Council member the announcement should be delivered by the Vice-Chancellor and President, or Deputy Vice-Chancellor (Student Experience and Governance) as University Secretary.
- 3.45 Condolence messages should be developed by the Director, Vice-Chancellor and President's Office and Development on behalf of the University and sent from both the Vice-Chancellor and President and the person responsible for managing the relationship with the deceased person.
- 3.46 Flowers may be sent on behalf of the University at the discretion of the employee who managed the relationship with the stakeholder.

Death of a relative of a current CQUniversity employee

- 3.47 The Manager of the employee affected by the death of a relative will inform the employee's immediate team/school, direct reports about the death in a sensitive manner, and provide team/school members with information related to funeral or memorial services. Managers should seek advice from the Director, Vice-Chancellor and President's Office and Development and the Director, People and Culture where appropriate.
- 3.48 Flowers may be sent to the employee and their family by the employee's Manager on behalf of the wider University if the employee's relative was part of their immediate family (e.g. spouse, child, mother, father, brother or sister).
- 3.49 Condolence messages may be developed by the Director, Vice-Chancellor and President's Office and Development to be sent to the employee from the Vice-Chancellor and President if requested by the employee's Manager.

4 RESPONSIBILITIES

Compliance, monitoring and review

- 4.1 The Deputy Vice-Chancellor (Student Experience and Governance) is responsible for the compliance, monitoring and review to this procedure.

Reporting

- 4.2 No additional reporting is required.

Records management

- 4.3 Employees must maintain all records relevant to administering this procedure in a recognised University recordkeeping system.

5 DEFINITIONS

- 5.1 Terms not defined in this document may be in the University [glossary](#).

6 RELATED LEGISLATION AND DOCUMENTS

Nil.

7 FEEDBACK

7.1 University staff and students may provide feedback about this document by emailing policy@cqu.edu.au.

8 APPROVAL AND REVIEW DETAILS

Approval and Review	Details
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