Dealing with the death of a staff member

The death of an employee can be a traumatic experience for those who are left to deal with the loss of a colleague. Staff may also have personal relationships with the grieving family which can add to their distress. Reactions/responses may differ depending on whether the staff member’s passing was unexpected or the result of a long illness.

The information below is intended as guidance to ensure that processes are put in place as effectively and sensitively as possible.

The following procedure is to be followed in the event of the death of a member of staff. It is essential that information is disseminated sensitively in order to alleviate any further distress to relatives, staff and students.

Notification

Whoever receives notification of the death should ensure that they:

- get the name of the person informing the University, their relationship to the deceased and their contact details
- get the name of the deceased and place of work; and
- inform the notifier that the Executive Dean/Executive Director or another delegated member of staff will be in contact with them.

The Executive Dean/Executive Director (or their deputy in the event of their absence) will be responsible for:

- Contacting the person who notified the University of the death to express sympathy, obtain further details on date and cause of death and details of the funeral and if a representative from the University or colleagues can attend.
- Informing the relevant Human Resource manager who will need the employee’s name and Campus/position, date and cause of death, name and address of surviving spouse/dependant (if possible) and details of funeral arrangements (if possible)
- Informing colleagues within the Faculty/School or Division/Section
The relevant Human Resources manager will inform the Executive Director (Division of HR) and will also be responsible for informing the following, as appropriate:

- Human Resource team
- Manager, Remuneration and Benefits (*It is important to note that it is a legal requirement that the staff members salary will be frozen until CSU is contacted by the Executor of the estate)*.
- Vice-Chancellor’s office

**Responsibilities**

**Executive Dean/Executive Director**

- Reach out to the employee’s family and colleagues
- Oversees the logistics of the announcement to employees

**Division of Human Resources**

- Arranges grief management support (e.g. Employee Assistance Program referrals/ group sessions)
- Coordinates any media announcements with public relations department (if required)

**Division of Finance**

- The Director, Finance Operational Services will ensure that no invoices are sent to the deceased’s address, and deal with any other financial matters, e.g. if member of staff had a University credit card.
- For academic staff the Director, Finance Operational Services will liaise with the Faculty/Division to ensure that appropriate action is taken to inform any funding bodies which the staff member may have been working with.
Afterwards:

- Be aware that colleagues may need support for some time following death and the loss of a colleague can be a painful reminder of other losses.

- Consider appropriate timing of things like advertising the person’s position and allocating their desk or office to someone else. It is best to have open and honest discussions with your team in relation to these matters.

- Removal from email Distribution lists.

- Arrange for any personal effects to be returned.

Further information and resources can be accessed from:


**Access Code**: Charles Sturt Univer

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