

TYPE:	Administrative
TITLE:	Student Death Response
NO.:	ADMIN-245
RESPONSIBILITY:	Chief Administrative Officer; Dean, Students
APPROVED BY:	Durham College Leadership Team
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1. Introduction

The College is committed to a compassionate and coordinated response in the event of a [student](#) death. The response will respect the uniqueness of each situation, the wishes of the student's next of kin, as well as administrative and legislated responsibilities.

2. Purpose

The Student Death Response Policy and Procedure is to guide Durham College in responding to the death of a student.

3. Definitions

Refer to [Durham College's Standard Definitions](#).

4. Policy statements

4.1. This policy and procedure applies to the administrative response to the death of a student who is currently registered in a program offered by the College, or who has been an actively registered student within the last calendar year.

4.2. In the event of a student death, the College will ensure a timely and effective response.

5. Procedure

Any employee who learns of a student death will contact the dean, Students or designate. The dean, Students will initiate the College's response to ensure the appropriate departments are notified and protocols are initiated.

Any employee who learns of the death of an alumni will notify the associate vice-president, Development and Alumni Affairs. The associate vice-president, Development and Alumni Affairs will initiate the College's response to ensure the appropriate departments are notified and protocols are initiated.

If the deceased is a recent graduate, within the last calendar year, the dean, Students will determine if the Student Death Response policy should be invoked.

5.1. Office of the Registrar and Finance

The College will ensure a timely and consistent approach to the processing of student accounts in the event of a student death. The dean, Students will notify the Office of the Registrar of the student death.

- 5.1.1. The Office of the Registrar will move the student record to a deceased student status in the student information system.
- 5.1.2. The Office of the Registrar will provide emergency contact information to the dean, Students.
- 5.1.3. The Office of the Registrar will determine whether the student qualifies to receive a posthumous credential or certificate of achievement in memoriam at convocation.
- 5.1.4. During a semester in which the student is registered:

The Office of the Registrar will update the student account and assess according to the following:

- Tuition and [ancillary fees](#) (including ancillary fees collected on behalf of the student association) will be refunded to the designate of the student's family;
- If fees are paid in full for the semester, the refund will be prorated based on the time left in the semester;
- If the account is in deficit, fees will be adjusted to the date of withdrawal and recorded as an uncollectible debt; and
- If the account has a surplus, the College will issue a refund to the designate of the student's family.

- 5.1.5. During a semester in which the student is not registered:

- If the account is in a deficit, the deficit will be recorded as uncollectible debt; and
- If the account has a surplus, the College will issue a refund to the designate of the student's family.

5.1.6. Closure of Academic Records

- The Office of the Registrar will make a determination as to whether it would be appropriate to award posthumously any academic credit or recognition.
- The student's academic file will be closed in the appropriate manner upon receipt of a death notice.

5.2. Student association – Student Health Benefits

5.2.1. If the student health benefits payments have not been transferred to the student association, the College will refund the health benefits amount to the designate of the student's family.

5.2.2. If the student health benefits payments have been transferred to the student association, they will be responsible for refunds of this payment where applicable:

- If the student "opted out" of the Health Benefits Plan and the refund cheque has not been issued, it will be issued to the designate of the student's family;
- If the student did not opt out, the designate of the student's family may be eligible for Death Benefits under the plan; and
- If the student did not opt out and the designate of the student's family is not eligible for Death Benefits under the plan, the student association will approve a pro-rated refund of the Health Benefits payment to the designate of the student's family issued by the College's Finance department.

5.3. Financial Aid and Awards (FAA)

5.3.1. The FAA will review files to determine if the student was in receipt of Ontario Student Assistance Program (OSAP) loans or other awards; if the student had a file with OSAP, a hold will be posted on their account.

5.3.2. Upon receipt of a death certificate, the director, Financial Aid and Awards will notify the appropriate Ministry, National Student Loans and the Canadian Student Loans Programs, to ensure any outstanding loan funding is not collected and communication ceases.

5.3.3. If the student is in receipt of other scholarships and awards, the file will be reviewed by the Director to determine appropriate action.

5.4. Communications and Marketing

The goal is to distribute the message within one business day from notification and family approval.

5.4.1. Upon notification of a student's death, and confirmation of student's status at the College from Office of the Registrar, the dean, Students will notify Communications and Marketing so they may draft a message for distribution that includes the following information:

- Student's name, school, year of study and program;
- Funeral and visitation arrangements (if known);
- Information as to when flags on campus will be lowered; and
- Contact information for confidential mental health supports and services for students and employees.

5.4.2. Content of the message will be adapted to each individual circumstance and according to information available.

5.4.3. Prior to distribution, Communications and Marketing will ensure:

- The communication is signed off by the dean, Students and the President;
- A message is shared with Ontario Tech University's communications team; and
- The Office of Campus Safety (OCS) is notified when to lower flags to half-mast at Oshawa and Whitby campuses as per the Flag-Usage policy and procedure.

5.4.4. Communications and Marketing will distribute the message on behalf of the President to:

- College employees; and
- Students via their approved College email

5.5. IT Services

5.5.1. The dean, Students will notify IT Services to deactivate electronic accounts upon confirmation of a student death. These include:

- Network;
- Email;
- DC Connect;
- Banner; and
- MyDC

5.5.2. Email records in the student's College email account will only be released to the executors of a student's estate with a formal request through the Freedom of Information and Protection of Privacy Act:

- Release of records will only be made after all information that

identifies other parties is removed and the records have been reviewed by the College's Freedom of Information and Protection of Privacy Coordinator.

- A preliminary scan of the student's email account will be made to determine the number of records that will need to be reviewed. The preliminary scan will be completed without charge. If the student's account is above 100 records, the parties who have made the request will be informed in advance of the number of records and charges that may apply for recovery.

5.5.3. Records will not be released if a student dies without a will.

5.6. International Education Office (IEO)

5.6.1. In the event of an International student's death, the dean, Students will work with the IEO to ensure the following:

- Notification of the International Student Health Insurance Provider. This student health provider will typically be responsible for coordinating the funeral services (repatriation), obtaining the death certificate, and liaising with the family regarding repatriation arrangements.
- Notification of the embassy or consulate of the student's country in Canada. When diplomatic representation is unclear, contact Global Affairs Canada for more information.
- Notification of partnering institution where applicable.
- Identify and engage a translator(s) as necessary to assist in family communications.
- Assist the family in making travel arrangements and obtaining visas where appropriate.

5.7. Campus Health and Wellness Centre (CHWC)

5.7.1. Upon receiving the notification of a student death, the director, CHWC will review the student's health records to determine if the student had ever registered with the CHWC. Any employee who was assigned to work with the student will be notified by the director, CHWC or designate.

5.7.2. CHWC employees will be alerted and briefed as soon as possible regarding the student death.

5.7.3. Upon request, the director, CHWC will make arrangements for CHWC employees to be immediately available in order to provide mental health supports to students arising from the student death.

5.7.4. If the nature of the mental health needs exceed the capacity of the on-campus services, the CHWC will provide additional community support

information and offer referrals on a case-by-case basis for external resources.

- 5.7.5. Mental health supports will be made available at any memorial function arranged by the College in support of students and their wellness needs.
- 5.7.6. Recognizing that the grieving process does not have any pre-determined timelines, the CHWC will respond to all requests for support related to a student death as a priority request for services.
- 5.7.7. The director, CHWC will conduct a file review if the deceased was registered at the CHWC for general or mental health support. The director will inform the dean, Students that the file review has been completed. At the recommendation of either the director or the dean, Students, an external review of the file may be conducted.

5.8. Human Resources and Equity

- 5.8.1. The Employee and Family Assistance Program (EFAP) contact information will be communicated to employees through the message communicated by Communications and Marketing.
- 5.8.2. Full-time employees are able to directly access confidential supports through DC's EFAP.
- 5.8.3. Contract or part-time employees may request access by contacting the director, Organizational Effectiveness in Human Resources.
- 5.8.4. A supervisor may request grief support for their team by contacting the director, Organizational Effectiveness.

5.9. Residence Services

- 5.9.1. In the event that a Durham College student has died within residence, the following steps will be taken:
 - The Residence employee who becomes aware of a student death, will contact the on-call manager;
 - The on-call manager will contact Campus Security as well as Emergency Services via 911;
 - The director, Residence Operations (DRO) or designate will notify the dean, Students or designate;
 - Once the primary or secondary contact have been notified, the Residence will facilitate access to the student's personal affects; and.
 - If required, the Residence will arrange for the packing and shipping of the student's personal affects.

- 5.9.2. The Residence will review the student's account and ensure:
- If the account is in a deficit, the amount owing will be recorded as uncollectible debt;
 - Any eligible refunds will be coordinated with the College; and
 - A privacy alert will be applied to the student's account with Residence.

5.10. Alumni Affairs

- 5.10.1. The dean, Students will notify the Office of Alumni Affairs of a student's death so they can adjust their contact database in the event a student has previously graduated
- 5.10.2. Upon notification of the death of an alumni (beyond a year), the Alumni Affairs office will notify the President's Office and the senior academic administrators as appropriate.
- 5.10.3. If appropriate and timely, the president and/or associate vice-president, Development and Alumni Affairs, will send condolences to the next of kin.
- 5.10.4. The Alumni Affairs office will contact the FAA office to determine whether the alumni has outstanding OSAP loans. If there is an outstanding loan, the Alumni Affairs office will request the family provide a copy of the death certificate to the FAA.
- 5.10.5. The Alumni Affairs office will ensure their contact database is updated.
- 5.10.6. The Alumni Affairs office will notify the Office of the Registrar to close the student's academic record as appropriate.
- 5.10.7. The Alumni Affairs office will notify ITS Services to ensure network access is deactivated.
- 5.10.8. With permission from next of kin, the Alumni Affairs office will communicate alumni deaths to fellow alumni through the alumni news.

6. Roles and responsibilities

- 6.1. Any employee who becomes aware of a student death prior to having received formal communication from the College, is responsible for notifying the dean, Students immediately.
- 6.2. The dean, Students is responsible for initiating the College's Student Death Response policy and procedure upon learning of the death of a student. This consists of completing the Student Death Checklist and the coordination of all associated procedures.
- 6.3. The associate vice-president, Office of Development and Alumni Affairs is

responsible for leading the protocol in the event of an alumni member's death.

- 6.4. Individual departments are responsible for promptly completing departmental procedures as necessary to meet the criteria of this policy and procedure.

7. Accessibility for Ontarians with Disabilities Act considerations

Accessibility for Ontarians with Disabilities Act (AODA) standards have been considered in the development of this policy and procedure and it adheres to the principles outlined in the College's commitment to accessibility as demonstrated by the Multi-Year Accessibility Plan.

8. Non-compliance implications

Implications of this policy and procedure not being implemented as described include:

- Unapproved communications regarding a student death;
- Audit implications for institutional records;
- Failure to process OSAP correctly has negative implications for student's next of kin;
- Reputational implications for the institution from mismanagement of a sensitive issue; and
- Potential impact on a criminal investigation.

9. Related forms, legislation or external resources

- Student Death Response Plan Checklist