Deceased Students Reporting Procedure

Section 1 - Purpose and Context

(1) The University of Newcastle (University) acknowledges that a student may die during their studies with us. In such circumstances the University has a duty of care to provide an appropriate response to the management of the academic and administrative aspects of the student's enrolment.

(2) The University's aim is for any necessary administrative processes following the death of a student to be timely, respectful and considerate.

(3) The purpose of this procedure is to provide for the active management of student academic and administrative matters following their death.

(4) This procedure is to be used in conjunction with the University's critical incident policies and procedure should the death occur on-campus (see Student Critical Incident Procedure).

Section 2 - Definitions

(5) In the context of this document, the following definitions apply:

a. “next of kin” refers to persons who identify themselves to the University as family or next of kin of the deceased student and who have written confirmation of their status as the family contact person for the University. Next of kin may also be persons identified by policy, consular officials, or medical personnel as family or next of kin. The University acts in good faith with such persons during the implementation of this Procedure, and does not investigate their bona fides.

Section 3 - Reporting Procedure

Timing

(6) The University wishes to ensure that no additional hardship is placed on grieving families throughout our administrative processes. To achieve this, it is expected that this procedure will be carried out as quickly as possible after the initial notification and no later than two (2) working days after the receipt of formal confirmation of the student's death.

Formal Confirmation

(7) The University will formally register the death of a student following confirmation of the student's death. Confirmation may be by way of:

a. a funeral or memorial notice published in the newspaper or online; or
b. a copy of, or original death certificate.

(8) Next of kin, friends, or family members may contact the University to notify us of the death of a student. The

notifier will be requested to provide records to confirm the student's death, where possible, as outlined in Clause 7, or provide contact details of the deceased’s next of kin.

(9) All records or details provided by a notifier must be forwarded to:

a. the Senior Manager, Student Administration for undergraduate students; or
b. the Director, Graduate Research for Higher Degree by Research candidates.

Administrative Processes

(10) The following administrative matters will be undertaken upon formal confirmation of a student's death:

a. suspension of University communications to the student;
b. check customer account, including any negative Service indicators;
c. amendment of any active enrolments for the student;
d. the assessment of and development of a plan to address paid and unpaid tuition fees and outstanding debts, which may include refunds or special consideration;
e. amendments to all systems to reflect the student's deceased status and to protect their identity; and
f. administratively withdraw the student.

(11) The student's date of death must be recorded in the University's student systems and records. This is the responsibility of Student Administration.

(12) Records pertaining to the formal notification of a student’s death must be retained on the student file including the student's name, student number, program and the program status (e.g. Active/Completed) at the time of death, and the cause of death (if known).

(13) The Senior Manager, Student Administration will advise the following staff of the student's death in writing to ensure that all appropriate systems and records are updated accordingly:

a. University Registrar;
b. the relevant College Pro Vice-Chancellor;
c. Senior Manager Admissions & Scholarships;
d. Director, Communications & Engagement;
e. Chief Financial Officer;
f. the Alumni Office;
g. the relevant College Strategic Program Manager.

(14) For Higher Degree by Research candidates, the Director, Graduate Research or their nominee will advise the following staff of the student's death in writing to ensure that all appropriate systems and records are updated accordingly:

a. University Registrar;
b. Associate Director, Student and Academic Business;
c. the Alumni Office; and
d. the relevant Head of School in writing.

(15) Staff notifications will include:

a. the deceased student's name and student number;

b. the student's program, location, and the time the student attended the University;
c. the student's date of birth and date of death (if known);
d. cause of death (if known);
e. name of next of kin and their contact address (if available).

(16) The relevant College Strategic Program Manager is responsible for confirming the student's program progression to determine the student's eligibility for a posthumous award in accordance with the University's Awards and Graduation Policy.

(17) For Higher Degree by Research candidates, the relevant Head of School and Graduate Research are responsible for confirming the student's program progression to determine the student's eligibility for a posthumous award under the University's Higher Degree by Research Policy and Higher Degree by Research Procedure.

(18) Where the deceased student is a UAC applicant, the Senior Manager Admissions & Scholarships will inform UAC of the death and include the details outlined in clause 15.

(19) If the decedent is an ELICOS student, the Senior Manager, Student Administration will inform the Pathways and Academic Learning Support Centre Executive Officer of the death in writing including the details outlined in clause 15.

(20) If the student is an Indigenous student, the Senior Manager, Student Administration will inform the Office of the Pro Vice-Chancellor Indigenous Strategy and Leadership of the death in writing, including the details outlined in clause 15.

(21) The Senior Manager, Student Administration will confirm with Student Support Services if the student has been a client of any of these services and will inform the Associate Director, Student Wellbeing. The Associate Director, Student Wellbeing will liaise with the relevant College Liaison Coordinator about whether any counselling support for family and/or other students is required.

(22) The University Registrar will report the student's death to the Senior Deputy Vice-Chancellor (Academic & Global) / Deputy Vice-Chancellor (Research and Innovation) and/or the Vice-Chancellor, as appropriate.

(23) If the student was currently enrolled, the Senior Manager, Student Administration will inform the Team Leader, IT Service Desk who will remove the students access to all relevant information technology systems.

Enrolled International Students

(24) If the deceased student was an enrolled international student, the University will comply with the additional reporting requirements required under the Education Services for Overseas Students Act 2000 (ESOS Act).

(25) The Senior Manager, Student Administration is responsible for advising the Department of Immigration and Border Protection (DIBP) of the circumstances of death of an enrolled international student. This should occur prior to updating PRISMS to prevent a letter being sent to the student's most recent recorded address, thus minimising the possibility of further distress for the student's family.

(26) The Senior Manager, Student Administration, or their nominee, will use PRISMS to report the death of an international student against their electronic confirmation of enrolment (eCoE), with the following details:

a. Reason for Student Course Variation - termination of student studies prior to completing the course;
b. Termination Reason - provider decision to cease student enrolment;
c. Provider decision to cease student enrolment reasons - Student has been reported as deceased (include full details in the comment field as per records provided to confirm the student's death and state that DIBP has been notified by email and provided with supporting documentation).

(27) If the decedent is an international student studying on campus, the Director, Future Students International will negotiate arrangements with the next of kin and/or sponsor for handling the deceased person’s body and personal effects. A memorial service will be organised for fellow students, staff and family.

Sponsored Students

(28) Specific protocols may also apply to sponsored students. Details can be obtained from the relevant Third Party Contract.

Section 4 - Posthumous Awards

(29) The Awards and Graduation Policy outlines the University's provisions for the granting of a posthumous award.

(30) The Senior Manager, Student Administration will seek information from the relevant College to determine the student's eligibility for a posthumous award.

(31) Where the student is eligible for a posthumous award, the Senior Manager, Student Administration will contact the deceased student's next of kin to determine their wishes in relation to such an award, and make appropriate arrangements for the award in accordance with the Awards and Graduation Policy.

(32) For Higher Degree by Research candidates, the relevant supervisor will contact the next of kin of the candidate to explain the examination process and possible outcomes, and to gain their permission for thesis examination to proceed.

Status and Details

Status	Current
Effective Date	13th October 2026
Review Date	13th October 2026
Approval Authority	Senior Compliance Manager
Approval Date	6th October 2026
Expiry Date	Not Applicable
Responsible Executive	Belinda Yourn Senior Deputy Vice-Chancellor (Academic & Global)
Enquiries Contact	Bridene Doherty Senior Manager, Student Administration 0249215923 Student Central

Glossary Terms and Definitions

"University" - The University of Newcastle, a body corporate established under sections 4 and 5 of the University of Newcastle Act 1989.

"Working day" - Any day other than Saturday, Sunday, or a public holiday in Newcastle, on which business may be conducted.

"Award" - When referring to a University qualification, this term means an academic qualification approved by Academic Senate that is conferred when a student has met the relevant program requirements. For all other uses of this term, the generic definition applies.

"Campus" - means any place or premises owned or controlled by the University, but may also specifically refer to a designated operating location such as the Callaghan Campus.

"Course" - When referring to a course offered by the University, a course is a set of learning activities or learning opportunities with defined, assessed and recorded learning outcomes. A course will be identified by an alphanumeric course code and course title. Course types include core courses, compulsory courses, directed courses, capstone courses and electives. For all other uses of this term, the generic definition applies.

"Student" - A person formally enrolled in a course or active in a program offered by the University or affiliated entity.

"Candidate" - With regard to Higher Degree by Research it has the same meaning as student. For all other instances it is a person considered for appointment to a position.

"Program" - When referring to learning, a program is a sequence of approved learning, usually leading to an Award. For all other uses of this term, the generic definition applies.

"Service indicators" - A system mechanism for flagging a student's service status. A negative service indicator indicates that the student has outstanding tuition fees or library fines. A positive service indicator, indicates that the student has a surplus balance due to an overpayment.

"Staff" - Means a person who was at the relevant time employed by the University and includes professional and academic staff of the University, by contract or ongoing, as well as conjoint staff but does not include visitors to the University.

"Thesis" - A dissertation involving research by a candidate for the award of a Higher Degree by Research (HDR) qualification.

"Undergraduate" - Refers to any qualification up to and including the level of a Bachelor Honours degree.

"International student" - A student (as defined by the University) who is not an Australian citizen, Australian Permanent Resident or New Zealand citizen (or dual citizenship holders of either Australia or New Zealand). This includes students who will be studying offshore and those who will be studying onshore and have a student visa, provisional residency, temporary residency, bridging visa, or any other category of non-permanent visa for Australia.

"College" - An organisational unit established within the University by the Council.