

MNHS Deceased Student Business Process

SCOPE

This protocol applies to:

- All Medicine, Nursing, and Health Sciences staff;
- All Medicine Nursing, and Health Sciences students.

PURPOSE

The purpose of this document is to ensure the appropriate steps are taken, by the appropriate people, to manage communication, notifications and administrative matters, including posthumous awarding of degrees and closing off the student's records with the University.

This protocol outlines:

- a) The necessary steps to take when a staff member is notified that a student has passed away; and
- b) The necessary steps to take when SEBS notifies the Faculty that a student has passed away.

PROTOCOL STATEMENT

Notification of a student death may occur via informal or formal communication. The Faculty and Schools may also receive notification via SEBS. At all times, it is crucial to maintain student privacy and ensure that the news is communicated sensitively and compassionately. In being mindful of the impact the news may have on those receiving the notification, draft email templates have been prepared which include links to Monash University health and wellbeing support services. These email templates are a guide and can be modified as required.

STEPS FOLLOWING NOTIFICATION

If a member of staff is notified of the death of a student, the following steps are to be taken. The news is not to be shared more widely. As a part of this protocol, it is the Head of School who is responsible for the detail and timeframe for notifications of the student's death.

1. If an academic staff member receives the notification they should at the earliest opportunity contact the Director of Education of their School, who in turn will notify the Head of School.
2. If a professional staff member receives the notification they should at the earliest opportunity, contact the School Manager who in turn will notify the Head of School.
3. If the member of staff does not feel comfortable contacting the above staff, they should immediately refer the matter to their direct supervisor who will make the notification as per points 1. and 2. above.
4. It is the Head of School, or their delegate, who will ensure notification is made to
 - a. The Dean,
 - b. Sub-Faculty Dean,
 - c. Deputy Dean Education,
 - d. Faculty General Manager and,
 - e. relevant internal staff (including Director of Education, School Manager, Student Services Team Leader) as deemed appropriate.
5. Depending on the circumstances the Head of School may feel it is appropriate to notify staff in the School or Department of the death however this is not always the case and is at the discretion of the Head of School.
6. Once notified, the Faculty General Manager will inform the Senior Director, SEBS, and await further instruction.
 - a. The Senior Director, SEBS will coordinate the administrative tasks that are required and will liaise with Faculty staff as needed.
 - b. Once the necessary steps have been taken by SEBS, they will contact the appropriate Faculty staff, to notify them of their responsibilities.
7. If SEBS are notified directly of the death of a student, they will notify the Faculty when the necessary next steps can be taken. When this happens, the Faculty will ensure that the Head of School and other Faculty leaders (Dean, Sub-Faculty Dean, Deputy Dean (Education)) are notified at the earliest opportunity. It is the Head of

School, or their delegate, who is then responsible for further notifications, as appropriate, within their School or Department.

LIAISON AND COMMUNICATION WITH THE FAMILY

1. The Head of School will usually be the primary point of contact between the deceased's family and the Faculty for posthumous conferral of an award (see [Posthumous Conferral Procedure](#) 1.2).
2. The Head of School, or the delegate, will arrange for flowers to be sent to the family and if appropriate, may contact the family directly to express condolences on behalf of all staff at the Faculty and the process that will be undertaken with regards to assessing the eligibility for a posthumous conferral of an award.

ADDITIONAL STAFF WHO MAY NEED TO BE NOTIFIED

Generally, staff will only be notified of the death of a student if they are required to undertake tasks to manage the finalisation of the students results or manage the School's response. Depending on the potential impact of the news, or if the news is more widely known, the Head of School may decide to notify a broader group of staff (such as a teaching team) however this is not always necessary.

Staff members who may need to be notified in order to finalise the student's results and manage academic statements and potential posthumous conferral include, but are not limited to:

- a. The relevant Course Director
- b. The Chief Examiners of the units in which the student was enrolled
- c. The Unit Coordinators of the units in which the student was enrolled
- d. Professional staff in the School or Faculty managing student records and administrative processes

MONASH UNIVERSITY COUNSELLING AND WELLBEING SUPPORT SERVICES

[Employee Assistance Program](#)

Phone 1300 360 364 | Make an [online booking](#)

[University counselling](#)

Phone (03) 9905 3020 | [Online assistance](#)

[MyCoach for People Leaders](#)

Phone 1300 360 364

APPENDICES

Appendix A – Template email to Senior Management

Dear MNHS Colleagues,

I am writing to you with some sad and potentially distressing news. The School has been notified of the death of [Student Name], who was enrolled in [Course].

As yet, SEBS have not yet been notified, which I will leave with [name of Faculty General Manager] for action.

[further details as may be deemed appropriate such as – Flowers have been arranged, support has been offered to staff impacted by the news of the death etc.]

Kind regards,

[Name]

Appendix B – Template email to internal staff

Dear MNHS Colleagues,

I am writing to you with some sad and potentially distressing news. The School has been notified of the death of [Student Name], who was enrolled in [Course].

SEBS has been notified and the appropriate steps have been taken with regard to the student's enrolment at Monash. I ask that you please do not reach out directly to the family, I will express our condolences on behalf of all staff, in order to minimise disruption during this difficult time.

It is our responsibility to assess the student for any potential alternative-exit or the awarding of their full degree posthumously. To that end, can I please ask [Chief Examiners] to let me know what would have been the final result for the student if you had to return results for your unit now, and [Course Director] to let me know your recommendation to the Dean for a posthumous conferral of an award.

In order to maintain confidentiality and privacy, I ask that you do not disclose this news to other staff in the School.

I understand that this could be a difficult time for you and Monash has a range of services to assist you through the [Employee Assistance Program \(EAP\)](#). Please reach out to me or [appropriate delegate, i.e. name of Director of Education or Deputy Head of School] should you wish.

Kind regards,

[Name]

Implementation Date	December 2023
Review Date	December 2026
Process Owner	Office of the Deputy Dean Education
Category	Learning and Teaching
Version Number	1
Content Enquiries	Med-quality-fmnhs@monash.edu
Responsibility for implementation	Chief Examiners Unit Coordinators Course Directors Directors of Education Heads of Department Heads of School
Status	New
Approval Body	Name: Faculty Education Committee Meeting: 6/2023 Date: 27 November 2023 Agenda item: 8.1
Related Policies	
Related Documents	Posthumous Conferral Procedure