

**Policy Identifier:** Death Response Policy on the Death of a Student

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<b>Policy Title:</b>	Death Response Policy on the Death of a Student
<b>Description:</b>	The Death Response Policy provides a framework for the Institute Response to a student death/s. A Death Response Plan has been developed to complement the Death Response Policy and to assist staff in implementing the policy when required. Both the Death Response Policy and the Plan have been developed and based on the values, mission and priority of MIE to create a community of care and compassion through student partnerships, which fosters the wellbeing of students and where they feel supported.
<b>Author (Position):</b>	Director, Student Counselling Service
<b>Version:</b>	3.0
<b>Approved By:</b>	MIE Governing Body
<b>Approval Date:</b>	January 2019
<b>Policy Re-approval Date:</b>	May 2026
<b>Date of Next Policy Review:</b>	June 2027 (or as necessary)

<b>Revision History</b>		
<b>Previous Version no.</b>	<b>Summary of Amendments</b> <i>Inc. date of approval of the update</i>	<b>Reviewed Version no.</b>
2.0	Updated to separate policy and procedure, formally known as Bereavement Support Procedure on the Death of a Student. Approved May 2026	3.0

## **Death Response Policy – on the Death of a Student**

### **1. Context**

The death of a student is a serious event for the whole Institute, especially the student's close friends, peers and staff members. The Institute's response impacts on the students and staff affected and their families and on others close to the deceased. It is important that the Institute reacts to such an event in a way that recognises the loss of one of its members, deals sensitively with the aftermath and supports those most affected by the loss. The Marino Institute of Education (MIE) Death Response Policy guides the Institute's response to a student's death. This document should be read in conjunction with the Student Death Response Plan (DRP) which guides staff in the implementation of the Student Death Response Policy and the tasks associated with responding, so students, staff and family/ies are supported through their distress and loss.

### **2. Purpose**

The Death Response Policy and Plan provides a framework for the Institute to:

- 2.1 Acknowledge the deceased.
- 2.2 Recognise the loss for students, staff, and the wider community.
- 2.3 Ensure a compassionate response for all those affected.
- 2.4 Assure a timely, coordinated and consistent response to a student death.
- 2.5 Harness students' support networks.
- 2.6 Identify and reach out to those requiring assistance and provide a targeted response.
- 2.7 Minimise possible negative impact on other students' wellbeing, their academic performance and ultimately student retention.
- 2.8 In the case of a death by suicide, minimise the risk of suicide contagion by not normalising or glorifying suicide.
- 2.9 Ensure that the response is culturally sensitive and respectful of all faiths and traditions, and equally respectful of situations where no faith is professed.

2.10 Respond to media enquires in a respectful and timely manner if relevant.

### **3 Benefits of this Policy**

The Death Response Policy will benefit the Institute by providing:

- 3.1 A coordinated, compassionate and consistent Institute response.
- 3.2 Clarity of roles and responsibilities for Institute staff.
- 3.3 Safeguards for the Institute's reputation.

### **4 Scope**

#### 4.1 General Scope

The MIE Death Response Policy and Plan shall usually be applied in the case of the death of any full-time student and maybe tailored as appropriate for part-time students. Although the response might be different depending on the situation, the policy will typically apply to both registered students and students who are off books, as well as any MIE student who dies when on placement or studying abroad.

- 4.2 The policy shall apply to students who have completed their course but who have not yet graduated.
- 4.3 The policy will usually apply equally in and out of term, as well as after-hours and at weekends.
- 4.4 Graduates/Alumni are not covered by the policy.

Although it is acknowledged that the death of a graduate, particularly a recent graduate, may be a very traumatic event for families and for other graduates – a formal Institute response is not possible. It is recommended that staff who are made aware of the death of a graduate inform relevant personnel, including former tutors<sup>1</sup>, supervisors and academic staff. Outreach to families and former students and attendance at funerals where possible is advised, particularly if the deceased is a recent graduate.

### **5 Principles**

The policy is shaped by the Institute's:

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<sup>1</sup> See [Tutor System Policy](#) and [Tutor System Procedure](#)

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- 5.1 Commitment to a holistic model of education
- 5.2 Commitment to retention of students.
- 5.3 Commitment to a compassionate, respectful collegiate community.
- 5.4 Duty of Care to students underpinned by Health and Safety legislation.
- 5.5 Commitment to best practice guidelines and research-informed practice,
- 5.6 A timely, tiered and targeted response, offering opportunities for appropriate remembrance and connection.
- 5.7 Respect for confidentiality of sensitive personal data – information is shared only with staff who are involved in the response on a ‘need to know’ basis and is treated as confidential.
- 5.8 Collaborative partnership model with students

## **6 Responding to a student death**

### 6.1 Coordination Responsibility

The President/Registrar are responsible for initiating this policy. The President/Registrar/their nominee chairs and coordinates the Institute’s response to a student’s death. The members of the Response Team assist in advising, undertaking and reporting back on all the necessary and agreed tasks so that concerned/impacted students, staff and family receive the support and compassion required at a very difficult/sensitive time.

The Response Team is respectful of all cultures, traditions and faiths, and equally respectful of situations where no faith is professed. The Response Team is responsible for advising the Institute on the appropriate response in each individual case.

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6.2 Members of Death Response Team

	<b>Response Person</b>	<b>Deputy in the absence of the Response Person</b>	
Initiator/Convenor/ Chair	President or Registrar	Another member of Leadership Team	
	Course Leader	Academic staff member from the relevant department will deputise	
	Leader's Head of Department (or Dean)		
	Chaplain	Member of the Chaplaincy team	
	Director of Student Counselling and Student Support Services	Student Counsellor	

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	Senior Tutor/student's tutor	Senior Tutor/students tutor	
	Director of Estates and Conferencing		
	The Lecturer with Responsibility for Initial Bereavement Support in Chaplaincy		

Administrative support will typically be provided by a staff member from the Education Office and/or the President's Office.

**The following personnel will be invited to attend the Response Team meetings when and as relevant, at the discretion of the President or the Chair.**

- The International Foundation Programme (IFP) Manager or their nominee.
- The SU President and Class Representative may be invited to join the response team or to otherwise assist the response team with communications to the class or the wider student community, or in organising class transport to the funeral.
- Eber staff

External advice may also be sought if required e.g. cultural, and religious / death by suicide e.g. Samaritans

The Student Support Services team members assist in the Institution response through the Director of Student Counselling and Student Support Services. The Chaplaincy team also assist through the Chaplain.

The Academic Staff assist the Head of Department in responding to a student death.

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Please see Appendix 1 of the Student Death Response Plan document which lists the members of the Death Response Team and Appendix 2 which outlines the roles of all staff involved.

### 6.3 Tasks of Death Response Team

The role of the Death Response Team is to coordinate and oversee the implementation of the response and agree who will undertake the following tasks, which are outlined in detail in the accompanying document.

#### 6.3.1 Immediate Tasks (within the first 24/48 hours) on Receiving a Report of a (Student) Death

- Notification of emergency Services (if relevant)
- Preservation of scene (if relevant)
- Verification of the death
- Liaison with the family members concerned
- Notification of death to students and staff and administrative areas
- Identify and reach out to those who need immediate support
- Encourage students to harness their family and peer support networks
- Review academic implications i.e. lecture cancellations, changing submission deadlines if relevant, rescheduling examination date/s or facilitating another date as a first attempt within the examination period for those that want/need it
- Facilitate/organise a gathering led by chaplain for students impacted
- Media response.

#### 6.3.2 Medium\_Term Tasks (one week-one month) after the death.

- Funeral (Notification and attendance arrangements)
- Provide information on the process of bereavement and internal & external sources of support for all (students & staff) those impacted
- Identification of those who require follow up and the offer of one-to-one support with Chaplain/Counselling
- Memorials
- Debrief support for the Responders if required/appropriate. - e.g. [inspiresupporthub.org](http://inspiresupporthub.org) or MIE Student Counselling Service

#### 6.3.3 Longer Term Tasks

- Review of Response what worked well and what might need to be changed in the procedure (4-6 weeks post event)
- Anniversaries/annual memorials
- Coroner's Court/Inquest if relevant
- Annual review and Circulation of the Death Response Plan /Bereavement Support Procedure
- Staff Training

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**These above tasks are outlined in detail in the Plan for Responding to Student Death document which should be read in conjunction with this Student Death Response Policy**