

**UT Health Science Center:
EM111 Student Death Procedures**

Version 1

Publication Date: 05/27/2022

No./Title: EM111 – STUDENT DEATH PROCEDURES	Resp. Office: REGISTRAR Approval Body: CASA	Effective Date: 10/28/2009
Category: Students	Last Review: 04/16/2019	Next Review: 04/01/2022
Contact: University Registrar	☎ 901.448.7770	✉ registrar@uthsc.edu
Related Form:	Notice of Deceased Student Form (see Appendix)	

POLICY

To be prepared in the event of a student death, University of Tennessee Health Science Center (UTHSC) has developed procedures for communicating with families and with the university community, for coordinating with external individuals and agencies, and for supporting those individuals who are impacted by the untimely event.

PROCEDURES

Notification Procedures

- A. When the student’s death is on the Memphis campus, the first responder will immediately contact Campus Police. If the student death occurs at another major teaching facility (Knoxville, Chattanooga or Nashville) the first responder will be the local security detail responsible for those respective areas. Campus Police/security officers will respond and be in charge of the scene of the incident until all appropriate actions have been taken. A ranking UTHSC Officer will be available, as appropriate. At the first opportunity, Campus Police/local security officers will contact the Executive Vice Chancellor/Chief Operations Officer and/or the ranking UTHSC official at the site. The Executive Vice Chancellor/ranking UTHSC officer will immediately inform the Chancellor and other UTHSC officials as outlined below and will contact appropriate staff members and coordinate their efforts.
- B. Anyone becoming aware of a student death that occurred outside of the campus will contact the Executive Vice Chancellor/Chief Operations Officer or the ranking UTHSC official in that region.
- C. The Executive Vice Chancellor or the ranking UTHSC official in the region will inform the Chancellor, the Vice Chancellor for Academic, Faculty and Student Affairs, the student’s Dean and the Office of Communication and Marketing of the student’s death. The Office of Communication and Marketing will coordinate all contacts with the media.
- D. Once notified, the Vice Chancellor for Academic, Faculty and Student Affairs will communicate with the Registrar.
- E. It is the medical examiner’s responsibility to notify the family in consultation with the campus

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Chief of Police/ranking local security officer. UTHSC officials may only then contact a member of the deceased student's family.

- F. The Registrar will notify, via email, the deceased student's instructors and any campus employer of the deceased student once the family has been notified.
- G. The Vice Chancellor of Academic, Faculty, and Student Affairs will contact the Office of Student Academic Support Services and Inclusion (SASSI) to arrange for a behavioral health counselor to respond to the scene, if appropriate. For incidents that occur at other major teaching sites, the Vice Chancellor of Academic, Faculty, and Student Affairs will arrange for local counseling services to assist those affected by the death.
- H. The Registrar will inform the Vice Chancellor for Academic, Faculty and Student Affairs if there are any other students with the same full name as the deceased. In such instances, the Vice Chancellor for Academic, Faculty and Student Affairs will inform the families of these individuals that their student was not the one involved.
- I. The Vice Chancellor for Academic, Faculty and Student Affairs, or designee, will serve as the primary campus contact for the family of the deceased student and will assist any family members who wish to come to the Memphis campus, arranging for local housing and providing other assistance as needed. If the student death occurred at one of the other major teaching locations (Knoxville, Chattanooga or Nashville), the Vice Chancellor for Academic, Faculty and Student Affairs will coordinate with the ranking UTHSC official in that region to provide support for the family members.
- J. The Registrar will request a copy of the Death Certificate from the family or some verification of the student's death. Copies of the death certificate will be distributed to the Director of Financial Aid when such verification is required and the Registrar will retain a copy. Federal Health and Human Services Regulations and NACUBO¹ Guidelines require the Death Certificate if the student is receiving financial aid.
- K. The Registrar will provide 'next of kin' information to the Chancellor's Office. The Chancellor will then write a letter of condolence to the family of the deceased student, if appropriate.
- L. The Vice Chancellor for Academic, Faculty and Student Affairs will inform the Student Government Association (SGA) leadership of the student death.
- M. The Vice Chancellor for Academic, Faculty and Student Affairs, in consultation with Student Government Association (SGA) representatives and with regional UTHSC officials (as appropriate) will assist students and faculty wishing to hold a memorial service for the deceased student.
- N. Upon receipt of the death certificate, the Registrar will close the student's academic record and mark 'deceased' on his/her record. This designation alerts the Registrar's staff so that no communication is sent to the student, parents or spouse. Before closing the official file, the Registrar will forward 'next of kin' name and address to the Vice Chancellor for Academic, Faculty and Student Affairs.
- O. The Registrar will then notify the appropriate campus officials to make the following changes

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to the student record:

- The Director of Financial Aid will finalize any remaining work-study payments and close the employment records for the deceased student. The Office of Human Resources will fulfill this function for UTHSC employees who were also students. The deceased student's financial aid situation will also be reviewed and the proper steps taken so that any federal student loans can be forgiven.
- The Bursar will make any allowable adjustments to the deceased student's account. The Bursar will process any allowable refund of tuition and fees. Generally, the student is withdrawn from all course work for which he/she was enrolled that semester and the student's estate provided a full refund of tuition and fees. The refund check, made payable to the student's estate, will then be mailed separately from the letter of condolence sent by the Bursar's Office. The Bursar may also refund parking and other miscellaneous fees.
- The Director of the General Education Building (GEB) and the college's Associate Dean of Student Affairs will facilitate the return to the family of any property that the deceased student may have left in lockers in the GEB or in designated areas within the college. In cases in which the student had been studying in Knoxville, Chattanooga or Nashville, the local UTHSC official with responsibility for students will assist families to access student lockers and/or the student's housing facility such that student effects can be retrieved.

Notice of a Deceased Student

The Registrar, in accordance with the above procedures, will provide the campus officials noted above with the official written notice of a student death through the use of the "Notice of a Deceased Student" email (see Appendix A).

Records Disclosure Procedure

Requests received by the Registrar for information about a deceased person who attended the UTHSC, including but not limited to an official transcript, shall be considered on an individual basis. Primary consideration will be given to requests that are supported in writing by the deceased's immediate or surviving family. In all cases, proof-of-death in the form of a death certificate is required.

APPROVAL HISTORY:

Effective: October 28, 2009

Revised: June 5, 2012, Committee on Academic and Student Affairs (CASA)

Reviewed: November 3, 2015, Committee on Academic and Student Affairs (CASA)

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Approved: November 5, 2015, Chancellor

Revised: April 16, 2019, CASA

Approved: April 30, 2019, Chancellor

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APPENDIX A (Email Template)

NOTICE OF A DECEASED STUDENT

Date: _____

To: _____

Subject: Deceased Student: - [name of the deceased]

The Registrar has been notified of the death of [name of deceased] – [id number] on [date of notification].

Mr./Ms. [name] attended the University of Tennessee from [month, year] to [month, year] as a student in the [name of college and academic program].

Please take all of the necessary steps to change/amend your office's official records. If a mailing address must be maintained, change it to c/o Registrar.

A memorial service is being planned for [name] on _____ by _____. (If this information is not available, provide name and contact information for someone who is responsible for planning any memorial activities.)

Sincerely,

Registrar

University of Tennessee Health Science Center