



Absent and Missing Students Procedure

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Owner: Director of Student Services

Department: Student Services

Version	Effective From	Amendments	Equality Analysis	Stakeholders Consulted	Approval Date	Author	Date for Review
V1.0	01/09/2023	<p>Updated in line with best practice around information sharing and escalation procedures clarified to reflect current practice.</p> <p>Updated department names, role titles. Changed Next of Kin to 'trusted contact'.</p> <p>Cross referenced with Engagement and Attendance Policy.</p> <p>Inclusion of missing students to be reported via the Head of Student Wellbeing, Student Engagement & Retention and Head of (School) Department.</p>	01/09/2023	Policy Review Group Student Services Disability & Dyslexia Team Student Engagement & Retention Centre Wellbeing Team Apprenticeship Team EEC & Academic Board Members	20/09/2023	Lydia Pell Sinead McCarthy	25/09/2023

This Policy is reviewed by Education & Experience Committee and approved by Academic Board



1 Introduction

1.1 Purpose

- 1.1.1 The purpose of this procedure is to provide guidance to staff when a report of an absent or missing student is received.
- 1.1.2 This procedure relates to the Absent and Missing Students Policy

2 Procedure

1.2 Reporting and responding to a report of an absent or missing student

- 2.1.1 Initial report and investigation. Concerns about an absent or missing student may be raised in the following ways:
- A student reporting a concern to a member of University staff.
 - A member of staff reporting their concern to another member of staff, particularly to those staff members who have a designated responsibility for student support.
 - A student's placement, apprenticeship or internship provider raising a concern to the university.
 - The student's family, or trusted contact or friend expressing their concern.
 - Someone outside the University reporting their concern to a member of the University community. This may be from statutory services or any other 3rd party.
 - Third-Party contact. There may be times when a family member, named trusted contact, or friend contacts the University because they are concerned they have not heard from the student. In most cases, all that is required is for the student to be contacted and told of the third party's concern with the suggestion that they make contact with them. Staff should not disclose any information about the student to the third



party on confidentiality grounds. They should however take note of the person's name and contact details in case there are further concerns relating to the student.

- 2.1.2 Any member of staff who is concerned about an absent/missing student or has received a reported concern should immediately report this at the local level to the Head of Department, Student Engagement and Retention Co-ordinator and Head of Student Support and Wellbeing.
- 2.1.3 These three members of staff should collaboratively review the concern, bring together information about the student's attendance record and any key facts that could increase the potential risk of the student and attempt to make contact with the student using usual UEL channels. If concerns remain then escalation is appropriate.
- 2.1.4 Head of Department, Student Engagement and Retention Co-ordinator and Head of Student Support and Wellbeing should escalate concerns where they are unable to make contact with the student at the local level. This should be into Student Services via the Deputy Director of Student Services who will co-ordinate with the Head of Student Support and Wellbeing to carry out a further investigation. This will include looking at any engagement with student services teams, residential life activity, and any other information of engagement activity outside of the academic record.
- 2.1.5 Escalation to Director of Student Services (or nominee). If these further enquiries fail to locate the student or concerns remain the Deputy Director of Student services will escalate in order for the Director of Student Services (or nominee) to coordinate the University's response to the situation.
- 2.1.6 The Director of Student Services (or nominee) will (where appropriate) liaise with the Head of Security, Head of Student Support and Wellbeing and Head of Residential Life and Conduct to make further attempts to locate the student and assess the possible level of risk involved.



2.1.7 This may include:

- Searching the student's University hall of residence room for clues to their whereabouts, e.g. room checks, enquiries with neighbours, campus searches, CCTV, incident reports.
- Examining student records to see if the student is already known to any University support services.
- Asking the School, Students' Union, Security, IT Services and the Library for any additional evidence of the student's whereabouts.
- Establishing last known contacts and whether the student evidenced any unusual patterns of behaviour. The Student Engagement and Retention Team may liaise with colleagues as appropriate to obtain additional information that may help them with the initial investigation. At this stage, this should not include contacting trusted contacts or family, or other third parties external to the University. All investigations should be carried out discretely and without causing undue alarm.

2.1.8 If the Director of Student Services (or nominee) considers there to be serious grounds for concern about the student's wellbeing they will use the student's named emergency trusted contact where appropriate. There may be rare cases where internal information suggests that contacting the 'trusted contact' could increase risk for the student. In such situations this information may be passed on to the police rather than making direct contact. These decisions will be recorded on the student services CRM.

2.1.9 Reporting the student as a missing person. If, as a result of these enquiries the location and wellbeing of the student cannot be confirmed, the Director of Student Services (or nominee) will then report the student as missing to the Police and other external agencies as necessary (e.g., Home Office, relevant Embassy, Consulate or High Commission), and become the main University point of contact for the Police.



- 2.1.10 The Director of Student Services will inform the relevant members of the University Executive Board, the relevant Dean of School, the Director of Communications and the Academic Registrar to ensure any subsequent incoming enquiries can be dealt with appropriately. It may also be appropriate to inform the Head of Student Immigration and Compliance where the student has a University sponsored visa.
- 2.1.11 Supporting the found student. Once the student has been located and their safety and general wellbeing ensured the Director of Student Services will update relevant members of staff. The academic department will remind the student of the expectation that they will be in attendance as outlined in the Engagement and Attendance Policy. Support to help address any underlying difficulties will also be offered through signposting to relevant support services.
- 2.1.12 If a student is located deceased, the Policy and Procedure for Response to Student Death will apply.

2 Links to other Institutional Policies and Procedures

2.1 Internal Policies

This Policy/Regulation relates to the following institutional regulations, policies or procedures:

- [Student Engagement and Attendance Policy](#)
- [Safeguarding Policy](#)
- Student Death Policy
- Incident Management Procedures

2.2 Exemptions and Professional Bodies

There are no exemptions to this policy.



3 Definitions

- 2.1.13 The University will use the most recent definition(s) of 'absent person' and 'missing person' as proposed by the Association of Chief Police Officers of the United Kingdom (March 2015) to update their Authorised Professional Practice (APP) and following the Interim Guidance on the Management, Recording and Investigation of Missing Persons (2013).
- 2.1.14 This is to ensure that decisions around 'absent' and 'missing' are soundly based on risk and that the rationale for those decisions is suitably documented.
- 2.1.15 The definitions below have been adopted for the purpose of this policy:
- Absent – “A person not at a place where they are expected or required to be and there is no apparent risk.”
 - Missing - “Anyone whose whereabouts cannot be established and where the circumstances are out of character or the context suggests the person may be subject of crime or at risk of harm to themselves or another.”