

Gisma University of Applied Sciences

STUDENT LOSS RESPONSE POLICY



Gisma
University
of Applied
Sciences



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1. Introduction

This policy outlines how Gisma University of Applied Sciences will respond in the unfortunate event of a student's death. The University values the health and wellbeing of each student, and in the event of such a tragedy, it is crucial to provide a proper and compassionate response. All actions should focus on supporting the student's family and friends during this difficult time.

2. Purpose and Scope

No institution is immune to the possibility of a student's death. This policy provides guidance for the initial steps to be taken in such incidents. Both students and staff should be aware of the procedures and the importance of acting carefully and sensitively when discussing this topic with affected individuals, such as parents, friends, and colleagues. Maintaining the privacy of the deceased student is a priority.

3. Policy Principles

This policy ensures that:

- Individuals present or nearby during the incident understand the immediate steps to take, while acknowledging that strict adherence to protocol may be challenging in such sensitive situations.
- Relevant parties within and outside the University are informed appropriately, and close relatives are involved in decision-making processes.
- Those responsible for managing the response act with sensitivity and reasonableness.
- Individuals affected by the student's death receive professional psychological support.
- The University takes all necessary actions and is confident in its response.

4. Procedures

If Death Occurs Off-Campus

- Notification of a student's death may be received from close friends or relatives. Contact details should be exchanged for further updates. The information must be promptly relayed to University Management: Julian Davies (Julian.Davies@gisma.com), Nigina Tawakalsada (Nigina.Tawakalsada@gisma.com), Prof. Fotis Papageorgiou (Fotis.Papageorgiou@gisma.com), Prof. Peter Konhaeusner (Peter.Konhaeusner@gisma.com).
- Detailed information should be obtained from a friend or relative, preferably through an official report by local law enforcement, a medical examiner, or the hospital involved. However, sensitivity must be exercised when dealing with grieving individuals.
- A designated person from management (Julian Davies, Nigina Tawakalsada, Prof. Fotis Papageorgiou, Prof. Peter Konhaeusner) will be responsible for communication. The University should offer support to the student's family and close friends.
- No public announcements should be made until a coordinated plan of action has been developed by those responsible (specify who).
- The content of public announcements should be agreed upon with the student's relatives and close friends.
- Ensure that all shared information is accurate, leaving no room for misinformation.
- Prepare statements for students and faculty. A condolence letter signed by management (specify who) should be published on social platforms and the University's official website.

If Death Occurs On-Campus

- In all cases except those occurring in a hospital, the first step should be to immediately contact the police by calling 110.
- If the body is discovered on campus, first aid should be administered by the Gisma team members who are trained for the first aid. The Line Manager and upper Management should be notified as soon as possible. If first aid is no longer needed, the area should be treated as a potential crime scene.
- Before the police arrive, only medical personnel should be allowed to enter the premises. It's crucial to remember the state of the scene and any changes made while administering first aid.
- University management (Julian Davies, Nigina Tawakalsada, Prof. Fotis Papageorgiou, Prof. Peter Konhaeusner) should be informed immediately. A Management representative should meet the police and provide full support during the investigation.
- The designated University contact (Julian Davies, Nigina Tawakalsada, Prof. Fotis Papageorgiou, Prof. Peter Konhaeusner) will inform the student's family and offer full support throughout the process, serving as the primary communication point.
- A Student Death Response Team should be formed to manage communications, planning, and decision-making (Julian Davies, Nigina Tawakalsada, Prof. Fotis Papageorgiou, Prof. Peter Konhaeusner).
- Students or witnesses likely to be questioned by the police should receive full University support, including immediate access to professional psychological help.
- If the student was in their final semester, the University should issue a posthumous degree to the parents, or a Certificate of Achievement if applicable.
- The University does not host campus memorials

Death has occurred within the accommodation building managed by the University

- Whenever a student is found dead within the accommodation building, the first thing is to inform your Line Manager immediately, who then will inform immediately the police and (Julian Davies, Nigina Tawakalsada, Prof. Fotis Papageorgiou, Prof. Peter Konhaeusner).
- By the time the police arrive, do not touch or change anything around, remember that now it is a potential crime scene.
- Students who became witnesses to the incident should be taken to a separate room by the employee and be shown the necessary help, if the dead student was sharing a room with other students, the main target should be leaving the student's belongings untouched by the time the Police arrives.
- The Manager of the building, which is the Campus Manager UE should be informed about the situation.
- The University representative (Julian Davies, Nigina Tawakalsada, Prof. Fotis Papageorgiou, Prof. Peter Konhaesner) should inform the parents and the close ones about the incident.
- All the affected people should be offered professional psychological help.

5. Communication Guidance

The University recognizes that social media and related tools can become a reason for a quick spread of misinformation, rumors and speculations about the cause of the death, before the official report is released, may start to circulate in the University and out of it. In such cases, the University will have to come up with different kinds of preventive announcements, it can be online or face to face, prioritizing the safety of the campus life and the mental health of the victim's close ones. The (Julian Davies, Nigina Tawakalsada, Prof. Fotis Papageorgiou, Prof. Peter Konhaesner) should make sure that the parents of the student are aware of the effort that the University is putting on the privacy protection of the student.

All University staff and students should avoid any kind of social media communication about the death of the student, any discussions about the reason of the death, recognizing that even a small piece of information can be painful for the family members and close ones. Later such kinds of communications can be mistaken for an authoritative statement from the University's side.

The University may get calls and emails from different interested parties, in such cases the University should be very clear that we cannot provide any information about the death of the student considering a privacy laws and regulations. If the caller is concerned about the students' wellbeing in such cases, ask them to contact (Julian Davies, Nigina Tawakalsada, Prof. Fotis Papageorgiou, Prof. Peter Konhaesner). Samples for email responses will be provided by the University.

6. Guidance for Faculty

The faculty members may be approached by the students who were affected by the death of the student. They might ask for a chance to miss a class or to postpone some academic responsibilities, in such cases the faculty member should offer full support, they should show empathy and understanding, and if the student needs professional psychological help, they should be referred to the professional.

It is important to facilitate the grieving process, and at the same time continue to support a stable campus environment. The classes or assignments should not be cancelled for everyone, an individual approach should be implemented, each request should be discussed on a case-by-case basis.

Faculty members can be a great help for the students who are grieving, they can be offered academic help, special sessions with professors, extension of assignments' deadlines, computing the final grade without all work being done, if it is applicable to University's grading policy and become a person for the student with whom they can talk about their loss.

This protocol is set to be reviewed every 3 years.

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