



TECHNISCHE
UNIVERSITÄT
DRESDEN

Recommendations for Coping with Death and Grief



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Dear Members of TU Dresden,

Coping with death and grief at work or while studying requires a considerable degree of sensitivity and understanding. It is a distressing time, especially for those who are directly affected by a loss, but also for the entire team and the institution. Whether it is the loss of a loved one in the family or of someone you are close to at work, serious illnesses and deaths often come as a shock. By the same token, the needs of those affected can be very diverse.

A sensitive approach to death and grief that takes into account different religious and cultural needs is crucial for the physical and mental health of all staff and students. This includes providing appropriate support in the event of personal loss and fostering a working and learning environment that is both respectful and compassionate.

When staff members, students or their relatives die, it is vital for teams and study groups to have the opportunity to respond to this difficult situation collectively and in the appropriate manner, and to acknowledge and process their emotions.

Below, you will find recommendations on how you as managers, colleagues and fellow students can support those who have suffered a loss. In addition, current regulations at TU Dresden (TUD) as well as its counseling services are listed, alongside collective bargaining agreements and legal provisions.

I hope this handout will be of help to you in the event that you encounter death and grief in your professional or private life.

Sincerely,

A handwritten signature in blue ink, reading "Dr. Böhm". The signature is written in a cursive, flowing style.

Prof. Roswitha Böhm

Vice-Rector University Culture

Guidance for managerial staff when one of your colleagues or students has lost a relative

Show understanding and compassion for those who have suffered a loss. An empathetic and respectful attitude is critical to reassure those affected that you support them and that they are not alone. The grieving process affects everybody in different ways and can take longer than expected. Please respect the grieving person's privacy and be accepting when they do not want to talk about their loss.

However, if they wish, and you are able to, do offer them the opportunity for a personal, confidential conversation. Ask them what you and your team can do to help.

Members of your team will often feel uncertain whether they should or should not talk about the loss.

When you can't find the right words...

"Would you like to talk about it?"

"How can I / the team help you during this difficult time?"

"What do you need from me / from us now?"

"How can I / how can we support you?"

It may be helpful to provide the grieving person with access to **support networks** or **counseling services** that can offer long-term assistance in such situations. You can find relevant information on **page 15**.

We recommend support services for returning to work or studying after a bereavement. The working or studying environment can supply a certain normality and stability. Give the grieving person time to find their way back into working life, for instance by temporarily redistributing tasks.

You can also take advantage of the opportunities offered by the service agreements on mobile and flexible working hours.

Collective bargaining agreements and legal regulations in the event of the death of relatives of members of staff

Employees covered by collective bargaining agreements (TV-L), civil servants and trainees at TUD are entitled to leave of absence or special leave with continued payment of remuneration for two working days in the event of the death

- of the spouse
- of the life partner
(in accordance with the Civil Partnerships Act)
- of a child
- of a parent.

The entitlement for employees is based on § 29 Para. 1b TV-L, for civil servants on § 12 Para. 1 No. 2b Saxon Leave, Maternity Protection and Parental Leave Regulation – (SächsUrlMuEltVO) and for trainees based on § 14 Para. 3 TVA-L BBiG.

In addition, employees can apply, in accordance with § 28 TV-L, for special leave without pay if there is an important reason; this regulation also applies to trainees in accordance with § 14 Para. 3 TVA-L BBiG. Civil servants can apply for leave for personal reasons with loss of pay in accordance with § 14 Saxon Leave, Maternity Protection and Parental Leave Regulation – (SächsUrlMuEltVO)

Employees not covered by collective bargaining agreements (research and student assistants) can also be granted leave of absence for up to two working days with continued payment of remuneration in the above-mentioned cases with regard to § 616 BGB (temporarily unable to perform their duties).

Inquiries and applications regarding paid leave, special leave and leave for the aforementioned reasons are processed in Directorate Personnel.

Contact

Employees:

✉ sachgebiet2.2@tu-dresden.de

University lecturers:

✉ sachgebiet2.1@tu-dresden.de

Civil servants in administration:

✉ sachgebiet2.2@tu-dresden.de

Student and research assistants, trainees:

✉ sachgebiet2.4@tu-dresden.de

Download Service Agreement

➤ verw.tu-dresden.de/VerwRicht/Sachwort/download.asp?file=rsd20620_Dienstvereinbarung.pdf

➤ tu-dresden.de/tu-dresden/organisation/ressourcen/dateien/personalrat/dienstvereinbarungen/rsd20621_Anlage.pdf?lang=de

Recommendations for managers when a colleague or student has passed away

Contact Unishop / Cards

➤ tu-dresden.de/tu-dresden/campus/unishop/karten

If you learn of a death in your team: Please look after yourself! Take the time to collect yourself. As regards self-care, you are also very welcome to approach the contact points within and beyond TUD that are mentioned on page XX.

If possible, get in touch with the surviving relatives. Try to clarify what information you may or, if applicable, may not pass on.

Then, gather your team together promptly. Inform as many people as possible at the same time. Please communicate the information you have truthfully, provided this does not conflict with the wishes of the surviving relatives.

Convey your sympathies to the relatives with a personal and handwritten condolence card, signed by you on behalf of the team. Condolence cards can be ordered from TUD's Unishop.

In due course, you should clarify with the surviving relatives how your or your colleagues' participation in the funeral will be handled – do the relatives wish for that or not?

It is helpful for you and your team to consider collectively how you would like to manage the situation.

Don't go straight back to business as usual. Together with your team, find your own rituals: For example, a photo of the deceased and flowers could be placed in a prominent place in your organizational unit, or you could display a book of condolence that can later be handed to the surviving relatives.

Create a space and a framework for commemoration, for example by organizing a meeting or a vigil. A minute's silence or similar as part of a staff meeting is also possible.

It is essential that such events are always voluntary, as team members will be affected in different ways. With that in mind, you could schedule the event for the end of a working day.

If you would like to inform TUD members of the death of your colleague, you have the option of submitting the news to the internal web. Please make sure the relatives of the deceased agree before going ahead with any

type of publication. This applies particularly to external communication.

You could also communicate the news by displaying a book of condolence for the deceased in your organizational unit.

If you are considering external communication, a death notice in a daily newspaper is an option (see the following pages). You could also publish a news item on the website of your organizational unit, which would then also be visible to those who are not members of TUD. For this and any further external communication, we recommend that you first come to an agreement within your organizational unit and with the relatives about whether they would like external communication, and if the deceased would have wanted it, too. If so, please consult SG 7.2 to check further ways of communication.

Please contact the ZIH Service Desk regarding handling of work-related and private data on work PCs and laptops of the deceased. They will contact the TUD Data Protection Officer and arrange for the ZIH login to be deactivated. Please note that all data centrally linked to the ZIH login will be deleted no later than 15 months after the ZIH login has been deactivated.

When TUD guests die, the contact person of the deceased is responsible for deactivating the associated ZIH login. In order to do this, the contact person can select the relevant account in the guest administration of the self-service portal and click on the option "Log out guest".

We advise placing personal items left at the workplace of the deceased in a suitable receptacle and then handing this over to the surviving relatives (after a suitable length of time since the death and the funeral has passed).

Together with the close colleagues of the deceased, please consider whether further rituals should be created, for instance recurring vigils on their birthday or the anniversary of their death.

Contact

Press Office

✉ pressestelle@tu-dresden.de

Contact

ZIH

✉ servicedesk@tu-dresden.de

**Download
Circular Letter**

↗ verw.tu-dresden.de/VerwRicht/Sachwort/download.asp?file=rsd10511.pdf

**Download
Guideline Suicidality**

↗ tud.link/1cd9uv

**Contact
SG 3.2 Internal Service**

✉ innerer.dienst@tu-dresden.de

For deceased members of staff and former TUD employees, TUD will facilitate the placement of a death notice in a newspaper. TUD's guidelines regarding death notices, funeral wreaths and financing from central funds can be found in the **current circular** letter.

A loved one ending their life by committing suicide can be a totally unexpected event that raises questions and complications that other types of death do not. A **handout on coping with suicidal tendencies** is also available.

Here are the essentials of the circular letter in brief:

The death notice or obituary

- should appear in a newspaper named by the surviving relatives that is in circulation at the place of residence or work of the deceased. The size of the notice is specified, and should contain a short text of remembrance and solidarity.

Regarding the funeral wreath:

- Ribbon color: TUD corporate color HKS 41, imprint in silver (if ribbon color is not possible, please use Saxon state colors green and white)
- Examples for the text: "In respectful/silent memory", "In grateful remembrance", "In memory of..."...TU Dresden (plus name of organizational unit, if applicable)
- Arrangement:
Right ribbon: TUD Dresden University of Technology
Left ribbon: e.g. "In respectful memory"...
- Cost ceiling: May to October EUR 100 / November to April EUR 150

Financing of obituaries; wreath and monetary donations

TUD (excluding Faculty of Medicine):

a) Obituaries in the form of a death notice in a newspaper are to be financed **centrally and decentrally in equal halves** by the Faculties and the Central Units. For this purpose, the cost coverage declaration for obituaries must be enclosed when the order is placed.

b) Wreath and monetary donations can be financed from central funds. The invoice is to be placed on the accompanying invoice sheet under cost center 9530271G, G/L account 659900.

Authorized persons who have initiated the order (e.g. the organizational unit itself in the case of wreath donations) are responsible for the order being mathematically and factually correct.

Faculty of Medicine

In coordination with the Dean's Office from central faculty funds.

**Download
Cost Coverage Declaration**

↗ verw.tu-dresden.de/VerwRicht/Formulare/download.asp?file=Kostenuebernahmeerklaerung_Nachruf.pdf

Who needs to be informed if a colleague, a visiting professor or a student passes away?

Contact

Directorate 2

Employees covered by collective bargaining agreements:

✉ sachgebiet2.2@tu-dresden.de

University lecturers:

✉ sachgebiet2.1@tu-dresden.de

Administration civil servants:

✉ sachgebiet2.2@tu-dresden.de

Trainees:

✉ sachgebiet2.4@tu-dresden.de

Contact

Admissions Office

✉ servicecenter.studium@tu-dresden.de

Contact

International Office

✉ international@tu-dresden.de

Kontakt

Zentrale Studienberatung

✉ studienberatung@tu-dresden.de

In the event of the death of a member of staff/trainee:

— Directorate Personnel. The colleagues advise surviving relatives regarding possible claims to death benefits, compensation for vacation entitlements and the settlement of benefits for surviving relatives from the occupational pension scheme.

In the event of the death of a visiting professor:

— Directorate Personnel, Unit 2.1, insofar as the contract was concluded via Directorate Personnel, irrespective of the nationality of the deceased

— In addition, the body supervising the program, e.g. the International Office in the case of the Dresden Fellowship Program and the Eleonore Trefftz Program

In the event of the death of a student

— The Admissions Office or the International Office in Directorate 8

— darüber hinaus das Dezernat Personal, Sachgebiet 2.4, wenn es sich um eine studentische oder wissenschaftliche Hilfskraft handelt.

The Admissions Office or the International Office will check the details after the death has been reported and will then ask for proof, usually the death certificate. Under certain circumstances, the semester fee can be refunded to the surviving relatives. The Admissions Office or the International Office will arrange for a letter of condolence, signed by the Rector, to be sent to the surviving relatives.

If students suffer delays in their degree program due to the death of a relative or have difficulties with their studies in general, they can contact the **Central student information and counseling service in Directorate 8**. At the counseling service, there is always an opportunity to address the topics of death and grief.

Reporting procedure in the event of a death while working:

Witness/person who finds the deceased informs

→ superiors

→ the university management and

→ the police (☎110)



Further contacts and addresses

For advice on coping with grief, **all members of staff** and managers can turn to TUD's psychologically trained colleagues and the **medical officers of TUD's occupational health services** (Counseling in German and English).

The **Psychosocial Counseling Center of the Studentenwerk Dresden** provides advice and support (in German) for **students**. Crisis appointments can be arranged, which are also open to study groups, friends of the deceased or co-residents of shared flats.

Outside TUD, you can contact the following facilities:

- The [City of Dresden's Psychosocial Crisis Service](#) is available to all residents (Counseling in German and English).
- You can also find **a list compiled by the City of Dresden** including various services on the subject of grief, such as groups for mourners or counseling options, here:

Telefonseelsorge

- You can reach the Crisis Hotline (in German) at:
☎ 0800/111 0 111 und ☎ 0800/111 0 222
- International telephone helplines (in a wide variety of languages) via the link on the right.

Contact

Gesundheitsdienst

➤ tu-dresden.de/tu-dresden/gesundheitsmanagement/ansprechpartnerinnen

Contact

Studentenwerk

✉ psb@studentenwerk.dresden.de
➤ studentenwerk-dresden.de/soziales/psychosoziale-beratung.html

Contact

Dresden Crisis Service

➤ dresden.de/de/rathaus/aemter-und-einrichtungen/oe/dborg/stadt_dresden_6636.php

Contact

Grief Counseling Dresden

➤ dresden.de/de/leben/gesellschaft/senioren/lebensende/trauer.php

Contact

International Crisis Hotline

➤ telefonseelsorge.de/international-helplines/

Kontakt

TU Dresden
Directorate 9 – University Culture
01062 Dresden

✉ dezernat9@tu-dresden.de

➤ tu-dresden.de/tod-trauer

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➤ tu-dresden.de/tod-trauer