

Reportable Incidents Policy

Brief Description & Purpose:	The Reportable Incidents Policy and its accompanying Procedure support the timely, relevant reporting and escalation of serious incidents for senior management attention. It clarifies the types of incidents and events that need to be reported to Executive management and/or Governors, or which may require reporting to an external body (e.g. regulator), and the expected escalation process and timescales.		
Applicable to (list cohorts):	Staff: All staff, governors and co-opted Board Committee members	Students: Not applicable	Third Parties: All who are in a formal relationship with the University
Effective From:	8 June 2020	Last Review Date:	January 2023
Approval Authority:	Audit Committee	Approved:	27 February 2023
Executive Owner:	Georgina Bailes	Business Owner:	Jack Taylor
Next review date	December 2025	Publication External Y/N	Y

1. Introduction

1.1 The University strives to maintain high standards and to operate within a culture of integrity, openness, transparency, and accountability. Incidents that result in, or could have resulted in, serious consequences or which suggest that internal controls may not have operated as intended, are reported within the framework set out in this Policy and the associated Procedures. The vast majority of incidents which occur in the course of University business are minor, localised and contained in their impact and are normally resolved through local management action. The focus of this Policy is on incidents which are more serious in nature and may require reporting to a regulator or other external agency.

1.2 Within the overall heading of reportable incidents, notifiable incidents are those which must be reported to an external agency, and reportable events are specific types of notifiable incidents which must be notified to the Office for Students (OfS) within specified timescales. See section 6, Definitions and section 6.3, Office for Students Reportable Events.

1.3 The University's approach to preventing, dealing with and/or mitigating the impact of such incidents is contained within a range of other Policies as detailed in the Procedure and is not covered here.

1.4 The University is regarded as a public authority for the purpose of compliance with legislation. It is subject to a range of regulatory conditions and legislation: the Office for Students (OfS) is the primary regulator, but the University is also subject to regulatory and legislative oversight from a number of other statutory and professional bodies, (e.g. the Health and Safety Executive, the Information Commissioner). As an exempt charity, the University is subject to charity legislation via the OfS. There are associated statutory and/or regulatory requirements to report certain incidents to these bodies, which may choose to exercise their powers of inspection and, where deemed appropriate, sanction.

2. Policy Detail

2.1 This Policy applies to all incidents and events arising from, or connected with, University activities undertaken in the UK or overseas. This may include incidents or events connected with partners or contractors in a formal relationship with the University.

2.2 The Policy does not apply to the Students' Union, a separate legal entity, but the Students' Union may utilise this Policy if it became aware of a serious incident that raised concerns, and should notify the Director of Governance in such cases.

2.3 This Policy is not to be used for complaints about a service or system or individual for which separate procedures apply.

2.4 The University adopts a proportionate approach to managing reportable incidents. Transparency and accountability are key: escalating potential or known adverse incidents and acting on the information relayed are critical to the success of this Policy. Reporting such incidents will never lead to criticism or disadvantage. Full detail on reporting incidents is provided in the Reportable Incidents Procedure on page 5.

2.5 Reportable Incidents

2.5.1 The wide range of circumstances of adverse occurrences can present difficulties when assessing whether escalation is required and how quickly this should happen. The following characteristics or events are likely to be classed as 'reportable':

- breaches of legal, regulatory or University Policy requirements, including those that may require reporting to public authorities (e.g. the Police), regulators or inspectors;
- alleged or suspected criminal activity;
- any incident which has significantly compromised or disrupted the delivery of University activities (e.g. which requires triggering the Business Continuity Plan or results in the likelihood of a KPI not being achieved);
- likely or known significant financial loss to the University, and a resulting need to make unexpected and/or significant financial provision as a result;
- credible and significant legal or insurance claims to be made against the University, or by the University against a third party;
- any incidents that suggest serious internal control weaknesses;
- matters which have or are likely to attract significant adverse media interest;
- serious issues affecting a significant partner or contractor (e.g. insolvency, significant business difficulties).

2.5.2 All such incidents that cannot be dealt with within the Faculty or Service's normal structures and arrangements should be reported to the Director of Governance via normal line management channels within two days, and will be investigated. Refer to the Reportable Incidents Procedure on page 5 for full details of the escalation steps.

2.5.3 It is recognised that certain types of serious incidents are subject to related University Policies and Procedures which specify the expected reporting and escalation routes; where these are serious, these will normally be classed as reportable to the Director of Governance in addition to other role-holder(s) as defined in the relevant Policy. These Policies are listed in the Reportable Incidents Procedure on page 6.

2.5.4 All escalation will be carried out with due regard to the need to preserve confidentiality and restrict the sharing of sensitive information, in line with relevant legislative or regulatory requirements.

2.5.5 The Audit Committee will receive at each meeting a report summarising any current reportable incidents, including the status of the incident and actions taken to ensure appropriate controls are in place.

2.5.6 Remedial measures or lessons learned arising from reportable incidents will be implemented promptly to ensure the University learns from such incidents and improves

internal controls as required. There may be occasions when the University defers implementation of actions due to external advice or the conclusion of any further outcomes.

2.5.7 The University is required to produce an annual Statement on Internal Control ('SIC') within its Financial Statements. Since reportable incidents may highlight weaknesses in internal control systems, the University Executive and Audit Committee will use relevant information about these incidents to inform judgements on the adequacy of the internal control environment and make reference to these judgements within the SIC.

2.6 Exceptions to Reporting Procedure

2.6.1 The reporting routes above and the steps set out in section 2.2 of the Reportable Incidents Procedure may exceptionally be varied where a known or suspected reportable incident must be reported confidentially, or reporting via the Procedure may jeopardise the integrity of an investigation or breach data protection requirements. For example, suspected Money Laundering incidents must be reported directly and confidentially between the [Money Laundering Reporting Officer](#) and the National Crime Agency (NCA). Where possible, the Director of Governance will report such incidents retrospectively to University Executive and Audit Committee once the matter is concluded.

3. Roles and Responsibilities

Role	Responsibility
Responsible manager	The relevant senior officer with operational or strategic responsibility for the specific area in which the incident has occurred
"Lead Specialist" within the University	A designated professional at the University, normally acting as a specialist advisor (e.g. on health and safety, research ethics, security, financial controls) within one of the University's Professional Services or the individual with relevant specialist knowledge in the Faculties.
Responsible member of the University Executive	The individual role-holder with ultimate responsibility for the specific Faculty, Professional Service area or portfolio in which the incident has occurred. (NB: On some occasions an incident may span the responsibility of more than one member of the University Executive).
Director of Governance	The key point of contact to whom reportable incidents should always be reported formally and who is responsible for managing and overseeing the reporting process set out in section 2.2 of the Procedure. The Director of Governance as Executive Owner of the Reportable Incidents Policy is responsible for ensuring that it is kept up to date and properly communicated throughout the University.
University Executive	The University Executive is collectively responsible for the assessment

	of the wider strategic, reputational, legal, compliance and resource implications of a reportable incident, and the actions required to ensure its proper handling.
Vice-Chancellor's Chief of Staff	The Vice-Chancellor's Chief of Staff will administer the notification process for any Reportable Events to OfS and will liaise with the Vice-Chancellor and Chief Strategy Officer, as appropriate. The Director of Governance will act as deputy when required.
The Audit Committee (or its Chair)	Audit Committee (or its Chair) will seek relevant assurances from the Vice-Chancellor and University Executive that the incident is being managed and has been resolved.
The Board of Governors	Board of Governors will receive and respond to the opinion of the Audit Committee in relation to a significant incident. It will also provide a steer or challenge to the University Executive on strategic, reputational, legal, compliance and resource implications of an incident.

4. Definitions

4.1 Reportable incidents - known or potentially serious or adverse incidents or events which warrant reporting to a more senior level within the University and may require reporting to Governors and/or an external body. These will normally be connected to University activities or reputation, either on campus or off-site, or connected with a University student or partner body. See section 3.5 above.

4.1 Notifiable incidents - reportable incidents and events for which there is an additional requirement, or where University senior officers have taken the decision, to notify external bodies such as regulators, funders or statutory authorities.

4.2 Reportable events - specific types of notifiable incident which must be notified to the Office for Students (OfS) within specified timescales. The OfS uses information about "reportable events" alongside other indicators to inform its judgement about the University's compliance with the ongoing conditions of registration and its assessment of the University's risk status.

4.3 Paragraph 494 of the [OfS regulatory framework](#) defines a reportable event:

A reportable event is any event or matter that, in the reasonable judgement of the OfS, negatively affects or could negatively affect:

- a. The provider's eligibility for registration with the OfS.
- b. The provider's ability to comply with its conditions of registration.
- c. The provider's eligibility for degree awarding powers, or its ability to comply with the criteria for degree awarding powers, where the provider:
 - (i) holds degree awarding powers; or
 - (ii) has submitted an application for degree awarding powers to the OfS, and for which the OfS has yet to reach a final decision.
- d. The provider's eligibility for university title, where the provider:
 - (i) holds university title; or
 - (ii) has submitted an application for university title to the OfS, and for which the OfS has yet to reach a final decision.

In interpreting 'the reasonable judgement of the OfS', the OfS will, as a matter of policy, consider whether a reasonable provider intent on complying with all of its conditions of registration and acting in the interests of students and taxpayers (rather than in its own commercial, reputational or other interests), would consider the event or matter to be material.

4.4 Detailed guidance on reportable events is available from OfS at [Regulatory advice 16: Reportable events \(officeforstudents.org.uk\)](https://www.officeforstudents.org.uk/regulatory-advice-16-reportable-events). Key elements of this are summarised in the Reportable Incidents Procedure on page 5

4.5 The University's Accountable Officer (the Vice-Chancellor and Chief Executive) maintains oversight of the reporting of Reportable Events.

5. Related Policies, Procedures and Other Resources

The following relevant policies and procedures are available on the [University Policy Page](#)

- Safeguarding Policy
- Prevent Policy Statement
- Public Interests Disclosure (Whistleblowing) Policy
- Counter Fraud and Bribery Policy
- Health and Safety Policy
- Anti-Money Laundering Policy
- Disclosure and Management of Conflicts of Interest Policy

University Business Continuity Plan

Incident Management Plan

Business Continuity Policy

[Online training courses – GDPR, Prevent Duty, Safeguarding](#)

Data breach Policy and Procedure

Death of a Student Procedure

Death and Major Injuries under the RIDDOR regulations

6. Version

Version No.	Reviewer	Date	Changes
1.0	Susan O'Donnell	8 June 2020	
2.0	Georgina Bailes, Richard Elliott, Jack Taylor	1 February 2023	Policy format change, updated OfS definitions reflected, reporting procedure clarified, minor amendments to wording, links added
2.1	Clare Stogden	2 August 2024	Minor amendments to titles and formatting