

Imperial College London

Imperial College London Missing Student Policy

The purpose of this document is to set out a process to ensure that Imperial College London has effective and proportionate response to any student reported or suspected of being missing.

Definition of a “Missing Person” by the Association of Chief Police Officers (ACPO):

‘Anyone whose whereabouts is unknown, whatever the circumstances of the disappearance, will be considered missing until located and their well-being or otherwise established.’

Objectives of the process:

- The preservation of life
- To identify clear lines of responsibility in the event that a student is suspected to be or reported as missing
- To explain how to investigate the report of a student suspected as being missing efficiently and to identify the most appropriate course of action
- To minimise any distress to the student’s family, dependants and friends
- Ensure efficient liaison with the police service and other institutions where appropriate
- To detail how to capture, record and update accurate information

Deeming a student as “missing”:

All staff and students should be encouraged to report as missing any Imperial student or colleague if their whereabouts are unknown and for whom they hold concerns for their health, wellbeing or safety.

Persons a student could be reported missing to:

- A member of academic staff
- A member of Residential Support/Services staff (if in halls)
- A counsellor, chaplain or Student Hub advisor
- Security staff
- Faculty Senior Tutor
- The Director of Student Service
- The Academic Registrar

When a student is reported missing via any of these routes and they are not already aware the Director of Student Services and Academic Registrar will be informed.

Ownership:

A single point of contact, usually the Director of Student Services, Academic Registrar or alternate (Faculty Senior Tutor) will coordinate initial actions. This will ensure all information captured is collated in one place to ensure an efficient and effective handover to the Police Service if required and inform future knowledge for any similar events involving the same person.

Initial investigations:

The list of information required and directed actions set out below are for guidance, they are in no way prescriptive, every investigation may require differing actions and tactics.

1. Attempt to make contact with the student using mobile phone, email or other media platforms such as What's app. If there is no answer, leave a message raising the College's concern for their safety and asking them to make contact on a specific number. Also set out that they will be reported as missing with the police within a specific timeline.
2. Ask Security team to put a trace on the student's ID card to identify and monitor recent and future movements.
3. If the student resides in a hall of residence, their room is to be entered and searched for them or any information that could assist in finding them. This should be undertaken by Residential Services/Support staff accompanied by a member of Security staff. If the person is later reported as missing to the Police, they will also likely further search the room.
4. The Director of Student Services, Academic Registrar and/or Faculty Senior Tutor are to be made aware of potential missing persons in every case if not already involved. The Director of Student Services or any of the above, will then inform other parties including the Warden (if in halls), the Head of Residential Services, the Head of Security, the Head of Department and the Vice-Provost (Education) as deemed necessary. Those contacted will be responsible for informing those in their own chain of command as appropriate.
5. Academic leads, Faculty Senior Tutors, Post Graduate Tutors or Heads of Department need to be spoken with in-case they hold any information relevant to the missing person's actions linked to their course.
6. Attempts should be made to obtain any detail known of the student's medical history especially in areas such as self-harm and the suffering of any form of mental illness.
7. Ascertain if there are any known issues known concerning the use of drink or drugs (whether controlled or prescribed.)
8. Assess whether this behaviour/conduct is out of the ordinary, i.e.: have they gone missing previously.
9. Obtain all personal information:
 - Full name
 - Date of birth
 - Full address
 - Any mobile phone number and/or land line number
 - All known email addresses
 - Next of Kin emergency contact details
 - Course enrolled on and current status
 - Contact details for friends
 - Any known social media contact points

10. Collect all relevant history:
 - When and where were they last seen
 - Who were they last seen with
 - What is the particular concern for their safety?
 - What is known about their state of mind, health and wellbeing
 - What, if any actions have been undertaken by anyone else to trace them
 - Are their family or next of kin aware?
11. Consideration for contacting the next of kin will be made by the Director of Student Services, Faculty Senior Tutor or their nominee.
12. Report the student missing to the Police. Use the 101 non-emergency number, this decision would be made by the Director of Student Services / Senior Faculty Tutor or their nominee based on risk. If, however, it is felt there is an immediate high risk to the student from the information held, the Police should be contacted using the emergency number 999 by the Director of Student Services or Senior Faculty Tutor. Out of hours, the Security team will contact the on-call Duty Manager and Senior Faculty Tutor for advice prior to taking any reporting action. The actual task of contacting the police will usually be undertaken by a member of the security team.
13. If it is confirmed that the police are formally investigating a missing person report either the Director of Student Services, the Faculty Senior Tutor or appropriate delegate will request the formation of an incident management group in line with the College's Crisis Management procedures.
14. The Director of Student Services/ Academic Registrar will consider the facts and if it is thought appropriate and necessary will inform the College International office.
15. The Director of Student Services/ Academic Registrar will consider the facts and if it is thought appropriate and necessary will inform the Provost's Office.

Administration

All actions taken and information obtained should be chronologically recorded with dates and times. Details of where the information was obtained and contact numbers should also be recorded. This information will be stored electronically by the Senior Security Investigator.

If the student is found:

The student, if appropriate in the circumstances of finding, should receive a de-briefing with a member of the College Tutor team. This will inform on future support for the individual and may gain useful information on their past whereabouts which could prove an invaluable asset if they were to ever go missing again.

Nigel Ward
Senior Security Crime Investigator.
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