

IMPERIAL

Imperial London Missing Student Policy

The purpose of this document is to set out a process to ensure that Imperial 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 member of staff and student 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
- Community Safety and Security staff
- Faculty Senior Tutors
- Student support services
- The office of the Academic Registrar

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

Ownership:

A single point of contact, usually the Director of Student Support Services, 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 should be made to 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 Imperials 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 the Community Safety and Security team to put a trace on the student's ID card to identify and monitor recent and future movements and review previous use.
3. If the student resides in a hall of residence, their room should be entered and searched for them and or any information that could assist in finding them. This should be undertaken by Residential/Warden team accompanied by a member of Community safety and security team. If the person is later reported as missing to the Police, they will also likely further search the room.
4. The Director of Student Support Services and Senior Faculty Tutor are to be made aware of potential missing persons in every case if not already involved. The Director of Student Support Services or any of the above, will escalate the details of the missing person to all they deem appropriate. Those contacted will be responsible for informing those in their own chain of command as appropriate.
5. Attempts should be made to obtain any detail known of the student's medical history especially in areas such as self-harm or any history of mental illness or significant risk.
6. Ascertain if there are any known issues known concerning the use of drink or drugs (whether controlled or prescribed).
7. Assess whether this behaviour/conduct is out of the ordinary, i.e.: have they gone missing previously.
8. 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

9. 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?
10. Consideration for contacting the next of kin will be made by the Director of Student Support Services, Senior Faculty Tutor or their nominee.
11. Report the student missing to the Police. Use the 101 non-emergency number, this decision will be made by the Director of Student Support Services / Senior Faculty Tutor / Department lead 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 any member of staff. Out of hours, the Community Safety and Security team will contact the on-call Duty Manager and Senior Faculty Tutor for advice prior to taking any reporting action.

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.

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
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