

3. University Staff wishing to contact Third Parties

- 3.1 Students are requested at registration to give the name of their next of kin (usually a parent) for use **in emergency situations only**.
- 3.2 Advice should always be sought from the **Registrar and/or Vice-President** before making contact with next of kin. An emergency may be considered to exist where it appears that serious harm may occur to the student or to other people, or where serious concern is expressed by a third party that a student may have disappeared.
- 3.3 If it appears that an emergency situation exists and that contact with a third party is (necessary or desirable) warranted, permission to make contact should be asked of the student, if practicable.
- 3.4 In emergency situations where permission is withheld/not given by a student apparently against his or her best interest (e.g. after admission to hospital), the **Registrar and/or Vice-President** will decide how to proceed.
- 3.5 Contact with the next of kin nominated by students is **not warranted** in the following cases:
- a) to pursue outstanding fees,
 - b) to check on a student's whereabouts,
 - c) to discuss cases of breaches of the code of discipline, fundraising, publicizing events or facilities on campus, or unacceptable behaviour.
- 3.6 The issue of contacting next of kin where a student dies is already covered in the University's Document, "Protocol on Student Death."
- 3.7 In dealing with International students studying in the University and University students studying abroad, contact with Study Abroad agents and partner institution should take place only in the manner, and be limited to that, stipulated in the agreement with the relevant agent or institution.

CONTACT WITH THIRD PARTIES

UNIVERSITY CODE OF PRACTICE

NUI MAYNOOTH

2002

1 General Principles

- 1.1 The University has entered into an individual relationship with every person who has become a student and has arranged to pursue his or her further education in the University. Each student of NUI Maynooth has entered into an individual arrangement to further his/her education with the University. No other person is a party to these individual arrangements.
- 1.2 In this policy document “Third Party” means any person(s) other than the University and the student.
- 1.3 All information held by (any office or department) the University about a student (e.g., name, address, date of birth, attendance or disciplinary record, examination results, academic progress, fees paid or due to the University) is **confidential**. This provision applies irrespective of the nature of system on which any information is held, manual or electronic.
- 1.4 Every student is entitled to confidentiality about his or her affairs regardless of his or her age (and of whether he or she has any disability).
- 1.5 There are five exceptions to this confidentiality:
 - a) In cases of emergency as provided for in section 3;
 - b) In cases where the student has given express permission in writing;
 - c) When, in accordance with legislation, student data is provided on a confidential basis to the Department of Social, Community and Family Affairs for the purpose of identifying possible abuses of the Social Welfare System;
 - d) When a written signed request is made by the Garda Síochana stating that the information is needed to prevent, detect or investigate a criminal offence.
 - e) Where relevant information has already been made public in a lawful manner and the University is requested to confirm it.

- 1.6 Inappropriate disclosure of student data in response to contact from third parties can be a breach of the **Data Protection Act** or other legislation.
- 1.7 All mailings to students (e.g. posting of examination results) are to be marked confidential and sealed.
- 1.8 Student data must never be published in such a way as to make individual students identifiable.
- 1.9 This code applies to and is binding on all University employees (staff members).

2 Contact Initiated by Third Parties

- 2.1 It is not University policy to contact a student on the basis of a request from a third party, and a third party who contacts the University to express concern about the welfare of a student should be so informed.
- 2.2 Subject to the provision of section 1.5 (b, c, and d) a third party must not be given a student’s address or telephone number. However, where a third party is seeking to contact a student, it is appropriate to ask the third party (if it is not already clear) whether the matter is urgent (and likely to be of immediate personal concern to the student) (e.g. a serious illness or the death of a family member or relative). In such cases it may be in order to provide such contact details, with appropriate safeguards (e.g. telephoning an identified person back at the given number rather than giving information in the course of the initial call).
- 2.3 A third party who contacts the University to make a complaint on behalf of a student should be informed that a complaint can be considered only when it is made (directly) by the student in question.
- 2.4 Any third party who contacts the University, should be treated with courtesy, tact, sensitivity, diplomacy and patience at all times.