

Giving in memory and reflection

Guidelines for supporting philanthropy in memory of a deceased student, member of staff, alumnus/na or friend of the University of York, and requests for physical memorials on campus.

1. Introduction and background

The Office of Philanthropic Partnerships and Alumni (OPPA) recognises that the desire to raise money in memory of a loved one is a common response to a death, and that, when a student, member of staff or alumnus/na of the University of York dies, family and friends sometimes wish to raise funds for causes at the University that are close to the interests of the deceased. People with no previous connection to the University may also wish to donate or fundraise in memory of a loved one if there is a cause here that they have a connection to. We also recognise that this is a very personal choice and not for everyone.

Historically, OPPA has regularly been asked to take a role in the University's responses to the deaths of students, members of staff and alumni, and this has usually been prompted when a desire is expressed to fundraise in memory of the deceased and/or to establish a physical place of memory on campus. The nature and extent of this involvement, and the members of staff involved within OPPA, have been ad hoc and variable depending on the circumstances of particular cases.

In 2016, OPPA established a formal 'Tribute Giving' programme, which gave the family and/or friends of deceased students, staff, alumni and friends the opportunity to dedicate a bronze leaf in someone's memory to be placed on campus in an area known as the 'Quiet Place' and/ or to have a tree planted in Diamond Wood. A donation was requested to cover the cost of the memorial, with the remainder of the funds being used to support the York Futures Scholarships. This programme was paused in early 2020 in order to review the offer and to align activity with wider University policy.

We now recognise the need to provide a framework for memorial giving, and the purpose of these guidelines is to clarify how OPPA should respond when a death of a member of the University community occurs, who is responsible for coordinating that response, and what level of support and advice the team should offer.

It is acknowledged that a response cannot be prescribed for these situations, and that flexibility and sensitivity must be deployed at all times. This document is intended to serve only as a guide.

2. Death of a current student

The University has published [guidelines](#) (January 2024) for how the institution should respond when a current student dies.

OPPA should play a role in this process only when the family and/or friends of the student express a desire to raise funds for the University, or to make a donation, in their memory.

The University's guidelines advise that there should be a single point of contact with the family. Once this person is identified, it is the responsibility of the Legacy and In Memory Manager to make contact with them and inform them that OPPA is there to support any fundraising or other memorial initiatives, and to ask if any contact from OPPA would be appreciated by the family.

The Legacy and In Memory Manager (acting through the Single Point of Contact if appropriate) will then manage any contact according to the following guidelines:

- The Legacy and In Memory Manager will act as the point of contact within OPPA, unless there is a known connection to another member of the team.
- If friends and / or family members wish to run an appeal to raise funds in memory of the deceased, YuStart should be suggested as the best platform for this.
- The Legacy and In Memory Manager will work with the Philanthropy Officer (Community Giving) to support the family in setting up an appeal.
- The family may have specific wishes for the use of funds raised, and the priority is to meet these wishes where possible. OPPA's role is to sensitively advise along the following principles:
 - The purpose of the appeal should be clearly defined before it is created, and agreed with the relevant department, college, society etc. Normal University processes for sign off and approval of new activity will be adhered to throughout.
 - The appeal should run for a fixed period of time, and the funds raised in that time should be spent within an agreed period of time (ideally one year).
 - If the appeal is to support students, the University of Opportunity or Mentally Fit York could be suggested as recommended funds.
 - If the family/friends wish to support a specific department, a bursary or prize is recommended. Ideally this would be set up to run for one academic year only, and for all the money to be awarded within that year. OPPA can support departments with setting this up.
 - Flexibility should be employed throughout this process in response to the family's wishes.

3. Death of a current member of staff

It is the responsibility of the Legacy and In Memory Manager to make contact with HR and/or the relevant department and inform them that OPPA is there to support any fundraising or other memorial initiatives, and to ask if any contact from OPPA would be appreciated by the family.

If contact would be appreciated by the family, the Legacy and In Memory Manager (acting through the Single Point of Contact if appropriate) will then manage any contact according to the following

guidelines:

- The Legacy and In Memory Manager will act as the point of contact within OPPA, unless there is a known connection to another member of the team.
- If friends and / or family members wish to run an appeal to raise funds in memory of the deceased, YuStart should be suggested as the best platform for this.
- The Legacy and In Memory Manager will work with the Philanthropy Officer (Community Giving) to support the family in setting up an appeal.
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 - The purpose of the appeal should be clearly defined before it is created, and agreed with the relevant department, college, society etc. Normal University processes for sign off and approval of new activity will be adhered to throughout.
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 - If the appeal is to support students, the University of Opportunity or Mentally Fit York could be suggested as recommended funds.
 - If the family/friends wish to support a specific department, a bursary or prize is recommended. Ideally this would be set up to run for one academic year only, and for all the money to be awarded within that year. OPPA can support departments with setting this up.
 - Flexibility should be employed throughout this process in response to the family's wishes.

4. Death of an alumnus or retired member of staff

The Legacy team will continue to respond to death notifications via the post, telephone or Alumni inbox.

Any queries about making a donation or fundraising in memory of a deceased alumni should be initially referred to the Legacy and In Memory Manager, who will follow the same process as for the death of a student or member of staff (Sections 2 and 3).

5. Current position re. memorials on campus

The area currently defined as a tribute garden within the Quiet Place is accessible through a gate requiring an access code which is known by the Legacy team and can be given out on request. The current leaf sculpture has space for an additional 6 leaves, however, the Legacy team will add an additional structure in late 2024/ early 2025 to accommodate more leaves. Currently, the production of the leaves can only be done by one individual (Mark Bentley in the Biology Workshop), who agreed to take this on as a favour to OPPA. A review should be considered for a more sustainable option in the future.

Diamond Wood is an option for memorial tree planting. Diamond Wood is an area of new native woodland celebrating the Queen's 60 year reign. So far, more than 17,000 native British trees have been planted in Diamond Wood. Together they will attract a broad range of insect and bird

life and form a tranquil setting for the York community to enjoy for generations to come. A growing number of the trees planted in Diamond Wood (on Kimberlow Hill on Campus East) celebrate the lives and occasions of students, alumni, staff and friends who are part of the University of York community. This 24 hectare Woodland Trust site was chosen in 2012 as one of just 60 Diamond Woods in the UK, and the only one in North Yorkshire.

You can choose your tree from a selection of 25 species native to Britain. The tree will be planted in the appropriate season and managed by our experienced Estates team. The Legacy and In Memory Manager is the first point of contact for arranging an in memory tree. There is no option for a plaque but there is an interpretation board and seating area which creates a peaceful and dedicated location to remember those who are no longer with us.

6. Support for staff working on In Memorial projects

It is recognised that working with bereaved family members and friends can be emotionally challenging. Staff can contact the employee assistance programme, [Health Assured](#), which offers independent, free and completely confidential telephone support, online resources and, where appropriate, face-to-face counselling, to support their health and well-being. Counsellors are available 24 hours a day, 365 days a year.

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1.1	14/06/22	MH, CW	Introduction and background and information for support for staff working on In Memorial projects added.
1.2			Introduction and background and information for support for staff working on In Memorial projects

			added.
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