Emergency contact protocol

1. All students are asked to provide details of an emergency contact when registering for their course. This information will be held on the relevant University student record system, (e.g. Saturn), in accordance with the University's Policy On The Release Of Personal Information On Present And Former Students Of The University and in accordance with the Data Protection Act 1998.

2. Students can nominate anyone they choose to be their emergency contact - it need not necessarily be their legal next of kin. Students should, however, let that person know that they have been nominated as the emergency contact and that they have given the University that person's details.

3. Emergency contact details will only be used very rarely by the University. Wherever possible, the permission of the student will be sought prior to the University getting in touch with the emergency contact.

4. If it is not possible for consent to be obtained (eg. because the student is incapable or unconscious) or if permission is denied, in very exceptional circumstances the University may still go ahead and use the emergency contact details. This is most likely to be when there are serious concerns for the welfare of the individual student. Examples of circumstances when a decision might possibly be made to get in touch with the emergency contact may include:

* admission to hospital (NB. The University is not always aware when a student has been admitted to hospital)
* serious illness (including psychiatric illness)
* when a student is 'missing'.

5. In all cases where the consent of the individual student has not been obtained, a decision to get in touch with the emergency contact will be taken by the Registrar (or by a senior member of the Registrar's Department) or by a Hall Warden. If any other member of staff considers that there is a need to get in touch with a students' emergency contact (and the individual student has not given permission) they should in the first instance discuss the case with the Registrar.

6. The contact will be made by the Registrar personally or by a senior member of staff of his Department.

7. For students who are under eighteen years old, the University is obliged to contact the student's parent/guardian in certain circumstances. In any such case a decision to make contact will be made by the Registrar or by a senior member of his department nominated for this purpose.

8. Where there has been a death, it is usually the responsibility of the police to contact the next of kin. In accordance with the policy on the release of personal information the University might provide emergency contact details to the police but would not normally be involved in the initial, direct contact with the next of kin.