

POLICY DOCUMENT

CRITICAL INCIDENT POLICY AND PROCEDURES

1 Purpose and Scope

The purpose of this policy and its related documents is to identify the personnel, structures and procedures for managing a critical incident.

Providers of education to international students are required by legislation to have documented critical incident policy and procedures, which outline the action to be taken in the event of critical incident. This includes the initial response, follow-up, reporting, review and improvement.

Scope:

- All full time and part time staff, casual, contract and contract academic staff
- All students (domestic and international)
- All visitors

2 Policy Statement

2.1 Critical Incident

A **Critical Incident** is any sudden or progressive development (event) which requires immediate attention and decisive action to prevent/minimise any negative impact on the health and welfare of one or more individuals. Critical incidents may include (but are not limited to) events such as:

- Death/suicide
- Attempted suicide, self-harm
- Serious accident or life threatening injury/illness
- An absent or 'missing' international student whereby the student has not attended class and is not contactable for a certain period of time
- Deprivation of liberty, threats of violence, assault, rape/sexual assault, aggravated burglary, biological or chemical weapons
- Domestic violence

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- Child protection matter
- Fire, bomb, explosion, gas/chemical hazards, discharge of firearms
- Natural disaster
- Threat of widespread infection or contamination
- Civil unrest
- Serious damage to essential facilities
- Disruption to operations of the College
- Information which has the potential to negatively affect the reputation of the College in the media and/or wider community
- Any critical incident affecting students off campus while representing the College.

Where College staff witness an event that may be considered a critical incident, or where staff are aware of an event which may either indicate or escalate to a critical incident, the *Critical Incident Procedures* below must be followed.

The following table provides a guide to determining the severity of critical incidents:

Level of risk:	Determined by:	Examples:
SEVERE (Emergency services required)	CEO and Dean or Director of Student Services and Campus Wellbeing or Heads of Department (HoD)	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Death, suicide or threat of suicide, or life-threatening injury • Deprivation of liberty, threats of violence, assault, rape/sexual assault, aggravated burglary, use of firearms, biological or chemical weapons • Fire, bomb, explosion, gas/chemical hazards, discharge of firearms • Threat of widespread infection or contamination • Natural disaster
SIGNIFICANT (Emergency Services required)	CEO and Dean or Director of Student Services and Campus Wellbeing or Heads of Departments (HoD)	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Severe occupational health and safety risk • Serious injury incurred by staff/student • 'Missing' international student • Child protection matter • Violent behaviour • Burns/alcohol/overdose/poisoning • Activity where evacuation is required
MODERATE (Emergency Services MAY be required)	CEO and Dean or Director of Student Services and Campus Wellbeing or Heads of Departments (HoD)	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • OHS risk • Suspicious package left unattended • IT System crashes • Student suffers epileptic fit or psychological breakdown

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Level of risk:	Determined by:	Examples:
MINOR (Emergency Services NOT required)	All Staff All First Aid Officers	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Minor injury • Plumbing blockages • Phone/Electrical failure • Computer system or network breakdown

2.2 Designated Officer

Any College staff member who is either a witness to, or first to be informed about an actual or potential critical incident is referred to as the 'Designated Officer'.

The Designated Officer is to assume responsibility for alerting the most senior College staff member available as soon as possible who, in turn, will re-assess the situation and convene the Senior Management team if deemed necessary.

The Designated Officer may need to assume temporary control of a critical incident site and assign duties to available persons (such as calling emergency services, alerting other staff, assisting with first aid, crowd control etc.), until such time as relieved by either the Critical Incident Team or Emergency Services.

2.2 Senior Management Team (Critical Incident Team)

The Senior Management Team (SMT) is responsible for managing the College's **response** to any critical incident which is considered to have a severe or significant level of risk or in some cases, moderate level of risk.

This team is convened by the most senior member of staff available at the time of the incident and will convene as soon as possible to plan an immediate response, allocate responsibilities and determine ongoing strategies.

Once the team is convened, the most senior staff member available becomes the **Head of the Critical Incident Team**, or assigns a suitable alternative to head the team.

The team will be composed of the following members of staff:

- CEO and Dean
- Heads of Department (HoDs)
- Director of Student Services and Campus Wellbeing
- Student Engagement and Partnerships Manager
- Compliance Staff Member
- Registrar
- Learning and Teaching Technologist

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- Information Services Librarian
- Others as deemed appropriate by the Head of the Critical Incident Team.

Where Emergency Services assume management of the critical incident, the Critical Incident Team will liaise with the managing body (e.g. Police Service or Fire and Emergency Services) for a coordinated approach to any response activities.

Where the College has assumed management of the critical incident, the Critical Incident Team will consult with and/or take instruction from the CEO and Dean and ANZ Chief Operations Officer as necessary.

2.2.1 Responsibilities of the SMT (Critical Incident Team)

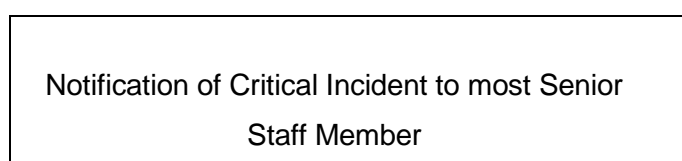
The team's duties include, but are not limited to:

- preparing a *Critical Incident Form* outlining details such as the type of incident, the exact location and details of any person or persons who might be injured, in distress, or at risk.
- reviewing the situation, setting priorities, allocating tasks/responsibilities and coordinating an immediate response including communications (to staff, students, families of those involved, helpers, and the media)
- organising ongoing response/follow up (including staff and student briefing, counselling, review and reporting)
- de-briefing to evaluate response procedures and make recommendations for handling future critical incidents
- Keeping records in the Critical Incident Register (by the CEO and Dean or Compliance Staff Member).

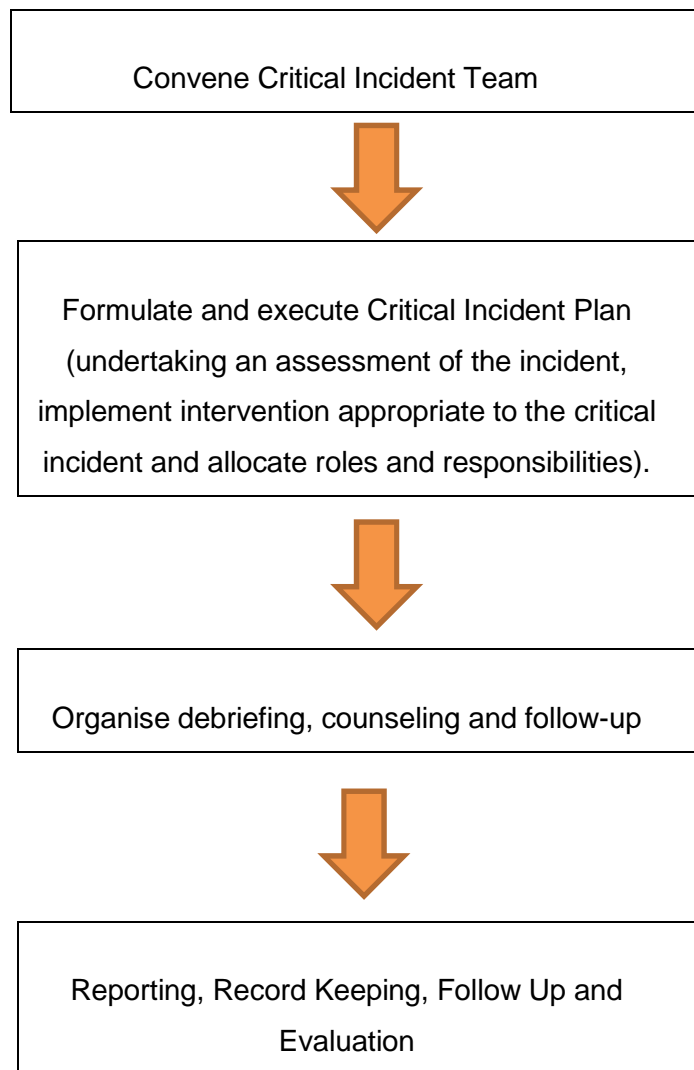
2.3 Procedure

This is summarised in the following diagram:

Critical Incidents Reporting and Procedure Flowchart



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2.4 Confidentiality and Record Keeping

All documentation relating to critical incidents will be kept confidential and shall be disclosed only to those persons who have a right to the information by virtue of their role in the process, to the student life or as required by law. Written records should contain such information as is necessary for others to gain a clear understanding of the grounds upon which an incident was determined and the actions taken to address it.

Records are maintained to protect the rights and interests of all parties, explain and justify the actions of the College and its employees, and document and explain the decision-making of the College.

Details of a critical incident (including a completed *Critical Incident Form* and other evidence) are kept on the ACPE Critical Incident Register, which is maintained by the CEO and Dean and/or a Compliance Staff Member.

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Note: The following section only applies to student visa holders:

2.5 Absent International Students

Where an international student is studying on a **student visa**, the College has a duty of care to ensure the student is safely in Australia and remains compliant with the conditions of their visa (where appropriate). As such, an international student may be classified as 'missing' if:

- The student is newly enrolled in an award course and due to start in their first study period on campus but has not arrived to their first week of classes.
- The student is a continuing student and has not re-enrolled in any subjects for the next study period and has not responded to any contact regarding enrolment by the end of the first week of that study period.
- The continuing student has enrolled in subjects but has not attended any classes on campus for two weeks without notice (at any point in the study period)
- It is brought to the attention of any staff member (academic or operational) that the student may be 'missing' either by another student, agent, or family member.

If an international student is classified as 'missing', the staff member responsible for identifying this situation is to immediately contact the Registry's Office and Compliance team.

Steps will be taken to contact the student directly and could include (but are not limited to):

- Phone calls
- Emails
- Formal written letters
- Home visits to the last known address
- Requesting the agent to contact the student.

If the student's welfare is of concern, the College reserves the right to contact the student's agent, listed next-of-kin and/or emergency contact in order to ensure the student is safe.

An international student who has not responded to any contact during the enrolment period after 7 days, the student will be sent an *Intention to Report to the Department of Home Affairs Notification* (with option to appeal) by the College. If the international student fails to respond to any notification sent by the College regarding their absence and is classified as 'missing', the student will be reported to the *Department of Home Affairs* through the PRISMS database and the student's next-of-kin or the Police may be notified.

3 Definitions

- **International Students** – The College defines an International Student as someone **who is not an** Australian citizen or permanent resident or a New Zealand citizen or a permanent visa holder. This definition includes students studying onshore on a range of temporary visas (working holiday visa, tourist visa, student visa etc.) or offshore as an online student. Information that applies only to students studying on specific visa classes (e.g. Student Visa) is specified when relevant. It should be noted that all international students pay fees specified for international students, regardless of visa subclass.
- **HE** – Higher Education
- **Emergency** - event or circumstance that impacts on a campus' people, operations, and environment which is of a size and complexity that requires a structured response to resolve the situation'. Emergencies require the application of resources beyond that of the initial immediate response and pose higher levels of risk to ACPE.
- **Crisis** - an adverse incident or series of events that have the potential to severely damage the ACPE's people, operations, environment and its long-term prospects and/or reputation. **Health** is the state in which an individual does not suffer from any disease or injuries as a result of work, work activities or the work environment.
- **Safety** is the state in which the risk of harm (to persons), damage to property or the environment is limited to an acceptable level.
- **Student/Learner** is an individual person who is formally enrolled to study at the College. The individual person is that who appears on the College's documents such as enrolment, admission and payment documents, and who is assigned an individual student ID.
- **Study Period** – A "study period" is defined in the National Code as "a discrete period of study" in a course, namely, semester, trimester, short course or as otherwise defined by the College as long as that period does not exceed 24 weeks". This will normally reflect the period during which the student can normally be expected to complete a group of units. A study period may also refer to the delivery period of an online subject.

4 Related Documents

- Risk Management Framework Policy
- Critical Incident Register
- WHS – Student Accident-Incident Notification Form

Legislation:

- Higher Education Standards Framework 2015
- Tertiary Education Quality and Standards Agency Act 2011
- National Code of Practice for Registration Authorities and Providers of Education and Training to Overseas Students 2018
- Work, Health and Safety Act 2011
- Child Protection (Working with Children) Regulation 2013

5 Policy Administration

Policy Name & Code:			Critical Incident Policy and Procedure (POL-14)
Policy Owner:			CEO and Dean
Approval Authority:			Board of Directors. ACPE
Next Review:			September 2023
Approval Date	Effective Date	Version	Summary of changes
10 Aug 17	19 Jul 18	2	Harmonised – fully harmonised for two brands.
11 Dec 18	12 Dec 18	3	Revision date: 31 October 2018 <ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Policy de-harmonised from other SGA brands. • Policy content revised to ensure accuracy and compliance with the HESF and National Code. • Policy format updated in line with the new template used for ACPE policies and procedures. • Job titles and departments updated to reflect current practices.
14 Mar 19	14 Mar 19	3.1	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • References to Dean and Operations Director replaced with CEO and Dean. • References to Student Services and Learning Support Manager replaced with Director of Student Services and Campus Wellbeing.

* Unless otherwise indicated, this policy will still apply beyond the review date.