

# Critical Incident Management Policy

## 1. Purpose

This Policy sets out the framework and principles to support the timely and effective management of Critical Incidents affecting students and staff at UNSW College (College).

This policy meets the requirements and obligations under the *Higher Education Support Act 2003 (Cth)*, and the *Education Services for Overseas Students Act 2000 (Cth)* (the "ESOS Act"), which regulates the delivery of education and training courses to students who come to Australia to study on a student visa.

This Policy further aims to provide a clear communication process when managing critical student incidents.

## 2. Scope

This Policy applies to:

- (a) all domestic and international students enrolled in a College award or non-award program; and
- (b) all College staff.

## 3. Critical Incident Definition

- (a) A Critical Incident is an acute or serious event that has caused immediate physical or psychological harm, or an imminent threat of harm, and requires urgent action.
- (b) Critical Incidents can include, but are not limited to:
  - i. death of a student or staff member;
  - ii. serious injury or serious threat of injury (may include a serious injury or health problem which prevents the student continuing with or completing their course);
  - iii. attempted suicide or self-harm or imminent risk of suicide or self-harm;
  - iv. missing student or staff member;
  - v. U18 student requiring hospitalisation
  - vi. mental health episode requiring involuntary hospitalisation;
  - vii. natural disaster located away from the College;
  - viii. student arrested or detained;
  - ix. assault, including sexual assault, domestic violence or robbery, severe verbal or psychological aggression;
  - x. drug or alcohol abuse; and
  - xi. other serious events involving media attention.

#### 4. Policy statement

The College is committed to ensuring that Critical Incidents are managed compassionately and effectively in a timely manner, and that appropriate resources are available to respond to Critical Incidents. In this context, the following principles apply:

- (a) any person can report a Critical Incident;
- (b) the Senior Manager, Student Wellbeing is the College Critical Incident Response Manager;
- (c) any Critical Incident involving Staff will be reported immediately to the Chief of Staff or nominated delegate to oversee and manage the staff support response plan;
- (d) the College will ensure there are adequate processes, systems and support to manage Critical Incidents effectively and that College staff are suitably trained;
- (e) timely medical treatment, counselling, interpreter services or other support will be arranged as needed and follow-up and ongoing interventions will be provided where necessary;
- (f) where a Critical Incident concerns an international student under 18, the College will take additional steps to ensure the student's care and welfare, including the allocation of dedicated staff to support the student and alternative accommodation if necessary;
- (g) affected students' parents, guardians or next of kin, and affected staff members' emergency contacts or next of kin, will be contacted where appropriate;
- (h) the College will liaise with police, health services and other service providers if required;
- (i) the College Chief Executive Officer will be notified of all Critical Incidents in a timely manner by the Executive Director, Students or nominated member of the Critical Incident Committee;
- (j) the incident and impacted staff and students may be managed in conjunction with other College policies and procedures at the discretion of the Response Manager and Critical Incident Committee.

#### 5. Responses to Critical Incidents

- (a) The College will tailor its response and management of Critical Incidents as per the [Critical Incident Management Procedure](#) and Response Plan, and within the framework of this Policy and other policies that may apply, including:
  - i. [International Students Under 18 Policy](#);
  - ii. [Sexual Assault and Sexual Harassment Policy](#);
  - iii. [Student Health, Safety and Wellbeing Policy](#); and/or
  - iv. [Work Health and Safety Policy](#).
- (b) Where a Critical Incident poses immediate risk to life, contact UNSW 24/7 Security Services on 02 9385 6666, who can arrange and contact emergency services as required.

Further, between 9:00am – 5:00pm, Monday to Friday, students and staff can get immediate support from front line staff at Level 1 of the College L5 Building, or call (02) 8936 2200 or email: [student.support@unswcollege.edu.au](mailto:student.support@unswcollege.edu.au).

- (c) The College has a duty of care for students, regardless of a student's age. In certain circumstances such as hospitalisation, or if the student is believed to be a missing student, the College will contact the student's nominated emergency contact person. In the event the College is unable to reach the nominated emergency contact, the College will endeavour to contact parents or next of kin.
- (d) The College's Critical Incident Committee is alerted as soon as possible to all Critical Incidents. Depending on the nature and complexity of the Critical Incident, the Committee may convene to advise and plan the support responses required;

## 6. Financial Approvals

The Head of Student Experience or Executive Director, Students will approve expenses in relation to the management of Student Critical Incidents, in accordance with the Financial Delegations Register.

## 7. Critical Incident Committee (CIC)

- (a) For the management of Complex Critical Incidents, a Critical Incident Committee is convened and chaired by the Executive Director, Students with membership comprising:
  - i. Executive Director, Students (Chair);
  - ii. Executive Director, Academic;
  - iii. Head of Student Experience (Committee Coordinator);
  - iv. Senior Manager, Student Wellbeing (Response Manager)
  - v. representative from Legal and Compliance; and
  - vi. assigned Case Manager, as required
- (b) The Critical Incident Committee will determine whether and in what manner senior stakeholders such as the College Chief Executive Officer, the College's UNSW ULT member or UNSW Directors of Risk & Safety need to be notified and kept informed about the incident. The Head of Student Experience will be responsible for taking minutes, monitoring actions and coordinating the Committee.

## 8. Privacy and confidentiality

- (a) Critical Incidents will often involve highly sensitive information concerning students, staff or others, including personal and confidential information. The College will protect the confidentiality of students, staff, and others affected by Critical Incidents wherever practicable and in line with the College [Privacy Policy](#) and applicable privacy law.
- (b) The College may disclose personal or confidential information relating to a Critical Incident to such College staff and UNSW stakeholders as need to know for the College to manage the incident appropriately.
- (c) In the event of an emergency, the College may also disclose personal or confidential information about the incident outside the College, such as to doctors, nurses and counsellors, to ensure appropriate support. The College may also report the incident to police and government agencies such as the Department of Home Affairs or TEQSA, where this is appropriate or required.

## 9. Recording and Reporting of Critical Incidents

- (a) The College will report the incident, or consequences of the incident (such as an international student's failure to attend classes), to government agencies such as the Department of Home Affairs and TEQSA, if required. If required, incidents will also be reported to safety regulators.
- (b) Information about Critical Incidents will be reported quarterly to the College Board of Directors and to UNSW (in accordance with UNSW's Controlled Entities Procedure) including an evaluation of how incidents have been managed, recommendations for improvements and training needs.
- (c) The College will maintain a Critical Incident Register with key information about every incident including detailed reporting of management plans, actions and outcomes.

## 10. Roles, responsibilities and delegations

Role	Responsibility
Senior Manager, Student Wellbeing	Manages and coordinates the response to individual Critical Incidents, including oversight of support provided for affected students, liaising with family / next of kin, service providers and government agencies
Head of Student Experience	Is responsible for the day-to-day implementation of this policy and is the first point of contact for all enquiries that relate to this policy.
Executive Director, Students	Convenes and chairs the Critical Incident Committee in the event of a Complex Critical Incident, and where reputational damage may occur
Chief of Staff	Coordinates the staff and HR response to Critical Incidents involving staff.
Critical Incident Committee	Coordinates the response to more Complex Critical Incidents.
Chief Executive Officer	Escalates to UNSW stakeholders

## 11. Definitions

Definitions and Acronyms	
Critical Incident	An acute or serious event that has caused immediate physical or psychological harm, or an imminent threat of harm, and requires urgent action.
Complex Critical Incident	Emergencies, events or circumstances that impact the College's people, operations or environment which are of a size and

Definitions and Acronyms	
	<p>complexity that requires a structured response to resolve the situation;</p> <p>and / or</p> <p>an adverse incident or series of events that have the potential to severely impact the College's people, operations, environment or its long-term prospects and / or reputation.</p>

Related Policy Documents and Supporting Documents	
Legislation	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>• <a href="#"><u>Education Services for Overseas Students Act 2000 (Cth)</u></a></li> <li>• <a href="#"><u>National Code of Practice for Providers of Education and Training to International students 2018</u></a></li> <li>• <a href="#"><u>Higher Education Support Act 2003 (Cth)</u></a></li> <li>• <a href="#"><u>Higher Education Provider Guidelines 2023 (Cth)</u></a></li> <li>• <a href="#"><u>Work Health and Safety Act 2011 (NSW)</u></a></li> </ul>
Policy	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>• <a href="#"><u>International Students Under 18 Policy</u></a></li> <li>• <a href="#"><u>Sexual Assault and Sexual Harassment Policy</u></a></li> <li>• <a href="#"><u>Student Health, Safety and Wellbeing Policy</u></a></li> <li>• <a href="#"><u>Work Health and Safety Policy</u></a></li> <li>• <a href="#"><u>Student Code of Conduct</u></a></li> </ul>
Procedures	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>• <a href="#"><u>Critical Incident Management Procedure</u></a></li> <li>• <a href="#"><u>WHS Incident Reporting and Management Procedure</u></a></li> </ul>
Other	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>• Critical Incident Register</li> <li>• Critical Incident Risk Assessment Template</li> </ul>

## Policy Governance

Critical Incident Management Policy	
Category/Business Group	Student Experience
Published Externally (Yes/No)	Yes
Approver	Chief Executive Officer
Responsible Officer	Executive Director, Students
Contact Officer	Head of Student Experience
Effective Date	18 April 2024
Next Review Date	18 April 2027
Version	2.0

**Revision History**

Version	Approved by	Approval date	Effective date	Sections modified
2.0	Chief Executive Officer – Sarah Lightfoot	18 April 2024	18 April 2024	Change to Policy title and amendments to sections 1, 3, 4, 5, 6, 7 8, and 9, including the amendment of the Critical Incident definition to include U18 hospitalised and mental health episode requiring hospitalisation involuntarily; inclusion of staff management and instructions in the event staff are impacted; inclusion of Work Health and Safety Policy and Student Health, Safety and Wellbeing Policy.
1.0	Chief Executive Officer – Sarah Lightfoot	11 August 2023	17 August 2023	N/A

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