



Critical Incidents Policy and Procedures

Approved by	Council
Approval date	22 May 2024
Previous approval date(s)	24/06/2019, 06/06/2019, 15/10/2018, 07/11/2016, 01/06/2015
Date for Review	2029
Responsible Officer and Committee	Dean Council
Related documents	Work, Health and Safety Standards Sexual Assault and Sexual Harassment Policy and Procedures Orientation Policy and Procedures Privacy Policy
Higher Education Standards (2021)	2.3 Wellbeing and Safety (2.3.4, 2.3.5) 6.2 Corporate Monitoring and Accountability (6.2.1 g) 7.2 Information for Prospective and Current Students 7.3 information Management
National Code (2018)	Standard 6: Overseas student support services (6.8; 6.92)

1. Purpose

- 1.1 This policy relates to critical incidents directly involving staff and/or students on any Sydney College of Divinity (SCD) campus that have an impact on the individual and also on other members of the SCD University College community.
- 1.2 At Sydney College of Divinity (SCD), critical incidents are managed by SCD and its Member Institutions with the reporting/recording of critical incidents managed and maintained on the SCD Critical Incidents Register by the SCD Governance Officer and through the governance reporting cycle.

- 1.3 The National Code (2018), Standard 6, outlines that the registered provider:
- (a) must have and implement a documented policy and process for managing critical incidents that could affect the overseas student's ability to undertake or complete a course, such as but not limited to incidents that may cause physical or psychological harm.
 - (b) must maintain a written record of any critical incident and remedial action taken by the registered provider for at least two years after the overseas student ceases to be an accepted student.
 - (c) must provide information to overseas students about how to seek assistance for and report an incident that significantly impacts on their wellbeing, including critical incidents.

2. Scope

- 2.1 This policy applies to all students, and staff of SCD and its Member Institutions involved in providing support to students, identifying students at risk, and responsible for the communication of this information to students and/or reporting of that information as per the SCD governance processes.

3. Definitions

- 3.1 The Policy Document Glossary applies to this policy.
- 3.2 The following definitions also apply to this policy:

Term	Definition
<i>Critical Incident</i>	<p>Means a traumatic event, or threat of a traumatic event (within or outside Australia) which causes extreme stress, fear or injury to a student or students. Critical Incidents can include but are not limited to:</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> • death, serious injury or any threat of these • critical mental health episodes • drug or alcohol abuse • confirmation of a serious infectious disease or virus • physical, sexual assault, domestic violence, or other abuse • severe verbal or psychological aggression • storms, fire, natural disasters, or pandemics • missing students • other life-threatening events

4. Statements and Objectives

- 4.1 All campuses will operate at all times in accordance with the current *Work Health and Safety Standards* (WHS) and will make WHS resources and training available for staff. See: <https://www.safeworkaustralia.gov.au/>
- 4.2 All campuses will take all reasonable steps to provide a safe environment on campus and advise all students, including overseas students, and staff on actions they can take to enhance their personal security and safety. This will include provision to all students, including overseas students, and staff of a reliable mobile phone contact for use in relation to after-hours critical incidents.
- 4.3 All campuses will ensure that overseas students are provided with information about seeking assistance for and reporting an incident that significantly affects their wellbeing, including critical incidents, and also general information on safety and awareness relevant to life in Australia.
- 4.4 The *Critical Incident Policy and Procedures* will be made available to all students, including overseas students. Any separate critical incident policy or protocol drawn up by a Member Institution for use at its campus(es) will accord with the thrust of SCD's *Critical Incident Policy and Procedures*, while providing relevant local details to all students at that campus, including overseas students. It is understood that circumstances may demand some variation in the sequence of actions at Stages 2 and 3 below that achieves similar results in handling the incident itself, assisting anyone affected, informing relevant people, documenting the incident in full, and keeping the requisite records.

Implementation

Stage 1: Identifying a critical incident

- 4.5 This policy relates to critical incidents that fall within any of the following criteria directly involving staff and/or students of the SCD and its Member Institutions (MIs):
 - (a) An incident that results in a physical injury requiring professional medical treatment occurring within the SCD Office of the Dean or Schools or its Member Institution's campus boundaries plus, for overseas students, off-campus.
 - (b) An incident that results in significant damage to the SCD or its Member Institution's facilities or property.
 - (c) An incident that threatens the safety of staff and/or students within the SCD Office of the Dean or Schools or its Member Institution's campus boundaries plus, for overseas students, off-campus.
 - (d) An incident that impacts significantly on the normal emotional experience of the College community.
 - (e) An incident that may be identified as falling outside of boundaries of what would be considered normally appropriate (e.g. sexual misconduct, physical violence, intimidation, etc.) that impacts significantly on student/student or staff/student relationships and interaction.

Stage 2: Action to be taken in relation to on-campus incidents

- 4.6 This sequence is the norm for a critical incident, including any affecting overseas students – circumstances may demand some variation that achieves similar results in handling the incident itself, assisting anyone affected, informing relevant people, documenting the incident in full, and keeping the requisite records:
- (a) Any critical incident is reported to the person in charge of the campus at the time - Principal/Dean/Campus Co-ordinator/delegated officer – by any student or staff member who becomes aware of it.
 - (b) Issues of safety are addressed immediately, using evacuation procedures and/or calling emergency services where necessary and following up the outcome.
 - (c) The person in charge of the campus needs to ascertain the facts and be able to verify what was 'reported to have occurred' - this will involve both those who reported the incident and those involved. The reported facts will be documented at this stage by the person in charge.
 - (d) The person in charge of the campus meets with and informs the critical incident team, which is normally the 'Executive Committee' for the campus and receives any relevant advice. Appropriate steps to be taken are planned and documented as soon as the nature of the incident allows.
 - (e) The Student Support Officer (e.g. the Registrar or Academic Dean) and any additional counsellors required are contacted by the person in charge.
 - (f) Remaining staff are informed by the person in charge, as appropriate.
 - (g) Where appropriate, the clergy are informed.
 - (h) The person in charge of the campus communicates with the students and college/campus community affected by the critical incident, being mindful of legal and privacy constraints.
 - (i) Siblings and close friends of the victims are informed individually and the emergency contacts for overseas students affected are contacted and informed.
 - (j) The person in charge of the campus informs the rest of the campus community, if appropriate.
 - (k) The person in charge of the campus contacts organisations and individuals for additional assistance if required.
 - (l) The person in charge of the campus informs the Office of the Dean of the critical incident.
 - (m) The person in charge of the campus informs the relevant consulate for overseas students affected, as appropriate.
 - (n) All students and staff members are informed of counselling and assistance available.
 - (o) The person on charge of the campus will establish a supportive, calm atmosphere by maintaining normal procedures as far as possible.
 - (p) The person in charge of the campus plans the response to the media, as required.
 - (q) The Chaplain prepares memorials or prayer services, if required.
 - (r) The details of the event and all steps that were followed must be documented and held on file by the person in charge for prompt communication to the Office of the Dean as soon as possible (see Stage 4 below).

- (s) If overseas students are absent from their studies as a result of the critical incident, the person in charge will make every effort to maintain contact with the overseas students and/or those taking care of them until the situation is resolved, for these reasons: (i) appropriate pastoral care should be made available, if appropriate, as a tenet of the SCD and its Member Institutions; (ii) SCD must be in a position to report variations to student enrolments on PRISMS as required.

Stage 3: Additional actions to be taken in relation to off-campus incidents involving an overseas student

- 4.7 In addition to the steps outlined above, the person in charge will undertake these further actions in relation to incidents that occur off-campus and affect overseas students:
- (a) Ensure overseas students are aware (i) that the College will assist them in the event of a critical incident that occurs off-campus, (ii) that the practical assistance will be available immediately, as possible, and (iii) that the College will assist them with any flow-on effect on their physical and psychological wellbeing, their studies, and/or their visa. Immediate practical assistance might, for instance, involve calling emergency services on behalf of overseas students affected and following up the outcome, informing those with whom the students affected live in Australia, if appropriate, or otherwise acting on an immediate request from the students affected, as appropriate (e.g. to have things fetched to them in hospital).
 - (b) Inform family or emergency contacts overseas of the incident, if appropriate.
 - (c) Provide guidance to family or emergency contacts overseas in relation to travel to Australia to support overseas students, if appropriate.
 - (d) Advise overseas students involved in a critical incident to consult the Department of Home Affairs as soon as possible, if their COE and visa may be affected.
 - (e) If overseas students are absent from their studies as a result of the critical incident, the person in charge of the campus will make every effort to maintain contact with the overseas students and/or those taking care of them until the situation is resolved, for these reasons: (i) appropriate pastoral care should be made available, if appropriate, as a tenet of the SCD and its Member Institutions; (ii) SCD must be in a position to report variations to student enrolments on PRISMS as required.

Stage 4: Documenting and record-keeping by the Office of the Dean

- 4.8 The Office of the Dean will confirm that the initial documenting of the incident by the person in charge has taken place.
- 4.9 The Office of the Dean will ensure that the steps taken by the person in charge of the campus and his or her 'Executive Committee' are documented and sent as soon as possible to the Office of the Dean. This documentation should include:
- (a) date, time and location of incident
 - (b) nature of incident
 - (c) the parties involved (taking into consideration any privacy requirements)
 - (d) any mitigation and immediate response actions
 - (e) any involvement/reporting to external departments (e.g. police)
 - (f) outcome and assessment reports; and
 - (g) any recommendations for improvement
- 4.10 The Office of the Dean will ensure that essential information is added to the *SCD Critical Incident Register* for reporting to Council whether for noting or action as appropriate.
- 4.11 The Office of the Dean will keep a written record of the critical incident and the remedial action taken for at least two years after all students involved have graduated or ceased to be an accepted student, including overseas students.

Stage 5: Follow-up

- 4.12 The person in charge of the campus concerned will make every effort to get back to the 'normal routine', within a time frame that is appropriate to the nature of the critical incident.
- 4.13 To avoid future incidents of a similar kind:
- (a) The persons in charge of all campuses will ensure that student support staff and any 'outside professionals' are able to meet the needs of the campus community, including overseas students.
 - (b) Provide appropriate further support training and/or materials to staff and students and additional/improved equipment and resources, where appropriate.

5. Related Procedures and Forms

Procedure	
Appendix 1	SCD Critical Incidents Report Form
Guidelines	
Appendix #	
Templates/Forms	
Appendix #	
Other Resources	
Appendix #	

Appendix 1: Critical Incident Report Form

Member Institution:	
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Person in Charge	
<i>Critical Incident Policy</i>	<i>This is the person in charge of the campus/ organisation at the time – Principal/ Dean/ Campus Coordinator/ Delegated Officer (Clause 4.6(a))</i>
Title:	e.g. Associate Professor, Dr, Mr, Ms, Professor etc.
Name:	e.g. John Smith
Email:	e.g. john.smith@ntc.edu.au
Phone Number:	e.g. 0412 345 678
Position:	e.g Principal.

Reporter of Incident	
<i>Critical Incident Policy</i>	<i>This is the student or staff member who first becomes aware of the incident (Clause 4.6(a))</i>
Title:	e.g. Associate Professor, Dr, Mr, Ms, Professor etc.
Name:	e.g. John Smith
Email:	e.g. john.smith@ntc.edu.au
Phone Number:	e.g. 0412 345 678
Position:	e.g Student.

Details of Critical Incident	
<i>Critical Incident Policy</i>	<i>Clauses: 4.6(b)-(c)</i>
Date of Incident:	Click or tap to enter a date.
Time of Incident:	6:25pm.
Location of Incident:	Please be as specific as possible e.g. Classroom H29
Nature of Incident:	Please provide details of the incident
Parties Involved:	e.g. Professor Jane Doe, Lecturer in theology; Mr John Smith, student.
Immediate actions taken:	e.g. to ensure everyone's safety, the building was evacuated and 000/ ambulance called.

Follow-up Actions	
<i>Critical Incident Policy</i>	<i>Clauses: 4.6(d)-(s)</i>
Members of Critical Incident Team:	Click or tap here to enter text.
Date notified/ met:	Click or tap to enter a date.
<i>All Incidents - Please indicate the appropriate steps taken and details as necessary</i>	
<input type="checkbox"/> Inform Student Support Officer	e.g. Mrs Janet Smith, Registrar
<input type="checkbox"/> Additional counsellors required	Please provide details.
<input type="checkbox"/> Other staff to be informed	e.g. Dr David Smith, Head of Theology;
<input type="checkbox"/> Clergy to be informed	Please provide details.
<input type="checkbox"/> Student/ College/ Campus Communication to be sent	Click to provide details.
<input type="checkbox"/> Family/ Close friends to be informed	e.g. how/ when contacted and response as appropriate.
<input type="checkbox"/> Emergency contacts informed	e.g. how/ when contacted and response as appropriate.
<input type="checkbox"/> Organisations/ Individuals to be contact for extra assistance	Click to provide details.
<input type="checkbox"/> Office of the Dean to be informed	e.g. contacted Steve Smith by text at 6:45pm on same day.
<input type="checkbox"/> Consulate to be informed	Click to provide details.
<input type="checkbox"/> Inform all students/ staff of counselling and assistance available	Click to provide details.
<input type="checkbox"/> Response to media prepared	Click to provide details.
<input type="checkbox"/> Chaplain prepared memorials or prayer services	Click to provide details.
<input type="checkbox"/> Maintain contact with affected international students/ their carers and monitor absences	Click to provide details.

<input type="checkbox"/> Other steps taken/ to be taken (please include timeframes)
Click to provide details.

<i>For off-campus incidents involving international students - Please indicate the appropriate steps taken</i>	
<i>Critical Incident Policy</i>	<i>Clauses 4.7</i>
<input type="checkbox"/> Ensure international students are aware that SCD will assist them in the event of an off-campus critical event	Click to provide details.
<input type="checkbox"/> Ensure international students are aware that practical assistance is available immediately	Click to provide details.
<input type="checkbox"/> Ensure international students are aware that SCD will assist them with any flow-on effects: <ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Physical well-being • Psychological well-being • Their studies • Their visa 	Click to provide details.
<input type="checkbox"/> Inform family/ emergency contact of incident and provide guidance on travel to Australia	Click to provide details.
<input type="checkbox"/> Advise international students to consult with Dept of Home Affairs if COE or visa might be affected	Click to provide details.
<input type="checkbox"/> Maintain contact with affected international students/ their carers and monitor absences	Click to provide details.

<i>Involvement/ Reporting to external departments</i>	
<i>Critical Incident Policy</i>	<i>Clauses: 4.9(e)</i>
External Department	Nature of involvement/ report

Outcome/ Assessment	
<i>Critical Incident Policy</i>	<i>Clauses: 4.9(f)-(g)</i>
<input type="checkbox"/> Outcome and Assessment reports attached or below:	
Click to provide details.	
Recommendations for improvement	
Click to provide details.	

Report Submitted by:			
Name:	e.g. John Smith	Date:	Click or tap to enter a date.
Position:	e.g Principal.		

SCD Office of the Dean Only			
Initial Documenting check by: (Clause 4.8)			
e.g. John Smith		Date:	Click or tap to enter a date.
Critical Incident Register Updated and report saved in folder by: (Clause 4.10)			
e.g. John Smith		Date:	Click or tap to enter a date.
Reported to Council: (Clause 4.10)			
Meeting:	Enter meeting e.g. 1 of 2024.	Date:	Click or tap to enter a date.
Report to be archived:	Click or tap to enter a date.		
Further Remedial or Follow-up Actions (Clause 4.11)			
Date:	Action/s:		
Click or tap to enter a date.	Click to provide details.		
Click or tap to enter a date.	Click to provide details.		
Click or tap to enter a date.	Click to provide details.		
Click or tap to enter a date.	Click to provide details.		
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