Student Critical Incident Management Policy

Section 1 - Purpose and Scope

Purpose

(1) This Policy sets out how the University responds to and manages Student Critical Incidents in a timely and coordinated manner.

(2) This Policy supports compliance with the requirements of the:

    a. Higher Education Standards Framework (Threshold Standards) 2021 - Wellbeing and Safety, Standard 2.3.5;
    b. Education Services for Overseas Students Act 2000 (ESOS);
    c. National Code of Practice for Providers of Education and Training to Overseas Students 2018; and
    d. ELICOS Standards 2018.

Scope

(3) This Policy applies to:

    a. All students (non-award, undergraduate, postgraduate and research, domestic, and international) irrespective of their mode of participation, location or whether studying with a University educational partner;
    b. All University staff;
    c. Contractors engaged by the University;
    d. Staff employed by the University's educational partners; and
    e. Staff employed by the University's accommodation service providers.

(4) This Policy does not apply to:

    a. Emergencies or crisis situations which are managed in accordance with Emergency and Crisis Management Policy and associated procedures.
    b. Routine student welfare concerns and minor incidents for which the University provides support and assistance through normal service operations such as Student Administration Services, counselling services and international student support.
    c. Incidents that do not involve students. Incidents involving staff or visitors are responded to under Work Health and Safety legislation and the University's Work Health Safety Policy and associated procedures.

Relationship to other University Policies

(5) A Student Critical Incident which is also a Crisis or Emergency may be managed in accordance with both this Policy and the Emergency and Crisis Management Policy and Procedures. Where there is a conflict between the two policies, the Emergency and Crisis Management Policy will apply.

(6) The Student Critical Incident Risk Matrix provides guidance on the types of critical incidents and applicable University policies.

(7) The [Emergency and Crisis Management Policy](#) applies where a Student Critical Incident occurs on University premises, including student residences, and there is:

a. real or immediate danger of injury or loss of human life and is beyond the capacity of normal University management structures and processes for effective resolution; or
b. a large impact on, or consequences for, operations of the University; or
c. a significant coordinated response by emergency service organisations and high-level coordination between the University and external agencies is required.

(8) Student Critical Incidents, as described in clause (7) are immediately referred to the Vice President (Operations) who assumes responsibility for their management.

Section 2 - Definitions

(9) For the purposes of this Policy the following definitions apply:

a. A Student Critical Incident means a traumatic event, or the threat of such, which causes extreme stress, fear, physical or psychological injury to Students and requires immediate intervention. Examples include, but are not limited to:
    i. death by misadventure, or life-threatening injury or illness;
    ii. suicide, or attempted suicide or self-harm, or imminent risk of suicide or self-harm;
    iii. unexplained or unusual absence (for example, on fieldwork);
    iv. violent behaviour, including severe verbal or psychological aggression;
    v. sexual assault;
    vi. witnessing serious incidents, or distressing behaviour;
    vii. significant mental ill-health issues threatening the safety of the Student or others;
    viii. drug, alcohol or psychoactive substance overdose.
b. Crisis and Emergency are defined in the University's [Emergency and Crisis Management Policy](#).
c. Higher Degree Researcher means a higher degree by research student.
d. Response Manager means the senior staff member responsible for, and empowered to, manage a Student Critical Incident.
e. Case Manager means the person appointed by, and accountable to, the Response Manager to co-ordinate the response to a Student Critical Incident.
f. Student means a person enrolled in a course leading to an accredited award of the University, or in units which do not lead to an accredited award of the University.
g. Student Critical Incident Management Team means the team of people assembled to manage and co-ordinate the response to a Student Critical Incident where the severity or scale of the incident requires it. The team is appointed by and accountable to the Response Manager.
h. Younger Student means a student under the age of 18 years.

Section 3 - Policy Statement

(10) The University proactively manages risk and adopts a range of risk reduction activities to ensure the occurrence and intensity of Student Critical Incidents is minimised.

(11) When a Student Critical Incident occurs, it will be:

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a. Responded to, or resolved, in a manner that ensures appropriately skilled and equipped persons are engaged to swiftly and safely minimise or remove immediate risk or danger;

b. Responded to, or resolved, with sensitivity and consideration of the wellbeing and safety of Students, their families, as well as staff and members of the community, if relevant;

c. Reported to relevant University staff members, and relevant international and Australian government authorities and agencies;

d. Managed and documented appropriately and confidentially, in accordance with the University's [Privacy Policy](#) and [Privacy Management Plan](#);

e. Managed in a manner to ensure that the University's reputation, domestically and internationally, is not damaged as a result of the incident; and

f. Reviewed upon its conclusion with the purpose of identifying and addressing risks and implementing improvement strategies.

Section 4 - Reporting Requirements

(12) The [Student Critical Incident Workflow](#) sets out the process for reporting critical incidents.

(13) First responders to a Student Critical Incident should contact relevant emergency services or University Security Services where required. If an accident occurs on University premises, it is normal practice for University Security to contact emergency services.

(14) Student Critical Incidents may occur in a range of different situations and locations. All initial reports should be made to the Vice President (Students) and Registrar.

(15) For the avoidance of doubt, this includes incidents that occur at:

a. The University's offshore educational partners; and

b. The University's accommodation service providers.

(16) All Student Critical Incidents are to be reported via [Riskware](#) as soon as practicably possible.

(17) Younger Students: The [National Code of Practice for Providers of Education and Training to Overseas Students 2018](#) (Standard 5) sets the framework for provider obligations where responsibility is accepted for accommodation, support and general welfare of international Students under 18 years of age. See [Welfare Arrangements of International Students Aged Under 18 Policy](#). If a staff member or approved homestay family becomes aware of a Student Critical Incident involving an international Student under 18 years of age, the incident must be reported in accordance with this policy, while ensuring that appropriate ongoing welfare arrangements are in place at all times.

(18) Higher Degree Researchers: University staff, such as supervisory teams and Graduate School staff are in close and regular contact with Higher Degree Researchers and may become aware of changes to a student's personal circumstances which may include a Student Critical Incident. If this occurs, the incident should be reported and managed in accordance with this Policy.

External Reporting Requirement

(19) Any critical incident which constitutes a material breach of safety that impacts students must be reported to the Pro Vice-Chancellor (Academic Quality) who will notify the [Tertiary Education Quality and Standards Agency](#) (TEQSA).

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Section 5 - Key Personnel

Response Manager

(20) Depending on the Student's involved in the incident, the Response Manager will be:

    a. Vice President (Students) and Registrar: coursework students;
    b. Senior Deputy Vice-Chancellor: higher degree researchers.

Case Manager

(21) The person, appointed by and reporting to the Response Manager, who co-ordinates the response to a Student Critical Incident when a Student Critical Incident Management Team is not required. Depending on the particular circumstances of the Student Critical Incident, the Case Manager will be as follows:

Student Cohort	Case Manager
Domestic coursework students	Director, Student Support
International students (except Higher Degree Researchers) and incidents involving domestic students while overseas	Manager, International Student Support Services
Higher Degree Researchers – domestic and international	Dean, Graduate School or Manager, Graduate School
Students enrolled with educational partners	Educational Partner Campus Manager (or equivalent)
Students enrolled with offshore educational partners	Educational Partner Campus Manager (or equivalent) in conjunction with the University's assigned partnership manager.
Others	Case-by-case basis

Other Relevant Staff

(22) Student Critical Incidents are responded to and resolved with appropriate consultation. Being mindful to protect the privacy of Students involved, and on the basis of 'need to know', advice and response may be sought from staff members and work units including, but not limited to:

    a. Indigenous Student Support Services
    b. International Student Support Services
    c. Student Safety and Wellbeing
    d. Equity and Inclusion
    e. Counselling Services
    f. Office of the Vice Chancellor
    g. HR Services
    h. Manager, Workplace Health and Safety
    i. Property Services
    j. Faculty/College staff
    k. Governance Services (Legal, Risk and Privacy)
    l. Office of Business Intelligence and Quality
    m. Director, Customer Experience, Marketing and Digital

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Section 6 - Managing Critical Incidents

(23) Student Critical Incidents are managed in accordance with the [Student Critical Incident Workflow](#) and follow the actions prescribed in the [Student Critical Incident Response Checklist](#).

Section 7 - Post Incident Review

(24) Within seven days of the conclusion of the Student Critical Incident, the Response Manager will assign an appropriate staff member to independently review the management of the incident to ensure compliance with this Policy and identify:

    a. The cause of the Student Critical Incident;

    b. Any action the University might take to mitigate the risk of recurrence;

    c. Ongoing support required by affected staff or students; and

    d. Opportunities to improve the University's Student Critical Incident processes, including recommendations to amend this Policy.

(25) De-identified post incident review reports will be provided to the Vice Chancellor's Group for consideration and action as required.

Section 8 - Record Keeping

(26) The Case Manager will ensure comprehensive records of the incident, actions and responses are maintained and stored securely, with appropriate restricted access to confidential information.

(27) HR Services are responsible for maintaining the University's Register of Critical Incidents.

(28) Records will be kept in accordance with the University's [Records Management Policy](#) and associated [Procedures](#) and the [Privacy Policy](#).

Section 9 - Associated Documents

(29) This Policy is supported by:

    a. [Student Critical Incident Workflow](#)

    b. [Student Critical Incident Risk Matrix](#)

    c. [Student Critical Incident Response Checklist](#)

(30) This Policy should be read in conjunction with:

    a. [Emergency and Crisis Management Policy](#)

    b. [Emergency Management Plan – Coffs Harbour](#)

    c. [Emergency Procedures - Lismore and Gold Coast](#)

    d. [Work Health Safety Policy](#)
       [Workplace Health and Safety Risk Management Procedures](#)

    e. [Welfare Arrangements of International Students Aged Under 18 Policy](#)

    f. [Privacy Policy](#)

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g. [Privacy Management Plan](#)
h. [Fitness for Study Policy](#)
i. [Higher Degree Research Fitness to Study Policy](#)

Status and Details

Status	Current
Effective Date	28th October 2022
Review Date	28th October 2025
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Expiry Date	Not Applicable
Responsible Executive	Brendon Nelson Vice President (Students) and Registrar
Head of Work Unit	Brendon Nelson Vice President (Students) and Registrar
Enquiries Contact	Brendon Nelson Vice President (Students) and Registrar _____ Student Care and Support