

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](#);
- e. [National Higher Education Code to Prevent and Respond to Gender-based Violence](#).

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. All members of Council;
- d. Contractors engaged by the University;
- e. Staff and volunteers of SCU student associations;
- f. Staff employed by the University's educational partners; and
- g. Staff employed by the University's accommodation service providers.

(4) This Policy applies in the event that student critical incidents occur on or off campus, online, within or outside of Australia at any time that involves enrolled students at Southern Cross University. For the avoidance of doubt, this includes incidents that occur at:

- a. The University's offshore educational partners;
- b. The University's accommodation providers;
- c. Student events and activities conducted by other entities, including third party arrangements with support from the University, whether on or off campus, within or outside of Australia; and
- d. The University's professional placement provider locations.

(5) 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

(6) 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.

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

(8) 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.

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

(10) A report of sexual assault or sexual harassment perpetrated by a student and where the victim wishes the University to take action must be promptly referred to the Pro Vice-Chancellor (Academic Quality) for investigation under the [Student Academic and Non-Academic Misconduct Rules](#).

(11) A report of sexual assault or sexual harassment perpetrated by a staff member will be referred to the Director, Human Resources for investigation, in accordance with the [Sexual Misconduct \(Prevention and Response\) Policy](#).

Section 2 - Definitions

(12) 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. missing students;
 - iv. severe verbal or psychological aggression;
 - v. gender-based violence, physical violence, intimate partner/domestic and family violence, sexual assault or other abuse and sexual harassment;
 - vi. behaviour threatening the safety of the Student or others;
 - vii. drug or alcohol overdose.
- b. Case Manager means the person appointed by, and accountable to, the Response Manager to co-ordinate the

response to a Student Critical Incident.

- c. Conduct and Integrity Unit means the University team that manages complaints and student misconduct.
- d. Crisis and Emergency are defined in the University's [Emergency and Crisis Management Policy](#).
- e. Higher Degree Researcher means a higher degree by research student.
- f. Material breach means a failure to perform an important and essential element of a contract as agreed.
- g. Response Manager means the senior staff member responsible for, and empowered to, manage a Student Critical Incident.
- h. Riskware means the University's risk management platform which facilitates the reporting, investigation and actioning of student and staff incidents and hazards.
- i. 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.
- j. Student Counselling, Safety and Wellbeing 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.
- k. Younger Student means a student under the age of 18 years.

Section 3 - Policy Statement

(13) 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, for example:

- a. Student safety information workshops delivered at orientation;
- b. Mandatory student completion of the Respect@SCU module;
- c. Student-centric safety campaigns;
- d. Promotion of the Riskware platform to students;
- e. Providing a dedicated support and security contact number for students.

(14) All commencing student are required to complete the Respect@SCU module within their first teaching period. If a student has not successfully completed the module before the date on which grades are released at the conclusion of the first teaching period in which a student attempts a unit, the following sanctions may be imposed until such time as the module is successfully completed:

- a. The student's final grades for that, and future teaching periods, will be withheld; and
- b. The student may not be permitted to enrol in subsequent teaching periods.

Student Critical Incident Management

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

- 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

(16) 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.

(17) Student Critical Incidents may occur in a range of different situations and locations. All initial reports are to be documented in Riskware and assigned to the Vice President (Students) and Registrar for triage and post incident care. All student critical incidents, with the exception of reports submitted via the Conduct and Integrity Unit processes, are to be reported via Riskware as soon as practically possible.

(18) 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.

(19) 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.

(20) The Vice President (Students) and Registrar will provide quarterly reports to the Vice Chancellor's Group to outline the number and nature of Student Critical Incidents, identifying any patterns of recurring Student Critical Incidents and recommendations for improvements to inform the management of future Student Critical Incidents and the development of on-going safety measures.

External Reporting Requirement

(21) 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).

Section 5 - Key Personnel

Response Manager

(22) The Response Manager will be the Vice President (Students) and Registrar.

Case Manager

(23) 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
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Domestic coursework students and international students (except Higher Degree Researchers and Study Abroad students) and incident involving domestic and international students while studying overseas.	Director, Student Support
Students enrolled in Study Abroad Programs	Director, Global Engagement
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 (for example, students on placement)	Case-by-case basis (for example, Faculty safety points of contact)

Other Relevant Staff

(24) 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. Office of the Vice Chancellor
- c. Office of the Vice-President (People and Culture)
- d. Manager, Workplace Health and Safety
- e. Office of the Vice-President (Operations)
- f. Property Services
- g. Academic Portfolio Office and Conduct and Integrity Team
- h. Faculty/College staff
- i. Governance Services (Legal, Risk and Policy)
- j. Office of Business Intelligence and Quality
- k. Director, Customer Experience, Marketing and Digital

Section 6 - Managing Critical Incidents

(25) Student Critical Incidents are managed in accordance with the Student Critical Incident Management Flowchart.

(26) Upon review of the nature and severity of the incident, or where appropriate, the University may contact impacted student/s to protect them from suspected imminent and serious harm, for law enforcement purposes and/or to provide post incident support.

(27) The University will manage students' personal and private information in accordance with the University's Privacy Policy and Privacy Management Plan.

Section 7 - Record Keeping

(28) 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.

(29) The Office of the Vice President (Students) and Registrar is responsible for the oversight of the University's

Register of Critical Incidents in Riskware.

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

Section 8 - Associated Documents

(31) This Policy is supported by:

- a. Student Critical Incident Management Flowchart
- b. Student Critical Incident Risk Table.

(32) 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](#)
- g. [Privacy Management Plan](#)
- h. [Fitness for Study Policy](#)
- i. [Higher Degree Research Fitness to Study Policy](#)
- j. [Support for Students Policy](#)
- k. Unilodge Accommodation: Emergency Response Management Plan
- l. [Harassment Bullying and Discrimination \(Prevention\) Policy](#)
- m. [Student Academic and Non-Academic Misconduct Rules](#)
- n. [Complaints Policy – Students and Members of the Public](#)
- o. [Feedback and complaints flowchart](#)

Status and Details

Status	Current
Effective Date	1st July 2025
Review Date	1st July 2028
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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 <hr/> Student Care and Support