

Student Critical Incidents Response Policy

For Emergency Services - triple zero (000)

For University Campus Security Emergency (24 hours) - +618 8313 5444

For Safer Campus Community supports available to students <https://www.adelaide.edu.au/safer-campus-community/report-an-incident/emergency-contacts>

OVERVIEW

SCOPE AND APPLICATION

POLICY PRINCIPLES

STUDENT CRITICAL INCIDENT RESPONSE PROCEDURES

Immediate Response to a Critical Incident

Action by Response Coordinator

Implementation of Response Plan

Recording and Documentation of Critical Incident

Final Review

Reporting

AUTHORITIES

DEFINITIONS

OVERVIEW

The University of Adelaide is committed to providing a safe environment for students and staff. This policy informs students and staff of the University's approach to Student Critical Incident response and how the University supports students in the event of a Critical Incident.

A Critical Incident is a traumatic event, or the threat of such (within or outside Australia), which causes extreme stress, fear, serious illness or injury. A Critical Incident may include death, attempted suicide, severe verbal or psychological aggression, physical, sexual or other abuse or natural disaster. Non-life-threatening events may qualify as Critical Incidents.

Every Critical Incident is unique and will need to be dealt with according to the nature and scale of the incident and the needs of the people affected.

The University has separate procedures for:

- a) [Emergency Management](#), which define how the University manages emergency response on campus to a range of emergency events; and
- b) [Reporting a Health, Safety and Wellbeing \(HSW\) Issue](#), which defines how the University reports any HSW risks, hazards, issues or concerns.
- c) Notifiable Event reporting that defines how the University reports an event or circumstance that could result in a claim being made against the University.
- d) Reporting sexual misconduct and other misconduct by members of the University community <https://www.adelaide.edu.au/safer-campus-community/report-an-incident>

These procedures may run in parallel to this policy in the event of a Student Critical Incident.

SCOPE AND APPLICATION

This policy applies to all University students (e.g. non-award, undergraduate, postgraduate and research, domestic and international, full or part-time study load) where the Critical Incident occurs on campus, onshore or offshore, or online in an approved University Related Activity. Incidents involving International Students in Australia may also include non-approved University Related Activity.

This policy does not apply to Student Non-Critical Incidents that are routine student welfare concerns, property damage, or other relatively minor incidents for which the University provides support and assistance through the normal service operations such as Counselling, Student Affairs, and International Student Support.

This policy and procedure should be read in conjunction with the [Emergency Management framework](#).

Where the Critical Incident arises in the context of a Third-Party arrangement, the Critical Incident policies and procedures of that partner institution apply.

The University provides specific support for students under 18 years of age as required under the Education Services for Overseas Students Act 2000 (Cth) (ESOS Act) for international students and as outlined in the [Safe Environments for Children and Vulnerable People Policy](#)

POLICY PRINCIPLES

The University will:

1. Oversee the health and safety of University students.
2. Allocate appropriate resources to manage Critical Incidents.
3. Provide a timely response to a Critical Incident.
4. Provide immediate information and support to the students involved/impacted.
5. Provide assistance to students to engage with external agencies (e.g. police, foreign embassies, agents, medical).
6. Maintain confidentiality, by disclosing Critical Incident information only to those persons who have a right to the information by virtue of their role in the management of Critical Incidents, or as required by law.
7. Maintain details of each Critical Incident report and action taken in accordance with the University's recordkeeping requirements, referred to in the Information Management Policy.
8. Evaluate the effectiveness and appropriateness of the University's response and management of the Critical Incident with recommendations for improvement and prevention reported on an annual basis to University Council.
9. Comply with relevant laws and regulations including the Education Services for Overseas Students Act 2000 (Cth) (ESOS Act) and *National Code of Practice for Providers of Education and Training to Overseas Students 2018* in relation to Critical Incidents involving International Students, and the requirements outlined in the *Higher Education Standards Framework (Threshold Standards) (2021)*.

POLICY PROCEDURES

1. Immediate Response to a Critical Incident

Once any member of the University Community has become aware of a student Critical Incident (excluding a major natural disaster), the following steps must be taken to support the safety and wellbeing of impacted student(s) and ensure key stakeholders are informed:

- a) Contact the appropriate emergency services – Police, Fire, Ambulance, or other local emergency services required to reduce the immediate threat, and
- b) Contact University Campus Security, who will inform the Response Coordinator.
- c) If a Critical Incident also constitutes a safety issue under the HSW Policy, it must be reported using the University's [Safety Reporting System](#).

2. Action by Response Coordinator

The Response Coordinator will assess the Critical Incident and develop the response accordingly, including:

- a) Coordinate any immediate information and support as required.
- b) Notify the Director, Student Life.
- c) Note whether or not the Critical Incident has occurred within or outside Australia and whether the people affected are domestic or international students to help determine appropriate action.
- d) Engage with the relevant Third-Party provider where the incident involves a student related to a third-party arrangement.
- e) Determine if the incident involves:
 - i. HSW concerns - contact Director, Safety and Wellbeing
 - ii. Legal concerns - contact the General Counsel, Legal Services
 - iii. Notifiable event concerns - contact Chief Risk Officer, as and where appropriate

3. Implementation of Response Plan

As outlined in the Student Critical Incident Guidelines & associated Checklists the Response Coordinator will convene a Critical Incident Coordinating Team (Coordinating Team). The Coordinating Team will coordinate:

- a) the response
- b) the immediate tasks required
- c) informing relevant areas and senior management
- d) the timing and responsibilities for follow up tasks, including internal and external communications, and
- e) the provision of personal and academic support for affected students.

4. Recording and Documentation of Critical Incident

The Response Coordinator will record the Critical Incident, including details of the remedial actions taken, using the Critical Incident Guidelines and Checklist and:

- a) Update the Critical Incident Register and the University records management system, including documenting actions taken and outcomes.
- b) Determine if the Critical Incident requires reporting to TEQSA:
 - i. if so, use the TEQSA Reporting template to record the Critical Incident and save the completed checklist in the relevant student file(s) on the University records management system.
 - ii. notify Manager International Compliance no later than 14 calendar days following the University's knowledge of the incident.
- c) Determine if the Critical Incident requires notifying the Manager International Compliance to cancel the student's Confirmation of Enrolment to inform the Department of Home Affairs.
- d) Where the Critical Incident involves an overseas student, maintain records of the Critical Incident and any remedial action taken for at least 2 years after the overseas student ceases to be an accepted student.

5. Final Review

The Coordinating Team will review and evaluate the effectiveness and appropriateness of the University's response to and management of Critical Incident to identify any improvements that could be made to the procedure and checklists for future responses to Critical Incidents. The Coordinating Team will provide an opportunity for all staff who played a significant role in the Critical Incident response to participate in the review. The outcomes of the review will be provided to the Director, Student Life.

6. Reporting

The Director, Student Life will provide an annual report to University Council outlining the number and nature of Critical Incidents, identifying any patterns of recurring Critical Incidents and recommendations for improvements to inform the management of future Critical Incidents and the development of ongoing safety measures.

AUTHORITIES

Key	Authority Category	Authority	Delegation Holder	Limits
Critical Incidents	Critical Incidents	Convene a Critical Incident response team	Associate Director, Student Wellbeing and Access	
Critical Incidents	Critical Incidents	Approve expenditure of funds for support Student Critical Incident response services	Director, Student Life	Within the Finance Expenditure limit
Critical Incidents	Critical Incidents	Disclosure of personal/private information	General Counsel and Executive Director, Legal Services Branch	Except in the case of mandated reporting
Critical Incidents	Critical Incidents	Oversight of notifiable events (insurance program)	Chief Risk Officer	

DEFINITIONS

Critical Incident means a traumatic event, or the threat of such (within or outside Australia), which causes a Student or Students extreme stress, fear or injury. Critical Incidents can include, but are not limited to:

- a) death
- b) attempted suicide or self-harm,
- c) serious injury
- d) life-threatening illness
- e) drug or alcohol overdose
- f) severe verbal aggression
- g) physical, sexual or other abuse
- h) missing students
- i) student arrest
- j) natural disasters (including interstate or International Student home countries)

Non-life-threatening events may qualify as Critical Incidents.

Non-Critical Incidents include but not limited to routine student welfare concerns, theft or loss of property, property damage, immigration issues or other relatively minor incidents for which the University provides support and assistance through the normal service operations such as Counselling Support, Student Affairs, and International Student Support.

Notifiable Event means every known fact, circumstance or event that could result in a claim being made against the University.

Response Coordinator is the University's Associate Director, Student Wellbeing and Access or delegate.

Safety Issue is considered anything that occurs while completing work for the University or while on University grounds, and that might cause or has caused harm to our people and/or damage to property. A safety issue can be

related to anything from physical objects to particular activities, or to the behaviour of people or animals.

University Community means Students, Staff, Titleholders, Volunteers, Visitors and Contractors.

University Related Activity includes but not limited to during or in connection with Students' clinical, practicum, internship or work experience placements, or while a Student is participating in University approved study at another institution.

Other definitions are as contained in the University's [Glossary of Terms](#).

RMO File No.	2021/2625
Policy Custodian	Deputy Vice-Chancellor and Vice-President (Academic)
Responsible policy officer	Executive Director, Student Experience
Endorsed by	Vice-Chancellor's Executive on 4 November 2022
Approved by	Vice-Chancellor and President on 21 December 2022 Reaffirmed by DVCA on 30 January 2025 refer D2025/145689
Related Documents and Policies	Information Management Policy Privacy Policy Safe Environments for Children and Vulnerable People Policy Student Misconduct Policy HSW Handbook – Emergency Management HSW Handbook – Report a Safety Issue or Incident <i>Melbourne Campus Critical Incidents Procedures (under review by Kaplan)</i>
Related Legislation	Education Services for Overseas Students (ESOS) Act 2000 (Cth) Work Health and Safety Act 2012 (SA) Work Health and Safety Regulations 2012 (SA) Privacy Act 1988 (Cth) Children and Young People (Safety) Act 2017 (SA)
Superseded Policies	Nil.
Effective from	1 January 2023
Review Date	31 March 2026
Contact for queries about the policy	Associate Director, Student Wellbeing and Access (+61 8 8313 0236)