

CRITICAL INCIDENT PROCEDURES

Approving Authority	Executive Management Team
Purpose	This procedure outlines for reporting and managing critical incidents.
Responsible Officer	Vice President
Next scheduled review	June 2021
Document Location	http://www.ozford.edu.au/higher-education/policies-and-procedures/
Associated documents	Student Support and Services Policy and Procedures Occupational Health & Safety Policy and Procedures Deferral, Suspension or Cancellation of Enrolment Policy and Procedures

1. PRINCIPLES

Under Standard 6 of the ESOS National Code 2018, the registered provider must have and implement a documented procedure 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. The registered provider 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.

This document outlines the Institute's procedure, support mechanisms and procedures for managing a critical incident. This procedure will ensure that the Institute has:

- an effective approach in response to critical incidents as they occur;
- appropriate support and counselling services available to those affected;
- appropriate training and information resources provided to staff.

2. SCOPE

This procedure applies to critical incidents relating to the Institute's staff and students.

3. DEFINITIONS

HES Framework

Higher Education Standards Framework (Threshold Standards) 2015.

ESOS National Code

The ESOS National Code refers to the National Code of Practice for Providers of Education and Training to Overseas Students 2018 established under the Education Services for Overseas Students Act 2000.

PRISMS

Provider Registration and International Students Management System (PRISMS). It provides Australian education providers with the Confirmation of Enrolment (CoE) facilities required for compliance with the Education Services for Overseas Students (ESOS) Legislation.

Compassionate or Compelling circumstances

Compassionate or compelling circumstances are generally those beyond the control of the student and which have an impact upon the student's course progress or wellbeing. These could include, but are not limited to:

- serious illness or injury, where a medical certificate states that the student was unable to attend classes;
- bereavement of close family members such as parents or grandparents;
- major political upheaval or natural disaster in the home country requiring emergency travel and this has impacted on the student's studies;
- a traumatic experience that has impacted on the student which could include involvement in, or witnessing a serious accident; and witnessing or being the victim of a serious crime, supported by police or psychologist's reports; or

- where the Institute was unable to offer a pre-requisite subject.

Critical Incident

A critical incident is defined as 'a traumatic event, or the threat of such (within or outside Australia), which causes extreme stress, fear or injury'. It includes but not limited to incidents that may cause physical or psychological harm.

Critical incidents are not limited to, but could include:

- missing students;
- severe oral, written or psychological aggression;
- death, serious injury or any threat of these;
- natural disaster; and
- issues such as domestic violence, sexual assault, drug or alcohol abuse;
- signs of physical and/or sexual abuse, and neglect.

Non-life threatening events can be classed as critical incidents.

Emergency Incident

A sudden, serious and urgent incident needing immediate Emergency Services support

4. PROCEDURES

- 4.1 The Institute will provide students with or refer them to (including electronically) general information on safety and awareness relevant to life in Australia during orientation. Students are provided with information on what to do and who to contact in an emergency. The Emergency Contact details are made available on the Institute's Student Handbook.
- 4.2 A discussion on Critical Incident is also covered during Orientation. Students will be provided with the Critical Incident Policy and Procedures.
- 4.3 Staff and students are informed that any critical incident must be reported to the Head of Student Services and Administration (HOSSA) in the first instance. The Critical Incident report must include the following details: time, location and a description and nature of incident. The names of students/staff involved, together with any relevant information that may be of assistance.
- 4.4 If the incident is determined as an emergency incident, the first action will be to contact the emergency services - fire, ambulance or police – as would be the case with other occupational health and safety matters.
- 4.5 After receiving the incident report, the HOSSA will call a meeting of the Executive Management Team (EMT).
- 4.6 The EMT will meet to discuss the incident, plan and determine a prompt and appropriate response and action plan by:
 - 4.6.1 Developing a clear understanding of the known facts.
 - 4.6.2 Assessing risks and response actions
 - 4.6.3 Planning an immediate response of the incident
 - 4.6.4 Appoint a delegate to deal with public enquiries. If required, a **media management** procedure may be included in the management plan to ensure the most positive and supportive response to the media. Only the Director or Vice President may speak to the media on behalf of the Institute.
 - 4.6.5 Determining action plan and allocating individual roles/responsibilities for ongoing tasks by devising a tasks schedule such as:
 - a. Liaison with emergency and other services
 - b. Liaison with students' next of kin/family members and other contacts such as agents
 - c. Liaison with other external bodies, such as accommodation providers or foreign embassies,
 - d. Identify students and staff most closely involved and most at risk and, assess their needs, determine the nature and degree of support needed
 - e. Confirm access to emergency funds if necessary.
 - f. Provide appropriate support to student and family, for eg: arrangement for visits to hospital, arrangement for visit from/to family, hiring interpreters for overseas family, assist family to make contact with relevant departments for insurance/legal arrangements

- g. In the event that the incident involves a death of a student, additional support to the family will include:
 - assisting with overseas family to obtain a visa to come to Australia
 - making arrangements for funeral/memorial service/repatriation
 - obtaining a death certificate
 - assisting with personal items and affairs including insurance issues
 - h. Provide appropriate support to other students. At a minimum, opportunities are provided for those involved to express and share with others the reactions that they had to the incident. Those in charge and those providing support also need extra consideration during this time.
 - i. Formal stress management interventions required for students and/or staff (release from classes, leave, rescheduled assessment or exams)
 - j. Counselling and managing students and staff not directly involved in the incident. Arrange a time and place for an initial group/individual debriefing session with Counsellor/s. In this session, an opportunity is given to share the impact of the event, discuss various interpretations of the event in cultural/ethnic terms, the resulting sense of vulnerability, the experience of painful emotions and the normalisation of reactions
 - k. Arrangements for further debriefing sessions for groups/individuals as required
 - l. Determining and plan for ongoing feedback and regular meetings so that the EMT is continually in touch and working together
- 4.7 The EMT will organise for reporting and recording of incident and actions taken. If the incident affects student's enrolment, the deferral, suspension and cancellation of enrolment policy and procedures will be applied.
- 4.8 The Institute will notify the Department of Education and Department of Home Affairs as soon as practical after the incident. In the case of a student's death or other absence affecting the student's attendance, the incident will be reported via the Provider Registration and International Student Management System (PRISMS).
- 4.9 The EMT will provide information and facilitate appropriate venues for its dissemination. A written bulletin will be provided if the matter is complex. Students and academic staff have a need to accept the reality of the event, and the inevitable discussions that follow are better based on fact rather than on rumour or supposition. It is important that rumours are discounted.
- 4.10 Once the event has been formally acknowledged - perhaps through meetings, a memorial service, or whatever is appropriate - the next step may well be to resume, as far as practicable, normal routines, so that any ongoing recovery strategies can take place against a background of predictability.
- 4.11 As a follow-up action, the EMT will set in motion a Critical Incident Action Evaluation Plan to review the management and response of the critical incident to address the underlying causes and various aspects arising from the incident by:
 - evaluating and reviewing the plan;
 - creating and disseminating a revised plan and its procedures for future incidents;
 - updating and publishing relevant policy and procedures; and
 - organising appropriate staff development and training.
- 4.12 Changes to the plan, policy and procedures, including updated resources, will be made as soon as practicable following the review and evaluation.
- 4.13 At the conclusion of the incident management, all aspects of the incident and its management will be recorded on the student files and Critical Incident File in the form of a file note.

5. QUALITY ASSURANCE

To ensure that this procedure is fit for purpose and meet the requirements of the HES Threshold Standards the procedure will be:

- 5.1 internally approved by the Executive Management Team on development or review
- 5.2 externally reviewed as part of any independent review of the HES Threshold Standards approved by the Governing Board;
- 5.3 internally reviewed by the Responsible Officer every three years from the date of approval (if not earlier).
- 5.4 referenced to the applicable HES threshold Standard and/or other legislation/regulation.

6. FEEDBACK

Feedback or comments on this procedure is welcomed by the listed Responsible officers of the Institute.

7. VERSION CONTROL

Version	Date approved	Description	Approved by
2.0	June 2018	Initial issue	EMT
Related legislation/ regulation/standard	HES Threshold Standards 2015 ESOS National Code 2018		