

STUDENT CRITICAL INCIDENT POLICY AND PROCEDURE



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1 PURPOSE

- 1.1 This policy and procedure acknowledges the importance of having a clear and coordinated process for decision making, managing and reporting critical incidents involving students of CQUniversity by outlining how to respond promptly and appropriately to, and manage critical incidents in an effective, consistent, compassionate and culturally sensitive manner.

2 SCOPE

- 2.1 This policy and procedure applies to incidents of a serious nature (critical incidents) involving CQUniversity students. A critical incident is defined as:

A traumatic event or situation or the imminent threat of such (within or outside Australia) which causes extreme stress, fear or injury/significant risk of harm to the physical or mental health, safety or wellbeing of an individual. It may include:

- death
- attempted suicide
- serious injury, life-threatening illness, and drug, alcohol or psychoactive substance overdose
- unlawful behaviour including physical and/or [sexual violence](#), or crime-related incidents
- missing student
- significant mental-ill health issues threatening the safety of self or others

- where a student, employee, community member, volunteer, visitor, tenant, or contractor has witnessed a serious incident, and
 - other traumatic events or serious threats.
- 2.2 This policy and procedure applies to students, [employees](#), contractors, visitors and volunteers on all campuses owned or operated by CQUniversity. It is inclusive of domestic and international visiting students studying on campus or via distance education.
- 2.3 This policy and procedure does not apply to incidents which have, or are likely to have, a noticeable and detrimental operational impact on the University. These are managed under the [Business Continuity Planning and Incident Management Policy and Procedure](#).

3 POLICY STATEMENT

- 3.1 This policy and procedure provides a framework to ensure that the University's response to a critical incident is effective, consistent, and culturally sensitive and dealt with in a compassionate and timely manner. This includes a response that is:
- managed and/or resolved in a way that is best for the student/s, their families, and for the University
 - reported to relevant University Senior Executive and government agencies, and
 - communicated appropriately to family.

4 PROCEDURE

Responding to a critical incident

- 4.1 Where a person on campus is aware of a death, an immediate threat to the life of a person or a serious threat to property (such as a fire):
- call 000 and report the incident to the police department or one of the emergency services
 - following that, report the incident to University Security (activate the Emergency function on the "SafeZone" mobile app and/or call 0418 792 982, or 07 4936 1331), and
 - record the incident using the [Report an Incident Form](#) or [Report a Confidential Incident Form](#) in the University's Risk Reporting System (CAMMS).
- 4.2 In all other instances:
- contact the Chief Wellbeing Officer (or nominee)
 - if unable to contact the Chief Wellbeing Officer (or nominee), contact University Security (extension 1331 from University landline, 0418 792 982 or Use the Safe Zone App on your mobile) and they will direct your call to nominated employee, and
 - record the incident in [CAMMS](#).
- 4.3 Where the Chief Wellbeing Officer believes the reported incident is a critical incident, they will call a meeting of the Student Critical Incident Response Team.

Student critical incident response team

- 4.4 Not every incident will be serious enough to warrant the processes of this policy and procedure and may be resolved by actions of the Students Success Division and/or other key teams. When a critical incident is reported, the Student Critical Incident Response Team will meet to coordinate the University's response. The membership of the Team may include:
- Vice Chancellor and President
 - Vice-President (Academic)
 - Vice-President (Student Success)
 - relevant Associate Vice-President

- Director Student Engagement
 - Chief Wellbeing Officer
 - Deputy Director Facilities Management (responsible for security)
 - University Solicitor
 - Manager Counselling
 - Student Ombudsman.
- 4.5 Depending on the incident type or location, the Team may include the following additional members, as determined by the Chief Wellbeing Officer:
- Director Commercial Services (where the incident occurs on or involves a student who is housed in a student residence)
 - Director International (where the incident involves an international student)
 - Deputy Vice-President (VET and Business Development) (where the incident involves a vocational education and training (VET) student)
 - Senior Coordinator Indigenous Student Engagement (where the incident involves an Aboriginal and/or Torres Strait Islander student)
 - relevant School representative such as Dean, Head of College or Deputy Dean Learning and Teaching (or nominee)
 - Director Student Central
 - Director Governance/University Secretary
 - Student Access and Equity Manager
 - Academic employees or supervisors involved with the student
 - Deputy Director Corporate Communications
 - Associate Director Safety and Wellbeing.
- 4.6 The Team will determine its own procedures (relevant to the nature of the incident) and be chaired by the Chief Wellbeing Officer or in their absence, the Director Student Engagement.
- 4.7 The Team will meet in a timely manner (wherever possible the same day the incident occurs or is reported) to immediately assess the severity of the situation and discuss the priorities and actions taken, or to be taken, over the first one to two weeks following the incident.
- 4.8 The person best placed should brief the Team on the current facts of situation. Consideration should be given to who has (or may be) directly affected, what is the appropriate first and second response, who should manage that, and who should be informed and consulted. Team members will be allocated roles and responsibilities, as necessary, as part of a plan to coordinate the ongoing management of the critical incident. These actions may include:
- ensuring facts are accurately established and informing the [emergency contact/next of kin](#) if required. Whenever possible, negotiate with the impacted student about alerting the emergency contact/next of kin prior to doing so. If the incident involves the death of a student, the police are responsible for informing the family or next of kin. Where possible, an employee with counselling training should be designated as a support for family members who may be dealing with extreme shock, grief or trauma associated with the incident
 - accessing the student record to verify student details, and gather relevant information, including address, email, phone numbers, nationality, primary contact, sponsor or agent etc
 - nominating a person to be the main point of contact for others (the hospital, relatives, friends and other parties such as the consulate and police) and that person making it known that they will be available/on call 24 hours a day during incident management
 - liaising with external agencies, which may include the Crisis Assessment and Treatment Team, doctors, hospital, police, government departments, and relevant Embassy

- informing Corporate Communications and Student Communications in case the circumstances of the critical incident result in media attention and to assist with the development of internal communications to employees and students
 - if the student is under 18, making provisions according to their nationality status or enacting mandatory reporting where required
 - making relevant referrals for academic and student wellbeing support services
 - ensuring priority counselling is provided for impacted individuals in the first days and up to two weeks after the incident. It is noted that timing is important for individuals who have been traumatised by an incident
 - providing voluntary group information sessions (facilitated by qualified counsellor) to employees or students directly involved, as required
 - contacting the relevant sponsor. If the student is an Australia Awards student, the Team must have regard to the specified Australia Awards procedures
 - recording the incident in [CAMMS](#)
 - reporting on the critical incident to senior officers, or
 - maintaining records, and documenting actions taken and outcomes, to form a Critical Incident Report at the conclusion of the incident.
- 4.9 Where the student involved is an international student, the Team will include the Director International (or nominee) and may take the following additional actions:
- if the student is a Study Abroad or Exchange student, contact their Home University or Agent, as they may be in contact with the parents/next of kin or other emergency contact. When the student is over 18 and whenever possible negotiate with the student about alerting their emergency contact/next of kin prior to doing so
 - hire independent interpreters (if required)
 - liaise with the relevant employees to place the student on leave and make the necessary report to the [Department of Home Affairs](#) (where required)
 - inform the Overseas Student Health Insurance (OSHC) provider
 - help the student to obtain legal advice, if needed
 - inform the Department of Home Affairs about the situation and any student visa implications, or
 - there can be costs associated with a critical incident. Where the student's personal or overseas insurance does not cover costs associated with the incident, the student and/or family will need to meet those costs. Consult with relevant employees about the possibility of accessing funds available through the Traumatic Event and Accident Management (TEAM) program via the University's agreement with the preferred overseas insurance provider. In exceptional circumstances, the Vice-Chancellor and President may approve financial assistance to assist direct family with travel, accommodation, and other arrangements.
- 4.10 For a critical incident involving a student on an Outbound Program, the following additional steps may need to be included:
- inform the Director International and Study Abroad Coordinator
 - contact the [Department of Foreign Affairs and Trade](#) to arrange consular assistance
 - liaise with Australian police to establish contact with the relevant international police force
 - check insurance arrangements with the Deputy Director Strategic Planning, Risk and Insurance.
- 4.11 The Team will ensure careful records are kept throughout the response period. Records will include detailed documentation about each step taken in the response process, including emails, letters and/or records of significant interactions that occur. A note will be placed on the student's central file advising that a file responding to a critical incident has been created.

Responding to a student in crisis

- 4.12 Refer to the [Staff Guidelines: Responding to a Student in Distress](#).

Student report of sexual violence

- 4.13 This section relates to when [sexual violence](#) against a student is alleged to have been committed by a student or employee at the University, on an Australian CQUniversity campus (including study hubs), at a University event, University online platform, placement or student residence. Where the alleged perpetrator is not a University student or employee and the incident occurs on a University campus or at a placement, the procedure outlined in sections 4.1-4.9 will apply.
- 4.14 When a student (heretofore referred to as the '[complainant](#)') reports an experience of sexual violence to an employee (outside of Student Counselling and Wellbeing) the employee will immediately report to the Chief Wellbeing Officer. The name of the complainant does not need to be disclosed at the time of the report. Employees must inform the student that they may have to identify the student, confidentially, to the Chief Wellbeing Officer to ensure the safety of students, employees and community. If the complainant is uncomfortable identifying themselves, the employee should refer the student to Student Counselling and Wellbeing, and notify Student Counselling and Wellbeing and the Chief Wellbeing Officer of the referral.
- 4.15 Employees involved in reporting and responding to a student report of sexual violence will adopt a non-judgemental, empathetic and unbiased stance.
- 4.16 The Chief Wellbeing Officer will promptly engage with relevant individuals to obtain information to adequately assess the situation. This includes consultation with expert consultants as identified within and external to the University (including police where necessary), to determine action to be taken.
- 4.17 Decisions about the case will be made by the Chief Wellbeing Officer, in consultation with expert consultants and appropriately communicated to all parties.
- 4.18 Actions to be taken may include;
- assisting the complainant who made the allegations to report the incident to the police (ensuring the complainant is aware of all of their reporting options)
 - referring the complainant who made the disclosure to Student Counselling and Wellbeing and where appropriate external services
 - seeking advice from the complainant and/or internal/external services (i.e. Access and Capacity-building Team, Queensland Health) to ensure the University's response is culturally sensitive and considers student's religious beliefs and other cultural considerations
 - seeking advice from the complainant and/or internal/external services to ensure the University's response is sensitive to the student's gender/sexual orientation
 - ensuring that the student or employee responding to the allegations (heretofore referred to as the '[respondent](#)') is provided support through student or employee counselling
 - considering what actions may need to be taken for the safety of the complainant who alleged the sexual violence pending resolution of any employee or student discipline proceedings, using the procedures available in those policy documents or other rules. This may involve suspending the respondent or taking other measures to ensure safety for all on the campus. This may include but is not limited to:
 - establishing a safety plan for the complainant and any other students or employees impacted
 - wherever possible taking direction from the complainant about their wishes
 - ensuring employees are available to chaperone or be present at campus events (including lectures and tutorials), where required
 - ensuring that a flag is placed against student respondents record to alert nominated employees if they re-enrol in the future and to implement measures to ensure student safety (message to be generic to protect privacy)
 - placing conditions on the respondent's ability to attend events (such as field trips or graduation ceremonies) where the complainant is also present

- necessary measures taken to ensure communication with the complainant is received (i.e. using multiple modes including face to face, phone, email, SMS) for the purpose of communicating to ensure the student's safety, and
 - adhering to mandatory reporting legislation, where the complainant is under the age of 18.
- 4.19 When the respondent is a professional registered with a governing body, the outcome of investigation/severity of alleged sexual violence will be disclosed confidentially to the nominated employees from the School. The nominated employee will be responsible for reporting the incident to governing bodies i.e. APHPRA, as required.
- 4.20 When the disclosed incident of sexual violence is a criminal matter, the complainant will be supported to refer the incident to police in the relevant jurisdiction for external investigation. In the event that an external investigation is carried out by police, an internal investigation will not proceed, however sanctions against the respondent may still proceed either during or after the police investigation. The University will respond to the incident and put appropriate supports in place, in consultation with police, to ensure the measures do not compromise the external investigation.
- 4.21 Where there is an external investigation and the complainant is an international student, they are permitted to leave Australia and the case will continue to be investigated.
- 4.22 Resources (including employees) will be made available to deal with the incident appropriately, considering the type of sexual violence and or location.
- 4.23 Refer to the [Staff Guidelines: Responding to a Student Who Makes a Disclosure of Sexual Harassment or Sexual Assault \(Sexual Violence\)](#) for further information.

Missing student

- 4.24 When a student is reported missing from their place of residence, the appropriate employee will report to the Chief Wellbeing Officer (in the case of an immediate threat the appropriate employee will contact 000). The Chief Wellbeing Officer will oversee the process of gathering information to make an assessment. This may involve:
- accessing the student record to verify details and to gather information, including address, email and phone numbers
 - establishing whether the student has been attending classes, submitted assignments, used the Learning Management System (Moodle), engaged with supervisor, or had recent contact with classmates, employees, and/or administrators
 - confirming that the student has not applied for leave of absence or cancelled their enrolment
 - confirming with the Chief Wellbeing Officer the student's building access activity around campus, when relevant
 - confirming if the student has been seen in or around the residence (for residential students)
 - determining whether the student is sponsored or on exchange (for international students)
 - requesting International Compliance check whether the student is onshore or offshore (for international students)
 - ascertaining whether the student has recently accessed services from the Student Counselling and Wellbeing, the Student Ombudsman and/or other student services
 - contacting the student (via University and other email address, telephone/SMS) to advise that concerns have been expressed about their personal welfare and that if they do not respond within a reasonable time (time period to be decided on a case-by-case basis), the Chief Wellbeing Officer will notify their [emergency contact](#), and
 - summarising information, including the contact details of the person who reported the student as missing, and reporting actions to the Chief Wellbeing Officer.

- 4.25 Unless there is a reasonable belief that contact is necessary to prevent or lessen a serious and imminent threat to the life or health of the missing student, in assessing whether or not a student is missing, employees cannot disclose the student's personal information to any third party, including family or friends.
- 4.26 If the person reporting a student as missing has serious concerns about the student's personal and mental welfare, encourage the person to contact the local police department.
- 4.27 For residential students, if the student reported missing replies within a reasonable time from the initial contact from the employee, the student will be requested to make an appointment with the Director Commercial Services to determine whether or not further support is required.
- 4.28 If the student does not reply to the initial email and phone call within a reasonable time, the Chief Wellbeing Officer, (or nominee) will:
- inform the emergency contact, and
 - request the local police department conduct a welfare check.
- 4.29 In the event that the local police department confirms that the student is missing, or the Chief Wellbeing Officer is satisfied that the circumstances surrounding the report of the missing student gives rise to a critical incident, they will call a meeting for the Student Critical Incident Response Team. The Team will take over coordination of the University response to the incident.

Death of a student

- 4.30 Refer to the [Acknowledgement of Deceased Persons Procedure](#).
- 4.31 Where the student died by suicide refer to [Responding to Suicide: A Toolkit for Australian Universities](#).

Conclusion and review

- 4.32 At the conclusion of a critical incident, the Student Critical Incident Response Team will:
- arrange access to appropriate counselling support for the employees involved in the management of the critical incident
 - review, with relevant employees involved, the management and responses to the critical incident, with a view to identifying improvements to the procedure and to the future management of critical incidents
 - update the Critical Incident Report, documenting actions taken and outcomes
 - thank the internal and external parties involved in responding to the incident, and
 - ensure a report is made to the Crisis Management Control Group and Senior University stakeholders.

Privacy: information management

- 4.33 Employees may disclose the identity of students to other employees for the purpose of managing and reporting on a critical incident.
- 4.34 When the incident is a disclosure of [sexual violence](#) the employee may only disclose the identity of the [complainant](#) to the Chief Wellbeing Officer, where required. The Chief Wellbeing Officer will manage the disclosure confidentiality and make a decision about whether or not the student's identity needs to be further disclosed in order to manage the critical incident.
- 4.35 The [Information Privacy Act 2009](#) (Qld) permits the University to disclose personal information about someone to a party outside the University where:
- a person consents in writing to their personal information being disclosed, or
 - the University believes on reasonable grounds that the disclosure is necessary to lessen or prevent a serious threat to the life, health, safety or welfare of an individual or to public health, safety or welfare.

4 RESPONSIBILITIES

Compliance, monitoring and review

- 5.1 The University's response to each critical incident will be adapted/implemented within the parameters of this policy and procedure to meet the needs of each incident.
- 5.2 The Chief Wellbeing Officer is responsible for implementing, monitoring, reviewing and ensuring compliance with this policy and procedure.

Training

- 5.3 The People and Culture Directorate and the Student Counselling are responsible for, and committed to, delivering student critical incident awareness training and information to all employees. Training and information will be made accessible via a range of modalities, including face-to-face training, online training and published materials.

Reporting

- 5.4 No additional reporting is required.

Records management

- 5.5 Employees must manage records in accordance with the [Records Management Policy and Procedure](#). This includes retaining these records in a recognised University recordkeeping information system.
- 5.6 University records must be retained for the minimum periods specified in the relevant [Retention and Disposal Schedule](#). Before disposing of any records, approval must be sought from the Records and Privacy Team (email records@cqu.edu.au).
- 5.7 Records specifically relating to Student Counselling will be kept in the University's Customer Relationship Management System (SugarCRM), separate to the critical incident reporting, and must remain private and confidential.

6 DEFINITIONS

- 6.1 Terms not defined in this document may be in the University [glossary](#).

Terms and definitions

Complainant: the student who discloses an incident.

Emergency contact/next of kin: the person nominated by the student in the Student Management System (Student One) as their emergency contact, or where that person is unavailable, next of kin, family, or other person if appropriate.

Employee: for the purpose of this document, the term employee will cover other categories of tenure or relationship to the University such as adjunct roles, research higher degree supervisors, contractors or external parties that are commissioned by the University to undertake work.

Respondent: the person who is called to respond to the disclosure/ the alleged circumstances.

Sexual violence: there is no universally accepted definition for behaviours that constitute inappropriate sexual conduct, which is sometimes referred to as 'sexual harassment', 'sexual coercion', 'sexual assault', or 'rape'. For the purpose of this document, the term 'sexual violence' will be used that encompasses behaviours that include (but are not limited to) the following:

- **sexual harassment:** uninvited and/or unwelcome comments, threats, and behaviours or requests of a sexual nature that make the targeted individual feel uncomfortable, humiliated, intimidated or offended. This may include online and/or face-to-face encounters, the distribution of sexually explicit images, emails or text messages.

- **sexual assault:** behaviours of a sexual nature directed at someone who has not given consent or is incapable of giving consent. This may include using verbal coercion, threats and/or physical force by any individual regardless of their relationship to the victim/survivor in any setting.

7 RELATED LEGISLATION AND DOCUMENTS

[Acknowledgement of Deceased Persons Procedure](#)

[Education Services for Overseas Students Act 2000](#) (Cwlth)

[Enterprise Risk Management Framework](#)

[Information Privacy Act 2009](#) (Qld)

[National Code of Practice for Providers of Education and Training to Overseas Students 2018](#) (Cwlth)

[Report a Confidential Incident Form](#)

[Report an Incident Form](#)

[Responding to Suicide: A Toolkit for Australian Universities](#) (CQUniversity resource)

[Responding to Suicide: A Toolkit for Australian Universities](#) (Universities Australia)

[Risk Management Policy](#)

[Staff Guidelines: Responding to a Student in Distress](#)

[Staff Guidelines: Responding to a Student Who Makes a Disclosure of Sexual Harassment or Sexual Assault \(Sexual Violence\)](#)

[Student Accommodation including International Students under 18 Policy and Procedure](#)

8 FEEDBACK

- 8.1 Feedback about this document can be emailed to policy@cqu.edu.au.

9 APPROVAL AND REVIEW DETAILS

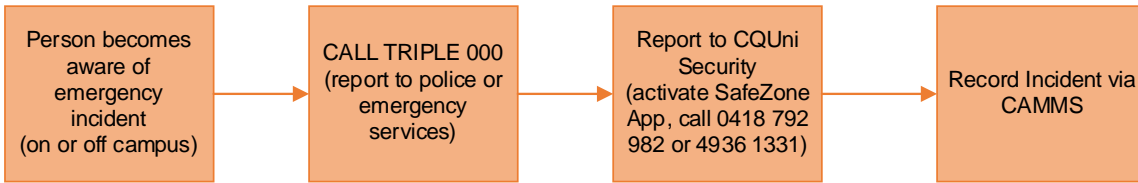
Approval and Review	Details
Approval Authority	Vice-Chancellor and President
Delegated Approval Authority	Vice-President (Student Success)
Advisory Committee	N/A
Required Consultation	Joint Consultative Committee
Administrator	Chief Wellbeing Officer
Next Review Date	25/08/2024

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Notes	

CQUniversity acknowledges its reference to the [Australian National University's Student Critical Incident Policy and Procedure](#) in developing this document

5 APPENDIX 1 – STUDENT CRITICAL RESPONSE PROTOCOLS (ON SITE OR ONSHORE)

Where an employee on campus is aware of a death, an immediate threat to the life of a person or a serious threat to property (such as a fire):



Where a critical incident involving a student of CQUniversity is identified by an internal party (i.e. student, employee or visitor) or an external party (i.e. Police, Placement Supervisor)

