

CRITICAL INCIDENT POLICY

Approving Authority	Governing Board
Purpose	This policy outlines the Institute's policy for reporting and managing critical incidents.
Responsible Officer	President and CEO
Next scheduled review	February 2031
Document Location	https://www.ozford.edu.au/policies-and-procedures/higher-education/
Associated documents	Critical Incident Procedure Business Continuity Management Policy Deferral, Suspension or Cancellation of Enrolment Policy and Procedure ICT Continuity Management Policy and Procedure Occupational Health and Safety Policy Records Management Policy and Procedure Risk Management Framework Policy Student Support and Services Policy and Procedure

1. PRINCIPLES

The Ozford Institute of Higher Education (hereafter referred to as the "Institute") must have and implement a documented policy and process for managing critical incidents that could affect the student's ability to undertake or complete a course, such as but not limited to incidents that may cause physical or psychological harm.

This policy ensures 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 for Institute staff.

2. SCOPE

This policy applies to all staff and all current and prospective students.

3. DEFINITIONS

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 is unable to attend class;
- bereavement for the death of close family members such as parents or grandparents (documented evidence must be provided);
- serious illness, accident or family incident which requires immediate travel which has impacted the student to studies;
- the inability to begin study on the course commencement date stated on the CoE due to delay in receiving a student visa if relevant;
- major political upheaval or natural disaster in the home country requiring their immediate travel and this has impacted on the student's studies;
- a traumatic experience supported by police or psychologist's reports which could include but is not limited to:
 - involvement in or witnessing of an accident; or
 - a crime committed against the student; or
 - the student being a witness to a crime and this has impacted on the student.
- where the Institute was unable to offer a pre-requisite unit.

Notes:

- *misreading the examination timetable, examination anxiety or returning home will not be accepted as Compassionate and Compelling circumstances;*
- *religious or faith-based issues are not in themselves grounds for special consideration. However, they may be used in support of an application that meets the Compassionate and Compelling circumstances set out above.*

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

Critical incidents are not limited to, but could include:

- Critical illness/serious injuries/medical emergencies involving a student or staff;
- unexpected Student/staff death;
- missing students;
- severe oral, written or psychological aggression;
- Traumatic events/threat/allegation that affect students;

- Sexual assault
- Physical and/or sexual abuse
- Domestic violence
- Mental Health Crisis
- Drug/alcohol abuse
- natural disaster
- riot; fire/explosion with injuries or significant damage on campus;
- campus disturbance / riot

Emergency Incident

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

Off-Campus Students

Students who are studying online or externally.

Provider Registration and International Student Management System (PRISMS)

Means the Provider Registration and International Students Management System (the electronic system that holds CRICOS and the electronic confirmation of enrolment).

4. POLICY

- 4.1 The Institute recognises that planning for the management of a critical incident is essential to enable the Institute and its staff to meet the duty of care owed to its students.
- 4.2 The Institute is committed to providing a prompt and appropriate response to critical incidents. The Institute's Executive Management Team is responsible to cover the actions to be taken in the event of a critical incident and any follow up required.
- 4.3 All staff and students at the Institute have the right to feel safe and to be safe. The Institute is committed to take all reasonable steps to provide a safe environment on campus and advise students and staff on actions they can take to enhance their safety and wellbeing.
- 4.4 All staff and students will be encouraged to report critical incidents.
- 4.5 The Institute will provide information to students and staff about how to seek assistance for and report an incident that significantly impacts on students' wellbeing, including critical incidents.
- 4.6 The Institute staff will be made aware of the ***Critical Incident Policy and Procedure*** and be given appropriate induction, to understand the procedures to use in managing a critical incident and their reporting obligations. Staff members have a legal and moral responsibility to report and respond to critical incidents involving the students with whom they have contact with.
- 4.7 The Institute recognises that appropriate infrastructure must be in place to ensure that all necessary support services are provided in the event of and as a consequence of a critical incident. The support should extend beyond the time of the specific event to address any post events support needs.

- 4.8 As a follow-up action to a critical incident, the Institute will develop a ***Critical Incident Action Evaluation Report*** to review the management and response of the critical incident to address the underlying causes and various aspects arising from the incident including :
- evaluating and reviewing the *critical incident*;
 - reviewing the ***Critical Incident Policy and Procedure*** to cover any future incidents;
 - updating and publishing the ***Critical Incident Policy and Procedure***; and
 - organising appropriate staff development and training.
- 4.9 The Institute will keep a written record of the incident and remedial actions taken and maintain the record for two years after the student's enrolment ceases.
- 4.10 The Executive Management Team will report to the Audit and Risk Committee and the Governing Board on any significant critical incidents including provision of the ***Critical Incident Action Evaluation Report***.

5. QUALITY ASSURANCE

To ensure that this policy is fit for purpose and meets the requirements of the TEQSA Compliance Frameworks, the policy will be;

- 4.11 internally endorsed by the Executive Management Team on development or review, prior to approval by Governing Board, or other delegated authority;
- 4.12 externally reviewed as part of any independent review of the TEQSA Compliance Frameworks approved by the Governing Board;
- 4.13 internally reviewed by the Responsible Officer every 5 years from the date of approval (if not earlier);
- 4.14 referenced to the applicable TEQSA Compliance Frameworks Requirement(s) and/or other legislation/regulation.

6. FEEDBACK

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

7. ACKNOWLEDGEMENT

This policy was initially developed with reference to the following:

- Deakin University, Critical Incident Management Policy, 2023 ([Critical Incident Management policy / Document / Deakin Policy Library](#))
- University of the Sunshine Coast, Critical Incident Management – Governing Policy, 2020 ([Critical Incident Management - Governing Policy | UniSC | University of the Sunshine Coast, Queensland, Australia \(usc.edu.au\)](#))

- UTS, Critical Incident Response Policy, 2023 ([Critical Incident Response Policy | University of Technology Sydney \(uts.edu.au\)](#))
- Ozford College, Critical Incident Policy and Procedure (see Ozford website)

8. VERSION CONTROL

Version	Date approved	Description	Approved by
1.0	February 2014	Initial issue	GB
2.0	June 2018	Internal review	GB
3.0	December 2020	Internal review	GB
4.0	July 2023	Internal review – Changes to definitions and minor edits	GB
4.1	September 2023	Internal review – minor formatting changes and add external referencing	EMT
4.2	June 2024	Internal review –policy scope to include both domestic and international students	EMT
5.0	July 2025	Internal review – minor edits and to include ICT Continuity Policy and Procedure	ARC/GB
5.1	February 2026	Internal Review to remove under 18 student obligations after change in policy	EMT
Related legislation/ regulation/ standard	Tertiary Education Quality and Standards Act 2011 Higher Education Standards Framework (Threshold Standards) 2021 Education Services for Overseas Students Act (ESOS) 2000 Education Services for Overseas Students Regulations 2019 The National Code of Practice for Providers of Education and Training to Overseas Students 2018 Standards 5 and 6		

Notes:

GB = Governing Board

OZFORD

Institute of Higher Education

ARC = Audit and Risk Committee

EMT = Executive Management Team