

# CRITICAL INCIDENTS INVOLVING STUDENTS PROCEDURES 2018

Issued by: Deputy Vice-Chancellor (Education)

Dated: 18 December 2018

Last amended:

Signature:

Name: Professor Philippa Pattison

---

## 1 Purpose and application

- (1) These procedures are to give effect to the [Serious Incident and Business Continuity Policy 2013](#).
- (2) These procedures set out the steps to be taken in the event of a critical incident involving one or more students.
- (3) These procedures apply to the University, staff, students and affiliates, in respect of any critical incident involving one or more students in connection with their study within or outside Australia.
- (4) These procedures apply to international students in respect of any critical incident involving one or more international students in connection with their study within or outside Australia:
  - (a) in the four weeks prior to the commencement of their first semester of study;
  - (b) during the period of their enrolment; and
  - (c) in the four weeks following the end of their final semester of study.

Note: This includes critical incidents that occur while a student is participating in an overseas exchange, study abroad, internship or other approved overseas program.

## 2 Commencement

These procedures commence on 18 December 2018.

### 3 Interpretation

<b>affiliate</b>	has the meaning given in the <a href="#">Code of Conduct – Staff and Affiliates</a> .  At the date of these procedures, this is:  Clinical title holders; adjunct, conjoint and honorary appointees; consultants and contractors to the University; holders of offices in University entities; members of Boards of University Foundations; members of University committees; and any other persons appointed or engaged by the University to perform duties or functions on its behalf.
<b>CAPS</b>	means Counselling and Psychological Services.
<b>case manager</b>	means the Director of Student Support Services or a person appointed to this role under clause 6.
<b>critical incident</b>	means a traumatic event, or the threat of a traumatic event, (within or outside Australia) that causes extreme stress, fear or injury to one or more students. Critical incidents include, but are not limited to: <ul style="list-style-type: none"><li>• missing students;</li><li>• severe verbal or physical aggression;</li><li>• critical mental health episodes;</li><li>• drug or alcohol abuse;</li><li>• domestic violence;</li><li>• physical, sexual or other abuse or assault;</li><li>• death, serious injury or any threat of these;</li><li>• accidents; and</li><li>• fire or natural disaster.</li></ul>
<b>exchange student</b>	means a person who is: <ul style="list-style-type: none"><li>• not admitted to an award course at the University;</li><li>• admitted to a formally approved program of study at an overseas institution with which the University has an exchange arrangement; and</li><li>• enrolled in one or more units of study at the University.</li></ul>
<b>non-award student</b>	means a person who is enrolled in a unit of study at the University, but is not an award student, exchange student or study abroad student.
<b>international student</b>	means a prospective, current or former student (whether within or outside Australia) who is not an Australian citizen or permanent resident and: <ul style="list-style-type: none"><li>• holds a student visa for the purpose of study at the University; or</li><li>• holds a visa that allows for study at the University.</li></ul>
<b>PRISMS</b>	means the Department of Home Affairs' Provider Registration and International Students Management System.



**Special Consideration**

means special consideration given to a student for one or more examinations or assessments, due to illness, injury or misadventure, in accordance with clause 67 of the [Coursework Policy 2014](#).

**student**

means a person who is currently:

- admitted to candidature in an award course of the University;
- an international student;
- a non-award student, exchange student or study abroad student at the University; or
- a student of the Centre for English Teaching.

**study abroad student**

means a person who is:

- not admitted to an award course at the University;
- admitted to a formally approved program of study at an overseas institution with which the University does not have an exchange arrangement; and
- enrolled in one or more units of study at the University.

## 4 Reporting critical incidents

- (1) All critical incidents should be reported within the first 24 hours to:
  - (a) the Campus Security Unit on **9351 3333**;
  - (b) the Director of Student Support Services; or
  - (c) by calling **1800 SYD HLP (1800 793 457)** from 9am to 5pm, Monday to Friday.
- (2) External emergency services should be called where appropriate, using the **000** service.
- (3) If a report of a critical incident is not made in the first instance to the Director of Student Support Services, a member of the Campus Security Unit or other staff member must inform the Director of Student Support Services as soon as practicable after the initial report.
- (4) Reports of critical incidents can be made by:
  - (a) one or more staff members or affiliates;
  - (b) a student or group of students;
  - (c) family or friends of a student involved in an incident;
  - (d) the NSW Police;
  - (e) a member of the public; or
  - (f) the media.
- (5) Contact details for emergency and ongoing support and assistance for students affected by critical incidents are set out in Schedule 1.

## 5 Initial response to report

- (1) The Director of Student Support Services or the Campus Security Unit is responsible for co-ordinating the initial response to the report of a critical incident.
- (2) The initial response will occur within 24 hours of the receipt of the report.
- (3) The Director of Student Support Services or the Campus Security Unit will take all reasonable steps to secure the immediate safety and welfare of the affected student(s).
- (4) The Director of Student Support Services will oversee the process of gathering information to:
  - (a) determine the nature of the incident;
  - (b) establish a clear understanding of the known facts;
  - (c) identify the affected student(s) and obtain their contact details;
  - (d) determine the current whereabouts of the affected student(s);
  - (e) assess the welfare of the affected student(s);
  - (f) arrange medical treatment for the affected student(s), as necessary; and
  - (g) arrange counselling for the affected student(s), as necessary.

**Note:** Where appropriate, information about the incident or the affected student(s) can be sourced from social media.

## 6 Managing the incident

- (1) Depending on the type of incident, an Emergency Response Team (ERT) will be activated. The ERT will include the Director of Student Support Services.
- (2) Where appropriate, a Crisis Management Committee (CMC) will also be activated.

**Note:** Further detailed information about the University's response to emergencies can be found on the [Safety Health and Wellbeing](#) website.

**Note:** Where an ERT or CMC is activated, the Director of Student Support Services or their case manager will perform the following functions in respect of students. Other relevant members of the ERT or CMC will be responsible for managing the incident in respect of its impact on infrastructure, staff and members of the public.
- (3) The Director of Student Support Services may act as case manager, or appoint an appropriate member of the staff of the office of Student Support Services to act as case manager.
- (4) A case manager who is not the Director of Student Support Services must keep the Director of Student Support Services informed of planned response strategies and ongoing developments in the management of the incident.
- (5) The case manager will immediately notify the Deputy Vice-Chancellor (Education) of any critical incident:
  - (a) involving the death of a student;
  - (b) involving multiple students or staff;
  - (c) requiring access to emergency funds; or
  - (d) that is reported in the media or otherwise attracts a large amount of attention or publicity.

- (6) In the event of an emergency or the death of a student, the case manager will also immediately notify the Chancellor, Vice-Chancellor and the relevant communications team.
- (7) To facilitate the management and resolution of any type of critical incident involving students, the case manager is responsible for:
  - (a) where appropriate, notifying and liaising with any or all of:
    - (i) the Manager of Security Services;
    - (ii) the Deputy Registrar;
    - (iii) the Director, Compliance and Student Affairs;
    - (iv) the Director, Safety, Health and Wellbeing;
    - (v) the Deans of relevant Faculties or the Heads of School and Deans of relevant University Schools;
    - (vi) the Registrar;
    - (vii) the Deputy Vice-Chancellor (Education);
    - (viii) the Vice-Chancellor;
    - (ix) the Chancellor;
    - (x) external and emergency providers, including doctors and hospitals;
    - (xi) government agencies, including the Department of Foreign Affairs and Trade, the Department of Home Affairs and AusAID;
    - (xii) relevant embassies and consulates;
    - (xiii) chaplains and religious personnel;
  - (b) where appropriate:
    - (i) ensuring that appropriate contact is made with the student's next of kin or other family;
    - (ii) assisting the student and their family with travel arrangements to or from Sydney;
    - (iii) arranging counselling; and
  - (c) where necessary and appropriate, accessing emergency funds to provide for:
    - (i) transport to or from the place of the incident;
    - (ii) clothing, food or other supplies for the affected student(s); or
    - (iii) emergency housing or hotel accommodation.
- (8) The release of any personal information to external parties in accordance with subclause (7) must comply with the University's [Privacy Procedures 2018](#).

## 7 Managing student fatalities

- (1) In the event of the death of a student, the case manager is responsible for ensuring that appropriate contact is made with the deceased student's next of kin or other family.
- (2) If the NSW Police contacts the University for next of kin details, the case manager will seek approval to release the requested information through the University's Archives and Records Management Services.

- (3) The case manager will prepare letters of condolence to be sent on behalf of the relevant Director, Dean, or Head of School and Dean, and the Vice-Chancellor. The letters will:
- (a) be respectful of the student's culture or country of origin;
  - (b) where appropriate (taking into account the location and language of the student's family), be translated;
  - (c) reflect the student's engagement in University and student life; and
  - (d) be provided to the student's family:
    - (i) at the student's funeral;
    - (ii) at a meeting by the student's family with an official delegation of the University; or
    - (iii) if the student's family does not wish the University to have a delegate attend the funeral, or to attend a meeting with the University, through official correspondence with the student's family.
- Note:** An official delegation of the University may include the Deputy Vice-Chancellor (Education), the Dean or Head of School and Dean or other faculty or University school representative, and a representative of Student Support Services or CAPS.
- (4) It is not usual practice for the University to confer an award posthumously, unless the student has substantially completed the requirements for their degree.
- Note: For information on aegrotat and posthumous awards, see clause 92A of the [Coursework Policy 2014](#), and sections 2.24, 3.24 and 4.23 of the *University of Sydney (Higher Degree by Research) Rule 2011*.
- (5) The case manager will advise the Student Records Unit and the Compliance Unit of the student's death, to:
- (a) ensure that the student's record is updated; and
  - (b) where relevant, facilitate appropriate reporting to the Department of Home Affairs via the PRISMS.

## 8 Student support

- (1) In consultation with the relevant faculty or University school, Student Support Services may provide the following support to students who are affected by a critical incident:
- (a) expedited counselling appointments;
  - (b) in situ (faculty or University school) counselling support;
  - (c) a 'quiet space' reflection room;
  - (d) a public grief or sorrow book;
  - (e) support for Special Consideration applications;
  - (f) ongoing assistance and recovery; and
  - (g) links to community agencies.
- (2) The case manager will advise the relevant faculty or University school of the available support services clearly, and early in the development of a critical incident response timeline.

## 9 Additional support for international students and their families

- (1) Where appropriate in the event of a critical incident resulting in serious injury and hospitalisation, the University may offer financial assistance to the student's parents, to enable them to meet travel costs and visit the student in hospital.
- (2) Where appropriate in the event of the death of an international student, the University may offer financial assistance to the student's parents for:
  - (a) travel to and from Sydney;
  - (b) accommodation costs while in Sydney; and
  - (c) translation costs while in Sydney.
- (3) The University will work with the student's family and any relevant insurance provider to expedite appropriate arrangements for:
  - (a) either or both of a funeral or cremation in Australia; or
  - (b) repatriation of the student's body to their home country.
- (4) Where appropriate, and depending on the nature of the critical incident, the case manager will liaise with the embassy or consulate of the student's country of origin. Discussions may include protocols and arrangements for:
  - (a) greeting and supporting the student's family;
  - (b) transport and accommodation;
  - (c) a funeral, cremation or repatriation of the student's body;
  - (d) provision of legal services;
  - (e) responding to inquiries from the NSW Police or State Coroner.

## 10 Critical incidents involving international students under 18 years

- (1) In the event of a critical incident that disrupts or has the potential to disrupt the welfare arrangements of one or more international students who are under 18 years of age, the University will:
  - (a) assess the current suitability of the student's accommodation, support and welfare arrangements;
  - (b) contact any relevant service provider engaged by the University to provide welfare arrangements;
  - (c) where necessary, arrange emergency accommodation and organise alternative support and welfare arrangements for the student; and
  - (d) contact the student's parents or legal guardians as soon as possible following the incident.
- (2) If an international student who is under 18 years of age goes missing from their approved accommodation and cannot be found or contacted, the University will report the student to the Department of Home Affairs, using the required PRISMS pro forma letter, within 24 hours.

Note: The University will use this report as a last resort. For information on the accommodation, support and welfare requirements for international students under 18 years of age, see the [Under 18 International Students Policy 2016](#) and the [Under 18 International Students Procedures 2016](#).

- (3) The University will make all reasonable efforts to immediately notify the parents or legal guardians of an international student under 18 years of age, if the University can no longer take responsibility for the student's welfare.

## 11 Record keeping

The case manager(s) will make and keep appropriate records of all critical incidents and their management, in accordance with the University's [Recordkeeping Policy 2017](#).

## 12 Privacy

The case manager(s) will collect, use, disclose and store personal information and health information relating to critical incidents in accordance with the [Privacy Policy 2017](#) and the [Privacy Procedures 2018](#).

## 13 Rescissions and replacements

This document replaces the following, which is rescinded as from the date of commencement of this document:

- (1) *Serious Incidents Involving Overseas Students Procedures 2011*, which commenced on 21 May 2012.

## NOTES

### *Critical Incidents Involving Students Procedures 2018*

Date adopted: 18 December 2018

Date registered: 20 December 2018

Date commenced: 18 December 2018

Administrator: Deputy Vice-Chancellor (Education)

Review date: 18 December 2023

Rescinded documents: *Serious Incidents Involving Overseas Students Procedures 2011*

Related documents: *Higher Education Support Act 2003 (Cth)*

*Education Services for Overseas Students Act 2000 (Cth)*

*Privacy and Personal Protection Information Act 1988 (NSW)*

*State Records Act 1988 (NSW)*

*National Code of Practice for Providers of Education and Training to Overseas Students 2008*

*Code of Conduct – Staff and Affiliates*





*Serious Incident and Business Continuity Policy 2013*

*Coursework Policy 2014*

*Privacy Policy 2017*

*Recordkeeping Policy 2017*

*Under 18 International Students Policy 2016*

*Privacy Procedures 2018*

*Under 18 International Students Procedures 2016*

## **AMENDMENT HISTORY**

**Provision      Amendment**

**Commencing**

## **SCHEDULE 1 – Contacts for students affected by critical incidents**

### **Emergency contacts**

- (1) In an emergency, students should contact emergency services by dialling triple zero (**000**).
- (2) Students who feel unsafe on campus or are concerned for someone else's safety can also contact Campus Security on **9351 3333**, 24 hours a day.
- (3) Students who have experienced sexual assault can contact:
  - (a) NSW Rape Crisis Service on **1800 424 017**, 24 hours a day;
  - (b) **1800RESPECT** on **1800 737 732** or online via [www.1800respect.org.au](http://www.1800respect.org.au), 24 hours a day;
  - (c) Royal Prince Alfred (RPA) Hospital Sexual Assault Service on **9515 9040** (Monday to Friday) or **9515 6111** (after hours). Counselling and medical services are available for anyone who has been sexually assaulted. Campus Security can arrange transport to RPA.

### **External contacts**

- (1) NSW Police Assistance Line – contact **131 444**, 24 hours a day.
- (2) Department of Home Affairs – contact **131 881**, 9am to 5pm, Monday to Friday.

### **Internal contacts**

- (1) **1800 SYD HLP (1800 793 457)** from 9am to 5pm, Monday to Friday;
- (2) Student Liaison Officers – contact **8627 6808** or email [safer-communities.officer@sydney.edu.au](mailto:safer-communities.officer@sydney.edu.au), 8.30am-5.30pm, Monday to Friday;
- (3) on campus emergency housing - contact Student Accommodation Services on **9351 3322**, 9am to 5pm, Monday to Friday;
- (4) security services - contact Campus Security on **9351 3333**, 24 hours a day;
- (5) health services - contact the University Health Service on **9351 3484**, 8:30am to 5pm, Monday to Friday;
- (6) counselling services – contact Counselling and Psychological Services (CAPS) on **8627 8433**, 9am to 5pm, Monday to Friday;
- (7) academic support - [special consideration](#) for examinations and assessments; and
- (8) student advocacy services – undergraduate students: contact the [Student Representative Council](#) (SRC) on **9660 5222**, 9am-5pm, Monday to Friday; postgraduate students: contact the [Sydney University Postgraduate Representative Association](#) (SUPRA) on **9351 3715**, 9am to 5pm (closed 12-1pm), Monday to Friday.