Critical Incident Policy and Procedure

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APIC
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1. Purpose

This policy provides a clear framework for responding to and managing critical incidents and ensuring appropriate action is taken to address any underlying causes. The procedures cover the immediate action to be taken, the and the recording

2. Scope

Unless otherwise stated this policy applies to all APIC students, whether on or off-campus. Some overseas students may require additional support because they will not have close family available, and the College will endeavour to assist in these cases as much as possible.

3. Definitions

Term	Definition
Critical Incident	A **Critical incident** includes a traumatic event, or the threat of such (within or outside Australia), which causes or is likely to cause extreme stress, fear, or injury. This includes physical or psychological harm, extreme emotional distress, fear or injury. These may include and are not limited to: • Any fatality or serious injury, or threat of these, that affect or are likely to affect staff or students • Missing student • Attempted suicide of a student • Life threatening illness/injury of a student or staff • Sexual and/or physical assault of a student or staff • Threats or acts of violence by or towards students, staff and/or their family members • Severe verbal or psychological aggression • Staff and/or students being taken hostage • Sudden or unexpected death or suicide of colleague, classmate, teacher • Natural disasters • Cybersecurity attack and business continuity • Terrorist attacks including bomb threats • issues such as domestic violence, physical, sexual, or other abuse

4. Principles

1. The College maintains its duty of care towards students at the College
2. The College respects the privacy of students and staff and acts in accordance with its Privacy Policy.

5. Policy

The college will ensure that a process is in place that will manage critical incidents.

The college will:

1. minimise the risk to its students and staff of critical incidents
2. protect its assets and environment
3. minimise disruption to teaching and other activities caused by critical incidents
4. protect its reputation as a safe and supporting educational provider.

The college will take action to minimise the risk of a critical incident occurring by planning for, preparing against and encouraging the detection of any possible risks and mitigate them.

If a critical incident occurs, the college will respond in a timely and professional manner with the idea of minimising harm to our students and staff.

After a critical incident, the college will attempt to minimise disruption and to continue normal operations as quickly as possible but only if the risk of harm has been mitigated.

The process of responding to critical incidents will involve recording the critical incident, learning from it by identifying any gaps, errors or inadequacies that can be addressed and taking steps to minimise risk of the critical incident reoccurring.

6. Procedure

The following steps outline the process to manage a critical incident. It applies to all APIC staff including sessional staff members who may be present when the incident occurs or who may be the first point of contact for the student.

Critical phase

The critical phase is the time immediately after the incident has occurred, or the point in time when the student or staff member first contacts APIC. Staff should assess the situation and ensure that they consider the following:

1. Ensure that the student and or staff member is safe and is receiving adequate medical supervision in a safe environment
2. Ensure that other students are safe
3. Contact relevant authorities as appropriate (e.g., police, ambulance)
4. Determine if evacuation procedures are required to be implemented
5. Report incident to the relevant APIC Manager
6. Once the student is out of danger and receiving medical attention resume activities if appropriate
7. As soon as possible, ascertain what happened and any ongoing problems
8. Support other students or arrange for counselling to occur
9. Address any other immediate needs, that is, additional support, police report, report stolen goods etc.
10. Follow the procedures outlined in Appendix 1 in the case of a death of a student.

Ongoing supervision and follow-up

Once the incident has been managed and necessary contact has been made with relevant personnel, it is important that the student support follows up with the student. This may include:

1. Keeping in contact with the student and relevant family members or close friends while observing the Privacy Policy. Monitor the situation with a daily call
2. Checking that the student is receiving ongoing medical help and counselling if appropriate.
3. Passing on findings to the appropriate manager and other relevant authorities while observing the provisions of the Privacy Policy

Investigation and taking action

To ensure that the incident is accurately recorded and managed, the Registrar or the designated officer shall:

1. Collect facts about the incident (e.g., injuries to person, any witnesses, information from the scene). This may be in written form or using media such as photographs, as appropriate.
2. Examine any work/operating procedures or training that may have impacted the incident.
3. Determine the cause of the accident/incident paying attention to contributing factors, environmental factors, mechanical failure, and systems failure.

Take action that will minimize risk of the critical incident happening again. This includes but is not limited to:

1. Review work procedures, training, and/or safe operating procedures.
2. Document recommendations and communicate results of investigation to the relevant persons or parties.

7. Reporting

The Critical Incident Report form is to be completed and provided with any verbal reports to the Campus Manager

including any recommendation on ways to prevent similar occurrences. Media enquiries should be referred to the Chief Executive Officer. Social media is to be monitored and responded to by the social media officer.

Written reports, endorsed by the student, are to be put on the student's file on the Student Management System, and on ***Critical*** *Incident Register* and sent to the parents of the student and other relevant authorities with the student's written permission.

8. Related Documents

- Critical Incident form
- Sexual Harassment and Sexual Assault Policy and Procedures
- APIC's Critical Incident Register

9. References and Legislation

- Higher Education Support Act 2003
- Tertiary Education Quality and Standards Agency (TEQSA) Act 2011
- Standard 6 of the National Code of Practice for Providers of Education and Training to Overseas Students 2018 (the National Code 2018)
- Standards 2.3.5 and 6.2.1.j of the Higher Education Standards Framework (Threshold Standards) 2021
- Education Services for Overseas Students Act 2000
- NSW Privacy
- Victoria Privacy
- Biosecurity Act 2015
- National Health Security Act 2007
- Esafety.gov.au toolkit

10. Version Control

Document ID	Critical Incident Policy and Procedure
Category	Corporate
Document Owner	Chief Executive Officer (CEO), Registrar
Approved by	Board of Directors

Version	Summary of changes	Approval date	Review Date
1.0	Initial Policy	Board of Directors 3 Feb 2017	Feb 2019
1.1	Minor change to critical incident recording form and to register	9 Sep 2017	Sept 2019
2.0	Major updates to harmonise with the other two institutes.	16 December 2022	Dec 2024
2.1	Minor changes to the job titles	7 July 2023	Dec 2024

11. Appendix 1- Procedures in Case of a Student Death

In the case of a critical incident that results in the death of a student the Academic Registrar should form a taskforce comprising relevant officers. The taskforce is responsible for:

- Assessing risk and planning immediate response actions
- Liaising with emergency and other services
- Allocating individual roles and responsibilities for tasks
- Contacting appropriate persons which may include:
- Next of kin
    - Other students (those involved, friends)
    - Hospital
    - Counselling/support staff
    - The person assigned to deal with the media
    - Teaching/academic and other relevant staff
    - Student representatives
    - Contact Department of Home Affairs (if relevant) or the Consulate, Sponsor, Accommodation provider (for overseas students).
- Liaising with other external bodies
- Arranging counselling of students and staff not directly involved in the incident
- Keeping careful records throughout the process
- Establishing what costs can be met by the College
- Discussing fee reimbursement
- Investigating any insurance issues
- Arranging condolence letters to everyone involved
- Arranging Thank you letters
- Offering follow up support to those involved
- Reviewing critical incident procedure
- For overseas students, the responsibilities of the taskforce may also extend to:
    - Arranging a funeral or memorial service
    - Obtaining a copy of the death certificate and related documents
    - Arranging for repatriation
- Arranging for the student's possessions to be stored or sent to his/her family.