



GLOBAL COLLEGE AUSTRALASIA

CRITICAL INCIDENT MANAGEMENT

POLICY AND PROCEDURE



RTO No: 45088 | CRICOS Code: 03564F



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PURPOSE

- a. This Policy and Procedure sets out an effective and transparent approach to responding to and managing critical incidents affecting GCA students and staff, specifically incidents causing or threatening to cause injury, extreme stress, or fear. The approach ensures the compliance of Global College Australasia (GCA) with mandated standards and, in particular, with the National Code of Practice for Providers of Education and Training to Overseas Students 2018 (NCP).

SCOPE

- b. This Policy and Procedure applies to all GCA students and staff, as well as third parties used by GCA to deliver education or ancillary services and encompasses all critical incidents involving students regardless of whether the student was engaged in an GCA activity.

POLICY STATEMENT

- c. Responding to and effectively managing critical incidents is an institutional priority of the highest order.
- d. GCA has an effective and clearly communicated framework for managing and responding to critical incidents, including an overall plan calibrated for particular types of events and, where relevant, plans for particular operational areas.
- e. GCA has a designated Critical Incident Response and Management Team with defined roles and responsibilities.
- f. Where GCA students or staff are engaged in GCA activities on sites operated by third-party partners, including industry placements, there must be effective critical incident management policies and procedures, or their functional equivalents, in place at those sites.
- g. Critical incident procedures are accurately, clearly, and comprehensively communicated, including on the website, in the Student Handbook, at student orientations and staff inductions, and in pre-arrival information for international students.
- h. Potential critical incidents are evaluated as soon as practicable to determine whether they are critical incidents, and if they are, appropriate response and management actions are immediately triggered.
- i. Critical incident response and management systems and processes comply with obligations under Standard 6 of the NCP and Standard 2.3.5 of the Higher Education Standards Framework (Threshold Standards) 2021.
- j. Critical incident response and management systems and processes comply with relevant Commonwealth government and state government protocols, standards, and legislative requirements, including reporting obligations.
- k. All communications in relation to a critical incident comply with relevant privacy legislation and treat personal information confidentially, disclosing it only to those persons who have a right to the information by virtue of their role in responding to or managing the critical incident as required by law or their personal relationship with affected parties.



- l. Critical incidents can impede a student's ability to complete their course, and, therefore, GCA has in place an effective, student-focussed response with ongoing academic and well-being student support.
- m. After any critical incident, there is a thorough evaluation of the effectiveness of the response to and management of that incident, and any deficiencies identified will be immediately rectified.
- n. Critical incident systems and procedures are regularly reviewed, utilising feedback from GCA staff and students, external expert advice, and benchmarking to ensure best practice is embedded.

PROCEDURE

1 Critical Incident Response and Management Team

- o. The Critical Incident Response Team (CIRT) is responsible for the response to and continuing management of critical incidents. A critical incident is a tragic or traumatic event or situation or the threat of such, both within and outside Australia, affecting students or staff, and that has the potential to cause unusually strong emotional reactions.
- p. Critical incidents, which encompass both life-threatening and non-life-threatening events, include but are not limited to:

- missing students; or
- domestic violence, physical and sexual assault, or other abuse; or
- death, serious injury, or threat thereof; or
- life-threatening illness affecting students; or
- fire, bomb threat, explosion, gas or chemical hazard, water leak; or
- severe verbal or psychological aggression directed towards students or staff; or
- self-harm or drug incidents requiring medical attention; or
- student or staff witnessing a serious accident or violent event; or
- arrest of a student or staff member; or natural disasters.

- q. The membership of the CIRT is constituted as follows:

- is the Director and Chief Executive Officer; and
 - NCM, appointed by the CEO; and
 - GCA any staff members, appointed by the Director/CEO.
- r. All members of the CIRT must have accurate knowledge of this Policy and Procedure, GCA critical incident response and management systems and processes, and mandatory reporting obligations.
 - s. Access to the CIRT is published on the website and in the Student Handbook, as are the available means for communicating with the CIRT.
 - t. The CIRT may co-opt individuals with particular expertise to the CIRT in the context of specific critical incidents.
 - u. The CIRT ensures there is an effectively communicated CIRT Emergency Contact number and that there are designated individuals with an appropriate understanding of GCA response and management systems rostered to answer it 24/7.



- v. During and in the aftermath of a critical incident, the CIRT meets with the regularity required to maintain an effective response to and management of the incident.
- w. Meetings of the CIRT are minuted.

2 Reporting critical incidents

- x. GCA staff or students who become aware, directly or indirectly, of a critical incident or an incident that is potentially critical should report it immediately via the CIRT Emergency Contact number:

1300 886 340
- y. The designated individual answering the CIRT Emergency Contact number collects all readily available information, including witness reports, and assesses the probable seriousness of the incident.
- z. If the incident is assessed as a potential critical incident, the designated individual notifies relevant external responders, such as emergency services or the police, as appropriate and as required by legislation and notifies the Director/CEO.

3 Responding to and managing a critical incident

- aa. If the NCM judges that the incident is of a degree of seriousness that it is a potentially critical incident, then the NCM immediately convenes a meeting of the CIRT, either face-to-face, online, or by telephone.
- bb. The CIRT assesses the incident and determines if it should be responded to and managed as a critical incident.
- cc. If circumstances prevent the NCM from convening a meeting of the CIRT within a reasonable time frame, then the NCM determines if the incident should be responded to and managed as a critical incident.
- dd. If it is determined that the incident is a critical incident, then:

a member of the CIRT, who may be the NCM, is designated to oversee operational aspects of the response to and management of the incident and to be the key contact regarding operational matters; and

any existing response and management plan developed for the type of incident that has occurred is implemented after confirming that the characteristics of the current incident do not require modification of that plan; or

if there is no existing response and management plan developed for the type of incident that has occurred, the CIRT develops and implements a plan of appropriate actions and interventions; and either

any existing communication plan developed for the type of incident that has occurred is implemented after confirming that the characteristics of the current incident do not require modification of that plan; or

if there is no existing communications plan developed for the type of incident that has occurred, the CIRT develops and implements a communications plan, ensuring that it complies with relevant privacy legislation and that personal information relating to the incident is treated confidentially and disclosed only to those persons who have a right to the information by virtue of their role in the process as required by law or their personal relationship with affected parties; and

it is determined what external advice, including legal advice, be sought given the nature of the incident, and immediate steps are taken to secure that advice and to consider it; and



effective mechanisms for tracking the impact of response and management plans are put in place, including enabling the modification of plans if they are not proving effective; and

external organisations or individuals should be notified of the critical incident, such as the Department of Home Affairs or the Embassy or Consulate of the country of citizenship of any international student affected, are identified, noting that communication with such organisations or individuals must not be initiated until any formal police notification processes are completed; and

appropriate support for individuals involved in or affected by critical incidents is put in place and resourced.

4 Notifying students and staff

ee. The CIRT will advise all students of the critical incident if, and only if, the ongoing health, welfare, and safety of the student body as a whole is improved by so doing and provided that the provision of such advice respects privacy, maintains confidentiality, and is truthful.

ff. The CIRT will advise all staff of the critical incident if, and only if, the ongoing health, welfare, and safety of the staff as a whole is improved by so doing and provided that the provision of such advice respects privacy, maintains confidentiality, and is truthful.

5 The Critical Incident Report and review

gg. The Critical Incident Report:

- describes what happened; and
- describes what actions were taken by the CIRT and their rationale; and
- describes changes to action plans made to improve the effectiveness of response to and management of the incident; and
- provides initial assessments of what worked well and what didn't; and
- describes the resolution of the incident.

hh. The NCM is responsible for:

- completing the Critical Incident Report; and
- creating and maintaining a confidential file for the critical incident, which should include the Report itself, witness statements, witness contact details, relevant findings, police reports, relevant ongoing information, details of the review, and evaluation of the response and management plans; and
- ensuring that the critical incident file is securely stored in the records management system with the requirement that it be maintained for at least two (2) years after the cessation of enrolment of any students involved in the incident; and
- ensuring that any required external reporting relevant to the critical incident is completed; and
- initiating a review of the response to and management of the critical incident in order to identify deficiencies in the procedure and related plans, actions, interventions, and the like in order to ensure deficiencies are remedied and feasible improvements implemented.

6 Ongoing support

ii. The NCM is responsible for:

maintaining contact with and monitoring the need for well-being, including psychological support, for individuals who have been directly or indirectly adversely affected by the critical incident; and



providing advice regarding external support available in addition to support provided or organised by the GCA; and in the event of the death of a student, ensuring compassionate and culturally sensitive support is offered in matters relating to memorial services, funeral arrangements, or repatriation of the body.

7 Emergency and other contact information

jj. The following contact information is readily accessible on the GCA website:

Internal:

GCA CIRT Emergency Contact number: 1300 886 340

External:

police, fire, ambulance: 000 or 112 on mobile phones.

community organisations, phone counselling services, etc. Beyond Blue 1300 22 4636.

a telephone interpreting service is available 24/7 at 131 450. (GCA will cover the costs of interpreting services required in the response to and management of critical incidents.).

Overseas Student Health Cover Providers: <https://www.studyaustralia.gov.au/en/plan-your-move/overseas-student-health-cover-oshc>

Department of Foreign Affairs and Trade: 1300 555 135.

Department of Home Affairs: 1300 558 287.

Contact information for individuals:

student contact details and their emergency contact details are maintained securely in the student information system. (Students are required to ensure contact details are current and are regularly reminded of this requirement.).

staff contact details and emergency contact details are maintained securely in the human resources information system. (Staff are required to ensure contact details are current and are required to confirm details annually.)

RESPONSIBILITIES

8 Compliance, monitoring, and review

kk. It is the responsibility of all GCA students, staff, and decision-making authorised management, as well as third parties used by GCA to deliver education or ancillary services, to comply with this Policy and Procedure.

ll. The Director/CEO are responsible for ensuring that this Policy and Procedure aligns with relevant legislation, government policy, as well as GCA internal requirements, strategies, and values.

mm. The Chief Executive Officer is responsible for the implementation of and ensuring compliance with this Policy and Procedure.

9 Reporting

nn. After any critical incident, the Director/ Chief Executive Officer will provide a summary of findings and actions arising from the review of the response to and management of the critical incident.



10 Records management

- oo. Employees must manage records in accordance with the Records Management Policy and Procedure. This includes retaining these records in a recognised GCA recordkeeping information system.
- pp. GCA records must be retained for the minimum period specified in the relevant Retention and Disposal Schedule. Before disposing of any records, approval must be sought from the GCA Director/CEO.

DEFINITIONS

- qq. Terms not defined in this document may be in the glossary.

11 Terms and definitions

- rr. **Critical incident:** tragic or traumatic events or situations or the threat of such, both within and outside Australia, affecting students or staff and which have the potential to cause unusually strong emotional reactions.

RELATED LEGISLATION AND DOCUMENTS

- ss. National Code of Practice for Providers of Education and Training to Overseas Students 2018.
- tt. Privacy Act 1988 (Cth).

FEEDBACK

- uu. Feedback about this document can be emailed to the Director/CEO at GCA.

APPROVAL AND REVIEW DETAILS

Approval and Review	Details
Next Review Date	24/05/2025

Approval and Amendment History	Details
Original Approval Authority and Date	Director/CEO
Amendment Authority and Date	Director/CEO
Notes	