

PP6.0 Critical Incident Policy and Associated Procedures

Policy area	Student Support
Standards	National Code 2018 - Standard 6
Responsibility	CEO/PEO, Academic Manager & Student Services Manager
Classification	Internal/External

1. Purpose

The purpose of this policy is to ensure that Sydney City College of Management (SCCM) has a clear framework for responding to critical incidents that may affect students or staff. This includes incidents that have a significant impact on the health, safety, or wellbeing of individuals, or that may affect the delivery of training and compliance with student visa conditions.

2. Policy Statement

SCCM is committed to:

- Providing an immediate, appropriate, and coordinated response to critical incidents.
- Ensuring the safety and wellbeing of students and staff at all times.
- Meeting its obligations under the ESOS Act 2000 and National Code 2018 by reporting critical incidents where required.
- Maintaining accurate records of all incidents and responses for compliance and audit purposes.

3. Definitions

- **Critical Incident:** A traumatic event, or the threat of such, which causes extreme stress, fear, or injury. It may be an emergency requiring immediate action.
- Examples include but are not limited to:
 - Death or serious injury of a student or staff member.
 - Missing student (especially under 18 or vulnerable learners).
 - Serious illness, accident, or medical emergency.
 - Natural disasters (fire, flood, earthquake, etc.).

- Acts of violence, assault, or threat to personal safety.
- Serious mental health crisis or attempted self-harm.
- Critical incidents involving international students that may impact their welfare or visa compliance.

4. Guidelines

4.1 Immediate Response

- SCCM will respond immediately to all reported critical incidents to ensure the safety and wellbeing of students, staff, and visitors.
- Staff are required to prioritise safety, and where applicable, contact emergency services without delay.

4.2 Critical Incident Response Team (CIRT)

- The Critical Incident Response Team (CIRT) will be activated once a critical incident is reported.
- The CIRT will be led by the Operations Manager (or their authorised delegate) and may include representatives from Student Services, Admissions, Compliance, and Senior Management where appropriate.
- The Operations Manager is responsible for:
 - Coordinating the overall response,
 - Assigning responsibilities to team members,
 - Managing communications with emergency services, families, and authorities,
 - Overseeing documentation and follow-up actions.

4.3 Emergency Services Contact

- Where necessary, emergency services will be contacted immediately by dialling **000** (police, ambulance, or fire).
- SCCM staff must not delay contacting emergency services if there is an immediate threat to life, health, or safety.

4.4 Communication with Family and Emergency Contacts

- Once the situation is under control, SCCM will inform the student's family members, guardians, or nominated emergency contacts of the incident.
- Communication will be managed by the Operations Manager (or delegate) in a sensitive and timely manner, respecting cultural awareness and privacy obligations.

4.5 Documentation

- Every critical incident must be documented using the Critical Incident Report Form.
- Records must include incident details, individuals involved, actions taken, communications made, and follow-up arrangements.
- The completed form will be entered into the Critical Incident Register and retained for compliance and audit purposes.

4.6 Reporting Requirements

- Where a critical incident involves an overseas student and is reportable under the ESOS Act 2000 and National Code 2018 (Standard 6.4 & 6.5), SCCM will notify the relevant authorities.
- This may include reporting through PRISMS to the Department of Home Affairs or notifying other regulatory bodies (e.g., WorkSafe).
- Notifications will be made within the required timeframes, and a record of the notification will be retained in the student's file.

5. Procedures

5.1 Immediate Response

5.1.1 Ensure Safety

- Any staff member who becomes aware of a critical incident must take immediate action to ensure their own safety and that of others.
- If there is an immediate threat to life, health, or safety, the staff member must contact emergency services by dialling 000 (police, ambulance, or fire) without delay.
- Staff should follow SCCM's emergency evacuation and workplace health and safety procedures where relevant (e.g., fire evacuation drills, first aid response).
- The priority at this stage is to stabilise the situation until emergency services or the Critical Incident Response Team (CIRT) takes over.

5.2.2 Report the Incident

- Once safety is reasonably ensured, the staff member must immediately report the incident to the Student Services Manager or directly to the Operations Manager.

- If neither is available, the incident must be reported to the most senior staff member present on site.
- When reporting, staff should provide:
 - A clear description of what occurred.
 - The time and location of the incident.
 - The names of any individuals involved or affected.
 - Any actions already taken (e.g., first aid given, emergency services contacted).
- The staff member must also complete a preliminary entry in the Critical Incident Report Form as soon as practical.

5.3.3 Activate the Critical Incident Response Team (CIRT)

- Upon receiving the report, the Operations Manager (or their delegate) will immediately activate the Critical Incident Response Team (CIRT).
- The CIRT is responsible for:
 - Assessing the severity of the incident.
 - Allocating responsibilities among team members (e.g., liaising with emergency services, contacting family, arranging counselling support).
 - Coordinating communication between staff, students, and external parties.
 - Ensuring all actions are logged for compliance and follow-up.
- The Operations Manager will assume the role of Incident Coordinator until the situation is stabilised.

5.2 Short-Term Response

5.2.1 Provide Support

- The Operations Manager (as Incident Coordinator) will ensure immediate support is arranged for any student(s) or staff directly affected by the incident.
- This may include:
 - Calling an ambulance or arranging urgent medical attention.
 - Providing on-site first aid until professional care arrives.
 - Referring affected students to SCCM's external counsellor under the existing agreement to support their mental health and wellbeing.
 - Offering initial debriefing and emotional support to students or staff witnesses.

- Where appropriate, the Operations Manager or delegated staff member will contact the student's emergency contact, guardian, or family members in a timely and sensitive manner to inform them of the situation.

5.2.2 Internal Communication

- The Operations Manager will notify the CEO/PEO, and relevant staff (such as trainers, student services, and compliance) to ensure coordinated support is provided.
- The incident must be documented in detail using the Critical Incident Report Form, including:
 - Description of the incident,
 - Individuals involved,
 - Actions taken,
 - External services contacted,
 - Immediate follow-up required.
- The incident will then be formally recorded in the Critical Incident Register by the Operations Manager.

5.2.3 External Communication

- The Operations Manager (or delegate) will ensure all relevant external notifications are made as required:
 - Emergency services – follow up and provide ongoing updates if emergency responders are involved.
 - Department of Home Affairs – if the incident impacts an overseas student's enrolment, welfare, or visa conditions, SCCM must report via PRISMS in line with ESOS obligations.
 - Other relevant agencies – e.g.:
 - WorkSafe if the incident occurred in a workplace or training environment and involved injury.
 - Local authorities or health agencies if the incident poses broader community risks (e.g., contagious illness).
- All communications with external bodies must be documented, including dates, times, names of officials contacted, and outcomes of discussions.

5.3 Ongoing Response

5.3.1 Student Welfare

- The Operations Manager will oversee the implementation of ongoing support measures for any affected students.
- This may include:
 - Continuing access to SCCM's external counsellor for professional psychological support.
 - Regular check-ins from the Student Services team to monitor student wellbeing and engagement.
 - Adjusting training or assessment schedules (e.g., extensions, rescheduled assessments, reduced study load) to allow the student time to recover without academic disadvantage.
 - Liaising with trainers/assessors to ensure academic adjustments are implemented consistently and fairly.
- If the student is an overseas student, SCCM will also monitor their course progression and attendance to ensure compliance with visa requirements while supporting recovery.

5.3.2 Staff Welfare

- SCCM recognises that staff may also be impacted by a critical incident.
- The Operations Manager will arrange:
 - Access to counselling or debriefing sessions for staff directly involved in or affected by the incident.
 - Peer or managerial support to help staff manage stress, anxiety, or trauma.
 - Adjustments to teaching or workload responsibilities, where necessary, to allow staff recovery.

5.3.3 Compliance

- The Operations Manager, in consultation with the Compliance Manager, will ensure all reporting obligations under the ESOS Act 2000 and the National Code 2018 (Standard 6.4 & 6.5) are fully met.
- This includes:
 - Recording and retaining all incident documentation in the Critical Incident Register.

- Filing copies of completed Critical Incident Report Forms, correspondence, and external notifications in the student's or staff member's file.
- Reporting any required changes to enrolment via PRISMS within mandatory timeframes.
- All records will be retained for a minimum of 5 years and will be available for compliance audits and risk management reviews.

5.4 Follow-Up and Review

5.4.1 Debriefing

- After the situation has been stabilised, the Operations Manager will organise a formal debrief session with:
 - Staff directly involved in the incident,
 - Student Services representatives,
 - Any affected students (where appropriate and with sensitivity to their wellbeing).
- The purpose of the debrief is to:
 - Evaluate the effectiveness of SCCM's response to the incident,
 - Identify strengths in the process,
 - Highlight areas where improvements can be made,
 - Provide an opportunity for staff and students to share their experiences and feedback.
- Where required, SCCM may also arrange external facilitators (e.g., counsellors) to lead or support the debrief session.

5.4.2 Review Policies and Procedures

- The Operations Manager, in consultation with the Compliance Manager, will conduct a review of SCCM's emergency and critical incident management procedures following the incident.
- This review will focus on:
 - Identifying any gaps in policy or practice,
 - Assessing whether communication channels and responsibilities were clear,
 - Updating emergency and incident management procedures as needed,
 - Ensuring staff training requirements are addressed (e.g., refresher training on incident response).

- Recommendations arising from the review will be documented and submitted to Senior Management for approval and implementation.

5.4.3 Documentation and Record Keeping

- The Critical Incident Report Form must be fully completed by the Operations Manager (or delegate) and signed off by Senior Management.
- All related documentation must be securely stored, including:
 - The completed Incident Report Form,
 - Any internal correspondence and meeting notes,
 - Records of actions taken,
 - Reports or notifications submitted to regulators or government agencies.
- Records must be filed in both the individual student's or staff member's file (as relevant) and in SCCM's Critical Incident Register.
- All documentation will be retained for a minimum of 5 years for compliance, audit, and risk management purposes.

6. Roles and Responsibilities

- **All Staff:** Must immediately report critical incidents and take reasonable action to ensure safety.
- **Admissions Officer / Student Services Officer:** First point of contact; responsible for logging the incident and notifying the Academic Manager.
- **Operations Manager:** Leads the Critical Incident Response Team, manages communication with students, staff, families, and external authorities.
- **CEO / PEO and Compliance Manager:** Oversees compliance reporting and ensures continuous improvement in policies and procedures.

7. Staff Training and Awareness

- All staff will receive induction training on SCCM's Critical Incident Policy and Procedures as part of their commencement.
- Annual refresher training will be conducted to ensure staff remain familiar with their roles and responsibilities in managing critical incidents.
- Training will include:

- Emergency response procedures (e.g., evacuation, contacting emergency services).
- Reporting requirements and use of the Critical Incident Report Form.
- Roles of the Critical Incident Response Team (CIRT) and escalation pathways.
- Mental health first aid awareness and referral processes, including SCCM's agreement with an external counsellor.
- The Operations Manager is responsible for ensuring training is delivered and records of attendance are maintained.

8. Record Keeping

- All critical incidents are to be documented in the Critical Incident Report Form.
- Records must be entered into the Critical Incident Register and retained for a minimum of 5 years.
- Where the incident relates to an overseas student, all PRISMS reporting must be completed within required timeframes.

9. Related documents to consider with this policy

- Complaints Handling Policy
- Appeals Handling Policy
- Student Code of Conduct
- Deferral, Suspension and Cancellation Policy
- Student Records Retention and Management Policy
- Critical Incident Report Form
- Critical Incident Register

10. Reference(s) to Standards 6-National Code 2018

The provider must have a documented **Critical Incident Policy** that outlines how incidents are identified, reported, managed, and reviewed.

1. Immediate Response

- Procedures must include **immediate action steps**, such as contacting emergency services, securing the area, and notifying relevant internal staff.

2. Notification and Reporting

- The incident must be reported to:
 - **Senior management**
 - **Next of kin/emergency contact** (with consent)
 - **ASQA**, if required
 - **Department of Home Affairs**, if the student's visa may be affected

3. Support Services

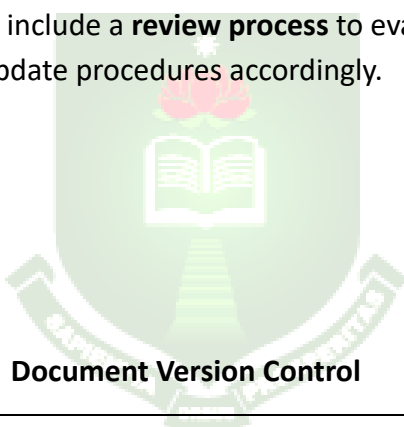
- The provider must ensure **ongoing support** for affected students, including:
 - Counselling
 - Academic support
 - Accommodation assistance
 - Legal or medical referrals

4. Recordkeeping

- All critical incidents must be **documented and securely stored**, including actions taken and outcomes.

5. Review and Continuous Improvement

- The policy must include a **review process** to evaluate the effectiveness of the response and update procedures accordingly.



Document Version Control

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