

Critical Incidents Policy and Procedures

Policy Purpose

The Institute recognises that appropriate infrastructure must be in place to ensure the provision of all necessary support services in the event of a critical incident.

Policy Scope

Support mechanisms and procedures for managing critical incidents are in place. These ensure an effective approach in responding to critical incidents as they occur, including appropriate support and counselling services.

Students and staff are made aware of the Institute's Critical Incident Policy and processes. The policy will be available for reference by staff and students via the Institute Australia website. Students are informed about Critical Incident processes at Orientation.

Appropriate training and information resources are provided to staff.

Definitions of a 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'. Critical incidents are not limited to, but could include:

- missing students
- severe verbal or psychological aggression
- death, serious injury or any threat of these
- natural disaster
- issues such as domestic violence, sexual assault, drug or alcohol abuse
- non-life threatening events which are considered to be of a critical nature due to the affect it may have on a person or persons.

Overseas Students

The Institute recognises the special needs of overseas students which may require additional support, interpreters, communication with relatives in other countries, communication with consulates, and communication and/or reporting to DIAC as soon as possible after a critical incident.

The incident may affect visa conditions or the student's program of study and in the case of a student's absence from classes, return to their home country or death the incident must be reported to DIAC via PRISMS.

When an overseas student sustains serious injuries or dies, the Institute will work closely and respectfully with the student's family to provide necessary and appropriate support. This may include, but is not limited to:

- hiring interpreters
- making arrangements for hospital/funeral/memorial service/repatriation

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- obtaining a death certificate
- assisting with personal items and affairs including insurance issues
- assisting with visa issues

In addition the Institute will notify all relevant and authorised parties, including but not limited to, the accommodation provider, delivery partners and providers of services such as library and internet/computer access.

On-campus Incidents (Swanston Street and South Melbourne)

If the incident is on campus and involves death, serious injury or a threat to life or property, the Campus Manager and General Manager of MEGT Education Group will be contacted immediately.

Off-campus Incidents (including students on work placement)

If the critical incident involves a student or staff member and is off campus, the person receiving the information must immediately contact the Campus Manager or delegate (eg Workplace Coordinator) who will communicate to other staff and relevant persons as appropriate.

Incident reporting

All reports will include as a minimum

- time of incident
- detailed location of the incident
- nature of the incident (e.g. threat, accident, death or injury)
- names and roles of persons involved (e.g. staff, students international or domestic, other parties)

Management of Incidents

Immediate priorities in the management of any incident will be primarily

- actioning evacuation procedures if required
- activating emergency assistance if required
- provision of first aid or medical assistance if required

And then

- information gathering
- reporting to appropriate authorities
- access and provision of relevant support services

The release of information to the press or public rests with the MEGT (Australia) Ltd CEO, the Education Group Manager, or formal delegate, and must comply with the requirements of Privacy legislation and other legal requirements. The MEGT CEO or the Critical Incident Team will identify a staff member as a single point of contact for all media and other public communications (Media Coordinator). It may be necessary to check with the police, ambulance or fire brigade etc, before making a statement. All staff are to avoid making statements which may lead to an impression of blame or fault.

The Institute Manager, or delegate, will convene a meeting with relevant staff and support services personnel who will constitute the Critical Incident

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Team. In particular situations and as required, assistance will be sought from other staff with responsibilities for occupational health and safety, first aid, fire wardens, counseling, and public relations.

The Critical Incident Team will enlist the assistance of other staff or agencies or services as deemed appropriate to ensure timely and effective management of the incident in the interests of the students and/or staff, and the Institute's delivery partners.

The approved incident forms and checklists will be used to ensure communication and management of the incident as well as consistent and complete record keeping.

The first priority of the Critical Incident Team will be:

- to identify the facts to the best of their abilities, what is known and what is not known
- identify persons involved in the critical incident
- to determine how to gather more information
- to develop and implement a plan for responding appropriately in a timely manner
- to develop and implement a plan for communicating with all relevant persons / stakeholders including as relevant: family members, staff, other students, agents, police, medical services, consuls, DIAC, other providers, media

The Critical Incident Team will have ongoing responsibility for:

- ensuring staff, students, family, authorities and services are kept informed in a timely and appropriate manner
- follow-up support services
- review and analysis of the response to the incident regarding the appropriateness in the circumstances, interests of the students, staff, family, MEGT (Australia) Ltd and the Institute and its delivery partners.
- appropriate services and assistance being engaged to assist with the management of the incident
- ensuring appropriate and timely documentation and reporting of the incident and the response to it
- confirming that all legal responsibilities of MEGT (Australia)Ltd and Australian Business Colleges Pty Ltd are considered and met.

Staff Awareness Training

It is essential that all Institute staff who will come in contact with Institute students be made aware of the existence of the Critical Incident policy.

Institute staff will be provided with appropriate and sufficient training to enable them to manage the implementation of this Critical Incident policy and its associated procedures.

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The Institute will ensure that awareness of the Critical Incident policy is included in staff induction.

All Institute staff will be made aware of all relevant community resources in the immediate local area. These include, but are not limited to:

- Emergency services
- Police
- Medical authorities
- Religious leaders
- Ethnic group leaders
- Funeral Directors
- Embassy or Consular representatives.

PROCEDURES

First Steps

1. The first priority in the case of a Critical Incident is to action evacuation procedures if required and provide essential first aid or medical assistance.
2. Report and inform are secondary priorities. The Institute must be notified of any occurrence which could be defined as a Critical Incident involving an Institute student or staff member.
3. As soon as the Institute is advised of a critical incident the following procedures will become effective.
 - Where a Critical Incident policy exists for a site on which the incident occurs, eg one of the workplaces where a student is placed, the procedures will be enacted in concert with the existing site policy. Responsibilities for action may be shared between the Institute and the site involved.
 - Regardless of the existence and details of a site policy, the Institute must be kept informed of all actions and decisions taken in the management of the incident and nothing in the site policy diminishes the Institute's duty of care to staff and students.
4. As soon as possible upon being advised, the Education Group Manager or delegate will liaise with relevant persons and staff to:
 - establish a Critical Incident Team
 - ensure a Media Coordinator and Critical Incident Coordinator are identified (this may be one person with two functions)
 - ensure the Critical Incident policy is implemented
 - ensure a plan is established and communicated to all relevant staff
 - ensure ongoing strategies for managing the incident and response

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- ensure agencies, support organisations and other individuals are involved in responding to the incident, including liaison with police, doctors, hospital staff and other relevant professionals
- legal assistance is provided if required
- family members (identified emergency contact person, next of kin, authorised guardian, parents, siblings) are advised of the incident and advised about what is being done in response, who is involved, and what support is available to them
- appropriate and adequate records are kept

If required, assist family members to arrange travel to Australia, or return of the student to his or her home country.

5. The Critical Incident Team will enlist assistance from and co-opt others as required.

First Response Checklist

Issues to be considered:

- Was evacuation required, and if yes, was it managed appropriately?
- Was first aid or medical assistance provided in a timely manner?
- Was a person appointed to act as Critical Incident Coordinator and/or Media Coordinator?
- Was contact with next of kin/significant others made in a timely and appropriate manner?
- Were there adequate arrangements for informing staff and students?
- Are there guidelines to staff about what information to give students?
- Was there an appropriate written bulletin to staff, if the matter was complex?
- Were there appropriate and sufficient de-briefing for staff and students?
- Was a staff member delegated to deal with telephone/counter enquiries if required?
- Were media and publicity managed appropriately?
- Has there been adequate identification of those students and staff members most closely involved and therefore most at risk?
- Has assistance been sought from others who have experienced a similar past trauma if appropriate?
- Has relevant and culturally appropriate counseling been implemented?
- Is there a plan for ongoing feedback and regular meetings as a post-critical incident activity?

Other considerations which have a link with a critical incidents:

- Availability of mobile phones
- Hiring Independent Interpreters
- Refund of student's fees to pay repatriation or associated expenses
- Consideration of personal items and affairs (household and academic)
- Insurance Matters, OHSC Coverage, Ambulance Cover
- Formal Stress Management interventions required for students and/or staff (release from classes, leave, rescheduled assessment or exams)

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- Arrangements for further debriefing sessions for groups/individuals as required
- Fees issue to be resolved if student cannot continue with their studies
- Legal Issues: helping students gain access to legal assistance if required.
- Arrangements for further debriefing sessions for groups/individuals as required
- Follow up condolences
- Financial Assistance for families of affected person(s) if residing in Australia
- Organising students/staff for hospital visits
- Sensitivity to anniversaries, inquests and legal proceedings

Stress Management Checklist

- Debriefing as soon as possible after the event on an individual or group basis
- Further debriefing - one or more days after the incident (group basis)
- Follow up 2 - 6 weeks later - (individual or group basis)
- Ongoing counselling as required (staff and their families can access MEGT (Australia) Ltd Employee Assistance Program)
- Recovery time for staff involved and the Coordinating Team members.

Student Records Checklist

- Ensure the following as a minimum is kept and up-to-date within the students records, and can be made available in hard copy if required:
- Colour Photograph (from ID CARD)
- Copy of Passport, including number, photo page and visa page
- Student's address and telephone number
- Student's religion if provided
- Emergency contact telephone, with next of kin details, agent or sponsor (if applicable)
- Any other identification details - student ID, course details,
- Known Medical conditions, allergy information etc.

Staff Awareness Training

The following considerations should be included in critical incidents staff awareness training

- Attitude and perceptions – how staff present and manage themselves can be critical in effective management of the incident
- Effective communication skills are essential to effective management of a critical incident - Listening to what is said and what is not said is a key component of this
- Making use of networks, community groups, cultural groups and religious groups should be considered to provide support to students, family, friends and staff – persons injured or directly effected by the critical incident as well as those providing support to them may benefit from this broader support circle
- Culturally, ethnically, religiously and personally sensitive and appropriate responses by staff will reduce escalation or complication of the situation
- Available services and support, and how to access them

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- Self protection is important – you can not help others effectively if you are overly stressed or become injured
- Staff will not be singled out to take sole responsibility for management of the incident

Timelines

The successful management of critical incidents depends on the Institute taking appropriate action and providing support during and after a critical incident.

Police Involvement

Where critical incidents are cases of sudden unexpected death, injury or disaster, the police and others must be contacted.

The police are required to investigate all cases of sudden unexpected death. If the injury or death results from a criminal act, such as assault, the police will also need to be contacted.

Police actions include:

- Recording a report of the incident
- Where appropriate investigating the incident
- Reporting death to the Coroner
- Notifying next of kin in cases of death
- Obtaining official identification of the deceased (this must be done by someone who has known the deceased for some time)
- Conducting investigations on behalf of the Coroner - for example, interviewing witnesses and others who may have been involved, collecting clothing and other items for use in evidence, delivering specimens for analysis.

Responsibility	General Manager (MEGT Education Group)
Policy Developed By	Management Team
Policy Endorsed By	Continuous Improvement Committee 30/8/2010
Policy Complies with	AQTF 2007 and National Code 2007
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