

Critical Incident Management Policy

Effective Date: 2025.04.15

Last Reviewed: 2025.04.03

Version: v2 2025.04.15

1. Purpose

The purpose of this policy is to outline the Alphacrucis University College (AC) framework in preparing for, responding to and recovering from a critical incident.

2. Scope

This policy applies to all AC staff and students on all AC campuses, and also includes any tenants on AC premises.

3. Definitions

- 3.1. **Critical Incident:** A critical incident is defined as a tragic or traumatic event or situation impacting a student/s and/or staff member/s which has the potential to adversely affect AC staff, students and/or operations and its long-term prospects and/or reputation. A critical incident is further defined by the ESOS Act and National Code 2018 as a traumatic event, or the threat of such (within or outside Australia), which causes extreme stress, fear or injury to international students. Examples of critical incidents include pandemics, armed conflicts, and natural disasters.
- 3.2. **International student:** is defined as an Overseas student per the Education Services for Overseas Students Act 2000 (ESOS Act).
- 3.3. **Overseas student:** An overseas student is not an Australian or New Zealand citizen an Australian permanent resident or holder of an Australian permanent humanitarian visa. An overseas student is defined as a person who holds an Australian student visa, whether they are within or outside of Australia.
- 3.4. **ESOS Act:** means Education Services for Overseas Students Act 2000.
- 3.5. **PRISMS:** means the Provider Registration and International Student Management System.
- 3.6. **AC Risk Management Plan:** A plan that outlines how potential risks will be identified, assessed, and managed at AC. It serves as a proactive guide for anticipating, mitigating, and monitoring risks to minimise their impact on AC and all its stakeholders.
- 3.7. **Remedial actions:** refer to the steps taken to address and resolve the immediate and long-term effects of the incident. These actions are aimed at minimising damage, restoring normal operations, and preventing recurrence. They typically involve corrective measures, such as providing support, investigating causes, improving protocols, and implementing safety enhancements.

4. Policy Statement

- 4.1. Critical incident management is part of the AC Risk Management Plan which ensures risk assessments have been undertaken with respect to the likelihood and impact of potential adverse events on AC operations. AC has an obligation to document critical incidents in respect to international students.
- 4.2. Critical incidents are classified into three levels:
- 4.2.1. **Minor event** - localised impact which has been contained and is unlikely to escalate further. It can usually be handled by AC staff using normal operating procedures.
 - 4.2.2. **Moderate event** – localised impact on AC operations and may threaten life or property, or could potentially escalate into a major incident. It might include serious injury or death of a student or staff member.
 - 4.2.3. **Major event** – high impact or imminent severe adverse effect on AC operations. It may entail or threaten to cause multiple fatalities or serious injuries and/or significant property damage or adverse media reporting.
- 4.3. AC responds to a critical incident in line with the following principles:
- 4.3.1. Timely and appropriate management in response to the severity of the incident.
 - 4.3.2. Transparent communication both internally and externally where appropriate.
 - 4.3.3. Privacy of the affected students is maintained within the parameters of AC and consent is sought from the affected students to share their details wherever possible.
 - 4.3.4. Health and wellbeing of affected staff and student must be considered.
 - 4.3.5. Compliance with relevant legislation and Standards.

5. Roles and Responsibilities

The following roles and responsibilities apply in relation to this policy:

- 5.1. **AC Workplace Health and Safety Officer:** The AC Workplace Health and Safety Officer is responsible for ensuring that critical incidents are managed in accordance with this policy by responding and investigating critical incidents, drafting reports outlining any incidents and any remedial action taken, and ensuring employees follow safety protocols. The Workplace Health and Safety Officer also plays a proactive role by monitoring and assessing safety risks, implement safety policies, conduct training, and promote a safe working environment to prevent accidents and injuries.
- 5.2. **Vice President Operations:** The Vice President Operations is responsible for receiving and reviewing any critical incident reports completed by the Workplace Health and Safety Officer, and make decisions on any recommendations made by the Workplace Health and Safety Officer in response to any incidents managed or reviews undertaken by the Workplace Health and Safety Officer.
- 5.3. **Registrar:** The Registrar is responsible for providing clear guidance to staff on what constitutes a critical incident and the procedures for reporting and supporting affected students in accordance with the National Code; as well as documenting and reporting critical incidents impacting students, particularly international students.

6. Procedures



6.1. Critical Incident Management Procedure

- 6.1.1. In the event of minor incidents, the person receiving the information must report it to the AC Workplace Health and Safety Officer or equivalent.
- 6.1.2. In the event of moderate or major critical incidents on or off campus and involving death, serious injury or a threat to life, the person receiving the information must immediately contact any government emergency services required (including police, fire, ambulance).
- 6.1.3. Key details to report include the time, location and nature of the incident (e.g. threat, accident, death or injury), names and roles of persons involved (e.g. staff, international or domestic student).

6.2. Response Checklist

- 6.2.1. In the event of a critical incident, the AC Workplace Health and Safety Officer must ensure that all relevant Department Heads are informed and are coordinated in their response to the incident.
- 6.2.2. When managing a critical incident, the AC Workplace Health and Safety Officer should always consider:
 - a) Preservation of life and avoiding any further injury;
 - b) Preservation of AC assets and operations;
 - c) Minimisation of the impact on the local community and environment;
 - d) Supporting, where possible, emergency services response;
 - e) Resumption of normal business operations as soon as is practicable.

6.3. Confidentiality and Privacy

- 6.3.1. Staff and student confidential and personal information will only be released with the consent of the person involved, next of kin or where it may be necessary to protect the health and wellbeing of others.

6.4. Communication Checklist

- 6.4.1. As soon as possible, the Workplace Health and Safety Officer will:
 - a) liaise with Marketing Department and other relevant staff to prepare a communication plan;
 - b) liaise with medical, government and other relevant professionals;
 - c) determine if legal assistance is required;
 - d) contact next of kin and ensure support is provided to family and friends, including staff and students;
 - e) provide follow-up condolence letters to family;
 - f) ensure counselling support is provided, if required; and
 - g) complete an incident report for the Vice President (VP) Operations. The incident report must include details of any remedial action undertaken by AC in response to the incident. Remedial actions may include:
 - i. **Counselling and Support Services:** Providing emotional and psychological support to students, staff, and others affected by the incident through counselling or grief support.

- ii. **Incident Investigation:** Conducting a thorough investigation to determine the cause of the incident, assess any failures in safety protocols, and identify areas for improvement.
 - iii. **Communication and Information Sharing:** Ensuring clear and transparent communication with students, staff, and the broader AC community about the incident and any steps being taken in response.
 - iv. **Review and update Policies:** Revising safety policies, emergency procedures, or protocols based on findings from the investigation to prevent future incidents.
 - v. **Training and Awareness Programs:** Providing additional training to staff and students on handling emergencies, recognising potential risks, and improving safety awareness.
 - vi. **Physical Safety Improvements:** Enhancing security measures or making modifications to the physical environment (e.g., improving lighting, or creating safer entry/exit points).
 - vii. **Disciplinary Actions:** If the critical incident was caused by a student or staff member's behaviour, appropriate disciplinary actions may be taken, such as suspension, expulsion, or additional training.
- h) Remedial actions are tailored to the type of incident that occurred and aim to mitigate the impact of the incident, ensure the safety and well-being of everyone involved, and prevent similar occurrences in the future.

6.5. For incidents during semester

- 6.5.1. When a critical incident occurs during semester, AC will ensure that:
- a) relevant staff and faculty make appropriate arrangements for affected students (e.g. release from classes; rescheduling assessments; withdrawal; refunds) as appropriate;
 - b) in the case of death, notify all relevant departments, including Library, IT, Student Experience Department, etc.
- 6.5.2. Off-campus critical incidents involving staff or students should be reported by the person with the information as soon as possible to the Work Health and Safety Officer and VP Operations.
- 6.5.3. Critical incidents involving a student studying offshore will be managed by the campus or institution where the student is studying, in collaboration with AC.

6.6. Additional procedures for international students

- 6.6.1. AC will adhere to the current Educational Services for Overseas Students (ESOS) Act and notify the relevant government departments as soon as practical after the incident. In the case of a student's death or other absence affecting attendance, the AC International Student Officer or equivalent will contact the Department of Home Affairs by phone prior to reporting via the Provider Registration and International Student Management System (PRISMS).
- 6.6.2. If an international student dies or sustains serious injury, AC may be required to assist the family:
- a) hire interpreters;
 - b) make arrangements for hospital/funeral/memorial service; repatriation;

- c) obtain death certificate;
- d) with personal affairs, including insurance and visas issues.

6.6.3. AC will maintain a written record of any critical incident and remedial action taken by AC for at least two years after the overseas student ceases to be an accepted student.

6.7. Costs

6.7.1. Costs incurred by a staff member or student, next of kin or family as a result of a critical incident will be met by the staff member, student and/or family, unless approval to provide financial support has been granted by the Vice President Operations.

7. Responsible for implementation

7.1. Vice President Operations

7.2. AC Workplace Health and Safety Officer

8. Related AC Policies or Documents, Standards and Legislations

8.1. AC Policies or Documents

- 8.1.1. Sexual Assault and Sexual Harassment (SASH) Prevention and Response Policy
- 8.1.2. Support for Students Policy
- 8.1.3. Workplace Health and Safety Policy
- 8.1.4. International Student Policy

8.2. Relevant Standards and Legislations

- 8.2.1. Higher Education Standards Framework
- 8.2.2. Federal Register of Legislation - Standards for Registered Training Organisations (RTOs) 2015 (please note that the Standards for RTO's 2015 will be replaced by the following as of 01/07/2025: National Vocational Education and Training Regulator (Outcome Standards for Registered Training Organisations) Instrument 2025, National Vocational Education and Training Regulator (Compliance Standards for NVR Registered Training Organisations and Fit and Proper Person Requirements) Instrument 2025)
- 8.2.3. Education Services for Overseas Students Act 2000 (ESOS Act)
- 8.2.4. The National Code of Practice for Providers of Education and Training to Overseas Students 2018 (National Code 2018)
- 8.2.5. Higher Education Support Amendment (2023)

9. Review and Revision

This policy will be reviewed on a regular basis in accordance with the Policy Development and Review Policy by the Vice President Operations (or Delegate). Any proposed changes will be tabled at the approving committee for considering. Revisions will be communicated to all relevant stakeholder once approved.

10. History of approval and amendments

Policy owner	Vice President Operations
Policy category	Management: WHS
Policy status	Approved but under review
Approval Body	Council
Endorsement Body	Executive
Approval Date	15/04/2025
Last Review Date	03/04/2025
History of Policy Amendments	
V1 2025.04.03	Policy reviewed and amended in response to ESOS Audit Findings and benchmarks.

Add a new row for each version of the policy. Do not remove previous changes.

Appendices

Critical Incident Contacts

Emergency Phone List	Phone Number
Ambulance	000
Fire	000
Police	000
State Emergency Service	132 500
Telstra Call Tracing Service	1800 007 097
Health Direct – 24 hour health advice line	1800 022 222
Westmead Hospital Cnr Hawkesbury Road and Darcy Road Westmead NSW 2145	9845 5555
Westmead Private Hospital Cnr Mons and Darcy Roads Westmead NSW 2145	8837 9000
Electricity Emergency	1800 000 922
Lifeline	131 114
Gas Emergency	131909
Poisons Information	13 11 26
Salvation Army Care Line	1300 36 3622
Health Communication Service	9816 0347
Mensline Australia	1300 789 978
Beyond Blue	1300 224 636
Women's Information Line	1800 817 227
National Sexual Assault, Domestic Family Violence Counselling Service	1800 RESPECT (1800 737 732)
Funeral Advice Line	1300 306 670
Road Trauma Support Team	1300 367 797