



Title	AHE Critical Incident Procedure
Code	BPr3
Approving Body	Board of Directors
Developer	CEO/Executive Dean
TEQSA Provider ID	PRV14320
CRICOS Registration No:	TBA
Date Approved	26 August 2021
Commencement Date	26 August 2021
Date of Review	August 2022
Distribution	All stakeholders
Purpose	Apex Higher Education (AHE) has developed a Critical Incident Procedure to deal with various types of critical incidents that may occur at AHE
Scope	Applies to all governance and operational aspects of AHE

1. Principles

- 1.1 AHE needs to prepare and respond to the unlikely event of a critical incident as part of its Business Continuity planning and response. The objectives of this **Critical Incident Procedure (CIP)** are to make sufficient preparations for responding to a critical incident or emergency to minimise the effect upon the students, personnel and operations of AHE.
- 1.2 Students, course delivery, administration, information or human resources of AHE all may be affected, and AHE requires the co-operative efforts of AHE management together with functional areas to support a response to any critical incident. This CIP provides guidance and effective processes for AHE's response to, and management of, critical incidents when they occur to ensure that AHE meets its duty of care obligations by providing the appropriate health and safety support to those affected and taking appropriate actions to prevent re- occurrence of the incident.
- 1.3 This CIP is not designed to provide an answer to each type of critical incident that could happen, but rather is provided to identify the methods on how to manage a critical incident if one was to occur.
- 1.4 This CIP also relates to the overall emergency plans of AHE and aims to minimise the damage incurred during an emergency, by providing guidelines for a rapid and effective response to an emergency.
- 1.5 AHE further recognises that coordinated, systemic institutional procedures enable rapid, appropriate and comprehensive responses to a critical incident.
- 1.6 Ensure that all staff are aware of critical incident management through the **AHE Staff Handbook**.

2. Critical Incidents: Actions and Responsibilities

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 to AHE students and/or staff. AHE will ensure that it has in place a structured approach in responding to critical incidents as they occur and providing appropriate support and counselling services to overseas students.

The below are examples of Critical Incidents and Key Response Steps.

Further information concerning procedures on how AHE responds is contained in Section 3 below.

Critical Incidents Affecting Persons

These include (but are not limited to)

- Any fatality or serious injury affect or like to affect staff or students
- Serious road accidents
- Attempted suicide of a student
- Life threatening illness/injury of a student
- Sexual and/or physical assault of a student
- Threats or Acts of violence by or towards students, staff and/or their family members
- Hold up or robbery
- Missing student
- Severe verbal or psychological aggression
- Issues such as sexual assault, domestic violence, drug or alcohol abuse
- Acute illness of a person
- The death or critical injury of a staff member, student or visitor on AHE premises
- Staff and/or students being taken hostage
- Students being killed/injured while engaged in an AHE-sponsored activity

Key Response Steps

- 1) Person affected (or close contact of person affected) to immediately contacts the SSO. If outside of office hours, person to call the CEO/Executive Dean.
- 2) SSO or CEO/Executive Dean to take immediate steps to ensure person affected is safe. This may include contacting the police or ambulance as relevant.
- 3) Complete the **AHE Critical Incident Report Form** within 24 hours of the incident (student assisted by staff or AHE staff).
- 4) SSO contacts the CEO/Executive Dean (as relevant).
- 5) CEO/ Executive Dean to assess the critical incident, identify needs, priorities, personnel, and activate a **Critical Incident Action Plan**.

Threats to AHE premises

These include (but are not limited to)

- A break-in accompanied by major vandalism
- The threat of damage to premises that AHE occupies (e.g. a terrorist threat)
- The destruction of whole or part of premises that AHE occupies (e.g. by fire)
- Fire, explosion, bomb threat or acts of terrorism

Key Response Steps

- 1) Person who witnessed or discovered the incident to immediately contact the SSO. If outside of office hours, person to call the CEO/Executive Dean.

<ol style="list-style-type: none"> 2) SSO or CEO/Executive Dean to take immediate steps to ensure staff and students are safe. This may include contacting the police or ambulance, or evacuating the premises as relevant. 3) Complete the AHE Critical Incident Report Form within 24 hours of the incident (student assisted by staff or AHE staff). 4) SSO contacts the CEO/Executive Dean (as relevant). 5) CEO/ Executive Dean to assess the critical incident, identify needs, priorities, personnel, and activate a Critical Incident Action Plan.
<p>Imminent Community/ Regional/ National Threats These include (but are not limited to)</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> • A natural or other major disaster in the community • Infection or threatened infection of serious communicable diseases such as the COVID-10 pandemic • Infection or threatened infection of serious communicable diseases • Natural disasters <p>Key Response Steps</p> <ol style="list-style-type: none"> 1) When the incident or threat is identified, the CEO/Executive Dean is to take immediate steps to ensure all staff and students are safe. This may include contacting the police or ambulance, or evacuating the premises as relevant. 2) If relevant, complete the AHE Critical Incident Report Form within 24 hours of the incident (student assisted by staff or AHE staff). 3) CEO/ Executive Dean to assess the critical incident, identify needs, priorities, personnel, and activate a Critical Incident Action Plan. 4) CEO/ Executive Dean to report the matter to the Board of Directors immediately if urgent or report it at the next BOD meeting and activate aspects of the Business Continuity Plan.

- 2.1 **Emergency Critical Incidents** involves the possibility of immediate or imminent threat, to staff and/or students and may require an immediate response.
- 2.2 **Non-emergency Critical Incident** do not involve the need for an initial emergency response (for example the development of a pandemic from a lower phase). In such cases the government instructions will need to be followed.
- 2.3 The CIP is designed to complement other procedures concerning providing a safe environment for students and staff, regular maintenance of buildings and facilities and evacuation procedures in case of emergency. Nothing in this Procedure is to be taken as contrary to guidelines and procedures laid down elsewhere concerning these matters. The Procedure include that:
 - All staff are made aware of critical incident management through the **AHE Staff Handbook**.
 - Students are properly informed during **Orientation** and through the **AHE Student Handbook** on how to respond to a critical incident and what support is available to them. This will include information on safety and awareness relevant to life in Australia and how to seek assistance for and report an incident that significantly impacts on their well-being, including critical incidents. Updates to information will be provided to students as required.

- All critical incidents must be recorded using the **AHE Critical Incident Report Form** (completed for each incident) and sent to the CEO/ Executive Dean.
- All facilities are subject to regular maintenance (refer to the **AHE Resources Monitoring and Improvement Procedure**);
- Emergency exits are clearly marked and always kept clear of obstacles;
- Fire prevention measures and protection equipment are in place (e.g. fire wardens appointed, smoke detectors, alarm systems and fire extinguishers are in place and maintained);
- Normal safe work practices are followed routinely, and staff are familiar with fire drill and emergency evacuation procedures; and
- Back-ups of computer records are stored off-site and retrievable (refer to the **AHE Data Security and Recovery Procedure**)

2.4 How the CIP relates to overseas students

- a. AHE will ensure that all overseas students are made aware during Orientation of:
 - What to do in the case of a critical incident.
 - The point of contact for any issues which require student support, including critical incidents.
- b. AHE will also ensure that where required, and as appropriate:
 - As soon as practical after a critical incident occurs, the appropriate regulator(s) is/are notified about the details of the incident including the time, location and nature of the incident.
 - In the case of an overseas student's death or other absence affecting the student's attendance or course progress, the incident is reported via PRISMS.
 - That the incident, and how the incident is managed, are recorded on the affected students' files.

3. Procedures

3.1 Reporting a Critical Incident

In the case of a critical incident, it is important that key people are notified. In an emergency, the primary objective is the safety of human lives. Salvage and recovery operations will be of secondary importance and will take place only when the affected area is declared safe.

- a) When a Critical Incident has been identified, the staff member receiving the news immediately verbally contacts the **CEO/Executive Dean**. Complete a **AHE Critical Incident Report Form** within 24 hours of the incident. This reporting staff must give full details of the situation including the exact location of the incident, the type of incident and details of any person or persons who may be injured, in distress or at risk.
- b) Students can also report critical incident to student support staff via email to the Student Services Officer, who in return can contact the CEO/Executive Dean. The SSO will assist the student in completing the **AHE Critical Incident Report Form** within 24 hours of the incident.

<p>Student Services Officer (SSO) Designated student contact officer 8 am – 5 pm Monday to Friday at Reception. Additional hours: open till 9 pm if evening classes are held; open during the weekend if classes are held Phone: 02 – 8007 6262 Email (24/7 for response within 24 hours): studentsupport1@ahe.edu.au Emergency Contact: CEO/Executive Dean: Mobile 0420 386 862</p>
--

[Note: contact details are indicative at this stage](#)

3.2 Responding to a Critical Incident

3.2.1 **CEO/Executive Dean** will immediately assess the critical incident. If unavailable, the Registrar or the Dean is delegated to respond.

3.2.2 If it is assessed as a critical incident, the **CEO/Executive Dean** will also be responsible for the assessment and co-ordination of responses to the incident. The Registrar and Student Services Officer (SSO) will be co-opted as necessary to deal with specific aspects.

3.2.3 The **CEO/Executive Dean** will take the following actions:

- a) Identify the person(s) affected by the critical incident.
- b) Identify the needs and priorities based on the assessment and recommend response in terms of personnel and resources required and allocate individual roles/responsibilities for ongoing tasks. Delegate the SSO to take note for all meetings to keep records of content and decisions.
- c) Arrange to offer immediate assistance to persons involved in the incident. Action evacuation procedures if required and provide first aid or medical assistance as needed.
- d) Get in touch with Emergency services and ensure that all details known about the incident are provided.
- e) Develop and implement an **AHE Critical Incident Action Plan** after discussions with Registrar/Dean/SSO for responding appropriately in a timely manner.
- f) Contact relevant next-of-kin or relevant emergency contacts for the individuals involved in the incident and provide appropriate support. If an overseas student dies or sustains serious injury, this support may extend to many of the tasks that may otherwise have been dealt with by the family;
- g) Brief Student Services Officer and ask to deal with telephone/counter inquiries.
- h) Initiate pastoral care services to be provided to individuals including victims and other persons affected by the incident
- i) Set up a quiet area for the use of victims and/or their families. This area shall be protected from intrusion by anyone not immediately affected in the incident
- j) Provide an officially agreed response to the media and ensure other staff involved are aware of the appropriate response to the media.
- k) Complete the **AHE Critical Incident Report Form** within 24 hours of the incident and keep appropriate and adequate records.
- l) In the case of death of the student put a stop on the student's record and enrolment and confirm access to Emergency funds at AHE if necessary.

3.3 Follow Up Action

The **CEO/Executive Dean** will:

- a. Assess the need for counselling, further information and debriefing sessions and may need to arrange resources to implement an ongoing plan for support.
- b. In implementing an ongoing plan of support, ensure follow up concerning the well-being of individuals involved in the incident. This support may be extended to provide accommodations or adjustments to student or staff workload to provide for recovery from injury and delayed stress and the onset of post-traumatic stress disorder.
- c. Ensure that AHE complies with any legislative reporting requirements that may arise as a consequence of this incident.
- d. Manage long term consequences such as insurance, inquests and legal proceedings if any.
- e. If the critical incident requires student's suspension or cancellation of studies, then the incident needs to be reported in PRISMS and recorded in Student Management System.
- f. Prepare a detailed report of the management of the incident including recommendations for the management of such incidents in the future as appropriate.
- g. Instruct the Student Services Officer to record the incident in the **Critical Incident Register**.
- h. Review and evaluate the response to the critical incident and seek approval from Board of Directors (BOD) as to any changes to policy and procedure where applicable.

3.4 Complete and Maintain Critical Incident Records, and Safe Environment

- a) The CEO/Executive Dean will, on finalisation of the critical incident, complete the **AHE Critical Incident Report Form** within 24 hours of the incident.
- b) The SSO will record the incident in the **AHE Critical Incident Register** and give it to CEO/Executive Dean for checking.
- c) The SSO will file a copy of the **AHE Critical Incident Report Form** and all other related documents prepared as part of this incident and remedial action on the Student Management System for at least two years after the student ceases to be an accepted student.
- d) CEO/ Executive Dean will a copy keep the **AHE Critical Incident Action Plan, AHE Critical Incident Report Form, AHE Critical Incident Register** and all related documents in the Critical Incident File.
- e) The **Register** will be tabled and reported at the AHE Board of Directors at every meeting and any remedial action/ delegated actions, including additional allocation of resources, will be taken.
- f) As relevant, policies and policies and any documentation at AHE, including **AHE Student Handbook, AHE Staff Handbook** and **Orientation** materials, and training procedures will be

revised to ensure continuous improvement for AHE in particular for preventative measures and provision of a safe environment. These may include:

- conducting risk assessments at AHE and implementing preventative controls for the risks identified
- providing advice about actions to take, staff to contact and support services that are accessible
- conducting relevant prevention education programs and training for students and staff
- providing support for affected students where needed (whether directly or through another party)
- improving systems and processes to respond to incidents and prevent recurrences.

6. Relevant Legislation and Benchmarking Documents

- Commonwealth Register of Institutions and Courses for Overseas Students (CRICOS) <https://cricos.education.gov.au/>
- Department of Home Affairs <https://www.homeaffairs.gov.au/>
(Previously Department of Immigration and Border Protection (DIBP))
- Education Services for Overseas Students Act 2000 <https://www.legislation.gov.au/Details/C2017C00292>
- National Code of Practice for Providers of Education and Training to Overseas Students 2018 <https://www.legislation.gov.au/Details/F2017L01182>
- TEQSA National Register <https://www.teqsa.gov.au/national-register/provider/apex-institute-higher-education-pty-ltd>
- Higher Education Standards Framework (Threshold Standards) 2021
(Refer to Higher Education Standards Panel) <https://www.dese.gov.au/higher-education-standards-panel-hesp/higher-education-standards-framework>
- TEQSA Guidance Note: Corporate Governance (Aug 2019) <https://www.teqsa.gov.au/latest-news/publications/guidance-note-corporate-governance>
- TEQSA Good Practice Note: Preventing and responding to sexual assault and sexual harassment in the Australian higher education sector (2020) <https://www.teqsa.gov.au/latest-news/publications/good-practice-note-preventing-and-responding-sexual-assault-and-sexual>
- TEQSA Guidance Note: Wellbeing and Safety (2018) <https://www.teqsa.gov.au/latest-news/publications/guidance-note-wellbeing-and-safety>

3. Related Documents

- AHE Institutional Quality Assurance Framework
- AHE Resources Monitoring and Improvement Procedure
- AHE Data Security and Recovery Procedure
- AHE Student Academic and Non-Academic Support Policy and Procedure
- AHE Orientation
- AHE Health and Safety Policy and Procedure
- AHE Student Handbook
- AHE Staff Handbook

- Please refer to the temporary AHE Website <https://apex-h.pagecloud.com/>
- AHE Critical Incident Register
- AHE Critical Incident Report Form
- AHE Critical Incident Action Plan

4. Definitions

Please refer to the **AHE Table Acronyms and Definitions**

Version Control and Approval

Version	Person Responsible and Action Taken	Date	Approved by
2021.2	CEO/Executive Dean revised document based on comments of A Schofield who audited document. Key Response Steps are now included for each type of Critical Incident	2 Sep 2021	CEO/Executive Dean
2021.1a	CEO/Executive Dean revised document to be ESOS Act 2000 and National Standards 2018 compliant including procedure for reporting critical incidents and benchmarking	26 Aug 2021	Board of Directors
2019.1	CEO/Executive Dean revised that all critical incidents are to be recorded in the AHE Student Academic Central Register.	21 Sep 2019	Board of Directors
2018.1.3	CEO/Executive Dean clarified certain procedures	15 Jan 2019	CEO/Executive Dean
2018.1.2	CEO/Executive Dean amended policy names and roles	3 Dec 2018	CEO/Executive Dean
2018.1.1	CEO/Executive Dean amended. Student Services Officer named.	27 Feb 2018	Board of Directors
2018.1	CEO/Executive Dean Created Document	20 Jan 2018	

APPENDIX A

EMERGENCY CONTACTS

Student Services Officer (SSO)

Designated student contact officer

8 am – 5 pm Monday to Friday at Reception. Additional hours: open till 9 pm if evening classes are held; open during the weekend if classes are held

Phone: 02 – 8007 6262

Email (24/7 for response within 24 hours): studentsupport1@ahc.edu.au

Emergency Contact: CEO/Executive Dean: Mobile 0420 386 862

Note: contact details are indicative at this stage

EMERGENCY AND SUPPORT SERVICES

Service	Phone Number	Address
Police	000	
Fire Brigade	000	
Ambulance Service	000	
Local hospitals:		
1. Parramatta Medical Centre	9762 1041	Entrada Centre, 20 Victoria Road Parramatta
2. Westmead Hospital Emergency Room	8890 5555	Hawkesbury Road and Darcy Road, Westmead
State Emergency Service	132 500	
Nearest Police Station	9633 0799	Parramatta Police Station
Plumber	TBA	
Electrician	TBA	

APPENDIX B EVACUATION PLANS

