



# Wollongong College Australia

A College of the University of Wollongong

**Australia**

Wollongong

Wollongong College Australia  
A trading division of ITC Education Limited  
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# Critical Incident Policy and Procedure

Date approved: 8 November 2007

Approved by WCA Academic Board

- References & Legislation
- National Code of Practice for Providers of Education and Training to Overseas Students 2007
  - Critical Incident Report Form (F-WCA-14.1.8)

## Contents

1.	Aim.....	3
2.	Description.....	3
3.	Definitions .....	3
4.	Reporting an Incident.....	4
5.	Details to be Reported .....	5
6.	Procedure for Managing Critical Incidents .....	5
7.	Response Checklist for the Critical Incident Team.....	7
8.	Contact Details.....	10
9.	Version Control and Change History.....	10

## 1. Aim

This Policy relates to critical incidents directly involving students on Wollongong College Australia – Wollongong (the College) campus which impact not only on the individual but also on other members of the College community.

## 2. Description

This document outlines College policy, support mechanisms and procedures for managing a critical incident. This policy will ensure that the College:

- a. takes all reasonable steps in order to prevent the development of post traumatic stress syndrome or harm to the learning environment
- b. supports strategies to minimize the occurrence of critical incidents
- c. provides appropriate support and counselling services to those affected
- d. provides appropriate training and information resources for staff.

## 3. Definitions

**“critical incident”** is defined by the National Code (Standard 6) 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 may 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, arrest
- personal illness such as mental illness, including depression, or eating disorders.

Non-life threatening events could qualify as critical incidents.

#### **4. Reporting an Incident**

The College will disseminate information to the Academic Registrar's Division (ARD) and will be responsible for managing the critical incident within the College.

ARD is responsible for disseminating information to appropriate people within the University and responding to any special needs that might emerge.

The University Security Service may be required to play a pivotal role, and could be the first point of contact.

##### **4.1 On-campus Incidents – Wollongong Campus**

If the incident is on campus and involves death, serious injury or illness or a threat to life or property, the person receiving the information must contact the College Campus Director or the University Security Service. Contact details in section 8 of this policy/procedure.

It is the responsibility of the College Campus Director or the University Security Service to coordinate the necessary action following an incident and to determine the appropriate action.

## **4.2 Off-campus Incidents – Wollongong Campus**

If the critical incident involves a student or staff member and is off-campus, the person receiving the information must immediately contact the Campus Director or the After Hours Emergency Contact who will communicate with other staff as appropriate.

## **5. Details to be Reported**

Details to report include but are not limited to:

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

A Critical Incident Report Form (F-WCA-14.1.8) is completed by the person managing the case. The form is available on the College intranet. The completed form is forwarded as soon as possible to the Campus Director. The completed forms are stored in the Campus Director's office.

## **6. Procedure for Managing Critical Incidents**

6.1 The incident should be reported to the Campus Director who will seek background details about the incident from the informing source if possible and appropriate and may request that the information is not immediately made public. The Campus Director will contact the UOW Media Officer who will respond where appropriate, to media enquiries.

6.2 Preliminary Action by the College

6.2.1 UOW Security advised of incident -UOW Security to contact the relevant emergency service

- 6.2.2 Access student records to verify details, including contact information. Particulars of home address are to be provided to emergency services only in cases where the individual is unable to provide these details.
- 6.2.3 Confirm with Security that where the Police or Emergency Service have been involved, they have been in contact with next of kin/family. Where Police or Emergency Service have not been involved, the Campus Director should contact the next of kin/family, homestay family or flatmates of the student
- 6.2.4 Where the circumstances are considered to have some public relations implications, the Vice-Chancellor and Vice Principal (Administration) are to be briefed by the Head, College Network.
- 6.3 The Campus Director or nominee will call a meeting with some or all of the following staff or their nominees as a Critical Incident Team. This team will be responsible for managing the College's response.

**The Critical Incident Team** may include any or all of the following:

- Campus Director
- Program Manager/s
- Student Adviser/s
- Study Tour Manager
- Homestay Coordinator
- Head, College Network
- Media Officer
- UOW representative/s

- 6.4 As soon as possible, the Campus Director will liaise with the Critical Incident Team to prepare a communication plan. At the initial meeting, the task of the group is to:
- a. develop a clear understanding of the known facts
  - b. plan an immediate response
  - c. plan ongoing strategies, including a communication strategy
  - d. allocate individual roles/responsibilities for ongoing tasks.

## **7. Response Checklist for the Critical Incident Team**

### **7.1 Communication**

- a. liaise with police, doctors, hospital staff and other relevant professionals
- b. determine if legal assistance is required and refer accordingly
- c. provide follow-up condolence or other appropriate letters to the family
- d. complete an incident report for the College records
- e. communicate to staff and/or student community.

The team will also provide timely advice, where appropriate, to the following:

- Counselling Centre
- UOW Chaplain or other religious representative
- UOW Dean of Students
- Vice-Chancellor, Deputy Vice-Chancellor, Pro Vice-Chancellor (Academic), Vice-Principal (Administration))
- Homestay Coordinator

- Manager, UniAdvice for international students (to advise agent and/or funding authority and/or home institution)
- Security, if notification is not through that channel.

- 7.2 If necessary the team will provide support for family, friends and staff, through the following, where appropriate:
- a. contacting the next of kin (parents/guardian) and providing support to family and friends
  - b. assisting with arrangements made for visits from family and friends, e.g. accommodation, travel, crisis support and referral to appropriate services
  - c. making arrangements for affected staff, eg leave
  - d. making arrangements for special consideration for academic requirements and other College administrative issues.

7.3 The Media Officer is responsible for responding to media enquiries and will, where appropriate, make statements on behalf of the College.

#### **7.4 Management of Enrolment Record**

7.4.1 If the incident occurs during session, make appropriate arrangements for students (eg. release from classes, rescheduling assessments or exams)

7.4.2 If the incident occurs during session and a student is unable to continue with studies, provide student with information to apply for deferral or withdrawal from WCA and UOW

7.4.3 It may also be necessary to:

- a. adjust Student Information System details (refunding fees as entitled)
- b. notify the Library (for action regarding any loans)

- c. notify Information Technology Services (cancellation of email)
- d. notify Homestay provider, if applicable
- e. ensure any personal effects are returned to the next of kin
- f. close bank accounts and dispose of any other personal property in consultation with the family.

### **7.5 Additional procedures for International Students**

The Educational Services for Overseas Students Act 2000 (ESOS Act) requires the College to notify Department of Education Science and Training (DEST) and the Department of Immigration and Citizenship (DIAC) of the incident, where appropriate, as soon as practical. In the case of a student's death or other absence affecting the student's attendance, the incident will need to be reported via the Provider Registration and International Student Management System (PRISMS).

When an international student is involved in a critical incident, the College will advise the Consulate/Embassy (as they often provide support such as travel for the family). The College may be required to assist the student's family which may include:

- a. hiring interpreters
- b. making arrangements for hospital/funeral/memorial service/repatriation
- c. obtaining a death certificate
- d. assisting with personal items and affairs including insurance issues
- e. assisting with visa issues.

## 7.6 Follow up meeting post the critical incident

The Campus Director will organise a follow up meeting to review the incident and identify/minimise risks for the future.

## 8. Contact Details

Wollongong College Australia Campus Director

Phone: 4252 8930 (extension 8930)

After Hours: 0413 993 793

After Hours Emergency Contact:

Phone: 4252 8815

University Security Service:

Phone: 4221 4900 (extension 4900)

or dial 1 from any campus security telephone

## 9. Version Control and Change History

Version Control	Date Released	Date Effective	Approved By	Amendment
1	8/11/07	19/11/07	WCA Academic Board	