

Critical Incident and Emergency Management Policy and Procedure

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Preamble

AIFE is committed to supporting the health, safety and welfare of its students, staff, governing bodies and individuals engaged in providing services to AIFE, wherever possible.

The characteristics of AIFE's operating model are that administrative, management and organisational governance activities are conducted from AIFE's Head Office in Melbourne. The teaching of AIFE students is conducted exclusively online, which is completed in international locations, either in the student's own home environment, or at the campus of the student's employing university.

Accordingly, AIFE will take all reasonable steps to ensure that all AIFE staff, governing bodies and its contractors are provided with the appropriate support and resources to maintain their health, safety and welfare, and that all students will be provided with similar support and resources, appropriate to an online environment in international locations.

Purpose

The purpose of this Policy and Procedure is to plan for, respond to and manage critical incidents that may impact Australia Institute of Future Education (**AIFE**) and its community.

Standard 2.3.5 of the *Higher Education Standards Framework (Threshold Standards) 2021 (HESF)* requires higher education providers to have:

a critical-incident policy together with readily accessible procedures that cover the immediate actions to be taken in the event of a critical incident and any follow-up required.

Whilst "critical incident" is not defined in the HESF, for the purpose of this Policy and Procedure, AIFE will adopt the definition of "critical incident" under *the National Code of Practice for Providers of Education and Training to Overseas Students 2018*, which is a *traumatic event, or threat of such (within or outside Australia), which causes extreme stress, fear or injury.*

To elaborate, critical incidents may include, but are not limited to:

- Serious injury, illness, or death of a student or staff member
- A missing student
- Severe verbal or psychological aggression
- Physical assault
- Student or staff members witnessing a serious accident or incidence of violence

- Natural disaster e.g. Epidemic, earthquake, flood, windstorm, hailstorm, or extremes of temperature
- Traumatic incident, such as natural disasters
- Fire, bomb-threat, explosion, gas or chemical hazard, or
- Social issues e.g. sexual assault, drug use, alcohol abuse, internet abuse.

An incident is considered critical if the incident requires immediate attention and decisive action to:

- Prevent / minimise any negative impact on the health and welfare of AIFE's community
- Mitigate any damage to AIFE assets and operations
- Protect AIFE's reputation.

This Policy and Procedure will enable AIFE to return to business-as-usual as soon as possible following a critical incident.

Scope

This Policy and Procedure applies to:

- All incidents that have impacted or have the potential to impact on AIFE's community, services and operations, property and the environment. This includes physical actions or hazards and incidents that may disrupt its operations and/or cause major reputational damage to AIFE, and
- All staff, students, members of governing bodies, contractors and consultants.

Policy

There is a risk AIFE may be vulnerable to a range of critical incidents and emergencies that occur with or without warning. AIFE will develop and implement systems for appropriate and effective management of these situations.

This Policy and Procedure outlines protocols for the management of critical incidents and emergencies and provides information about appropriate resources.

AIFE will comply with all reporting requirements including, but not limited to privacy requirements, crime and corruption, environmental and health, ethical conduct, obligations to students and insurance requirements.

Principle

Emergency planning and management

A Critical Incident Team (CIT) led by the CEO will be established to ensure that site-specific plans and procedures are maintained and implemented. These plans and procedures will be comprehensive, consistent and communicated to staff regularly.

Incident risk assessment

Any incident or emergency that occurs is to be evaluated as soon as possible to assess its severity and determine an appropriate response. Incident responses will be scalable depending on the nature and severity of the incident.

Incidents that are not deemed to be critical will be managed as part of business-as-usual processes.

Incident management

All critical incidents and emergencies will be managed by the CIT unless it is deemed that an alternative management approach is more appropriate, such as in the case when the incident is confidential or sensitive in nature. The decision to manage a critical incident under an alternative approach will be made by the CEO or a nominated member of CIT.

In the event of a critical incident requiring activation of the CIT, the CEO or a nominated member of CIT will mobilise the required resources.

Following the completion of a response to a critical incident, a review will be undertaken to determine the effectiveness of the response and any improvements that can be made going forward.

Off-campus and off-shore considerations

Students involved in an incident occurring off-campus or offshore, are to follow the incident management procedures applying at that site and report it to AIFE's CEO.

Recording and reporting

The CEO or a nominated member of CIT is responsible for ensuring that:

- Incident Reports are completed and maintained in accordance with AIFE's *Records Management Policy and Procedure* and reported to the Board of Directors, and
- Any external reporting obligations required by legislation are met.

Procedure

In the event of a critical incident or emergency, students and staff should:

- Follow this Procedure
- Exercise common sense, and
- Ensure the safety of all concerned is prioritised.

Reporting a critical incident

Students should report incidents or hazards promptly to the Administration Manager via email or through Cloud Campus.

Staff should report incidents or hazards to their line manager in person, via email, or on the phone.

The Administration Manager or the relevant line manager should inform a CIT member, who will assume immediate responsibility for controlling the situation.

Managing a critical incident

The CIT member will, either in person or through teleconference / Cloud Campus:

- Attend the incident
- Offer immediate assistance to persons involved
- Inform the CEO, who will assess the situation, consider any risks to those present and inform other members of the CIT as required
- Contact and liaise with Emergency Services as required, and
- Document details of the incident.

Upon managing the critical incident, the CIT member will:

- Notify the emergency contacts for students or staff involved in the incident and providing appropriate support.
- Coordinate appropriate psychology, counselling and/or support services for any student who was sexually assaulted and/or harassed
- Coordinate appropriate counselling and support services for students involved
- Manage internal and external communications.

The CIT will organise ongoing response/follow up (including staff briefing, counselling, review and reporting) as part of the process.

Recording and reviewing a critical incident

After the critical incident has been managed and resolved, a CIT member must complete a Critical Incident Report (an example is provided at Appendix 1) containing the following details:

- Type of critical incident
- Exact location where the critical incident occurred
- Details of other person(s) involved in the critical incident and who might be injured, or in distress and in need of counselling or at risk.

The Critical Incident Report will be used to:

- Review the situation and identify future priorities
- Ensure AIFE complied with any legislative requirements that may have arisen from the incident, and
- Coordinate communications to AIFE's community, the media, and TEQSA, if deemed necessary.

A de-briefing session will be organised by the CIT to evaluate the effectiveness of the critical response procedures and inform the preparation of a report to the Board of Directors which will include recommendations for managing future critical incidents, if necessary.

Ongoing support will be provided to ensure there is follow-up with those involved in the incident.

Responsibilities

The Board of Directors is responsible for:

- The health and safety of students, staff and visitors to AIFE
- Monitoring the occurrence and nature of critical incidents and that action is taken to address underlying causes (HESF Standard 6.2.1j).

The CEO or a nominated member from the CIT will:

- Be available during hours of operation in case of incidents or emergencies
- Manage the processes for preventing, preparing for, responding to, and recovering from critical incidents
- Ensure staff are trained to respond to critical incidents
- Ensure that appropriate information is provided to students
- Ensure that a network of services is maintained to respond to different types of incidents including counselling services, police, hospitals and legal centres.

The CIT will manage critical incidents and emergencies until normal operations can resume.

Definitions

For the purposes of this Policy and Procedure, the following terms are defined as follows:

Emergency	A sudden, unexpected event that requires an immediate response from internal and external emergency services
Incident	An issue or occurrence that requires a response but is not critical, has a localised containable impact and unlikely to escalate in severity. The required response and management will be part of ongoing business-as-usual

Version history

Version #	Changes	Approval Body	Approval Date
1.0	New policy	Board of Directors	14 December 2022

Additional Information

Policy Status	Approved
Policy Owner	CEO
Next Review Date	3 years from Approval Date
Related Internal Documents	Records Management Policy and Procedure

Higher Education Standards Framework (Threshold Standards) 2021	Standards 2.3.4, 2.3.5, 6.1.4, 6.2.1j
Other legislative or regulatory instruments	Not applicable

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Appendix 1 – Critical Incident Initial Report

Date of Incident	
Reported by	
Description of Incident	
What happened?	
Location of the incident	
Time and date of the incident	
Lists the people involved	
Who did the incident affect	
Who was notified about the incident	
Other relevant information	
Lists supporting document and attach clearly labelled	

Name:

Signature:

STAFF USE ONLY

Report Reference Number:

Received on:

Acknowledged on:

Passed to responsible officer (Critical Incident Team member):