Critical Incident Response Policy

Version number	1
Approved by	Corporate Governance Board
Date of approval	13/11/2017

Purpose

Sydney Institute of Higher Education (**SI**) is dedicated to safeguarding its staff, students, and environment, as well as the overall continuity of its business operations. Central to this is effective critical incident response strategies that will enable SI to preserve health, lives, and property, and recover rapidly from a critical incident.

This *Critical Incident Response Policy* establishes the principles underlying critical incident response at SI. It defines the responsibilities of the *Audit & Risk Committee* and the measures that SI will take to prepare staff and students for critical incidents should they occur along with the incident response, recovery, and reporting procedures.

Scope

This policy applies to all individuals involved in SI operations as well as SI infrastructure and resources.

Principles

SI recognises its duty of care towards all individuals on its premises and will do its utmost to preserve their health, safety, and security.

SI considers a critical incident to be a situation or threat of a situation that has or will endanger the health and safety of people on SI property, the property itself, and/or the ability for SI to continue operating.

Critical incidents may include:

- human-caused disasters and accidents (e.g. building fire), including catastrophic IT failure or data loss
- a hostage or siege situation
- an active shooter incident
- a serious health issue (e.g. disease breakout or environmental contamination)
- bomb threat or bomb detonation
- missing students
- severe verbal or psychological aggression
- death, serious injury or any threat of these

- natural disaster
- issues such as domestic violence, physical, sexual or other abuse; and
- other non-life threatening events.

Critical incidents do not include:

- Minor incidents that can be resolved using standard procedures

SI acknowledges the importance of being organised and prepared for critical incidents far prior to their occurrence. SI will ensure that staff, students, and third parties on SI premises are aware of the measures in place to respond to critical incidents.

Effective risk management is central to remaining prepared and ready to recover in the event that a critical incident occurs. Risk management processes, including planning for critical incidents, are implemented primarily by the *Audit & Risk Committee*, who also have responsibilities to monitor and report to the *Corporate Governance Board* on the response and advise associated follow up actions. Refer also to the *Risk Management Policy* and the *Business Continuity Plan*.

In the event that a critical incident occurs, SI must ensure that all stakeholders are informed of what occurred and how the response by SI was carried out.

SI will prioritise the health, safety, and security of staff and students and secondly, a rapid return to normal higher education operations.

Governance Procedures

Audit & Risk Committee

The *Audit & Risk Committee* is chaired by the <u>Provost</u>.

The role of the *Audit & Risk Committee* is to:

- Ensure that appropriate procedures are followed in any response to a critical incident
- Ensure that all responsibilities of any immediate responders to a critical incident are clear
- Ensure the safety of those involved in a critical incident are prioritised
- Initiate any recovery processes
- Provide continual advice concerning any recovery processes to the *Corporate Governance Board*
- Develop and submit a detailed report after the incident for the *Corporate Governance Board* with recommendations for action to avoid future critical incidents
- Continue to monitor and respond to any longer-term consequences of critical incidents and continue to advise the *Corporate Governance Board* accordingly.

Preparation

SI must display emergency response plans clearly on cards posters around campus, including:

- *Evacuation Plan*
- Contact numbers for emergency services (Police, Fire, Ambulance)
- List of key SI personnel that are responsible for critical incident responses

- Locations of emergency exits and emergency equipment (such as fire extinguishers)
- Maps for evacuation routes and emergency assembly areas.

New students are to be given this information as part of student orientation programs and included in the *Student Handbook* upon enrolment.

The *Audit & Risk Committee* reviews the information given to students annually to ensure accuracy.

Any visitors to SI are to sign in upon arrival and required to acknowledge they have read and understood this information.

Staff members will undergo periodic training to ensure they know how to respond to critical incidents. This includes:

- First aid training.
- Understanding the staff roles and responsibilities established in the current SI *Business Continuity Plan*.
- Undergoing drills of responses to various situations.
- For senior staff, knowing how to establish the Critical Incident Committee (see below).

Additionally, SI must run periodic evacuation drills.

Incident response

Any individual on SI premises should act promptly if they identify a critical incident or the risk or potential for a critical incident to occur.

That individual should notify an *Executive Management Team* member and call emergency services if someone is injured or it is a life-threatening situation.

Critical incident responses will vary according to the situation.

Critical Incident Response Checklist

To guide their immediate response to an incident, staff members should use the *Critical Incident Response Checklist*, attached both to this policy (see 'related documents' below) and to the current SI *Business Continuity Plan*. This checklist and any written record of any critical incident and remedial action taken by SI must be maintained for at least two years after the international student ceases to be an accepted student under the ESOS Act.

Evacuation

SI staff or emergency services personnel may order an evacuation of SI premises. Staff must remain with students during the evacuation. Once outside, staff must account for all students and notify emergency services if any student is left unaccounted for. Staff must stay outside with students until the situation is resolved (see *Evacuation Plan*).

Critical Incident Committee

The Critical Incident Committee is comprised of the *Executive Management Team* and is chaired by the

President. The Critical Incident Committee will liaise with officers of the responding emergency services personnel and will assume responsibility for the immediate and ongoing response to the critical incident and direct SI staff and students.

All staff will be aware of their responsibilities as a critical incident arises. Through prior training, all staff will know where to meet and what duties must be shared.

Additioally, the responsibilities of The Critical Incident Committee include:

- Risk assessment of hazards/situations which may require emergency action;
- Analysis of requirements to address these hazards/situations;
- Establishment of liaison with all relevant emergency services e.g. police, fire brigade, ambulance, hospital, poisons information centre, community health services;
- 24-hour access to contact details for all students and their families, agents, homestay families, carers, consular staff, embassies and interpreting services if necessary;
- Development of a critical incident plan for each critical incident identified;
- Dissemination of planned procedures;
- Organisation of practice drills;
- Regular review of the critical incident plan;
- Assisting with the implementation of the *Critical Incident Response Policy*;
- Arranging appropriate staff development;
- Advising the Corporate Governance Bord on budget allocation for emergencies.

Providing information

The media may report on a critical incident. Furthermore, external stakeholders, students and staff who are/were involved in the incident, and the families and friends of students and staff will request updates while the incident is underway, and in the aftermath.

The President must coordinate communication, taking advice, if possible, from the Critical Incident Committee, and taking advice from emergency services personnel. The President will issue an official statement expressing SI's commitment to the health, safety and security of its staff and students, summarising the actions that SI is taking to uphold this commitment, and providing updates on the incident as appropriate.

The President must ensure that:

- Information is not misleading
- Information does not breach SI's ethics and privacy policies
- Information does not jeopardise or misrepresent police or legal processes, e.g. identifying bodies and criminal trials.

Recovery

The recovery strategies outlined in the current SI *Business Continuity Plan* will be implemented as soon as the immediate threat to health, safety and security has passed.

For all critical incidents, SI will adhere to the following:

- All those involved or with a vested interest in the outcome will be provided with an official statement by the <u>President</u> (see 'Providing information' above)
- Trauma counselling services will be organised for those involved
- The Critical Incident Committee and any other staff who were involved will attend debrief meetings
- A realistic timeline for resumption of higher education operations will be determined.

Reporting

After normal SI operations have been restored, the *Audit & Risk Committee* must review what occurred, taking advice from the Critical Incident Committee and other sources as necessary. The *Audit & Risk Committee* will then submit a report to the *Corporate Governance Board*. This will include:

- Type of critical incident and how it occurred
- Descriptions of students and/or staff involved
- Actions taken in response to the incident
- Recommendations for immediate further action
- Evaluation of policy effectiveness
- Advice on areas for improvement.

Procedures to follow in the event of a critical incident

The President is responsible for the implementation of this procedure and to ensure that staff and students are aware of its application and that staff implement its requirements.

Following the critical incident, actions must be taken immediately to resolve or address the event. Please refer to the 'Steps to immediately take action and resolve or address the critical incident' in this Policy.

1. **The following immediate action is required within 24 hours:**

   (a) Identify the nature of the critical incident(b) The person, who is initially notified of the incident should get as much information as possible regarding the nature of the critical incident including:
   - Where did the injury occur - on-campus or off-campus?
   - How severe is the nature of the injury?
   - Where is the student now?
   - Is the student in the hospital?
   - Has the ambulance been called?
   - Is an interpreter required?
   - Does WorkCover need to be notified?(c) The information should be documented for further reference(d) The person who is initially notified of the incident should notify a member of the *Critical Incident Committee* immediately

   (e) Assignment of responsibilities to SI staff
   - The *Critical Incident Committee* will identify the staff member responsible for any immediate action;

- The incident will then be referred to the identified staff member;
- The responsible staff member should keep in close contact with the *Critical Incident Committee* and any other staff members as required;

(f) Implement the appropriate action strategy:

If the student is on-campus:
- Ensure that appropriate intervention is taken to minimise additional injury;
- Provide first aid where necessary; (this should be done by one of the qualified first aid officers)
- Ascertain the seriousness of the injury;
- Call the ambulance if required;
- If the ambulance is required, accompany the student to the hospital;
- Ascertain the seriousness of the injury from the hospital staff;
- If the ambulance is not required, accompany the student to the relevant medical services, for example, the GP.

If the student is off-campus:
- If the situation appears serious, call an ambulance and either meet the ambulance at the student's location or at the hospital;
- If the ambulance is not required, attend the location of the student;
- Provide first aid where necessary (this should be done by one of the qualified first aid officers)
- Ascertain the seriousness of the injury;
- Call the ambulance if required;
- If the ambulance is required, accompany the student to the hospital;
- Ascertain the seriousness of the injury from the hospital staff;
- If the ambulance is not required, accompany the student to the relevant medical services, for example, the GP.

If the student has already been taken to the hospital:
- Attend immediately to the hospital;
- Ascertain the seriousness of the injury from the hospital staff.

(g) Dissemination of information to the student's parents and family members:
- When there are a number of people to contact such as when a student is in a homestay, the SI staff should attempt to simultaneously contact all parties;
- Contact the parents/next of kin of the student;
- Contact the carer of the student, for example, if the student is living with a relative;
- Contact the homestay family of the student (if relevant).

(h) Completion of the *Critical Incident Response Checklist*
- The written record of the Critical Incident Response Checklist and remedial action taken by the Institution must be kept for at least two years after the international student ceases to be an accepted student under the *ESOS Act*.

(i) Assess the need for support and counselling for those directly and indirectly involved

(j) If the student is seriously injured or requires hospitalisation, SI should enlist the aid of the

International Student Support Advisor and the Student Counselling and Wellbeing Officer to assist the family if they are travelling to Australia, with interpreting services to aid in communication with the relevant medical services and with the counselling services if required.

(k) SI should assess whether other staff members and students have been affected by the incident and provide support and counselling if required.

(l) SI should also contact the DoHA and inform the department of the incident.

2. **The following additional action within 48 to 72 hours is required:** (a) Assess the need for ongoing support and counselling for those directly and indirectly affected by the incident (b) Provide staff members and students with factual information as appropriate
   - Depending on the nature of the incident, it may be appropriate for the President to address the Institution and inform all staff members and students of the facts of the incident and the condition of the student concerned. (c) Restore the normal functioning and the delivery of program(s)
   - Where the incident occurred on Si's premises, there will be other procedures to follow in relation to any possible safety issues and the SI's legal obligations. The *Critical Incident Committee* should identify the appropriate staff member to follow up on these issues.

Follow-up actions including monitoring, support and evaluation

(a) Identification of any other people who may be affected by the critical incident and access to support services for the affected community members

- The effects of traumatic incidents can be delayed in some people. SI needs to be aware of any emerging need for support and/or counselling.

(b) Maintain contact with any injured/affected parties

(c) If the student is in hospital for some time, SI needs to maintain contact with the student and their family by:

- Providing support and assistance for the student and the family;
- Depending on the condition of the student, SI could provide academic work for the student to enable them to remain in touch with their program of study
- Discuss with the family any required changes to the enrolment of the student, for example, suspension or cancellation of enrolment and make any changes required on PRISMS

(d) Provision of accurate information to staff and students where appropriate:
- Depending on the nature of the incident, it may be appropriate for the President to address the Institution and inform all staff members of the facts of the incident and the condition of the student concerned
- Evaluation of critical incident management;
- The *Critical Incident Committee* should convene to evaluate the *Critical Incident Response Checklist* and the effectiveness of the management plan and to make modifications if required;
- Be aware of any possible longer-term effects on the Institution, staff and students' wellbeing, for example, inquests, legal proceedings.

Resources

The nature of critical incidents is such that resources cannot always be provided in anticipation of events. The *Critical Incident Committee* uses its discretion to provide adequate resources, both physical and personnel to meet the needs of specific situations. Staff will be reimbursed for any out-of-pocket expenses.

Managing the Media

The <u>President</u> should normally handle all initial media calls and;

- manage access of the media to the scene, and to staff, students and relatives;
- determine what the official Institution response will be;
- ensure all facts should be checked before speaking to the media;
- if accurate information is unavailable or the issue is of a sensitive nature, explain that questions cannot be answered at this time;
- avoid implying blame or fault fo any part of the incident as this can have significant legal implications;

The <u>President</u> may delegate media liaison to another member of staff.

Evaluation and review of the *Critical Incident Response Policy*

After every critical incident, a meeting of the *Critical Incident Committee* will be held to evaluate the critical incident report and the effectiveness of the management plan and to make modifications if required. If appropriate this process will incorporate feedback from all staff, students and local community representatives.

Emergency Contacts

If an emergency exists, call Triple Zero (000) – Police, Ambulance and Fire Brigade
If translators are required contact Translating and Interpreting Service by phoning 131 450
For 24-hour crisis support and suicide prevention, call Lifeline on 13 11 14
Poisons Information Centre: Phone 13 11 26
Department of Home Affairs: Phone 1800 123 400 https://www.homeaffairs.gov.au/
Sydney Hospital and Sydney Eye Hospital: Phone +61 2 9382 7111; 8 Macquarie Street Sydney NSW 2000 <u>https://www.seslhd.health.nsw.gov.au/sydney-eye-hospital</u>

Steps to immediately take action and resolve or address the critical incident

Critical Incident Flowchart

Critical Incident Flowchart

Critical incident occurs

SI staff member is informed

Gather information regarding the incident
- Where did it accur?
- How severe is the injury?
- Where is the student?
- Is an ambulance needed?
- Has an ambulance been called?
- Is an interpreter needed?
- Does Workcover need to be notified?

Document the information and complete the *Critical Incident Response Checklist*

Notify Critical Incident Team Leader (i.e. the President of SI)

The Critical Incident Team Leader (i.e. the President) identifies person responsible for immediate action

Management or action strategy implemented

Student on-campus
- Minimise additional injury
- Provide first aid (by qualified first aid officer)
- Ascertain seriousness of the injury
- Call ambulance if required
- Accompany the student to hospital
- Ascertain the seriousness of the injury from hospital staff
- If ambulance not needed accompany student to the relevant medical services, e.g. the GP

Student off-campus
- If the situation is serious, call an ambulance and either meet the ambulance at the student's location or at the hostpial
- If the ambulance is not required, attend the location of the student
- Provide first aid (by qualified first aid officer)
- Ascertain seriousness of the injury
- Call ambulance if required
- Accompany the student to hospital
- Ascertain the seriousness from hospital staff
- If ambulance not needed accompany student to the relevant medical services, e.g. the GP

Student at hospital
- Attend the hospital immediately
- Ascertain the seriousness of the injury from the hospital staff

Inform student's parent/guardian/carer and homestay family/next of kin

Complete Critical Incident Response Checklist

Media response (if required)

Inform DoHA and seek consulate support (if required)

Assess need of support and counselling

Maintain contact with the injured student and the family

Assess need for ongoing counselling and support

Update staff and students as appropriate

Restore normal operation of the Institution

Follow up any legal or safety issues

Policy Implementation and Monitoring

The *Corporate Governance Board* delegates responsibility for the day-to-day implementation of this policy to the *Audit & Risk Committee*, and at the time of a critical incident, to any member(s) of the *Executive Management Team* that is present. Further responsibilities are established in the current SI *Business Continuity Plan*.

Critical Incident Response Checklist

Critical Incident Type:		
Date:		
Name of staff member coordinating response:		
Position at SI:		
Incident response:	**Tick** **When completed:**	**Notes (e.g. time of action, details to include in final report).**
Identify injuries.		
Identify damage to property.		
Call Police, Fire or Ambulance services - Triple Zero (000)		
Account for all staff, students, and visitors.		
Evacuate the site (if necessary).		
Form critical incident response team.		
Allocate specific roles and responsibilities to staff.		
Gather adequate information about the situation.		
Communicate relevant information to staff and students (ongoing task).		
Communicate necessary information to the President.		
Record decisions and actions.		

Identify key business operations that have been disrupted.		
Complete a report to submit to the Audit & Risk Committee.		
NOTE: The written record of the Critical Incident Response Checklist and remedial action taken by the Institution must be kept for at least two years after the international student ceases to be an accepted student under the ESOS Act.		

Definitions

Corporate Governance Board: the governing body responsible for oversight of all higher education operations, including the ongoing viability of the institution and the quality of its higher education delivery. The *Corporate Governance Board* guides Management and delegates responsibility for academic matters to the *Academic Board*.

Critical incident: any major event, episode or crisis that creates a significant risk to the health, safety, well-being or reputation of any person(s) or group. It may be a real, perceived, or alleged situation, and is the highest level of threat to SI's core operations. A critical incident is 'a traumatic event, or the threat of such (within or outside Australia), which causes extreme stress, fear or injury'. This does not include serious academic misconduct.

Critical Incident Committee: comprises a core group being the members of the *Executive Management Team* and any other persons that may be required on an ad-hoc basis to assist the *Critical Incident Committee*.

Critical Incident Response Checklist: a written record of any critical incident and remedial action taken which must be retained for at least two years after the overseas student ceases to be an accepted student.

DoHA: Department of Home Affairs see https://www.homeaffairs.gov.au/

Duty of care: the moral and legal obligation of SI to ensure the safety and wellbeing of its students, staff and stakeholders.

Executive Management Team: The *Executive Management Team* comprises the <u>President</u>, <u>Company Secretary</u>, <u>Provost</u>, <u>Business Development Manager</u>, <u>Finance Manager</u> and the <u>Dean</u>.

Non-academic staff: staff employed at SI in an administrative, technological, marketing and support capacity.

Review schedule

This policy will be reviewed by the *Corporate Governance Board* every three years.

Version History

Version number:	Approved by:	Approval date:	Revision notes:	Next review date:
1	Corporate Governance Board	13/11/2017		13/11/2020
2	Corporate Governance Board	26/02/2020		

▲ Related Documents

➡	<u>Privacy Policy</u>
➡	<u>Risk Management Policy</u>
➡	<u>Provost</u>
➡	<u>Business Continuity Plan</u>
➡	<u>Evacuation Plan</u>
➡	<u>Student Handbook</u>
➡	<u>Audit and Risk Committee – Terms of Reference</u>
➡	<u>Corporate Governance Board – Terms of Reference</u>