



CRITICAL INCIDENT GUIDELINES

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Responsible Division & Unit:	Division of Student Life		
Supporting documents, procedures & forms:	Privacy Policy Privacy Information Sheet Emergency Response Plans WHS Emergency Management Procedures University Critical Incidents Process Map (refer Attachments) Critical Incident procedures for University of Wollongong students participating in the International Exchange Program Sexual Harassment Prevention Policy Student Wellbeing Check Local Protocol Student Wellbeing Request Form Outbound Student Mobility Critical Incident Procedure Student Fatality Response Workflow Sexual Harm Response Policy Student Conduct Rules Student Health Assessment and Leave Policy Student Conduct in Residence Policy UOW Critical Incident Management Plan UOW Crisis Management Plan		
Relevant Legislation & External Documents:	Higher Education Support Act, 2003 (Commonwealth) Education Services for Overseas Students Act, 2000 (Commonwealth) The National Code of Practice for Registration Authorities and Providers of Education and Training to Overseas Students		
Audience:	Public		

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1 Introduction / Background

1. This document is intended to provide a clear process for managing critical incidents involving students. This will minimise the risk of independent action and assist in ensuring that each case is managed effectively and compassionately.
2. The response needs to be timely and professional, and also as personal and sincere as possible. Incidents may vary in terms of the scale of the emergency, the level of response required and the level of media interest. The response should be adapted, within these guidelines, to meet the needs of each incident.

2 Scope / Purpose

1. This document should be read in conjunction with Campus Emergency Response Plans, Sexual Harm Response Policy, UOW Crisis Management Plan, UOW Critical Incident Management Plan, Student Fatality in Response Workflow and the Outbound Student Mobility Critical Incident Procedure.
2. This document applies to all University of Wollongong (UOW) Australia students (including incidents involving students in University Residences), whether on or off campus unless otherwise stated.
3. Included in the scope of this document are incidents involving UOW students enrolled at offshore sites (with the exception UOW Global Enterprises)
4. Excluded from the scope of this guideline are outbound students (ie: students enrolled at onshore sites who are participating in an exchange program). Please refer to the separate Study Abroad Procedure, Critical Incident Procedures for University of Wollongong students participating in the International Exchange Program.
5. Situations involving international students may require liaison with additional stakeholders such as consulate and/or other parties who may act as intermediary between family and the University.
6. Where there is concern for a student's wellbeing, but the concern does not meet the definition of a critical incident a Wellbeing Check can be requested. Section 12 Attachments The Student Wellbeing Check Local Protocol and Wellbeing Check Request Form.

3 Definitions

Word/Term	Definition (with examples if required)
Critical incidents	<p>An incident can be defined as either a “major” or “minor” critical incident.</p> <p><i>Major includes the following:</i></p> <ul style="list-style-type: none">• Death• Serious injury/illness• Hospitalisation with serious intervention required (e.g.: accident, ill health, incapacitated)• Significant Public health alert• Serious Mental health issue



Word/Term	Definition (with examples if required)
	<ul style="list-style-type: none">• Emergency medical evacuation• Missing person• Student Arrest• Suicide attempt (concerns of welfare of student) or self harm• Perpetrating or being the victim of crime related incidents (eg: assaults, sexual assaults, robbery)• A significant threat to a person (eg: stalking, domestic violence, bullying – including cyber bullying)• Significant reputational effect on the University of Wollongong External disaster <p><i>Minor incidents involve the following:</i></p> <ul style="list-style-type: none">• Minor is anything that does not fall into these categories and can be managed locally• Minor injuries• Petty Theft• Minor vehicle incidents on campus• Incidents out of session that are unrelated to University activities and have no impact on other students or staff
University Residence	University student accommodation
Regional / Sydney Campus	Institutions part of the University of Wollongong's network of campuses. They include UOW Shoalhaven campus, UOW Batemans Bay, UOW Bega, UOW Sutherland, UOW Liverpool, UOW Southern Highlands, UOW Sydney CBD.
International or overseas student	A student who is not a permanent resident of Australia but studying in Australia with UOW or is studying at an offshore site
Staff	All people employed by the University including conjoint appointments, whether on continuing, permanent, fixed term, casual or cadet or traineeship basis.
Affiliates	Includes people holding University of Wollongong Honorary Awards as conferred by the University Council, including the awards of Emeritus Professor, Honorary Doctor and University Fellow; people appointed in accordance with the University's Appointment of Visiting and Honorary Academics Policy; and people engaged by the University as agency staff, contractors, volunteers and work experience students
Student	A person registered for a course at the University of Wollongong
Residence Student	A student living in University student accommodation



4 Preliminary Action

1. The following actions should be taken by the responsible staff of the Division of Student Life or for student critical incidents involving sexual harm and domestic violence, Safe and Respectful Communities (SARC):
 - a. Access the relevant student record to verify details, including contact information.
 - b. Gather background details of the incident from the informing source if possible and appropriate.
 - c. If relevant and with the consent of the source (if required), confirm with UOW Security that the Police or the relevant emergency services agency has been in contact with next of kin/family/other relevant parties, where appropriate.
 - d. Where the circumstances are considered to have some implications in relation to or arising from the University's public profile, the Deputy Vice-Chancellor, Academic and Student Life (DVCA) are to be briefed by the Division of Student Life (or nominated delegate).
 - e. Check with the UOW Principal Privacy Officer about privacy obligations prior to any discussion with external agencies (including Consulate/Embassy where the student is an international student).
 - f. The Director, Division of Student Life (or nominee) or, in the case of sexual harm or domestic violence the SARC representative, will provide timely advice to stakeholders with necessary consents and consideration of privacy obligations
 - g. A Critical Incident Management Team will be formed if the circumstances around the fatality have resulted in unacceptable, unmanaged risks and the situation requires immediate attention, intervention, and management across multiple UOW functions. The CIMT membership will be dependent upon the situation, however, may include Security, Legal and Advancement and Communication. If the situation warrants, the Chair of the CIMT (DVCA) may standup the Crisis Management Team.
 - h. Where the student is an international student and family members have already been consulted, advise the Consulate/Embassy (where support such as travel for the family of the student may be available).

5 Recommended Process Involving a Student

1. If a critical incident is first identified by, or reported directly to, an emergency service the emergency service will inform UOW Security as the University's initial point of contact.
2. If the critical incident is first identified by (or referred to) UOW Security, UOW Security will contact the relevant emergency service agency, if required/appropriate.
3. UOW Security has access to student records for the purposes of verifying details to assist emergency services. Particulars of the incident or provision of student details are to comply with UOW privacy obligations.
4. UOW Security will alert the Director, Division of Student Life of student critical incidents or SARC if the incident is related to domestic violence or sexual harm.
5. After receiving notification, the Division of Student Life or SARC will organise support where required.
6. It is the responsibility of these officers to conduct an assessment of the circumstances of the matter



and determine further immediate action.

7. If the matter arises after office hours, UOW Security has after hours contact details for key staff.
8. Depending on the scale and nature of the event, responsibility for managing the situation might be transferred to another officer within the University.
9. All internal communication is channeled through the Director, Division of Student Life (or nominated delegate) or SARC for sexual harm or domestic violence incidents. All comment to the media is to be made through the Media Manager.
10. Any direct contact with the family/next of kin in an official capacity is to be through the Director, Division of Student Life or nominee.

6 Recommended Process for Missing Persons

1. From time to time, parents or other family members of a student, a recent graduate or recent student may contact the University to report that student or graduate as missing. These enquiries should be referred to the Director, Division of Student Life or SARC for sexual harm or domestic violence incidents.
2. The Director, Division of Student Life, (or nominee) or Security should refer the relative to the Police. However, there are circumstances where the family may be reluctant to pursue that option and if so, the following charitable organisations may be a suitable alternative.
 - a. The Salvation Army (Telephone +61 2 9211 0277) offer a family tracing service. However, due to its international protocol, it will not initiate enquiries in Australia. The student's relatives should be advised to contact the Salvation Army in their home country. The Salvation Army operates in 100 countries. This applies even if the family have arrived in Australia to look for their relative. If the Salvation Army locates the "missing" person, it will request the person to let their family know they are safe.
 - b. Mission Australia (24 hours Support Line - Freecall 1800 227 772) has a Family and Friends of Missing Persons support line. It offers support and a referral service.
3. Depending on the advice provided by the family, the Director, Division of Student Life should ascertain whether it has had any contact with the student and/or has current contact with the student, through which a message may be passed.
4. There are Privacy constraints to providing student address and other information to family members. If a current student address/email address is on the Student System, the University may offer to send a letter on behalf of or from the family to that address or to telephone using the last known contact numbers on the student's record.
5. UOW Security manages requests from the Police in conjunction with the University Privacy Policy.

7 Recommended Process for Student Fatality

1. Refer to the Student Fatality Response Workflow

8 Media Unit

1. The Media Manager is responsible for responding to media enquiries and will, where appropriate, make statements on behalf of the University.



9 Ongoing Liaison

1. The Director, Division of Student Life (or nominated delegate) will take responsibility for managing the case including, where necessary, liaison with:
 - a. Police;
 - b. Medical Services;
 - c. Media Manager - to be kept informed;
 - d. Family - ongoing contact (assist with travel and accommodation, as necessary); and
 - e. Through the DVCA to the Vice-Chancellor - for information, and direction as required.

10 Roles & Responsibilities

1. University Security Services plays a pivotal role in providing a first or emergency response, and should be the first point of contact.
2. The Director, Division of Student Life, Senior Manager SARC and SARC team and Security are responsible for managing the first response to critical incidents involving students who live in a University residence that occur either in residence or off campus.
3. SARC are responsible for first managing critical incidents related to sexual harm and domestic violence.
4. The Media Manager is responsible for responding to media enquiries and will, where appropriate, make statements on behalf of the University.
5. All other University staff and affiliates have a responsibility to report critical incidents to University Security who will ensure emergency service agencies are appropriately involved and will contact the Division of Student Life for follow up.

11 Version Control and Change History

Version Control	Date Effective	Approved By	Amendment
1	5 April 2006	Academic Registrar	New Procedure
2	6 May 2009	Vice Principal (Administration)	Migrated to UOW Procedure Template as per Policy Directory Refresh
3	7 February 2011	Academic Registrar	Review of entire document. Document name change to Critical Incident Guidelines. Process map and checklist created.
4	17 Jan 2013	Vice-Principal (Administration)	Updated references from OHS to WHS and DVC(A) to DVC(E).
5	11 September 2013	Chief Administrative Officer	Updated to reflect title change from VP(A) to CAO.
6	13 February 2014	Deputy Vice-Chancellor (Education)	Updated to reflect change from Dean of Students to Student Ombudsman



Version Control	Date Effective	Approved By	Amendment
7	5 July 2016	Vice-Chancellor	Consequential amendment following minor amendments to Coursework Student Academic Complaints Policy – removal of reference to Student Ombudsman at clause 4.1(f). Transfer to rebranded template.
8	21 July 2017	Vice-Chancellor	Minor updates to include new UOW campuses UOW South Western Sydney and UOW Sydney CBD. Updated definitions for “affiliate”, “staff”, “students”, and “residence student”. Critical incident response more clearly outlined.
9	18 December 2020	Chief Operating Officer	Administrative amendments to reflect divisional and faculty realignments.
10	3 March 2023	Vice-Chancellor	Administrative amendments to reflect divisional realignment. Removal of flowchart.
11	1 May 2023	Deputy Vice Chancellor (Academic)	Addition of attachment of the Student Wellbeing Check Protocol.
12	17 August 2023	Deputy Vice Chancellor (Academic)	Update to reflect changes to organizational structures and responsibilities, new policies and processes and the Student Fatality Response Workflow