



Critical Incident Management and Business Continuity Policy and Procedure

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1. PURPOSE

This *Critical Incident Management and Business Continuity Policy and Procedure* aim to ensure that the Australis Business School (“Australis”). can respond to a critical incident effectively and provide appropriate support services to those affected. Australis recognises that any critical incident that occurs must be documented, reported and taken seriously, as it will potentially harm the physical and psychological wellbeing of all staff, students, contractors and visitors. This policy and procedure is not for critical incidents that may relate to sexual assault or sexual harassment (refer to the *Sexual Assault and Sexual Harassment Prevention and Management Policy and Procedure*, for such critical incidents).

2. OVERVIEW

Effective critical management ensures a rapid and thorough response to emergencies, safeguards the lives of Australis students, staff and employees, and assures its business resilience. The policy and procedure demonstrate Australis's commitment and proactive approach to critical incident planning and management.

3. SCOPE

The policy and procedure apply to all students and all staff of Australis, including academic and non-academic staff, Board of Directors (BoD) and committee members, internal and external stakeholders, independent contractors, consultants and visitors. They cover all operations, activities and day-to-day decision-making under the direction of Australis.

Note: For critical incidents that may be related to sexual assault or sexual harassment, refer to the *Sexual Assault and Sexual Harassment Prevention and Management Policy and Procedure*.

4. DEFINITIONS

See the Australis *Glossary of Terms* for definitions.

5. POLICY STATEMENT

5.1 Policy Statement

Every critical incident is unique and needs to be addressed individually according to the nature and intensity of the incident and the needs of the people affected.

Critical incidents may include:

- severe accident or life-threatening injury or illness
- death or attempted suicide
- a missing student who is not contactable for a certain period
- severe verbal or psychological aggression
- threats of violence, assault, rape or sexual assault
- aggravated burglary
- presence or use of biological or chemical weapons
- threat of widespread infection or contamination
- domestic violence, physical, sexual or other abuse
- natural disaster
- civil unrest
- cybersecurity threat such as serious data breach etc.

5.2 Policy Principles

Australis will ensure that services and procedures are in place to ensure:

- Threats and potential crisis events are regularly identified and assessed to improve Australis's readiness for any such events.
- Correct services are in place to support staff and students through any critical incidents or crises, including for international students who may be away from family or community support systems.
- Appropriate plans are in place for managing critical incidents, crises and emergencies.
- Resources are available for recovery from a critical incident, crisis or emergency, supporting the Australis community to resume regular business as soon as possible.

6. PROCEDURE

The Australis critical incident management framework is developed according to the four significant stages of risk management: Prevent, Prepare, React and Recover.

These stages are further detailed below.

6.1. Prevent

Australis ensures the availability of welfare and support services for general concerns, with the primary aims of preventing critical incidents and providing timely support in the event of a critical incident.

6.2. Prepare

Strategies are in place to ensure that Australis is well-prepared to respond to a critical incident. Notices and emergency evacuation maps indicating the assembly points in the event of a fire or other emergency are displayed throughout Australis premises. Emergency wardens are appointed and are trained regularly in emergency and evacuation procedures.

6.3. React

The staff member who first encounters a critical incident is responsible for performing an analysis of the incident and deciding whether there is an immediate risk to the health or safety of any persons.

Once it has been determined that a critical incident is taking place or has taken place, the staff member will provide an immediate response and contact any relevant emergency services or authorities if required. If a critical incident threatens the health or safety of any individual, medical advice and treatment will be the priority. Anyone qualified to render first aid will be requested to do so unless emergency services provide contrary advice.

After responding to the critical incident, the staff member will report to their immediate supervisor, to the Dean and to the Chief Executive Officer (CEO). The staff member will also complete a Critical Incident Report and provide this to their supervisor, the Dean, the Administration Manager and the CEO.

The Critical Incident Report will include the following details:

- location, date, time, nature and details of the incident
- impact of the incident, including names and details of all individuals (students, staff and visitors) affected by the incident
- if applicable, which authorities have been contacted, including details of when the incident was reported, who it was reported to and any reference numbers allocated to the incident
- details of further response and remedial actions taken in relation to the incident
- the outcome or conclusion of any remedial action taken as a result of the incident

If the critical incident involves an international student's death or critical injury, the student's family will be informed and the necessary assistance will be provided. Actions may include the following:

- contacting the international student's next of kin and emergency contact
- hiring certified interpreters to help in communication with the student's family
- making travel arrangements and organising temporary accommodation for relatives if necessary
- contacting and arranging support/counselling staff, legal services and religious leaders
- making hospital, funeral, repatriation, rehabilitation and memorial service arrangements
- obtaining or facilitating a death certificate and other necessary documentation
- helping with the dispatch or disposal of personal belongings and helping to manage personal affairs that may include the health insurance of an international student
- communicating with the Australian Department of Home Affairs regarding visa issues

6.4. Recover

Recovery from a critical incident will take time. The incident will continue to have an impact not only on those directly involved, but also on the broader community, for a significant length of time.

Australis will ensure support is in place towards recovery. Australis will identify the staff and student/s who have been directly or indirectly affected or traumatised as a consequence of a critical incident to ensure relevant support is provided immediately or on an ongoing basis. Condolence letters will be sent to everyone involved.

The Critical Incident Management Team (CIMT), led by the CEO, will review the details in the Critical Incident Report and involve the reporting staff member and other related stakeholders in creating a recovery plan in the aftermath of a critical incident. If the CEO is not available, the Dean will lead the CIMT until the CEO is available to take over the lead role. If the Dean and the CEO are both not available, then the Administration and HR Manager will lead the CIMT until the CEO is available to take over the lead role.

The Critical Incident Report will be continuously updated as the recovery plan is executed. The recovery plan will include allocating responsibilities such as contacting emergency contacts for those affected, communicating essential information, responding to the media and liaising with responsible agencies and authorities. The recovery plan will also include details of financial and legal issues such as property damage, insurance issues, the liability of Australis in any situations and the potential for lawsuits. Counsellors will be arranged for any persons who may require additional assistance.

7. INFORMATION AND TRAINING

All staff, including casual staff, are provided with mandatory staff induction training that includes Australis provisions to promote and foster a safe environment on campus and online and how to manage critical incidents (or emergencies) and support business continuity.

There will be information provided to students and staff regarding campus and online safety on Australis's website and highly visible throughout the campus (including what to do in the event of critical incidents such as when there is a fire).

Australis will also conduct regular seminars, at least annually, for staff and students about campus and online safety and what actions to take in the event of critical incidents.

Students and staff are made aware of how they should respond to a critical incident, of relevant contacts, and of safe behaviours during student orientation or staff induction. Students and staff should be familiar with the types of alarms and signals, evacuation routes, location of emergency exits, assembly area, and where to find wardens and first aiders.

The table below summarises some of the training that will be provided to staff, including casual staff, to ensure they can effectively respond to critical incidents.

Staff information/training	Staff
Administering first aid	First aiders - Student Administration and HR Manager and/or Student Administration and Support Officers and other staff that hold first aid certificates
Evacuation in the case of fire or bomb threat	Wardens - Student Administration and HR Manager and/or Student Administration and Support Officers and other staff as required
Assisting people with physical disabilities in the case of emergencies	Wardens - Student Administration and HR Manager and/or Student Administration and Support Officers and other staff as required
ICT failure – e.g. cyber attack affecting core business systems	IT Manager and IT Helpdesk
Pandemics – e.g. COVID-19 disrupting learning and teaching with reference to credible health advice from credible sources such as official World Health Organisation (WHO) and Australian government health advice	CEO, Dean and Course Co-ordinator

8. EVALUATION

After a critical incident has concluded, a staff member not involved in the management of the critical incident will be tasked to independently review the incident, including how well it was managed, the response and communication about the incident and the outcome or aftermath of the incident. The staff member will write a report that includes any recommended changes to Australis's plans, policies and procedures in order to improve its approach to dealing with critical incidents and maintaining effective business continuity. The report, with recommendations, will be presented to the CIMT as well as the Audit and Risk Committee, the Academic Board (for academic recommendations) or the BoD (for non-

academic recommendations) for their review and approval. The Dean or the CEO will implement the approved recommendations from the report.

9. REPORTING

Australis will notify the Victorian Department of Education and the Australian Department of Home Affairs as soon as practicable after a critical incident. In the case of a student's death or other events that have caused direct physical harm to international students (such as a critical injury or suicide) which has led to a student's absence, the incident will be fully documented and immediately reported through the Provider Registration and International Student Management System (PRISMS). In the case of a student's death, the Student Management System will be updated to ensure no further communication is sent. Any outstanding tuition fees owed by the student will be resolved and reimbursement to the family will be arranged for prepaid tuition fees.

10. REVIEW

Australis's *Critical Incident Management and Business Continuity Policy and Procedure* will be tested from time to time (at least every two years) through scenario and simulation exercises. This risk mitigation action will be monitored by the Audit and Risk Committee and the BoD. This will inform continuous improvements in how Australis staff can be better trained to respond to crises. Australis will also carry out random annual fire and evacuation drills in order to minimise loss of life and injury in the case of fire or other events requiring evacuation of the building where the Australis campus is situated.

11. Related Documents, External References and Version Control

Related/Referenced Documents

- Audit and Risk Committee Terms of Reference
- Board of Directors Terms of Reference
- Bullying, Discrimination and Harassment Prevention and Management Policy and Procedure
- Code of Conduct
- Critical Incident Management and Business Continuity Plan
- Facilities, Resources and Infrastructure Policy
- Fraud and Corruption Control Policy and Procedure
- Health and Safety Policy
- Privacy Policy
- Professional Development and Scholarly Activity Policy and Procedure
- Records and Information Management Policy
- Sexual Assault and Sexual Harassment Prevention and Management Policy and Procedure
- Student Welfare, Wellbeing and Support Policy and Procedure

Related Legislation and External References

- Higher Education Standards Framework 2021
- Tertiary Education Quality and Standards Agency (TEQSA) Act 2021

Version Control

Version	Date	Reviewed/approved by	Key notes/changes
0.1	29/09/22	Board of Directors (BoD)	Approved by the BoD with minor editorial improvements.
0.2	01/12/22	Learning and Teaching Committee (LTC)	Reviewed by the LTC meeting 01/12/22 and updated with minor editorial improvements.
0.3	31/01/23	Academic Board (AB)	Approved at the AB meeting 31/01/23.
0.4	22/03/24	AB and BoD	Updated based on 21/03/24 AB meeting and 22/03/24 BoD meeting. Added reference to

			the <i>Sexual Assault and Sexual Harassment Prevention and Management Policy and Procedure</i>
0.5	05/04/24	AB and BoD	Further input from AB meeting 04/04/24 and BoD meeting 05/04/24 incorporated
0.6	11/04/24	AB and BoD	Reviewed and approved at the AB 11/04/24 meeting Reviewed and approved at the BoD 11/04/24 meeting

Document Review

To be reviewed at least every five (5) years from the date of final approval.