

Critical incident policy

Purpose

The purpose of this policy is to ensure that critical incidents or potential critical incidents are managed appropriately and applies to all international students at Chambers Institute.

This policy meets the requirements of the National Code of Practice for Registration Authorities and Providers of Education and Training to Overseas Students (National Code 2007) as established under the *Education Services for Overseas Students (ESOS) Act 2000*.

Overview

Chambers Institute is committed to managing critical incidents or potential critical incidents to ensure the safety of all staff and students. In the event of a critical incident, the appropriate infrastructure and procedures will be in place to ensure the provision of all necessary support services.

Definition of a Critical Incident

A critical incident is defined in the National Code 2007 as a traumatic event or the threat of such (within or outside Australia) which causes extreme stress, fear or injury. Critical incidents could include, but are not limited to, events such as:

- Missing students
- Severe verbal or psychological aggression
- Death, serious injury or any threat of these
- Natural disaster; and
- Issues such as domestic violence, sexual assault, drug or alcohol abuse.

Policy

1. Organisational responsibility and commitment

Chambers Institute is committed to ensuring that:

- a) risk reduction measures are in place to reduce the likelihood of a critical incident.
- b) appropriate training and information resources are provided to staff and students.
- c) appropriate actions are taken in the event of a critical incident or potential critical incident and that these actions maximize the safety of staff and students.
- d) a designated officer and critical incident team (see section 3 for definitions) manages critical incidents
- e) appropriate post incident procedures are followed such as support and counseling services.
- f) an evaluation of the response to the critical incident is undertaken and that procedures are updated where improvements are identified. Staff and students will be encouraged to provide suggestions to assist this process.

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2. Risk reduction measures

Chambers Institute has identified the risks of not implementing an effective critical incident policy and procedure in its Risk Management Plan. Therefore Chambers Institute will ensure that critical incidents are minimized through:

- a) Dissemination of this policy and critical incident procedures to all staff and students of Chambers Institute.
- b) Use ISANA Critical Incident Kit to provide information to all staff.
- c) Providing regular training and/or information to staff and students to ensure they are aware of safety, prevention of risk and able to respond promptly to any perceived threats to safety.
- d) Ensuring that staff bring safety issues to the attention of the CEO through the completion of a Safety Hazard Control Plan. Staff should provide the completed form to the CEO who will record and assess the risk and take action accordingly. In the case of students, concerns should be brought to any staff member who will complete the form on behalf of the student. Students may also bring their concerns to their student representative.
- e) Regular emergency management training and information including critical incident responses.
- f) Ensuring that at least 2 staff members of the Chambers Institute have current training in First Aid.
- g) Provision of specific information to staff who are undertaking travel for business related purposes on what to do or who to contact should they experience a critical incident whilst interstate or overseas.

3. Designated person and critical incident team responsibilities

In the event of a critical incident, a designated person and Critical Incident Team will be responsible for the prevention and management and management of critical incidents.

A designated person is any Chambers Institute staff member who either witnesses or is informed about an actual or potential incident. The designated person is required to inform the Critical Incident Team as soon as possible of the incident. In the meantime, however, the designated person may need to assume temporary control of a critical incident site and allocate tasks to others (e.g. calling emergency services, alerting other staff, assisting with first aid, crowd control etc). If the emergency services attend the incident, they will take over control of the critical incident upon arrival and the designated officer will take on the role of ensuring that the best interests of any student/staff member/visitor affected by the incident are met.

The Critical Incident Team will convene as soon as possible to plan an immediate response, allocate responsibilities and determine ongoing strategies. The Critical Incident Team will be responsible for the development and implementation of a Critical Incident Action Plan to ensure that the incident is handled appropriately and timely.

The Critical Incident Team includes:

CEO

Academic Manager

Marketing Officer

Student Welfare Officer

Course Administrator

Teacher

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4. Critical incident action plan

The Critical Incident Action Plan to be developed to ensure that the critical incident is handled appropriately and timely must be documented and include:

- a) Details of the incident including time, date, location, nature of the incident and names and roles of persons involved.
- b) General control objectives for the incident as well as specific action items to be undertaken including communication and reporting. This also includes media management.
- c) Details of designated person or critical incident team.
- d) Other information required.
- e) Follow up action

5. Critical Incident Follow Up

A range of strategies will be in place to ensure that the appropriate support and monitoring is provided following a critical incident. These strategies include:

- f) debriefing of staff and students including provision of accurate information.
- g) identifying staff and students who need to access support services to assist them in dealing with the critical incidents.
- h) identifying any other persons who may be affected by the critical incident and providing access to support services as required
- i) arranging a memorial service as appropriate
- j) monitoring the progress of all those affected by the critical incident especially staff and students for signs of delayed stress and the onset of post-traumatic stress disorder.
- k) managing long term consequences such as inquests and legal proceedings.

6. Reporting

- a) Where the incident may affect the student's visa conditions or program of study, Chambers Institute will notify DEEWR and DIAC as soon as practical after the incident.
- b) Where a student dies or sustains serious injury, Chambers Institute will liaise with the student's family and provide support as required. Chambers Institute will also notify all other relevant and authorized parties.
- c) A review and evaluation of the response to the critical incident will be conducted by CEO. The purpose of the review and evaluation is to assess how well the incident was handled and to identify/minimize risks for the future.

7. Evaluation

Evaluation of the response to a critical incident will be carried out and documented. Any improvements will be documented and implemented as appropriate.

8. Records

Approved incident forms and checklists will be used to ensure communication and management of the incident as well as consistent and complete record keeping.