

# Procedure: Student critical incident

## Purpose

This procedure provides a process for decision-making and managing critical incidents that involve Australian National University students in an effective, consistent, compassionate and timely manner.

## Scope

This procedure applies in the event of a critical incident that occurs on or off campus at any time that involves enrolled students of ANU.

This policy and procedure does not apply to sexual assault and sexual harassment incidents which are covered under the [Sexual Misconduct Policy](#) and Sexual Misconduct Response (Student) Procedure.

## Definitions

**Incident Coordinator** is the person, nominated by the ANU and managed by the Deputy Vice-Chancellor (International and Corporate) portfolio, who manages the University's response to critical incidents.

**Primary Contact** is the person nominated by the student on the Interactive Student Information System (ISIS) as their Primary Contact and/or Emergency Contact, or where that person is unavailable, next-of-kin, family, or other person if appropriate. If this student is living in residential accommodation and the primary contact listed on ISIS cannot be contacted for the purposes of this procedure, then the primary contact listed on StarRez will be considered the primary contact.

**Personal representative** is the legal personal representative of a deceased student who may be the Primary Contact or an Executor or Administrator of the student's will or estate. The University Legal Office can provide advice on identifying a legal personal representative.

**Student critical incident** is a traumatic event, or the imminent threat of such (within or outside Australia), which causes extreme stress, fear or injury to a student or group of students (including Higher Degree by Research and exchange students). A student critical incident requires a response and active management within 24 hours of notification and is not able to be normalised through local procedures. A critical incident may include, but is not limited to:

- a. missing student
- b. death, serious injury or any threat of these to self or others
- c. serious threats of violence to students and/or staff
- d. other traumatic events or serious threats, such as those caused by natural disasters.

## Procedure

### Initial response

1. In a life threatening or emergency situation, call **000**.
2. Actual or suspected student critical incidents should be notified to the ANU through contacting ANU UniSafe (Security) by calling (02) 6125 2249 or using the call Security button on the ANUOK app, 24 hours a day, 7 days a week. Notifications can be from any party including, but not limited to:
  - Emergency services when they need to attend to campus emergencies or where they require contact with the University
  - Students or staff who become aware of an incident affecting an ANU student
  - Individuals not related to the University, such as family or friends, who become aware of an incident affecting an ANU student.
3. If the incident is on campus, and emergency services have been called, ANU UniSafe can provide immediate first aid, secure the environment, and provide access for emergency services to campus.
4. A list of contact details for other urgent support will be kept updated on the ANU website: <https://www.anu.edu.au/students/health-safety-wellbeing/getting-help-at-anu/urgent-support>.
5. If ANU UniSafe considers that the situation is in line with the student critical incident definition, ANU UniSafe escalates it to the Incident Coordinator (IC).
6. The IC determines whether the incident is a student critical incident in line with the definition.
7. If the situation is a student critical incident, the IC activates the Student Critical Incident Response Team to operationalise a whole-of-University response. If the situation is not considered a student critical incident, the IC ensures alternative responses are initiated and people involved in the incident are provided with appropriate support services, as appropriate.

## **Student Critical Incident Response Team (SCIRT)**

8. The membership of the SCIRT consists of the following or their delegate:

- Director, University Experience (Chair)
- Senior Manager, Student Safety and Wellbeing
- Head of Clinical Services
- University Registrar
- Dean of Students
- Associate Director Operations, Facilities and Services Division
- Director, ANU Communications and Engagement
- Chief People Officer

9. Depending on the type and location of the incident and affected students, the SCIRT Chair may include other University staff or external specialists to join the SCIRT, as appropriate:

- Chief Residential Services and Operating Officer
- The relevant Head of Residence if the student is a residential student
- The relevant Dean, General Manager, or representative of the ANU College(s)
- Manager, Access and Inclusion if the student is under 18 years old
- Director, Facilities and Services if required due to the nature of the incident
- A cultural liaison, where the student is a First Nations student or is from a culturally and linguistically diverse background
- Senior Manager, ANU Global Programs, if the student is on an exchange or study abroad program
- International SOS, if the student is travelling domestically or abroad.

10. The privacy of affected students must be handled in accordance with the [ANU Privacy Policy](#) as necessary to meet the needs of each incident.

11. Communications with the SCIRT will be made through a dedicated functional email address.

12. The SCIRT will meet in a timely manner as soon as is practicable after the incident occurs or is reported to assess the severity of the situation, identify priorities and allocate actions to be taken in a timely manner.

13. The Chair of SCIRT is responsible for planning, coordinating and managing the critical incident. This includes the following actions, which the Chair may assign to SCIRT members as appropriate:
- a. Accurately establishing facts and event timeline;
  - b. If appropriate, informing the student's nominated emergency contact. Whenever possible, negotiate with the impacted student about alerting the emergency contact prior to doing so. If the incident involves the death of a student, the police are responsible for informing the family or next of kin;
  - c. If appropriate, identifying a suitable ANU staff member to be a designated contact for family members to provide support and information as required;
  - d. Reviewing the student record to verify student details, and gather relevant information, including age, address, email, phone numbers, nationality, primary contact, sponsor or agent etc.;
  - e. Liaising with external agencies, which may include the Access Mental Health, doctors, hospital, police, government departments, and relevant Embassy;
  - f. Liaising with media organisations where the circumstances of the critical incident result in media attention and assist with the development of internal communications to staff and students;
  - g. Making relevant referrals for academic and student wellbeing support services;
  - h. Ensuring priority counselling is provided for impacted individuals in the first days and up to two weeks after the incident;
  - i. Providing voluntary group information sessions coordinated by Student Safety and Wellbeing to staff or students directly involved, as required;
  - j. Contacting the relevant sponsor. If the student is an Australia Awards student, the SCIRT must have regard to the specified Australia Awards procedures;
  - k. Managing the recording of the incident which may include entry in [Figtree](#);
  - l. Maintaining records in the [Electronic Records Management System \(ERMS\)](#), and documenting actions taken and outcomes, to form a Student Critical Incident Report at the conclusion of the incident; and
  - m. Participate in relevant post incident reviews and formulation of recommendations for continual improvement.
14. The SCIRT is to establish mechanisms for the timely, ongoing and accurate reporting on the critical incident to the IC.

15. Where the critical incident involves an international student, the Chair of SCIRT is responsible for ensuring the following actions are taken where appropriate. These may be delegated to members of the SCIRT, where appropriate:
- a. If the student is a Study Abroad or Exchange student, contact their Home University or Agent, as they may be in contact with the parents/next of kin or other emergency contact;
  - b. Hire interpreters with relevant NAATI certification or equivalent qualification and/or experience (if required). Consideration should be given to this regardless of English language proficiency due to the impact of shock or grief for people for whom English is a second language;
  - c. In the event of death or medical emergency, inform the Overseas Student Health Insurance (OSHC) provider;
  - d. Provide information to the student on accessing legal advice and financial support, if needed;
  - e. Ensure the student's leave is approved by the relevant College and reported on the [Student Administration System](#) and the [Provider Registration and International Student Management System](#) (PRISMS) database, within 14 days where the international student is under the age of 18 and within 31 days for all other international students; and
  - f. Inform Immigration about the situation. The SCIRT should liaise with the Academic Standards and Quality Office (ASQO) to inform Immigration.
16. Where the critical incident involves an international student under the age of 18 years with a valid Confirmation of Appropriate Accommodation and Welfare (CAAW) letter, where the Primary Contact has already been informed, the University Registrar is responsible for the following actions if the critical incident involves, or has the potential to cause, a disruption to accommodation and/or welfare arrangements. These tasks can be delegated to other members of the SCIRT where appropriate:
- a. Assess the suitability of current arrangements;
  - b. If required, notify and work with relevant stakeholders, including Homestay, Accommodation and Guardian service providers; and
  - c. Arranges emergency accommodation or ensures alternative welfare arrangements are made.
17. There can be costs associated with a student critical incident. Where the student's personal or overseas insurance does not cover costs associated with the incident, the student and/or family need to meet those costs. In exceptional circumstances, the Vice-

Chancellor may approve financial assistance to assist direct family with travel, accommodation, and other arrangements.

18. Notifiable incidents under relevant Commonwealth and/or State legislation must be reported within the required timeframes.

- For details as to who the relationship manager is, contact University Legal Office or the Director, Corporate Governance and Risk.
- A health and safety incident is notifiable if the incident involves workers (including contractors) or students and results in death, serious injury or illness of a person, or involves a dangerous incident with the potential to cause serious injury or illness. The Work Environment Group, Human Resources, must be notified within four hours of being informed of a student death that occurred on campus or while conducting University activity off campus (e.g. field trip). They will notify Comcare where required.

### **Missing Student**

19. When concerns about a student are reported to an academic College or to a Residence, the appropriate staff member(s) gathers information, makes an initial assessment, and reports on that to ANU UniSafe.

20. In assessing whether a student is missing, University staff cannot disclose the student's personal information to any third party, including family or friends.

21. To make an initial assessment where the academic College or Residence believes a student is missing, the Chair of SCIRT is responsible for the following actions, which may be assigned to SCIRT members as appropriate:

- a. Access the student record to verify details and to gather information, including address, email and phone numbers;
- b. Establish whether the student has been attending classes, submitted assignments, accessed digital systems (e.g. learning management system, lecture recording system, WATTLE), engaged with supervisor, or had recent contact with classmates, staff, and/or administrators;
- c. Confirm that the student has not applied for leave of absence or cancelled their enrolment;
- d. Confirm with ANU UniSafe the student's building access activity around campus;
- e. For residential students, confirm if the student has been seen in or around the residence;
- f. For international students, determine whether they are sponsored or on exchange;

- g. For an international student, requests [Academic Standards and Quality Office](#) to check immigration records to see whether they have left the country;
  - h. Ascertains whether the student has recently accessed University services; and
  - i. Contacts the student (University and other email address, telephone/SMS) to advise that concerns have been expressed about their personal welfare and that if they do not respond within two working days, the local police will be notified.
22. If the student reported missing replies within two days of the initial contact from the University, the student is requested to make an appointment with the College(s) and/or ANU services such as Student Safety and Wellbeing team to determine whether further support is required.
23. If the student does not reply to the initial email and phone call within two days, the Chair of SCIRT or delegate:
  - a. Informs the Primary Contact and/or Emergency Contact; and
  - b. Requests the local police to do a welfare check.
24. In the event that the local police confirm that the student is missing, the Chair of SCIRT is responsible for ensuring the following are notified:
  - a. The Office of the Vice-Chancellor;
  - b. The relevant ANU College Dean(s);
  - c. The University Legal Office;
  - d. Chief Residential Services and Operating Officer, if appropriate; and
  - e. University Registrar.

## **Death of a Student**

25. Where a student dies on campus,
  - call **000** immediately and notify ACT Policing and emergency services
  - Following that, call ANU UniSafe (ANU Security) at (02) 6125 2249 or through the call Security button on the ANUOK App.
26. When ANU UniSafe is notified of a death of a student, ANU UniSafe will escalate it to the IC.
27. The Chair of SCIRT or nominee may assist the police to confirm the identity of the student. The police will notify the next of kin.
28. When notified of a student death on or off campus, the Chair of SCIRT is responsible for notifying:

- a. Work Environment Group, Human Resources, within four hours of being informed, if the death occurred on campus or while conducting University activity off campus (e.g. field trip) to notify Comcare where required;
- b. Office of the Vice-Chancellor to notify the Chancellor and send a letter of condolence, to be translated if required;
- c. Director, ANU Communications and Engagement to coordinate all external communications in the event of a student death and are consulted on internal communications going to large groups;
- d. The University Legal Office to liaise with external agencies (e.g. AFP, Coroner), assessing external agency requests for information, acting as conduit for preparing documents for external agencies, and providing legal advice on privacy;
- e. The College Dean(s) and College General Manager(s) to remove the student's name from class lists, inform relevant staff and students, coordinate all internal communications, send a letter of condolence (if appropriate), and determine whether it is appropriate for the student to receive a posthumous award;
- f. Chief Residential Services and Operating Officer, who will coordinate with the respective Head of Residence and residential staff;
- g. Senior Manager, Student Safety and Wellbeing to coordinate wellbeing support for affected students and staff;
- h. Chief People Officer to provide support for staff identified as being impacted by the death;
- i. University Registrar to update the student record accordingly to prevent any automatic correspondence, update the record as 'Deceased, student withdrawn from all courses', set program status to 'discontinued';
- j. Finance and Business Services to ensure that automatic debtor notices are not sent;
- k. University Librarian to ensure that automatic requests for return of library materials are not sent;
- l. Information Technology Services to request that all electronic access is withdrawn;
- m. Other stakeholders in student-facing roles (e.g. Chaplaincy, student associations) who engage with students impacted by the death.

29. Where the deceased student is a residential student, the Head of Residence may:

- a. Works with ANU UniSafe to lock down the student's room and liaise with ACT Policing and/or ambulance services;



- b. Ensures all belongings are returned to the student's personal representative, at an appropriate point in time. Where required and after consultation with the police, the Head of Residence should ensure that an appropriate member of staff is available to escort the personal representative to the room if they choose to collect the belongings in person;
- c. Following official confirmation from the local police and/or Embassy that next of kin has been informed, notifies students within the Residence of the student's death in a sensitive manner;
- d. Identifies the students in the deceased student's residence and friendship groups to whom the offer of support should be made;
- e. Consults with Senior Manager, Student Safety and Wellbeing regarding the management of information to the student residential community and measures, including psychological interventions, which assist with the expression of a community acknowledgement and offer to access support;
- f. Plans a memorial service, in consultation with Chaplains and consistent with the student's religious and cultural background, if appropriate; and
- g. Requests the Chief Residential Services and Operating Officer that no further accommodation related correspondence is addressed to the student, to cease immediately all automated financial processes, and process all possible refunds after receiving instructions from the personal representative as to the correct account details.

30. Where the deceased is an international student, the Chair of SCIRT is responsible for the following actions, which may be assigned to SCIRT members as appropriate:

- a. Notifies University Registrar to inform Immigration before reporting in PRISMS;
- b. Notifies Embassy or Consulate, where appropriate. The SCIRT should consult with the Deputy Vice-Chancellor (International and Corporate) for communication with embassy or consulate;
- c. Where the death is of an exchange student, notifies the University Registrar (or equivalent) of the home institution to determine the appropriate way to contact next of kin;
- d. Assists the family or personal representative to assist with funeral/repatriation arrangements, the return of personal effects, insurance, travel and accommodation, meet them on arrival, and arrange for them to meet with relevant staff and/or students; and

- e. Engages ANU Chaplains or other religious clergy/representatives for funeral/memorial services in accordance with the wishes of family or their personal representative.

31. The Office of the Vice-Chancellor has the authority to approve financial assistance to the family with travel, accommodation, and other arrangements.

### **Conclusion and review**

32. The SCIRT will stand down, with the authorisation of the IC, at such time as the ongoing management of the incident can be transitioned to the business as usual roles and responsibilities of the University.

33. At the conclusion of a student critical incident, the Chair of SCIRT is responsible for the following actions, which may be assigned to SCIRT members as appropriate:

- a. Arranges access to appropriate counselling support for the staff involved in the management of a student critical incident;
- b. Reviews with relevant staff involved, the management and responses to the student critical incident, with a view to identifying improvements to the procedure and to the future management of student critical incidents; and
- c. Completes the student critical incident report, documenting actions taken and outcomes.

34. Every 6 months, the SCIRT reports and provides data to the ANU Audit and Risk Management Committee on the management of student critical incidents.

35. All records/documents created under this procedure are kept in the University's Electronic Records Management System (ERMS).

## Document information

Title	Student critical incident
Document Type	Procedure
Document Number	ANUP_002607
Version	22
Purpose	These procedures provide clear processes for decision-making and managing critical incidents involving students of the University in an effective, consistent, compassionate, and timely manner.
Audience	Staff, Students
Category	Academic
Topic	Students
Subtopic	Other
Effective Date	1 Dec 2022
Review Date	1 Dec 2027
Responsible Officer	Deputy Vice-Chancellor (Student and University Experience)
Approved By	Deputy Vice-Chancellor (Academic) (dvc.academic@anu.edu.au)
Contact Area	Office of the Deputy Vice-Chancellor (Student and University Experience) (director.university.experience@anu.edu.au)
Authority	Privacy Act 1988
Printed On	22 Mar 2023

Please ensure you have the latest version of this document from the Policy Library website before referencing this.