



## Critical Incident Response

A critical incident is a traumatic event, or the threat of such, which causes extreme stress, fear or injury. Critical incidents may include, but are not limited to, a missing student, severe verbal or psychological aggression, death, serious injury, a natural disaster, domestic violence, physical abuse, sexual abuse, and other potentially life-threatening events. It should be noted that this does not include serious academic misconduct.

Exposure to a critical incident can be overwhelming and threatening and may lead to distress. This can be harmful when a person has demands and expectations that are out of keeping with their needs, abilities, skills and coping strategies. This distress can result in a decline in one's wellbeing.

### General Critical Incident Response Principles

United Institute will strive to instil a comprehensive, integrated and systematic approach in our response to critical incidents. In our quest to do so, will be guided by the following:

- Provide information on our approach to critical incidents in the Induction program for both learners and staff members;
- Meet our duty of care as an employer and as an RTO;
- Consider any relevant laws when managing a critical incident;
- Respond to the critical incident in a timely manner;
- Ensure the safety and security of our learner at all times;
- Cooperate with the relevant agencies such as the Department of Education and Training and the Department of Home Affairs (where applicable);
- Where a learner under the age of 18 is involved in a critical incident, we notify their parent or guardian appropriately and in a timely manner, **unless the learner has advised that it is their parent or guardian who has caused the critical incident or they are emancipated from their parent or guardian;**
- Regularly monitor the effectiveness of the response and risk control measures (where applicable);
- Maintain a written record of any critical incidents and remedial action taken for at least 5-years from the date of the critical incident, or 2-years after the overseas student ceases to be a student (whichever is later); and



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- Ensure that our process in managing critical incidents and our record keeping procedure meets the requirements of Standard 6 of the National Code.

### **Critical Incident Response Team**

In the event of a critical incident, United Institute will assemble a Critical Incident Response Team who will be responsible for:

- The implementation of the critical incident response procedure
- Identify the cause of the critical incident, assessing the situation and controlling any further risk that it may pose
- Implement, monitor and maintain risk control measures
- Regularly monitor the effectiveness of the critical incident risk control measures and rectify any deficiencies identified
- Consult and liaise with other staff members and learners on the effectiveness of our critical incident practices
- Report to the CEO at least once a day with updates on the critical incident and our response
- Liaise with Emergency Response authorities (where applicable)
- Liaise with the relevant government agencies (where applicable)
- Ensuring the well-being of all learners, staff members and others involved or witness to a critical incident
- Arranging for counselling or trauma services (where appropriate) following the critical incident



## **Critical Incident Response Procedure**

1. **Critical incident is reported to the Student & Administration Support personnel** – the learner or staff member is to call (03) 99990779 to report the situation to United Institute. The Student & Administration Support personnel is to complete the *Critical Incident Report Form* and assemble a Critical Incident Response Team (CIRT). The CIRT is to consist of the Student & Administration Support personnel and other staff members with the appropriate skills and qualities to contribute to a successful outcome in our management of the critical incident. The CIRT is to be provided with the *Critical Incident Report Form* and a member of the team appointed as the Designated Officer. The Designated Officer is responsible in delegating tasks and overseeing the management of our response to a critical incident.
2. **Immediate actions** – the CIRT is to undertake the following immediately (or within 24-hours):
  - Check on the safety of the learners and other staff members
  - Identify the cause of the critical incident
  - If practical, remove or minimise the cause for any potential for the critical incident to spread or escalate
  - Ensure the injured and/or traumatised learners and staff members are provided with appropriate emergency and medical care
  - Arrange for counselling, trauma or religious services (as appropriate)
  - Ensure adequate support and practical is available for and offered to learners and staff members
  - Ensure the site of the incident is not disturbed (if in relation to a police matter or where an investigation is required by WorkSafe)
  - Manage media reports (if applicable)
  - Commence an investigation to record real-time or factual data on the critical incident
3. **Inform relevant parties** – the CIRT is to:
  - Brief all relevant personnel involved in the critical incident;
  - Keep learners, their families (where appropriate), staff members, the Department of Education and Training, the Department of Home Affairs and other relevant agencies informed; and
  - In the event of an overseas student's death or other circumstance affecting the student's attendance, the Department of Home Affairs is to be notified, initially via telephone, followed by reporting via PRISMS.



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4. **Identify, assess and investigate the critical incident** – the CIRT is now to commence their investigation into the critical incident. They are to identify the cause and assess the likelihood of it reoccurring. They are to also assist with the police or any other agency, where required. They may refer to our 'Risk Management and Internal Audit' policy to guide their approach and steps in this process.
5. **Control the risk** – once the critical incident has been investigated and the cause uncovered, the CIRT is to analyse the information and brainstorm and research ways to control the risk to prevent any re-occurrence. Once a list of risk control measures has been developed, the CIRT is to present it to the CEO for approval.
6. **Implement, monitor and maintain risk control measures** – once the CEO has approved of the risk control measures, the CIRT is to implement, monitor and maintain them. Throughout the process, the CIRT is also responsible in keeping learners, their families (if appropriate), and staff members informed of the management of the critical incident response.
7. **Monitor behaviours and well-being** – throughout the process, the CIRT is responsible in:
  - Ensuring learners and staff members are provided ongoing access to counselling, trauma or religious services (as appropriate)
  - Monitor the attitudes and behaviours of learners and staff members for any signs of Post-Traumatic Stress Disorder (PTSD)
  - Monitor the general health and well-being of all learners and staff members
8. **Restore normal daily operations** – where practical and safe to do so, the CIRT will be responsible in restoring normal daily operations of United Institute. Ensure records are kept for a minimum of 5-years or 2-years after the overseas student ceases to be a student (whichever is later).



**Critical Incident Response Process Flow-Chart**

