

Critical Incident Policy and Associated Procedures

1. Purpose

This policy outlines the approach of the **Institute of International Studies (IOIS)** to identifying, managing, responding to, and reviewing **critical incidents** that may impact students, staff, visitors, or the operation of the organisation.

The purpose of this policy is to ensure IOIS:

- Responds quickly and effectively to incidents that may affect the health, safety, or wellbeing of individuals,
- Minimises disruption to training operations,
- Meets its obligations under the **Work Health and Safety Act 2011 (Cth)** and **Outcome Standards for RTOs 2025**,
- Embeds incident response within the **IOIS Risk Management and Self-Assurance Framework**.

2. Scope

This policy applies to all:

- IOIS staff, trainers, contractors, students, and visitors,
- Learning environments (on-campus, online, or external training sites),
- Activities conducted under IOIS's control or supervision, including events and excursions.

3. Definitions

Term	Definition
Critical Incident	Any sudden or unexpected event causing or potentially causing significant harm to individuals or disruption to IOIS operations. Includes but is not limited to serious injury, death, fire, natural disaster, threats to personal safety, data breaches, and reputational harm.
Incident Coordinator	The person appointed by IOIS (typically the Academic Manager or WHS Officer) to manage the response and communication related to the incident.

Term	Definition
Self-Assurance Review	A formal internal review process to evaluate IOIS's compliance and performance following an incident, identifying corrective and preventative actions.
WHS Representative	The designated officer responsible for health and safety compliance and reporting.

4. Policy Statements

- IOIS takes **all reasonable steps** to prevent, prepare for, and respond to critical incidents.
- A **Critical Incident Management System (CIMS)** is maintained to ensure timely and coordinated responses.
- IOIS provides **appropriate support** to those affected, including emotional, academic, and operational support.
- All incidents are recorded, reported, and reviewed to identify lessons learned and to support continuous improvement.
- Information relating to incidents will be handled **confidentially** and in accordance with IOIS's **Privacy Policy**.
- The CEO is responsible for ensuring that corrective actions are implemented and that systemic risks are managed through the **Risk Register** and **Continuous Improvement Register (CIR)**.

5. Procedures

5.1 Prevention and Preparedness

1. IOIS conducts annual **risk assessments** to identify potential hazards and threats to safety and continuity of operations.
2. Emergency procedures, including evacuation plans, are clearly displayed and discussed at orientation.
3. All staff are briefed on emergency contacts, incident reporting processes, and safety responsibilities during induction.

5.2 Immediate Response

1. **Ensure Safety and Contain Risk**
 - Provide first aid where possible and contact local emergency services immediately by dialling **000** in Australia.



- Evacuate affected areas if necessary.
- Isolate hazards or restrict access until safe.

2. Notify Key Personnel

- The first staff member on scene must notify the **Incident Coordinator** (Academic Manager or CEO).
- The Incident Coordinator determines if the situation qualifies as a *critical incident* and activates the response plan.

3. Incident Coordination

- The Incident Coordinator ensures communication with emergency services, staff, and affected individuals.
- All actions are recorded in the **Critical Incident Register**.
- If the incident involves injury, WHS reporting obligations are triggered and the incident must be reported to **SafeWork NSW** if notifiable.

4. Communication Management

- The CEO or delegated representative is the **official spokesperson** for all external communications.
- IOIS ensures that information is accurate, timely, and protects the privacy and dignity of those involved.

5.3 Support for Affected Persons

IOIS provides or facilitates:

- Access to **first aid and medical assistance**;
- **Psychological or counselling referrals** (e.g., Lifeline, Beyond Blue, or other support services);
- Adjustments to study load or deadlines for students directly impacted;
- Assistance in contacting family members or emergency contacts, if necessary.

Where required, the Student Support Officer coordinates ongoing support, ensuring affected individuals are not disadvantaged.

5.4 Investigation and Documentation

1. The Incident Coordinator ensures completion of an **Incident Report Form** within **24 hours** of the event.
2. Evidence, photos, or witness statements (if applicable) are attached to the report.
3. A formal review is undertaken by the CEO and Academic Manager to determine:
 - Contributing factors,
 - Preventive actions,
 - Policy or procedure changes required.

4. Findings are recorded in the **Continuous Improvement Register (CIR)** and the **Risk Register** if the incident exposed systemic weaknesses.

5.5 Post-Incident Review and Self-Assurance

1. Within **10 working days** of the incident, IOIS conducts a **post-incident review meeting** involving relevant staff.
2. The review assesses:
 - Adequacy of the immediate response,
 - Communication effectiveness,
 - Compliance with IOIS procedures,
 - Training gaps or resource deficiencies.
3. The CEO ensures corrective actions are implemented and monitored.
4. Lessons learned feed into the **annual Self-Assurance Review**, informing policy updates, PD plans, and risk management strategies.

5.6 Recordkeeping

- All records (incident forms, investigation reports, correspondence, and follow-up actions) are stored securely in IOIS's central compliance system.
- Records are retained for at least **seven years**.
- Sensitive information is restricted to authorised personnel and handled per the **IOIS Privacy Policy**.

6. Responsibilities

Role	Responsibilities
CEO	Approves and oversees the critical incident response and ensures regulatory reporting compliance.
Academic Manager Incident Coordinator	/ Leads immediate response, manages communication, coordinates reviews, and ensures follow-up support.
Trainers / Staff	Report incidents promptly, assist in managing safety, and complete incident documentation.
Student Support Officer	Provides welfare support, referrals, and ongoing follow-up for affected students.
WHS Officer	Ensures SafeWork notifications are completed (if required) and that corrective actions are implemented.

7. Related Documents

- IOIS Risk Management Policy
- IOIS Privacy Policy
- IOIS Student Support Policy
- IOIS Health and Safety Policy
- IOIS Continuous Improvement Register
- Incident Report Form and Critical Incident Register



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