

## 1. Purpose

Australian School of Accounting (ASA) is committed to ensuring a safe and effective environment for students, staff and visitors to ASA. In the event of a critical incident, ASA’s response should be timely, professional and compassionate for all students and staff involved. The appropriate response will depend on the severity of the incident. Effective management of critical incidents, should any occur, is necessary to minimise trauma, injury, illness, property or other damage.

## 2. Principles

ASA is committed to:

- providing effective safeguards for the health, safety and wellbeing of all staff, students and visitors to ASA;
- responding appropriately and in a timely manner to critical incidents;
- protecting the reputation of ASA and the continuity of its teaching and business operations; and
- complying with applicable health and safety regulations, legislation and standards.

## 3. Scope

This Policy applies to the whole of ASA, including students, staff and visitors. Incidents may occur on or off campus. Students who are living away from home may require additional support.

## 4. Definitions

Term	Definition
Critical Incident	A traumatic event, or the threat of such (within or outside Australia), which causes extreme stress, fear or injury
National Code 2018	The National Code of Practice of Education and Training to Overseas Students 2018

Critical incidents may include:

- serious injury;
- death;
- sexual assault or harassment;
- mental health issues;
- natural disasters;
- political or civil unrest;
- a breakdown in infrastructure (e.g. a major technological outage or through vandalism);

- serious threats to people including physical and emotional;
- missing person;
- public health alerts for serious diseases;
- criminal incidents, e.g., robbery or assault;
- other personal threats, e.g., cyber bullying; or
- any incident that may include physical or psychological harm.

Minor incidents, such as petty theft, are not covered by this policy. Incidents occurring out of session or outside of ASA premises are not covered by this policy unless there are serious repercussions that could impact students or staff.

## **5. Policy**

ASA will provide a safe and secure physical environment for its staff, students and visitors. It will monitor risks including the potential for critical incidents. ASA will maintain procedures that are designed to ensure an appropriate response to critical incidents, should any occur.

## **6. Procedure**

The following procedure is required in managing a critical incident should one occur at ASA. This process is not exhaustive and since it may not cover all situations, is intended as a guide only and further information or assistance should be engaged wherever necessary.

### **6.1 Step 1: Communication**

When a critical incident occurs, the Principal must be notified immediately. He/she will coordinate the emergency response. If the Principal cannot be contacted, then the Academic Dean or the most senior available staff member should be contacted. The Chair of the Board of Directors should immediately be notified by the Principal or Academic Dean. A list of key personnel and contact details will be maintained by the Principal's office and will be available in the event of a critical incident.

In coordinating the emergency response, the Principal or other responsible person will:

- contact security, if appropriate;
- contact relevant emergency services if appropriate (Police, Fire Brigade, Ambulance, SES);
- organise evacuation if required;
- notify key people (including staff, students and relatives) as required; and
- notify organisational units including Student Administration, Corporate Services and all Academic Units.

Depending on the nature and scale of the incident, responsibility for managing the situation might be transferred to a more senior person or to external authorities, e.g. the police.

## **6.2 Step 2: Gathering information**

Immediately after notification of the incident, the following questions need to be addressed by the critical incident response coordinator:

- What happened?
- What makes the event critical?
- When did the incident occur?
- Where did it happen?
- Who was involved?
- Who needs assistance?
- What is the most appropriate response?

## **6.3 Step 3: Further responses**

Additional responses by the critical incident response coordinator may include:

- arranging counselling and other relevant support for affected individuals;
- contacting a chaplain or religious leaders, funeral director or government agencies as necessary and/or applicable.

## **6.4 Step 4: Recovery and Monitoring**

Once the immediate priorities have been managed, there will be a follow-up period which may include the following:

- salvage and recovery of resources and facilities;
- monitoring the health and wellbeing of those directly or indirectly affected by the incident, with recommendations for ongoing support and medical services as appropriate; and
- restoration, as far as possible, of operational routine.

## **6.5 Step 5: Investigation, Analysis and Reporting**

Following on from step 4, the management of the incident will be reviewed, as follows:

### **6.5.1 Initial Investigation and Debriefing:**

- collection and recording of details and facts from the person or persons involved and any witnesses to the incident
- interviews with the individuals involved in the incident and witnesses to the incident.

### **6.5.2 Analysis:**

Analysis of the incident requires:

- assessment of the cause of the incident and contributing factors;
- review of relevant safety procedure or absence of same that may have led to the incident or adversely affected the response to the incident;
- a review of related internal processes and procedures relevant to the incident; and
- recommendations for improvement that will help to prevent similar future incidents.

### **6.5.3 Reporting:**

The Principal or delegate will document the incident in a formal report to the Board of Directors. This report will include all relevant details, the results and recommendations contained in the analysis including any remedial action taken and recommendations to address any underlying causes. ASA will maintain such records for a minimum of two years as required under the National Code 2018.

## **7. Death of a Student**

Where a critical incident has resulted in the death of a student, the following specific actions are required:

### **7.1 Collection of Information**

The following details must be collected and recorded:

- student name,
- student number,
- course,
- date of birth,
- date of death (if known),
- cause of death (if known),
- name of next of kin (if available); and
- contact details for next of kin.

### **7.2 Liaison**

The Principal is responsible for liaising with the next of kin and/or relevant embassy or consulate for handling the deceased person's body and personal effects. A memorial service may be organised for fellow students, staff and family.

### **7.3 Reporting requirements for international students**

If the decedent was an enrolled international student there are additional reporting requirements under the *Education Services for Overseas Students Act 2000 (ESOS Act)*:

- The Principal and Academic Dean must be advised of the death as soon as possible.
- Student Administration must immediately advise the Department of Home Affairs and the Department of Education of the circumstances of death.

It is especially important to contact the State Immigration Office, prior to reporting on PRISMS, to prevent a letter being sent to the student's most recent recorded address. This minimises the possibility of any further distress for the student's family and associates.

## **8. Report of Sexual Violence**

When there is a report of a sexual assault or sexual harassment, or of students or staff who witnessed and have been affected by such an incident, the procedure set out in Section 6 above applies but additional precautions may be necessary and the following specific actions are required.

### **8.1 Support and resources**

All appropriate resources will be provided to the student or staff member, including referral to external resources.

Where the affected individual is uncomfortable reporting the incident themselves, they should be helped to contact the Student Support Officer who can report it on their behalf.

The Student Support Officer must ensure that the student or staff member is also provided support through student or staff counselling. The affected staff or student should also be referred to external services. Useful contacts include the following:

Eastern & Central Sydney Sexual Assault Service

<https://www.healthdirect.gov.au/australian-health-services/20079913/eastern-central-sexual-assault-service/services/camperdown-2050-missenden>

(02) 9515 9040

NSW Health Sexual Assault Services

<https://www.health.nsw.gov.au/parvan/sexualassault/Pages/info-sexual-assault-victims.aspx>

1800RESPECT. National Sexual Assault, Domestic Family Violence, Counselling Service. Ph. 1800 737 732

### **8.2 Staff guidance and support**

The staff responding to the report must be guided to exercise due sensitivity and be careful, empathetic and non-judgemental.

It may be appropriate to consult with external experts to help staff to determine which actions should be taken.

### **8.3 Principal's responses**

Following the procedure set out above in Section 6, the Principal will, with due sensitivity, seek to inform themselves of the event and its circumstances, in order to gauge an appropriate and measured response. This may include seeking external professional advice.

The Principal's responses, and any decisions they make about the matter, will be communicated to all parties, keeping in mind the need for respect, discretion and confidentiality.

The Principal's responses may include the development of a safety plan for the affected student or staff member, and this may include the suspension of an alleged perpetrator.

The safety plan that is developed should take into account the wishes of the affected person.

#### **8.4 Possible criminality**

When the alleged incident is potentially a criminal matter, the affected student or staff member should be assisted to report the matter to the police.

### **9. Report of An External Critical Incident Causing Physical or Psychological Harm**

Critical incidents include traumatic events. The events that cause trauma to ASA staff or students may take place on or near the campus or they might take place in remote locations. Staff or students may suffer physical injuries or they may be experience psychological injury, including a stress-related injury psychological harm, because of events that take place in their home countries or elsewhere.

Section 9 applies specifically to the occurrence of trauma arising from remote events. These include, but are not limited to:

- Natural disasters, including epidemics, storms, earthquakes, and floods;
- Wars, religious persecutions, and civil or political turmoil; and
- The witnessing of a serious incident in a context unrelated to ASA and its campus.

When staff or students are aware of such an off-campus event that may cause physical or psychological harm, the procedure set out in Section 6 above applies but additional precautions may be necessary.

Staff need to be reminded that such incidents can be overwhelming and can lead to distress. Where an individual student or staff member may be affected, care must be taken to help guide them to the available resources which are available.

Every effort must be made to assess whether the affected individual would benefit from counselling.

When the incident is likely to affect more than one individual, immediate small group support should be considered. Every effort must be made to assess whether any of the affected individuals would benefit from counselling.

Group support debriefing may also be appropriate.

In all cases, the opportunity for rest and time out should be considered and follow-up support needs to be offered.

If the critical incident is an international disaster that may affect all of the international students, the Commonwealth Government International Students website is a useful resource: <https://www.studyinaustralia.gov.au/English/student-support>.

### **10. Review of Policies**

This Policy must be reviewed at least annually.

## 11. Related Documents

*Privacy Policy*

*Risk Management Policy*

*Work, Health and Safety Policy*

*Records Management Policy*

*Critical Incidents Policy and Procedure*

## 12. Relevant Legislation

*The Education Services for Overseas Act 2000 (ESOS Act)*

*Higher Education Standards Framework (Threshold Standards) 2021*

*National Code of Practice for Providers of Education and Training to Overseas Students 2018*

*Higher Education Support Act, 2003 (as amended)*

## 13. Version Control

Document		Critical Incident Policy and Procedure			
Approved by		Board of Directors		Date: 15 December 2021	
				Next review (annual)	2022
Version #	4.0	Replaces Version #	3.1	Annual review – BoD approval	
	3.1		3.0	Update TEQSA standards	
	3.0		2.1	Board of Directors approval	
	2.1		2.0	Governance restructure	
	2.0		1.2	Council approval Next review	2021
	1.2		1.1	CRICOS RFI	
	1.1			Admin review and checking flowchart alignment with policy/procedure	
	1.0		0.6	Council approval	
	0.6		0.5	Style review	
	0.5		0.4	Project Manager review	2020
	0.4		0.3	Styling New logo Next review	2020
	0.3		0.2	Council review	
	0.2		0.1	Council review	
	0.1		Generic		