

## CRITICAL INCIDENT POLICY

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### 1. Purpose

1.1 This Critical Incident policy and the related Procedures cover the actions to be taken in the event of a critical incident and any follow-up required.

### 2. Principles

2.1 MHE has a duty of care under common law to provide a safe and secure environment for all. MHE takes any potential crisis or emergency very seriously.

### 3. Context

3.1 This policy is aligned with section 2.3 of the *Higher Education Standards Framework 2021*.

### 4. Scope

4.1 This policy applies to all staff, students, stakeholders and any other person who may be physically affected by a critical incident or emergency or who may require first aid on the MHE campus.

### 5. Definitions

*Critical Incident* – an event, or the threat of an event, which causes extreme stress, fear or injury. Critical incidents may apply to just one person, one group of people or an entire community. Critical incidents include but are not limited to:

- missing students
- severe verbal or psychological aggression

- death, serious injury or any threat of these
- natural disaster
- domestic violence and sexual assault
- drug or alcohol abuse.

*Emergency* – an actual or imminent event which endangers or threatens to endanger any person's health or safety, or damages or destroys or threatens to damage or destroy property or endangers or threatens to endanger the environment.

*First Aid* – Emergency treatment given to an injured or sick person before a medical professional can attend.

*Hazard* – any object, situation or setting which has potential to cause harm, loss, danger or injury.

*Provider Registration and International Students Management System (PRISMS)* – A site established by the Department of Education, Skills and Employment which provides Australian education providers with the Confirmation-of-Enrolment facilities required for compliance with the Education Services for Overseas Students (ESOS) Legislation.

*Risk* – the probability of exposure to harm, loss, danger or injury from a particular hazard.

## 6. Roles and Responsibilities

The Board of Directors will be responsible for:

- ensuring that sufficient funds are assigned to providing and maintaining equipment necessary for handling critical incidents and schedule periodic testing of preparedness
- considering and acting upon advice from the Audit, Risk and Compliance Committee regarding amendments to existing policies and procedures or drafting new policies and procedures
- arranging training for relevant staff with regards to preventing, minimising or responding to critical incidents
- arranging assistance, commemoration and appropriate release of information in response to a critical incident
- returning MHE to normal operations as soon as possible after a critical incident.

The Audit, Risk and Compliance Committee will be responsible for:

- establishing protocols for handling critical incidents
- reviewing reports of critical incidents
- assessing the causes of critical incidents
- reviewing methods of preventing or responding to critical incidents
- reporting to the Board of Directors with suggested amendments to policies and procedures relating to potential critical incidents
- storing records of critical incidents securely
- updating the staff files or student files of any person involved in a critical incident.

The Student Support Officer will be responsible for:

- ensuring that new students become aware of basic critical incident prevention and handling procedures during Orientation
- arranging counselling and debriefing when required for students involved in critical incidents.

The Designated Safety Officer will be responsible for:

- assessing the nature and seriousness of any critical incident
- initiating immediate responses in accordance with the protocols established by the Audit, Risk and Compliance Committee.

All staff will be responsible for:

- ensuring that Work, Health and Safety rules are adhered to throughout the campus at all times

- alerting the Designated Safety Officer immediately upon noticing any critical incident or immediate threat of one
- reporting accurately and thoroughly on any critical incident they were involved in or witnessed.

## 7. Policy Details

### 7.1 Minimising the Likelihood of Critical Incidents

7.1.1 MHE will establish an Audit, Risk and Compliance Committee to:

- Identify and monitor all potential hazards and their degree of risk
- establish protocols for appropriate management of critical incidents
- review and oversee compliance with the Risk Management Plan and Register.

7.1.2 Students and staff will be given appropriate information about potential hazards and methods of preventing them.

7.1.3 Students are encouraged to discuss any safety issues with staff. Staff are encouraged to discuss safety issues with appropriate managers. Both staff and students must be confident that anything related to their time at MHE which they consider affects their wellbeing will be taken seriously.

7.1.4 Staff will receive critical incident handling training and other information related to work health and safety (See WHS Policy and Procedure for details).

7.1.5 MHE will foster and promote a safe environment, including by advising students and staff on actions they can take to enhance safety and security on campus and online (See Acceptable use of IT Policy and Procedure for details).

### 7.2 Responding to and Managing Critical Incidents

7.2.1 MHE's CEO will have responsibility for all responses to critical incidents.

7.2.2 MHE will inform students of the actions they can take, the support services available to them (both through MHE and externally) and the staff they can contact if critical incidents or any other personal circumstance negatively affects their education.

7.2.3 Staff will have ready access to appropriate information about potential causes of critical incidents and how best to react to them as they arise, as well as adequate resources.

7.2.4 Responses to actual or potential critical incidents will always have the aim of ensuring the safety of all people present.

7.2.5 Whenever the campus is open, there will always be at least one certified first aid officer amongst the staff available.

7.2.6 Where a critical incident requires involvement of the police, fire brigade, medical professionals, State Emergency Services or other appropriate authorities, they will be contacted promptly. MHE will give all required assistance to them and follow their directions.

### 7.3 Recovery from Critical Incidents

7.3.1 MHE will provide suitable services for people directly or indirectly affected by critical incidents, including medical treatment and counselling. MHE will supply timely, accurate advice on access to personal support services, including but not limited to access to emergency services, health services, counselling, legal advice, advocacy, accommodation and welfare services, the nature and extent of which will be informed by needs of the individual student or group of students affected.

7.3.2 After any critical incident, the Audit Risk and Compliance Committee will review the Risk Management Plan and Register, as well as policy, procedures and campus infrastructure, to prevent

recurrence and/or improve MHE’s response. Students, staff and contractors are encouraged to contribute to this review. Once this is complete, updated policies and procedures will be made available on the MHE website and staff will be trained in any new procedures.

7.3.3 MHE will maintain a record of all critical incidents on the campus and responses to them. MHE will monitor the occurrence and nature of critical incidents to identify and address their underlying causes. To this end, MHE will ensure that its information systems and records are maintained securely and confidentially.

7.3.4 After a critical incident, management will attempt to resume normal operations as soon as possible.

## 8. Relevant Legislation

MHE acknowledges its legal and regulatory obligations under the following frameworks:

- Higher Education Standards Framework (HESF) 2021
- Education Services for Overseas Students (ESOS) Framework 2013
- Commonwealth Register of Institutions and Courses for Overseas Students (CRICOS)
- National Code of Practice for Providers of Education and Training to Overseas Students 2018
- Education Services for Overseas Students Act 2000

## 9. Policy Administration

Policy category	Health and Safety
Policy owner	Board of Directors
Responsible officer	Campus Compliance Officer
Approving authority	Board of Directors
Contact officer	Campus Compliance Officer
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Related documents	Critical Incident Procedure Work Health and Safety Policy and Procedure Risk Management Plan and Register Risk Assessment and Continuous Monitoring Template Student Support Framework Student Counselling Policy and Procedures

## 10. Version control

Version	Approval date	Approved by	Summary of changes
1.1	8th July 2022	Board of Directors	

## 11. Benchmark / References

- Australian Institute of Management  
[ABS-Policy-Critical-Incident.pdf \(aim.com.au\)](#)
- International College of Management Sydney  
[Critical Incident Policy – Policy Library \(icms.edu.au\)](#)
- Ozford Institute of Higher Education  
[Microsoft Word - Critical Incident Policy GB \\_ Dec20 \(ozford.edu.au\)](#)
- Southern Cross Higher Education  
[HEPP56-Critical-Incident-Policy-and-Procedure.pdf \(scei-he.edu.au\)](#)