Policy Document Administrator	Chief Operating Officer
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Approved by	Council
Responsible Body	Council
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Superseded documents	None
Related documents	Risk Management Policy Risk Management Procedure Risk Appetite Statement Workplace, Health and Safety Policy Grievance Resolution Policy – Students Information on Student Support Services Rules Quality Management Policy Affiliated College Risk and Compliance Reporting Framework Affiliated College Risk & Compliance Alert Protocols
Related HE Standards	2.3.5, 6.2.1 j, 7.3.3 c., 5.4.2
Related National Code	6.8. 6.9.2
Student Lifecycle Stage/s	All

1. PURPOSE

The Australian University of Theology's critical incident policy establishes a framework to outline principles and procedures for itself and its affiliated colleges regarding the immediate action and follow up required where a traumatic event, or the threat of such (within or outside Australia) causes extreme stress, fear, or injury to students.

This framework includes:

- The quality management review steps to ensure that this framework operates effectively,
- The processes for monitoring taking action to address underlying causes,
- The requirements for confidentiality and securely maintaining records of critical incidents and any remedial action taken, and
- The requirements to provide information to overseas students about how to seek assistance for and report a critical incident significantly impacting on their wellbeing

2. DEFINITIONS

Definitions for any words in **Bold** in this document can be found in the Policy Glossary. The first instance of each defined term has been outlined in bold.

3. SCOPE

These guidelines apply to all the officers and Affiliated Colleges of the Australian University of Theology (AUT)

This framework operates in conjunction with the risk management plan of the AUT. The AUT advises Affiliate Colleges against having multiple instruments serving similar purposes

and instead recommends that the obligations within this framework be integrated into affiliate college risk management plans.

Critical incidents are likely to be infrequent to rare and consequently provide limited opportunity to acquire expertise by experience. As critical incidents are often emergencies this policy focuses upon essentials rather than outlining a comprehensive coverage. The onus is on affiliate colleges to adapt this advice in a way that enables them to respond best to their circumstances.

4. PRINCIPLES

4.1. Critical incident procedures should:

- Enable incidents to be managed efficiently and compassionately,
- prevent further harm and promote recovery,
- facilitate continuous improvement, and
- Reduce the risk of litigation

4.2. Possible Critical Incidents may include but are not limited to the following, or the threat of the following, whether they occur on-campus or off-campus, during or after normal hours of college activity, or occur within or outside Australia.

- Acts of violence or threatening behaviour,
- Natural hazards or man-made disasters,
- Site invasion that leads to harm whether by intent or not,
- Accident onsite or offsite,
- Acts of self-harm or social irresponsibility,
- Structural failure of building or equipment,
- Riot or affray,
- Onset of physical or mental illness,
- Witnessing a critical incident affecting third parties including accident, assault, injury, death,
- Person or persons missing and presumed to be at substantial risk,
- Arrest,
- Acts or omissions of staff, students and/or contractors, and
- Being the victim of a crime – robbery, assault

5. ROLES AND RESPONISBLITIES OF AFFILIATE COLLEGES

In accordance with the Affiliated College Risk and Compliance Reporting Framework, affiliate colleges are required to have and maintain a Critical incidents policy that is adequate and current and:

- Identify in the policy the types of critical incidents and the affiliated colleges procedures for responding to incidents,
- Include in the policy contact details for emergency and support services,
- Reference in the policy privacy considerations, and
- Outline in the policy staff responsibilities to supervise the management of critical incidents and ensure the welfare of students and staff including communication, and reporting mechanisms, reporting mechanisms explicitly referring to the AUT, including directly to the Vice-Chancellor and the location and usage of the AUT's Critical Incident Form.

The reporting of critical incidents utilising the AUT's Critical Incident Form is a key element in ensuring the legislative requirements to keep records of critical incidents.

The AUT advises Affiliate Colleges against having multiple instruments serving similar purposes and instead recommends that the obligations within this framework be integrated into affiliate college risk management plans.

Affiliate colleges are required to comply with the Affiliated College Risk and Compliance Reporting Framework, Affiliated College Risk & Compliance Alert Protocols, and the submission of Critical Incident Reports via the AUT quality management system Tickit.

6. ROLES AND RESPONSIBLITIES OF AUT

The AUT will regarding critical incidents and affiliate college critical incident policies:

- Monitor affiliate colleges in accordance with the Quality Management Policy and the Affiliated College Risk and Compliance Reporting Framework.
- Process, review, and record Critical Incident Report Forms submitted by affiliated colleges.
- Report on the handling of critical incidents in accordance with Quality Management Policy and the Affiliated College Risk and Compliance Reporting Framework, and the Affiliated College Risk & Compliance Alert Protocols.
- Written records relating to critical incidents involving students must be retained for a minimum of two years after the impacted student(s) ceases to be an accepted student.

7. VERSION HISTORY

Version	Approved by	Approval Date	Effective Date	Changes made
1	Council	7 June 2010	1 July 2010	New document
2	Council	8 December 2014	8 December 2014	DIR 1412-18.1

3	Council	19 August 2023	19 August 2023	Update format, establish review timeframe, update alignment with requirements of Quality Management Policy and Affiliated College Risk and Compliance Reporting Framework
4	Vice-Chancellor	June 2025	June 2025	New policy format, minor editorial updates to implement university status.
5	Council	March 2026	March 2026	Specify minimum timeframe for record keeping in relation to critical incidents involving students.

Any hard copy of this electronic document may not be current as the AUT regularly reviews its guidelines. The latest version can be found online at https://www.aut.edu.au/documents/

PART B: GUIDELINES FOR AFFILIATE COLLEGE PROCEDURES

1. Introduction

1.1 Student File Essentials

For the purposes of managing incidents student files should normally contain:

- Coloured Photograph
- For overseas students a copy of the title and Australian visa pages of their Passport
- Student's religion
- Emergency contact telephone numbers, with next of kin details, agent or sponsor (as applicable)
- Any other significant personal details – student ID, course details, medical conditions, allergy information, etc.
- Medical insurance status

2. Procedures

The following procedures are indicative, provide guidelines and should be adapted to college circumstances. Colleges are however required to comply with the Affiliated College Risk and Compliance Reporting Framework, Affiliated College Risk & Compliance Alert Protocols, and the submission of Critical Incident Reports via the AUT quality management system Tickit.

2.1 Action by witness or directly affected party

A person who witnesses an incident or is the first contacted shall …

1. contact the Principal or responsible person,
2. act as directed by the responsible person,
3. if directed or in the absence of obtaining immediate access to the responsible person, contact emergency services as soon as it is safe to do so,
4. take immediate action to minimise the risk of further injury or damage,
5. act to protect the safety and welfare of witnesses, and
6. assess the situation carefully and gather information

2.2 Action by responsible person (i.e. Principal or designated person)

The responsible person shall …

1. maintain oversight of the incident,
2. arrange for expert help as required,
3. establish communication systems to keep affected parties informed, including family and friends during the incident and throughout the follow-up period,
4. direct others to assist in the management of the incident,
5. ensure appropriate effective support is provided to affected parties,
6. protect the site or anything associated with the incident in case the matter is invested by the Police or other government agency,

7. set up a recovery room with appropriate furniture and resources if appropriate,
8. gather relevant information about the incident and interview affected parties,
9. assist staff/students to contact their family/close friend(s) to advise them of the situation and provide other assistance as necessary and appropriate,
10. assist members of the public to contact their family/close friend(s), and assist them as appropriate, perhaps by arranging transport for them,
11. inform the Principal and the Registrar and Dean of Students of the situation,
12. if the incident has impacted an overseas student, inform the Overseas Student Contact Officer for the campus,
13. debrief those who worked on the incident,
14. establish a means of keeping affected parties informed without compromising legal, insurance or reputational liability,
15. prepare or arrange for the preparation of a Critical Incident Report. The Registrar would normally be responsible for seeing that this was completed satisfactorily and kept on file, and
16. Assess implications arising for risk mitigation and arrange for their implementation

2.3 Action by the Registrar or person designated by Registrar

The Registrar, or designated responsible person, shall …

1. assist in the documenting of the incident and preparing the incident report,
2. assess the implications for an affected student's study and assessment program,
3. under the direction of the responsible person manage the follow up procedures,
4. contact the AUT Vice-Chancellor or his delegate, advising of matters relevant to AUT responsibilities and submitting the Incident Report when completed as appropriate,
5. arrange for any necessary notification to relevant educational and government bodies,
6. monitor or assist the Principal in monitoring investigations by any external agencies,
7. maintain a complete record of critical incidents, and
8. Submit AUT Critical Incident Report Form via AUT quality management system Tickit

2.4 Action by the Principal if not the responsible person

If the Principal is not the responsible person, the Principal shall …

1. Contact the AUT Vice-Chancellor, as appropriate, and confirm his knowledge of the incident and action being taken or completed,
2. receive the Critical Incident Report,
3. consider any recommendations, and
4. manage relations