



Critical Incident Policy

Policy Area: Management

Approval: Chairperson, Board of Directors

Signature:

Date:

1. RESPONSIBILITY AND AUTHORITY

The Sheridan Principal shall have responsibility for developing a *Critical Incident Policy*, which will be approved by the Sheridan Board of Directors. The Principal shall ensure the policy is developed, distributed, reviewed, maintained, understood, and implemented at Sheridan.

This policy is published on the Sheridan website at sheridan.edu.au.

2. PURPOSE AND SCOPE

Sheridan has obligations under the *National Code of Practice for Providers of Education and Training to Overseas Students (2018)* and the *ESOS Act 2000* to ensure that an effective *Critical Incident Policy* provides detailed procedures to be used in the management of critical incidents.

Critical incidents are likely to be infrequent to rare and consequently provide limited opportunity to acquire expertise by experience. Also critical incidents are often emergencies and time is critical, so this policy focuses upon essentials rather than attempts to be comprehensive in coverage.

A critical incident may be defined as an event which results in serious harm to persons or property often accompanied by trauma affecting victims and participants.

This document provides guidance on procedures to adopt in handling critical incidents but does not restrict the scope or power of Sheridan executives to adapt or modify policies as seems appropriate. Advice related to critical incidents, emergency procedures and risk management will be taken from specialist organisations from time to time as this policy is improved and updated.

3. DEFINITIONS

A critical incident is as an event which results in or has the potential to cause serious harm to persons or property often accompanied by trauma affecting victims and participants. A threshold for the adjective "critical" could be where expert medical attention or professional counselling is required or the cost of structural repair is substantial.

Staff refers to the staff members of Sheridan.

Responsible Person is the person designated a supervisory role and responsibility in respect of an incident.

Emergency services consist of the core services (police, fire and rescue services, emergency medical services including ambulance) summoned by a dedicated emergency telephone number.

4. PRINCIPLES

4.1 Benefits of this Critical Incident Policy should:

- Reduce the likelihood of critical incidents
- Enable incidents to be managed efficiently and compassionately
- Prevent further harm and promote recovery

- Facilitate continuous improvement
- Reduce the risk of independent action

4.2 Events intended to be covered by this *Critical Incident Policy* may include, but are not limited to, the following, regardless of whether the event(s) occur on-campus or off-campus, during or after normal hours of Sheridan activity. Possible events include:

- natural hazards, disasters or potential disasters, or those caused by human beings;
- 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;
- being the victim of a crime – robbery, assault.

4.3 International Students

- Sheridan recognises that International Students will require special consideration in the event of a Critical Incident because of less familiarity with local circumstances and institutions and the absence of a personal support network.

4.4 Sheridan recognises that it has responsibility:

- to ensure that Responsible Persons are appointed to supervise the management of critical incidents and ensure the welfare of students and staff;
- to comply with the National Code 2018 which means that Sheridan must maintain a record of critical incidents including but not limited to a description of the nature of the incident, the way in which it was managed and the follow up actions that took place to complete the recovery;
- to ensure that the *Critical Incident Policy* is updated regularly in order to comply with changed requirements of the National Code and for requests from those agencies having a legal right to information stored in relation to any Critical Incident.

5. POLICY CONTENT

Specific Sheridan roles and responsibilities:

5.1 Sheridan shall incorporate the critical incident policy within its Risk Management framework.

5.2 Sheridan shall bring the Critical Incident policy and procedures to the attention of staff and students at the time of their orientation or induction to Sheridan.

5.3 With regard to Sheridan's *Critical Incident Policy*, the Principal shall:

- 5.3.1 be the person with responsibility for oversight and authority of a critical incident. In the event that the Principal is not available, or the incident is large requiring multiple persons, the Principal may appoint another senior staff person to exercise oversight of this policy and ensure that the procedures of this policy are implemented.

- 5.3.2 establish roles for particular staff, form teams that seem appropriate and delegate responsibilities to personnel with appropriate expertise.
- 5.3.3 ensure that all persons present at Sheridan are informed about the identity of other persons having delegated responsibility under this policy.
- 5.4 To facilitate the implementation of Sheridan's Critical Incident Policy, the Principal (or a Responsible Person nominated above), shall:
 - 5.4.1 ensure that adequate reporting and communication systems provide information flow up and down the line of command, and that assembly points are made known to all on-campus personnel. It is important to avoid confusion and ensure the coordination of decisions and actions in the event of an incident;
 - 5.4.2 ensure personnel who first identify an incident know who to report to and are aware that they should avoid actions that compound risk. This may include training programs;
 - 5.4.3 appoint those personnel with competencies likely to assist with incident response – eg, those with first aid qualifications and other technical skills;
 - 5.4.4 contact the relevant authorities for expert advice – eg, medical, fire, SES, police, counselling;
 - 5.4.5 appoint support staff to record responses and check established procedures. The Registrar should normally be responsible for ensuring a report is compiled and records maintained;
 - 5.4.6 develop and implement strategies to identify follow up-procedures for affected parties to an incident in a way that brings finality;
 - 5.4.7 schedule debriefing sessions for all persons involved in the incident;
 - 5.4.8 facilitate a review of the incident at a later date and make recommendations to the relevant authorities, including the Sheridan Principal and Board of Directors.
- 5.5 General responsibilities of Sheridan staff and students under the *Critical Incident Policy* include:
 - 5.5.1 following the published Sheridan critical incident procedures;
 - 5.5.2 knowing to whom they report an incident or the potential for an incident;
 - 5.5.3 not placing themselves or others at risk of injury or other trauma ;
 - 5.5.4 supporting those with overall responsibility for oversight of the process;
 - 5.5.5 availing themselves of the support mechanisms in the event of exposure to a critical incident.

Specific procedures for Sheridan in the event of a Critical Incident

5.6 Action by witness or directly affected party

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

- 5.6.1 contact the Principal or Responsible Person;
- 5.6.2 act in accord with the directions of the Principal or Responsible Person;
- 5.6.3 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;
- 5.6.4 take immediate action to minimise the risk of further injury or damage;

- 5.6.5 act to protect the safety and welfare of witnesses;
- 5.6.6 assess the situation carefully and gather information.

5.7 **Action by Responsible Person (ie, Principal or delegated person).**

The Responsible Person shall:

- 5.7.1 maintain oversight of the incident;
- 5.7.2 arrange for expert help as required;
- 5.7.3 establish communication systems to keep affected parties informed, including family and friends during the incident and throughout the follow-up period;
- 5.7.4 direct others to assist in the management of the incident;
- 5.7.5 ensure appropriate effective support is provided to affected parties;
- 5.7.6 protect the site or anything associated with the incident in case an the matter is investigated by the Police or other government agency;
- 5.7.7 set up a recovery room with appropriate furniture and resources if appropriate;
- 5.7.8 gather relevant information about the incident and interview affected parties;
- 5.7.9 assist staff/students to contact their family/close friend(s) to advise them of the situation and provide other assistance as necessary and appropriate;
- 5.7.10 assist members of the public to contact their family/close friend(s), and assist them as appropriate, perhaps by arranging transport for them;
- 5.7.11 inform the Principal and Student Welfare Officer of the situation;
- 5.7.12 if the incident has impacted an international student, inform the International Student Contact Officer for the campus and make those arrangements which are necessary to ensure the well-being of the affected student(s);
- 5.7.13 provide opportunity for debriefing sessions those who worked on the incident;
- 5.7.14 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;
- 5.7.15 make recommendations to the relevant authorities – including the Principal and Sheridan Board of Directors– about ways in which future incidents may be managed;
- 5.7.16 assess implications arising for risk mitigation and arrange for their implementation.

5.8 **Action by the Registrar or person designated by Registrar *after the incident***

This person shall:

- 5.8.1 assist in the documenting of the incident and preparing the incident report;
- 5.8.2 assess the implications for an affected student's study and assessment program;
- 5.8.3 under the direction of the Principal, or Principal's delegated person, manage follow-up procedures including;
 - contact the Board of Directors, advising of matters relevant to Board responsibilities and submitting the Incident Report when completed as appropriate;
 - arrange for any necessary notification to relevant educational and government bodies, e.g. the Department of Home Affairs, Consulate/Embassy, etc;

- monitor or assist the Principal in monitoring investigations by any external agencies;
- maintain a complete record of critical incidents.

5.9 **Action by the Principal, or the Responsible Person, *after the incident***

The person shall:

- 5.9.1 contact the Chair of the Board of Directors, as appropriate, for the purpose of conveying knowledge of the incident and action being taken or completed;
- 5.9.2 receive the Critical Incident Report;
- 5.9.3 consider any recommendations arising from the Critical Incident Report;
- 5.9.4 make a report to the Sheridan Board;
- 5.9.5 manage relations, together with the Sheridan Board if necessary, with those persons involved in the Critical Incident.

Student File Essentials

- 5.10 Academic Administration best practice dictates that student files will normally contain:
- a coloured photograph;
 - for international students, a copy of the title and Australian visa pages of their passport;
 - a record of the student's religion, if any;
 - emergency contact telephone numbers, with next of kin details, agent or sponsor (as applicable);
 - other significant personal details – eg, student ID, course details, medical conditions, allergy information, etc.;
 - medical insurance status.

6. APPENDIX: DOCUMENT HISTORY AND VERSION CONTROL RECORD

Document Title:	Critical Incident Policy
Source Documents:	Adapted with permission from: ACTh Critical Incident Policy
Associated Internal Documents:	Business Continuity Policy
Associated External Documents	<i>ESOS Act 2000</i> National Code of Practice for Providers of Education and Training to Overseas Students (2018)
Authorised Officer:	Chairperson, Board of Directors
Approved by:	Mr Michael Smith
Date of Approval:	10 Mar 2021
Date of Next Review:	Feb 2022

Version Number	Version Date	Authorised Officer	Amendment Details
1.00	02 Mar 2013	Chairperson, Board of Directors	Submitted to TEQSA for Sheridan College HEP registration: Attachment 8.7.1a Critical Incident Policy
2.01	18 April 2019	Chairperson, Board of Directors	Simplification of Policy and inclusion of Scenario Planning
3.00	10 July 2019	Chairperson, Board of Directors	Revert to original Policy. Updated legal frameworks.
4.00	3 Mar 2021	Chairperson, Board of Directors	Revisions based on recommendations from the annual review by the Audit and Risk Subcommittee of the Board of Directors.