

Critical Incidents and Business Continuity Policy and Procedure

Supporting plans, policies and procedures	• Bullying Harassment and Discrimination Policy and Procedure • Critical Incidents and Business Continuity Plan • Critical incident register • Critical incident report • Facilities, ICT Infrastructure and Resources Policy • Health and Safety Policy • Risk Management Policy • Risk Management Plan • Student Misconduct Policy and Procedure • Student Welfare, Wellbeing and Support Policy and Procedure • Risk Register • Resource Access and Usage Policy • Staff Handbook • Student Handbook
Related Legislation	• <i>Education Services for Overseas Students Act 2000</i> (ESOS Act) • Tertiary Education Quality and Standards Agency Act 2011 (TEQSA Act) • The Higher Education Standards Framework (Threshold Standards) 2021
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Document Review	This document is to be reviewed at least every 3 years from the date of final approval.

Version	Review Date and Person/Body	Notes
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1.0	Approved 3 June 2020 by the Board of Directors	
2.0	Approved 16 June 2020 by the Academic Board	
2.1	1 September 2020 Audit and Risk Committee review	Minor updates following further internal review
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4.0	Reviewed and approved by the Academic Board on 14 June 2022 Reviewed and approved by the Board of Directors via email circulation on 20 June 2022	Updates made following the response to the TEQSA Request for Information (REQ06238)
4.1	Reviewed and approved by the Academic Board on 06/12/23 Reviewed and approved by the Board of Directors 30/11/2023	Updates the policy with clear information, procedures and included appendix A.
4.2	Reviewed and approved by the Academic Board (AB MO 25) and by the Board of Directors at BOD MO48 31 July 2026	

Background and Scope

This document outlines Melbourne Institute of Higher Education's (MIHE) approach to handling critical incidents and ensuring business continuity. This policy and procedure also provides guidance on how critical incidents will be identified, managed and communicated in order to maximise the safety and welfare of staff, students and other stakeholders and to ensure that MIHE

continues to operate efficiently and effectively. In addition it is recognised that some international students may require additional support because they may not have close relatives in Australia. In such a case MIHE will assist as far as possible.

MIHE will:

1. minimise the risk of critical incidents to all stakeholders
2. protect its assets and environment;
3. minimise the disruption to teaching and other activities caused by critical incidents; and protect its reputation as a safe and supportive education provider.

This policy and procedure and applies to all MIHE visitors, students, staff and contractors.

Definitions

Critical Incident	A Critical Incident is a traumatic or tragic event or situation, or the threat of such (within or outside Australia) affecting an MIHE student or staff member that causes extreme stress, fear or injury and emotional distress within the Academy community. Critical incidents are not limited to but could include: - death (including the death of a dependant residing in Australia for an international student) - serious illness causing declining health of a student or staff member over time - serious injury preventing or severely affecting a student's ability to continue with a course - severe verbal or psychological aggression - natural disaster - d Non-life-threatening events could still qualify as critical incidents; for example: - missing students; - severe verbal or psychological aggression; - threat of d or; and - domestic violence, sexual assault, drug or alcohol abuse.
Business Continuity	Business Continuity means MIHE's capacity to continue business as usual, which includes provision of services at standard levels in the aftermath of any major or critical incidents that threatens the safety of staff and/or students.

For further definitions refer to Glossary of Terms.

Policy

MIHE acknowledges that critical incidents can occur anywhere anytime and that every critical incident is unique and needs to be addressed according to the needs of the people affected. The following core principles underline MIHE's approach to critical incidents and business continuity:

- In alignment with the *Health and Safety Policy*, MIHE is committed to providing and maintaining a safe, healthy and hazard free work and study environment.
- This policy and procedure will provide guidance for the fast, efficient, and co-ordinated response to critical incidents affecting MIHE staff, contractors, students, clients and visitors.
- MIHE will address critical incidents minimising negative impacts.

- Co-ordination and communication with relevant authorities, such as law enforcement, emergency response, and disaster relief will be maintained for efficient identification, management, and resolution of major or critical incidents.
- Communication on major or critical incidents will be conducted with transparency and in a timely manner to the extent possible.

This policy and procedure outlines the MIHE policy, support mechanisms and procedures for managing a critical incident. The policy ensures MIHE has:

- An effective approach in responding to critical incidents as they occur.
- Appropriate support and counselling services available to those affected.
- Appropriate training and information resources provided to staff.

MIHE will ensure that all students, staff and contractors are made aware of this policy and procedure and receive a copy during their orientation, induction or at the time of joining MIHE

The *Educational Services for Overseas Students Act* requires MIHE to notify the Department of Education and the Department of Home Affairs (DoHA) as soon as practical after a critical incident involving an international student and in the case of a student's death or other absence affecting the student's attendance, the incident will need to be reported via the Provider Registration and International Student Management System (PRISMS).

On-campus Incidents

If the incident occurs on campus, the first action will be to contact the Emergency Services - fire, ambulance or police. The Chief Executive Officer must also be contacted immediately when the incident involves death, serious injury or a threat to life or property.

Off-campus Incidents

If the critical incident involves a student or staff member and occurs off-campus, the person receiving the information must immediately contact the Chief Executive Officer who will communicate other staff as appropriate.

Key Details to be Reported

Key details to report include the time, location and nature of the incident (e.g. threat, accident, death or injury) and the names and roles of persons involved (e.g. staff, international or domestic student).

Important contact details, such as phone numbers for Emergency Services, will be easily available to staff and students on the MIHE website and will be displayed prominently around the MIHE campus. Staff and students will be asked to provide MIHE with emergency contact information and will also be asked to keep this information up to date on a regular basis.

Procedure

The following steps explain how MIHE identifies, manages and resolves major or critical incidents and ensures business continuity. This should be read in conjunction with the *Critical Incidents and Business Continuity Plan*.

1. Identifying and attending to a critical incident.
2. Reporting the critical incident.
3. Co-ordinating a Critical Incident Response and Recovery Plan.
4. Evaluation and critical incident review.

These steps are further detailed below.

Identifying and attending to a critical incident

A MIHE staff member who is first to encounter or identify a critical incident is required to assess the incident and form a judgment as to whether there is an immediate risk to the health and safety of any person(s), as defined above.. Once it has been determined that a critical incident has taken or is taking place, the MIHE staff member must contact emergency services as appropriate.

If the critical incident threatens the health or safety of any persons, obtaining medical advice and treatment is the first priority. Any persons qualified to render first aid will be requested to do so unless emergency services provided contrary advice.

MIHE will provide first aid kits in prominent and easily accessible locations on the campus and these will be identified in the Emergency Plan which is also prominently displayed in multiple locations on the campus.

If the critical incident involves an international student's death, suicide serious illness, or a critical injury, the student's family will be informed and the appropriate assistance will be provided by MIHE including:

- contacting the international student's next of kin and/or emergency contact;
- obtaining certified interpreters in order to help with communication with the student's family;
- making travel arrangements and finding temporary accommodation for relatives if necessary;
- contacting and arranging support, counselling or , legal services;
- making hospital, funeral, repatriation, rehabilitation and memorial service arrangements;
- obtaining or facilitating a death certificate and other necessary documentation;
- helping with the dispatching or disposal of personal belongings and helping to manage personal affairs that may include liaising with the international student's health insurance provider

- communicating with the Department of Education and Training and Department of Home Affairs regarding visa issues.
- arranging or facilitating counselling services to students and staff not directly involved in the incident; and
- sending condolence letters as required.

The Student Welfare and Support Officer is responsible for implementing stress management strategies, including the following stages:

1. Debriefing as soon as possible after the event on an individual or group basis
2. Further debriefing one or more days after the incident
3. Follow up 2 to 3 week's later, individual or group basis.
4. Ongoing counselling as required.
5. Recovery time for staff involved and the Critical Incident Team members

MIHE will notify the Department of Education and Training and the Department of Home Affairs as soon as practicable after an incident. In the case of a student's death or other events that may cause direct physical harm to international students (such as critical injury, suicide) which leads to a student's absence, the incident will be fully documented and immediately reported through the Provider Registration and International Student Management System (PRISMS). In the case of a student's death, the Student Management System (Wisenet) will be updated to ensure no further communication is sent.

Reporting the critical incident

After attending to the critical incident, the staff member must report the incident to their immediate supervisor who will inform the CEO. The staff member is required to complete a Critical Incident Response Report (see Attachment 1) and submit it to the Administration Manager who will update the Critical Incidents Register accordingly. The Report will include the following details:

- time, location and nature of the incident, eg threat, accident, death or injury;
- names, contact details positions of person/s involved and at risk, eg staff, international or domestic student;
- current location of the student/staff member reporting the incident;
- any emergency services or other government agencies that have been contacted (including any reference numbers allocated to the incident);and
- the need for an interpreter; and

- details of any further response or remedial action taken and the outcome of those actions if known.

Co-ordinating a Critical Incident Response and Recovery Plan

A Critical Incident Management Team will be formed (led by the Dean, CEO or Administration Manager who will review the details in the critical incident report and involve the staff, students or other stakeholders as required to in order to create a recovery plan in the aftermath of a critical incident.

Consultation on and Implementation of the Recovery Plan: The Critical Incident Management Team will assess the critical incident and recommend a plan of action with the CEO being responsible for its implementation.

- Where required, meetings with appropriate staff, students or other stakeholders will be held. This meeting will determine issues and responsibilities relating to:
 - assessing risks and response actions;
 - liaison with emergency and other services;
 - contact with students' relatives and other appropriate persons;
 - liaison with other external bodies, such as home stays, carers or foreign embassies; and
 - counselling and managing students and staff not directly involved in the incident.
- Where appropriate, MIHE may be required to provide support to the family in the form of: hiring interpreters; making arrangements for hospital/funeral/memorial service/repatriation; Obtaining a death certificate; assisting with personal items and affairs including insurance issues; and assisting with Visa issues.

Follow-up and review of the critical incident action plan implementation

Where a critical incident has occurred and all immediate action and reporting requirements have been fulfilled, MIHE will conduct a follow-up and review of the Action Plan and its implementation. This follow up and review will involve those staff members initially involved in the incident and Action Plan meeting and will ensure:

- Any required follow up such as de-briefing, counselling and prevention strategies have been completed.
- All staff and students involved in the incident have been informed of all outcomes from the incident.

- A recommendation as to the response to the critical incident is documented and included in the continuous improvement submissions.
- Any further follow up required is documented and responsibilities allocated to appropriate staff.

MIHE will identify the staff and student/s who have been directly or indirectly affected or traumatised as a consequence of a critical incident to ensure relevant support is provided immediately or on an ongoing basis.

This assistance may include:

- liaising with consular staff
- hiring interpreters
- making arrangements for visits from family and friends, eg accommodation, travel, crisis support and referral to appropriate services
- making arrangements for hospital/funeral/memorial service/repatriation – obtaining a death certificate
- assisting with personal items and affairs including insurance issues – assisting with visa issues
- notifying the student's Homestay or accommodation provider.
- Complete a Critical Incident Report (see Attachment 1).

Evaluation and Critical Incident Review

After a critical incident has concluded, a staff member not involved in the management of the critical incident will be tasked to independently review the incident including how well it was managed, the response and communication about the incident and the outcome or aftermath of the incident. The report will include any recommended changes to MIHE's plans, policy and procedures to improve its handling of with critical incidents and maintaining effective business continuity. The report will be presented to the Dean and CEO, Audit and Risk Committee, Academic Board (for academic recommendations) and Board of Directors (for non-academic recommendations) for their review. The Dean and/or CEO will be responsible for implementing the approved recommendations in the report. The Critical Incident Register will be updated once the governance reviews have been completed and the recommendations that have been accepted have been implemented.

MIHE's Critical Incident and Business Continuity Policy and Procedure and plan should be tested from time to time (at a minimum every two years) through scenario and simulation exercises. This is a risk mitigation action that will be monitored by the Audit and Risk Committee and Board of

Directors. This sort of testing will help test and inform continuous improvements in how MIHE staff can be better trained to respond to crises. MIHE will also carry out random annual fire and evacuation drills to minimise the loss of life or injury in the case of fire or other events requiring an evacuation of the building in which the MIHE campus is situated.

Record Keeping and Reporting

All records of a critical incident are to be maintained by MIHE in the Critical Incident Register and it is the responsibility of the CEO to ensure that the Recovery Plan has been implemented and any follow up action is completed. Critical incidents and their management shall be reported to the Board of Directors and Academic Board at least annually or sooner as required.

Appendix A: Critical Incident Report.**Critical Incident Report to be completed after all critical incidents.**

Name of MIHE Employee:	
Role within the MIHE:	
Date of Critical Incident:	
Location of the incident	
People involved in the critical incident (& their role within the MIHE): Brief Description of incident (Include who, what, why as appropriate) Attach additional pages/documentation if required	
Description of Critical Incident:	
Immediate action taken:	
Witnesses/Other key people involved:	
Name (Please print full name clearly) Student/staff/others Phone no:	
Further action required:	
Did the incident involve an international student?	☐ Yes ☐ No
Emergency Service involved:	☐ Yes (Police / Ambulance / Fire) ☐ No
Follow up required for people involved in critical incident:	☐ Medical ☐ Counselling ☐ Police Statements ☐ Notification to family ☐ Other Details of follow up: _____ _____ _____

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Reported Critical Incident to:	

Please give or send the completed form to the CEO or other most senior person available.

Name

Signature

Date