

Critical Incidents and Business Continuity Policy and Procedure

Supporting plans, policies and procedures	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • 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 Welfare, Wellbeing and Support Policy and Procedure • Risk Register • Resource Access and Usage Policy • Staff Handbook • Student Handbooks
Related Legislation	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • The Higher Education Standards Framework (Threshold Standards) 2021 • Tertiary Education Quality and Standards Agency (TEQSA) Act 2011
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Approved by	Board of Directors and Academic Board
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Document Review	This document is to be reviewed every two-years at a minimum from the date of final approval.

Version	Review Date and Person/Body	Notes
0.1	Draft prepared by CEO and Learning and Teaching Committee in May 2020	
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
2.2	Approved 15 September 2020 by the Academic Board Approved 30 September 2020 by the Board of Directors	Minor updates following further internal and external review
3.0	Reviewed and approved by the Board of Directors and Academic Board via email circulation on 23 July 2021	Updates made following the response to the TEQSA Request for Information 23 July 2021
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 Dec. 2023 Reviewed and approved by the Board of Directors 07 Dec. 2023	Updates the policy with clear information, procedures and included appendix A.

Background and Scope

This document outlines Melbourne Institute of Higher Education’s (MIHE’) approach to handling critical incidents and business continuity. This document also provides guidance on how to identify and manage critical incidents to ensure MIHE continues to operate as required and applies to all MIHE visitors, students, staff and contractors. Guidelines are also included to guide the way MIHE

will manage its operations and communication with MIHE stakeholders, including students, government and regulatory bodies, etc.

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 are 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 for all MIHE staff, contractors, students, clients and visitors.
- This policy and procedure will provide guidance for the fast, timely, efficient and co-ordinated response in the face of major or critical incidents affecting MIHE staff, contractors, students, clients and visitors.
- MIHE will address major or critical incidents minimising negative impacts to MIHE staff, contractors, students, clients and visitors.
- 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 document 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 and staff will be made aware of MIHE's *Critical Incident and Business Continuity Policy and Procedure* during their orientation, induction or at the time of joining MIHE. This is included in both the Staff and Student handbooks and provided to them when they join MIHE.

The Educational Services for Overseas Students (ESOS) 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 is on campus, the first action will be to contact the Emergency Services - fire, ambulance or police (call 000" – as would be the case with other WH&S matters. The Chief Operating 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 is off-campus, the person receiving the information must immediately contact the Chief Operating officer or 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), 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 four 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.

1. **Identifying and attending to a critical incident:** A MIHE staff member who is first to encounter a is required to assess the incident and form a judgement as to whether there is an immediate risk to the health and safety of any person(s), as per the definition of a critical incident in this policy. Once it has been determined that a critical incident has taken place, 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 will be 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 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
- hiring certified interpreters in order to help with communication with the student's family
- making travel arrangements and temporary accommodation for relatives if necessary
- contacting and arranging support/ counselling staff, legal services and religious leaders
- 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 DoHA regarding visa issues.
- arranging or facilitating counselling services to students and staff not directly involved in the incident.
- sending condolence letters as required

MIHE will maintain a written record of any critical incident and remedial action taken by MIHE for at least two years after the international student ceases to be enrolled with MIHE.

2. **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 Chief Operating Officer or Chief Executive Officer. The staff member is required to complete a Critical Incident Response Report and provide this to the Administration Manager. The Critical Incidents Register will be updated by the Administration Manager following the receipt of the Critical Incident Report.

The Report will provide key details to be reported include:

- time, location and nature of the incident, eg threat, accident, death or injury
- names, contact details positions of person/s involved, eg staff, international or domestic student

- current location of the student/staff member reporting the incident
 - whether and which emergency services or other government agencies that have been contacted (including any reference numbers allocated to the incident)
 - whether an interpreter is required
 - Identifying those students and staff most closely involved and therefore most at risk.
 - details of any further response or remedial action taken and the outcome of those action if known
3. **Co-ordinating a Critical Incident Response and Recovery Plan:** A Critical Incident Management Team will be formed (led by the Dean, Chief Operating Officer or Administration Manager will review the details in the critical incident report, involve the staff member and other related stakeholders (as required) to create a recovery plan in the aftermath of a critical incident.
- Consultation on and Implementation of the Action Plan:** The Critical Incident Management Team will assess the Critical Incident and recommend a plan of action to follow up the Critical Incident. Chief Operating Officer will be responsible to implement the plan.
- Where required, a meeting with appropriate staff/students will be held to follow up the incident. 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 contacts
 - 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
 - Assisting with Visa issues

Follow up & Review of Critical Incident

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).

Record keeping requirements in relation to a Critical Incident

All records of a critical incident are to be maintained by MIHE in the Critical Incident Register and it is the responsibility of the Chief Operating Officer to ensure that all paperwork, immediate action, and follow up action is completed.

4. **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. A report will be written by the staff member and will include any recommended changes to MIHE's plans, policy and procedures to improve its approach to dealing with critical incidents and maintaining effective business continuity. The report with recommendations will be presented to the Dean and CEO as well as the Audit and Risk Committee, Academic Board (for academic recommendations) and/or Board of Directors (for non-academic recommendations) for their review and approval. The Dean and/or COO will be responsible for implementing the approved recommendations in the report. The Critical Incident Register is also updated once the report has been approved and when all the recommendations in the report have been completed.

- Additional Action (48 – 72 hours).

Stress Management

The Student Welfare Officer is responsible for implementing and delivering 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.

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.

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?	<input type="checkbox"/> Yes <input type="checkbox"/> No
Emergency Service involved:	<input type="checkbox"/> Yes (Police / Ambulance / Fire) <input type="checkbox"/> No
Follow up required for people involved in critical incident:	<input type="checkbox"/> Medical <input type="checkbox"/> Counselling <input type="checkbox"/> Police Statements <input type="checkbox"/> Notification to family <input type="checkbox"/> Other

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	Details of follow up: _____ _____ _____ _____ _____
Reported Critical Incident to:	

Please give the original form to the Student Welfare & Support Officer who will place it on the student's file and forward a copy to the Chief Operating Officer.

Name

Signature

Date