

Critical Incident Policy

1 PURPOSE

This procedure ensures that any critical incident that occurs is documented, reported and action taken by the Golden Wattle Group Pty Ltd T/A Meridian Vocational College where required.

This policy is designed to ensure that Golden Wattle Group Pty Ltd T/A Meridian Vocational College:

- a) Meets its Duty of Care as an ESOS based Education Provider
- b) Is able to respond to a Critical Incident effectively and promptly
- c) Provides appropriate support services to those affected
- d) Applicable information is provided to staff and students

2 SCOPE

This policy applies to all students and staff in compliance with the ESOS Framework. The critical incidents covered in this procedure include, but are not limited to, those incidents which occur at our premises and/or training and assessing locations either during or after hours.

A Critical Incident is any traumatic event, or threat of such (within or outside Australia) which has the potential to harm life or well-being, and causes extreme stress, fear or injury to the person experiencing or witnessing the event.

Critical incidents may include, but are not limited to:

- Serious injury, illness, or death of a student or staff
- A missing student
- Serious illness, such as any illness which causes the deterioration of the student /staff member's health over time
- Serious Injury which prevents or severely affects the student's ability to complete the course
- Physical or Sexual assault
- Occupation Health & Safety Risk
- Student or Staff witnessing a serious accident or violent act
- Natural disaster
- Fire, bomb-threat, explosion, gas or chemical hazard
- Drug or Alcohol abuse
- Damaging Media attention
- Traumatic events that affect students; such as
 - Sexual Assault
 - Mental Health Crisis
 - Drug / Alcohol Overdose
- In the case of younger overseas students, under the age of 18 years, any event causing the disruption of Accommodation and Welfare arrangements constitutes a critical incident
- If an overseas student under the age of 18 years cannot be contacted and their whereabouts and wellbeing are not about to be confirmed, this too constitutes a critical incident

- In the event of a report or accusation of harm (abuse, neglect or other) against a caregiver or other by an overseas student under the age of 18 years, a critical incident will be registered

3 POLICY STATEMENT

This policy should not be confused with the standard incident reporting policy and procedures that pertain to staff and students contained within the college or whilst on Work Based Placement.

Should an incident be deemed to meet the above criteria, that incident report can be upgraded to a Critical Incident and be subject to the following information within this policy.

The Golden Wattle Group Pty Ltd T/A Meridian Vocational College Critical Incident Response Procedures will address the actual management of a Critical Incident and include the following items:

- The time of the incident
- The type of incident
- Immediately after the incident
- Following the incident
- Post the incident
- Review the Critical Incident management

This policy shall be disseminated to all Staff and Student's to ensure that they are aware of these requirements in the event of a Critical Incident and shall form part of the orientation process.

Overseas students will be provided with information about assistance available and how to seek assistance or, and report any incidents. Assistance will also be available for reporting and seeking assistance through Student Support Services and staff.

3.1 CRITICAL INCIDENT RESPONSE

- 3.1.1 If a member of Golden Wattle Group Pty Ltd T/A Meridian Vocational College's staff believes that a critical incident has occurred, that staff member is required to contact emergency services (if required) and contact the CEO immediately
- 3.1.2 The staff member shall contact emergency services (if appropriate) immediately
- 3.1.3 Wherever emergency services are required to be contacted all personnel are to be cleared from any dangerous area without delay
- 3.1.4 In the instance of injury or onset of illness on premises, Golden Wattle Group Pty Ltd T/A Meridian Vocational College First Aid Officer should be notified whenever a student or staff member requires assistance
- 3.1.5 Contact should be made with the family of any student involved in situation requiring emergency services
- 3.1.6 Parents/legal custodians of any younger student involved in any form of critical incident must be contacted and informed
- 3.1.7 A Critical Incident Report Form is to be completed by the appropriate staff member involved in the incident
- 3.1.8 The Critical Incident Report Form is to contain as much information as possible and indicate the people directly involved in the incident

- 3.1.9 If an overseas student under 18 years of age experiences disruption to their welfare and accommodation, this incident is considered a critical incident and all reasonable actions are taken by student support to resolve the disruption and notify the student's family and notify Australian Department of Home Affairs.

3.2 DESIGNATED OFFICER

Any Staff Member who is either a direct witness or the first to be informed of the incident or potential incident can assume the position of the Designated Officer and

- Is to assume temporary control over the Critical Incident and to assign duties and responsibilities to Staff and Students as required
- Is to alert the CEO or most Senior Staff Member at the first available opportunity,
- Is to provide a brief to and from part of the Critical Incident Response Team,
- Is to complete the Critical Incident Report Form.

3.3 CRITICAL INCIDENT RESPONSE TEAM

When an incident occurs, the CEO or most Senior Staff Member will form a Critical Incident Response Team – CIRT.

The CEO or most Senior Staff Member shall be the designated Critical Incident Team leader,

The CIRT is to take over control of the Critical Incident from the Designated Officer, after a handover brief, and

The Designated Officer will form part of the CIRT

The CIRT is responsible for:

- Implementation of this procedure,
- Identifying the cause to the Critical Incident circumstance, assessing and controlling any further risk
- Implementing, monitoring and maintaining risk control measures,
- Regularly monitoring the effectiveness of the Critical Incident risk control measures and rectify any deficiencies in the procedures,
- Consulting with Staff and Students on Critical Incident practices,
- Liaison with Emergency Response Authorities,
- Liaison with Department of Education and the Department of Employment, Australian Department of Home Affairs and other relevant agencies,
- Ensuring the well-being of Staff and Students following the Critical Incident,
- Arranging Counselling or Trauma Services following the Critical Incident should the student request it. Counselling can be arranged should the Critical Incident Team leader deem it relevant.
- Regularly monitoring the effectiveness of the Critical Incident response and updating any response measures to ensure ongoing support of the student.

3.4 CRITICAL INCIDENT RESPONSE TIMELINE

When an incident occurs, CEO will form a Critical Incident Response Team – CIRT

- ↳ CEO shall be the designated Critical Incident Team leader
- ↳ The CIRT is to take over control of the Critical Incident from the Designated Officer, after a handover brief, and
- ↳ The Designated Officer will form part of the CIRT
 - ↳ Compliance Manager informs CEO
 - ↳ Compliance Manager informs Admissions Manager

3.4.1 At the time of occurrence and within 24 hours

- a) Identify the cause of the Critical Incident
- b) If practical, remove or minimise the cause for a potential further Critical Incident
- c) Ensure the Safety and Well-being of Staff and Students
- d) Ensure injured and/or traumatised Staff and Students are provided with appropriate Emergency Care
- e) Arrange Counselling, Trauma or Religious Services
- f) Ensure support for Staff and Students in the event an incident is still continuing
- g) Keep Staff, Students, Parents, Agents and where necessary the Department of Education and Australian Department of Home Affairs informed
- h) Manage Media Reports
- i) Designated Officer is to Complete the Critical Incident Report Form
- j) Commence an investigation to record real-time or factual data on the Critical Incident

3.4.2 Immediately After

- a) Arrange Counselling, Trauma or Religious Services
- b) Allow Staff and Students to contact relatives and friends
- c) Ensure Staff and Students who have been exposed to the Critical Incident with Support and Practical assistance
- d) Debrief all relevant personnel involved in the Critical Incident
- e) Where applicable, ensure the site of the incident is not disturbed in relation to a Police matter or when an investigation is required by the state or territory safety authority
- f) Keep Staff, Students, Parents, Agents and where necessary the Department of Education and Australian Department of Home Affairs informed
- g) Restore Normal daily operations, where practical and as soon as possible
- h) Manage Media Reports

3.4.3 Following

- a) Ensure Staff and Students are provided ongoing access to Counselling, Trauma or Religious Services
- b) Monitor Staff and Students attitudes and behaviour for any signs of PTSD
- c) Monitor Health and Well-being of any Staff and Students hospitalised
- d) Keep Staff, Students, Parents, Agents and where necessary the Department of Education and Australian Department of Home Affairs informed
- e) Assist in the arrange of memorial proceedings if appropriate
- f) Conduct a CIRT debrief and provide the report to Staff and Students where necessary
- g) Manage Media Reports

3.4.4 Post

- a) Ensure Staff and Students are provided ongoing access to Counselling, Trauma or Religious Services
- b) Analyse the findings of the CIRT Incident debrief and where necessary implement RISK Control Measures to minimise the likelihood of reoccurrence

3.5 REPORTING OF THE CRITICAL INCIDENT

In accordance with the ESOS Act, Golden Wattle Group Pty Ltd T/A Meridian Vocational College is required to notify the Department of Education and Australian Department of Home Affairs as soon as practical after the incident and in the event of a student's death or

other circumstance affecting the student's attendance. In this instance notification will be made initially by Phone followed by reporting via PRISMS.

3.6 REVIEW THE CRITICAL INCIDENT MANAGEMENT

The CIRT shall monitor and review the critical incident responses, strategies and the support offered to the student during, immediately after and post incident reporting

4 RESPONSIBILITIES

Role within RTO	Area of responsibility
CEO	Approval Authority
CEO	Development/Review
CEO	Monitoring and Evaluation
CEO	Compliance
CEO	Implementation

5 DESIGNATED OFFICER

The Designated Officer:

- If not a witness to the incident, shall be the first to be informed of the incident or potential incident,
- Is responsible for taking temporary control over the Critical Incident and to assign duties and responsibilities to staff and students as required,
- Is to alert the CEO or most Senior Staff Member at the first available opportunity,
- Is responsible for the delivery of a brief to the Critical Incident Response Team,
- Is Required to form part of the Critical Incident Response Team,
- Holds the responsibility for completing the Critical Incident Report Form.

6 RELATED LEGISLATION AND REGULATIONS

- * The National Code of Practice for Registration Authorities and Providers of Education and Training to Overseas Students 2018, known as 'the National Code 2018' Standards 5 and 6
- Standards for Registered Training Organisations (RTOs) 2025
- Education Services for Overseas Students Regulations 2001
- Education Services for Overseas Students Act 2000

7 RELATED POLICIES AND PROCEDURES

- Overseas Student Support Policy
- Younger Student Policy
- Engagement Prior to Enrolment Policy and Procedures
- Formalisation of Enrolment Policy and Procedures