

## Critical Incidents Procedure

### SCOPE

This procedure applies to all AFTT Team Members, students and visitors who have been exposed to a critical incident – either on-campus or off-campus (students & Team Members) including Team Members on business related travel interstate or overseas. Where AFTT Team Members witness an event that may be considered a critical incident, the policy and procedures should be followed.

Where AFTT Team Members are aware of an event which may either indicate or escalate to a critical incident, the policy and procedures should be followed.

### PURPOSE

The purpose of this procedure is to assist AFTT Team Members and students in the management of critical incidents.

### DEFINITIONS

**HES Framework** – Higher Education Standards Framework (Threshold Standards) 2015.

**ESOS National Code** – The ESOS National Code refers to the National Code of Practice for Providers of Education and Training to Overseas Students 2018 established under the Education Services for Overseas Students Act 2000.

**PRISMS** – Provider Registration and International Students Management System (PRISMS). It provides Australian education providers with the Confirmation-of-Enrolment (CoE) facilities required for compliance with the Education Services for Overseas Students (ESOS) Legislation.

**Compassionate or Compelling circumstances** – Compassionate or compelling circumstances are generally those beyond the control of the student and which have an impact upon the student's course progress or wellbeing. These could include, but are not limited to:

- Serious illness or injury, where a medical certificate states that the student was unable to attend classes;
- Bereavement of close family members such as parents or grandparents;
- Major political upheaval or natural disaster in the home country requiring emergency travel and this has impacted on the student's studies;
- A traumatic experience that has impacted on the student which could include involvement in, or witnessing of a serious accident; and witnessing or being the victim of a serious crime, supported by police or psychologist's reports; or
- Where the Institute was unable to offer a pre-requisite subject.

**Critical Incident** – A critical incident is defined as 'a traumatic event, or the threat of such (within or outside Australia), which causes extreme stress, fear or injury'. It includes but not limited to incidents that may cause physical or psychological harm.

Critical incidents are not limited to, but could include:

- Medical emergencies involving a student or Team Members,
- Critical illness of a student,
- Unexpected student/Team Members death,
- Missing students,
- Severe oral, written or psychological aggression,
- Natural disaster,
- Campus disturbance/riot,
- Fire/explosion with injuries or significant damage,
- Traumatic events that affect students, such as
  - Sexual Assault,
  - Domestic violence,
  - Mental Health Crisis,
  - Drug / Alcohol Overdose.

Non-life threatening events can be classed as critical incidents.

**Emergency Incident** – A sudden, serious and urgent incident needing immediate Emergency Services support. CIRT - Critical Incident Response Team.

*For definitions not listed here please refer to AFTT's Glossary.*

### PROCEDURE

#### CRITICAL INCIDENT – FIRST POINT OF CONTACT

#### 1 AFTT: Critical Incidents Procedure

Updated on 20.08.2020 to reflect JMC Pty Ltd's business name of the Academy of Film, Theatre & Television (AFTT)

Academy of Film, Theatre & Television is the business name of:

International Film School Sydney Pty Ltd (IFSS) ABN 50 108 452 062 | RTO Code: 91143 | CRICOS No: 02660C

JMC Pty Ltd ABN 53 003 572 012 | CRICOS No: 01259J

AFTT is advised of a critical incident. The Campus Manager, or their delegate, is usually the first point of contact.

### FORMING CIRT

Each incident should be rated according to the risk assessment plan. The Campus Manager, or their delegate, makes a decision on 'critical incident' i.e. does the event meet the critical incident definition with a risk rating of 1 or 2?

- If yes, the Campus Manager convenes the Critical Incident Response Team (CIRT),
- If no, the Campus Manager or nominee, advises on appropriate course of action.

Where an international student is involved, the Director of International Services must be notified and CIRT is formed. The Director of International Services or nominee must be a member of the CIRT.

### CIRT MEMBERSHIP

The CIRT is chaired by the Campus Manager and membership can include:

- Heads of Department,
- Administration Coordinator,
- Director, International Services,
- Marketing and Brand Manager, and
- Nominated trained Team Members member/or agency/or counsellor.

### THE ROLE OF CIRT

The role of the CIRT is to effectively manage critical incidents with clear actions and procedures that are humane, sensitive, and responsive to the needs of students, Team Members and the broader AFTT community. Intervention procedures may reduce the intense reactions of students and Team Members to an incident and assist them in returning to their normal studies and/or duties.

### THE OPERATIONS OF CIRT

The operations of the CIRT involve activities prior to, during and after periods impacted upon by the critical incident, and include:

- Preparing/informing students and Team Members on actions to be taken in the event of a critical incident,
- Initial action,
- Stabilising the AFTT community,
- Debriefing:
  - Personal support,
  - Media management,
  - Corporate review,
  - Reports and Records management.

### CIRT ROLE IN PREPARING STUDENTS/TEAM MEMBERS FOR A POSSIBLE CRITICAL INCIDENT

The CIRT role in preparing students/Team Members for a possible critical incident includes:

- Informing AFTT students and Team Members of the role and activities of the CIRT,
- Assisting/advising on the development of positive working relationships and morale across the Academy,
- Establishing contacts with and/or developing suitably trained internal or external debriefers,
- Assessing AFTT environment for the potential for critical incidents,
- In consultation with students and Team Members, developing agreed procedures for responding to critical incidents:
  - Medical emergencies involving a student,
  - Critical illness of a student,
  - Student death,
  - Traumatic events that affect students,
- Ensuring that students/Team Members are familiar with these procedures.

### CIRT INITIAL ACTION

Critical incidents may trigger a wide range of physical and psychological symptoms, including increased heart rate, high blood pressure and anxiety. The initial action of AFTT is to calm students and Team Members following a critical incident and to ensure that their immediate needs are met. A member of the CIRT, who was not involved in the incident, or affected by it, is responsible for this initial action.

A demobilisation takes place before the end of a shift or before those involved in the incident disperse.

Strategies include:

- Contact emergency services if necessary,
- Convene a meeting for those involved as soon as possible,
- Summarise the incident and clarify uncertainties,

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- Invite questions and discuss issues of concern,
- Show care and support,
- Draw up a plan of action, taking into account the needs of the students/Team Members,
- Make short-term arrangements for study/work responsibilities,
- Offer information on defusing and debriefing.

#### **CIRT ROLE IN STABILISING THE ACADEMY COMMUNITY**

The role of stabilising the AFTT community is assigned to a trained person (e.g. Campus Counsellor) and is designed to bring the experience of the incident to a conclusion and provide immediate personal support. The aim is to stabilize the responses of students/Team Members involved in the incident and allow an opportunity for them to express any immediate concerns. This step should take place within 12 hours of the incident.

Strategies include:

- Review the event,
- Clarify student/Team Members questions and concerns,
- Encourage student/Team Members to talk about what happened,
- Identify current needs,
- Offer student/Team Members advice, information and handouts on referrals and support agencies,
- Arrange debriefing and follow-up sessions to provide additional information about the event when available.

#### **CIRT ROLE IN DEBRIEFING**

Debriefing is usually carried out within three to seven days of the critical incident, when students and Team Members have had enough time to take in the experience. Debriefing is not counselling. It is a structured voluntary discussion aimed at putting an abnormal event into perspective. It offers students/Team Members clarity about the critical incident they have experienced and assists them to establish a process for recovery.

Debriefers help the students/Team Members to explore and understand a range of issues, including:

- The sequence of events,
- The causes and consequences,
- Each person's experience,
- Any memories triggered by the incident,
- Normal psychological reactions to critical incident,
- Methods to manage emotional responses resulting from a critical incident.

#### **CIRT ROLE IN PERSONAL SUPPORT**

- An immediate and primary role of the CIRT is to determine how the institute can support the individual student(s) and their families involved in the incident.
- The Campus Manager, or their delegate, manages all agreed communications and support mechanisms with affected students and their families.
- The CIRT through the Campus Manager arranges for particular students most closely related to the student(s) involved in the incident to receive personal support.

#### **CIRT ROLE IN MEDIA MANAGEMENT**

All media enquiries, press releases and institute website postings related to the critical incident are managed by the CIRT.

The Campus Manager or Marketing and Brand Manager will be the only people approved by the CIRT to deal with communications with the media.

The CIRT has a responsibility to impress upon students and Team Members that there may be pressure on students/ Team Members to provide photos to the media. Out of respect for the students/Team Members and their families and to protect the integrity of AFTT, no photos other than those approved by the CIRT should be released to the media.

#### **CIRT ROLE IN THE CORPORATE REVIEW**

A corporate review is held a few weeks after the incident by members of Senior Management. The CIRT reviews all aspects of the incident to uncover deficiencies in the handling of the incident and provide corrective solutions and reports to Senior Management. The review looks at how the incident was handled, how it could have been handled better and the effectiveness of the intervention strategies. Related institute policies, safety regulations, safe work procedures are also reviewed.

#### **CIRT ROLE IN REPORTS AND RECORDS MANAGEMENT**

The Campus Manager responsible for administration and who is a member of the CIRT has the responsibility for ensuring that:

- Minutes and agendas of ongoing CIRT meetings are maintained,
- A file is raised each time the CIRT is convened to deal with a specific critical incident. This file (electronic and/or hardcopy) includes but is not limited to records of:

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- The incident,
- The nature of the incident,
- The people involved in the incident,
- How the institute became aware of the incident,
- Student support measures,
- Communications with external bodies (Police/emergency services/DET/DoHA/VRQA/ACPET, embassies), media outlets and particularly members of student families,
- Reports from defusing and debriefing sessions,
- Action plans,
- Corporate review report; and
- Subsequent amendments to institute policies and procedures.

#### **COMPLAINTS and APPEALS**

Students may access the Student Complaints and Appeals Policy and its associated procedures to appeal against any decisions made under this procedure.

#### **POSITIONS RESPONSIBLE**

- Administration
- Nominated trained Team Members member/or agency/or counsellor
- Heads of Department
- Campus Manager
- Director of International Services
- Marketing and Brand Manager

#### **RELATED LEGISLATION**

This Procedure supports AFTT's compliance with the following legislation:

- Higher Education Support Act 2003 (Cth),
- Higher Education Standards Framework (Threshold Standards) 2015,
- Education Services for Overseas Students (ESOS) Act 2000 (Cth),
- National Code of Practice for Registration Authorities and Providers of Education and Training to Overseas Students 2018
  - ESOS National Code 2018, Part B, Standard 6