**Veritas Institute
Australia**

Purpose of the policy

To outline the necessary steps taken to ensure that the appropriate procedures are followed in the event of a critical incident including the required follow up to the incident and recording of the incident and action taken. This policy and related procedures have been developed to assist Veritas Institute Australia staff and students in responding appropriately to incidents that may cause trauma to an individual and/or affect the campus. It establishes basic procedures and reporting systems to cover prevention, immediate responses and follow-up actions to deal with the immediate consequences and the longer-term implications of a critical incident. In accordance with the requirements of National Code 2018, the policy includes specific processes for dealing with critical incidents affecting international students. When an international student is involved Veritas Institute Australia, its management will also undertake caring role normally taken by the student's family. We believe in the importance of efficient, sensitive and supportive strategies while dealing with critical incident occurrences. The policy and procedure is designed to minimise confusion, conflicts, and preventing student harm.

1. 0 Policy

> This policy/procedure supports Student support services, Standard 6 (See Staff Handbook)
> Furthermore, it demonstrates Staff capability, educational resources and premises (Standard 11).

This policy and procedure ensures that all critical incidents must be documented and reported. Furthermore, the action plan for corrective actions is to be documented with preventative approaches to avoid future occurrences. This document outlines the Veritas Institute Australia's policy, support mechanisms and procedures for managing a critical incident. The policy ensures the Veritas Institute Australia 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.

2.0 Definitions

Designated person is any Veritas Institute Australia's staff member who either witnesses or is informed about an actual or potential incident. The designated person should immediately inform the most senior member of staff available of the incident. In the meantime, however, the designated person may need to assume temporary control of a critical incident site including, for example, calling emergency services, alerting other staff, assisting with first aid, crowd control etc.

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' affecting Veritas Institute Australia's student or staff member that causes extreme stress, fear or injury and emotional distress within Veritas Institute Australia's community.(Definition from National Code 2018). Critical incidents could include, but are not limited to, events such as:

- Missing students
- Severe verbal or psychological aggression
- Death, serious injury or any threat of these
- Natural disaster; and
- Issues such as domestic violence, sexual assault, drug or alcohol abuse
- Death (including the death of a dependent residing in Australia in the case of 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

Critical Incident Policy & Procedure V1.2 Sep 2022
Veritas Institute Australia RTO NO: 41406 CRICOS CODE: 03762M

This is not a controlled document when printed
Status: Current

Approved By: CEO
Review: Sep 2023

- Jail following a crime in Australia or abroad
- Domestic violence, sexual assault, drug or alcohol abuse.
- Non-life-threatening events could still qualify as critical incidents.

Examples of critical incidents that may occur to an International Student are:

> - Death (Including death of a dependent residing in Australia)
> - Accidents, Suicide, result of an injury or terminal illness, or Murder
> - On Campus accident resulting in injury
> - Abrupt onset of Mental disorder (e.g., depression attack, bipolar attack, panic attack) or a severe physical illness
> - Floods, fire and natural disasters affecting the student
> - Aggressive episode involving a student or the staff member at Veritas Institute Australia
> - Serious 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 continue with or complete the course.

Critical Incident Reporting Guidelines

Police must be notified in any case of sudden unexpected death (call 000, fire, police, ambulance)

Police actions include:

> - Reporting such death to the Coroner
> - Notifying next of kin
> - Obtaining official identification of the deceased (this must be done by someone who has known the deceased for some time)
> - Conducting investigations on behalf of the Coroner, e.g., interviewing witnesses and others who may have been involved, collecting clothing and other items for use in evidence, delivering specimens for analysis. The Educational Services for Overseas Students (ESOS) Act 2000 requires Veritas Institute Australia to notify the Department of Education and the Department of Home Affairs (DHA) as soon as practical after a critical incident involving an international student. Also, 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 Veritas Institute Australia's campus, the first action will be to contact the emergency services - fire, ambulance or police (by Calling "000") – as would be the case with other work health & safety matters. The CEO/Student Support officers 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 takes place outside Veritas Institute Australia's premises, Veritas Institute Australia's staff receiving the information must immediately contact the CEO and Student Support Staff who will communicate with the other staff as appropriate. Emergency 24 hr contact number for Veritas Institute Australia is (CEO Ph:0435 147 434)

Critical Incident Policy & Procedure V1.2 Sep 2022
Veritas Institute Australia RTO NO: 41406 CRICOS CODE: 03762M

This is not a controlled document when printed
Status: Current

Approved By: CEO
Review: Sep 2023

Key Details to be Reported to CEO Nidhi Taluja:

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.

Non - life threatening events could still qualify as critical incidents, however, a serious illness or injury to a broader staff community happening outside the campus may not be considered a critical incident.

1. The management or nominee calls an immediate meeting with the following staff to make decisions as to how to proceed:

> ➢ RTO Manager
> ➢ Student support officers
> ➢ Trainers and assessors

This group becomes the Critical Incident Team. One member of the team should scribe for all meetings to keep a record of all content and decisions made.

2. At the initial meeting of the Critical Incident Team the tasks are to:

> ➢ Create a clear understanding of the known facts
> ➢ Plan an immediate response
> ➢ Plan ongoing strategies
> ➢ Allocate individual roles/responsibilities for ongoing tasks.

3. Issues to be considered include:

> ➢ Notifying next of kin/significant others.
> ➢ What is the most appropriate manner of contact?
> ➢ Arrangements for informing staff and students
> ➢ Guidelines to staff about what information to give to students
> ➢ Issuing a written bulletin to staff if the matter is complex
> ➢ Briefing the student support officer/other staff (if an international student is involved) and other staff; delegating a staff member to deal with inquiries
> ➢ Liaising with necessary emergency services/hospital/medical
> ➢ Managing media/publicity
> ➢ Identifying those students and staff most closely involved and therefore most at risk

These people are likely to be:

> ➢ those directly involved
> ➢ personal friends/family of those involved
> ➢ others who have experienced a similar past trauma
> ➢ other students and staff.

Critical Incident Team is to:

Arrange a time and place for an initial group/individual debriefing session with counsellor/s. This session provides an opportunity to share the impact of the event, discuss various interpretations of the event in cultural/ethnic terms, the sense of vulnerability, the experience of painful emotions and the normalisation of reactions.

Critical Incident Policy & Procedure V1.2 Sep 2022
Veritas Institute Australia RTO NO: 41406 CRICOS CODE: 03762M

This is not a controlled document when printed
Status: Current

Approved By: CEO
Review: Sep 2023

3.0 Procedure

Procedure for the Immediate Response (within 24 hours) when a critical incident has been identified, whether occurring on or off the campus:

	Action	Details	Responsibility

1.1	**Immediate response (within 24 hours)**	a) Designated person to assess situation and consider any risks to their own safety before taking any action.
		
		b) Where the designated person considers that a critical incident is occurring or is likely, they are to alert the most senior staff member available.
		
		c) Designated person to take over temporary control of incident (where there is no threat to that person's safety).
		
		d) Designated person or other staff member to contact emergency services (Dial 000) ensuring that all details known about the incident are provided. Time, location and nature of the incident, e.g., threat, accident, death or injury. Key details to be reported include:
		
		    1) Names and positions of person/s involved, e.g., staff, international or domestic student
		
		    2) Current location of the student/staff member
		
		    3) Whether emergency services have been called
		
		    4) Whether an interpreter is required
		
		a) After emergency contact, notify critical incident team (CEO Phone: 0435 147 434) who will develop and implement a critical incident plan for responding appropriately in a timely manner.
		
		b) Ensure safety of staff and students through steps evacuation procedures if required and providing first aid or medical assistance.
		
		c) Ensure agencies, support organisations and other individuals are involved in responding to the incident including liaison with police, doctors, hospital staff, embassies or consulates and other relevant professionals.
		
		d) Contact and inform parents and family members of those involved in incident.
		
		e) Manage media and publicity by providing an officially agreed response and by ensuring that all staff are informed of the appropriate response to the media.
		
		f) Assess the need for support and counseling those directly and indirectly involved.
		
		g) Review legal issues including advising family of process/access to assistance as appropriate.
		
		h) Keep appropriate and adequate records.
		
		i) The above details should be documented for further reference. The management will seek additional information about the incident and will
			Designated person/Critical Incident Team/Relevant staff members
			
			After contacting the emergency services, the staff member witnessing the incident or receiving the news immediately contacts the Veritas Institute Australia's CEO,

	Action	Details	Responsibility
		request that details are not immediately made public, if appropriate. The management will communicate with other staff as appropriate, including the student admin officers (if an international student is involved) and the RTO manager.	
1.2	**Secondary response (48 – 72 hours)**	Organise tasks, timelines and individual responsibilities for the next hours/days, etc. See the list below for Additional Actions to be undertaken after **48 – 72 hours** of the critical incident taking place: Plan ongoing feedback and regular meetings so the **Critical Incident Team** is in constant touch and working together. a) If the case of a student's death, notify the CEO and relevant teaching staff so records are stopped b) Confirm access to Veritas Institute Australia's emergency funds if necessary. c) If the incident involves death or serious injury to an international student, assist the student's family as needed. Ensure that support and counseling is provided as identified under immediate response. **Assistance may include:** d) liaising with appropriate staff and others who may help hiring interpreters e) making arrangements for visits from family and friends, e.g., arranging accommodation, travel, crisis support and referral to appropriate services f) making arrangements for hospital/funeral/memorial service/repatriation – obtaining a death certificate g) assisting with personal items and affairs including insurance issues – assisting with visa issues h) notifying the student's Homestay or accommodation provider. i) Assess any further needs for support and counseling. j) Provide staff and students with factual information about the critical incident including organising a debriefing for all students and staff closely involved with the incident. k) Restore Veritas's operations to regular routine, program delivery, and community life as soon as possible. l) Complete critical incident report including detailed actions that need to be undertaken.	Designated person/Critical Incident Team/Relevant staff members

Critical Incident Policy & Procedure V1.2 Sep 2022
Veritas Institute Australia RTO NO: 41406 CRICOS CODE: 03762M

This is not a controlled document when printed
Status: Current

Approved By: CEO
Review: Sep 2023

	Action	Details	Responsibility

1.3	**Ongoing follow up response**	a) Identify any other persons who have been affected by the critical incident and provide access to support services as required.
		
		b) Provide any further information to staff and students as required.
		
		c) Provide appropriate support in the event of a serious injury or death such as hiring interpreters, making arrangements for hospital/funeral/memorial service/repatriation, obtaining a death certificate, assisting with issues such as insurance and visa issues.
		
		d) Monitor the progress of all those affected by the critical incident especially staff and students for signs of delayed stress and the onset of post-traumatic stress disorder.
		
		e) Manage long term consequences such as insurance, inquests and legal proceedings.
		
		   a) Who is the decision maker?
		
		   b) Who will follow up?
		
		   c) Availability of mobile phones
		
		   d) Notification of and liaison with sponsor/agent if applicable
		
		   e) Liaison with police, doctors, hospital etc.
		
		   f) Hiring independent interpreters
		
		   g) Death notices
		
		   h) Funeral/memorial service requirements
		
		   i) Refunds of tuition fees to pay repatriation or associated expenses
		
		   j) Copy of death certificate
		
		   k) Consideration of personal items and affairs (including household and academic)
		
		   l) Insurance matters (including OHSC cover, ambulance cover)
		
		   m) Formal stress management interventions required for students and/or staff (release from classes, leave, rescheduled assessments or exams)
		
		   n) Liaising with academic staff or supervisors
		
		   o) Arrangements for further support/counselling sessions for groups/individuals as necessary
		
		   p) Liaising with DIBP regarding visa issues if studies are interrupted
		
		   q) Fee issues if applicable
		
		   r) Legal issues if applicable, e.g., access to legal aid services, right to sue
			Designated person/Critical Incident Team/Relevant staff members

Critical Incident Policy & Procedure V1.2 Sep 2022
Veritas Institute Australia RTO NO: 41406 CRICOS CODE: 03762M

This is not a controlled document when printed
Status: Current

Approved By: CEO
Review: Sep 2023

	Action	Details	Responsibility
		s) Condolence letters to family	
		t) Financial assistance for victim's family if residing in Australia	
		u) Roster of staff/students for hospital visits	
		v) Restore normal functioning of Academic Follow-up – Monitoring, Support, Evaluation • Assess need for ongoing support for affected students/staff	
		w) Maintain contact with any injured/affected individuals	
		x) Critical Incident Team to evaluate effectiveness of critical incident management plan, with feedback from staff/students and relevant community personnel.	
		y) Be aware of any possible longer term issues, e.g., inquests, legal proceedings Policy	

Specialist Services – Contact Details

The following services may need to be contacted in the case of a critical incident:

Emergency Services

- Police, Fire and Ambulance: Phone: 000
- Police Headquarters (24 hr): Phone 131 444
- Lifeline (24-hour crisis counseling line) 131 114
- Poisons Information Centre: 131126
- Health Department: 134 325 84
- 24 hours College Contact Number (**Nidhi Taluja:** 0435 147 434)

***For how to complete a Critical Incident Report (see **Appendix at the end**)

Reporting procedure

The critical incident policy works together with other policies and procedures (e.g., student support related policies, deferment, suspension and cancellation policy) serving the students by taking necessary actions during any incidents and record keeping of the incidents and action/s.

Veritas Institute Australia's management will identify and report all critical incidents. Critical incident may be the incidents that occurred outside of Australia affecting a learner, for example, a natural disaster in the student's region or village. Incidents could affect students' family, and the learner returns to their home country immediately.

Veritas Institute Australia's management notifies the department of home affairs (DHA) of a change of the students' visa status in accordance with section 19 of the ESOS Act within 14 days after the event specified below occurs:

Critical Incident Policy & Procedure V1.2 Sep 2022
Veritas Institute Australia RTO NO: 41406 CRICOS CODE: 03762M
This is not a controlled document when printed
Status: Current
Approved By: CEO
Review: Sep 2023

Any Deferment, suspension or cancellation of an accepted student's studies (whether as a result of action by the student or the provider or otherwise) before the student's course is completed.

Where a Critical Incident is identified the following procedures must occur:

➢ As part of the reporting process the CEO and Student Support Staff shall confirm that the incident falls under the definition provided above of a 'Critical Incident.'

➢ When a staff member feels, a critical incident has occurred, they are required to contact emergency services where required and contact the CEO/Student Support officer immediately.

ACTIONS

A 'Critical Incident Report' (Appendix) is to be completed by the appropriate staff member involved in the incident or notification of the incident. Where appropriate the report will be completed/verified by the Student Support Staff and given to the CEO/CEO.

The 'Critical Incident Report' is to contain as much information as possible indicating the people directly involved in the incident.

The Educational Services for Overseas Students Act 2000 (ESOS Act) requires Veritas Institute Australia to notify the appropriate government agency(s) soon as practical after the incident 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).

Consultation of the Action Plan

The CEO/CEO will assess the Critical Incident and implement a plan of action to follow up the Critical Incident.

Where required, a meeting with appropriate staff/students will be organised. This meeting will determine issues and responsibilities relating to:

- Assessing risks and response actions
- Liaising with emergency and other services
- Contact with students' relatives and other appropriate contacts
- Liaising 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.
- Media Management (Where required)

Where appropriate, Veritas Institute Australia may be required to provide support to the family in the form of:

- Hiring interpreters
- Arranging 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 & Evaluation of Critical Incident

Where a critical incident has occurred and all immediate action and reporting requirements have been fulfilled, Veritas Institute Australia will conduct a follow up and the review of the specific critical incident. 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.

Critical Incident Policy & Procedure V1.2 Sep 2022
Veritas Institute Australia RTO NO: 41406 CRICOS CODE: 03762M

This is not a controlled document when printed
Status: Current

Approved By: CEO
Review: Sep 2023

- 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 documentation of Veritas Institute Australia.
- Any further follow up that is required is documented and responsibilities allocated to appropriate staff.
- An evaluation report will be made available to Veritas Institute Australia's staff and students and other interested parties as relevant.

Record keeping requirements of a Critical Incident

All records of a critical incident will be maintained by Veritas Institute Australia and it is the responsibility of the CEO to ensure that all paperwork, immediate action, and follow up action is completed.

Stress Management

The student Support Staff is responsible for implementing and delivering stress management strategies, including the following stages:

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

Critical Incident Policy & Procedure V1.2 Sep 2022
Veritas Institute Australia RTO NO: 41406 CRICOS CODE: 03762M

This is not a controlled document when printed
Status: Current

Approved By: CEO
Review: Sep 2023

**Veritas Institute
Australia**

CRITICAL INCIDENT FORM

Section 1 –Details of student or staff raising Critical Incident				
Full Name		**Student Number**		
Contact Tel		**Mobile**		
Address				
Email				

Section 2 – Details of Critical Incident				
Date of Critical Incident:		**Time:**		
Type of Incident: please circle the critical incident type if not listed please give details in Other section.	**Description**	**Location of the incident**	**Who have you contacted**	
	Missing Student			
	Severe Abuse			
	Natural disaster			
	Death of family member			
	Serious injury			
	Sexual Assault			
	Domestic Violence			
	Drug or alcohol abuse			
	Witness a crime or violence			
	Mental health issue			
	Other			
Reported to		**Position Title**		

In the event that a student is deceased Veritas Institute Australia's staff are to contact next of kin or emergency contact as listed on enrolment form and advise embassy or consulate officials of the deceased student's passport nationality.

Immediate Action Required by Veritas Institute Australia's Staff:

Section 3 – Details of any local support network that you wish Veritas Institute Australia's Staff to contact					
Name		**Contact number**		**Email**	
Name		**Contact number**		**Email**	
Name		**Contact number**		**Email**	
Name		**Contact number**		**Email**	

Section 4 - Details of any overseas family member or friend that you wish Veritas Institute Australia's staff to contact			
Name	Country	Contact number	Email

Critical Incident Response Team:

Name	Position	Date of Effect	Date of completion	Available after hours	
				Yes	No
				Yes	No
				Yes	No
				Yes	No

Please list stakeholders for communication setup and log

Name	Organisation	Contact details (email only)	Relationship to student

Section 5 – Witnesses to Incident

The following persons witnessed the incident:

Name 1		Contact	
Address			
Signature 1		Date	
Name 1		Contact	
Address			
Signature 1		Date	

Section 6 - List Support Actions and Services

If student required to return home urgently and leave Australia and their studies, have we reassured student that?

CoE can be adjusted if required	Yes	No	That a new training plan will be developed for completion of their studies with no additional costs at their return	Yes	No
Leave of absence letter supplied	Yes	No	Supplied the student with a list of contacts for Veritas Institute Australia's staff while they are away	Yes	No
Veritas Institute Australia's staff are able to contact local stakeholders if required	Yes	No	Assured student that Veritas Institute Australia's staff will email them during their absence, offering support and any updates	Yes	No
If student is missing have Australian Department of Home Affairs been informed?	Yes	No	Date of reporting		Initial	
Have the police been informed?	Yes	No	Date of reporting		Initial	
Have community support been contacted?	Yes	No	Date of Contact		Initial	
Have any Social Services been contacted?	Yes	No	Date of Contact		Initial	
Name of organisation			Name of contact		Contact number	

Critical Incident Policy & Procedure V1.2 Sep 2022
Veritas Institute Australia RTO NO: 41406 CRICOS CODE: 03762M

This is not a controlled document when printed
Status: Current

Approved By: CEO
Review: Sep 2023

Does student require Councillor?	Yes	No	Date of Contact		Initial	
Did the student require hospitalisation?	Yes	No	Date of Admission		Initial	
Does the student require a stay in hospital?	Yes	No	Approx. length of stay:		Initial	
Has the student contacted their embassy?	Yes	No	Date of contact		Initial	
Comments and other information						

Section 7 - Critical Incident Response Team actions:

Action	Result	Date	Date of update/ feedback/review					
			1st Update	Initial	2nd Update	Initial	3rd Update	Initial
Communications log updated	Yes / No							
SMS Updated	Yes / No							
Student file updated	Yes / No							
CEO/PEO Updated	Yes / No							
RTO Manager updated	Yes / No							
Admissions Manager updated	Yes / No							
External stakeholders updated	Yes / No							
Student status reviewed	Yes / No							
Check counselling sessions	Yes / No							
Community support ongoing	Yes / No							
Student training plan update	Yes / No							
Critical incident process reviewed with stakeholders	Yes / No							
Feedback from all stakeholders	Yes / No							

Section 8 – student post interviews

| Three-month interview | Date: | | Notes | |
| Six-month interview | Date: | | Notes | |

Critical Incident Policy & Procedure V1.2 Sep 2022
Veritas Institute Australia RTO NO: 41406 CRICOS CODE: 03762M
This is not a controlled document when printed
Status: Current
Approved By: CEO
Review: Sep 2023

Veritas Institute Australia

Report completed for CEO	Date:	Notes	

Communications Log

Stakeholder	Method of contact	Date of contacts and Initial					
		Date	Initial	Date	Initial	Date	Initial

Section 9 – Signatures and End of Critical Incident Report

Compliance Managers name:		Signature		Date	
Student Support Officers name:		Signature		Date	
Students name		Signature		Date	
CEO name		Signature		Date	
Veritas informed of closure of CI:		Signature		Date	
Stakeholders informed of closure of CI:		Signature		Date	

Critical Incident Policy & Procedure V1.2 Sep 2022
Veritas Institute Australia RTO NO: 41406 CRICOS CODE: 03762M

This is not a controlled document when printed
Status: Current

Approved By: CEO
Review: Sep 2023