

Critical incident response plan

This template provides operational protocols to be followed when responding to a critical or unexpected student situation. This plan is a guide only and allows for flexibility depending on the situation being dealt with at the time.

What is a student critical Incident?

A student critical incident is an unplanned or unforeseen traumatic event affecting a student or students which has an impact on the institution the student attends; its staff, its students and the wider community.

Providers have a responsibility to be prepared for and to respond quickly, effectively and sensitively to any student critical incident.

Impact of student critical incidents

Student critical incidents may have a negative impact on a number of people, either through the immediate effects of being involved, by witnessing an event, or because the emotional impact of past experiences has resurfaced.

Where there are negative effects there is a need to be aware not only of the effect on people not directly affected, but also of the unpredictability of spread and impact of this effect.

Effects can impact:

- secondary victims, such as students, staff and family members
- an institution through negative media or public response
- the wider community

The need for a student critical incident plan

Providers have a duty of care to staff and students to ensure staff dealing with the situation are thinking clearly, acting efficiently, communicating responsibly and working as a team to:

- save the life of anyone at risk
- inform those with the need and right to know
- protect others from the effects of the event
- minimise any long term impact on the provider / industry reputation
- restore normality
- mitigate the potential for a reoccurrence or resulting events where possible

The critical incident response team

In the event of an emergency, a response team may need to be established to provide the necessary support for people immediately affected by the incident and to plan for active monitoring and longer term care of those concerned. The school International Director/Manager Pastoral Care needs to be part of this team.

Role of the Student Critical Incident Response team

As soon as notification is made of a student critical incident:

- providers should verify that the student(s) is from their institution

- Student Critical Incident Response Team to meet
- ensure a clear understanding of the facts
- select a person from the team to lead and manage the response
- select someone to manage media if required
- plan and approve the immediate response
- plan and approve ongoing strategies
- response manager to be point of contact for feedback and questions
- response manager to maintain group communications, records and documentation
- response manager to allocate individuals roles / responsibilities for ongoing tasks
- deal with any other issues as they arise
- ensure appropriate support for staff/students during a critical incident
- address legal requirements
- address media requirements

Acknowledgments:

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Student Critical Incident Response Team – contact list

Role	Name	DDI	Mobile	Email

Larger institutions may also need to include department or faculty lists.

External agencies to contact:

Agency	Contact Name	Phone	Web address	Email
NZ Police				
MFAT				
NZQA Code staff				
Embassy / consulate				
Insurance provider				
Immigration NZ				
Chaplain				
Lawyer				
Funeral Director				

Death of a Student

Student details:

First name:	Surname:
Date of birth:	Date of death:
Student ID:	Programme/course:

Immediate checklist:

within 24 hours

Requirement	Date/time	Notes
1. Communicate effectively and efficiently about the deceased student		
a) Before notifying anyone confirm who has died, their full name and identifying details, and details surrounding the death		
b) Do not give unnecessary details about how the student died unless they are asked for and the NZ Police have given clearance to communicate this information		
c) Determine if the death is due to work activity or institution led activity under the control of the institution – if so, notify the Health and Safety Manager		
d) Identify any religious or cultural considerations		
2. Establish a Student Critical Incident Response Team		
a) Meet team within 24 hours to explain roles and responsibilities. Thereafter, it is not necessary for the whole team to meet (only as required)		
b) Manager to report regularly to relevant		

senior management personnel within institution		
c) Deal with NZ Police – identify and get details of appropriate contact		
3. Notifying the family		
a) Establish that the family has been notified		
b) Facilitate visas for family where required (via MFAT/NZ Police)		
4. Dealing with student friends/flatmates etc		
a) Decide on the appropriate way to notify students of the death, when this should occur and when the death should be formally announced. (Due to social media students are often the first to know)		
b) Gather affected students together with staff counsellor. Start a condolence book		
c) Ensure Critical Incident Response Team has the counsellor's contact details		
d) Identify which friends may be badly affected/at risk and need support – refer to counsellor/s		
e) Contact counsellor/s and inform them of potentially at risk students		
f) Give students contact details for the appropriate members of the Student Critical Incident Response Team (Chaplains, counsellor/s, student advisor/s). It may be appropriate for a counsellor to approach students/friends/staff as		

a group in a large meeting place such as a lecture theatre or hall of residence		
5. Media		
a) Media communications spokesperson identified and briefed		
b) Media response developed and agreed		
6. Security of the deceased students room		
a) Ensure security of the deceased students room and belongings if it is not part of a NZ Police investigation		
b) If the deceased student is flatting privately, arrange with the landlord to have the room locked until an approved person can do inventory		

Medium term checklist:

Within 15 days

Requirement	Date/time	Notes
1. Student information		
a) Ensure that all information about the student is removed from institution web pages. Note that this may also need to include protecting the anonymity of other students impacted by the death		
2. Family matters		
a) Establish what the family wants to do with the body (repatriate or funeral)		
b) Liaise with the insurance company to facilitate and expedite approvals		
c) Liaise with the funeral director		
d) Organise a tapu		

lifting/religious ceremony for the site if appropriate		
e) If family are coming to New Zealand, arrange airport pick ups. Keep in mind that some families expect to see staff from the embassy or consulate at the airport		
f) Arrange accommodation for family members		
g) Maintain contact with and support for family and friends of the deceased		
h) Keep parents informed		
i) Respond appropriately to any cultural issues relating to the death of the student. Involve cultural advisors if needed		
j) Facilitate and accompany family to visit the site of the incident		
k) Establish whether it is appropriate to have a memorial service for the deceased		
l) Communicate funeral/memorial details to classmates and staff		
m) Organise letter of condolence to the family from the institution		
3. Attend of the deceased's belongings		
a) Check with the family to make sure that it is acceptable to make an inventory of the deceased's belongings. Some cultural practices require family members to do this		
b) If the family wish to visit the accommodation check to make sure that it is in a reasonably tidy		

condition		
c) Arrange to have the deceased students accommodation unlocked		
d) Make an inventory of belongings. Have more than one person present for verification. Disturb belongings as little as possible		
e) Money should be counted, kept in a safe place and returned to the next of kin		
f) Take note of bank account details and close the account. If there is more than \$10,000 in the account a court order is needed to move funds		
g) Take note of vehicles owned by the deceased		
4. Academic services		
a) Obtain a death certificate or coroner's report for the Graduation office to change the status of the deceased students file		
b) Verify if any refund is due and organise for transfer of funds		
c) Verify programme completion – posthumous award if applicable		
5. Media releases		
a) Media spokesperson briefed as events unfold and facts are confirmed		
b) Decide on appropriate media releases		
c) All media communications should be logged		
6. Information sharing		
a) Manager should report regularly to other staff to keep them informed		

**Long term checklist:
15 days plus**

Requirement	Date/time	Notes
1. Follow up		
a) Ensure students and staff still have the contact details of appropriate staff members		
b) Ensure help remains available for students who could experience grief during/after an inquest or memorial service		
c) Ensure staff receive support		
d) Ensure the institution website does not have inappropriate references to the student		
e) Ensure thanks and acknowledgements go to people who have helped and offered assistance		
2. Evaluate plans, procedures and practice		
a) Meet with all staff on the Student Critical Incident Response Team to evaluate within two to three weeks of the incident		
b) Identify and follow up outstanding tasks and address concerns		
c) Include recommendations to improve procedures (eg upskilling staff)		
d) Write a report on the review and file for future access		