

Policy area	ESOS Compliance Framework
Standards	ESOS Act 2000, ESOS Regulations 2019, National Code 2018,
Responsibility	CEO, CRICOS Manager

1. Purpose

This policy explains how Heaton Institute of Technology manages critical incidents involving international students. It ensures students receive appropriate support during serious events that affect their:

- Safety
- Health and wellbeing
- Ability to continue studying

The policy aims to:

- Protect student welfare.
- Meet ESOS Act and National Code requirements.
- Provide clear procedures for staff.
- Ensure responses are timely and coordinated.
- Maintain proper records and documentation.
- Protect privacy and sensitive information.
- Support continuous improvement.
- Separate welfare support from enrolment and compliance decisions.

2. Definitions

Critical Incident

A traumatic event or threat that seriously affects a student's:

- Safety
- Health
- Emotional wellbeing
- Ability to study

Incidents may occur:

- On or off campus.
- In Australia or overseas.

Immediate Response

Actions taken straight away to ensure safety and obtain emergency assistance.

Escalation

Referring the incident to the CRICOS Manager for coordination and oversight.

Consent

Permission from the student to share information with family or third parties.

Sensitive Information

Information about health, personal circumstances, welfare or safety that requires extra privacy protection.

External Support Services

Professional services such as:

- Doctors
- Counsellors
- Mental health services
- Emergency services

Community organisations

3. Policy statement

Heaton Institute of Technology adopts a student-centred approach.

Key Principles

1. Student welfare comes first

Safety and wellbeing are always the highest priority.

2. Responses must be coordinated

Staff should not manage incidents independently.

3. Responses must be timely and appropriate

Support should match the seriousness of the incident.

4. Decisions must be evidence-based

Clear records and documentation are required.

5. Welfare and compliance are separate

Support provided does not automatically lead to:

- Deferral
- Suspension
- Cancellation
- PRISMS reporting

4. What is a Critical Incident

Critical incidents include events that significantly affect a student's wellbeing or ability to study.

Examples include:

Medical or Family Emergencies

- Death of the student or close family member.
- Serious illness.
- Hospitalisation.

Mental Health Emergencies

- Suicide attempt.
- Self-harm.
- Acute mental health crisis.

Missing Student

- Student cannot be contacted.
- Welfare concerns exist.

Violence and Abuse

- Physical assault.
- Sexual violence.
- Domestic or family violence.

Accidents

- Serious accidents or safety incidents.

Substance Misuse

- Drug overdose requiring medical treatment.

External Events

- Natural disasters.
- Civil unrest.
- Overseas emergencies affecting family members.

If staff are unsure, they should treat the situation as a potential critical incident and escalate it.

5. Immediately Response and Escalation

When staff become aware of a critical incident:

Step 1 – Ensure Safety

Priority is to protect:

- The student.
- Other people involved.

Step 2 – Contact Emergency Services

Call emergency services immediately when there is:

- Risk to life.
- Serious injury.
- Health or safety concerns.

Step 3 – Escalate to the CRICOS Manager

The CRICOS Manager coordinates:

- Communication.
- Support arrangements.
- Documentation.
- Further actions.

Staff Must Not

- Handle incidents alone.
- Attempt informal resolutions.
- Delay reporting because information is incomplete.

When uncertain, staff should always escalate the matter.

6. Student Support and Welfare

Support is coordinated mainly by the:

Student Support Officer

Support may include:

- Information about available services.
- Referrals to doctors and counsellors.
- Access to community support.
- Welfare assistance.
- Ongoing follow-up.

Support Occurs in Stages

Immediate Support

Focuses on:

- Safety.
- Crisis management.
- Stabilisation.

Ongoing Support

Focuses on:

- Recovery.
- Continued wellbeing.
- Monitoring and follow-up.

Important Limitation

Heaton Institute of Technology:

✓ Supports and refers students.

✗ Does not provide:

- Medical treatment.
- Legal advice.
- Counselling services.

Specialist services are arranged through external providers.

7. Communication and Privacy

Communication during a critical incident must be:

- Calm.

- Respectful.
- Clear.
- Fact-based.

Communication Is Coordinated by the CRICOS Manager

Written templates may be used for:

- Welfare follow-up.
- Ongoing check-ins.
- Study impact discussions.
- Consent requests.
- Notifications when information must be shared.

Sharing Information

Normally, student consent is obtained before contacting:

- Family members.
- Emergency contacts.
- Third parties.

Information may be shared without consent when:

- There is an immediate safety risk.
- A legal or regulatory requirement exists.

Confidentiality

Information is only accessible to staff who need it to perform their duties.

Staff must not discuss incidents informally.

8. PRISMS and Enrolment Impacts

A critical incident does **not automatically** result in:

- Deferral.
- Suspension.
- Cancellation.
- PRISMS reporting.

After Welfare Needs Are Stabilised

The Institute assesses whether the student's ability to continue studying has been affected.

If necessary, enrolment actions are managed under:

PP5.14 – International Student Deferral or Suspension Policy

PRISMS Reporting

PRISMS reporting occurs only when an actual enrolment change has been made.

Support provided under this policy does not determine or imply any reporting outcome.

9. Documentation and Record Keeping

A written record must be maintained for every critical incident.

Records should include:

- Description of the incident.
- Dates and relevant details.
- Support provided.
- Referrals made.
- Follow-up actions.
- Important communications.

Sensitive Information Must Be Protected

Records are:

- Stored securely.
- Restricted to authorised personnel.
- Managed according to the Privacy Protection Policy.

Record Retention

Critical incident records must be kept for:

At least two years after the student ceases to be an accepted student.

Poor record management can create compliance risks.

10. Documentation and Record Keeping

After an incident is closed, the CRICOS Manager decides whether a formal review is required.

Review Areas

The review considers:

- Timeliness of response.

- Effectiveness of support.
- Quality of communication.
- Coordination between staff and services.
- Accuracy of records.

Purpose of the Review

The review aims to:

- Improve systems and processes.
- Identify gaps.
- Strengthen future responses.

It is **not intended to blame individuals**.

11. Critical Incident Management Process (Summary)

<i>Step</i>	<i>Action</i>
1	Identify incident and ensure safety
2	Escalate to CRICOS Manager
3	Assess support requirements
4	Provide and coordinate support
5	Manage communication and privacy
6	Monitor wellbeing and adjust support
7	Consider enrolment impacts and PRISMS requirements
8	Finalise records
9	Conduct post-incident review