

**University College Cork**

**Procedure for the Management of Critical  
Incidents While on Student Placement**

**Version 1.00**



The purpose of these procedures is to provide a framework for managing critical Incidents affecting students of University College Cork while on Student Placement. These procedures are a supplement to the University's Student Placement Policy which sets out the University's minimum required standards in the organisation and management of Student Placements.

# Student Placement Critical Incident Procedure

## Document Location

<http://www.ucc.ie>

## Revision History

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0.01	19/02/2016	Initial draft
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1.00	27/09/2016	Approval by UMTO

## Consultation History

Revision Number	Consultation Date	Names of Parties in Consultation	Summary of Changes
0.1	19/02/2016		

## Approval

This document requires the following approvals:

Name	Title	Date
Caroline Fennell	Senior Vice-President Academic and Registrar	13/09/2016
UMTO	University Management Team – Operations	13/09/2016

This procedure has been approved by the Senior Vice-President Academic and Registrar, University Management Team – Operations (UMTO). Any additions or amendments to this or related policies will be submitted by the Corporate Secretary to UMTO for approval or to whatever authority UMTO may delegate this role. These procedures will be reviewed annually by the xxx who will consult as necessary before submitting any amendments for approval.

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## 2 DEFINITIONS

The Procedure for the Management of Critical Incidents while on Student Placement governs the management of Critical Incidents affecting UCC Students while on Student Placement.

**For the purposes of this Procedure, the following capitalised terms (which are used throughout this Procedure) shall have the following meanings in the context of this Procedure:**

### **Critical Incident means:**

An event, or the threat of such (within or outside Ireland), which causes extreme stress, fear or injury. It is an event that causes individuals to experience a strong emotional reaction that interferes with their usual coping skills. The event has a level of trauma that is beyond the normal living experiences of those affected. The resulting stress reaction may include emotional, physical, behavioural and cognitive changes evident either at the time of the incident or later. The impact of a critical incident may affect any member of the University, not only those most directly involved.

### **Primary Contact**

The person nominated by the student as their Primary Contact, or where that person is unavailable, next-of-kin, family, or other person if appropriate.

### **Member of UCC means:**

As per the Principal Statute, section A4, members of the University are defined as follows:

- members of the Governing Body;
- members of the Academic Council;
- University's employees;
- University's students;
- University's graduates.

Any other person the Governing Body may appoint to be members. For the Purposes of this Policy it also includes any volunteer, service provider or graduate member engaged in UCC arranged activity.

### **University or UCC means:**

University College Cork – National University of Ireland, Cork

### **Placement Organisation means:**

The organisation with which the Student Placement occurs. During the Student Placement responsibility for the direct supervision of the Student is transferred to the Placement Organisation.

### **Student means:**

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A student registered with UCC.

**Nominated UCC Contact means:**

The Member of UCC assigned to the Student as their primary contact during Placement.

**Placement Organisation Supervisor/Mentor means:**

The Placement Organisation member assigned to the Student as their primary contact/supervisor during Placement.

**Academic Mentor means:**

The Member of UCC assigned to the Student as their contact for academic matters during Placement.

**Placement Co-Ordinator means:**

The Member of UCC assigned to the Student as their contact for administrative matters during Placement.

**Student Placement means:**

The placement of a **UCC registered student** with a third party for a period of time during their course of study which forms part of the accreditation award to the Student. This includes work based, project based and educational placements.

**Procedure means:**

This Procedure for the Management of Critical Incidents while on Student Placement.

## 3 PURPOSE

The purpose of this Procedure is to provide a clear and straightforward process for responding to a **Critical Incident** (please see Definitions) that occurs while a Student is on Placement. The Critical Incident may affect one or multiple Students. Incidents which are not of a critical nature will be managed by the Student's School/Department according to their internal procedures. This Procedure is a supplement to the University's Student Placement Policy which affirms UCC's commitment to its duty of care to Students while on Student Placement.

## 4 WHAT IS A CRITICAL INCIDENT?

A Critical Incident is any event or occurrence that has the potential to affect the welfare of the Student, the University or the Placement Organisation. It requires immediate intervention on the part of the University. Types of Critical Incidents that can occur during Student Placements may include but are not limited to:

- a) death, accident, serious injury or serious threat of these;
- b) missing student;
- c) health issues – physical or psychological;
- d) family illness/bereavement;
- e) incarceration or crime – perpetrator/victim/accused;
- f) natural disaster or disease epidemic;
- g) political unrest;

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- h) exposure to traumatic events;
- i) cultural issue;
- j) professional issues;
- k) serious issues with the Placement Organisation.

## 5 ROLES AND RESPONSIBILITIES

This Procedure will inform Members of UCC on their responsibilities in relation to the University's response to the occurrence of a Critical Incident while on Student Placement.

### 5.1 Head of Department

The Head of Department's responsibilities include:

- a) Providing General Services with the contact details for their Designated Department Contact with regard to Critical Incidents.

### 5.2 Designated Department Contact

The Designated Department Contact's responsibilities include:

- a) centrally logging the Incident and establishing the facts of the situation;
- b) contacting the Head of College and Head of Student Experience regarding the Incident.

### 5.3 Head of College

The Head of College's responsibilities include:

- a) performing a risk assessment of the Incident;
- b) agreeing who will act as the Incident Manager;
- c) deciding when the Incident is to be closed.

### 5.4 Head of Student Experience

The Head of Student Experience's responsibilities include:

- a) performing a risk assessment of the Incident;
- b) agreeing who will act as the Incident Manager;
- c) deciding when the Incident is to be closed.

### 5.5 Incident Manager

The Incident Manager's responsibilities include:

- a) implementing immediate and ongoing response strategies;
- b) ensuring a consistent message is communicated from all areas within UCC;
- c) performing a post-incident review.

## 6 PROCEDURE FOR RESPONDING TO A CRITICAL INCIDENT

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## 6.1 Initial Notification

If a Student is involved in or affected by a Critical Incident while on Student Placement they should contact their Designated UCC Contact during office hours or the 24 hour UCC number, provided at their briefing, if out of hours. If General Services are contacted they will formally log the notification and notify the designated department contact.

Notification to the University of a Student(s) potentially being involved in a Critical Incident may be raised by a:

- Student;
- friend of the Student;
- next of kin/family member;
- Placement Organisation.

Notification may also come through:

- academic staff;
- Department of Foreign Affairs – website or embassy;
- news report/media;
- police;
- social media;
- third party.

Prior to going on Placement all Students will be prepared in accordance with the Preparation/Induction of a Student Prior to Placement procedure.

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Please see Appendix 1 for details of Student preparation relating to Critical Incidents.

The following 5 steps should be followed in response to notification of a Critical Incident. During all steps any actions and communications must be documented using the communications log (Appendix 4). A checklist of actions to be taken throughout the process is available in Appendix 5.

**Step 1: Verification and initial assessment**

**Step 2: Risk Assessment**

**Step 3: Communication with Third Parties**

**Step 4: Ongoing Management**

**Step 5: Post-Incident Review**

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## 6.2 Step 1: Verification and Initial Assessment

On notification of a Critical Incident the designated department contact will centrally log the Incident on the critical incident report (Appendix 3) and take the following actions:

1. Establish the facts of the situation:
  - a) whereabouts of the student(s);
  - b) state of Student(s)'s health/wellbeing;
  - c) details of the Incident;
  - d) nearest local contact;
  - e) immediate assistance required;
  - f) emergency services notified;
  - g) any other Student(s) involved or in the area.
2. Establish, if possible, if the Student's Primary Contact and the Placement Organisation have been informed of the situation.
3. If notification was through a third party verify the information received either through a second person, the Placement Organisation or, if abroad, the Department of Foreign Affairs.
4. Contact the Head of College and the Head of Student Experience to advise them of the details of the Incident.
5. If a Critical Incident involves a missing Student(s) the Procedure on Missing Students must be invoked and the Head of Student Experience will assume responsibility for the handling of the Incident.  
<https://www.ucc.ie/en/media/support/studentexperience/UCCProcedureonMissingStudents-Jan2016.pdf>
6. If a Critical Incident involves the death of a Student(s) the Procedure on the Death of a Student must be invoked and the Head of Student Experience will assume responsibility for the handling of the Incident.

## 6.3 Step 2: Risk Assessment

1. In keeping with the University's Risk Management policy, the Head of College and/or the Head of Student Experience must perform a risk assessment of the situation to determine the appropriate level of response. Please see Appendix 2 for the factors to consider when assessing the risk of the situation.
2. Based on the risk assessment, the Incident will be categorised as one of the following incident types.

Response Level	Incident Types	Managed by
1.	Local Incident	School
2.a	Minor Emergency Type (A)	College
2.b	Minor Emergency Type (B)	Head of Student Experience
3.	Major Emergency	Corporate Secretary

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3. If the level of risk is categorised as 2.b or 3 The Head of College will contact the Corporate Secretary who is the chair of the Emergency Management Team (EMT). The Corporate Secretary will review the risk assessment and decide if the Incident is to be handled as level 2.b or 3.
4. If the Incident is level 3, the EMT will be contacted and the Incident will be managed in keeping with the Emergency Response and Business Continuity Plan (ERP). The Chair of the Emergency Management Team (EMT) will assume responsibility for the handling of the Incident.  
<link>
5. If the level of risk is categorised as 2.b, the Incident will be managed by the Student Experience Office.
6. The Head of College and/or the Head of Student Experience will decide who will be responsible, with the appropriate liaison, for the implementation of immediate and ongoing response strategies (hereafter known as the Incident Manager). In some cases, it may be appropriate for the Head of College or the Head of Student Experience to act as the Incident Manager.
7. The Incident Manager, the Head of College and/or the Head of Student Experience will decide if an incident steering group is required. If one is required, the Incident Manager will convene the steering group.
8. The Incident Manager will inform Marketing and Communications, if appropriate, and the Students Union of the incident.

## 6.4 Step 3: Communication with Third Parties

The Incident Manager, with the appropriate liaison, will take the following actions:

1. Obtain detailed student information of all Students involved from the relevant departments or the Student Placement central repository once in place. The information should include:
  - a. Student id(s);
  - b. local address(es);
  - c. next of kin;
  - d. known medical conditions.
2. Inform and consult with University offices (OCLA, Student Experience) regarding the Incident as necessary.
3. Contact the student(s)'s primary contact, family or next of kin to keep them informed. Advise them that UCC can arrange or provide support for them. If necessary, interpreter services should be arranged for those families of a non-English speaking background.
4. If abroad, advise the student(s) to contact the Insurance Company for help, advice and assistance. OCLA will contact the Insurance Company on the University's behalf.

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5. If necessary, contact the Placement Organisation Supervisor/Mentor to ensure they are aware of the Incident and to discuss and agree the local response.
6. If other Student(s) are affected or in the area, contact them to inform them of the Incident and to assess their needs.
7. Update the critical incident report and include/update information detailing:
  - a. the Student(s) involved in the Incident;
  - b. the type of Incident;
  - c. a clear and concise description of the Incident;
  - d. action taken to date.
8. Issue the critical incident report to the following key stakeholders as appropriate:
  - a. Registrar
  - b. Corporate Secretary

## 6.5 Step 4: Ongoing Management

For the duration of the Critical Incident, the Incident Manager will:

1. Maintain ongoing contact with the Student(s) regarding support required.
2. Liaise with the Placement Organisation Supervisor/Mentor or nominee regarding any action/support required locally.
3. If necessary contact the local Irish Embassy, if the Student(s) are abroad, to assist in liaising with local authorities in the host country and to discuss the allocation of roles and responsibilities.
4. Arrange, if necessary, appropriate transportation and/or accommodation for the Student's family to travel to the Student(s)'s location.
5. Arrange, if necessary, for a member of staff from UCC to travel to the student(s)'s location to assist and support the Student(s).
6. Ensure all official communication by Members of UCC is consistent for the duration of the Incident.
7. Hold ongoing meetings with the appropriate Members of UCC for the duration of the Incident.
8. Maintain ongoing contact with any other Student(s) in the area.
9. Identify those Students and staff who are closely involved with the Student(s), ensuring that they are aware of support within and outside the University.

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10. Brief the appropriate Members of UCC on information to provide to Students.
11. Monitor the need for counselling and maintain contact with those who may need ongoing support.
12. Due consideration must be given to any academic implications arising from the affects of the Incident.
13. Record all actions and communications in the communication log.

## **6.6 Step 5: Post-Incident Review**

The Head of Student Experience and the Head of College will formally close the Incident. The Incident Manger will arrange for a review meeting to be held to discuss the Incident which involved the invoking of this procedure. This review meeting will be held within 2 weeks of the conclusion of the Incident. The purpose of this meeting is to:

1. ensure that all Staff and Students have been adequately supported;
2. review the implementation of this Procedure;
3. consider any amendments to the Procedure that may be required.

Such meetings would normally be attended by any Members who were involved.

The Incident Manager will keep records throughout the whole management of the Incident. This will include detailed documentation about each phase of the response process, copies of emails and letters, records of significant interactions that occur using the communication log. This log will form part of the post-incident review.

Consideration may need to be given to the academic implications for the Student(s) as a result of the Critical Incident. The Academic Mentor will be responsible for assessing whether there are any academic implications.

Thank you letters may be prepared and sent to all those who contributed to responding to the Incident.

## **6.7 Communications**

Any enquiries from the media or from any other external persons regarding a student experiencing a Critical Incident will be handled by the Office of Marketing and Communications in liaison with the Incident Manager. The switchboard will be informed to ensure all enquiries are re-directed to the Office of Marketing and Communications.

## **7 RELATED POLICIES AND PROCEDURES**

These procedures underpin the following University policies and procedures:

- a) Student Placement Policy

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UCC staff should ensure compliance with the above policies and procedures in addition to these Critical Incident Management Procedures.

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## 8 APPENDIX 1: STUDENT PREPARATION

Before any student goes on a Placement they must be provided with the UCC emergency contact details and guidelines on when to use them.

The Student briefing pack must include in relation to Critical Incidents:

- Designated Department/School Contact details;
- insurer 24 hour hotline details (abroad only for trips less than 90 days);
- certificate of UCC travel insurance which includes a summary of cover provided (abroad only for trips less than 90 days). If the trip abroad is for longer than 90 days, the Student will be required to purchase their own insurance and provide evidence to their Placement Co-Ordinator;
- a 24 hour University emergency contact number and advice on when to use it.

The Student briefing pack should also include advice on how to be safe when on Placement. For example, advice on:

- securing local emergency contact details;
- what to do in the case of a medical emergency;
- what to do if the victim of a crime.

Prior to the Placement, the Student should provide their Primary Contact details to their Placement Co-Ordinator in case of an emergency and sign that they give permission for this person to be contacted in the case of an emergency. These contact details need to be online 24 hours and available to the appropriate staff member(s).

A central repository of all Students on Placement, their location, their contact details and their Primary Contact must be available online 24 hours to the appropriate Members of UCC. These details will be entered and maintained at section level.

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## 9 APPENDIX 2: FACTORS TO CONSIDER WHEN ASSESSING THE CATEGORY OF INCIDENT

The following matrix is designed to assist in the evaluation of the level of severity involved. It is intended to act as a guide.

Factors	1 (L)	2 (M)	3 (H)
Severity of Incident			
Potential Impact			
Location Impact			
Multiple Students Involved			

Each factor above is given a rating where 1 is low and 3 is high. The following should also be taken into consideration when assessing the category:

- local support available;
- emergency support services engaged;
- impact on University.

The total score will then be used to determine the category of Incident:

Total Score	Risk Level	Incident Type	Response Level	Action
<5	Low	Local Incident	1	Managed locally
6 to 7	Medium	Minor Emergency A	2.a	Managed locally
8 to 9	High	Minor Emergency B	2.b	Managed ISCM
10 to 12	Extreme	Major Emergency	3	Managed ISCM

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## 10 APPENDIX 3: CRITICAL INCIDENT REPORT (Online)

CRITICAL INCIDENT REPORT			
<b>Date of Incident:</b>		<b>Time of Incident:</b>	
<b>Location of Incident:</b>		<b>Date &amp; Time Incident Reported:</b>	
<b>Incident Manager:</b>			

INITIAL ASSESSMENT	
<b>Whereabouts of Student(s):</b>	
<b>State of Student(s) health/wellbeing:</b>	
<b>Nearest local contact:</b>	
<b>Immediate assistance required:</b>	
<b>Emergency services notified:</b>	
<b>Primary contact notified:</b>	
<b>Placement organisation notified:</b>	

STUDENT DETAILS				
Surname	Forename(s)	Sex	Date of Birth	Course

INCIDENT DETAILS	
<b>Who is involved:</b>	
<b>What happened:</b>	
<b>How it happened:</b>	
<b>Action taken:</b>	
<b>Current situation:</b>	
<b>Next steps:</b>	
<b>Other information:</b>	



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## 12 APPENDIX 5: CRITICAL INCIDENT CHECKLIST

Tasks	Done	N/A	Completed Date	Comments
<b>Verification</b>				
Log incident				
Establish facts				
Verify information				
Contact Head of College				
Contact Head of Student Experience				
<b>Risk Assessment</b>				
Perform risk assessment				
Categorise Incident				
Agree Incident Manager				
Notify the Director of Marketing and Communications				
Notify the Students Union				
<b>Notification</b>				
Obtain detailed student information				
Contact the Primary Contact				
Contact the Insurance Company				
Contact the Placement Organisation				
Consult with University offices				
Inform programme staff				
Update the critical incident report				
Issue critical incident report				
<b>Ongoing Management</b>				
Contact the Student				
Liaise with Placement Organisation				
Contact next of kin				
Contact Irish Embassy				
Arrange transport/accommodation for family				
Inform those closely involved with Student of support available				
Brief staff on information to provide to Students				
Monitor the need for counselling				
<b>Post-Incident Review</b>				
Update records				
Offer Incident debriefing				
Arrange review meeting				
Finalise documentation				
Issue thank you letters				

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