

Policy 043: Critical Incident

1. Purpose and Scope

- 1.1 This policy sets out ACM's approach for handling an emergency situation that affects the ACM community that may occur in or out of teaching hours, weekends and during holidays.
- 1.2 A critical incident may involve both internal and external factors that may include hazards and events that pose direct or imminent threat to the safety, security and wellbeing of ACM students and staff.
- 1.3 This policy outlines the management plan for critical incidents as they may occur while students are undertaking their study during nominal teaching hours, and ensures that ACM is equipped to provide meaningful support to all students and staff affected by an incident.
- 1.4 The policy provides guidance to actions which should be considered by Executive Management, the Senior Management Team, and the Critical Incident Management Team (CIMT) in case of an emergency within ACM or the local community, or on an educational visit.
- 1.5 This policy gives clear guidance regarding the circumstances under which the policy would be enacted. The Designated Safeguarding Lead, on assessment of all factors, and individuals directly or indirectly involved, would exercise judgment over the policy's activation and implementations.

2. Policy Statement

Critical Incidents

- 2.1 ACM is committed to emergency planning to ensure the safety of its members and the smooth running of its business.
- 2.2 It is important to the success of emergency planning at the institution that its community is aware both of the central responsibilities and commitments in the case of a critical incident on campus, but also of local responsibilities and information outlets.
- 2.3 A critical incident is a sudden event or situation which may put staff and students under stress both physically and emotionally. In assessing a critical incident, consideration must be given to the existing factors and the impact on staff and students. It must also be considered with regard to the scope, and the wider public impact.
- 2.4 In general terms, a critical incident is defined as a traumatic event which causes or is likely to cause extreme physical and/or emotional distress to staff and/or students and may be regarded as outside the normal range of experience of the people affected. This may include, but is not limited to events involving ACM students and staff, where there has been:
 - Extremist acts of aggression
 - Serious injury or death
 - Physical or sexual assault
 - Violence or threats of violence
 - Hold up, attempted robbery
 - Sudden or unexpected death or suicide of a member of the ACM community
 - Natural disasters
 - Fire, explosion, bomb threats
 - High publicity violent crimes
 - Any incident that is charged with extreme emotion.

- Any fatality, near fatality or incident likely to affect seriously a number of staff and/or students
- Serious traffic accidents
- Major theft or vandalism
- A student reported as a missing person.

2.5 Every critical incident is unique and will need to be dealt with differently, according to the needs of the people affected.

Critical Incident Management Team (CIMT)

2.7 The CIMT is responsible for:

- The initial and ongoing assessment of the scale, duration and impact of the critical incident;
- Establishing ACM's operational and business critical priorities in responding to the incident;
- The allocation of staff and resources;
- The management of, and support, of any ACM representatives who are responsible for the planning, management, and response taken by ACM;
- Liaison with external agencies as needed.
- Note: any suspected extremist based acts of terrorism, including threats physical spaces and the community, or cyber based threats must be reported to the ACM Police immediately. The Prevent Lead will contact the Police to discuss arrangements for the handling of these matters which may or may not involve the CIMT.

2.8 In the longer term, the CIMT will support the Senior Management Team to ensure adequate implementation of:

- Institutional reputation management;
- Long-term business recovery;
- Financial control;
- Corporate priorities;
- Community engagement;
- Decisions relating to long-term staffing needs, which may result from an emergency or sustained disruption to area's of ACM's business needs.

2.9 The CIMT with normally comprise of 3-5 members, including:

- A member of Executive Management
- Two Members of Senior Management Team

And may include:

- ACM Designated Safeguarding Lead (DSL)
- ACM PREVENT Duty Lead
- A member of student support services
- A member of the education team
- A member of the marketing team
- Student Representatives

2.10 Depending on the nature of the incident, the CIMT may be expanded to include Heads of department (or their nominees) with specific responsibilities within the impacted areas.

Activation of the Policy

2.10 Information about an incident may come from a staff member, student, parent, the emergency services or the local authority.

2.11 The staff member who receives the notification should be mindful to request and make a record of as much information provided as possible:

- The name of the person who has reported the incident
- The specific incident details
- Who, if anyone, has also been informed (for example, any emergency services)
- The exact location of the incident
- Details of any casualties
- What, if any, action has been taken so far
- A name of a contact at the scene, and their contact details
- What further assistance, if any, is needed

Staff and Student Welfare

2.12 ACM takes the responsibility towards staff and students seriously, with student and staff welfare considered a priority.

2.13 Where there is an occurrence of a critical incident, welfare and well being of all affected individuals should be considered, with individuals who have been particularly adversely affected identified for additional support, should they wish to engage with it.

2.14. The diversity of staff and students should be taken into account when considering additional support, including considering contact with leaders within local faith communities.

2.15 Support which is accessed and made available after an incident may be referred to as Post-Incident Care. This is aimed at helping individuals to understand their feelings following an emergency and to identify sources of future support. The overall aim of the support is to help people in a way that will reduce the possibility of developing long-term effects and difficulties as a result of a critical incident.

Communication

2.16 Effective communication is integral to the successful management of any critical incident. It should include effective information exchange within the response team, engagement with staff, students and others immediately affected by the incident, and liaison with the wider public via the media where necessary. Crisis messaging must be managed with the utmost care and sensitivity after the initial incident.

2.17 Communication surrounding any incident should focus on mitigating the effects of the incident on those who are directly involved. Relevant information will be shared with those who are impacted by the incident. It is vital to ensure that all communication is conducted in a manner that protects the interests and privacy of those involved.

2.18 Post-incident communication will focus on encouraging an orderly return to normal operations in a manner that protects the interests and privacy of those who were involved. Its scope includes, but is not restricted to, providing reminders to the community on how individuals can access support, including Medical Services and Counselling Services, and how members of the community can become involved in any post incident analysis.

2.19 By necessity, communication will be influenced by the nature of the critical incident. A communications plan will be developed by the CIMT to ensure that a clear communication protocol that outlines the responsibilities for the development and implementation of both internal and external communications.

2.20 Following an incident, the Senior Management Team should ensure that all ACM staff are fully briefed on facts and are aware of what information can be disclosed to the wider community, including media representatives.

2.21 Staff should be made aware of confirmed facts relating to incidents, and what information is authorised to be released. They should also be made aware of the potential problems caused by the spread of misinformation through word of mouth, media and social media platforms.

2.22 Designated staff, approved by Executive Management in consultation with the CIMT will be given responsibility to speak to external stakeholders, organisations, and media in relation to the incident. In some cases this may also be informed by the Police and other Government agencies. This does not preclude ACM student's or employee's right to freedom of speech, but does ensure that official communication is consistent and equitable.

3. Responsible Parties

3.1 The policy lead is responsible for the cyclical monitoring and review of the policy in liaison with the Quality Assurance and Enhancement Manager. The Critical Incident Policy lead is:

- ACM Designated Safeguarding Lead

3.2 The Senior Management Team are responsible for ensuring staff awareness and effective implementation of the Critical Incident Policy.

3.3 Implementation and compliance with the Policy, and corresponding Procedure will be overseen by the following staff:

- Executive Management
- Senior Management
- Education Management
- Designated Safeguarding Lead
- PREVENT Duty Lead
- Human Resources Department

4. Reference Points

4.1. Internal:

- Emergency Closure Policy
- Safeguarding Policy
- Health and Safety Policy
- Content Approval Policy
- ACM Prevent Policy

4.2. External:

- Civil Contingencies Act 2004
- Counter-Terrorism and Security Act 2015
- Revised Prevent Duty Guidance: for England and Wales
- Health and Safety at Work Act 1974
- Human Rights Act 1998
- Corporate Manslaughter and Corporate Homicide Act 2007

5. Date of Approval and Next Review

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