



VICTORIA UNIVERSITY OF
WELLINGTON
TE HERENGA WAKA

CRITICAL INCIDENTS

2023 OVERVIEW

Te Herenga Waka—
Victoria University of Wellington

May 2024



CRITICAL INCIDENTS

2023 OVERVIEW

DEFINITION

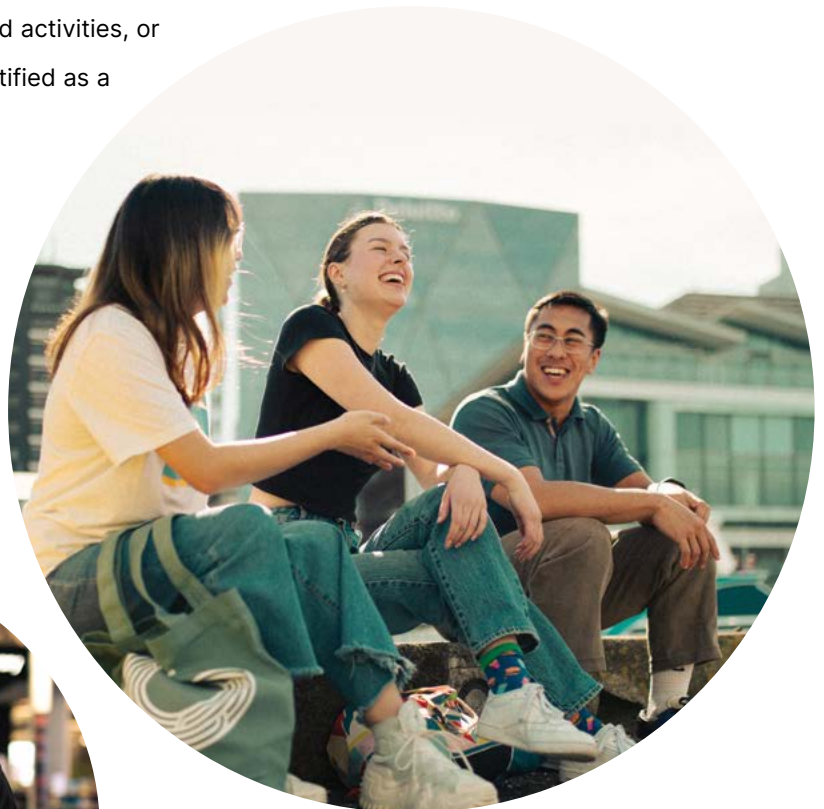
A critical incident is defined as an unanticipated, major, traumatic event with a widespread and significant effect on taurira. It is likely to have a stressful impact on the University community and will require immediate action since it may overwhelm the coping strategies of either an individual or group.

The definition includes an incident that occurs on university property or off campus during the undertaking of university-related activities; for example, off-campus field trips and teaching, or cultural and sporting activities. Deaths are reported below when they occur:

- on campus
- while undertaking university-related activities, or
- where a taurira was previously identified as a 'learner at risk'.

RESPONDING TO TAUIRA CRITICAL INCIDENTS

When a critical incident occurs, coordination and leadership are needed across a range of responding groups to respond to the incident, ensure safety and wellbeing, protect assets and operations, and minimise the impact on the community. Most incidents at the University are handled within business-as-usual processes. In most taurira-related incidents, the Taurira—Student Interest and Conflict Resolution (SICR) team lead a coordinated response in collaboration with other relevant support services.



TAUIRA CRITICAL INCIDENTS 2023

Deaths*

1†

The data above was collected from Tauria—SICR's case management database with input from Te Kopanga—University Accommodation Wellington.

Deaths are the most significant critical incidents to affect the tauria community. These tragic incidents are often multifaceted, and the response requires a delicate balance of respecting the privacy of the deceased while being transparent and open with impacted tauria. In situations where a tauria may have died by suspected suicide, the University works closely with Health New Zealand—Te Whatu Ora to ensure any risks of contagion are appropriately managed.

Comprehensive training initiatives at Te Herenga Waka are designed to equip staff with the skills and knowledge needed to effectively respond to emergencies. A first-responder network is in place at the University, which includes Campus Security teams.

The Incident Management Team receives specialised training in the coordinated incident management system (CIMS). Regular emergency exercises are conducted to ensure proficiency in responding to a range of emergency events. This proactive approach ensures that teams are well prepared to handle any situation that may arise. The training is ongoing and part of the University's emergency management refresh.

Te Kopanga—University Accommodation Wellington has also recently developed online modules for their staff that focus on emergency and critical incident procedures to ensure their training is bespoke to the unique tauria accommodation context.

AREAS OF PRIORITY FOR 2024

A key priority for 2024 will be developing a university-wide critical incident procedure for all tauria-related critical incidents. This procedure will support greater clarity on roles and responsibilities, especially clarifying VUWSA's role in the University's response processes.

In response to Code reporting obligations, more work is needed to socialise the definition that is outlined in this report to enable greater consistency with how critical incidents are defined and then recorded. Accurate data collection will assist with identifying trends and areas for further training or process refinement.

Tragic critical incidents requiring postvention processes have a significant impact on the whole community and are also often complex and delicate processes for staff to coordinate. A priority for 2024 is to collaborate with community partners to increase organisational capacity and business continuity for this work, which will support continuous improvement and staff wellbeing.

*This relates to students who were enrolled in studies in 2023 and the University was formally notified of their death.

†Demographic data is not provided to ensure it is not identifiable.

