

# Student Wellbeing and Safety Policy

## Purpose

This policy outlines the principles that guide UNSW in promoting and supporting the wellbeing and safety of students, including the processes for reporting, responding to, and managing concerns and critical incidents.

## Scope

This policy is intended to support the wellbeing and safety of all students when engaged in any UNSW activity as defined by the [UNSW Code of Conduct and Values](#). It applies to all employees, those engaged to provide services for the University, and all students.

Staff and students are required to follow this policy when a student:

- has been involved in a critical incident and needs urgent health and wellbeing support;
- appears likely to harm themselves or others;
- has expressed active suicide ideation or is self-harming;
- repeatedly behaves in a way suggestive of serious mental health issues or health and welfare issues and may need formal leave from their studies;
- is known to be experiencing serious adverse personal circumstances; or
- due to one or more of the matters above, could benefit from a case managed response outlined in section four of the procedure below.

A student critical incident is an acute or serious event that has caused immediate physical or psychological harm or an imminent threat of harm and requires urgent action.

For all critical incidents posing immediate risk to life call 000 and contact [University's Security Services](#) on 9385 6666.

## Our Commitment

1. The University's [Safer Communities](#) supports the wellbeing and safety of all students through promoting and fostering a healthy and safe environment on campus, online and off campus, when students are participating in an activity endorsed or arranged by the University.
2. A student experiencing mental health difficulties or other adverse impacts upon their wellbeing and safety will be offered the most appropriate support or referral available.
3. The processes in place to support the wellbeing and safety of our students are underpinned by compassion and a commitment to act in a timely, professional and an inclusive manner.
4. The University treats students as unique individuals and where relevant, identifies alternatives to the models of care and support offered or provided.

5. Staff and students have a clearly defined and appropriate avenue to raise wellbeing and safety concerns about a student.
6. Students will be afforded a fair opportunity to participate in processes outlined in this policy.
7. Personal information is managed in accordance with the University's [Information Governance Policy \(section 3\)](#).

## Principles and objectives

### 1. Students learn best when their wellbeing and safety is optimised

In support of this principle, the University:

- Promotes student's safety, including cultural, psychological and physical health and wellbeing, encouraging and supporting students to flourish academically and enjoy a positive student experience.
- Communicates its commitment to student wellbeing and safety via health and safety information on the University's [student health, safety and wellbeing website](#) and other communication channels.
- Encourages students to register with the [Equitable Learning Services](#) where appropriate to confidentially discuss disabilities or conditions that impact their study, including neurodivergence, a physical or mental health condition, or carer responsibilities so that reasonable adjustments may be considered and implemented.

### 2. Supportive services enable students to manage their wellbeing and safety

In support of this principle, the University:

- Implements reasonable proactive and effective mitigation and risk management strategies to make every effort, where reasonably practicable, to eliminate or control risks for students from hazards, including cultural, psychological and physical wellbeing and safety hazards associated with education and learning at UNSW.
- Provides services that enhance [staying safe on campus](#) and when undertaking a UNSW approved study or research program off-campus including [when overseas](#).
- Provides easily accessible information about [mental health assistance and support](#) including [24/7 mental health help and support](#).
- Provides a range of support services including [Nura Gili Centre for Indigenous Programs](#) and [health, wellbeing, and safety](#) support.
- Provides a process for applying for [Special Consideration](#) when illness or circumstances might impact on students' assessment performance.
- Implements reasonable adjustments as approved by [Equitable Learning Services](#) to support an equitable studying and learning environment for all students.
- Provides support for students who have experienced gender-based violence as set out in the [Preventing and Responding to Gender-based Violence at UNSW Policy](#).

### 3. University policies and procedures optimise student wellbeing and safety

In support of this principle the University:

- Provides specialised staff and referrals, including referrals to specialist off site services.
- Treats students fairly, impartially, equitably and with compassion.
- Adheres to the principles of procedural fairness when making decisions that affect a student's interests and ensures that its partner organisations understand and are committed to these same principles.

#### **4. Personal information is collected and treated confidentially for the purposes of supporting student wellbeing and safety**

In support of this principle the University:

- Respects an individual's right to privacy and confidentiality when receiving University support services.
- Collects, generates, and uses personal information for the purpose of discharging its responsibility to students and the wider UNSW community.
- Stores all personal information in accordance with privacy requirements of the [Information Governance Policy](#) (section 3) and will not disclose it to an external third party without the student's consent, unless required to do so by law or where the safety of the student or others are at risk.

# Procedures

Whilst students are responsible for their own wellbeing and safety, UNSW proactively offers a wide range of support services to students. Health, safety, and wellbeing related issues experienced by a student can be broad ranging, from acute mental or physical health concerns to stress and anxiety. External changes to a country or region (geo-political or environmental) may also impact upon the wellbeing of our students.

UNSW Sydney students can access these support services via the University's student [health, safety and wellbeing](#) websites.

UNSW Canberra students can access these support services via the [Student Support Services](#) and [Student Counselling Service](#) websites.

## 1: Responding to a student critical incident that requires urgent action

In the event of a critical incident and/or need for immediate assistance on a **Sydney campus** call [UNSW Security Services](#) on **(02) 9385 6666**. It is important that UNSW Security are notified to ensure emergencies services are accurately directed to the correct campus location.

In the event of a critical incident and/or need for immediate assistance on a **Canberra campus** select from the [Emergency Information](#): Australian Federal Police (AFP) - 131 237; Emergency Services: Police, Ambulance, Fire Brigade – 000; Wilsons Security - 0466 856 355; ADFA Duty Officer (main contact for afterhours assistance) - 0418 413 035.

In the event of a critical incident and/or need for immediate assistance **off any campus** call **000** and [UNSW Security Services](#) on **9385 6666**.

In the event of a critical incident and/or need for immediate assistance for a student **overseas** contact [International SOS](#) via [sydney@internationalsos.com](mailto:sydney@internationalsos.com) or through the Sydney Assistance Centre (24-hour) on +61 2 9372 2468.

## 2: Supporting students' mental health

When a student has expressed suicide ideation or is engaging in self-harm, the mental health service should be contacted in the first instance (unless there is an emergency when the above procedure for a critical incident should be followed).

Information for UNSW Sydney students requiring mental health support can be found on [mental health assistance and support](#) website, including [24/7 mental health help and support](#).

Information for UNSW Canberra students can be found on the [Student Counselling Service](#) website.

### 3: Support for students who have experienced gender-based violence

Students can:

- use our Gendered violence portal to access support, or
- email [reportgenderedviolence@unsw.edu.au](mailto:reportgenderedviolence@unsw.edu.au) or
- phone (02) 9385 5418 Monday to Friday from 9am to 5pm.

Students can also access confidential after-hours mental health support by:

- phone 02 9385 5418 or
- text 0485 826 595

5 pm -9 am, Mon-Fri and 24/7 on weekends and public holidays.

Support for students is provided by the [Gendered Violence Response Team](#). This team comprises specialist mental health clinicians within our Psychology and Wellness team. They provide holistic, trauma-informed and wraparound psychological support that can include a range of supports depending on the student needs. Further information is available in the [Preventing and Responding to Gender-based Violence at UNSW Policy](#).

### 4: Supporting other serious wellbeing and safety needs

UNSW Sydney students can seek help through the University's confidential counselling service and should contact or be directed to [Psychology and Wellness](#).

UNSW Sydney students can seek help in relation to other wellbeing and safety issues and should contact or be directed to the [Student Support Advisors](#) or their local Faculty support staff.

UNSW Canberra students can seek help through the University's confidential counselling service and should contact or be directed to the Canberra [Student Counselling Service](#) team.

### 5: Supporting students with complex welfare and safety needs

#### 5.1 Behavioural issues

Where a student is behaving in a manner inconsistent with the [UNSW Code of Conduct and Values](#) or the [Preventing and Responding to Gender-based Violence at UNSW Policy](#), action may be taken according to the [Complaints Management and Investigations Policy & Procedure](#).

#### 5.2 Serious behavioural issues

Where a student's wellbeing or safety appears seriously compromised in complex circumstances such as noted in the Policy Scope, a case manager should be assigned. The Complex Case Manager within Student Life, Division of Education & Student Experience, is the most appropriate person to case manage such situations. If the student is currently engaged with a support service, the day-to-day case management may be conducted less formally.

A referral to a Student & Staff Support Response Group (SSSRG) should be considered when:

- The seriousness or complexity of the issues requires expertise and guidance from a range of individuals with relevant expertise;
- The critical incident has been addressed but ongoing concerns require attention;
- The affected student is declining to engage with support services; or

- Repetitive actions or seriously concerning behaviour by the student indicate no apparent improvement or risk reduction is occurring.

The purpose of the SSSRG is to assess available information, and if necessary, seek further information and make recommendations to manage the current or emerging risks. If at any time it becomes clear that a Critical Incident is or may occur, the process outlined in Section 1 above should be followed.

### **5.3 Convening a Student & Staff Support Response Group (SSSRG)**

#### **5.3.1 SSSRG Membership**

Core membership of a SSSRG will comprise:

- Chair: Registrar & Director of Student Services (Registrar) or their delegate
- Director, Wellbeing or their delegate
- Director, Safety or their delegate
- Director, Conduct and Integrity or their delegate
- Senior Legal Counsel, UNSW Legal or their delegate
- Secretariat.

Co-opted membership of a SSSRG will be determined on a case-by-case basis and might include:

- Student's Case Manager
- Faculty/School representative
- Director, Graduate Research School
- Director, Nura Gili
- Head, Psychology & Wellness
- Head, UNSW Health Service
- Head, Student Life
- Head, Student Hub Management
- Head, Student Success
- Head, UNSW Colleges & Residential Life or residential college welfare officer
- Chair, Re-enrolment Appeals Committee
- Member of the Gendered Violence Research Network
- Chair (or delegate of the Chair) of the Modern Slavery Working Group
- Any other member/s of staff as required.

#### **5.3.2 Recommending a SSSRG**

A recommendation to convene a SSSRG is made to the Registrar by emailing [registrar@unsw.edu.au](mailto:registrar@unsw.edu.au).

#### **5.3.3 Establishing a SSSRG**

If the recommendation to convene a SSSRG is accepted, the Registrar (or delegate) will, in a timely manner:

- Where appropriate, ensure the student has been informed of the referral and the process involved and is invited to both attend and make a submission to the SSSRG;
- Ensure a Case Manager has been assigned to the student to assist with collating information and liaison with the student;

- Ensure the information provided to the SSSRG accurately identifies the concerns and potential issues; and
- Identify and invite the relevant co-opted staff, having particular regard to the student's particular cohort (e.g. Aboriginal and Torres Strait Islander students, international students, students with a disability, higher degree by research candidates).

#### 5.3.4 SSSRG Considerations

The SSSRG will meet at the earliest possible opportunity. The SSSRG will consider all information available, including any submissions made by or on behalf of the student.

#### 5.3.5 Outcome of a SSSRG

The Case Manager and SSSRG Chair will prepare written recommendations to be taken and/or communicated to mitigate the risk posed by the student's behaviour. Outcomes from a SSSRG, might include but are not limited to:

- The student agreeing to meet with the Case Manager with defined regularity.
- The student agreeing to engage with support services with defined regularity.
- The student be placed on program leave for a period of time (usually no less than one teaching session) with any conditions of return to study clearly specified.
- The SSSRG Chair will provide a written record of their decision.

The Case Manager will liaise with the student about the outcome of the SSSRG, including any decision made by the SSSRG Chair. The Case Manager may also, with the express prior consent of the affected student, inform the person who initially raised the concern.

In the event that a student is required to take program leave, the Case Manager will be responsible for liaising with the student and relevant academic staff and support services to ensure that the student has a managed, scaffolded transition back to their studies that is appropriate to the student's circumstances at their time of return to study.

#### 5.3.6 Review process

A student who wishes to review the outcome of a decision made by the SSSRG Chair, may do so only on the grounds of a lack of procedural fairness.

An application for a review should be made in writing within twenty days of the written determination and submitted to the Deputy Vice-Chancellor, Education and Student Experience, who is responsible for determining the outcome of the review.

A review will usually be considered within 15 working days.

Students have the right to lodge a complaint to the NSW Ombudsman. Details can be found at <https://www.ombo.nsw.gov.au/>.

#### 5.4 Notetaking and record keeping

Notes and documentation must be kept at all stages of this process, including records of meetings, discussions, recommendations, decisions, and actions proposed or taken, and stored on an appropriate confidential university file. All reports and remedial actions related to student critical incidents will be maintained on the student record for two years after the student ceases to be enrolled. The file must be created and stored in conformity with



university privacy, data security, and other relevant policies.

### 5.5 Confidentiality

Subject to this paragraph, all parties involved in a SSSRG are to maintain confidentiality. Information and records about a student matter are not to be divulged to anybody without direct involvement in the case with the following exceptions:

- Where breach of confidentiality is justified by serious and imminent threat of harm to a person or persons; and
- Where there is a legal obligation that overrides this confidentiality provision.

## 6: Acknowledging diversity

All activities undertaken as part of this procedure should respect the uniqueness of each student and the diversity of the University community, including its cultural and linguistic diversity. This includes providing information to students in other languages where appropriate, offering interpreting services if a student requires this for any meetings, and ensuring that any Equitable Learning Plan and/or advice about the impact of a disability or condition where appropriate is taken into account in any decisions made as part of the support offered or provided to students. It is acknowledged that trauma can effect a person's behaviour, memory, health and wellbeing and people engaged to form a Student & Staff Support Response Group will have completed trauma-informed education and training programs.

**Effective:** 12 January 2026

**Responsible:** Deputy Vice-Chancellor, Education and Student Experience

**Lead:** Pro Vice-Chancellor, Student Success



## Appendix 1: Roles and Responsibilities

All members of the UNSW community share a responsibility for maintaining a safe, harmonious, and tolerant University environment, in line with the [UNSW Code of Conduct and Values](#).

All staff, students, and affiliates (including contractors) are responsible for ensuring that they conduct themselves in accordance with this policy and its supporting procedure.

The Deputy Vice-Chancellor, Education and Student Experience, is responsible for managing the resources in their Division required to support the implementation of this policy.

The Chief Assurance and Legal Officer, is responsible for managing the resources in their office to support the implementation of this policy.

Changes to this policy are approved by the Vice-Chancellor. Changes to the implementation of this policy are approved by the Deputy Vice-Chancellor, Education and Student Experience.

## Legislative compliance

This policy is intended to ensure that UNSW complies with the:

- [Higher Education Standards Framework \(Threshold Standards\)](#) (2021)
- [TEQSA Guideline Note: Wellness and Safety](#) (2018)
- [Education Services for Overseas Students Act 2000 \(latest version 2024\)](#) with its associated [National Code of Practice for Providers of Education and Training to Overseas Students \(2018\)](#)
- [Higher Education Support Amendment \(Response to the Australian Universities Accord Interim Report\) Act 2023](#)
- [Universities Accord \(National Higher Education Code to Prevent and Respond to Gender-based Violence\) Act 2025](#)
- [National Higher Education Code to Prevent and Respond to Gender-based Violence 2025](#)

## Supporting Documents

- [Preventing and Responding to Gender-based Violence at UNSW Policy](#)
- [UNSW Code of Conduct and Values](#)
- [Complaints Management and Investigations Policy & Procedure](#)
- [Support for Students Policy](#)