

Crisis Management Policy

Section 1 - Purpose

(1) This Policy provides the framework for the response to, and management of, a crisis at or involving QUT. A crisis may present one or more of the following risks for QUT:

- a. A threat to the health and safety of staff, students and members of the University community;
- b. a threat to the health and safety of the general public or the environment;
- c. potential or real damage to the University's physical or virtual infrastructure;
- d. loss of revenue;
- e. reputational damage; and/or
- f. acute disruption of the University's normal business operations.

(2) This Policy details the overarching decision-making structure and coordination measures necessary to respond to a crisis and return the University to its normal operations. QUT's objectives are to ensure that its crisis management response:

- a. upholds its responsibility to provide a safe and healthy environment for staff, students and other members of the University community;
- b. upholds its responsibility to protect the environment and the health and safety of the general public;
- c. upholds its responsibility to protect the University's physical or virtual infrastructure and to minimise disruptions to normal business operations;
- d. is systematic and measured, supported by comprehensive and well-embedded operational plans; and
- e. is decisive and timely, with due regard to the uncertain and challenging nature of the situation.

(3) This Policy is supported by the QUT Crisis Management Plan, which provides detailed procedural information on the University's crisis management activities.

Section 2 - Application

(4) This Policy applies to all staff and students, and other members of the QUT community subject to the QUT [Code of Conduct - Staff](#).

(5) While QUT retains overall responsibility and accountability for ensuring the health and safety of its community:

- a. where staff members or students are physically located at another organisation during a crisis event, the emergency response procedures for that organisation will apply; and
- b. where members of the University community are travelling on official University business during a crisis event, assistance services will be provided by QUT's Global Assistance Program partner ([Travel Policy](#)).

(6) This Policy applies to the management of crises, i.e. major or catastrophic events which have a broad impact on the University or its operations. For information on the University's response to specific emergency situations, refer to

Section 3 - Roles and Responsibilities

| Position | Responsibility |
|--|--|
| Vice-Chancellor and President | <p>Determines that a crisis exists and activates the Crisis Management Plan, on the advice of the Crisis Executive Group.</p> <p>Enacts emergency decision-making authority delegated by QUT Council.</p> <p>Chairs the Crisis Executive Group.</p> <p>Acts as the QUT spokesperson (or nominee).</p> <p>Provides Council with regular reports on QUT's crisis management decisions and actions taken throughout the crisis.</p> <p>Chairs the Crisis Management Team post-crisis review.</p> <p>Provides final report to Council following post-crisis review and evaluation.</p> |
| Vice-President (Administration) and University Registrar | <p>Acts as QUT's Crisis Response Coordinator.</p> |
| Crisis Response Coordinator | <p>Convenes the Crisis Executive Group.</p> <p>Approves Crisis Management Plan.</p> <p>Ensures appropriate records are made and kept of actions and decisions.</p> |
| Crisis Executive Group | <p>Considers potential issues not yet requiring activation of full Crisis Management Team.</p> <p>Provides advice to the Vice-Chancellor and President.</p> |
| Crisis Management Team | <p>Directs and coordinates QUT's response to a crisis.</p> <p>Implements the Crisis Management Plan.</p> <p>Reviews the University's management strategy post-crisis and makes recommendations to the Vice-Chancellor and President on future crisis preparation.</p> <p>Ensures the University is prepared and resilient to the potential impacts of a major crisis.</p> |
| Crisis Management Support Team | <p>Provides expert advice and specialist information to Crisis Management Team to assist in implementing decisions.</p> |
| Staff members appointed to Crisis Management Team | <p>Undertake crisis management training at least once annually.</p> |
| Manager, Security and Emergency Management | <p>Reviews the Crisis Management Plan on an annual basis, or as required.</p> <p>Implements and maintains records of training for members of Crisis Management Team.</p> <p>Ensures crisis management rooms are fully operational at all times.</p> |

Section 4 - QUT's Crisis Response Structure

Crisis Management Team

(7) QUT's Crisis Management Team (CMT) is its primary crisis management structure. The CMT is responsible for

providing managerial, operational and strategic leadership to QUT throughout a crisis. It is comprised of the Crisis Executive Group and the Crisis Management Support Team. Depending on the nature of the crisis, the CMT may also operate connectively with other University groups, including the Counter Disaster Committee, the Emergency Control Organisation for each location, and any other active business continuity team.

(8) The CMT maintains structural resilience through the appointment of primary and alternate delegates for each CMT function, and by ensuring that all members of the CMT are appropriately trained and suitably resourced to undertake their allocated duties.

(9) Detailed information on the roles and responsibilities of the CMT and its members can be found in the QUT Crisis Management Plan.

Crisis Executive Group

(10) The Crisis Executive Group (CEG) is the CMT's standing committee, responsible for strategic leadership during a crisis, and the ongoing consideration of actual, pre-planned and future issues. The CEG is convened by the Crisis Response Coordinator and chaired by the Vice-Chancellor and President. If the full CMT is activated to manage a crisis event, the CEG will then integrate into the CMT.

(11) Membership of the CEG is detailed in the Crisis Management Plan.

Crisis Management Support Team

(12) The Crisis Management Support Team consists of the senior management team and specialist advisers activated to provide expert advice and crisis specific information to the CMT in the event of a crisis. This team may consist of operational, functional and specialist staff depending on the type of incident and the extent of impact on QUT.

Crisis Response Coordinator

(13) The Vice-President (Administration) and University Registrar acts as the Crisis Response Coordinator for the University. The Crisis Response Coordinator is responsible for leading the Crisis Management Team, and for managing QUT's response to a crisis event across its lifecycle.

Section 5 - Crisis Management Plan

(14) The Crisis Management Plan (CMP) is an active response document that provides detailed procedures on the University's crisis management approach, including the steps taken by the Crisis Management Team across the lifecycle of a crisis. The CMP is regularly reviewed and is maintained by the Manager, Security and Emergency Management.

Section 6 - Crisis Preparedness and Planning

(15) QUT maintains risk awareness via its robust and well-embedded suite of interconnected frameworks and plans that form part of its enterprise risk management process. These instruments ensure that the University has a reasonable level of preparedness for unexpected and serious situations. These include:

- a. QUT Enterprise Risk Management Framework
- b. QUT Business Continuity Framework
- c. QUT Crisis Management Plan
- d. QUT Emergency Response Procedures
- e. QUT Counter Disaster Plan

- f. QUT Pandemic Plan and supporting protocols
- g. QUT IT Disaster Recovery Plan
- h. System Recovery Plans
- i. Business Continuity Plans.

(16) These frameworks and plans are active instruments, regularly reviewed and updated to reflect on past learnings, stay abreast of contemporary developments and anticipate future risks. They stipulate the University's preferred responses to known or predicted risks, and also provide assurance of its ability to take rapid action and make critical decisions as necessary during any unforeseen crisis.

(17) In addition to these formal frameworks and plans, QUT proactively maintains situational awareness of its wider operating environment as a means of identifying potential threats and risks. This includes engaging with relevant external stakeholders such as emergency services and other law enforcement agencies, government departments, sector specific bodies and other Universities to identify emerging risks which may impact QUT.

Section 7 - Crisis Response

(18) In responding to a crisis, QUT's priorities are to:

- a. bring the situation under control as quickly as possible;
- b. safeguard life and avoid injury;
- c. minimise any impact on the environment or to the general public;
- d. protect QUT's reputation, assets and revenue; and
- e. return to normal business operations as soon as practicable.

(19) The University's response to a crisis will be in accordance with the QUT Crisis Management Plan (CMP).

(20) QUT's default position is not to pay a ransom resulting from a ransomware demand or other illegal activities including kidnapping and extortion. Prima facie it is unlawful to pay a ransom to a terrorist organisation or an organisation proscribed by United Nations sanction.

Determining a Crisis

(21) The Vice-Chancellor and President is responsible for determining that the University is in a crisis event and for subsequently activating the Crisis Management Plan. In making this decision, the Vice-Chancellor and President takes advice from the Crisis Response Coordinator and the Crisis Executive Group.

Emergency Decision-Making During a Crisis

(22) QUT Council has delegated to the Vice-Chancellor and President temporary emergency decision-making authority. This allows the Vice-Chancellor and President to make any decision, or to take any action, required during a crisis to safeguard the University and its community. The Vice-Chancellor and President remains accountable to QUT Council for these decisions and actions and will report to Council on all actions and decisions taken during a crisis.

(23) The Vice-Chancellor and President (or the Vice-President (Administration) and University Registrar as delegated nominee) is also responsible for making the decision to cease classes, close buildings and/or campuses or to cancel any organised events.

Section 8 - Crisis Communication

(24) QUT is committed to providing clear, comprehensive and timely communication to the University community and relevant external stakeholders during a crisis event.

(25) The Vice-Chancellor and President (or nominee) will act as spokesperson for the University. All media and social enquiries will be directed through Marketing and Student Recruitment.

(26) QUT has established a protocol for communications with the media during critical incidents ([Media Relations Policy](#)).

Section 9 - Recordkeeping

(27) There are two components to the University's recordkeeping during a crisis event:

- a. Log Keeping - the Crisis Management Plan specifies the officer responsible for acting as scribe and maintaining a log of all decisions and actions made by the Crisis Management Team throughout the crisis period.
- b. Corporate Recordkeeping - the Crisis Response Coordinator is responsible for ensuring that appropriate and comprehensive records of the crisis management process, including a copy of the Crisis Management Plan and records kept by the log keeper, are created and stored permanently in QUT's corporate recordkeeping system, QRecords, consistent with QUT's [Records Governance Policy](#).

Section 10 - Post-Crisis Review and Evaluation

(28) The Crisis Management Coordinator is responsible for convening and chairing the Crisis Management Team's post-crisis review. This review will evaluate the University's overall crisis response, in particular the effectiveness of the Crisis Management Plan, to identify any areas for improvement.

(29) The Crisis Management Coordinator will report on this review to the Vice-Chancellor and President, advising of any relevant learnings and recommending any necessary changes. Following this review, the Manager, Security and Emergency Management will revise the Crisis Management Plan as necessary.

Section 11 - Final Response and Reporting

(30) Following the post-crisis review and evaluation, the Vice-Chancellor and President will provide Council with a final report including information on:

- a. the University's performance against its Crisis Management Plan;
- b. progress on any recommended actions for improvement of the University's crisis management processes; and
- c. the exercising of the emergency decision-making authority delegated to the Vice-Chancellor and President by Council.

Section 12 - Definitions

| Term | Definitions |
|--------|---|
| Crisis | A crisis is an event or series of events, beyond the expertise and resources of any one faculty or division to manage, with the potential to critically impact the University as a whole. |

Section 13 - Delegations

(31) Refer to [Register of Authorities and Delegations](#) (VC144, C173) (QUT staff access only).

Status and Details

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| Policy Owner | Derek Cordwell Director, Administrative Division |
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