

# STUDENT CRITICAL INCIDENT PROCEDURES 2024

Issued by: Deputy Vice-Chancellor (Education)

Dated: 6 March 2024

Last amended: 4 July 2024 (administrative amendments)  
14 October 2024 (administrative amendments)  
31 March 2025 (administrative amendments)

Signature:

Name: Professor Joanne Wright

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## 1 Purpose and application

- (1) These procedures:
  - (a) support University actions and decision-making in response to critical incidents involving students; and
  - (b) may be applied as part of the [University of Sydney Emergency Response Plan](#); and
  - (c) give effect to the [Risk Management Policy](#).
- (2) These procedures apply to:
  - (a) students, staff, and affiliates; and
  - (b) all critical incidents involving students, wherever occurring, including:
    - (i) on University lands;
    - (ii) elsewhere in Australia; or
    - (iii) overseas.

## 2 Commencement

These procedures commence on 6 March 2024.

### 3 Interpretation

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|---|--|
| <b>Aboriginal and or Torres Strait Islander student</b> | <p>has the meaning given in the <a href="#">Confirmation of Aboriginal and Torres Strait Islander Identity Policy</a>, which at the date of these procedures is:</p> <p style="padding-left: 40px;">means being an Aboriginal and or Torres Strait Islander person, who is of Aboriginal and or Torres Strait Islander descent, identifies as Aboriginal and or Torres Strait Islander and is accepted as such by the community in which they live, or formerly lived.</p>   |
| <b>Affiliate</b>  | <p>has the meaning given in the <a href="#">Staff and Affiliates Code of Conduct</a>. At the date of these procedures this is:</p> <p style="padding-left: 40px;">a person appointed or engaged by the University to perform duties or functions on its behalf, including but not limited to:</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>• an honorary title holder engaged under the <a href="#">Honorary Titles Policy</a>;</li> <li>• a consultant or contractor to the University; and</li> <li>• an office holder in a University entity, a member of any University committee, board or foundation.</li> </ul> <p style="padding-left: 40px;">An affiliate is not an employee of the University.</p> |
| <b>Clinical school</b>                                  | <p>has the meaning given in the <a href="#">University of Sydney (Governance and Faculties and University Schools) Rule</a>, which at the date of these procedures is:</p> <p style="padding-left: 40px;">a clinical school within the University of Sydney Medical School in the Faculty of Medicine and Health, established consistently with Part 5 [of the Rule].</p>  |
| <b>critical incident</b>                                | <p>has the meaning given in subclause 4(1).</p>  |
| <b>DVC ISS</b>  | <p>means the Deputy Vice-Chancellor, Indigenous Strategy and Services.</p>   |
| <b>emergency response team</b>                          | <p>means the team in Campus Protective Services whose primary responsibility is to provide emergency services on campus.</p>   |
| <b>Incident Manager</b>                                 | <p>means:</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>• the Head of Student Wellbeing; or</li> <li>• a University staff member nominated by the Head of Student Wellbeing.</li> </ul>   |
| <b>internal emergency</b>                               | <p>has the meaning given in the <a href="#">University of Sydney (Emergency Powers) Rule</a>, which at the date of these procedures is:</p> <p style="padding-left: 40px;">means:</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>• long-term disruption to significant business systems;</li> <li>• fire, flooding, smoke, destructive weather or other long-term damage to buildings or premises or threat to life;</li> <li>• spill or release of poison or hazardous materials;</li> <li>• mob violence or armed protest; and</li> <li>• attack on staff or students using a weapon or firearm.</li> </ul>  |



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| <b>special consideration</b>                    | means consideration given to a student in circumstances where well-attested illness, injury or misadventure occurs during a semester or at the time of an examination.<br><br><b>Note:</b> See clauses 82 of the <a href="#">Coursework Policy</a> .  |
| <b>student</b>                                  | means a person who: <ul style="list-style-type: none"><li>• is currently admitted to candidature in an award course at the University;</li><li>• is a non-award student, exchange student or study abroad student enrolled in a unit of study at the University; or</li><li>• is currently enrolled in a course offered by the Centre for English Teaching.</li></ul><br><b>Note:</b> For definitions of non-award student, exchange student and study abroad student, see the <a href="#">University of Sydney (Student Discipline) Rule</a> . |
| <b>student association</b>                      | has the meaning given in the <a href="#">Student Associations Policy</a> , which at the date of these procedures is:<br><br>any student representative organisation, student club, or student society (regardless of how they are named).   |
| <b>student critical incident response team</b>  | has the meaning given in clause 9.  |
| <b>University lands</b>                         | has the meaning given in the <a href="#">Campus Access Policy</a> . This is:<br>includes any land or road occupied or used by, or in connection with, the University. This includes: <ul style="list-style-type: none"><li>• all or part of any building or structure; and</li><li>• any land used or occupied in connection with a building or structure.</li></ul>  |
| <b>University mental wellbeing support line</b> | means the phone support line (1300 474 065) delivered by Lifeline which is available: <ul style="list-style-type: none"><li>• from 5pm to 9am on weekdays;</li><li>• 24 hours on weekends and public holidays; and</li><li>• during the University's closedown period.</li></ul>  |

#### 4 Defining critical incidents affecting students

- (1) A critical incident means an event or situation, or the imminent risk of such, which causes serious illness, fear, harm, injury, extreme stress, or other trauma to the person. This may include:
- (a) death;
  - (b) attempted suicide or self-harm, or imminent risk of suicide or self-harm;
  - (c) serious injury or life-threatening illness;



- (d) drug, alcohol or psychoactive substance overdose;
  - (e) reports of an alleged indictable offence
  - (f) scams (personal, financial and other);
  - (g) a missing student;
  - (h) behaviours threatening the safety of self or others;
  - (i) modern slavery;
  - (j) witnessing a serious incident;
  - (k) natural disasters;
  - (l) event of cultural significance; or
  - (m) war or civil unrest;
- (2) Non-critical incidents may include, but are not limited to:
- (a) incidents that have not resulted in significant risk or harm to:
    - (i) a student or students, staff or members of the community, or
    - (ii) the community with which they identify;
  - (b) reports of harassment;
  - (c) accidents where students are unharmed;
  - (d) theft or loss of property;
  - (e) student homelessness; or
  - (f) student immigration issues.

## 5 Reporting critical incidents

- (1) Critical incidents involving students that occur on University lands, and that have caused significant injury or harm, or involve imminent risk to the individual or others, must be reported to:
- (a) NSW Police, Fire and Rescue NSW, NSW Ambulance, or other appropriate local emergency service;
    - (i) In the case of sexual assault, the assault survivor must, if possible, decide whether to report the matter to authorities.
- and
- (b) Campus Protective Services, who are available 24 hours a day, 7 days a week.
- Note:** See Schedule Two for contact details to report incidents or receive support.
- (2) Campus Protective Services will inform the Incident Manager or Head of Student Wellbeing regarding a student critical incident that has occurred on University lands.
- (3) If necessary, the Incident Manager will:
- (a) notify the Emergency Response Team in Campus Protective Services;
  - (b) follow the directions of the Emergency Response Team; and
  - (c) provide updates to this team.

- (4) Student critical incidents that do not occur on University lands, including outside Australia, must be reported to Student Wellbeing,

## 6 Action on receiving reports of critical incidents

- (1) The Incident Manager or Campus Protective Services will determine whether to inform emergency services or other relevant authorities about:
  - (a) the contents of any report;
  - (b) whether the incident is reportable conduct under the [Children's Guardian Act 2019](#); and

**Note:** See the [Working with Children and Vulnerable Adults Policy](#).

- (c) whether to report the issue to the Office of General Counsel.
- (2) On receiving a report of a student death, the Incident Manager or a staff member designated by the Incident Manager will notify:
  - (a) the Deputy Vice-Chancellor (Education), the Chief Student Life Officer, and the Office of the Vice Chancellor;and
  - (b) if the incident involves an Aboriginal and Torres Strait Islander student, the DVC ISS;
  - (d) if the incident involves a student or students inbound or outbound as part of a University exchange program or as part of another mobility experience, the Associate Director, Sydney Global Mobility.
- (3) If the Incident Manager determines that a critical incident may impact the wider University community, they may convene a student critical incident response team to coordinate a welfare response.

**Note:** See clause 9 and Schedule One.

## 7 Role of the Incident Manager

- (1) For each incident, the Incident Manager will:
  - (a) assess the need and arrange for internal or external support for the affected students, including, as required:
    - (i) emergency accommodation for a student or family members;
    - (ii) travel assistance for a student, or family members;
    - (iii) medical assistance or consultations;
    - (iv) counselling or other psychological consultations;
    - (v) financial assistance; or
    - (vi) registration with [Inclusion and Disability Services](#).

**Note:** See Schedule Two for contact details.



- (b) contact the Associate Dean (Student Life) within the relevant faculty or University school about the status of the student's course and assist with special consideration requests or other necessary academic adjustments or arrangements;

**Note:** See the intranet site for [special consideration](#).

- (c) if the incident involves an Aboriginal and Torres Strait Islander student, consult with the Director of the Gadigal Centre to ensure responses are culturally appropriate;
  - (d) if the incident involves a recent sexual assault (i.e., within the past 72 hours), and notice of the incident is received after hours, assess and respond to immediate safety needs, and handover in business hours to the Safer Communities Office;
  - (e) comply with privacy legislation, the [Privacy Policy](#) and the [Privacy Procedures](#) when accessing, providing and recording all information.
- (2) To prevent or lessen a serious or imminent threat to the life or health of a person, the Incident Manager may:
- (a) liaise with NSW Police or other emergency services, including co-ordinating and delivering on requests for information;
  - (b) request access to University-held information about the person's recent history of:
    - (i) logging into University ICT and learning systems (from ICT); or
    - (ii) accessing buildings on campus (from Campus Protective Services);
  - (c) if the incident involves an Aboriginal and Torres Strait Islander student, seek guidance from the Director of the Gadigal Centre regarding culturally appropriate approaches to student engagement and risk mitigation;
  - (d) if relevant, liaise with University managed accommodation, colleges, and student accommodation to establish last sighting of student or request room check;
  - (e) liaise with internal services and external providers of 24/7 student safety and wellbeing support
  - (f) if the student is an International Student, consider consulting the Director, Student Affairs and Compliance and/or the relevant Consulate.;
  - (g) liaise, as required, with government departments, agencies, and representatives, including overseas jurisdictions; and
  - (h) communicate, as appropriate, with a student's family or next of kin.

**Note:** For the avoidance of doubt, the Incident Manager may disclose private and personal information if disclosure is necessary to prevent or lessen a serious and imminent threat to the life or health of a person. See sections 17 and 18 of the [Privacy and Personal Information Protection Act 1998](#).

- (3) If the critical incident requires communication in a language other than English, the Incident Manager may:
- (a) engage a National Accreditation Authority for Translators and Interpreters (NAATI) accredited interpreter or translator; and
  - (b) require confidentiality as a term of their engagement.

**Note:** See the [NAATI website](#).

- (4) If the critical incident involves hazards, incidents and injuries associated with University activities, the Incident Manager will:
  - (a) remind relevant staff of their obligations to comply with incident and hazard reporting as required by [Work Health and Safety Procedures](#);
  - (b) liaise with the Chief Health and Safety Officer;
  - (c) if the critical incident involves an international student, contact the relevant embassy or consular representative in Sydney, if appropriate;
  - (d) if the student is an inbound study abroad or exchange student, coordinate with the Associate Director, Sydney Global Mobility to notify the student's home university; and
  - (e) create records of the incident and its management, and enter them into the University's recordkeeping system, as required by the [Recordkeeping Policy](#).

## **8 Communication by the Incident Manager**

- (1) Each critical incident is unique. Communication about the incident will depend on:
  - (a) the nature of the incident;
  - (b) the location and scale of the incident;
  - (c) who has been affected;
  - (d) consideration of cultural and language factors;
  - (e) any relevant Commonwealth or state legislation or guidelines;
  - (f) advice from police or other emergency services; and
  - (g) the needs of the people affected.
- (2) If the incident involves an Aboriginal and Torres Strait Islander student, the Incident Manager will seek guidance from the Director of the Gadigal Centre regarding culturally appropriate approaches to external and internal communication.
- (3) The Incident Manager will:
  - (a) determine the need to communicate internally with individual University officers; and
  - (b) manage all internal communications in accordance with the [Privacy Policy](#) and [Privacy Procedures](#).

## **9 Student critical incident response team**

- (1) The Incident Manager may convene a student critical incident response team to coordinate the wellbeing response to a critical incident.
- (2) A student critical incident response team will be formed with the terms of reference and operation specified in Schedule One.

## **10 Support services**

Contact details for support services available in the event of a critical incident are listed in Schedule Two.

## 11 Recordkeeping and reporting

- (1) All records relating to a critical incident response will be generated, stored and maintained as required in accordance with the [Recordkeeping Policy](#).
- (2) Statistical data derived from incident records may comprise all or part of executive and management reporting for members of the:
  - (a) Senate;
  - (b) the [People and Culture Committee \(through a quarterly report on safety incidents prepared by Student Wellbeing and the Student Affairs Unit\)](#);
  - (c) University Executive and its relevant committees.

## 12 Review

- (1) The Incident Manager will consult annually with key stakeholders and:
  - (a) review the management of critical incidents;
  - (b) identify any lessons learnt; and
  - (c) if necessary, recommend amendments to the policy or these procedures.

## 13 Rescissions and replacements

This document replaces the *Student Critical Incident Procedures 2022* which is rescinded as from the date of commencement of this document.

## NOTES

### Student Critical Incident Procedures 2024

|                      |  |
|----------------------|--|
| Date adopted:        | 6 March 2024   |
| Date commenced:      | 6 March 2024   |
| Date amended:        | 4 July 2024 (administrative amendments)<br>14 October 2024 (administrative amendments)<br>31 March 2025 (administrative amendments)  |
| Administrator:       | Deputy Vice-Chancellor (Education)   |
| Review date:         | 31 March 2029  |
| Rescinded documents: | <i>Student Critical Incidents Procedures 2022</i>  |
| Related documents:   | <a href="#">Children's Guardian Act 2019</a><br><a href="#">Education Services for Overseas Students Act 2000</a><br><a href="#">Health Records and Information Privacy Act 2002</a> |





[Higher Education Standards Framework \(Threshold Standards\) 2021;](#)

[Privacy and Personal Information Protection Act 1998](#)

[University of Sydney \(Emergency Powers\) Rule](#)

[University of Sydney \(Governance and Faculties and University Schools\) Rule](#)

[Staff and Affiliates Code of Conduct](#)

[Campus Access Policy](#)

[Confirmation of Aboriginal and Torres Strait Islander Identity Policy](#)

[Coursework Policy](#)

[Privacy Policy](#)

[Recordkeeping Policy](#)

[Risk Management Policy](#)

[Privacy Procedures](#)

[Student Sexual Misconduct Response Procedures](#)

[Under 18 International Student Procedures](#)

[Working with Children and Vulnerable Adults Policy](#)

## AMENDMENT HISTORY

| <b>Provision</b>     | <b>Amendment</b>  | <b>Commencing</b> |
|----------------------|---|-------------------|
| 3                    | Amended definition of 'University lands' to align with Campus Access Policy 2024.               | 4 July 2024       |
| 3; related documents | 'University of Sydney (Campus Access) Policy 2009' replaced with 'Campus Access Policy'         | 4 July 2024       |
| throughout           | Administrative amendments to remove the year in policy references                               | 4 July 2024       |
| footer               | replaced '2022' with '2024'   | 4 July 2024       |
| Schedule 2 (13)      | Updated Employee Assistance Program contact number and hours of operation                       | 14 October 2024   |
| 6(2)(a)              | Administrative amendments to reflect changes to delegations for the Chief Student Life Officer. | 25 March 2025     |



| <b>Provision</b> | <b>Amendment</b>  | <b>Commencing</b> |
|------------------|---|-------------------|
| 3                | Amended 'Note' in definition of 'special consideration' to remove reference to clause 83 of Coursework Policy | 25 March 2025     |

## SCHEDULE ONE

### STUDENT CRITICAL INCIDENT RESPONSE TEAM

#### TERMS OF REFERENCE AND OPERATION

#### 1 General Principles

- (1) The Incident Manager may determine that it is necessary to convene a student critical incident response team to:
  - (a) allocate roles and responsibilities to team members to manage the wellbeing response to the critical incident;
  - (b) determine appropriate processes to respond to the specific circumstances of the incident;
  - (c) meet, as soon as possible, preferably the same day the incident occurs or is reported, to:
    - (i) assess the severity of the situation; and
    - (ii) discuss the priorities and actions taken, or to be taken, over the first 24 hours, one week, two weeks or longer and following the incident;
  - and
  - (d) as appropriate, report back to the Emergency Response Team.

#### 2 Membership

- (1) This team will comprise the:
  - (a) Chair, being the Incident Manager ;
    - (i) the Chair is responsible for oversight of the critical incident response and management of all internal communications in accordance with the [Privacy Policy](#) and [Privacy Procedures](#);
  - (b) Manager, Staff Health Support; and
  - (c) any other additional advisory members as considered necessary.

**-Note:** Refer clauses 7 and 8 of the Procedures for information on the role of the Incident Manager and communication responsibilities
- (2) Depending on the incident type or location, the team may include the following additional advisory members, as determined by the Incident Manager:
  - (a) Associate Dean(s) e.g. Student Life, Indigenous Strategy and Services or Head(s) of School;
  - (b) Manager or principal of accommodation or colleges, or nominee;
  - (c) General Counsel;
  - (d) Manager, Privacy Compliance, or nominee;



- (e) if the critical incident involves an Aboriginal or Torres Strait Islander student, or an Aboriginal or Torres Strait Islander community member, or nominee;
- (f) Director, Student Affairs and Compliance;
- (g) if the incident involves an international or partnership student or a student on study abroad or exchange or other mobility experience, Associate Director, Sydney Global Mobility;
- (h) Director Communications;
- (i) Operations Controller, Campus Protective Services;
- (j) Chief Health and Safety Officer;
- (k) Director, Asset Management and Operations;
- (l) Director, Student Administration Service;
- (m) Team Lead, Student Counselling Service
- (n) Manager, Disability and Inclusion;
- (o) Manager, Safer Communities Office;
- (p) Manager Wellbeing Services;
- (q) if the critical incident occurs in a clinical school, Faculty General Manager, Faculty of Medicine and Health;
- (r) if the critical incident involves a Centre for English Teaching student, Director, Centre for English Teaching;
- (s) if the critical incident occurred during activities held by a student association, as appropriate, either the Clubs and Societies Manager, University of Sydney Union, or the General Manager, Sydney University Sport and Fitness Limited;
- (t) if the critical incident involves a student who holds an international sponsorship, the Head of International Partnerships and Development;
- (u) if the incident involves a partnership student, a senior representative from the University's Education Partner Provider; or
- (v) any other person deemed necessary due to the nature of the incident.

### **3 Operation**

- (1) Student critical incident response team members may undertake any of the following actions depending upon the specific circumstances of the incident:
  - (a) access the student record to verify student details, and gather information about the student, including:
    - (i) emergency and next of kin contact details;
    - (ii) address;
    - (iii) email;
    - (iv) phone numbers;
    - (v) nationality;
    - (vi) primary contact;
    - (vii) sponsor or agent;



(viii) and any other relevant information;

(b) establish facts about the incident in a culturally appropriate and sensitive manner;

**Note:** If the critical incident involves an Aboriginal or Torres Strait Islander student, or an Aboriginal or Torres Strait Islander community member, consult with DVC ISS or staff from the Gadigal Centre for advice on cultural factors to inform the critical incident response.

(c) communicate that the Incident Manager will be available 24 hours a day during the incident response phase and is the main point of contact for:

(i) family members;

(ii) friends; and

(iii) external parties such as the consulate, police and medical services providers;

(d) inform the emergency contact or next of kin:

(i) if possible, negotiate with the impacted student about alerting their emergency contact prior to doing so; and

(ii) if the incident involves the death of a student within Australia, the police are responsible for informing the next of kin.

(e) liaise with external parties, which may include medical services providers, emergency services, government departments, or the relevant embassy;

(f) consider whether the critical incident meets the criteria for trauma incident funding redemption to cover costs such as international travel for next of kin, repatriation of remains, or funeral and burial costs;

(g) inform the University's Media and Public Relations team:

(i) in the event the critical incident results in media attention; and

(ii) to assist with the development and dissemination of internal communications to staff and students;

**Note:** See Schedule Two for contact details.

(h) if the student is under 18:

(i) where required, undertake mandatory reporting as regulated by the [Children's Guardian Act 2019](#);

**Note:** See the [Working with Children and Vulnerable Adults Policy](#)

(ii) if appropriate, enact approved support and welfare arrangements.

**Note:** See the [Under 18 International Students Policy](#)

(i) make appropriate referrals for staff and student wellbeing support services;

(j) monitor the post incident response and support needs of impacted individuals for up to two weeks after the incident, and ensure that those affected receive care commensurate with the severity and complexity of their need, in line with [current best practice guidelines](#);

(k) notify the University's Mental Wellbeing Support Line that a critical incident has occurred which may trigger a higher volume of calls; and



- (l) for reporting of hazards, incidents and injuries associated with University activities, log the incident in the University's incident reporting system, [RiskWare](#).

## SCHEDULE TWO

### Contact details and support services

- (1) **Emergency services in NSW** (police, ambulance, fire and rescue): call **triple zero (000)**
- (2) **Campus Protective Services**: call **+ 61 2 9351 3333**, 24 hours a day, seven days a week.
- (3) **Head of Student Wellbeing**: call +61 2 8627 8433 or +61 2 8627 8437. Email [student.wellbeing@sydney.edu.au](mailto:student.wellbeing@sydney.edu.au)
- (4) **Incident Manager**: call +61 2 8627 8816. Email [student.incident@sydney.edu.au](mailto:student.incident@sydney.edu.au)
- (5) **Safer Communities Office**, call +61 2 **8627 6808** or email [safer-communities.officer@sydney.edu.au](mailto:safer-communities.officer@sydney.edu.au). Trauma-informed case management for students who have experienced sexual assault, sexual harassment, domestic and family violence, bullying and harassment, or issues relating to modern slavery.
- (6) **Information and Communications Technology**: call +61 2 9351 2000
- (7) **University of Sydney Media and Public Relations Team**: call +61 2 8627 0246 or email: [media.office@sydney.edu.au](mailto:media.office@sydney.edu.au)
- (8) **University Mental Wellbeing Support Line**: call **1300 474 065**, available from 5pm to 9am weekdays, 24 hours on weekends and public holidays and during the University's closedown period
- (9) **Student Counselling Service** call **+61 2 8627 8433**, 9:00am-5:00pm, Monday to Friday  
**Note:** Calls to the Student Counselling Service when the University is closed are automatically redirected to the University Mental Wellbeing Support Line.
- (10) **The Gadigal Centre** call **+61 8627 8619** between 10am and 4pm, Monday to Friday.
- (11) **The [Aboriginal Counselling Service](#)**: call **0410 539 905**
- (12) For disclosures or complaints about an incident of sexual assault or sexual harassment, call **1800 SYD HLP (1800 793 457)** and select option 2.  
**Note:** Calls to 1800 SYD HLP when the University is closed are automatically redirected to Rape and Domestic Violence Australia.
- (13) **[Employee Assistance Program](#)**, call:
  - (a) **1300 687 327**, available 24/7;
  - (b) **1300 287 432**, a dedicated First Nations helpline;
  - (c) **+61 3 8620 5300**, an international line for staff based overseas.
- (14) **[Full Stop Australia](#)** call **1800 385 578**, available 24/7.
- (15) **[1800RESPECT](#)** call **1800 737 732**, available 24/7.
- (16) **Royal Prince Alfred (RPA) Hospital Sexual Assault Service** call **9515 9040** (Monday to Friday) or **9515 6111** (after hours). Counselling and medical services are available for anyone who has been sexually assaulted. Campus Protective Services can arrange transport to RPA.



- (17) **Student Accommodation Services** call **9351 3322**, 9:00am to 5:00pm, Monday to Friday for on-campus emergency accommodation. For after-hours emergency accommodation, contact **Campus Protective Services** on **9351 3333**
- (18) **University Health Service** call **9351 3484**, 8:30am to 5:00pm, Monday to Friday.
- (19) **Student representative associations:**
  - (a) [Students' Representative Council](#) (SRC) for undergraduate students call **9660 5222**, 9:00am-5:00pm, Monday to Friday; and
  - (b) [Sydney University Postgraduate Representative Association](#) (SUPRA) for postgraduate students call **9351 3715**, 9:00am to 5:00pm (closed 12:00pm-1:00pm), Monday to Friday.