



Students at Risk Framework

Supporting and case managing students identified to be at significant and ongoing risk of harm to self and/or others.

1. Purpose

- a. The Students at Risk Framework (the 'Framework'), encompassing the Students at Risk Group (SARG), supports identification and case management of students presenting with serious risk of harm to self and/or others. It is intended to complement existing University policies, procedures and activities established to foster and maintain the wellbeing and safety of students, staff, and other members of the UniSA community. The Framework supports the University's responsibility to mitigate and manage risk, as stipulated in the [Student Critical Incident Policy](#), [Student Critical Incident Procedure](#), and the [University's Strategic Crisis Management Framework](#).
- b. The key aims are to ensure students presenting with or posing risk to self and/or others are identified early, supported and managed in a coordinated manner. This is achieved by ensuring student incidents are investigated at the Program and Academic Unit levels in the first instance, in line with existing University policies. The SARG intervenes in instances where attempts to address issue(s) at the local level have been unsuccessful or risks to community safety have escalated to a serious level¹ because of a student's behaviour or conduct, including matters involving students which sit outside of the [Sexual Harm Policy](#) and [Sexual Harm Procedure: Students](#), in accordance with breaches to the [Code of Conduct for Students](#), to the SARG for intervention and/or case management.

2. Guidelines and Principles

a. Independence & Responsibility

- i. UniSA students are independent adult learners who are responsible for their own decisions about engagement with support services within or external to the University. The SARG will ensure all students referred to the Group are informed about support services available within the University as well as access to student advocacy.
- ii. Where possible, UniSA students referred under the Students at Risk Framework will be actively encouraged to be fully involved and included in all decision making regarding their matter.

¹ Refer to Critical Incident Policy and Procedure Definitions



- iii. In situations where serious risks to wellbeing and safety are identified, the University's duty of care to provide a safe learning and working environments for all students, staff, visitors, and members of the community will take precedence over the student's independence. This means some decisions about how best to mitigate risk may not have the student's cooperation or agreement.
- iv. In all cases referred under the Students at Risk Framework, the SARG will aim to maximise the student's engagement in accordance with their capacity and take into account the student's individual circumstances. Situations identifying risk to students under 18 years of age will be managed in accordance with relevant legislation including, but not limited to, the Children and Young People (Safety) Act (2017) and the Education Services for Overseas Students (ESOS) Act 2000.
- v. The Students at Risk Framework operates on the premise that University services for students such as Counselling and Access and Inclusion services within the Student Engagement Unit (SEU) all play a role in supporting safety and wellbeing. Although most concerns involving students can be resolved by a referral to, and active engagement with, services within or external to the University, some risk situations require a coordinated approach involving staff with expertise to assess and manage wellbeing and safety risks.
- vi. In situations where a student's behaviour or conduct is considered to be associated with diagnosed or undiagnosed health condition(s) or a disability, the SARG may recommend assessment or intervention by medical or professional experts as part of the student's case management plan, in line with the [Required Medical Leave Policy and Procedures](#) or other relevant University policies. External stakeholders may also be invited to contribute and participate where appropriate, e.g. accommodation providers, University partner organisations.
- vii. In circumstances where student behaviour or conduct relates to a criminal matter the SARG will seek advice from Chancellery.
- viii. The role of the SARG is to work with the student to develop a mutually agreed approach which enables the student to continue to study, and or maintain their place in their program(s) whilst addressing the identified risks.
- ix. A Student Conduct Agreement (the 'Agreement') will be developed between the student and the SARG to provide an agreed and shared set of responsibilities to mitigate future risks and support students to be successful. This approach provides the student with the opportunity to identify and address issues preventing them from behaving in accordance with the [Code of Conduct for Students](#), and is an alternative to proceeding immediately to the outcomes outlined in the relevant policies.

b. Relevant University policies, Statutes and By-laws

- i. The Students at Risk Framework is applicable to students identified to be at significant and ongoing risk of harm to themselves and/or others and is not intended to replace, change, or conflict with the implementation of University Statutes, By-laws, OHSW & IM, Policies and Procedures, or external processes, but rather to complement or align with these as appropriate.



- ii. In circumstances where serious misconduct or risk behaviours threaten the safety of the student or others, the SARG may recommend University By-laws and or Statutes be invoked to temporarily suspend a student as part of meeting the University's duty of care to provide a safe teaching, learning and workplace environment. However, initiating disciplinary actions using University Statutes or By-laws for a student who is at risk or posing a threat to the wellbeing and safety of others may not be appropriate in all situations.
- iii. The University's duty of care to all members of the University community will act as a primary objective in all individual student cases referred to the SARG. Each student case will involve careful assessment of the student's support needs as well as the University's capacity to provide required support and monitoring of the student until the risk has been mitigated.

c. Confidentiality

- i. In all cases referred to the SARG, the Group will adhere to the University's [Privacy Policy](#). Only information relevant to managing risk will be shared within the SARG.
- ii. Information relevant to the SARG will be stored securely and will only be accessible to staff who are members of the Group managing the student case.
- iii. Where a student being case managed by the SARG is referred to or is already accessing the University's Counselling or Access and Inclusion services, SARG members will only have access to information relevant to managing risk. All relevant professional and ethical confidentiality policies and protocols applicable to staff within Counselling and Access and Inclusion services will continue to be adhered to.
- iv. Where SARG intervention is not possible due to lack of relevant facts or nonengagement by the student, ongoing risk may be managed by monitoring concerning behaviour and liaising with internal and external stakeholders as necessary for the purpose of assessing or mitigating risk.

d. Care

- i. The University is committed to providing a caring and supportive environment for students and staff. The role and actions of the SARG are intended to achieve mutual benefits for students and the University by ensuring risk to a student or others is identified as early as possible and managed in the best interests of the individual student and the University community.

e. International students

- i. International students referred under the Students at Risk Framework will be managed according to the University's obligations under relevant legislation including but not limited to the ESOS Act 2000. The SARG process recognises that factors such as cultural transition challenges and limited family supports

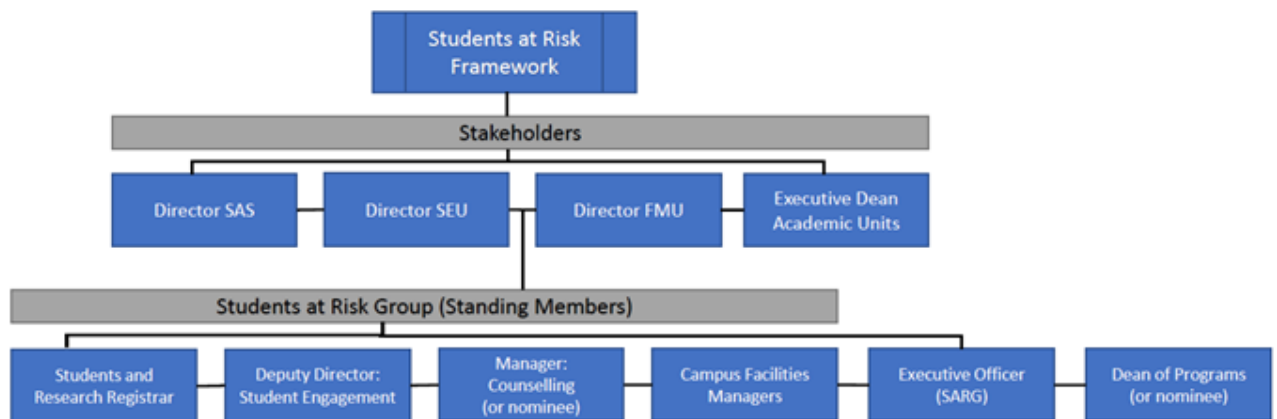


faced by international students must be considered for all international student cases referred to or managed by the SARG.

- ii. International students under the age of 18 years referred under the Students at Risk Framework will also be managed with specific regard to all relevant legislation and the sensitive thresholds applicable to decision making regarding their safety, wellbeing, and support needs.

3. Students at Risk Group Structure

- i. The SARG is comprised of stakeholders who represent key university safety, policy and support services to enable a holistic approach and application of the framework, in collaboration with students.



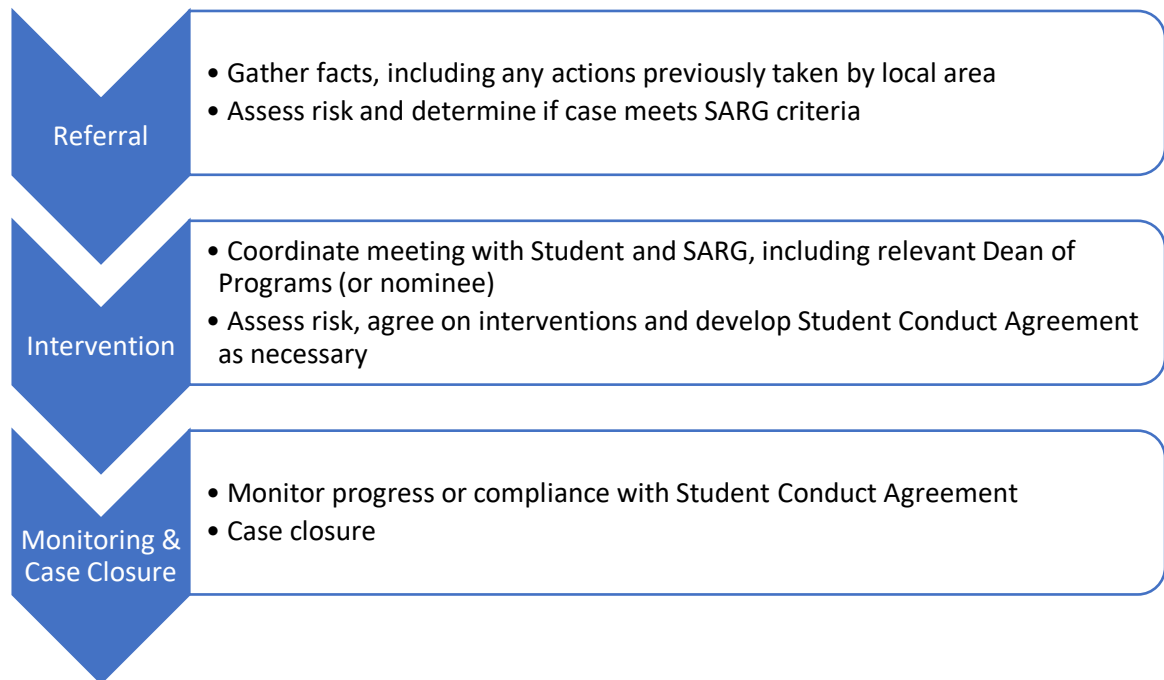
Examples of serious student behaviours posing a risk of harm to self or others that **may** meet the criteria for referral to the SARG include, but are not limited to:

- i. Stated intentions to harm self and/or others
- ii. Repeated and persistent breaches of the Code of Conduct for Students
- iii. Persistent disruptive or erratic behaviours which impact members of the University community
- iv. Sexual Assault and Sexual Harassment (external to SASH Policy cases)
- v. Physical violence or assault
- vi. Domestic or family violence on campus
- vii. Stalking
- viii. Bullying and harassment, including cyber bullying and harassment



4. Case Management Process

- a. In responding to referrals under the Students at Risk Framework, the standing members of the SARG will follow the process outlined below:



- b. In responding to referrals under the Students at Risk Framework, the relevant Academic Unit² will follow the process below:
- The Dean of Programs will liaise with staff member(s) who referred the matter, informing them of planned actions/response i.e., that the matter will be referred to the SARG.
 - Following the initial SARG meeting, the Dean of Programs (or nominee), with assistance from the SARG Executive Officer, will prepare and send a letter to the student on Academic Unit letterhead by email (as a pdf document) inviting them to attend a meeting with the SARG. Student to be advised they can bring a support person or USASA Advocate to the meeting.
 - The Dean will arrange for a hard copy of the letter to be posted to the address recorded on the student record by Registered mail and via the student's myMail address and contact via telephone to advise the letter has been sent. All documentation sent to the student is to be forwarded to the SARG Executive Officer.
 - At the SARG meeting, ideally with the student in attendance (this may occur without the student if they choose not to attend), the student will be offered the opportunity to discuss the concerns raised, any challenges they may be experiencing, and identify any supports they may require.

² The Academic Unit responsible for the student's primary program will participate in the SARG. Where the student is enrolled in multiple awards, the Academic Unit that has raised the concerns will participate in the SARG.



- v. After the SARG meeting, a nominated member of SARG will communicate decisions to the student in writing and any actions or outcomes to all parties.
- vi. Where an 'Agreement' has been developed by SARG and a further meeting is required with the student, at least two SARG members will meet with the student and a support person if the student wishes, to go through the Agreement, ensure it is understood by the student and endorsed by both the student and SARG representative.
- vii. An Agreement will be active and applied with or without the student's cooperation, however all efforts to engage the student in voluntarily entering into the Agreement will be undertaken by the SARG.
- viii. SARG will monitor compliance and address any support needs or breaches in collaboration with the relevant Academic Unit as required.
- ix. In instances where a student declines to participate with an Agreement, or where there is a breach of the Agreement, the SARG will reconvene with the relevant Academic Unit Dean of Programs to determine next steps, which may include recommending to the relevant Executive Dean that the outcomes listed in the relevant policies and or procedures be enacted, which may result in a period of required medical leave, suspension or expulsion, or other outcome as determined by the Executive Dean.