

# **Suicidal Threats and/or Attempts: Policy and Procedures for Mandated Assessment**

## **I. Introduction**

Southern Illinois University Carbondale expects a standard of conduct regarding student safety and self-welfare. The University expects students to have a concern for their own safety, and the welfare of the university community. Suicidal threats and/or attempts constitute a violation of the University's expectations regarding student safety.

A student will be subject to a mandated assessment in the event that the Suicide Prevention Team (Director and Chief Psychologist of the Counseling Center and the psychologist from the SHC Mental Health Clinic) is presented with a credible report that a student

1. has attempted suicide; or
2. has threatened suicide; or
3. has engaged in efforts to prepare to commit suicide; or
4. has expressed a preoccupation with suicide.

The student will be required to participate in three sessions of mandated assessment provided by a mental health professional employed by the SIUC Counseling Center. The purpose of this assessment is to provide a comprehensive and in-depth inquiry of the precipitating incident, prior attempts and threats, and current suicidal intent. The assessment will also provide the student with resources to adhere to this standard of safety in the future and to monitor the student's willingness and ability to adhere to this standard.

## **II. Referral of Students to the Suicide Prevention Team**

1. SIUC employees who observe or become aware of a student who has made a suicidal threat, has made a suicide attempt, has engaged in efforts to prepare to commit suicide, or has expressed a preoccupation with suicide have an ethical obligation to complete a Suicide Incident Report located on the Counseling Center website, [www.siu.edu/offices/counsel/](http://www.siu.edu/offices/counsel/) The Suicide Incident Report is to be completed and provided to the Suicide Prevention Team within 24 hours of the incident, or within 24 hours of becoming aware of the incident.

2. A member of the Suicide Prevention Team will make contact with the student within 24 hours of receiving a credible Suicide Incident Report and schedule the first appointment within 24 hours from the time of contact with the student. If the student is not reached within 24 hours, a certified letter will be mailed to the student. The letter will state that the student has 24 hours from the receipt of the certified letter to make and keep the first appointment.

### **III. Mandated Assessment**

1. The first assessment session must take place within 24 hours of student contact by the Suicide Prevention Team.
2. The remaining two mandated assessment appointments will ideally occur at weekly intervals.
3. The three assessment sessions will provide a comprehensive and in-depth inquiry of the precipitating incident, prior attempts and threats, and current suicidal intent. The assessment will also provide the student with resources to adhere to the standard of safety in the future and to monitor the student's willingness and ability to adhere to this standard.
4. Students have the option to seek continuing counseling after the mandated assessment requirement has been met.

### **IV. Noncompliance with Mandated Assessment**

1. The Chair of the Suicide Prevention Team (Counseling Center Director or designee) will advise the Vice Chancellor for Student Affairs or designee in the event that a student does not comply with the Suicidal Threats and/or Attempts Policy and Procedures for Mandated Assessment.
2. Failure to adhere to this standard of safety or failure to fulfill the requirements of the assessment outlined in this policy may result in disciplinary action up to and including expulsion. The appropriate actions associated with this policy will be determined by the Vice Chancellor for Student Affairs or designee.
3. The Vice Chancellor for Student Affairs or designee will contact the student by phone or certified letter within 24 hours informing the student that they have not complied with the mandated assessment and will risk disciplinary action up to and including expulsion if they do not make and keep the mandated assessment appointment within 24

hours from personal contact by the Vice Chancellor for Student Affairs or designee.

4. The Vice Chancellor for Student Affairs or designee may take other steps, including contacting the student's parents and/or other significant others in the event of a suicide attempt. The decision to notify parents and/or others would occur on a case-by-case basis and would center on the following elements:
  1. the severity of the suicide threat(s) and/or attempt(s);
  2. the number of suicide threats and/or attempts;
  3. the impact these incidents have had on other members of the university community;
  4. the willingness of the student to make a good faith effort to conform to the university's standard of self-welfare and community-welfare;
  5. recommendation from the Suicide Prevention Team.

## **V. Appeals**

1. A student may appeal the accuracy of the Suicide Incident Report to the Suicide Prevention Team Chair. In some instances, in order for the appeal to go forward, a student may be required to sign a release of information authorizing the members of the Suicide Prevention Team to contact and interview witnesses to the incident.
2. The policy of three sessions of assessment is applied uniformly to all students who cross the threshold of safety and self-welfare described above. The requirement of three assessment sessions is not subject to appeal.
3. If a student disagrees with other aspects of the policy, such as whether the events in question cross the threshold of what constitutes a suicide threat and/or attempt, the student can appeal the Suicide Prevention Team's decision to the Vice Chancellor for Student Affairs or designee whose decision is final.

## **VI. Student Departure and Re-entry**

1. A student must have an assessment by a mental health professional employed by the SIUC Counseling Center if the student chooses to withdraw or take a leave of absence, is administratively or medically withdrawn, or is suspended from the university in regards to crossing the safety threshold described in this policy in order to gain readmittance to the university.

2. The assessment will determine if the student has met all conditions imposed at the time of the student's departure from the university and if the student's readmittance would be in the best interest of the student and the university community.
3. The student may appeal the decision of the mental health professional to the Vice Chancellor for Student Affairs or designee by submitting a written appeal within 14 days of receipt of the mental health professional's assessment and decision. In some instances, in order for the appeal to go forward, a student may be required to sign a release of information authorizing the mental health professional to contact the Vice Chancellor for Student Affairs or designee regarding the assessment and decision.

## **VII. Confidentiality**

1. All records associated with the reported incident are kept separately by the Suicide Prevention Team and do not appear as part of the student's academic record.
2. All records associated with the mandated assessment are protected by state laws regarding confidentiality.

## **VIII. Amendments to Suicidal Threats and/or Attempts: Policy and Procedure for Mandated Assessment**

1. Upon recommendation of the Vice Chancellor for Student Affairs or designee or a member of the Suicide Prevention Team, amendments to this document will be considered by a committee composed of the Vice Chancellor for Student Affairs or designee, director of the Counseling Center, director of Student Housing, director of Judicial Affairs, and a representative from University Legal Counsel.
2. All proposed amendments must be approved by the Vice Chancellor for Student Affairs and the Chancellor.
3. Amendments will take effect immediately upon approval by the Chancellor but will apply only to new cases and not to cases under the Suicide Prevention Team review at the time of the amendment.

## **IX. Annual Reporting**

1. The number and disposition of all cases reviewed by the Suicide Prevention Team during an academic year will be reported annually to the Vice Chancellor for Student Affairs or designee by the Chair of the Suicide Prevention Team.