

Scope & content

The *Guide to Best Practice in Managing the Effects of Natural Disasters in ELICOS* aims to help colleges respond to unforeseen situations where large numbers of students or staff are threatened with physical harm and in order to ensure their safety a decision to send students and staff home or even close a college may need to be made.

The resource covers areas such as:

- regulatory requirements and duty of care
- organisational procedures
- communicating with authorities
- communicating with students, staff and other 'stakeholders'
- closing a college
- after the event
- pragmatic issues such as staff pay and student time in classes

The resource includes case studies outlining specific situations where a college has responded to disaster in a particularly successful way. The full Guide is available to staff at English Australia member colleges.

Key features of best practice in disaster management

Colleges demonstrating best practice in managing natural disasters to minimise negative effects on students, staff and property evidence the following:

1. **Commitment by principal administrators** to ensure the college has appropriate policies, procedures and sufficient financial and human resources to prepare for and deal with natural disasters.
2. Appropriate **risk analysis** in the context of the operation of the college: the number of students and staff and the location.
3. Thorough **planning** to ensure staff and students are ready to respond to a natural disaster. Key personnel are allocated clear responsibilities.
4. Effective **communication with external bodies** to ensure the college receives up to date and accurate information about the disaster situation.
5. **Communication with staff and students** that is accessible and clear so that all know what to do as the disaster unfolds.
6. Emotional and material **support and understanding** to help people deal with the aftermath of the disaster.
7. **Assessment and evaluation** of disaster situations to inform continuous improvement of processes and policies.