Santino Scibelli
University College London (UCL)
President Michael Arthur
Major Incident Plan
September 24, 2017

Introduction

The Major Incident Plan encompasss a systematic and organizational structure for emergency planning, response, management, and recovery for University College London. UCL is London, England's leading multidisciplinary university, with over 11,000 members of faculty and an annual approximation of 35,000 students. The purpose of this proposal is to provide an analytical and expository review of the current plan available on the University College London website, followed by a discussion focused on areas within the plan warranting any changes for consideration and revision were noted as imperative.

The original plan was created in July 2012 and the current plan was published in June 2017, with a noted review date of December 2017, as the second iteration of UCL's Major Incident Plan (MIP). The version 2.0 plan was composed by Angela French, BCM & MIP Manager, and the 20 page-document can be publicly accessed through the riskNET document library on UCL's website. The Major Incident Team committee for UCL, responsible for the initial evaluation and handling of campus crisis management, is run by the Vice-Provost of Operations who is the Convenor of the incident team. In his absence during an incident, the Director of Estates acts as the Convenor.

The MIP includes a brief table of contents, an overview of abbreviations used within the document to ensure clarity throughout, and multiple record forms which consist of: (1) Initial

MIT Meeting Record, (2) MIT Assigned Roles, (3) Incident Assessment Record, (4) MIT Objectives, and (5) Incident Response Strategy. There is clear navigation, large-readable font, and concise guidance throughout the plan. Section 1.0 of the plan serves as the "Introduction" which briefly describes the overall framework of what constitutes a problem, disruption, or source of crisis. This ranges from conflicts that cannot be confined to departmental, divisional, or faculty levels which call for escalation. In addition, the plan notes that potentially common occurring disruptions include loss of equipment, telecommunications, staff, utility, and any chain of damage/disaster. The end of this section emphasizes the importance that UCL employees are under an obligation to be trained in the use of the Major Incident Plan.

Section two discusses the aim and purpose of the plan, which is essentially the cognizance for increased resilience at the time of a major incident/disaster and management of critical activities, potential hazards, and threats that may affect the campus wide community. The primary purpose of the plan is to ensure safety and well-being of all UCL individuals. This section also presents the chain of communication and consultation amongst UCL's Major Incident Team (MIT), identifying confirmed procedure for the Convenor, Vice-Provost (Operations), to receive authority in the event that the Provost and President are not available for consultation to secure recovery of UCL from an active incident.

Section three discusses the "Activation" of the MIP and procedure for reporting the incident via existing mechanisms: (1) Security, (2) Facilities Helpdesk, and (3) IS Helpdesk. It is noted that if these attempts to not resolve the issue, then it is required for a senior member of staff from the area affected by the crisis to initiate contact with a member of MIT, which is designated in a flow chart following this section. The flow chart addresses that the Incident

Report be processed by the quickest practicable means - which crossovers in the beginning stages between contacting emergency services to inform security versus cascading an altar activated by authorized persons to activate the plan. Within this stage, the primary actor is the Vice Provost, followed by Director of UCL Estates (in the event the VP is unable to consult), or any member of the MIT in the event that both primary contacts are unavailable to enact the MIP once alerted.

During normal business hours, the plan immediately established the MIT, where outside business hours the duty security manager would first contact key personnel to alter the Incident Response Team (IRT) to take over the situation until any MIT members are available. The MIP is then activated until the major incident is considered closed.

Section four discusses incident definitions and assessment criteria. The incident assessment determines the 5 W's and H: Who, what, why, where, when, and how. It is noted that form 3 in the document, Incident Assessment Record, should be used to record this information. This reports the duration of an incident, health/safety, and its impact on an individual, operational, or property level across the campus community. It addresses alternative systems for reassigning work tasks, means of communication, and questions to ask during the incident for both short-scale and long-scale incidents.

A chart is provided in this section which describes three criteria for activating the MIP: (1) Incident - considered to disrupt normal course of operations for a short duration, (2) Serious Incident - involving major injury or serious illness with appropriate correspondence beginning with the IRT over to the MIT for action, and (3) Major Incident which immediately involves the MIT to handle an unexpected event, or series of events, where normal arrangements are unlikely

to be sufficient. Criteria 3 is an event resulting in multiple major injuries or death, with potential impact on UCL's reputation, personnel, operating or research capability through financial consequences or serious regulatory breach. This criteria requires immediate response.

Section five briefly describes the Major Incident Control Rooms, disclosing three designated areas on campus which each contain lockable facilities for the storage of equipment and documentation for use by MIT during an incident. This section provides information on decision-making for activation of the control room - the Head of Safety (aka deputy) and MIT secretary's responsibilities are listed here. Depending on the incident, an emergency call center is also designated to be set up with trained volunteers leading this initiative.

Section six outlines the agenda for MIT Meeting, which consists of the allocation of responsibilities (recorded using Form 2 - MIT Assigned Roles), incident assessment (recorded using Form 3 - Incident Assessment Record), ownership of the incident, defining objectives of MIT, developing response strategies, and agreed actions arising with schedule planning for the next meeting. The following nine pages of the document enclose each of the five MIP forms which contain multiple sections, details, and initiatives for MIT preparatory utilization.

Form 1 is the Initial MIT Meeting Record which outlines a chronological record of date, time, location, and individuals involved during each meeting. Each meeting's agenda is broken down sectionally, based on the agenda outline disclosed in section six, with an action-item list included. This list is used to address an action, the owner responsible, and rating of priority or timescale for this specific item taken on by an MIT member. The end of the form includes the scheduled plan for setting a date, time, and venue for the next meeting.

Form 2 designates the MIT Assigned Roles. This describes the full range of responsibilities and roles for each individual member of the team. It outlines the tasks of each lead within the MIT in ranked order: (1) MIT Lead, (2) Finance Lead, (3) Communications Lead, (4) People Lead, (5) Information and Technology Lead, (6) Estates Lead, (7) Safety lead, (8) Operations Lead, (9) Secretary Lead, and "others as needed" are noted as well. This form also discusses role guidance for the UCL liaison officer - essentially acting as the primary contact for agencies responding to an incident and working closely with the MIT.

Form 3 discloses the Incident Assessment Record, which is used by the MIT for post-report and analysis of an incident. The form includes factors ranging from regulatory, financial, operational, property, and health assessment on post-incident conditions within UCL. It addresses potential or active impacts on the university, expected duration, and possible future outcomes.

Form 4 focuses on the MIT Objectives which are applied to any major incident at UCL. Depending on the type of incident, this is used to measure and set specific goals to ensure maximized prioritization of core objectives throughout an incident with collaboratively set deadlines by members of the MIT. Following this, Form 5 is an outline of the Incident Response Strategy which encompasses available strategic response options with pros and cons, resulting in a team-created recovery strategy for initiation.

Section seven of the plan discusses subsequent meetings of the MIT, which addresses protocol for meetings following a major incident with an altered agenda in correlation with the acute incident. Section 8 of the plan discloses location of key information relating to hazardous areas - recording occupying departments and key hazards for each UCL building which is

accessed by the MIT for assistance through the management of a major incident. Lastly, section nine formulates procedure for the record of events and the closure report. The safety lead ensures that all events are recorded through the UCL incident and reporting and investigation system which is accessible by all MIT members through the UCL intranet from the Safety Services homepage using a secure login process. The closure report requires a description of factors within the incident, services/number of people affected, and a statement on lessons learned.

Initial Review, Strengths, and Positives

Upon my review of UCL's MIP, there are substantial strengths of the plan's structure. The plan exhibits positive qualities correlated with an effective emergency management plan - it is concise, provokes developmental thinking, and provides clear orientation for team-work based objectives. The plan is easily accessible from UCL's website for review, discussion, and awareness of updates from students, faculty, or parents. The table of contents is organized very effectively with designated specifics or topics and the addition of an abbreviations page is very resourceful for a document of this stature. Readers can avoid confusion or misinterpretation by referring to the abbreviations page for clarification, something that a handful of other institutions do not include within their plan.

The plan remains very direct and consistent within each section with identifying goals, delegation of responsibility, and expected desired outcomes. The readiness of this plan is provided through a directly linear approach, for example: providing a flow chart with required chain of communication and leadership in the event of an incident, color-coded sequence

correlated with level of crisis distinguishing three incident criterias, instruction for assessment and post-assessment decision for activation of the MIP.

The MIP exhibits a team-work oriented focus on designating the importance of leadership roles to members of the MIT. The plan accounts for the clear chain of command, additionally addressing backup chain of command in the event primary leaders are not available, and holds accountablility within their leadership roles. An interesting piece of the MIP is that it exudes a focus on ownership amongst MIT members - each leader is accountable for their own influence towards the plan, objectives to carry out, and impact response strategy. The MIT uses a user-friendly SMART (Specific, Measurable, Achievable, Realistic, and Time Framed) application to their objective planning. This provides a clarifying and attainable consensus among the MIT to drive appropriate discussions on prioritizing their six objectives effectively for CTA (call to action) in an incident.

Another positive aspect of the plan is its allocation of open-perspective, flexibility, and accounted individualisation of each MIT member. For example, Form 1 (MIT Meeting Record) is laid out clearly and easily for team members to use as a resource for reflection during the meetings. It seems to be used more as a tool to stimulate discussion around ownership of specific incident-related tasks, perspective on response strategies, and agreements amongst the group for action items. In addition, the closure report at the end of an incident gives each member an opportunity to reflect: they are required to disclose other than the issue their own perspective on actions taken, lessons learned, and outstanding actions. This approach expands the developmental process for the institution to gain valuable insight from team members, serving

less as a record and more as a guide for future revitalizations to the current plan based on MIT feedback.

Weaknesses, Risks, and Issues

Though the MIP strengths rest on a strong basis for developmental process, strategy initiatives, and a relatively small chain of communication through MIT members; there are certainly areas of the plan where immediate attention should be taken into consideration. For one, the plan has very vague descriptive measures for components of an incident. The document briefly outlines "disruptions or problems" in Section 1, but does not explicitly account for clear events that constitute an incident, emergency, or crisis situation at any point through the plan. An alarming factor for me is that there is not even addressed protocol or mention of an active shooter incident, nonetheless any accountability for acts of aggression, terrorism, or personal harm (such as suicide). The plan requires an additional section which lists and explains various, specific elements of crisis incidents and emergency situations. This can give faculty and students clear criteria for how this plan is applied within different scenarios, while providing substantial coherence for MIT and IRT members which is a critical missing piece throughout the entire document. In comparison to many institutional emergency response plans for college campuses in the United States, there is an inclusion of distinct crisis situations.

Another drawback to this plan, although more of an accessibility versus procedural standpoint, is how easily an individual can obtain this plan from outside of the country. While it is standard that almost all schools provide online access to emergency management plans, I believe that this information should only be accessible by students, faculty, or parents by logging

in through a secured-system with password-protected measures. While a counter-argument to this could be prospective student engagements for access to the plan or investigative research/review on the plan for data analysis - the lack of international privacy for an emergency management plan is concerning. There should be an increase in monitored measures to track transferability for this type of sensitive information. Prospective international students, non-students, or casual internet users should have to request this information from an administrator versus having public access from the website. There should be an alternative method of obtaining this type of information, though this is more of a security-measure and a consideration discussed amongst most institutions which is not just limited only to UCL.

The MIP also lacks a clear course of activating the initiatives. In Section 3, there is a flow chart provided with a conflicted cross-over of communication between emergency services, campus security, and authorized personnel before reaching the activation phase by the MIT. The beginning cell of the flow chart, labeled Initial Incident Report by quickest practicable means, does not seem intuitive and displays confusing multi-directional correspondence. It looks as if the flow chart is asking for the information to be allocated to all three sources of contact to alert MIT, while each bracket connects to "Authorized Persons." This can cause miscommunication due to (1) no allocation of who the "authorized persons" are for each department in the plan and (2) waste time going through too many sources of contact first instead of going straight to an "authorized person" to alert MIT or an MIT member directly. The plan does not properly regulate the beginning stage of communication before MIT is even alerted, which inhibits the desired outcome of utilizing the quickest practicable means for procedure and leaves this strategy

ill-defined. The plan should include departmental contacts designated as authorized personnel and also revise CTA for set primary, immediate contacts.

The final drawback noted is the overt-focus on the plan's use of forms. Nine pages of the plan consist of forms while these sections could be filled with alternative information discussed through this critique. Additionally, there may be substantial difficulty with taking time to fill out required forms in the midst of a critical incident while the focus should be first and foremost on safety. The plan's first CTA is to fill out an Incident Report and this calls for immediate change as the time taken to do this can negatively influence the safety of the campus community. Prioritized revisions to the plan include, but are not limited to, vital addition of potentially hostile crisis incidents, secure-permissions for plan accessibility, and expected communication roles.