OHS Occupational Rehabilitation Policy

Section 1 - Summary

(1) Victoria University (VU) is committed to providing a safe and healthy workplace for all staff. It is the policy of Victoria University that every effort will be made to prevent work-related injuries through an appropriate risk management system. However, should a staff member sustain a work related injury that means they are unable to continue their normal duties and/or hours of work, VU will provide the necessary assistance for them to remain at work, or return to work as soon as it is safe to do so. VU will also take all reasonable steps to ensure the injury (or a similar injury) does not happen again. We will do this through risk management, in line with the policy outlined below and in accordance with legislative requirements.

(2) Occupational rehabilitation is about returning staff to productive employment as quickly and as safely as possible following a workplace injury. The underlying principle is that rehabilitation in the workplace, rather than at home or in a medical institution, is both more effective and more productive for the injured staff member and the employer.

Section 2 - Scope

(3) This Policy applies to Staff.

Section 3 - Policy Statement

(4) VU will assist staff who sustain a physical or psychological injury to remain at or return to their pre-injury duties in accordance with the Act.

(5) Victoria University's Return to Work Obligations under the Act are as follows:

a. For the duration of the employment obligation period, (to the extent it is reasonable to do so), VU will provide injured staff members with suitable employment if the staff member has a current work capacity or pre- injury employment, if the worker no longer has an incapacity.
b. From the time that VU know of a staff member's incapacity for work, VU will plan for a staff member's return to work. This includes:
    i. obtaining relevant information about the staff member's capacity for work;
    ii. considering reasonable workplace support, aids or modifications to assist in the staff member's return to work;
    iii. assessing and proposing options for suitable employment or pre-injury employment;
    iv. engaging in consultation;
    v. providing the worker with clear accurate and current details of the staff member's return to work arrangements;
    vi. monitoring the staff member's return to work.
c. VU will consult with the injured staff member, the staff member's doctor or healthcare provider (where the

worker has given their consent) and occupational rehabilitation provider (where one has been engaged) about their return to work.

d. VU will nominate and have appointed a Return to Work Coordinator who has an appropriate level of seniority and is competent to assist in meeting VU's obligations under the return to work part of the Act.
e. VU will, at all times, make specific return to work information available to staff members. Return to work information will also be made available to staff members following an injury. This information will include the display of the 'if you are injured poster' required under the Act. VU will consult with staff members about how specific return to work information is made available to workers.
f. If VU hires an on hire worker and that worker is injured while working at VU, VU will, (to the extent it is reasonable to do so), cooperate with the labour hire employer to facilitate the worker's return to work.

(6) As an injured worker, VU staff members have the right (under the Act) to:

a. choose their doctor or healthcare provider;
b. choose an occupational rehabilitation provider from a list of a minimum of three providers (when this service is required);
c. be represented, assisted and supported in the return to work process. This person can be a family member, friend, colleague or union representative. A support person cannot be the staff member’s legal representative;
d. be provided with suitable employment or pre-injury employment after a workplace injury;
e. privacy of their confidential information, maintained in accordance with the Privacy and Data Protection Act 2014 and the Health Records Act 2001 ;
f. appeal decisions made regarding their claim.

(7) As an injured worker, VU staff members are obligated (under the Act) to:

a. make reasonable efforts to return to work;
b. make reasonable efforts to actively participate and cooperate in planning for return to work;
c. actively use an occupational rehabilitation service when required and cooperate with the providers of that service;
d. actively participate and cooperate in assessments of their capacity for work, rehabilitation progress or future employment prospects;
e. actively participate and cooperate with their Agent in an interview to enhance their opportunities to return to work, if requested to do so.

Additional Information

(8) All staff are encouraged to access additional information about their rights and obligations as an injured worker via the following WorkSafe publications available from the WorkSafe Website:

a. Return to Work Coordination — the basics you need to know Worksafe Information for Return to Work Coordinators
b. Returning to Work — A guide for injured workers Returning to Work
c. Information for injured workers: How to make a claim How to make a Worksafe Claim

Issue Resolution Procedure for Return to Work Issues

(9) If/when an issue concerning return to work arises at VU, we will refer to our internal agreed issues resolution procedure - Complaints Policy.

(10) The following people can raise a return to work issue:

a. Injured worker;
b. Person nominated by the worker- the worker has the option to be represented, supported and assisted in the return to work process by another person;
c. Occupational rehabilitation provider;
d. Return to Work Coordinator;
e. Injured worker's manager or supervisor; or
f. Worker's treating health practitioner.

Section 4 - Procedures

(11) OHS Occupational Rehabilitation Procedure

Section 5 - HESF/ASQA/ESOS Alignment

(12) HESF: Standard 2.3 Wellbeing and Safety.

(13) Compliance Standards for NVR Registered Training Organisations and FPP Requirements 2025: Standard 20 Compliance with Laws.

Section 6 - Definitions

(14) Act: for the purposes of this Policy, refers to the Workplace Injury Rehabilitation and Compensation Act 2013 (Cth) (the Act).

(15) Approved Provider: means a provider of specialist Occupational Rehabilitation services that is approved by and registered with the Victorian WorkCover Authority.

(16) Early Intervention: means identifying physical, mental and organisational risk factors which have the potential to cause an injury and employing individually appropriate strategies to prevent them from reaching that point.

(17) Injury: (as defined by the Act) means any physical or mental injury and without limiting the generality of that definition includes -

a. industrial deafness;
b. a disease contracted by a worker in the course of the worker's employment (whether at, or away from, the place of employment);
c. a recurrence, aggravation, acceleration, exacerbation or deterioration of any pre-existing injury or disease.

(18) Manager: for the purposes of this policy, refers to: Vice Chancellor, Deputy Vice Chancellors, Executive Deans, Deputy Deans, Vice-Presidents, Executive Directors, Directors, Divisional Managers, and Managers.

(19) Occupational Rehabilitation Services: means specialist services, such as workplace assessments, vocational assessments, preparation of complex return to work plans, functional assessments, etc, that are available to assist injured staff to return to suitable and safe employment. Providers of these services are also available to advise and support Managers throughout the Return to Work process.

(20) Return to Work Coordinator: means the Coordinator WorkCover & Return to Work & Claims Management who is responsible for initiating and assisting in the development of return to work plans in conjunction with the injured staff member, the Manager and other key parties.

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(21) Staff member: for the purposes of this policy, means any person who has a current employment contract with VU. Contractors, students and visitors are not considered staff in this policy.

(22) Suitable Duties: means duties that are arranged for injured staff members on a temporary, fixed-term basis if they are unable to perform their pre-injury duties. Suitable duties are determined based on:

a. availability and appropriateness of duties,
b. the injured staff member's work capacity, AND;
c. recommendations from Treating Health Practitioners.

Suitable duties are finalised and signed in conjunction with the injured worker and other key parties.

(23) Treating Health Practitioner: means a qualified health professional (ie doctor, physiotherapist, psychologist, chiropractor, etc) who provides treatment for a work-related injury.

(24) WorkCover Authorised Agent: means an agent that has been authorised by the Victorian WorkCover Authority to administer all aspects of Workers Compensation in accordance with the Act.

a. VU’s WorkCover Authorised Agent is:
    i. Name: Gallagher Bassett Workers Compensation
    Phone: (03) 9297 9000
    E-mail: wcv@gbtpa.com.au

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