OHS Occupational Rehabilitation Procedure

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 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 Procedure outlined below and in accordance with legislative requirements.

(2) Occupational rehabilitation involves 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 Procedure applies to all Staff.

Section 3 - Policy/Regulation

(4) OHS Occupational Rehabilitation Policy

Section 4 - Procedures

Part A - Summary of Roles and Responsibilities

Roles	Responsibilities
Return to Work Coordinator	Support the return to work process for injured employees.
Claims Administrator	Manage and support the claims management process for injured employees.

Part B - Procedures

Steps for Managers to assist injured staff

(5) Assist injured staff member to complete an Incident Report on the Incident Reporting System.

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(6) Consult with the injured staff member to determine their individual needs.

(7) Talk to OHS Team (with person's permission) about how OHS can support the Manager and help them assist the injured staff member.

(8) Develop a written plan, in conjunction with the staff member, their manager, the Return to Work Coordinator, their treating health practitioners and other key parties to either maintain the person at work or return them to work.

(9) Ensure adjustments can be made (where necessary) to accommodate individual needs. These might include, but are not limited to, a change of hours, changes to duties/responsibilities, or a change of workplace/location.

(10) Recognise that each person's needs are different so it is important to keep asking how the person is handling their injury and work.

(11) Think about the person's work colleagues and the possible issues that may arise in the team.

(12) Consider how to "keep in touch" if the employee is off work (to help them stay connected).

(13) Ask the individual what they would like communicated to their work colleagues, and ask permission before acting.

(14) Manage the team to ensure no further injuries are sustained.

(15) Provide support and resources accordingly.

General Injuries

(16) Staff are to report all work-related injuries, or injuries that could potentially be aggravated by work, to their Manager at the first opportunity. Please refer to the definition of "injury" in clause (9) of this Procedure.

(17) The injured staff member must complete an incident report on the Incident Reporting System in conjunction with their Manager. In circumstances where the injured person is unable to complete the form, their Manager must act on their behalf and complete the report with preliminary details.

(18) Note: If 30 days have elapsed, between becoming aware of the injury and the reporting, there may not be an entitlement to Workers Compensation.

(19) The Manager should contact the employee to discuss the incident/injury/etc. They should find out how they are doing, advise how the University can assist them in their return to work and ascertain what the employee understands about their diagnosis, prognosis and work restrictions.

(20) The Manager must then alert the Return to Work Coordinator, who will provide guidance and assistance to facilitate the safe return of the injured staff member to their normal duties. The Manager must provide details regarding the injured staff member, the incident, type of injury, type of work usually performed, medical restrictions and available suitable duties.

(21) Return to Work Coordinator or Manager will contact the injured staff member, offer advice/assistance and determine medical restrictions and capacity for work.

(22) For non Workcover claims, the Return to Work Coordinator will liaise with the Treating Health Practitioners as soon as possible and make a referral to a Rehabilitation Provider for specialist support if necessary. Victoria University will provide a choice of at least three (3) appropriate Occupational Rehabilitation Providers for the staff member to choose from. For WorkCover claims, the Authorised WorkCover Insurer will determine whether a Rehabilitation Provider for specialist support is required, and provide a choice of at least three (3) appropriate Occupational Rehabilitation Providers for the staff members to choose from.

(23) If the staff member cannot or does not want to make a choice, one will be recommended for them. If the employee is off work or has medical restrictions, the Return to work Coordinator will discuss these restrictions with the employee's Manager and ensure that the Manager has a clear understanding of the medical requirements.

(24) A Return to Work plan developed in consultation with the injured staff member, Manager, Treating Health Practitioners, Return to Work Coordinator and key providers. The plan and an agreement will be in writing and conform to legislation.

(25) The Return to Work Coordinator and/or the Rehabilitation Provider will obtain the Treating Health Practitioners' advice, support and guidance prior to arranging the return to work plan, providing suitable duties and suitable hours, monitoring progress and, where necessary, prior to arranging placement in an alternative position.

(26) Regular return to work planning meetings will be scheduled and conducted as part of the return to work process. During these meetings, the plan will be monitored and revised in accordance with medical advice and legislative requirements.

(27) Continuation of the plan will be determined by evaluating progress towards the stated objective. If staged increases in hours and range of duties cannot be achieved within 52 weeks of the specified date or if frequent recurrences or aggravations of the injury occur, the return to work plan will be revised or possibly abandoned. If the plan is abandoned, a rehabilitation plan in another organisational unit may be trialed if appropriate. Eventually, the staff member may have to consider other employment options within Victoria University if suitable and practical.

(28) If the staff member is not successful in obtaining a position within the University, vocational re- education may then be considered for placement in a program such as the NES Program (New Employer Services) and/or the WISE Program (WorkCover Incentive Scheme for Employers). Both the NES and WISE programs assist workers to source new employment when they are unable to return to their pre injury employer. Further information can be found under the "workers" link on the Victorian WorkCover Authority website.

(29) The rate of pay for the period of participation in rehabilitation duties will be paid according to that of the alternative position, with appropriate compensation and make-up pay. Should the rate of compensation alter, or make-up payments cease, the injured employee will be advised in writing prior to it occurring.

(30) If makeup pay is due to cease, the injured employee will be advised so they can contact their Superannuation Fund or the University Superannuation Officer for advice regarding their options.

WorkCover Claims

(31) A WorkCover claim for compensation form and information will be sent as appropriate.

(32) The injured staff member must promptly provide the original WorkCover certificate of capacity, the completed Worker’s injury claim form and other relevant information to their manager or the Return to Work Coordinator. The staff member must give copies of the medical certificate to their Manager. For all lost time claims, the claim must be processed and sent to the WorkCover Authorised Agent by the Return to Work Coordinator within 10 calendar days of receiving the claim from the worker for a physical injury, and within three business days if the claim is for a mental injury.

(33) The Return to Work Coordinator shall inform staff whose claims have been accepted that they will have reasonable medical and similar expenses (such as Doctor, Specialist, medical treatment, hospital, Physiotherapist, Chemist etc) paid for by WorkCover. The WorkCover Authorised Agent decides if a particular cost is reasonable or not and cannot pay above the WorkCover Scheduled Fee.

(34) In the event a WorkCover claim is rejected and the employee has no paid leave entitlement, the University will encourage the employee to access income support from relevant government agencies (i.e. Centrelink) or claim

income protection where appropriate.

Section 5 - HESF/ASQA/ESOS Alignment

(35) HESF: Standard 2.3 Wellbeing and Safety.

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

Section 6 - Definitions

(37) Act: for the purposes of this Procedure, refers to the Workplace Injury Rehabilitation and Compensation Act 2013 (the Act).

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

(39) 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.

(40) 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.

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

(42) 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.

(43) 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.

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

(45) 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.

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

(47) 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. Victoria University's WorkCover Authorised Agent is:

Name: Gallagher Bassett Workers Compensation

Phone: (03) 9297 9000

E-mail: wcv@gbtpa.com.au

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