

# Disability and Medical Condition Support and Workplace Adjustment For Staff Policy

## Section 1 - Purpose / Objectives

(1) Victoria University takes all reasonable steps to provide an inclusive work environment, which respects the diversity inherent in our staff profile, in accordance with the University's Equity and Diversity Policy Framework, the Disability Action Plan and the OHS Policy Framework. The University seeks to provide reasonable adjustment and reasonable accommodation for staff and prospective staff with a disability/medical condition, to enable them to participate in all aspects of employment.

(2) This policy also outlines the process within which requests for reasonable adjustment/accommodation for staff with a disability or medical condition are to be considered at Victoria University.

(3) The purpose of this policy is to ensure that:

- a. Staff with a disability/medical condition are appropriately supported, wherever possible, to be able to successfully fulfill their work responsibilities in ways which are proactive, contribute to career or educational progression and support the University's operational requirements;
- b. The University is compliant with relevant state and federal anti-discrimination legislation by adopting a positive and consistent approach to supporting staff with a disability/medical condition, implementing reasonable adjustment/s and/or occupational rehabilitation support where possible, to ensure that discrimination on the basis of disability, impairment or medical condition does not occur and that staff can fully contribute to safe and suitable employment;
- c. Staff and supervisors/managers are aware of their rights, responsibilities and obligations in relation to supporting staff with a disability/medical condition, including guidance to help manage such arrangements at the work unit level.

**Please Note: Workplace injuries or those subject to Workcover compensation are dealt with separately under the University's OHS Policy framework, including the Occupational Rehabilitation Policy, Return To Work Program and in accordance with the relevant Legislation – Occupational Health and Safety Act and Accident Compensation Act 1985.**

(4) This policy should be read in conjunction with the University's other relevant policies.

## Section 2 - Scope / Application

(5) This policy is important to:

- a. All Staff
- b. Managers and Supervisors
- c. Human Resource Practitioners

## Section 3 - Definitions

(6) Disability - The definition of disability is that used by relevant State and Commonwealth Anti-Discrimination Legislation and is very broadly defined. A disability may be periodic, temporary or permanent, total or partial, lifelong or acquired

- a. "disability" , in relation to a person, means:
  - i. total or partial loss of the person's bodily or mental functions; or
  - ii. total or partial loss of a part of the body; or
  - iii. the presence in the body of organisms causing disease or illness; or
  - iv. the presence in the body of organisms capable of causing disease or illness; or
  - v. the malfunction, malformation or disfigurement of a part of the person's body; or
  - vi. a disorder or malfunction that results in the person learning differently from a person without the disorder or malfunction; or
  - vii. a disorder, illness or disease that affects a person's thought processes, perception of reality, emotions or judgment or that results in disturbed behaviour;
- b. and includes a disability that:
  - i. presently exists; or
  - ii. previously existed but no longer exists; or
  - iii. may exist in the future (including because of a genetic predisposition to that disability); or
  - iv. is imputed to a person.
- c. To avoid doubt, a disability that is otherwise covered by this definition includes behaviour that is a symptom or manifestation of the disability.

(7) People and Culture - Human Resources Department at VU

(8) P&C Business Partner - Consultant to work with business areas.

(9) Occupational Rehabilitation Consultancy - Occupational rehabilitation services means specialist services, such as workplace assessments, rehabilitation consulting, preparation of return to work plans, functional assessments, etc, that are available to assist staff to participate in suitable and safe employment.

(10) Staff/Staff member - A current member of staff employed at VU, including work experience staff, trainees and, for the purposes of this policy, contractors to the University.

(11) Potential Staff Member/Applicants - Individuals applying for paid work at VU, including persons applying for work experience, traineeship or, for the purposes of this policy, contract positions.

(12) Supervisor/Manager - The person to whom a staff member reports

(13) University or VU - Victoria University

(14) Workplace - The organisational workplace (department/unit) in which a staff member is employed to work.

## Section 4 - Policy Statement

(15) Victoria University supports the right of people with all abilities to work and study on an equitable basis with other members of the University community, in a safe and healthy manner and in an environment free of discrimination and harassment. For many people with a disability, the physical environment, inaccessible equipment or inflexible

employment practices can impose unintended barriers to effective participation in employment. Discrimination, Harassment or Bullying by any staff member against another on the basis of disability will not be tolerated.

(16) This policy outlines the University's commitment to:

- a. providing an accessible and inclusive workplace for staff with a disability/medical condition; and
- b. applying the principles of reasonable adjustment to ensure removal of any barriers to full participation in all aspects of University work and life.

(17) The University is committed to developing, negotiating and providing a reasonable adjustment plan for staff with a disability/medical condition, if required, in accordance with this policy, the Occupational Rehabilitation Policy, the Discrimination, Harassment and Bullying Policy and in recognition that the best source of information is the person with the disability/condition.

## **Section 5 - Procedures**

(18) The procedures describe how to request, develop and implement a workplace adjustment to accommodate a disability/medical condition. The procedures accompanying this policy apply to staff members who have a temporary, episodic or permanent disability/medical condition that may impact on the accessibility of the work environment or their ability to perform the work associated with the role.

## **Section 6 - Guidelines**

(19) Nil

## Status and Details

<b>Status</b>	Historic
<b>Effective Date</b>	3rd September 2014
<b>Review Date</b>	30th June 2019
<b>Approval Authority</b>	Vice-Chancellor
<b>Approval Date</b>	3rd September 2014
<b>Expiry Date</b>	3rd June 2019
<b>Accountable Officer</b>	Simone Wright Chief Human Resources Officer 9919 5447
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