

OHS Rehabilitation Policy

Section 1 - Background and Purpose

(1) Occupational Rehabilitation is the process of restoring those who are ill or injured to the fullest physical, psychological, social, vocational and economic usefulness of which they are capable.

(2) Occupational Rehabilitation aims to assist employees to return to meaningful and productive work at the highest possible level of functioning following illness or injury.

(3) Effective Occupational Rehabilitation commences as soon as possible after an injury or illness is reported and takes account of the individual's state of personal well being as well as physical recovery.

(4) The purpose of this Policy and Procedure is to promote occupational rehabilitation for employees to enable an early, safe and durable return to work. These services are available to all employees whether the injury or illness is work related or not and can be provided either by appropriate university staff or by external consultants.

Section 2 - Scope

(5) Applies to all University employees.

Section 3 - Policy Statement

(6) La Trobe University is committed to actively promoting and providing occupational rehabilitation and return to work services for all employees with injuries or illnesses that may affect their employment.

(7) Rehabilitation will be achieved through:

- a. The nomination of a Return to Work Coordinator
- b. The nomination of approved rehabilitation providers
- c. Ensuring that effective procedures are in place to support occupational rehabilitation
- d. Ensuring that rehabilitation services and return to work activities commence immediately, or as soon as is necessary to ensure the earliest possible return to pre-injury employment
- e. Ensuring that suitable duties, including modified or alternate duties, are made available where practicable to assist the injured employee to remain at work or to return to work at the earliest opportunity
- f. Maintaining a register of injuries
- g. Maintaining the confidentiality of information relating to employees participating in occupational rehabilitation in accordance with privacy legislation.
- h. Ensuring that a rehabilitation program is voluntary and does not prejudice an injured worker.

Section 4 - Procedure

Responsibilities

(8) The Return to Work Coordinator is responsible for:

- a. Assisting injured employees where practicable to remain at or return to work.
- b. Commencing occupational rehabilitation as early as possible in accordance with medical advice.
- c. Liaising with injured employees, their supervisor and their treating medical and health professionals.
- d. Monitoring the progress of injured employees.
- e. Preparing a return to work plan where appropriate in consultation with all parties concerned

(9) Heads of Schools, Divisional Managers are responsible for:

- a. Where practicable, providing or identifying suitable duties for injured employees.
- b. Ensuring the work environment is suitable or that appropriate modifications are made or equipment provided to enable a safe return to work.
- c. Supporting the employee and the return to work program.
- d. Liaising with the Workplace Environment and Wellbeing Unit (OHS) on matters relating to the employee's return to work program.

(10) All employees:

- a. Reporting promptly all injuries or illnesses to their supervisor that may be work related or may affect their ability to perform their duties.
- b. Cooperating with the University to enable it to meet its rehabilitation obligations.
- c. Submitting promptly all relevant medical certificates and reports, together with leave applications for absences.
- d. Attending medical examinations relating to the actual injury or illness as arranged by the University or its insurers (reasonable costs associated with such examinations will be borne by the University or its insurers).
- e. Cooperating in reasonable workplace changes designed to assist the rehabilitation of another employee.

Return to work Program, Plan and Offer of Suitable Employment

(11) In cases where an employee's duties are affected by their injury or illness, a Return to Work Program can be developed in consultation with all parties concerned.

A Return to Work Program has two parts, the Return to Work Plan and an Offer of Suitable Employment. It sets out in writing the arrangements necessary to maintain an injured or ill employee at work or return them to work.

The Return to Work Plan notes basic details regarding the injury or illness and the key parties involved in providing support services, i.e. treating health practitioners, occupational rehabilitation consultants, etc.

An Offer of Suitable Employment is the written outline of the suitable duties that have been identified for the employee to undertake or return to.

Role of Return to Work Coordinator

(12) The Role of Return to Work Coordinator is to:

- a. Assist injured or ill employees where practicable to remain at, or return to, work.
- b. Commence Occupational Rehabilitation support as early as possible.
- c. Liaise with the employee, their supervisor and treating medical and health professionals to identify how best to

support that person via the Occupational Rehabilitation program.

- d. Monitor the progress of the employee with respect to return to work programs.
- e. Prepare Return to Work plans where appropriate.

Appointment of a Return to Work Coordinator

(13) The Return to Work Coordinator is appointed by the University. The name and contact details of the RTW Coordinator is published on the Human Resources Internet Site.

Section 5 - Definitions

(14) For the purpose of this Policy and Procedure:

- a. Rehabilitation: Process of restoring those who are ill or injured to the fullest physical, psychological, social, vocational and economic usefulness of which they are capable.
- b. Return to Work Coordinator: Nominated person(s) who advise employees and the workplace in regards to Occupational Rehabilitation and Workers Compensation.

Section 6 - Stakeholders

Responsibility for implementation – Executive OHS Committee.

Responsibility for monitoring implementation and compliance – Executive Director, Human Resources.

Status and Details

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