

Workplace Rehabilitation - Procedures

1. Purpose of procedures

1.1 Workplace rehabilitation is the process of restoring an injured worker to their maximal physical, psychological, social, vocational and economic capacity. The University aims to assist injured workers to return to normal duties as quickly and as safely as possible. The University approaches injury management as a process of consultation and communication between all stakeholders to ensure optimal working capacity for the injured worker throughout the rehabilitation process.

1.2 These procedures operationalise the principles set out in the Workplace Rehabilitation – Operational Policy and clarify responsibilities of stakeholders.

2. Scope and application

2.1 These procedures apply to all staff of the University

3. Definitions

Please refer to the University's Glossary of Terms for policies and procedures. Terms and definitions identified below are specific to these procedures and are critical to its effectiveness:

Injured Employee: Employees who have sustained a medically diagnosed occupational injury and/or illness which may be physical or psychological for which they have an entitlement to compensation as defined by the prevailing legislation.

Incident Report Form: A form to document all workplace illnesses, injuries, hazards, near misses and accidents.

Injury Management: A process of consultation and communication between all stakeholders to ensure optimal working capacity for the injured worker throughout the rehabilitation process.

Non-work-Related Injuries: Injuries that are not caused by employment and are not claimable through current workers' compensation legislation.

Suitable Duties: A program of employment which provides an injured worker with meaningful work to allow a gradual and safe return to normal duties.

Treating Medical Practitioner (TMP): The nominated General Medical Practitioner (doctor) who provides appropriate medical treatment, certification and injury management.

Q-Comp: The workers' compensation regulatory authority of Queensland.

Work-Related Injuries: Where employment is a significant contributing factor in causing injury as defined by current workers' compensation legislation and accepted by WorkCover as a workers' compensation claim. Work-related injuries can happen during work, on a work break, while working away from the worksite, travelling between worksites, or travelling between work and home.

WorkCover: WorkCover Queensland is a Queensland Government owned statutory authority operating as a commercial enterprise for workers' compensation insurance.

Workplace Rehabilitation: The process of restoring an injured worker to their maximal physical, psychological, social, vocational and economic capacity. It aims to assist injured workers to return to normal duties as quickly and as safely as possible.

Rehabilitation and Return to Work Coordinator (RRTWC): Designated University staff responsible for liaising with the injured workers and stakeholders, as well as developing, coordinating and evaluating workplace rehabilitation plans. The RRTWC is based in People and Culture.

4. Work-related injuries

4.1 Staff must report work-related injuries to their supervisor as soon as possible.

APPROVAL AUTHORITY

Chief Operating Officer

RESPONSIBLE EXECUTIVE MEMBER

Chief Operating Officer

DESIGNATED OFFICER

Director, People and Culture

FIRST APPROVED

2 September 1997

LAST AMENDED

16 February 2022

REVIEW DATE

18 March 2024

STATUS

Active

- (a) staff must complete an Incident Report form and forward the completed form to their supervisor;
- (b) staff must obtain a workers' compensation (WorkCover) medical certificate from their treating medical practitioner if they intend to claim for worker's compensation; and
- (c) to apply for workers' compensation, a staff member must submit an application to WorkCover, either online or by telephone 1300 362 128.

4.2 Work-related injuries are those where employment is a significant contributing factor in causing injury as defined by current workers' compensation legislation and accepted by WorkCover as a workers' compensation claim. Work-related injuries can happen during work, on a work break, while working away from the worksite, travelling between worksites, or travelling between work and home.

4.3 In some cases, staff may be asked to authorise a Rehabilitation and Return to Work Coordinator, based in the Health Safety and Wellbeing team in People and Culture, to discuss their injury with their treating medical practitioner and supervisor.

4.4 Depending on the type of injury, compensatory benefits payable by WorkCover may include weekly compensation payments, medical, hospital and rehabilitation costs, and/or a lump sum payment for permanent impairment. WorkCover has a maximum approved amount that they will pay for medical and allied health services. If the treating doctor or specialist charges above that amount, the patient is responsible for paying the difference. More details can be found at Allied health fees.

4.5 WorkCover assesses an application according to the relevant workers' compensation legislation. To assess an application, WorkCover may talk to the staff member, the University, the treating medical practitioner and other relevant stakeholders to determine whether:

- (a) the claim has been made in the right timeframe;
- (b) the person claiming was working for the University when they were injured;
- (c) the person claiming is considered a worker;
- (d) it was a work-related incident that caused the injury; and
- (e) the person's job was a significant contributing factor to their injury.

5. Non work-related injuries

5.1 Staff with non-work related injuries should inform their supervisor as soon as practicable. Non work-related injuries are those not significantly caused by employment and are not claimable through current workers' compensation legislation. Staff must obtain a medical clearance from their TMP to ensure a safe return to work.

5.2 If the staff member is unable to return to normal duties post injury, they should inform their treating medical practitioner of the availability of workplace rehabilitation at the University. Staff with non-work related injuries, may request that their treating medical practitioner complete a Work Capabilities form, to assist with the development of a suitable duties plan that enables a safe (and gradual if needed) return to work.

5.3 The Rehabilitation and Return to Work Coordinator may request the opinion of alternate medical practitioners in consultation with the staff member, where clarification of a diagnosis/prognosis is necessary or further information is required. The suitable duties plan is a voluntary arrangement for the University and the staff member, and each case is assessed individually, and where required, in consultation with the treating medical practitioner.

6. Suitable duties plans

6.1 The Rehabilitation and Return to Work Coordinator provides, monitors and reviews a suitable duties plan, which is a program of employment providing an injured staff member with meaningful work to allow a gradual and safe return to normal duties. The aim of the plan is to optimise the worker's rehabilitation and not place them at any further risk of injury. For staff with work-related injuries this is prepared in accordance with workers' compensation legislation.

6.2 When an injured worker is unable to return to their previous position, a suitable duties plan is developed by the Rehabilitation and Return to Work Coordinator based on the medical certificate provided by the treating medical practitioner, and in consultation with the staff member and their Supervisor. The plan includes:

- (a) the goal of the plan;
- (b) a list of duties and restrictions;
- (c) the hours to be worked;
- (d) details of training required; and

(e) anticipated time frame of the plan.

6.3 In accordance with workers' compensation legislation, staff on WorkCover must actively participate in suitable duties as per their suitable duties plans. Failure to participate in suitable duties may result in suspension of WorkCover benefits.

6.4 When a staff member with a non-work-related injury fails to progress during a suitable duties plan, the University has the right to request the staff member visit another medical practitioner, or an appropriate specialist practitioner. Failure to co-operate with these arrangements may result in the cancellation of the suitable duties plan.

7. Salary payments made by Workcover Queensland during workplace rehabilitation

7.1 For the majority of workers the weekly compensation rate for the first 26 weeks will be paid at the greater of the following:

(a) 85% of their Normal Weekly Earnings; or

(b) 100% of their industrial instrument (most workers will be employed under an industrial instrument and this is confirmed with their employer).

7.2 Payment of wages

7.2.1 Wage payments don't include:

(a) allowances or expenses relating to travel, car, relocation, meal, education, living in the country or away from home, entertainment, clothing, tools and vehicles;

(b) superannuation;

(c) any lump-sum termination payments for superannuation, accrued holidays, long service leave or any other purpose; and

(d) amounts paid to a worker as an employer excess.

7.2.2. Until the claim has been assessed by WorkCover, the staff member will be paid against their available personal leave, annual leave or long service leave, as requested by the staff member.

7.2.3 If there are no leave credits available, then the staff member will remain on unpaid leave until the claim is determined.

7.2.4 Upon the acceptance of the claim, all leave will be re-credited to the staff member.

7.2.5 For accepted claims, WorkCover will pay the staff member directly for any time lost due to injury.

7.2.6 For non-work-related injuries, the staff member will be required to take personal leave in the form of sick or annual leave, for any time not worked, whilst injured. Leave without pay may be approved for an agreed period after all other leave has been exhausted.

8. Responsibilities

8.1 Injured staff

8.1.1 Staff are responsible for obtaining appropriate medical treatment for an injury.

8.1.2 Staff must provide appropriate medical certification and leave forms, and for work-related injuries and WorkCover forms and documentation.

8.2 Treating medical practitioner

8.2.1 The treating medical practitioner provides injury management and suitable duties information through the WorkCover medical certificate or a Work Capabilities form for non-work-related injuries to assist with the development of a suitable duties plan. In some cases, the treating medical practitioner may be required to approve the suitable duties plan to ensure it is in accordance with their ongoing treatment of the injured staff member.

8.3 Rehabilitation and Return to Work Coordinator

8.3.1 The Rehabilitation and Return to Work Coordinator works in consultation with the injured staff member, their supervisor, the treating medical practitioner, allied health professionals and WorkCover (if applicable) to develop an appropriate suitable duties plan.

8.3.2 Through consultation with the above mentioned stakeholders the Rehabilitation and Return to Work Coordinator identifies any failures to meet the requirements of the suitable duties plan and addresses these issues with stakeholders concerned.

8.3.3 The Rehabilitation and Return to Work Coordinator maintains confidential and accurate records of the above process, including communications between stakeholders, medical certificates and suitable duties plans.

8.3.4 The injured worker and the Rehabilitation and Return to Work Coordinator will liaise with Workcover Queensland to coordinate remuneration for the injured staff member.

8.4 Supervisors

8.4.1 Supervisors should ensure that an injured worker seeks appropriate medical treatment immediately or as soon as practicable after an incident, injury or illness. If the injury is work-related the supervisor is to ensure an incident report is submitted and contact the Return to Work Coordinator as soon as possible.

8.4.2 In concert with the Rehabilitation and Return to Work Coordinator, supervisors have a critical role in ensuring the success of suitable duties plans, identifying current and suitable duties and helping to determine an appropriate suitable duties plan. Supervisors provide support in the implementation of a suitable duties plan, and monitor job performance and progress.

8.5 Other Staff

8.5.1 Colleagues within the relevant work area are encouraged to be involved positively and actively wherever possible to support the injured staff member and their return to work.

END

RELATED DOCUMENTS

- Health, Safety and Wellbeing - Governing Policy
- Workplace Rehabilitation - Operational Policy

LINKED DOCUMENTS

- Workplace Rehabilitation - Operational Policy

RELATED LEGISLATION / STANDARDS

- Workers' Compensation and Rehabilitation Act 2003 (Qld)
- University of the Sunshine Coast Enterprise Agreement