Return to Work Program Policy

December 2023 - This document is expired. It is replaced by the WHS Procedure - Risk and Hazard Management.

Section 1 - Purpose

(1) This Policy sets out management principles of Charles Sturt University (the University) on rehabilitation and return to work for staff who have been injured or become ill in the course of their employment.

(2) This program forms part of the Work Health and Safety Management System of the University and is consistent with the Injury Management Program of the University's workers compensation insurer.

Scope

(3) This Policy applies to all staff members of the University.

Section 2 - Glossary

(4) For the purpose of this Policy, the following definitions apply:

a. Occupational Rehabilitation - refers to the restoration of the injured staff member to their fullest possible physical, psychological, social, vocational and economic capacity.
b. Suitable Duties - refers to duties that are consistent with medical advice and that are meaningful, productive and appropriate for the injured worker's physical and psychological condition. They are agreed between the Injury Management Coordinator and the injured worker, and aim to assist in rehabilitation and return to work. Suitable duties could include:
    i. parts of the job that the injured worker was doing before the injury or illness;
    ii. the injured worker's pre-injury job on reduced hours;
    iii. training opportunities; or
    iv. different duties altogether.

Section 3 - Policy

Commitment

(5) Charles Sturt University (the University), through its Work Health and Safety Management System, is committed to:

a. preventing injury or illness by providing a safe and healthy working environment;
b. ensuring that injury management activities commence as soon as possible after injury in a manner consistent with the staff member's medical fitness for work;
c. providing support throughout the return to work process to minimise the effects of the injury and ensure that an early return to work is a normal practice and expectation;

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d. providing suitable duties/employment for an injured staff member as soon as is safely possible, as an integral part of the return to work process;
e. consulting with staff members and, where applicable, their nominated representative to ensure that the Return to Work Program operates effectively;
f. ensuring that participation in a Return to Work Program will not, of itself, disadvantage an injured staff member; and
g. ensuring that return to work principles are aligned with the insurer's injury management program.

Return to Work Program

(6) The University will consult with its staff members to ensure that the Return to Work Program operates in an effective manner for the purpose of implementing the University's return to work objectives.

(7) The University's Return to Work Program is an agreed system that is made up of a series of policies, procedures, guidelines, forms and links to information. It is the responsibility of the Work Health and Safety Unit (WHS Unit) to develop, implement, review and promote the Return to Work Program.

(8) The University's Return to Work program was developed through consultation and agreement with staff representatives, ensuring that the developed program meets the legislative requirement to be consistent with the University's workers compensation insurer's Injury Management Program and Guidelines for Workplace Return to Work Programs (SafeWork NSW, September 2010).

(9) Amendments to the Return to Work Program may be required, for example, due to changes in the legislation or when the program is reviewed. When this occurs, then approval for any changes will be made in accordance with the Delegations and Authorisations Policy.

(10) The Return to Work Program will be reviewed in consultation with the relevant University Health and Safety Committees. In addition, the Return to Work Program will be monitored and reviewed regularly by the Vice-Chancellor or nominee.

Issue Resolution

(11) All efforts will be made to resolve disagreements about the University's Return to Work Program, or its components, through discussions and in a spirit of cooperation.

Section 4 - Procedures

(12) Refer to the Injury Management and Return to Work Procedure.

Section 5 - Guidelines

(13) Nil.

Status and Details

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