

# Injury Management and Rehabilitation Policy

## Section 1 - Definitions

(1) For the purpose of this policy:

- a. 'Return to Work Program' refers to the University's system of managing workers who suffer a work related injury;
- b. 'Injury Management Plan' is a coordinated and managed plan that integrates all aspects of an employee's injury management including treatment, rehabilitation, retraining and claims management;
- c. 'Return to Work Plan' refers to a coordinated and managed program that enables individual employees to make a safe and timely return to their pre-injury fitness and duties;
- d. 'Nominated treating doctor' refers to the treating doctor nominated by the injured employee who, if required, will contribute to the employee's Return to Work Plan;
- e. 'Injury management consultants' are facilitators who assist insurers, employers, employees and treating doctors to find solutions to problems that may arise with Return to Work Plans;
- f. 'Significant injury' is where an injured employee cannot undertake their usual duties for a continuous period of seven or more days.

## Section 2 - Policy Statement

### Part A - Policy Declaration

(2) Southern Cross University is committed to providing a safe and healthy work environment. On those occasions when injuries do occur, this policy provides the framework for an equitable and consistent approach to the management of workplace injuries and occupational rehabilitation.

### Part B - Policy Description

#### Objectives

(3) The aim of this policy is to ensure the University complies with relevant state and territory legislation relating to work, health and safety, workers' compensation and injury management and facilitates a safe and timely return to pre-injury fitness and duties for injured employees.

#### Scope

(4) This policy applies to all University employees.

### Part C - Content and Implementation

(5) The University's injury management process involves the co-operation of all parties to ensure the best outcome for the employee within the framework set by the relevant state or territory legislation. Specific responsibilities and the processes to be followed are specified below.

## The University

(6) The University has developed a Return to Work Program in consultation with employees. A summary of the program is displayed on noticeboards throughout the University.

(7) The University aims to consult with staff, through Health and Safety Representatives (HSRs) to ensure the Return to Work Program operates effectively and is reviewed periodically.

(8) All significant injuries are reported to the University's insurer within 48 hours of the injury being reported to the University to allow the injury management process to commence as soon as possible.

(9) The University aims to have a Return to Work Plan in place for every employee who has a significant injury so that the employee receives prompt, appropriate medical management and a planned and managed return to work.

## Return to Work Coordinator

(10) The University's Return To Work Coordinator is the Manager, Workplace Health and Safety. The role of the Return To Work Coordinator is to:

- a. assist injured employees return to work as soon as it is safe and practicable to do so;
- b. cooperate with the Insurer to develop Injury Management Plans for injured employees;
- c. where appropriate, initiate the development of individual Return to Work Plans;
- d. ensure employees who need specialised rehabilitation services are referred to appropriate rehabilitation providers;
- e. monitor the employee's treatment and rehabilitation progress; and
- f. maintain confidential records of rehabilitation cases.

(11) Where appropriate, the University's Return To Work Coordinator also provides assistance for the return to work of employees who have been absent as a result of non-work related injuries or illness.

## Employees

(12) An injured employee is obliged to advise their supervisor of a work-related injury as soon as possible after the injury occurs. An [Incident, Accident and Hazard Report](#) Form should be completed and forwarded to the employee's supervisor for comment and then referred to the Manager, Workplace Health and Safety.

(13) Where it is considered appropriate, the Return To Work Coordinator will contact the injured employee to develop a Return to Work Plan. Employees are required to participate and cooperate with the Return To Work Coordinator to develop their Return to Work Plan and comply with obligations imposed by the plan. Where the employee has suffered a significant injury, their nominated treating doctor and a Rehabilitation Provider may also be involved.

(14) Workers' compensation payments may be suspended where an injured employee fails to comply with the requirements of their Injury Management Plan. Subject to meeting requirements, payments may be recommenced but suspended payments cannot be recovered.

## Rehabilitation Providers

(15) The University has nominated rehabilitation providers who are appointed to individual cases if necessary. An injured employee may choose their own accredited rehabilitation provider or change providers while undertaking rehabilitation.

(16) If required, the rehabilitation provider will prepare a written Return to Work Plan for an injured employee in consultation with the treating medical practitioner and the Return To Work Coordinator. Wherever necessary, there

will be a staged return to normal duties.

(17) If the employee has a significant injury, the Rehabilitation Provider follows an Injury Management Plan developed by the University's insurer which outlines the employee's work activities and proposed treatment.

## **Suitable Duties**

(18) The University aims to provide suitable duties when an injured employee is cleared by a medical practitioner to return to work on a full-time or part-time basis.

(19) Assessment of suitable duties must address the duties available, the work unit's requirements and the employee's medical restrictions and physical capacity.

(20) The following aspects are considered when assessing suitable duties:

- a. nature of the incapacity and the employee's pre-injury employment;
- b. details of restrictions as advised in the WorkCover NSW or Q-Comp medical certificate provided, or recognised equivalent medical certificate used in other states;
- c. age, education, skills and work experience of the injured employee;
- d. location and proximity of the employee's place of residence;
- e. provisions of any Injury Management Plan for the employee;
- f. any suitable employment for which the employee has received training; and
- g. suitable duties are productive and meaningful.

(21) The following parties may be consulted when suitable duties for an injured employee are developed or changed:

- a. Return To Work Coordinator;
- b. injured employee;
- c. employee's line supervisor;
- d. nominated treating doctor;
- e. rehabilitation provider; and
- f. insurer.

## **Return to Work Plans**

(22) An individual Return to Work Plan is developed for each injured employee on suitable duties. This plan is prepared by the Return To Work Coordinator or the rehabilitation provider and agreed to by the parties involved. Signed copies of the Return to Work Plan are provided to the injured employee, their supervisor and the nominated treating doctor.

(23) The Return to Work Plan will contain the following information:

- a. job title and location;
- b. goal of the Return to Work Plan;
- c. the name of the nominated supervisor;
- d. hours/days to be worked;
- e. duties, including any restrictions;
- f. commencement date;
- g. duration of the plan; and
- h. review date.

## Disputes

(24) If there is concern over the suitability of duties offered, discussions will be held between the Return To Work Coordinator, management, and the employee to seek resolution of the matter.

(25) Disputes regarding medical treatment may be referred to external consultants for an independent medical opinion.

(26) If a dispute continues an injury management consultant will be engaged, in consultation with the insurer, to review the employee's fitness for employment and the availability of suitable duties. They may be called upon in the following circumstances:

- a. inconsistent goals;
- b. complexity of injury or workplace environment;
- c. poor communication between insurer/employer and treating doctor;
- d. inconsistency between the treating doctor's recommendations and the workplace requirements; and
- e. disagreement about the suitability of duties offered to an injured employee.

(27) If a dispute is not resolved using an injury management consultant, the matter may be referred to the relevant authority as required under the various state or territory legislation.

## Status and Details

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| <b>Status</b>             | Historic                               |
| <b>Effective Date</b>     | 10th October 2012                      |
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| <b>Head of Work Unit</b>  | Kath Drew<br>Director, Human Resources |
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