

Return to Work Policy

Section 1 - Overview

The University is committed to assisting staff members to achieve a safe return to work after periods of illness or injury, in a way that will facilitate their best possible recovery. The management of injury or illness in the workplace is regarded as an important part of a Supervisor's responsibilities. This Policy should be read in conjunction with the University's Academic and ELC Teaching Staff Collective Agreement, and the Professional Staff Collective Agreement, and their relevant clauses addressing issues of long-term sick leave, workers compensation and medical retirement.

Section 2 - Scope

This Policy covers the return to work of staff.

Section 3 - Policy

(1) Supervisors will manage sick leave and workers compensation leave in accordance with the University's policies.

(2) At any time, following an illness or injury (whether it is work-related or not), a Supervisor or staff member may contact the Return to Work Coordinator for advice.

(3) Where a staff member has been absent from work for more than eight (8) weeks and has indicated that they intend to resume work, the Supervisor will:

- a. contact the staff member to confirm the date of resumption of duties;
- b. advise the staff member that they require a medical clearance (this will include a statement/certificate from their treating doctor indicating that they are fit to resume work and provide details of any limitations on that return to work);
- c. ascertain any special needs or flexible working arrangements that may be required to facilitate the return to work; and
- d. advise the Return to Work Coordinator.

(4) Depending on individual circumstances the Return to Work Coordinator may do one or more of the following:

- a. consult the staff member;
- b. provide advice to the work area,
- c. refer the matter to other specialist staff such as the OHS Officer;
- d. request consent from the staff member to liaise directly with their treating doctor;
- e. develop a Return to Work Plan in consultation with the staff member, Supervisor and other relevant parties.

(5) In some circumstances, the staff member may not be able to resume work until suitable support measures have been put in place. The Supervisor will advise the staff member if there is to be a delay in their return to work date.

(6) Where a Return to Work Plan is provided, both the staff member and the work area must adhere to the plan. Any

variations to the plan will be facilitated by the Return to Work Coordinator.

(7) All reasonable costs associated with return to work following a long-term illness (that is not workers compensation) will be met by the Cost Centre from which the staff member took the leave.

(8) If return to work does not result in the resumption of pre-injury or illness duties within a reasonable period of time, other employment options will be explored with the staff member. A review date will be incorporated into the return to work plan.

(9) The staff member's right to privacy is acknowledged. The University will not provide any material or information obtained in relation to Return to Work to any person who does not have a lawful purpose for requiring the material or information.

Practices and Procedures

(10) Return to work will be encouraged by the Supervisor, within the limits of medical advice from the treating doctor (or health practitioner) or rehabilitation coordinator.

(11) Arrangements which may be required to assist the staff member's return to work may include, but are not limited to:

- a. a formal return to work or rehabilitation plan
- b. reduction in hours of work
- c. changes to duties or position
- d. limited retraining
- e. support for rehabilitation
- f. ergonomic aids or equipment
- g. reasonable accommodations for disability, incapacity, or illness.

(12) Such arrangements must be approved by the Head of Cost Centre.

(13) It is the responsibility of the Supervisor to monitor and review staff members who are returning to work and provide documentation to Human Resource Services.

(14) All documentation regarding return to work will be retained on the staff member's personnel file.

Status and Details

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