



### Information Sheet

#### Purpose

Most staff are able to return back to work to their normal duties after a non-work related injury or illness, however, in some circumstances additional support may assist in promoting recovery and a safe return to work. This information sheet provides some general guidance regarding the support available for a staff member experiencing a non-work-related injury or illness which impacts on their capacity for work.

#### Q1 When does the University of Adelaide support rehabilitation for non-work-related injuries or illness?

When a staff member's capacity to perform the inherent requirements of their job is affected, or in doubt, due to personal illness and/or injury, the University will consider reasonable adjustments/accommodations and use of flexible work arrangements to support the staff member's return to work.

#### Q2 Why does the University need to provide reasonable adjustments for non-work-related injuries or illness?

Under the [Disability Discrimination Act 1992](#) (the Act), the University is obliged to provide reasonable adjustments for a staff member with a disability (i.e. illness/injury) to enable them to carry out the inherent requirements of their job. The definition of 'disability' in the Act is very broad and covers both temporary and permanent disability. For more information regarding the University's goals and intentions in relation to disabilities, please refer to the [University of Adelaide Disability Action Plan](#).

(Note: The inherent requirements are the essential activities of the job. The core duties that must be carried out in order to fulfill the purpose of a position.)

#### Q3 If you have a non-work-related injury or illness, when should you ask for assistance, and who should you contact?

If you have a non-work-related injury or illness, that could have the potential to impact on your work, you should speak to your Manager/Supervisor and/or the [Injury Management & Wellbeing Advisor](#) (Human Resources) on ext 35904 about the support that may be available.

#### Q4 If you are the Manager/Supervisor of a staff member who has a non-work-related injury or illness, when should you ask for assistance and who should you contact?

Firstly it is important to note that as the person's Manager/Supervisor you are best placed and should feel empowered to provide support to the injured/ill staff member. You are also best placed to monitor how the staff member is coping on a day to day basis.

However, if it is identified during the process that:

- reasonable adjustments will change the inherent requirements of the person's job; and/or
- include changes that will exceed a three month period; and/or
- the injury or illness requires a documented support plan; and/or
- the injury or illness is complex and presents a risk in relation to the requirements of the staff members role; and/or
- you require any advice or assistance,

then contact the [Injury Management & Wellbeing Advisor](#) (Human Resources) on ext 35904 and/or the relevant [Human Resources Advisor](#) assigned to your portfolio for information and assistance.

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**Q5 What documentation is required, if non-work-related rehabilitation is supported by your School/Branch?**

Staff Member:

It is recommended that staff obtain documentation regarding capacity for work and appropriate duties from the treating medical practitioner.

Manager/Supervisor:

It is recommended that Managers/Supervisors document any simple agreements regarding workplace adjustments, via an email to the staff member, to clarify the arrangement in place, the duration and review date (if applicable). More complex agreements should be documented by the University's Injury Management and Wellbeing Advisor. For example if the return to work is graduated over an extended period i.e. progressively increasing hours and/or duties.

**Q6 Do staff have to provide personal medical information, or a medical authority, if they are participating in a non-work-related rehabilitation program, or other support?**

In some cases additional information is required to ensure that the return to work is appropriate and supported by the treating doctor. If an exchange of clinical information is required, a medical authority will need to be sought from the staff member. The University's [Injury Management and Wellbeing Advisor](#) (ext 35904) must be consulted and facilitate any such request.

**Q7 Is participation in a non-work-related rehabilitation program compulsory?**

If a staff member with a non-work-related injury/illness does not wish to participate in this process other options should be explored with the assistance of the relevant [Human Resources Advisor](#) for your Faculty/Division.

**Q8 What personal medical information will be shared with the Manager/Supervisor when a staff member is being supported via a non-work-related rehabilitation program?**

Only information relating to a staff member's capacity for work will be released to their Manager/Supervisor, as necessary to facilitate the staff member's rehabilitation and safe return to work.

**Q9 What personal medical information will be shared with the work colleagues of a staff member being supported via a non-work-related rehabilitation program?**

Personal medical information will not be shared. But if an agreed rehabilitation program is implemented where there are significant changes to a staff member's role, it may be necessary to communicate with the staff members colleagues (for example a supervisor may wish to prepare colleagues for a staff member's return to work with information about what they will and will not be able to do). This should be done sensitively and with the permission of the staff member. The University's [Injury Management and Wellbeing Advisor](#) can provide advice and assistance to both the staff member and their supervisor if required.

**Q10 Who pays the costs of treatment and rehabilitation expenses for non-work-related injuries/illnesses?**

- Medical expenses are the responsibility of the staff member.
- Time away from work is covered by the appropriate available leave type (supported by medical certificate).
- The cost of general workplace equipment, external rehabilitation assistance, medical reports (requested by the employer), legal advice and additional resources is the responsibility of the School/Branch.

**Q11 What if the Manager/Supervisor does not agree with the information provided by a staff member's doctor in relation to the staff member's capacity, when they are supported via a non-work-related rehab program?**

In some circumstances, the University may request additional information from a staff member's medical practitioner and/or request that an independent medical assessment is undertaken to determine their current capacity, prognosis and recommendations. In these circumstances the cost of examination/report will be borne by the School/Branch and the staff member will receive a full copy of any report provided.

The University's [Enterprise Agreement](#) allows for information to be obtained under two clauses: **6.6** Incapacity to Perform Duties; and **7.4** Workplace Wellbeing;

The use of these clauses should only be undertaken with the support of Human Resources. Please gain assistance from the relevant [Human Resources Advisor](#) for your Faculty/Division.

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**Q12 What reasonable adjustments could be considered by a Manager/Supervisor, when a staff member is to be supported via a non-work-related rehabilitation program?**

The types of adjustments will depend on the individual and their capacity/symptoms. Encourage the person to think about their own solutions as well as offering some of your own.

They may include:

- Offering flexible work arrangements
  - Discuss some of the existing options for voluntary flexible work arrangements outlined in the University's [Enterprise Agreement](#). Options may include temporary reduction of fraction, purchased leave and compressed weeks.
  - Investigate variable start and finish times and/or structure work and work hours to match the persons most productive time of day.
  - Plan the use of sick leave and annual leave (with the support of a medical certificate) to temporarily reduce hours or allow attendance at appointments.
  - Change usual shift patterns to allow a longer period of day/afternoon/night shifts because changing the schedule of medication can be problematic.
  - Support the use of a flexible work arrangement to allow the person to gradually transition back to work following a period of time off.
- Increasing the frequency of one-on-one meetings to prioritise tasks and review deadlines
- Reviewing how tasks are allocated.
- Considering whether a temporary change to some duties is appropriate and can be supported (e.g. reduced contact with the public/students/other staff members)
- Appointing a buddy or mentor - someone on a similar grade and outside the usual management structure.
- Reviewing the physical layout of their workspace. For example if they have difficulty concentrating in open plan, investigate whether there is a quieter location on the floor (e.g. a corner rather than adjacent to a busy thoroughfare or the lunchroom. Or purchasing specific equipment (e.g. sit/stand workstation).

The [Injury Management and Wellbeing Advisor](#) can work with you to develop a formalised Rehabilitation and Return to Work Plan.

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