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# Competency Standards

For vocational rehabilitation practitioners

June 2005





## Acknowledgements

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## 1. Introduction

The purpose of the document is to outline the core competencies required of vocational rehabilitation practitioners operating within the workers' compensation system in Western Australia.

It is intended the standards will assist:

- approved vocational rehabilitation providers in the recruitment, training and professional development of staff within their organisations;
- tertiary educational institutions in the preparation of graduates who maybe employed within the workers' compensation system in Western Australia; and

### The Aims of the Competency Standards

Competency standards set out:

- what practitioners need to do, to be effective in the workplace;
- how well they need to undertake activities; and
- the underpinning knowledge and skills practitioners need, to be able to carry out these activities.

The competency standards outline what is expected of a vocational rehabilitation practitioner for effective performance in the workplace and includes the ability to transfer and apply skills and knowledge to new situations and environments. The broad concept of competency encompasses all aspects of work performance and includes:

- the requirement to perform individual tasks (task skills);
- the requirement to manage a number of different tasks within the job (task management skills); and
- the requirement to deal with the responsibilities and expectations of the work environment, including working with others (job/role environment skills).

The Standards include generic competencies, range of variables and evidence guides which apply to all units of competencies followed by a number of specialist units of competency.

### National Competency Standards Format

These Competency Standards have been written in line with guidelines established by the Australian National Training Authority (ANTA). The basic format is:

### Unit of Competency

The unit of competency is a discrete component within a standard. For each unit there is a title, a short descriptor, and a number of related elements of competency, each

with their associated performance criteria. A range of variables is included and an evidence guide.

### **Unit Title**

Each unit describes a discrete unit of work with a clearly identifiable outcome or product.

### **Unit Title Description**

The description is optional and assists with clarifying the unit title. It provides additional information and often describes the purpose of the unit.

### **Elements**

Elements of competency are the basic building blocks of the unit of competency. They are a series of work activities or steps directed toward the achievement of the overall outcome. There are identifiable outputs or products that contribute to achieving the unit.

### **Performance Criteria**

Performance criteria specify the required level of performance in the workplace. They usually describe a product or behaviour that can be observed.

### **Range of Variables**

The range of variables identifies the range of contexts and conditions in which the performance criteria apply.

### **Evidence Guide**

The evidence guide assists the supervisor with the interpretation and assessment of the unit of competency. It describes how evidence of competencies will be gathered and assessed. The evidence guide outlines the context within which assessment will be undertaken, the critical aspects that will be considered, and the relationship with the other units of competency.

## Competency Strand 1

### 2. Generic skills

#### Unit 1.1

Generic knowledge and skills are those applied to all professionals involved in vocational rehabilitation, including case management and specific service delivery, within the Western Australian workers' compensation and rehabilitation system. Included in this competency strand are elements relating to:

- knowledge of the workers' compensation system and relevant legislation
- rehabilitation philosophy and principles
- effective communication and liaison skills
- establishing a relationship with injured workers
- assessment and problem solving skills
- professional and ethical standards
- professional development
- other related skills and knowledge.

#### Competency

#### Performance Criteria

##### Element 1.1.1

Demonstrate a sound working knowledge, as it relates to vocational rehabilitation, of:

the injury management process and the roles and responsibilities of stakeholders;

the current Workers' Compensation and Rehabilitation Act;

the operations and assistance available from WorkCover WA;

the Dispute Resolution Process; and

WorkCover WA's reporting requirements for approved providers.

a) List the steps in the injury management process.

b) Describe the roles and list responsibilities of stakeholders.

c) Detail key sections of the Workers' Compensation and Rehabilitation Act relevant to the vocational rehabilitation process.

d) Outline functions and services of WorkCover WA.

e) List the steps in the dispute resolution process.

##### Element 1.1.2

Demonstrate an ability to access information relating to the relevant State and Federal Acts.

a) Identify other relevant Acts relating to injury management.

b) List sources of information relating to relevant Federal and State Acts.

**Element 1.1.3**

Demonstrate an understanding of impairment/disability/handicap and the impact on an injured worker.

- a) Define impairment/disability/handicap.
- b) Describe the potential functional and psycho-social impacts of disability.

**Element 1.1.4**

Demonstrate an understanding of the roles of vocational rehabilitation professionals working within an organisation (or externally for a single provider referring out).

- a) Outline the roles and skills of professionals working within the vocational rehabilitation environment (internal and external).
- b) Describe the services each professional is able to contribute to a vocational rehabilitation program.
- c) Outline the consultation and referral process you would adopt if requiring the expertise of another professional.
- d) Describe how you would ensure such services were in line with the referral request.
- e) Describe how you would facilitate ongoing and participative communications with these professionals.

**Element 1.1.5**

Demonstrate recognition of the role of consultation with relevant stakeholders in the vocational rehabilitation process.

- a) Describe the consultation and negotiation process.
- b) Identify relevant stakeholders.
- c) Provide accurate and timely verbal and written information as required.
- d) Produce accurate and timely feedback.

**Element 1.1.6**

Demonstrate the ability to communicate with individuals from varying occupational categories and cultural backgrounds.

- a) Describe how different communication techniques can be utilised by practitioners.
- b) Outline examples of issues which may be effected by scope of occupations and/or cultural backgrounds.
- c) Demonstrate when to utilise interpreter services.

**Element 1.1.7**

Demonstrate the ability to provide accurate verbal and written information on the workers' compensation and rehabilitation system, and where necessary direct parties to additional or alternative information sources.

- a) Identify the information resources available through WorkCover WA.
- b) Identify or list sources of information.
- c) Outline types of information available.

**Element 1.1.8**

Demonstrate sound interpersonal skills, in communication with stakeholders.

- a) Demonstrate the key micro-counselling skills used in the communication process.

**Element 1.1.9**

Demonstrate recognition of the primary role of an injured worker in decision making as part of the vocational rehabilitation process.

- a) Outline a participative approach in aspects of service delivery.
- b) Describe how to keep an injured worker informed of and involved in activities undertaken and information exchanged between stakeholders.

**Element 1.1.10**

Work with clients acknowledging and respecting their attitudes, values and beliefs, recognizing the holistic nature of the individual.

- a) Describe some effects which attitudes, values and beliefs may have on an injured worker and the vocational rehabilitation program.
- b) List how influences such as age, gender and culture may impact on vocational rehabilitation.

**Element 1.1.11**

Demonstrate an awareness of one's own personal beliefs, values and attitudes and how these may influence on the process of vocational rehabilitation.

- a) Describe the potential impact of beliefs, values and attitudes on professional judgement and how this may influence a vocational rehabilitation program.

**Element 1.1.12**

Demonstrate knowledge of the parameters imposed by the system within which an injured worker is managed.

- a) Identify and describe the parameters of the workers' compensation and rehabilitation system which may affect an injured worker's vocational rehabilitation; and
- b) Provide an explanation of how to work within the parameters of the workers' compensation system.

**Element 1.1.13**

Identify barriers to vocational rehabilitation, at an individual, situational and systemic level, throughout the process.

- a) Identify potential barriers to successful vocational rehabilitation outcomes at an individual, situational and/or systemic level.
- b) Describe how to address the influence of these barriers at different stages throughout the vocational rehabilitation process.

**Element 1.1.14**

Use appropriate analytical skills to identify, assess and address any problems encountered at an individual level, throughout the vocational rehabilitation process.

- a) Demonstrate an understanding of processes used to identify issues or problems that may impact on vocational rehabilitation.

**Element 1.1.15**

Demonstrate an understanding of medical terminology and an ability to utilise medical and other allied health reports in the provision of vocational rehabilitation services.

- a) Demonstrate the ability to review medical/allied health reports and identify content relevant to vocational rehabilitation.
- b) Demonstrate an understanding of the need for the practitioner to operate within limitations of their knowledge with regards to their interpretation and releasing of such information.

**Element 1.1.16**

Demonstrate a general knowledge of commonly occurring work related injuries, treatments and expected outcomes.

- a) Describe the nature, symptomatology, mechanism and natural history of commonly occurring work related injuries.
- b) Demonstrate an understanding of the relationship between these injuries, and the performance of tasks and functions.
- c) Demonstrate an understanding of the impact reduced functioning may have on work practices.
- d) Demonstrate an understanding of the implications of commonly occurring injuries, to an injured worker/ supervisor/ employer.
- e) Demonstrate an ability to access further relevant information, when appropriate.

**Element 1.1.17**

Adhere to the ethical guidelines of professional and industry associations.

- a) Demonstrate an understanding of the principles of confidentiality.
- b) Describe how confidentiality in all aspects of case management will be maintained.
- c) Demonstrate an awareness of the appropriate boundaries in the client-practitioner relationship.
- d) Demonstrate an awareness of strategies for addressing areas of conflict and develop appropriate management strategies to deal with these.
- e) Demonstrate an awareness of professional limits and knowledge of when to seek appropriate assistance.
- f) Demonstrate the development of an active professional support network.
- g) Demonstrate an understanding of the need to maintain professional and ethical behaviour in communication with all parties.
- h) Demonstrate an understanding of and respect for the professional and ethical boundaries of other disciplines.

**Element 1.1.18**

Undertake continuing education, both formal and experience based, to acquire and maintain professional skills.

- a) Describe how to source appropriate education / training programs for professional development.
- b) Describe how to identify appropriate journals and reference material.

**Element 1.1.19**

Use of self-evaluation skills in identifying professional development needs.

- a) Outline how feedback would be sought from parties and peers to assist with professional development.
- b) Describe how to identify your professional development needs.
- c) Describe how to utilise the Competency Standards.

**Element 1.1.20**

Maintain appropriate **documentation** of service delivery activities and outcomes.

- a) Provide timely and objective reports, which reflect objectives and outcomes of the referral requirements.
- b) Demonstrate an understanding of appropriate documentation techniques.

**Element 1.1.21**

Demonstrate an awareness of the changing nature of the work environment in industry sectors, and the effect on vocational rehabilitation.

- a) Describe key organisational, industrial and technological factors in the work environment that may impact on vocational rehabilitation.
- b) Outline how changing practices in the workplace effect vocational rehabilitation.
- c) Identify societal, political, economic and family factors that impact on vocational rehabilitation.

**Element 1.1.22**

Demonstrate a working knowledge of the available resources, relevant to vocational rehabilitation in the workforce and community.

- a) List the available community and workplace resources relevant for vocational rehabilitation.

**Element 1.1.23**

Demonstrate an understanding of the importance of community and workplace awareness of vocational rehabilitation.

- a) Explain how to promote an understanding of the role and function of vocational rehabilitation during routine contacts.

*Generic range of variables*

Generic knowledge and skills are those applied to all professionals involved in case management or specific service delivery, within the approved vocational rehabilitation industry. This Range of Variables statement also applies to all units in the standards.

A vocational rehabilitation practitioner must possess a relevant tertiary qualification.

Clients are injured workers as defined under Section 5 of the *Workers' Compensation and Rehabilitation Act, (1981)* and where the workers' compensation liability has been accepted by the insurer.

**Relevant State and Federal Acts include:**

- Workers' Compensation and Rehabilitation Act (1981)
- Occupational Safety & Health Act (1984) (State)
- Disability Discrimination Act (992) (Federal)
- Equal Opportunities Act (1984) (State)
- Industrial Relations Act (1979) (State)
- Workplace Relations Act (1996) (Federal)
- WorkCover WA
- WorkSafe Western Australia
- Human Rights & Equal Opportunity Commission
- Equal Opportunities Commission
- Department of Productivity & Labour Relations
- Department of Employment, Workplace Relations & Small Business

**Types of information available:**

- WorkCover WA pamphlets
- WorkCover WA Information Seminars
- Relevant Professional Journals
- Quality Assurance Standards for Vocational Rehabilitation Providers (WorkCover WA)
- Competency Standards for Vocational Rehabilitation Practitioners (WorkCover WA)
- WorkCover WA Infoline
- [www.workcover.wa.gov.au](http://www.workcover.wa.gov.au)
- Professional Practice Guidelines (WorkCoverWA)

**Relevant professional publications include:**

- Australian Journal of Rehabilitation Counselling
- International Rehabilitation Review
- Journal of Occupational Health and Safety
- Journal of Vocational Behaviour
- Rehabilitation Counselling Bulletin
- Journal of Work
- International Journal of Rehabilitation Research
- Journal of Applied Rehabilitation Counselling
- Journal of Occupational Rehabilitation
- Australian Occupational Therapy Journal
- Spine
- 

**Primary stakeholders are:**

- Injured workers
- Employers

**Relevant other parties may include:**

- treating medical practitioner
- workplace supervisors
- allied health professionals
- union representatives
- insurers
- family members or significant others
- co-workers
- reviewing and consulting medical practitioners
- work trial host
- community organisations.

The World Health Organisation's (WHO) definitions of **Impairment, Activity and Participation** is adopted (ICIDH-2: *International Classification of Functioning and Disability*. Beta-2 draft, Short Vversion. Geneva, World Health Organisation, 1999).

**WHO definitions are:**

**Impairments** are problems in body function structure as a significant deviation or loss. Body functions are the physiological or psychological functions of body systems and body structures are anatomic parts of the body such as organs, limbs and their components.

**Activity Limitations** are difficulties an individual may have in the performance of activities. An activity is the performance of a task or action by an individual.

**Participation Restrictions** are problems an individual may have in the manner or extent of involvement in life situations. Participation is an individual's involvement in life situations in relation to Health conditions, Body Functions and Structure, Activities, and Contextual factors.

(WHO email address: lewallep@ccm.who.ch)

### Key micro-counselling skills used in the communication process are to:

- establish rapport
- engage the client
- actively listen
- demonstrate empathy
- paraphrase
- reframe
- clarify
- probe for value added
- address arising conflicts
- bring session to a close.

Skills in identifying issues or problems that will impact on vocational rehabilitation, include but are not limited to:

- listening for meaning not content
- attention to non verbal factors
- identifying incongruencies.

### File documentation required

Recording of interviews, incoming/outgoing telephone calls/messages and consultations.

### Documentation includes:

Date, content of conversation/interview, responses provided, conclusions (if any) and actions required.

### Community Resources

- ACROD Ltd
- Alcohol & Drug Information Service
- Anglicare
- Citizens Advice Bureau of WA
- Crisis Care Unit
- DOME Inc Employment Services
- Independent Living Centre of Western Australia (Inc)
- InfoLink Government and Community Information
- ITEC Training
- Legal Aid Western Australia
- Department of Productivity & Labour Relations
- Small Business Development Corporation
- Dyslexia-SPELD Foundation (WA) Inc
- TAFE Colleges and Centres
- (TIS) Telephone Interpreter Service
- Welfare Resources Directory
- WorkCover WA (Infoline)
- WorkSafe Western Australia

## *Evidence guide*

This Evidence Guide also relates to other Units.

### **Who can assess?**

All assessments must be conducted by:

- the practitioner's supervisor
- an experienced practitioner (5 years) deemed competent against the standards.

### **What should be assessed?**

The elements of competency and their related performance criteria stated in these Competency Standards must be the basis of all assessments. For an element to be recorded as achieved, all performance criteria must have been demonstrated.

### **Where should assessments take place?**

At the practitioner's workplace unless specified otherwise.

### **What methods of assessment can be used?**

Methods of assessment include:

- reviewing of file notes/reports
- observation of on-the-job activities
- log book or work experience
- case studies
- role play
- client feedback
- employer feedback.

As the likelihood of sufficient relevant knowledge being demonstrated may be low, it is suggested that the knowledge elements be assessed through a direct assessment approach such as:

- written test; or
- oral test.

**This Evidence Guide relates specifically to Competency Strand 1.**

The knowledge of elements should be assessed through a direct assessment approach such as a written or oral test. Interpersonal skills should be demonstrated through attending interviews, role play, a log book of work experience reflecting these qualities, or through a review of case studies or a review of case history and case files.

## Competency Strand 2:

### 3. Case management

#### Unit 2.1

This competency strand relates to the co-ordination of all vocational rehabilitation services provided to an injured worker from the time of referral to case closure. It includes but is not limited to, co-ordination and monitoring of internal and external referrals, reporting, provision of vocational rehabilitation services, and liaison with all stakeholders.

Individual Case Management involves managerial activities that facilitate the movement of an individual through the vocational rehabilitation process, and includes co-ordination of all services needed to successfully achieve the vocational rehabilitation goal.

Case Load Management is the management and responsibility for the movement of a group of injured workers through the stages of the vocational rehabilitation process. It is a global process including work planning controls, decision making, case selection priorities, management techniques and time management.

The Case Manager is the primary professional responsible for vocational rehabilitation from referral to closure, whether to the original or new employer. The Case Manager refers out those services outside his/her area of expertise and facilitates the participation of an injured worker, employer and medical practitioner in the vocational rehabilitation process.

#### Competency

#### Performance Criteria

##### Element 2.1.1

Establish rapport with an injured worker.

- a) Demonstrate the ability to facilitate the gathering of an injured worker's history and reach an understanding of their perception/ knowledge of the injury/disability.
- b) Demonstrate the ability to appreciate the level of an injured workers knowledge and attitude towards the workers' compensation system.
- c) Demonstrate the ability to provide accurate information and to adjust the delivery of such information including the vocational rehabilitation process to an injured worker's level of understanding.
- d) Demonstrate an understanding of an injured worker's role in the injury management process.

**Element 2.1.2**

Establish rapport with employer.

- a) Demonstrate an understanding of an employer's role in the injury management process.
- b) Demonstrate how to identify appropriate personnel within the employing organisation.
- c) Demonstrate an understanding of workplace dynamics.
- d) Identify support for the vocational rehabilitation process within the workplace.
- e) Demonstrate an understanding of the type of industry / production involved.
- f) Identify specific requirements needed to access workplaces, including but not limited to security and safety.
- g) Demonstrate an understanding of the external demands placed on an employer.

**Element 2.1.3**

Establish rapport with treating medical practitioner.

- a) Demonstrate an understanding of the treating medical practitioner's role in the injury management process.
- b) Clarify expectations or requirements for communication processes.
- c) Demonstrate an understanding of communication techniques used when establishing rapport with the medical practitioner.
- d) Demonstrate an understanding of the role of the reviewing medical practitioner.

**Element 2.1.4**

Establish rapport with approved insurer/self-insurer.

- a) Demonstrate an understanding of an insurer's/self insurer's role in the injury management process.
- b) Demonstrate an understanding of the insurer's claims management role.
- c) Clarify expectations or requirements for communication processes.

**Element 2.1.5**

Manage caseload.

- a) Demonstrate an understanding of the skills required to prioritise work.
- b) Outline strategies used to timetable and arrange commitments in line with current vocational rehabilitation plan time-frames.
- c) Outline strategies for keeping all parties consulted and informed of process and progress.
- d) Demonstrate an understanding of the skills and strategies used to monitor and review progress of all cases currently being managed within vocational rehabilitation plan time-frames.
- e) Describe how un-timetable demands are managed when problems arise.
- f) Outline strategies for meeting reporting and data submission commitments for the case load.
- g) Describe how to identify own maximum capacity for case management and the appropriate action to be taken.

**Element 2.1.6**

Provide individual case management.

- a) Demonstrate a thorough knowledge of the vocational rehabilitation process from referral to closure.
- b) Outline the range of contacts necessary on receipt of referral.
- c) Demonstrate the ability to obtain relevant information from all parties involved.
- d) Demonstrate skills in developing cost effective return to work programs.
- e) Demonstrate the ability to make an appropriate internal or external referral of injured worker for vocational rehabilitation services.
- f) Outline the information required at the assessment and an understanding of the objectives of the initial interview.
- g) Demonstrate the ability to implement the program ensuring all parties are informed, timing and venues clear, and modifications and equipment ready.
- h) Outline the information required on the detailed "Return to Work" document, once the plan is agreed to.
- i) Describe what agreement/signatures are required prior to an injured worker returning to the workplace.
- j) Describe the contact, monitoring, review and closure process that would be implemented.

**Element 2.1.7**

Conduct an initial assessment.

- a) Demonstrate the ability to establish contact and gather relevant information from all key stakeholders.
- b) Outline what further information may be required.
- c) Demonstrate the ability to conduct an initial interview and articulate conclusions.
- d) Demonstrate the ability to identify the need for specific assessments/services, provide same or make referral.
- e) Outline the information required in a referral request (internal and external).
- f) Demonstrate skills in analysing information derived from the assessment process and relating it to the return to work program.
- g) Demonstrate the ability to identify issues, which may impact on an injured worker's wellbeing and/or the vocational rehabilitation process and refer for assistance, if required.

**Element 2.1.8**

Plan vocational rehabilitation.

- a) Demonstrate the ability to determine the goal in consultation with client, treating medical practitioner, employer, and other key stakeholders.
- b) Demonstrate an awareness of other sources of information relevant to vocational rehabilitation planning and refer appropriately.
- c) Demonstrate an ability to facilitate the goal setting process with an injured worker.
- d) Demonstrate an ability to explain and discuss options for the program with an injured worker.

- e) Demonstrate an ability to assist an injured worker to assess the costs and benefits of options.
- f) Outline strategies used to assist an injured worker with decision making.
- g) Demonstrate an ability to develop services and timelines designed to achieve the goal.
- h) Demonstrate an ability to set appropriate timeframes and identify associated costs.
- i) Discuss the strategies for obtaining approvals from the treating medical practitioner and employer prior to the commencement of a return to work program.
- j) Outline the circumstances requiring liaison with the treating medical practitioner / employer, on an ongoing basis once the vocational rehabilitation goal and return to work program has been developed.

### Element 2.1.9

Monitor and review vocational rehabilitation progress.

- a) Discuss how to recognise when to utilise team and review meetings.
- b) Demonstrate how to identify services, costs and methods of evaluation at each stage of the vocational rehabilitation process.
- c) Outline the indicators which suggest the adaptation of a plan.
- d) Demonstrate the ability to monitor an injured worker's progress with regard to physical, psychological and vocational issues.
- e) Demonstrate a knowledge of techniques and their use in assisting an injured worker with the long term management of their injury (e.g. self monitoring activity in the workplace and methods of maintaining physical fitness once program complete).

- f) Describe how to monitor the effectiveness of services of an internal and external service provider, contributing to specific services, as part of the vocational rehabilitation plan.

### Element 2.1.10

Effect program closure

- a) Explain how to identify when the provision for vocational rehabilitation is no longer appropriate.
- b) Describe how to conduct a closure interview or contact with the client, including goals achieved, self management strategies and timeliness of closure.
- c) Outline the process of consultation required at closure.
- d) Outline the salient information required in the closure report.

#### *Range of variables*

*See the generic range of variables (after Unit 1)*

#### **Reporting requirements for the completion of the plan for WorkCover WA**

Once agreed to by the medical practitioner, injured worker and employer (or the approved insurer where the employer has delegated that function) a closure interview/contact is conducted with the injured worker and closure information is entered into WorkCover WA's Rehabilitation Online application.

#### **Workplace dynamics include:**

- organisational culture
- industrial relations issues
- line management structure
- rotating team functions and shift arrangements.

#### **Workplace access requirements may include:**

- security pass / clearance
- dress requirements
- safety requirements
- personal protective equipment.

**Insurer's role and source information include:**

- insurer's role in the injury management process
- insurer's claims management role
- WorkCover WA internet site
- refer to "A Complete Guide to Workers' Compensation" (WorkCover WA).

**Other sources of information include:**

- allied health professionals (ie. Refer for neuro-psychological/clinical/cognitive assessments physical/exercise assessments, functional capacity/hand assessments)
- workplace supervisors/human resource staff
- union representatives
- family members or significant others
- insurers
- co-workers
- reviewing and consulting medical practitioners
- work trial hosts
- community organisations.

**Circumstances requiring liaison with treating medical practitioner include:**

- regular liaison through-out and at program closure
- to gain approval for the plan
- to gain approval for the Return to Work Programme/Work Trial
- when symptoms are exacerbated
- when treatment regimens change or intervene.

**Consultation requirements for closure include:**

- Documented evidence of contact with injured worker, indicating discussion and agreement
- for case closure
- Documented evidence of communication and agreement by other key party team members.

**Case Load Management may include:**

- use of diaries and planning grids
- review of work plan on a weekly basis, re-scheduling if necessary
- schedule time for reading mail, answering phone calls (advise clients when you will be available for routine calls/enquiries and instruct receptionist how to discern urgent contacts requiring immediate response)
- scheduling new referrals and assessment interviews, allocating time for all tasks (contacts, medical report review, initial interview/worksite visit, planning, preparing referrals, report preparation and data submission)
- consider action of limiting the number of new clients per week as assessment and planning is time-intensive (it saves time in the long term to assess comprehensively so potential problems can be identified early)
- clustering of interviews, with time between to dictate reports
- allocation of adequate time to deal with issues and benefit from counselling strategies when conducting problem-solving interviews
- scheduling of worksite visits/review appointments/team meetings/telephone contacts in advance for each client and cluster visits according to geographic location. Retain control when forward planning so that other parties know what to expect
- when appointments generate actions, itemise, prioritise and timetable into daily/weekly/forward plan
- diarising expected completion times for contracted services, internal or external, and follow up
- monitoring caseload progress and ensuring Quality Assurance standards are met
- managing procrastination on overwhelming tasks eg difficult clients, problematic reports, employer canvassing by diarising the task, posting a reminder on desk or computer, talking to supervisor/colleague, and/or by breaking task down into components
- allocating time each day for unscheduled/unexpected activities and if not required, use for catch up tasks
- being clear when receiving referrals for specific services whether time is available and schedule accordingly
- ensuring your organisation's responsibilities such as supervision, administration and training is accommodated
- handling colleague interruptions by assertive statements about time, deferring discussion to a mutually suitable time/place.

**Reference - Case Load Management:**

Henke, R.O., Connolly S.G., & Cox, J.G. (1975). Case load management: the key to effectiveness. Journal of Applied Rehabilitation Counselling, 6, pp.217-227.

Roessler, R.T., & Rubin, S.E. (1982). Case management and rehabilitation counselling: procedure and techniques. Baltimore: University Park Press.

Third Institute on Rehabilitation Services (1965). Training guides in caseload management for vocational rehabilitation. Washington, DC: Vocational Rehabilitation Administration.

Thompson, J.K., Kite, J.L., & Bruyere, S.M. (1977). Caseload management: Content and training perspective. Paper presented at the American Personnel and Guidance Association Annual Convention, Dallas.

*Evidence guide*

*See generic evidence guide (after Unit 1).*

Assessment should be based on file reviews conducted with practitioner by their supervisor, utilising the competency standards as the assessment tool, conducted at the practitioner's workplace.

Assessment should involve reviewing of all reports and return to work programs by a supervisor for a period of 3 - 6 months, or until deemed competent by the competency standards, conducted at the practitioner's workplace.

The Assessor should observe two initial assessments and related follow-up meetings / telephone contacts to evaluate practitioner's skill regarding the initial assessment process (conducted at the client's home, workplace or practitioner's workplace as appropriate).

When these two files are due to close, the practitioner is to discuss with the Assessor the rationale for closing and vocational rehabilitation process utilised. The Assessor is to evaluate the practitioner using competency standards.

Assessment should also be based on case studies representing different scenarios / issues for practitioner to complete, to allow for evaluation, to balance scenarios / issues which the practitioner may not experience with their actual cases to date, at 1 month, 3 months and 6 months.

## Competency Strand 3

### 4. Return to work

#### 4.1 Same employer

Return to work refers to a range of vocational rehabilitation interventions leading to an injured worker's return to employment. It can refer to a graduated, modified or partial duties approach; a period of alternative duties whilst recovery occurs; or, placement in new duties on a permanent basis with the same employer. This can include on-the-job the training in new duties.

#### Competency

#### Performance Criteria

##### Element 3.1.1

Develop return to work program with pre-injury employer, to either original or alternative duties.

- a) Outline the preparation/assessments required prior to the return to work, considering the injured worker, the workplace and the medical management of the case.
- b) Explain how to identify the availability of duties using a worksite assessment or other relevant information.
- c) Explain the circumstances in which a Functional Capacity Assessment, to match work requirements, would be required.
- d) Describe how to identify the objective of the return to work process and the need for work hardening goals or assessment of suitability for duties or work capacity.
- e) Describe how to arrange induction, training and supervision to new/alternative duties.
- f) Describe the parties involved in the time-tabling, documenting, approving of the return to work program.
- g) Demonstrate the ability to negotiate with an employer, supervisor and where necessary work colleagues, an appropriate return to work program for an injured worker.

- h) Demonstrate the ability to communicate the parameters and requirements of the return to work program to an injured worker.i)  
Outline the steps/tasks necessary to prepare an injured worker for commencement at the work place.
- j) Describe why an employer's commitment and support of the return to work program is important in ensuring success.
- k) Demonstrate the ability to establish and maintain sound monitoring protocols for the period of the return to work.

### *Range of variables*

*See the generic range of variables (after Unit 1).*

When a worker requires vocational assessment and retraining to prepare for a new job with the same employer, many of the activities required for placement with a new employer are applied to this process. Refer to Placement Activities for New Employer for competencies relating to training courses and placement in a new position.

### *Evidence guide*

*See generic evidence guide (after Unit 1).*

The knowledge elements should be assessed through a direct assessment approach such as a written or oral test.

Interpersonal skills should be demonstrated through: role play or observation; by a log book of work experience reflecting these qualities; through a review of case studies; or, a review of case history and case files.

## Competency Strand 3

### Return to work

#### 4.2 New employer

Return to work refers to a range of vocational rehabilitation interventions leading to an injured worker's return to employment. It can refer to a graduated approach at the same, modified or new duties, on a temporary or permanent basis with an alternative employer (ie. New employer or work trial host). This can follow or be concurrent with a training course or include on-the-job training. Wherever possible work trials with a potential for employment should be pursued.

#### Competency

#### Performance Criteria

##### Element 3.2.1

Identify area of employment suited to an injured worker.

- a) Outline the preparation/assessments required prior to deciding on the target employment area taking into consideration an injured worker's disability, medical advice and available work options.
- b) Describe how to identify work interests and transferable skills to assist in the choice of employment options.

##### Element 3.2.2

Develop return to work program with an alternative employer, to either original or alternative duties.

- a) Outline the preparation/assessments required prior to the return to work, considering the injured worker, the workplace and the medical management of the case.
- b) Explain how to identify the availability of duties using a worksite assessment or other relevant information.
- c) Explain the circumstances in which a Functional Capacity Assessment, to match work requirements, would be required.
- d) Describe how to identify the objective of the return to work process and the need for work hardening goals or assessment of suitability for duties or work capacity.

- e) Describe how you would arrange induction, training and supervision to new/alternative duties.
- f) Describe the parties involved in the time-tabling/documenting/approving of the return to work program.
- g) Demonstrate the ability to negotiate with the alternative employer, supervisor and where necessary work colleagues, an appropriate return to work program for an injured worker.
- h) Demonstrate the ability to communicate the parameters and requirements of the return to work to an injured worker.
- i) Outline the steps/tasks necessary to prepare an injured worker for commencement at the work place.
- j) Describe why an employer's commitment and support of the return to work program is important in ensuring success.
- k) Demonstrate the ability to establish and maintain sound monitoring protocols for the period of the return to work.
- l) Demonstrate knowledge of workers' compensation liability for new/host employer.
- m) Outline strategies used to confirm employment or obtain performance feedback at completion of placement.
- n) Demonstrate knowledge of notification requirements for an injured worker once employed.

### *Range of variables*

*See the generic range of variables (after Unit 1).*

#### **Preparation/assessments required prior to return to work (some or all of these may be required depending on the circumstances):**

- job analysis
- identification of duties/tasks
- work site assessment
- negotiation and development of return to work plan
- explanation to injured worker, supervisor/employer of return to work plan, special considerations/restrictions, expectations and reporting protocol
- assessment and negotiation of funding for modifications to the work station/site (if required)
- assessment and negotiation of funding and provision of adaptive equipment
- assessment for need of protective clothing, shoes or tools
- arranging training and supervision if requiring a new job (whether new or old employer).

#### **Circumstances requiring a Functional Capacity Assessment may include:**

- to determine there is a match between vocational choice and physical capacity
- when requested by treating medical practitioner/specialist
- to confirm capacity to do specific tasks or work
- to identify which tasks and functions increase pain
- where exacerbations occur, to identify activities/movements/work habits/muscle strengths which are problematic and make recommendations regarding education/exercise.

#### **Parties involved in timetabling and approving of return to work:**

- treating medical practitioner/specialist
- employer/supervisor
- injured worker
- allied health professional (if necessary).

**Steps/tasks necessary to prepare an injured worker for commencement at the workplace:**

- confirm medical practitioner/employer has agreed to return to work plan
- review transport arrangements
- ensure protective clothing/tools are available if required
- review specifics of return to work plan with worker re-enforcing need to work within limits and report problems
- confirm time and start date with employer and injured worker
- if required, provide support by attending with worker on first day.

*Evidence guide*

*See generic evidence guide (after Unit 1).*

The knowledge elements should be assessed through a direct assessment approach such as a written or oral test.

Interpersonal skills should be demonstrated through role-play, by a logbook of work experience reflecting these qualities, through a review of case studies or a review of case history and case files.

Management skills should be demonstrated by review of return to work preparation processes, file review and review of monitoring and achievement of time lines.

## Competency Strand 3:

### 4.3 Job search activities

Job search activities assist an injured worker to obtain employment with a new employer. The practitioner must possess a sound understanding of job search techniques and their application.

#### Competency

#### Performance Criteria

##### Element 3.3.1

Develop and implement a job search plan.

- a) Describe how to assist an injured worker to set appropriate objectives and time frames.
- b) Demonstrate skills in assisting an injured worker to develop strategies and steps to achieve employment.

##### Element 3.3.2

Educate injured workers on job search skills to enable them to search independently.

- a) Demonstrate the ability to assist an injured worker with resume development, interview techniques, job application and strategies for contacting employers.
- b) Explain how to educate an injured worker to discuss their disability with potential employers.
- c) Demonstrate the ability to provide feedback to an injured worker on their techniques and progress.
- d) Demonstrate the ability to identify potential employers and sources of job opportunities or agencies to assist with placement.

**Element 3.3.3**

Match individual injured worker needs with employer requirements.

- a) Demonstrate the ability to match potential employment opportunities with an injured worker's functional skills capacity.
- b) Demonstrate the ability to identify employer requirements for the job.
- c) Demonstrate the ability to advocate with an employer on an injured worker's behalf, and where necessary, arrange a trial period with a specific goal (graduated to increase work tolerance, on the job training, to reassure employer of injured worker skills/capacity etc).

**Element 3.3.4**

Demonstrate knowledge of relevant community resources, government bodies and employment agencies.

- a) Provide information to an injured worker on how to access relevant Government bodies, community resources and employment agencies.

*Range of variables*

*See the generic range of variables (after Unit 1).*

Injured workers with identified job goals and necessary skills that are ready to seek employment with a new employer.

Injured worker has access to telephone and/or computer (for word processing) for job application.

Practitioner requires working knowledge of EEO, industrial relations and OH&S legislation.

*Evidence guide*

*See generic evidence guide (after Unit 1).*

Assessment can be undertaken via viewing on-the-job performance, role-play, a review of job search plans, and placement outcomes, with new employer, achieved by practitioner.

## Competency Strand 3

### 4.4 Placement activities

Placement activities are for injured workers unable to return to their pre-injury employer, or requiring a temporary placement and may encompass activities with the same or new employer. They include activities such as labour market research, identification of suitable position/job, preparation and support for job seeking, employer negotiation and vocational and work adjustment training.

#### Competency

#### Performance Criteria

##### Element 3.4.1

Access labour market research.

- a) Demonstrate the ability to locate, investigate and evaluate relevant labour market research on the suitability, availability, viability and physical requirements of jobs.
- b) Describe how you would match alternative jobs to an injured worker's physical abilities and skills.
- c) Describe how to identify realistic job opportunities with an injured worker's participation.

##### Element 3.4.2

Plan vocational training.

- a) Demonstrate the ability to identify the training needs of an injured worker in relation to their vocational goal, taking into consideration individual abilities and limitations.
- b) Explain how to obtain relevant information related to education and training requirements for specific jobs.
- c) Outline the services required to ascertain an injured worker's aptitude for training, using formal assessment if necessary.
- d) Outline when to assist an injured worker to access practitioners specialising in vocational training.

- e) Describe the strategies employed to ensure the training course environment is suitable to an injured worker.
- f) Describe how to evaluate the outcome of an injured worker's progress throughout the training course.
- g) Demonstrate the ability to promptly identify issues/problems with the training.
- h) Demonstrate the ability to obtain realistic feedback from the trainer.
- i) Demonstrate the ability to communicate to an injured worker the outcome of the training program.

### Element 3.4.3

Develop return to work program with an alternative employer.

- a) Describe how, having identified a suitable alternative employer, to negotiate an appropriate return to work placement for an injured worker outlining hours, duties and conditions.
- b) Describe how to identify the purpose of the work placement program (ie. for work hardening purposes, assess work capacity, assess injured worker's suitability to work).
- c) Demonstrate the ability to identify the availability of duties using Job Analysis, Worksite Assessment/Functional Capacity Evaluation or other relevant information.
- d) Describe how and when to refer for an assessment of the suitability of the duties.
- e) Demonstrate the ability to communicate job requirements to an injured worker.
- f) Demonstrate the ability to identify negotiable conditions of employment.

**Element 3.4.4**

Arrange a return to work placement.

- a) Identify the need for job analysis and/or work site assessment and make appropriate referrals.
- b) Identify the availability of duties using Job Analysis, Vocational Assessment, Functional Capacity Assessment or other relevant information, and communicate all details of specific work placement to clients addressing concerns or requirements.
- c) Identify the requirements for an injured worker regarding safe work practices and facilitate the same.
- d) Refer for an assessment of the suitability of the duties, if required.
- e) Describe how to arrange induction, training and supervision to new/alternative duties.
- f) Describe the parties involved in the time-tabling, documenting, and approval of the return to work program.
- g) Demonstrate the ability to negotiate with the alternative employer, and supervisor, an appropriate return to work program for an injured worker.
- h) Demonstrate the ability to communicate the parameters and requirements of the return to work program to an injured worker.
- i) Outline the steps/tasks necessary to prepare an injured worker for commencement at the work place.
- j) Demonstrate the ability to establish a working relationship and explain the return to work process and specific requirements to the supervisor and, where necessary work colleagues.
- k) Demonstrate the ability to establish and maintain monitoring protocols with an injured worker, alternative employer or work trial host, for the period of the return to work.

- l) Demonstrate the ability to evaluate and assess an injured worker's progress throughout and at completion the work placement.
- m) Demonstrate the ability to provide feedback to all parties on progress / issues throughout and at completion of the placement.

### *Range of variables*

*See the generic range of variables (after Unit 1).*

All case managers may perform this task under the supervision of an experienced vocational rehabilitation practitioner, until deemed competent.

### **Resources required include:**

- employer contacts
- occupational descriptions
- demographic information.

### *Evidence guide*

*See generic evidence guide (after Unit 1).*

Assessment should be conducted through observation, case study, role-play and demonstration of past experience and outcomes.

Competency does not need to be assessed using real clients.

## Competency Strand 4:

### 5. Specific skills & assessments

This competency strand incorporates specific vocational rehabilitation skills and assessment including:

- Functional capacity assessment
- Support counselling
- Vocational assessment
- Vocational counselling
- Placement activities
- Workplace assessment & review
- Delivery of client training and education.

## Competency Strand 4:

### 5.1 Functional capacity assessment

A Functional Capacity Assessment is an assessment of the effects of disability by looking at the degree of useable functions, as well as the potential and actual limitations.

The practitioner should possess the ability to apply evaluation skills to determine the physical abilities and limitations of an injured worker, using a standardised assessment tool.

#### Competency

#### Performance Criteria

##### Element 4.1.1

Possess appropriate specific qualifications and/or training in relevant health sciences as required for the use of the assessment tool.

- a) Produce proof of a relevant qualification and/or training.

##### Element 4.1.2

Demonstrate knowledge of anatomy and its function, physiology, cognitive abilities and ergonomic principles.

- a) Explain the relationships between the knowledge of anatomy and its function, physiology, cognitive abilities, ergonomic principles with the assessment tool.

**Element 4.1.3**

Identify the rationale or objectives of the assessment.

- a) Demonstrate the ability to address the rationale / objectives of the assessment in a written report.
- b) Demonstrate the ability to explain and clarify the rationale / objectives of a Functional Capacity Assessment to referral source, injured worker, medical practitioner and other key parties, as required.

**Element 4.1.4**

Obtain the necessary approval to undertake assessment.

- a) Explain how to verify approval from appropriate parties (ie. medical practitioner or treating specialist), to undertake the assessment according to the requirements of the specific assessment tool.

**Element 4.1.5**

Prepare the assessment environment.

- a) Explain how to set up the assessment environment according to the specifications required of the assessment being utilised.
- b) Explain important environmental factors that may impact on assessment.

**Element 4.1.6**

Demonstrate a knowledge of a range of assessment tools and completion of relevant training in the assessment tool being utilised.

- a) Describe how to select an appropriate assessment tool relevant to the assessment objectives.
- b) Produce proof of training in the use of the assessment tool.
- c) Reflect this knowledge in the development of the assessment report.

**Element 4.1.7**

Select assessment techniques to meet an injured worker's needs.

- a) Explain the applicability of the selected assessment tool to the referral criteria and an injured worker's condition.

**Element 4.1.8**

Apply professional judgement, clinical observation skills and analysis.

- a) Provide evidence of the use of professional judgement in tailoring and conducting the assessment.
- b) Demonstrate the ability to document clinical observations and the process of analysis.

**Element 4.1.9**

Consider available information and / or the necessity for workplace assessment.

- a) Explain the circumstances where it is appropriate to undertake a workplace assessment and task analysis.
- b) Refer to and utilise workplace information available.
- c) Make recommendations regarding return to work options with reference to the relevant workplace.

**Element 4.1.10**

Analyse results relating to the objective and make appropriate recommendations.

- a) Demonstrate the ability to document observations, in accordance with assessment procedure.
- b) Demonstrate the ability to state the relationship between the observations and an injured worker's abilities and limitations.
- c) Demonstrate the ability to make recommendations according to an injured worker's demonstrated functional capacity.

### *Range of variables*

*See the generic range of variables (after Unit 1).*

#### **Required qualifications:**

This unit is related to the administration of a range of assessment tools, many of which are restricted in their application to practitioners with specific qualifications or training as follows:

For use of the assessment tool, the practitioner must possess the appropriate qualifications/training required for administration, as specified by the distributor of the tool. Assessment tools include:

- Isenhagen FCE
- West
- Valpar
- Key
- PWPE
- WorkHab Australia FCE

The FCE should be conducted in an area deemed appropriate by the assessors.

*Evidence guide*

*See generic evidence guide (after Unit 1).*

The FCE course trainer would assess competency to administer assessments.

Competency in administration of FCE needs to be assessed through observation of the assessment and reporting process by a suitable qualified Assessor on a client in a FCE room.

## Competency Strand 4:

### 5.2 Support counselling

Identify the psycho-social needs of an injured worker and assist in meeting these needs, through appropriate counselling techniques and referral to specialised services, when required.

The Unit describes the counselling activity to address issues throughout the vocational rehabilitation process including but not limited to:

- self concept
- loss and grief
- self esteem
- issues of adjustment
- motivation
- family counselling in relation to return to work;
- level of accommodation of the self and disability into the environment
- issues relevant to the return to work process.

#### Competency

#### Performance Criteria

##### Element 4.2.1

Identify psychological and other issues impacting on the vocational rehabilitation process and on adjustment to physical injury/illness.

- a) Demonstrate knowledge of common issues impacting on the vocational rehabilitation process and on adjustment to physical injury/disability.

##### Element 4.2.2

Recognise when specialised psychological intervention is required and demonstrate appropriate action.

- a) Outline the indicators which signify the need to identify and recommend intervention, with respect to referral for Clinical Psychology (including problems such as pain management, and depression).
- b) Demonstrate the ability to liaise with the medical practitioner regarding the need for such services, and if agreed, provide appropriate and timely referral.

##### Element 4.2.3

Successfully undertake support counselling.

- a) Demonstrate skills in support counselling.

**Element 4.2.4**

Demonstrate a sound knowledge of psychological adjustment processes, following a disability.

- a) Explain the process of psychological adjustment.
- b) Demonstrate a recognition of what stage an injured worker is in the adjustment process.
- c) Explain the process, as required.

**Element 4.2.5**

Employ appropriate counselling interventions to identify and address psychological and/or socio-economic factors.

- a) Demonstrate the ability to identify and clarify the issues of concern.
- b) Demonstrate the ability to discern the context in which the issues impact.
- c) Demonstrate the ability to discern when clinical psychological skills are required and arrange referral.

*Range of variables*

*See the generic range of variables (after Unit 1).*

**A vocational rehabilitation practitioner must possess a relevant tertiary qualification.**

Support counselling must be provided in a comfortable private location free from interruptions.

**Common psychological and other issues impacting on the vocational rehabilitation process include:**

- pain behaviour
- attitudinal issues
- family and financial issues
- workplace issues
- substance abuse.

**Support Counselling skills include:**

- establishing rapport
- interaction and liaison with other agencies (if client need identified)
- listening skills
- awareness of body language
- facilitating conflict resolution
- facilitating appropriate decision making techniques.

**An understanding of the role of a Clinical Psychologist to enable the practitioner to identify when clinical skills are required including:**

- treatment for anxiety/depression/post traumatic stress disorder
- pain management.

**Theories of Adjustment & Adjustment Counselling References:**

Banks, M.H. (1995). Psychological effects of prolonged unemployment: Relevance to models of work re-entry following injury. Journal of Occupational Rehabilitation, 5, 37-53.

Chontz, F.C. (1984). Psychological adjustment to physical disability: Trends in theories. In Marinelli, R.P & D'Il Orto, O.E (eds) (1984), The psychological and social impacts on physical disability (2<sup>nd</sup> ed, Chapters 8, 9 & 10). New York: Springer.

Gandy, G. L. (Ed), Martin, E Davis Jnr. (Ed) et al. (1999). Counseling in the rehabilitation process: Community services for mental and physical disabilities (2<sup>nd</sup> ed.). Springfield, IL, USA: Charles C Thomas Publisher.

Hershenson, David. B. (1996). A Systems Reformulation of a Developmental Model of Work Adjustment. Rehabilitation Counselling Bulletin, 40, 2-10.

Livneh, H. (1991). A unified appreciation to existing models of adaptation to disability: a model of adaptation. In Marinelli, R.P & D'Il Orto, O.E (eds) (1991), The psychological and social impacts on physical disability (3<sup>rd</sup>, ed, pp. 111-138). New York: Springer.

Livneh, H. (1991). A unified appreciation to existing models of adaptation to disability: interventions and strategies. In Marinelli, R.P & D'Il Orto, O.E (eds) (1991), The psychological and social impacts on physical disability (3<sup>rd</sup>, ed, pp. 241-248). New York: Springer.

Stewart, R. Jay. (1996). Applying Beck's Cognitive Therapy to Livneh's Model of Adaptation to Disability. Journal of Applied Rehabilitation Counseling, 27, 40-45.

### *Evidence guide*

*See generic evidence guide (after Unit 1).*

Assessors must be experienced in counselling (5 years), and be deemed competent relative to these standards.

The assessor needs to be familiar with relevant workers' compensation legislation in which the vocational rehabilitation is provided.

This Unit is to be assessed alongside Generic skills (Unit 1) and may take into consideration Case Management (Unit 2).

This Unit is to be conducted by role play or co-counselling sessions and file review, and the vocational rehabilitation practitioner is to review the progress and management of each file with the assessor. Also consider client feedback if appropriate.

## Competency Strand 4:

### 5.3 Vocational assessment

A vocational assessment involves the identification of suitable alternative vocational options through the use of counselling techniques and application of appropriate tests and inventories.

The purpose of vocational assessment is to assist an injured worker explore suitable employment options and develop recommendations for re-deployment. Education, training and work experience history is documented, transferable skills identified, interest, values and aptitudes explored, and a mode of re-training researched. Psychometric instruments and inventories may be used to confirm job-related interests, aptitudes and educational achievement.

The practitioner should possess an understanding and ability to use various interview techniques, designed to enhance information gathering and injured worker comfort.

#### Competency

#### Performance Criteria

##### Element 4.3.1

Possess appropriate specific qualifications and/or training in relevant health/behavioural sciences as required for the use of the assessment tool.

- a) Produce proof of a relevant qualification and/or training.

##### Element 4.3.2

Obtain and interpret information relevant to the vocational assessment process.

- a) Demonstrate the ability to explain the assessment process and foster acceptance of the use of tests and inventories.
- b) Demonstrate the ability to obtain and interpret information.
- c) Describe how to assist an injured worker to recognise and identify their transferable skills.
- d) Demonstrate the ability to assist an injured worker to recognise and accept that some areas of employment are no longer suitable.
- e) Demonstrate the ability to recognise issues which may influence or impact on the vocational assessment process and address these.

- f) Describe the appropriate action to take if unable to complete assessment and make recommendations.

### Element 4.3.3

Administer relevant tests and inventories.

- a) Demonstrate an understanding of the qualification requirements for tests undertaken, and ensure the possession of the relevant qualification required to administer.
- b) Demonstrate a knowledge of a variety of tests and inventories, for a range of purposes, relating to the vocational assessment process.
- c) Describe how to select the most appropriate test or inventory, for a required function.
- d) Demonstrate the ability to administer, assess and interpret appropriate tests and inventories.

### Element 4.3.4

Access resources and information on the current labour market.

- a) Demonstrate the ability to access resources and information on the current labour market.
- b) Demonstrate skills in the analysis of information.
- c) Demonstrate the ability to apply this to the recommendations.

### Element 4.3.5

Provide feedback, as appropriate, to the relevant parties.

- a) Demonstrate the ability to document and format reports detailing the outcomes of the interview and tests results, in a form which can be understood by all parties.
- b) Demonstrate the ability to provide results of the vocational assessment to an injured worker, referrer and if necessary, relevant stakeholders.

### *Range of variables*

*See the generic range of variables (after Unit 1).*

Possess relevant qualifications as required by the tests (if required adhere to the Australian Psychological Society Code of Ethics).

Clients are those requiring short term and long term redeployment.

Access to a variety of assessment tools and inventories.

Vocational Assessment must be provided in a quiet room free from interruptions that is able to accommodate the client's physical restrictions.

#### **Vocational Assessment involves the interpretation of information including:**

- Functional Capacity Evaluation Reports
- Medical Reports
- Psychological Reports.

#### **Vocational Assessment involves the obtaining of information relating to an injured worker's:**

- work history
- education history
- interests and values
- relevant family, socio-economic and other issues
- retraining potential
- physical capacity
- existing skills and abilities.

### *Evidence guide*

*See generic evidence guide (after Unit 1).*

Assessment by a professional with relevant qualifications and experience in vocational assessment (five years) and deemed competent against the standard. Where tests and inventories require psychological registration, the assessor should be a registered psychologist.

Assessment should be based on:

- appropriate use of tools and inventories and interpretation of results
- appropriate recommendations and conclusions
- observation of assessment or counselling session with clients or others
- review of five completed vocational assessment reports.

## Competency Strand 4:

### 5.4 Vocational counselling

Vocational counselling is any or all counselling services which assists workers' in the selection of suitable/realistic work options, identification of appropriate training (if required), and acceptance of and preparation for vocational re-direction. Vocational counselling is usually carried-out in conjunction with a vocational assessment.

The practitioner should possess an understanding and ability to use various interview techniques, designed to enhance information gathering and injured worker comfort.

#### Competency

#### Performance Criteria

##### Element 4.4.1

Communicate to an injured worker the process and limitations of the workers' compensation system as it relates to vocational options.

- a) Demonstrate a knowledge of and explain the limitations the system places on re-training and return to work options.
- b) Demonstrate the ability to identify appropriate options.

##### Element 4.4.2

Demonstrate knowledge of community resources available for career reference.

- a) Describe the services and written materials available and how to access them.
- b) Demonstrate the ability to pass on information to injured workers.

##### Element 4.4.3

Generate realistic job options.

- a) Demonstrate the ability to assist an injured worker in consideration of the following factors when determining vocational recommendations.
- b) Demonstrate the ability to provide appropriate counselling to an injured worker to assist in the acceptance of change and transition to alternative employment.

### *Range of variables*

*See the generic range of variables (after Unit 1).*

Clients are those requiring short term and long term redeployment.

Vocational counselling must be provided in a quiet room free from interruptions that is able to accommodate the client's physical restrictions.

Vocational Counselling assists an injured worker, consider the following factors when

- determining vocational options
- transferable skills
- vocational aptitude
- education & learning ability
- physical capacity
- labour market opportunities.

### *Evidence guide*

*See generic evidence guide (after Unit 1).*

The knowledge elements should be assessed through a direct assessment approach such as a written or oral test.

Interpersonal/counselling skills should be demonstrated through role play, video, co-counselling, by a log book of work experience reflecting these qualities, or through a review of case studies or a review of case history and case files.

## Competency Strand 4:

### 5.5 Workplace assessment & review

This unit lists the competencies required to:

- conduct a workplace assessment to identify suitable duties for an injured worker to return to work
- conduct a job analysis to identify the physical and cognitive demands of a specific job
- make recommendations for workplace modifications and/or job redesign to accommodate an injured worker's return to work and promote a safe work environment.

Practitioners undertaking workplace assessments, job analysis, workplace modifications and/or job design must possess knowledge relevant to the particular assessment (work environments/ organisations, physiology, biomechanics and ergonomic principles, and apply relevant Australian standards).

#### Competency

#### Performance Criteria

##### Element 4.5.1

Conduct a workplace assessment.

- Outline the theory and principles of workplace assessment.
- Describe how to identify the rationale or objective of the assessment.
- Demonstrate the ability to identify and analyse suitable duties within an organisation and make appropriate recommendations.
- Describe how to assess an injured worker's capacity to perform tasks, in accordance with current physical ability and medical certification.
- Demonstrate knowledge of the application of safe work practices (eg. manual handling posture).
- Demonstrate the ability to apply the results of workplace assessments to the return to work process.

- g) Demonstrate the ability to gather information regarding hours of work, normal shifts, rosters and designated work breaks.
- h) Demonstrate a knowledge of available resources (ie. Equipment and training).
- i) Demonstrate the ability to apply techniques of clinical observation, analytical and professional judgement regarding an injured worker's ability to undertake tasks.
- j) Demonstrate the ability to analyse assessment results, in relation to the referral objectives and make recommendations.
- k) Demonstrate skills in reviewing the implementation of assessment recommendations.
- l) Demonstrate the ability to make further recommendations to assist continued participation in work.
- m) Demonstrate knowledge of client restrictions and medical recommendations.

#### Element 4.5.2

Conduct a job analysis.

- a) Describe how to arrange a job analysis with the employer and identify areas for evaluation.
- b) Analyse jobs in relation to tasks, including physical, environmental and cognitive demands.
- c) Undertake job analysis in accordance with the referral objective.
- d) Demonstrate a knowledge in the application of safe work practices (e.g. manual handling, posture).
- e) Demonstrate the ability to liaise with the employer, as to the appropriateness of the worksite.

**Element 4.5.3**

Recommend workplace modifications

- a) Demonstrate a knowledge of available resources and how to access them.
- b) Demonstrate the ability to identify tasks which will assist with the successful return to or maintenance in the work environment.
- c) Demonstrate a knowledge of safety issues in line with workplace safety requirements.
- d) Demonstrate a knowledge of costings for work modifications and funding.
- e) Demonstrate a knowledge of assessment of an injured worker's limitations and injury, and the ability to apply recommendations, taking into account short and long term needs of an injured worker.
- f) Describe how to acquire a knowledge of the workplace environment and resources.
- g) Identify whether other services are required (eg. Architects and Ergonomists).
- h) Demonstrate the ability to provide training and education in the use of adaptive equipment, in line with safety and ergonomic guidelines.
- i) Describe the rationale for the provision of equipment.
- j) Demonstrate the ability to interpret, analyse and make appropriate recommendations, based on the findings.

**Element 4.5.4**

## Job Redesign

(The process of modifying, re-designing the job to the injured person's physical/functional/cognitive/psychological abilities).

- a) Demonstrate a knowledge of the principles and application of work practices (eg. work simplification, joint preservation techniques, work flow).
- b) Demonstrate a knowledge in the application of safe work practices (eg. manual handling and posture), interpretation, analysis and making appropriate recommendations.
- c) Outline circumstances in which job redesign may be used.
- d) Demonstrate the ability to approach the employer and confirm their willingness and ability to accommodate the injured worker's physical limitations.
- e) Demonstrate the ability to conduct: An analysis of tasks and duties and the physical, functional cognitive demands; the abilities (cognitive, knowledge and skills) required to complete them); study of work/teamwork flow and conduct a review of environmental conditions.
- f) Demonstrate the ability to match injured worker's identified physical/functional/cognitive/psychological abilities and deficits to the actual job available.
- g) Demonstrate the ability to identify jobs task/elements which are to be excluded.
- h) Demonstrate the ability to identify and negotiate additional duties.
- i) Explain how to identify the need for adaptive equipment or environmental modifications (eg. access to workplace and toilets; furniture, ramps, bench/desk height, lighting, chairs and equipment, safety equipment, temperature/air flow adjustment).
- j) Provide an example of an adapted Job Description.

- k) Demonstrate the ability to negotiate changes where necessary and obtain commitment from the employer to trial the changes.
- l) Describe circumstances in which it is necessary to include the supervisor/union representative in the negotiation process.
- m) Demonstrate the ability to negotiate and establish on-the-job support/supervision/re-training protocols.
- n) Provide example of a Return to Work Program Plan and explain how medical approval would be obtained.
- o) Outline how discussions with work team colleagues regarding changes which effect them would be arranged.
- p) Demonstrate the ability to identify and address safety issues (particularly for cognitive, hearing or visually impaired workers).

### *Range of variables*

*See the generic range of variables (after Unit 1).*

A vocational rehabilitation practitioner must possess a tertiary qualification, relevant skills, and/or training.

### **Circumstances for job redesign**

Matching the job to the worker's abilities:

- physical
- functional
- cognitive
- psychological.

Pertinent for workers with:

- acquired brain impairment
- spinal cord injuries
- post trauma stress disorder
- hearing or visual impairment.

A practitioner must also possess an understanding of relevant sections of the Occupational Safety and Health Act (1984).

### *Evidence guide*

*See generic evidence guide (after Unit 1).*

Assessment by a senior practitioner by viewing on-the-job performance, checklist, verbal or written testing of knowledge.

Competency is demonstrated by the practitioner obtaining and documenting all the relevant information and making suitable recommendations.

## Competency Strand 4:

### 5.6 Delivery of client training & education

The practitioner should demonstrate the delivery of client training and education for injury prevention and management programs and related topics, eg:

- safety
- relaxation and stress management
- back education.

#### Competency

#### Performance Criteria

##### Element 4.6.1

Provide group or individual training.

- a) Demonstrate a thorough knowledge of the topic.
- b) Demonstrate the ability to provide and develop appropriate training and education, in relation to an injured worker's functioning in the environment and injury management.
- c) Demonstrate a knowledge of anatomy and physiology.
- d) Demonstrate knowledge of relaxation/ stress management techniques.
- e) Demonstrate an understanding of a range of physical injuries and their consequences.
- f) Demonstrate the -ability to identify aim, set objectives, develop and present sessions, and evaluate outcomes of training.

*Range of variables*

*See the generic range of variables (after Unit 1).*

Training is undertaken in a conducive training environment with appropriate materials.

*Evidence guide*

*See generic evidence guide (after Unit 1).*

Performance is assessed by attendees via questionnaires and feedback.