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### 1. Purpose

The University is mindful of, and acknowledges that, an employee has a right to submit a workers' compensation claim for a work-related injury. The purpose of this framework is to provide information on how to seek assistance/support following a minor work-related injury through The University of Melbourne's Early Support Services (ESS).

### 2. Scope

This framework applies to all employees who have sustained a short term minor work-related injury and wish to seek reimbursement of their medical costs associated with the injury. This framework also provides guidance with remaining at or returning to work following the injury. Any participation in ESS is voluntary and at any time can be ceased by the employee or the University.

The ESS support program does not replace any proactive injury preventative program undertaken by the University departments, faculties or associated subsidiaries. Any costs connected with delivery of these programs will remain within the local area.

### 3. Definitions

#### 3.1. Itemised invoice / receipt

Itemised invoice / receipt refers to a tax invoice or receipt provided for medical services which contains the following information:

- Name of business/clinic
- Name of service provider (i.e., doctor, physiotherapist)
- Clinic/provider contact details (address, phone number, fax, email)
- Clinic/provider's ABN
- Injured employee details (name, address, date of birth)
- Invoice/receipt number

- Date of service
- Item number
- Service fee charged
- GST charged (if applicable).

**Note:** Early Support Services can only reimburse for authorised medical services provided in Australia only.

### **3.2. Minor work-related injury**

A short term minor work-related injury is defined as an injury that:

- occurs whilst engaged in employment activities
- is expected to resolve within a discrete period
- has little expectation of ongoing symptoms, treatment, or expenses
- requires a limited number of consultations with a doctor (GP and/or specialist, combined)
- requires short term allied health treatments (such as physiotherapy, osteopathy, chiropractor's etc.)
- requires diagnostic imaging/testing, up to one (1) of the following: x-ray, MRI scan, nerve conductivity test, ultrasound scan or CT scan
- does not exceed \$1,500.00.

### **3.3. Return to Work Plan (RTWP)**

A Return-to-Work Plan (RTWP) is a document which outlines any medically recommended modifications to an employee's substantive role on a short-term basis to assist them in their recovery and gradual return to their normal work duties and hours. RTWPs are reviewed and updated on a regular basis in line with medical advice.

### **3.4. Treating Health Practitioner**

A treating health practitioner (THP) is a registered healthcare professional who provides medical and / or treatment services. THPs may include General Practitioners, specialists / surgeons, physiotherapists, osteopaths etc.

- Services are limited to diagnosable conditions only:
  - Allied health physiotherapists, osteopaths and chiropractors (all considered the same treatment – double up will not be authorised).
  - Services provided by remedial massage / masseurs will not be funded.

## **4. Process**

### **4.1. Employee sustains a minor work-related injury**

- An employee sustains a minor work-related injury.
- The employee should seek first aid / medical attention if needed and must report the injury to their supervisor.
- The employee is encouraged to submit an incident report (via the University incident reporting system) as soon as practicable following a work-related injury in accordance with the University's Health & Safety procedures.

### **4.2. Information and awareness of the ESS Program**

- Employees will receive an automated email in response to the incident report with details of how to access the ESS program.
- If necessary, the Health & Safety Business Partner (or equivalent) may contact the employee (and manager / supervisor) once an incident report notification is received, to review the incident / advise the employee of the Early Support Services and where to find further information (incident response flowchart is outlined in appendix 1).

### **4.3. The employee submits an Early Support Services application**

- The employee reviews information relating to ESS and submits a ServiceNow form (or manual word document) if they wish to access the service.

### **4.4. Workplace Accessibility and Injury Support (WAIS) team review the request and respond to the employee**

- The WAIS team will receive a copy of the completed ServiceNow form or manual request form via the WAIS team's email ([uom-wais@unimelb.edu.au](mailto:uom-wais@unimelb.edu.au)).
- WAIS will review the employee's application for ESS and provide a response regarding the outcome of the application to the employee within three (3) business days of receipt of the request.
  - If further information is required, this timeframe may be delayed.
  - The WAIS team will contact the manager / supervisor if required.

If the application is accepted, WAIS will contact the employee to advise them and discuss:

- their injury / symptoms and plan for accessing treatment.
- any challenges in managing the injury in the workplace, and if required, we will seek medical information regarding treatment and any short-term role modifications needed.

**Note:** Should the application not meet the criteria for acceptance, the employee will be provided with reasons for the decision and notified of other options available to them (see 5.3 limitations).

#### 4.5. Employee seeks treatment and claims reimbursement

- The employee seeks treatment within the scope of ESS and obtains itemised receipts / invoices.
- The University reimburses the employee or pays the treatment provider directly in accordance with Appendix 2: *Early Support Services – Payment/reimbursement process*.

#### 4.6. Ongoing review and update

- The employee continues to attend treatment appointments and seeks reimbursements under ESS.
- The employee regularly updates WAIS and their manager / supervisor about any changes to their treatment plan (e.g., referrals to diagnostic scans / tests).
- Discussions with the THP and the employee will be required to review treatment plans and other options if recovery is not progressing as anticipated or if treatment requirement is beyond 13 weeks from the start of the ESS.
  - Note: Failure to participate in the ESS requirements will close the support request after seven (7) days.

#### 4.7. Completion of Early Support Services

The Early Support Service is concluded when one of the following is met:

- 13 weeks have elapsed since the approval of their ESS case. If the employee requires ongoing treatment post 13 weeks, they may need to consider submitting a worker's compensation claim. Discussion with WAIS is recommended.
- The employee decides to withdraw from the service or fails to reasonably participate in the program.
- The employee has no ongoing treatment needs.
- The limitations of funding under the service are met. If funding has been exhausted and the employee has ongoing treatment needs, the employee may consider submitting a workers' compensation claim.
- The WAIS team may require a questionnaire to be completed by the THP and if the requested information has not been received from either the employee or THP, the ESS case may be impacted and closed.

## 5. Considerations, Expectations and Limitations

### 5.1. Considerations

- The employee may choose to seek medical treatment prior to a decision is issued regarding provision of funding under ESS. The employee accepts that these treatment costs may not be funded under ESS if they do not meet the criteria, or if the application does not meet the criteria for acceptance.
- An employee's participation in ESS is voluntary and they may withdraw from the service at any time.
- Employees can choose to nominate a preferred treating health practitioner.
- Employees should notify the WAIS team if they have been incapacitated to work due to the injury.

### 5.2. Expectations

It is an expectation that:

- The employee will assist their supervisor (and Health & Safety Business Partner) in investigating the incident to allow for corrective actions to be implemented in a timely manner.
- The employee, supervisor and WAIS will work together to develop, implement, and monitor Return to Work Plans if the employee is unable to undertake their normal work duties.
- Medical information will be requested as needed to help guide the development and review of Return- to-Work Plans.
- Medical appointments will be scheduled outside of working hours. Special arrangements may be made on a case-by-case basis.
- Supervisors will seek advice if needed from the WAIS team.
- Any personal and/or health information will be managed in accordance with the University's Privacy Policy.
- Failure to participate in the ESS requirements will close the support request after seven (7) days.

### 5.3. Limitations

Employees who access ESS should be of the following general limitations:

- ESS covers reasonable costs relating to a minor work-related injury, defined as an injury that:
  - Occurs whilst engaged in employment activities;
  - Is expected to resolve within a discrete period;
  - Has little expectation of ongoing symptoms, treatment, or expenses;
  - Requires a limited number of consultations with a doctor (GP and/or specialist, combined);
  - Require short-term allied health treatments (such as physiotherapy, osteopathy, chiropractic etc.) – These services are limited to diagnosable conditions only:
    - Allied health physiotherapy, osteopathy, chiropractic (all considered the same treatment – double up will not be authorised).
    - Services provided by remedial massage / masseurs are not within the program scope and will not be authorised.
  - Requires diagnostic imaging/testing, up to one (1) of the following: x-ray, MRI scan, nerve conductivity test, ultrasound scan or CT scan;
- Does not exceed a total cost of \$1,500.00 for medical and like expenses. This includes medical practitioners' consultations, allied health services, pharmacological expenses, aids and appliances and minor medical procedures (limited to injections) etc. Please consult with WAIS to confirm if treatment outside of this list will be covered. If total medical costs are likely to exceed \$1,500.00, the employee may consider claiming expenses through a workers' compensation claim;
- Employees are not able to access ESS and Workcover concurrently;
- Funding under ESS is for **treatment only**. If an employee is unfit for work due to the injury, the employee will need to discuss their support options with their supervisor and/or WAIS.
- The University is not obligated to pay for medical expenses under ESS. ESS exists to provide support to injured employees.
- The reimbursement of expenses under this guideline does not imply that the University has accepted liability for the injury / condition under workers' compensation legislation.
- The University reimburses monies related to reasonable medical, treatment and diagnostic expenses.
- Personal items (e.g., spectacles, watches, and clothing) that are damaged in connection with a minor work-related injury may be reimbursed in exceptional circumstances.
- Other ESS program limitations to consider prior to applying:
  - Treatment requirements for general well-being
  - Common illnesses such as colds, gastro, Covid-19 etc.
  - Conditions for which the employee is already receiving treatment (e.g., post-surgery recovery)
  - Injuries that are severe in nature and require emergency assistance or hospitalisation.
  - Mental health injuries - Workers Compensation provisional payments are available for early, temporary funding for Victorian workers with work-related mental injuries, covering up to 13 weeks of medical services (e.g., psychologists, GPs) while claims are decided. These payments provide immediate support, reducing financial barriers, even if a workers compensation claim does not meet the claim criteria. Under exceptional circumstances, these types of services that have a clear benefit to the employee and University can be considered by the associate director or director – Health and Safety. Individuals enquiring about mental health support via ESS will be referred to existing mental health support services available:

- Workers Compensation claim (provisional payments).
- The Employee Assistance Program (EAP) provides independent and confidential services, as well as support materials to all employees. There is a variety of services such as financial coaching, legal advice, nutrition coaching, counselling services and more.
- Counselling & Psychological Services (CAPS) provides free, confidential, short-term counselling for staff. All counsellors are employees of the University and have a wealth of experience in assisting you to develop adaptive strategies to support you at home and at work. If you are new to CAPS or haven't attended the service this year, book an appointment by calling 03 8344 6927, or visiting CAPS on Level 5, 757 Swanston Street, Parkville

## 6. Roles and Responsibilities

Role	Responsibility	Out of scope
<b>Employee</b>	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>Participate will all voluntary requirements of the ESS program. Providing all consent documentation, medical certificates / medical reports / treatment plans to WAIS.</li> <li>Communicate with WAIS about medical updates, treatment outcomes.</li> <li>Responsible for payment of any work-related injury invoices up front to service providers (if required) and can seek reimbursement from the University.</li> </ul>	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>Failure to participate in the voluntary ESS requirements will close the support request after seven (7) days.</li> </ul>
<b>Manager / Supervisor</b>	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>Provide support to the employees to assist them to remain at or return to work as early as possible.</li> <li>Review and control hazards identified in the workplace as the risk owner.</li> <li>Seek advice from the WAIS team as needed.</li> </ul>	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>Manager / Supervisor will not submit application to the ESS program on behalf of the employee unless there are extenuating circumstances.</li> </ul>
<b>Workplace and Injury Support Team (WAIS)</b>	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>Monitor the limitations of the ESS program with incoming requests.</li> <li>Make an assessment on the injured employee's eligibility for ESS (within 5 business days) and notify the employee.</li> <li>Action reimbursements upon receipt of a valid itemised invoice/receipt.</li> <li>Support the employee and supervisor in navigating the ESS process.</li> <li>Provide specialist WAIS advice and guidance as needed.</li> <li>Communicate with treating health practitioners, as necessary.</li> </ul>	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>Do not manage hazards or controls within the workplace on behalf of the risk owner.</li> <li>Does not include support for non-work related injuries or health concerns.</li> <li>Early Support Services can only be reimbursed for medical services provided in Australia.</li> </ul>

## 7. Associated Documentations

### Forms

- [Early Support Services - ServiceNow form](#)
- Manual request form

### Guidance

- [Early Support Services - Incident response process – Appendix 1](#)
- [Early Support Services - Payment/reimbursement process – Appendix 2](#)
- [Important Information \(reimbursement details\) - Appendix 3](#)

## Appendix 1 – Early Support Services Incident Response Process

The below flowchart outlines the process for injured workers to access information about Early Support Services for work-related injuries. To access ESS for an injury, you must have a specific medical diagnosis from a doctor. Your treating practitioner will detail your exact diagnosis, and the affected bodily location.

Employee ESS Process	
<p><b>Step 1 - Report the Injury</b></p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>Injured employee submits an Incident Report via ERMS: Notify your manager / supervisor as soon as possible and ensure the incident is logged in the workplace Register of Injuries within 30 days.</li> </ul> <p><b>Note:</b> Employees will receive an automated email in response to the incident report with details of how to access the ESS program. The same information can be found via the <a href="#">Early Support Services webpage</a> &amp; ESS information and factsheet.</p>	
<p><b>Step 2 – Obtain an official diagnosis and work connection</b></p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>An injury must be a recognized and diagnosable condition (e.g., fracture, lumbar sprain, or nerve damage). The initial diagnosis must be issued by a medical practitioner (e.g., your GP). Subsequent updates can be issued by physiotherapists, osteopaths, or chiropractors.</li> <li>To access ESS, your employment must be a significant contributing factor to the injury or caused its aggravation.</li> </ul>	
<p><b>Step 3 – Employee submits the application for review</b></p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>The injured employee reviews information on ESS and submits <a href="#">ServiceNow</a> / or manual request form if they wish to access these services (<a href="mailto:uom-wais@unimelb.edu.au">uom-wais@unimelb.edu.au</a>). When applying, employees should consider the scope of available services.</li> <li>The WAIS team will make an assessment on the injured employee’s eligibility for ESS (within 5 business days) and notify the employee.</li> </ul>	
Program services (In scope)	Program limitations (out of scope)
<p>A short term minor work-related injury is defined as an injury that:</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>Occurs whilst engaged in employment activities.</li> <li>Is expected to resolve the matter within a discrete period.</li> <li>Has little expectation of ongoing symptoms, treatment, or expenses.</li> <li>Requires a limited number of consultations with a doctor (GP and/or specialist, combined).</li> <li>Requires short-term allied health treatments (such as physiotherapy, osteopathy, chiropractic etc.) – These services are limited to <b>diagnosable conditions</b> only.</li> <li>Requires diagnostic imaging / testing, up to one (1) of the following: x-ray, MRI scan, nerve conductivity test, ultrasound scan or CT scan.</li> <li>Does <b>not</b> exceed \$1,500.00 total treatment cost.</li> </ul>	<p>Program limitations include:</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>Travel ‘to’ and ‘from’ appointments</li> <li>Allied health physiotherapy, osteopathy, chiropractic (all considered as concurrent treatment – double up will not be authorised).</li> <li>Services provided by remedial massage / masseurs are not within the program scope and will not be authorised.</li> <li>Treatment requirements for general well-being, pre habilitation or proactive injury preventative program(s).</li> <li>Common illnesses such as colds, gastro, Covid-19 etc.</li> <li>Conditions for which the employee is already receiving treatment (e.g., post-surgery recovery).</li> <li>Injuries that are severe in nature and require emergency assistance or hospitalisation.</li> <li>Personal items (e.g., spectacles, watches, phones and clothing) that are damaged in connection with a minor work-related injury.</li> <li>Mental health injuries - Individuals enquiring about mental health support via ESS will be referred to existing mental health support available: <ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>Workers Compensation claim (provisional payments).</li> <li>The Employee Assistance Program (EAP) provides independent and confidential services, as well as support materials to all employees. There is a variety of services such as financial coaching, legal advice, nutrition coaching, counselling services and more.</li> <li>Counselling &amp; Psychological Services (CAPS) provides free, confidential, short-term counselling for staff. All counsellors are employees of the University and have a wealth of experience in assisting you to develop adaptive strategies to support you at home and at work. If you are new to CAPS or haven't attended the service this year, book an appointment by calling 03 8344 6927, or visiting CAPS on Level 5, 757 Swanston Street, Parkville</li> </ul> </li> </ul>

## Appendix 2 - Early Support Services – Payment / reimbursement process

The below flowcharts outline the processes for reimbursement of medical expenses to injured employees and payment of medical expenses directly to services providers in relation to Early Support Services for work- related injuries.

When injured employee has already paid the invoice	When UoM pays service provider directly
<b>Step 1</b> - Injured employee seeks medical attention.	<b>Step 1</b> - Injured employee seeks medical attention
<b>Step 2</b> - Injured employee pays for the medical service.	<b>Step 2</b> - Injured employee asks that the service provider bills UoM directly for the service and provides UoM’s billing details (see billing information on next page).
<b>Step 3</b> - Injured employee requests an itemised receipt.	<b>Step 3</b> - Provider invoices UoM directly
<b>Step 4</b> - Injured employee submits receipt to WAIS inbox ( <a href="mailto:uom-wais@unimelb.edu.au">uom-wais@unimelb.edu.au</a> ) for reimbursement.	<b>Step 4</b> - WAIS team reviews the submitted invoice and determines whether payable under ESS
<b>Step 5</b> - WAIS team reviews the submitted receipt and determines whether it is payable under ESS. This will include a ‘supplier set up’ to enable reimbursements directly to the injured employee.	<b>Step 5</b> - WAIS processes the reimbursement in line with <a href="#">UoM standard payment terms</a> . <small>*If the service provider is required to be set up as a “vendor” in the case management system, this process may take longer (for the first payment only).</small>
<b>Step 6</b> - WAIS team will aim to process the reimbursement within 7* days of the received date (is all necessary information has been provided). <small>*If the injured employee is required to be set up as a “vendor” in the case management system, this process may take longer (for the first payment only).</small>	

## Appendix 3 - Important Information (reimbursement details)

### Invoice/receipt requirements

A valid invoice/receipt must contain the following information:

- Name of business/clinic
- Name of service provider (i.e., doctor)
- Clinic/provider contact details (address, phone number, fax, email)
- Clinic/provider's ABN
- Injured employee details (name, address, date of birth)
- Invoice/receipt number
- Date of service
- Item number
- Service fee charged
- GST charged (if applicable)

**Note:** Early Support Services can only reimburse for medical services provided in Australia.

### Timeframe for first payment/reimbursement

- If the injured employee or service provider is required to be set up as a "vendor" in the case management system, payment of the invoice may take longer than usual. The WAIS team will contact the injured employee or service provider to advise of the process for vendor set up.

### Timeframe for ongoing payments/reimbursements

- WAIS processes the reimbursement within 7 days of the received date. When a valid invoice or receipt is received by WAIS before 12pm on a Tuesday, the injured employee or service provider should receive payment/reimbursement by Friday afternoon (dependent on banking institution).
- If the invoice/receipt is received after 12pm on a Tuesday, the payment or reimbursement should be received by the next Friday afternoon.

### Billing information

Service providers/clinics should be provided the following billing information:

Workplace Accessibility and Injury Support – Business Services  
The University of Melbourne  
Level 1  
11 Barry Street  
**CARLTON VIC 3053**

Submit all invoices/receipts via email or fax:

Email: [uom-wais@unimelb.edu.au](mailto:uom-wais@unimelb.edu.au)

Fax: 03 8344 3057

All invoice-related enquiries should be submitted in writing to [uom-wais@unimelb.edu.au](mailto:uom-wais@unimelb.edu.au)