

Vocational Rehabilitation Needs Assessment (IOA/IMA) Policy

[Historical] v12.1



Summary

Objective

This policy defines the assessments required when assessing the vocational rehabilitation needs of a client. Use this policy to understand:

1. Eligibility criteria
2. Initial Occupational Assessment (IOA)
3. Initial Medical Assessment (IMA)
4. When to refer for IOA/IMA
5. Legislation References

Background

ACC is required to determine the vocational rehabilitation (VR) needs of a client before providing the client with the appropriate vocational rehabilitation. There are two assessments used to assess a client's needs, the initial occupational assessment and the initial medical assessment. These assessments are completed together and help establish suitable and sustainable work options that vocational rehabilitation can be targeted towards.

Owner

[Name withheld]

Expert

Policy

1.0 Eligibility Criteria

a To be eligible for referral for an IOA and IMA the client must be:

- entitled to receive VR assistance
- unlikely to maintain their current employment; or
- unlikely to regain fitness for their pre-injury employment
- have completed an IOA (prior to the IMA)

2.0 Initial Occupational Assessment (IOA)

a An IOA is undertaken by an occupational assessor (vocational or career's consultant) who will identify the types of work that may be appropriate for the client based on their skills, education, and experience. This is not a medical assessment and effects of the client's injury are not taken into account during this assessment.

The assessment will also identify:

- the client's vocational needs and any vocational barriers to them returning to work or achieving work readiness
- vocational rehabilitation likely to assist the client to return to work or achieve work readiness for the identified work types
- any additional steps the client could take to return to work or achieve work readiness for the identified work types

3.0 Requirements when making an IOA referral

a When referring the client for an IOA you should:

- Tell the client:
 - about the assessment
 - that we will provide their pre-incapacity earnings to the occupational assessor
 - that they're entitled to bring a support person or persons to the assessment
- provide all the IOA related information to the assessor, including the client's employment history, occupational reports and pre-incapacity earnings (do not include medical information as it is not relevant for the IOA)
- tell the assessor about any behaviour that could indicate risk, including any potential for the client to become aggressive or violent
- take all reasonable steps to safeguard the assessor, such as providing a security service if needed
- record the agreement to undertake an IOA, and its purpose, on the client's Recovery Plan (RP) / Individual Rehabilitation Plan (IRP)

4.0 Information covered in the assessment

a We must ensure that the IOA report meets our criteria and quality standards. The IOA evaluation checklist provides a checklist of these standards and should be used to confirm these have been met before accepting the IOA report from the assessor.

 IOA Report Evaluation Checklist

5.0 Work types – what’s a reasonable number?

- a In most situations, 8-12 work type detail sheets are reasonable for an IOA.

To have an excessive number of similar work types in an IOA doesn't influence the VR provided or whether a client will eventually be found vocationally independent.

6.0 Initial Medical Assessment (IMA)

- a An IMA is undertaken by a medical assessor (occupational physician) to determine whether the types of work identified in the IOA are, or are likely to be, medically sustainable for a client taking into account the effects of their injuries.

An IMA should also identify:

- any recommended rehabilitation or treatment the client needs to help them return to work or achieve work readiness
- if it is indicated that regaining fitness for the pre-injury role is achievable

7.0 Requirements for IMA Referrals

- a When referring the client for an IMA you should:

- Tell the client:
 - about the assessment
 - that they're entitled to bring a support person or persons to the assessment
- provide all the related information to the assessor, including the IOA and medical, rehabilitation and vocational reports
- tell the assessor about any behaviour that could indicate risk, including any potential for the client to become aggressive or violent
- take all reasonable steps to safeguard the assessor, such as providing a security service if needed
- record the agreement to undertake an IMA, and its purpose, on the client's Recovery Plan (RP) / Individual Rehabilitation Plan (IRP).


8.0 Information covered in the assessment

- a We must ensure that the IMA report meets our criteria and quality standards. The IMA evaluation checklist provides a checklist of these standards and should be used to confirm these have been met before accepting the IMA report from the assessor.

 IMA Report Evaluation Checklist

9.0 When to refer for an IOA and IMA

- a When there is information to indicate that the client may not regain fitness, or sustain, the employment they held at the time of their injury, consideration should be given to assessment of their vocational rehabilitation needs via an IOA and IMA.

 Guidelines for when to refer for the IOA and IMA







- b If the decision is made to refer the client for these assessments, the client's circumstances should be taken into consideration when scheduling the assessments.


NOTE Examples


A client has recently begun treatment for significant PTSD symptoms. Check with the treating provider when it would be appropriate for the client to engage with an IOA assessor to discuss future vocational options.

A client has surgery scheduled in the near future. The IMA assessment should be scheduled following adequate recovery from surgery.

10.0 Links to Legislation

-  Accident Compensation Act 2001, Section 89 - Assessment of claimant's vocational rehabilitation needs
<http://legislation.govt.nz/act/public/2001/0049/latest/DLM101437.html>
-  Accident Compensation Act 2001, Section 90 - Occupational assessor
<http://legislation.govt.nz/act/public/2001/0049/latest/DLM101438.html>
-  Accident Compensation Act 2001, Section 91 - Conduct of initial occupational assessment
<http://legislation.govt.nz/act/public/2001/0049/latest/DLM101439.html>
-  Accident Compensation Act 2001, Section 92 - Report on initial occupational assessment
<http://legislation.govt.nz/act/public/2001/0049/latest/DLM101440.html>
-  Accident Compensation Act 2001, Section 93 - Medical assessor
<http://legislation.govt.nz/act/public/2001/0049/latest/DLM101441.html>
-  Accident Compensation Act 2001, Section 94 - Assessments when medical assessor unavailable
<http://legislation.govt.nz/act/public/2001/0049/latest/DLM101443.html>

 Accident Compensation Act 2001, Section 95 - Conduct of initial medical assessment
<http://legislation.govt.nz/act/public/2001/0049/latest/DLM101445.html>

 Accident Compensation Act 2001, Section 96 - Report on initial medical assessment
<http://legislation.govt.nz/act/public/2001/0049/latest/DLM101446.html>

Timeframes

None Noted

Proactively Released