**Course in functioning as a rehabilitation and return to work coordinator**

**UNIT 2: Develop return to work plans**

**Student Assessment Workbook**

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| Student Name: |  |
| Student Signature: |  |
| Date Submitted: |  |

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**Guide to completing the assessment workbook.**

Congratulations on completing the online Unit No. 2 - D*evelop return to work plans*. To complete your assessment for this unit you are now required to undertake the written component which includes –

* 1. Short answer (general unit questions)
	2. Case Study Activity (John and Sunstate Constructions)
	3. Job analysis (identification of skills and abilities requirements for an occupation)
	4. Suitable duty identification

*N.B. Case study activities provided in the next unit of this course (Implement and monitor return to work plans) are also considered a component of the assessment for the awarding of this competency, and as such, the submission of the assessment items needs to be made for full assessment and therefore the awarding of this unit of competency.*

***Please save your work regularly!***

Once you have completed the written component and are ready to be assessed, please send your completed work into OHSA by email, mail or fax at the following:

RRTWC Assessor

OHSA

PO Box 336

Palm Beach QLD 4221

Ph: 0755 595 440

Fax: 07 5559 5661

Email: rrtwc@ohsa.com.au

If you have any queries please don’t hesitate to contact us on the email above or on 0755 595 440.

**Develop Return to Work Plans**.

# Congratulations on completing the online component of this unit. Please complete the following short answer questions and case studies. To do this you may need to have reference to the Student Workbook, the Act and Regulation, and other documents and links found in the attachments menu.

On completion of this unit you will be required to submit this document into OHSA. Details on how to do this are provided at the end of this document.

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| Question 1 |
| When is it desirable for discussions about a return to work to commence and why is an early return to work considered important? |
| Click here to enter text. |

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| Question 2 |
| Please provide one example of what you (the RRTWC) may need to negotiate with each of the following stakeholders to achieve an early return to work. |
| *Injured Worker -* Click here to enter text.*Medical Practitioner -* Click here to enter text.*Employer -* Click here to enter text.*Insurers Case Manager -* Click here to enter text.*Occupational Therapist / Physiotherapist -* Click here to enter text. |

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| Question 3 |
| Please provide one responsibility of each of the following stakeholders? |
| *Injured Worker -* Click here to enter text.*Medical Practitioner -* Click here to enter text.*Employer -* Click here to enter text.*Insurer Case Manager -* Click here to enter text.*Occupational Therapist / Physiotherapist -* Click here to enter text.*RRTWC -* Click here to enter text. |

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| Question 4 |
| Why might it be necessary to engage an Occupational Therapist or a Physiotherapist to aid in the early return to work of an injured worker? |
| Click here to enter text. |

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| Question 5 |
| On the suitable duties template provided in your Student Learner Guide, the plan details require both a ‘long term goal’ and an ‘objective of the plan’. Please provide an example of each of these for an occupation found in your workplace. |
| *Occupation -* Click here to enter text.*Long Term Goal -* Click here to enter text.*Objective of this plan -* Click here to enter text. |

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| Question 6 |
| Why and when must the RRTWC obtain the ‘Injured Worker Authorisation’? |
| *Why -* Click here to enter text.*When -* Click here to enter text. |

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| Question 7 |
| s42 of the Act lists the matters that you must have regard to when designing a suitable duties program. Please discuss the importance of a), e) and f). |
| *a) -* Click here to enter text.*e) -* Click here to enter text.*f) -* Click here to enter text. |

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| Question 8 |
| Please discuss why the provision of ‘meaningful’ work is important in terms of maintaining an injured worker at work. |
| Click here to enter text. |

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| Question 9 |
| In the Student Learner Guide, a list of risk factors for expended injury and disability is provided. Please choose 3 risk factors and discuss why they may be considered a risk. Please also provide a possible strategy that could be used to overcome this risk. |
| *1.* Click here to enter text.*2.* Click here to enter text.*3.* Click here to enter text. |

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| Question 10 |
| Psychosocial Risk Factors – Yellow Flags.Discuss how the RRTWC role could impact positively in this area. |
| Click here to enter text. |

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| Question 11 |
| Psychosocial Risk Factors – Blue Flags.Discuss how the RRTWC role could impact positively in this area. |
| Click here to enter text. |

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| Question 12 |
| Psychosocial Risk Factors – Black Flags.Discuss how the RRTWC role could impact positively in this area. |
| *1.* Click here to enter text. |

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| Question 13 |
| Please provide a summary of the dispute resolution process regarding suitable duties or other return to work issues. |
| Click here to enter text. |

**Activity 1 – Case Study**

## Impact of injury on worker and employer (John and Sunstate Constructions)

The effect of workplace injury is related not only to the type and severity of injury, but also to the personality of the worker and the environment at work and at home. Sometimes after an injury there is a decline in the injured person’s self-esteem and a corresponding deterioration in his or her relationship with their partner and family. Financial pressures combine with feelings of worthlessness and can result in arguments, violence, and general relationship difficulties with a partner and family. The outcome of this process is that the worker becomes ‘stuck’ in the role of an invalid through the compensation process and beyond.

For many people, work is an integral part of their life and self-identity. Workplace injury may bring about fundamental changes in the expected course of the worker’s life, affecting not only the worker but also their dependents. Any injury has physical and psychological components with accompanying emotional reactions. There is no direct relationship between the severity of the injury or disease and the scope of the emotional reaction or the recovery of the injured worker.

Workers at risk of developing unhelpful or adverse reactions to injury that may lead to chronic disability are characterised by the following factors:

* aged between 20 and 55
* skilled or unskilled labourers for whom physical strength is a major requirement of the job
* sudden onset of injury or illness
* limited formal education
* skills acquired on the job
* narrow range of skills
* well paid jobs because of overtime and other allowances
* job provides social contacts and networks.

What happens that makes a confident and independent worker pass through the stages of injury, hospitalisation, and recovery to become chronically disabled?

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| *Using the following case study (John and Sunstate Constructions), consider three impacts of injury on -* * *the employer,*
* *the injured worker and;*
* *list 3 strategies that could have been used to lessen these impacts on the worker and his employer.*
 |

## Case study – the impact of injury on an injured worker and his rehabilitation and recovery and the impact on the employer.

A young family of four consisting of the father (John), a 35 year old carpenter, his 30 year old wife (Diane) who works in business administration, and their two children aged 8 (Jason) and 10 (Kylie).

At the time of the accident John and Diane have been married for ten years, have two children, Jason and Kylie, and have a well furnished but heavily mortgaged home. They have other debts related to purchases of electrical appliances, a second car and credit card debt. Both their wages are enough to cover expenses and provide a comfortable standard of living. Then disaster strikes.

### The accident

Diane sees her husband for the first time in the orthopaedic ward a few hours after the accident. John fell from the first floor of a building site and has a fractured pelvis, and a fracture to his lower left leg. Diane is very frightened and decides to stay at John’s side day and night until he begins to recover. The nursing staff encourage this as they are overworked and grateful for Diane’s assistance with the routine work of nursing an invalid.

At first John’s family are pre-occupied with his immediate survival and well being. His extended family come to visit but after a day or two return to their own responsibilities.

After a week John is beginning to feel better. He is able to be left alone for longer periods but Diane has committed herself to his total care and he finds it very agreeable to be taken care of so totally.

Back at Sunstate Constructions Peter (John’s boss) is under pressure as John was one of his most experienced and skilful workers with a talent for leading crews to complete jobs on time. Peter is not sure how long John will be away or whether he will return and is under pressure to keep the workflow on schedule. He visits John in hospital and realises that John’s injuries are serious and that he will need to recruit another person to take John’s place in the short term.

Sunstate Constructions is a small business employing around 30 people so each worker is an integral and important part of the team. Losing a key worker like John represents a serious setback to the business.

Peter feels a little guilty about recruiting someone to take John’s place but needs to keep the building work on schedule. He lets John know they will be recruiting a temporary replacement until John is able to return to work. Peter now has to take time out from a busy schedule to recruit a new foreman to take John’s place and retrain him in the firm’s quality systems. He is concerned that it will be difficult to find a replacement for John as the building trade is experiencing a boom and talented people are scarce.

Peter is under pressure – the recruitment process is expensive and time consuming and if the new person is unsuitable it will be a major setback. Peter also realises that medical costs and lost wages for John will probably result in a significant increase in the firm’s worker’s compensation premium. Morale is also affected due to the seriousness of John’s accident.

Diane meanwhile takes on an impossible task by attempting to give full attention to both her husband and his recovery, her children, her job and the day to day running of the house. As time goes by, she becomes increasingly fatigued and resentful. She is embarrassed to ask friends and neighbours to look after her children and does not feel able to take the initiative to reduce her attention to John. She wishes John would understand her situation and suggests that she cut back on her time at the hospital but he does not.

The result is increasing resentment and growing aggression on the part of Diane which John senses. Diane wife shelters him from the growing worries at home and their increasing financial difficulties. He accepts her reassurances at face value but begins to suspect that all is not well with their relationship and begins to speculate on why this is so. He is fearful about his ability to return to his job and worries about how he will cope and earn an income in future. He does not discuss these concerns with Diane.

The family’s entire way of life has changed. At first they are only worried about John’s survival and physical well-being. The extended family have shown care and concern but need to get back to their own lives.

After a week John feels better physically. He is more alert and could be left on his own for longer periods but does not suggest this to Diane. She feels torn between her concern for her husband and her family and employment responsibilities. There is growing tension in the family because of the competing demands on her time.

John is becoming more anxious about his injuries and his physical condition. The continuous rounds of x-rays, scans, tests and physical examinations reinforce his anxiety and he complains to his doctors and the nurses. They consider his complaints as trivial and begin to suspect that he is exaggerating his symptoms to gain sympathy and extend his recovery period. This lays the basis for a situation of mutual suspicion and distrust between John and those treating his injuries.

John’s relationship with his wife is undergoing subtle changes. The physical and mental strain caused by the responsibility of an injured husband continues to drain Diane mentally and physically. John’s pessimistic view of his future work and life options make him wonder about his relationship with Diane and whether he has a future as a worker. As a result John becomes tense and irritable, constantly questioning Diane about her ‘social life’ and demanding more of her attention. What had seemed like devoted care provided by her is now not enough.

Diane is at a loss to understand this change of heart and deep inside she feels hurt and resentful because she does not believe she deserves such treatment. She too has fears about the future and she has been prepared to make allowances for John, but because of his lack of appreciation of her efforts she is beginning to look at their relationship in a less positive light.

None of these issues and emotions are openly discussed by the couple or the family as a whole. John becomes more dependent while Diane, struggling to carry on with her additional responsibilities begins to wonder what will become of them. Eventually John is discharged from hospital and returns home to recover.

At home an entirely new situation arises. Normally John is out of the house from eight to eleven hours a day and the family has developed a routine based around his and Diane’s jobs and taking children to and from school. John does not usually do any housework apart from mowing lawns and maintaining the garden. Diane takes the children to school and picks them up after work. She also maintains the household routine of cooking, cleaning and shopping for food and other supplies. She is not used to having John around and this makes her edgy especially as she feels he could help out more. John spends his days resting on the couch.

John’s self-esteem and self-image are challenged and he responds in ways that are not positive or helpful. He begins to emphasise his authority and becomes more aggressive in his interactions with his children, yelling at them for minor misbehaviour and displaying violent verbal and sometime physical outbursts if Diane casually mentions they lack some commodity. John’s increasing aggression increases his alienation from Diane and his family and this provokes an escalating cycle of demands for attention and resistance from Diane and the children.

Financial pressures increase as John is not paid his full wage while on workers’ compensation benefits and after a time the benefits drop to a lower level further increasing the pressure. John is becoming anxious about his physical capacity to return to his previous job. He could perhaps take on an administrative position but is reluctant to even discuss this as he knows he will be earning less and in his eyes this type of work has less status than that of a skilled tradesman. He believes that with his limited education his job and the wages he earned defined his identity. John continues to exert his authority by dominating the allocation of finances and shouting whenever he feels his authority is questioned.

Diane is slowly and steadily changing. She has been a devoted and loving wife but she is now faced with this shouting and argumentative man. She had been able to make allowances for John while he was recovering in hospital as she saw his behaviour as a reaction to his injury. She had hoped that things would change when John came home but she was unprepared for his unfair and offensive behaviour.

In this atmosphere of doubt, suspicion, anger, self-pity and fear, John voices an ever increasing list of physical complaints. There is an escalating cycle of anger and blaming followed by a truce after which tensions gradually build up again. Relatives of each spouse become involved, each blaming the other party for the situation. After one argument, Diane’s parents encourage her to leave her husband and take the children with her.

John feels miserable because of his situation and the muscular tension resulting from his poor emotional state adds to his pain levels. He consults his doctor because he is feeling depressed and finds it difficult to participate in rehabilitation. The rehabilitation providers and John’s doctors believe that since his physical condition does not explain the level of his symptoms, his lack of cooperation represents a deliberate attempt to increase his compensation. The providers convey their attitude both covertly and openly to John and he soon realises they are suspicious and reject his concerns.

John is referred to the Medical Assessment Tribunal. The doctors are concerned with John’s physical injuries only and while John wants to discuss all the other problems that he has experienced, these are not in the tribunal’s scope. He leaves, angry, frustrated, and humiliated.

John then decides that his only option is to pursue a common law or damages claim against his employer. Once this happens his carers are convinced that their initial assumptions of malingering were justified and John’s complaints are not bona fide. During all this time John has been left alone with his situation, his worries and his despair as his familiar way of life disappears. He is not happy about taking legal action against his previous employer with whom he had a good working and social relationship. Peter has become distant and makes it clear to John that he resents him taking legal action for damages as it was “an accident” and he believes John is exaggerating his difficulties.

In some respects John’s situation would have been easier if his injuries had been more visible such as an amputation or paraplegia. His complaints and difficulties would be acknowledged and any efforts to overcome his impairment would be praised. But in his case his injuries have left no outward signs.

As John has not returned to his former life and status, and he believes that his options are radically different socially and professionally, he unconsciously believes that the maintenance of the sick role is the only way he can justify his position and maintain his worth as an individual. He is not a failure; he is a sick man who can do no more.

By the time John comes to the conclusion that he will have to fight for his rights, he believes that a lawyer is the only person who can bring relief from his current situation. With compensation in sight and a common goal to fight for, his relationship with Diane starts to improve. When compensation is finally paid it is seldom used for rehabilitation. What is left after lawyer’s fees and debts are paid is rarely enough to build a new career and is soon spent. But compensation has a positive effect on John and his family – once again John is a ‘provider’ with all the social and emotional support that this provides.

*(Adapted from J.Occup. Health safety – Aust. NZ 1988, 4(4); 313-318. Article written by K.Levine, A.Sheiber, J Benjamin and A.F. Halmosh.)*

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| John and Sunstate Constructions |
| Describe 3 impacts on the employer. |
| *1.* Click here to enter text.*2.* Click here to enter text.*3.* Click here to enter text. |

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| John and Sunstate Constructions |
| Describe 3 impacts on the injured worker. |
| *1.* Click here to enter text.*2.* Click here to enter text.*3.* Click here to enter text. |

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| John and Sunstate Constructions |
| List 3 strategies that could have been used to lessen these impacts on the worker and his employer. |
| *1.* Click here to enter text.*2.* Click here to enter text.*3.* Click here to enter text. |

**Activity 2 – Job Analysis**

**Objective:**

The objective of his activity is to provide you with an understanding on how to access suitable duties for injured workers by understanding their pre-injury tasks.

**The task:**

Choose an occupation from your workplace and list 10 skills and abilities that are required to be able to undertake the job successfully (see table below).

You may already have information available to you at your workplace through job descriptions, task analysis previously undertaken or have direct access to professionals in this area in which you can consult. Should you need assistance in determining the skills and abilities of a particular occupation, a good starting point is the following website - <http://online.onetcenter.org/> (or follow the link form the attachments menu).

1. Enter you chosen occupation in the ‘Occupation Quick Search’;
2. Choose the appropriate occupation;
* A description of that position will be provided including tasks, tools and technology, knowledge requirements, skills, abilities and work activities.

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| Job Analysis |
| List 5 skills and abilities of an occupation in your workplace that are required to complete the job successfully. |
| *1.* Click here to enter text.*2.* Click here to enter text.*3.* Click here to enter text.*4.* Click here to enter text.*5.* Click here to enter text. |

**Activity 3 – Identifying Potential Suitable Duties**

**Objective:**

The objective of his activity is to use the information gained in the previous activity to identify a list of potential work activities for a particular occupation in your workplace.

**The task:**

With reference to the list of skills and abilities completed in Activity 2, please provide 3 examples of possible suitable duties / work activities for that occupation in your workplace for each of the following business areas:

1. Administration;
2. Business Improvement;
3. Sales / Promotion;
4. Organisation;
5. Training.

*It is recommended that reference be paid to the ‘Ideas for Suitable Duties’ section of your Student Learner Guide.*

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| Identifying Potential Suitable Duties |
| Administration |
| *1.* Click here to enter text.*2.* Click here to enter text.*3.* Click here to enter text. |
| Business Improvement |
| *1.* Click here to enter text.*2.* Click here to enter text.*3.* Click here to enter text. |
| Sales / Promotion |
| *1.* Click here to enter text.*2.* Click here to enter text.*3.* Click here to enter text. |
| Organisation |
| *1.* Click here to enter text.*2.* Click here to enter text.*3.* Click here to enter text. |
| Training  |
| *1.* Click here to enter text.*2.* Click here to enter text.*3.* Click here to enter text. |

Congratulations on the completion of the written component. Remember to save your work and submit it into OHSA for assessment to:

RRTWC Assessor

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Please now commence Unit 3 of this course - Implement and monitor return to work plans. You may choose to lodge all three (3) of your units in the one submission.