

# Guidance: Occupational Health Referrals



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## 1.0 AIM

To ensure a guideline document is in place for the referral of Dublin Institute of Technology (DIT) staff and students to a designated independent Occupational Health Physician for consultation in a consistent, timely and efficient manner.

## 2.0 SCOPE

All staff members and students of the Institute.

## 3.0 INTRODUCTION

All referrals by the DIT Health & Safety Office to the Occupational Health Physician must be made using the designated Employer Referral Work Assessment Form (available from [www.medmark.ie](http://www.medmark.ie)).

The following information is designed to assist the DIT Health & Safety Office in deciding when to refer staff members or students to the Occupational Health Physician.

- If the Institute needs further information on control measures to ensure a staff member or student's health and safety while in DIT ;
- If following a return to work interview/other discussions, the staff member identifies a medical problem which may impact upon their ability to carry out their role and further information is required ;
- If advice is required about a staff member's fitness to return to work following a period of long term absence;
- If a staff member has complained of a musculoskeletal complaint that has not been resolved following the completion of a VDU assessment ;
- If concern is expressed that a staff member's sporadic absence may be linked to a health problem;
- If the staff member has been continuously absent from work for a period exceeding 4 weeks (long term absence);

- If concern is expressed about a change in a staff member's ability to carry out their job role;
- If concern is equally expressed regarding a student, and the impact the student activity may have on the student's health and safety, a referral can be made by the DIT Health & Safety Office in consultation with the Head of School/ Function.

## **4.0 ROLES AND RESPONSIBILITIES**

### 4.1 DIT Health & Safety Office

- Offer support and guidance to Institute staff members and students in matters of occupational health;
- Understand their role in the implementation of rehabilitation programmes/recommendations that are issued from the Occupational Health Physician;
- Ensure that information retained on staff members and students is kept in a confidential manner;
- Understand that in some instances a staff member will not wish to disclose information to their Line Manager, and in this instance a staff member may go directly to the DIT Health & Safety Office for self referral and
- Provide the Occupational Health Physician with further information as and when requested.

### 4.2 External Occupational Health Physician

- Provide individual advice to referring members of the DIT Health & Safety Office, regarding the nature of the condition, recommendations to working practices, and answer any questions posed on the referral form in a clear factual basis;
- Conduct a teleconference with the referring member of the DIT Health & Safety Office immediately following each assessment;
- Ensure that all written files are in a clear format and received by the referring member of the DIT Health & Safety Office within one week and
- Produce annual statistical data to establish trends and patterns of referral

### 4.3 DIT Staff Members & Students

- Ensure that his/her manager/supervisor is advised of any health/work related issues that may affect their ability to work or learn safely and to their full potential in the first instance;
- Understand that occupational health is a supportive service;
- If they are unable to discuss issues with their manager/Head of School/Function, they may self-refer to the Health & Safety Office without disclosing information to the manager/Head of School/Function, but they must obtain permission to attend for consultation during work/class time, from their manager/Head of School/Function;
- Keep any scheduled appointments and attend in good time;
- Provide information to the Occupational Health Physician, if requested, regarding medical history and details of any treatment from a G.P., consultant, specialist or health practitioner, and
- Comply with any recommendations made by the Occupational Health Physician.

## **5.0 PROCEDURE**

### **Referral Procedure for DIT Health & Safety Office**

#### **5.1 Introduction**

This procedure will offer guidance to the DIT Health & Safety Office, having identified the need to refer a staff member/student to the Occupational Health Physician, with some suggested questions to consider when referring. It will also offer guidance to staff members/students who may wish to self refer to the DIT Health & Safety Office.

#### **5.2 Scope**

All staff members and students of the Institute.

#### **5.3 Procedure**

##### **5.3 (a) Health & Safety Office**

- On receipt of a referral from the Line Manager/Head of School/Function, the Health & Safety Office will arrange a private meeting with the staff member/student. Discuss concerns with the staff member/student, and explain the reason(s) for referring them to the Occupational Health Physician. The staff member/student must sign off a file note detailing

all matters discussed and give written consent to (i) referral and (ii) their Line Manager/Head of School/Function being informed

- Complete the referral form and ensure that all relevant documentation is attached to the referral. For example, sickness absence data, incident report form, details of any relevant one-to-one discussions, relevant risk assessment etc.
  
- Ensure that all written information is in black ink and written in clear legible format and that all information given is factual.
  
- Ensure that a standard referral letter is printed on DIT headed paper and given/sent to the staff member/student in advance of the appointment date.
  
- On receipt of the written report from Occupational Health Physician, if necessary initiate a meeting between the staff member/student and their manager to discuss the outcome of the assessment.

### **5.3 (b) Occupational Health Physician**

- On receipt of referral form, check all relevant information is attached.
  
- Contact referring DIT Health & Safety Office personnel if further information is required.
  
- Provide written opinion and advice on:
  - Employee fitness to work.
  
  - Any further review required.
  
  - Underlying medical reason behind performance / absence and advice to manager
  
  - If the condition is likely to be permanent or temporary
  
  - Disability Discrimination Act implications and reasonable adjustments to the working environment
  
  - Setting of action plans to monitor attendance
  
  - Capability to work

- Redeployment
- If the condition is work / non-work related
- Support and training that may be beneficial to the individual
- Rehabilitation programmes – length of rehabilitation with set review dates
- When any restrictions may be lifted
- If further information is required

## **Appendix 1**

### **Sample Questions for Referral Form from DIT?**

Is the employee fit to work?

Is there an underlying medical condition affecting their ability to work?

How may it affect the individual? What measures might DIT need to put into place for the future?

What more can I do to support the employee at work?

Can I expect the employee to give me regular attendance at work in the future?

Are there any further adjustments I need to make to their working environment?

Is this condition likely to be permanent?

Is this condition covered by the remit of the Disability Discrimination Act?

**FROM:** *[Enter Name, Job Title, Work Address, Contact Tel]*

**TO:** *[Enter Name and Address of Staff Member/Student]*

**DATE:** *[Enter Date]*

**RE:** *Referral to Occupational Health Physician*

Dear \_\_\_\_\_,

Further to our meeting held on \_\_\_\_\_, you are aware that I wish to refer you for an appointment with an Occupational Health Physician. As discussed at our meeting, the reason for your referral is due to \_\_\_\_\_.

The main purpose for the referral is \_\_\_\_\_.

As agreed at our meeting, I have made a referral appointment for you. The details are as follows:

**Date & Time:**

**Venue:** Medmark, 69 Lower Baggot St., Baggot St. Bridge, Dublin 2.

**Physician:**

**Contact details:** (01) 676 1493

If this appointment is not suitable, please contact the Physician's office directly as soon as possible, and reschedule a date and time that suits you. Please call to my office in advance of your appointment date so that I can arrange a taxi to collect you from DIT and bring you to/from your appointment.

At your appointment, the Occupational Health Physician will take a detailed occupational, medical and social history, in order to make an assessment on your health in relation to your work. It may be followed by a physical examination. The Occupational Health Physician may request to seek information from your G.P. or any consultant, specialist or health practitioner, who has treated you.

Any information you provide will be treated in the strictest of confidence and will simply assist the Occupational Health Physician in his/her assessment and management of your health. The only feedback that will be provided to me will be any concerns regarding your safety, health and welfare at work.

It is important that you keep your appointment as scheduled and comply with any recommendations made by the Occupational Health Physician. The initial referral appointment will be provided at no cost to you. However you may be responsible for the cost of any additional treatments required. Full cost will be charged to employee if cancellation is less than 48 hours notice to Medmark .

I enclose for your information directions to Medmark and some Frequently Asked Questions. If you have any queries or wish to discuss anything in further detail, please do not hesitate to contact me.

Yours sincerely,

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Print Name



## **Directions to Medmark Premises**

(Sourced from: [http://www.medmark.ie/contact\\_location.htm](http://www.medmark.ie/contact_location.htm))