Vocational rehabilitation is aimed at returning the client to the workforce in suitable and sustainable employment which is at least at the level they were at before their injury/illness. Suitable employment is not limited to the best job that the client aspires to.

- A client must have a vocational goal on their plan where it has been identified they will have capacity in the coming 12 months to participate in vocational rehabilitation activities.
- Under DVA’s whole of person approach to rehabilitation the client may have medical management and psychosocial goals on their plan that are aimed at removing barriers to vocational goals.
- **Managing the expectations** of the client is an integral role of the consultant to achieve successful engagement and cost and time effective outcomes.
- The client must participate in rehabilitation activities, if they have capacity to do so, in order to receive their **incapacity payments**.
  - Participation in a work trial, and obtaining paid employment impact on the client’s incapacity payments.
- **Appropriate tools and activities** must be utilised to support the client’s vocational goals, based on their medical clearance, and their needs.
  - All activities must be approved on the client’s plan before they are commenced.
  - All counselling and assessment activities must be undertaken by an appropriately qualified professional.
- **Vocational counselling** can be used before, or as part of, a vocational assessment to assist the client to adjust to their new circumstances and identify new vocational options.
  - It cannot be used as a substitute for psychological treatment.
  - Please see the Vocational Assessment PPG for more information and when and how they are utilised.
- **Functional capacity evaluations (FCE)** are used to determine a person’s specific physical capabilities by undertaking standardised tests. The consultant must ensure the referral is clear regarding the purpose of the FCE so that the most relevant information can be obtained.
  - An FCE can be used to clarify the client’s capability where there is conflicting information between other medical certification and the client’s report ability.
- **Work environment assessments** are used to assess the client’s capabilities and limitations (functions diagnostic) within the context of a specific work environment and their condition/s.
  - It can identify the need for workplace modifications and/or job redesign and assess the ability and economic viability of implementing the modifications or redesign.
- It assesses the employer’s obligations, responsibilities and actions to provide a safe and inclusive work environment
- Consultants must report on outcomes and work with the client about the findings to create safe work practices.

- **Ergonomic assessments** assesses the set-up of a physical environment in the context of the client’s medical conditions.
  - Assessments can be done of the home environment where the specific environment relates to a psychosocial goal.
  - It can identify the need for education and adjustments to an environment to specifically target the source of client’s reported injury.
  - It must be undertaken only after a client has made use of the employer’s resources provided as part of the employer’s workplace health and safety obligations.
  - It can identify the need for aids to support the client.

- **Job seeking assistance** prepares the client for the job search process, develops skills for the workplace, and supports them to find a job.
  - Prepares the client for how to disclose and discuss their disability, where necessary.
  - It involves coordinating client participation in unpaid work trials to gain experience and confidence to re-enter the workforce or commence in a new type of employment.
  - Consultants may use employment consultants and agencies for job preparation and job placement support where appropriate. The consultants from these third party organisations must be supervised by the DVA rehabilitation consultant.
    - These services must be approved as a third party resource on the plan.

- **Work trials** are short term, unpaid placements in a job to provide the client with real world experience in a new role and different workplace. They are organised by the consultant.
  - Medical clearance must be obtained prior to participation in a work trial.
  - Consideration of the client’s condition/s must be made when selecting a work trial host.
  - Work trial agreement must be signed by all parties, and information about insurance whilst on a work trial provided to the client and employer. A work trial diary must also be completed by the client and employer.
  - Where a job opportunity arises from the work trial the consultant must support the client to obtain this paid employment.

- **Employer Incentive scheme (EIS)** offers incentive payments to employers to encourage employment of DVA clients. Please see the conditions in the PPG for when EIS applies.
  - The payments must be approved by the delegate before the consultant can formally offer them to the employer.
  - The EIS can be offered for a job obtained through a work trial or through other job seeking activities.

- **Self-employment assistance** involves assessing if self-employment is a viable option for the client, and if so, assisting them to access advisory and specialised services to help them build their business.
  - Consultants must ensure the client understands the commitment and risk involved in self-employment.
  - The client must prepare a well-considered business plan, with the support of a suitability experienced accountant or business planner, which details their ability to finance and earn in a particular self-employment venture.
Consultants must review this business plan and determine the support that can be provided to the client.

- **Retraining and further education** will often be required as they are entering a new role.
  - Consultants must carefully manage the expectations of clients with regards to the degree of retraining DVA will approve.
  - Consultants must consider a range of retraining and education options available to support a client to obtain suitable and sustainable employment.
  - Consult the Education and Training Procedural Guideline (PPG) for further information.

- **Relocation assistance** may be provided where the client is required to relocate to secure employment.
  - The client must be able to demonstrate they have been unsuccessful in gaining employment in their current location, and that they have received and accepted an offer of meaningful employment at a different location.
  - Consultants must manage clients’ expectation in relation to the availability of relocation assistance.
  - Delegate approval for relocation assistance must be obtained prior to the client moving.

- **Where a client obtains employment** their rehabilitation plan should not be closed immediately. The consultant must monitor the client for a period to ensure that no issues arise in their new role before closing the plan.