

UCSD Transitional Return-to-Work Program Guidelines

PURPOSE:

The Transitional Return-To-Work Program supports the mission of the University by maximizing human and financial resources and complying with applicable Federal, State and UC disability regulations.

GOALS and OBJECTIVES:

The University strives to return an injured/disabled employee to work as soon as the employee's condition permits. Studies have shown that the sooner an injured employee can be brought back to work, the faster they will recover and be able to return to regular assignments. Transitional work allows an employee with temporary restrictions to work in a modified, alternative, or reduced-hours capacity, for a defined period of time, while recuperating from an injury or illness. Such work assignments are known as Transitional Return-to-Work (TRTW) assignments.

APPLICATION:

The Workers' Compensation Program facilitates TRTW assignments for employees who have a work-incurred injury or illness. The Workers' Compensation Return-to-Work Coordinator, David Morgan, can be contacted at (858) 822-6677 or dfmorgan@ucsd.edu.

The Employee Rehabilitation Program can provide assistance with TRTW assignments for employees who have non-industrial injuries or illnesses.

ELIGIBILITY:

All UCSD campus employees with temporary partial disabilities are eligible for TRTW assignments.

Employees must obtain written medical documentation from their treating physician indicating their specific work restrictions.

For purposes of this policy, eligibility will be determined upon review of the employee's report of disability and supporting medical documentation through accepted University procedures; eligibility will not be determined by the status of claim acceptance.

Employees with restrictions that would permanently prevent him/her from returning to the job and hours worked at the time of their injury are not eligible for TRTW assignments. The Employee Rehabilitation Program will manage such claims in accordance with Federal, State and UC disability guidelines.

GUIDELINES:

- Employees will provide their supervisors with written documentation of all work restrictions and any anticipated period of disability, as given by the treating doctor, as soon as the injured worker receives such information. Upon receipt of this written medical documentation, the supervisor will initiate an “interactive dialogue” with the employee regarding the establishment of a TRTW assignment.
- If the employee and supervisor cannot determine an appropriate TRTW assignment, the Return-to-Work Coordinator will facilitate an interactive discussion between the supervisor and employee. If following this facilitated interactive discussion, it is determined that the department still cannot provide a TRTW assignment, the supervisor or department head shall notify the Return-to-Work Coordinator in writing of the unavailability of a TRTW assignment.
- Under the TRTW Program, the Campus does not intend to create long-term jobs to accommodate permanent disability.
- Workers’ compensation TRTW assignments will be documented by a TRTW agreement and written for a period not to exceed 90 calendar days, unless otherwise amended by approval of the department and workers’ compensation Return-to-Work Coordinator.
- Every effort will be made to place the TRTW assignment in the employee’s home department.
- The department, in conjunction with Employee Relations, has the option to change regular days off and work hours while an employee is working in a TRTW assignment.
- TRTW assignment supervisor monitors employee progress to ensure compliance with medical restrictions and satisfactory performance of the clearly defined job duties.
- TRTW assignment supervisor confirms that the TRTW assignment does not exceed the end date of the TRTW agreement.
- TRTW assignment supervisor notifies the Return-to-Work Coordinator immediately of any changes in the TRTW agreement, any problems the employee may have in performing the TRTW assignment, or if the employee reports that, he/she is unable to continue working.
- Assignments are to be progressive so there is evidence of recovery.
- In accordance with provisions of the California Labor code, employees who do not accept TRTW assignments are subject to the loss of workers’ compensation temporary disability benefits. Employees not receiving workers’ compensation temporary disability payments are not eligible for University Extended Sick Leave (PPSM 44).

FORM:

Transitional Return-to-Work Agreement

This one-page form provides written documentation of the interactive discussion between the employee and supervisor prior to a TRTW assignment. This form requires a signature from participating TRTW employees and their supervisor. It specifies the agreements, duration and employee medical restrictions, as specified by the treating physician during the TRTW Program. A revised form shall be completed and signed with any extension or revision of restrictions, as specified by the treating physician. This form must be faxed to Risk Management, Attention: Return-to-Work Coordinator (534-5202) immediately after employee begins TRTW assignment.