



POLICY: I: 02— Transitional Duty - Return to Work Program
Procedure review: Annually

DATED: March 1998
UPDATED: June 2024

APPROVED: Executive Director of Facilities and Construction:

I. PURPOSE

To establish guidelines for employees returning to work with medical restrictions as determined by a physician (JMU policy 1312 Workers Compensation/Return to Work). The Return to Work Program is designed to help injured or ill employees get back to work in a safe and timely manner.

II. DEFINITIONS

- A. Accommodations - Modifications or adjustments to job duties, work environment, or the way work is usually accomplished to comply with physician restrictions.
- B. Benefits Specialist - A university Human Resources (HR) representative that assists employees and supervisors with workers' compensation and return-to-work practices.
- C. Restrictions - Limitations made by a physician of the work an employee can and/or cannot do while recovering from an injury or illness. Work restrictions may be either temporary or permanent.
- D. Transitional Duty - Restricted duty or work that allows an injured worker to return to duty in the employee's original department or another department with pre-approved transitional assignments where the employee may perform modified duties, while under physical restrictions, as set forth by the treating physician, until the employee is capable of returning to full duty.

III. RESPONSIBILITIES

- A. Executive Director of Facilities and Construction - Responsible for implementation of procedure.
- B. Directors and Managers - Responsible for ensuring Facilities Management (FM) employees are familiar with provisions of this procedure.
- C. Supervisors - Responsible for guiding employees who have been given restrictions to contact the Benefits Specialist. Supervisors may provide the JMU position description to the employee prior to the doctor or emergency room visit. Supervisors will ensure the position description for each employee is current and updated as a position or job duties change. Supervisors will make a strong effort to provide reasonable accommodations or transitional duty when restrictions are provided by a physician. Each situation is considered on an individual basis.
- D. Employees - Responsible for completing necessary transitional duty and/or disability paperwork with the Benefits Specialist and/or the supervisor. Also responsible for providing the position

description to the physician and submitting a work release with restrictions to the Benefits Specialist and/or supervisor. When restrictions from a physician have been reviewed and transitional duty is available, it is the employee's responsibility to perform those duties to the best of their capability.

- E. Benefits Specialist – Main point of contact for FM employees and/or supervisors with questions related to transitional duty. The Benefits Specialist will work with the employee and supervisor to ensure the proper guidelines are followed.

IV. PROCEDURE

- A. Absences related to medical conditions that prevent employees from performing duties as specified in their position description shall be evaluated according to university and FM policies. All restrictions shall be referred to the Benefits Specialist to ensure that benefits, such as Americans with Disabilities Act (ADA), Employee Assistance Program (EAP), Family Medical Leave Act (FMLA), Workers' Compensation, and other available disability options are considered.
- B. The Benefits Specialist will provide the employee and the physician a list of the current tasks performed by the employee in carrying out duties specified in the position description (i.e., walking, bending, lifting specific weight loads, any repetitive motion, etc.) This will aid the physician in an assessment regarding the employee's ability to return to work.
- C. The physician will provide a document verifying work restrictions to the employee and/or the Benefits Specialist. If given to the employee, the employee must send the restriction documentation to their Benefits Specialist.
- D. The Benefits Specialist will email the restrictions to the employee's supervisor and/or manager.
- E. The supervisor or manager will review the restrictions to determine whether accommodations can be made and/or if transitional duty can be provided. The supervisor will communicate to the Benefits Specialist whether or not the restrictions can be accommodated. If accommodations are *not* possible, the Benefits Specialist will inform the employee and discuss other benefit options that may be available. If accommodations are possible, the supervisor will fill out the Transitional Duty Plan. The form will be reviewed and discussed with the employee. The transitional duty can be altered, upgraded, or changed in a manner consistent with medical restrictions and in accordance with an individual's improved condition. The plan will include a defined period of disability, the physical restrictions recommended by the physician, specific duties the employee will be expected to perform, as well as a defined begin and end date to the plan.
- F. The supervisor shall contact the Benefits Specialist if questions arise regarding the physician's written instructions to ensure compliance with state rules and regulations. The Benefits Specialist will contact the physician to obtain clarification of any questions that may be related to the restrictions document received or needed. Information regarding the restrictions will be shared with the supervisor.