

## Return to Work (RTW) Program Overview

The Return to Work program supports employees returning from both occupational (work-related) and non-occupational (not work-related) injuries and illnesses. The goal of the Return to Work (RTW) Program is to assist injured or ill employees to return to work when they are medically able, with or without restrictions and to their original assignment as soon as they can safely resume the essential functions required of that position. If an employee requires restrictions (physical or reduced hours scheduling) in order to return to work, temporary, modified, transitional assignment opportunities may be made available to assist with a safe return to the workforce.

The RTW team will communicate with the employee, treating provider, department, the third party administrators (insurance carriers for Workers' Compensation, Short-Term Disability, and Long-Term Disability.) The employee must provide written documentation or a completed **Work Accommodation Form** from their treating physician documenting their current capabilities, with a start date, estimated end date, and written progression plan for reduced hours or how the employee's physical capabilities will be increased over time to reach the final goal of regular duty. The RTW team will also work closely with the University Intercessor and Office of General Counsel, as needed, to ensure that the employee's return follows all requirements of the Americans with Disabilities Act, Family Medical Leave Act, and Workers' Compensation guidelines.

The University will provide a transitional assignment, if possible, for up to 90 calendar days, which is a nationally recognized return to work guideline. Many employees will require many less days to successfully return to their original assignment. Each employee will be evaluated every 30 days to determine if they have been medically cleared by their treating provider to return to their job or if they are progressing towards the goal of returning to their job within the estimated guideline. At or near the 90 day mark, each employee will be reviewed to determine the need for an extension of the transitional assignment for an additional 30 days. Extensions to the 90 day timeframe are made on a case by case basis. If it appears that the need for restrictions may be ongoing, the employee will need to work with his/her physician to complete the **Request for Disability Accommodations Form**. The University will review the completed request form and will require the employee's participation in the interactive process with the Human Resources Business Partner covering the home department, the University Intercessor – Director of Disability Compliance, their supervisor/manager and a representative of the RTW program to determine what may be a reasonable accommodation.