



POLICY STATEMENT 277
**RETURN TO WORK POLICY FOR EMPLOYEES
ON WORKERS' COMPENSATION**

Revision: 1
Last: Reviewed: June, 2021
Effective: June 2, 2021

PURPOSE: Louisiana State University of Alexandria (LSUA) provides workers' compensation benefits to its faculty and staff in accordance with state law. This coverage includes the University's "transitional" duty program designed to encourage employees, who have been released to perform work within limitations, to return to work.

GENERAL POLICY:

To return an employee to the workplace, LSUA will make reasonable efforts to place the employee into a meaningful assignment. LSUA cannot guarantee placement and is under no obligation to offer, create, or encumber any specific position for purposes of offering placement.

In the event an employee refuses "transitional" duties, which are within the employee's restrictions and ability to perform, LSUA is not obligated to provide alternatives. When someone refuses these duties, LSUA will notify the Office of Risk Management, and the employee's Workers' Compensation benefits may be terminated.

The Safety and Risk Manager will review the Return-to-Work policy with all new hires during orientation and once every five years with existing employees.

APPLICABILITY:

This policy applies to permanent employees of LSUA who are not working as a result of work-related injuries or illnesses and are receiving Workers' Compensation benefits. A master list of all LSUA eligible positions may be found in the Human Resources Office in Coughlin Hall.

POLICY PROVISIONS:

A. The primary authority for administering the Return-to-Work (RTW) Program is the Director of Human Resource Management, who serves as RTW Coordinator.

B. When a work-related injury or illness is reported by an employee the Director of Human Resources will immediately log this via the Office of Risk Management's third-party administrator's (TPA) claim system; the director will refer the injured employee to the chosen Occupational Medical Clinic or allow the employee to seek treatment with a physician of choice.



C. The Return-to-Work Program is defined as a “transitional” duty assignment to provide employees who are receiving Workers’ Compensation benefits as a result of an on-the-job injury, illness, or disease, the opportunity to perform productive work within the physical and environmental limitations posed by the injury or illness.

D. A Return-to-Work team assists in program administration. The team includes the Director of Human Resource Management, the Safety and Risk Manager, and the supervisor of the employee being considered for the RTW program. Depending on the position in which the employee is employed, other individuals may participate on the team such as the department head, program coordinator, etc., as determined by the appointing authority.

The RTW team will strive to return the employee to productive work as quickly as possible. The team will be responsible for reviewing all cases of employees who are off duty as a result of work-related injuries, illnesses, and diseases, and who are referred by the Risk Management Coordinator as suitable for “transitional” duties.

- E. To be eligible for the Return-to-Work Program, an employee must:
- a. Be off work as a result of work-related injuries, illnesses, or diseases;
 - b. Be receiving Workers’ Compensation; and
 - c. Have the treating physician’s approval to return to transitional work.

F. The RTW team will identify job functions and physical requirements that can be considered “transitional” duties in the work environment. An effort will be made to place the employee in their original work unit; however, if this is not possible, the team will recommend an appropriate work station and schedule. The appointing authority must approve the proposed placement prior to further action being taken.

G. The Risk Management Coordinator will provide the treating physician with a copy of the job functions and physical requirements identified as the “transitional” duty assignment. Once the treating physician confirms that the employee can perform the listed functions, the employee may be allowed to return to work on a transitional duty assignment.

H. Upon return to work, the employee, the Director of Human Resource Management, and the supervisor of the unit to which the employee is assigned “transitional” duty will review the transitional duty plan. The employee will sign a statement certifying that the plan has been reviewed with them, and the supervisor and director will witness the statement.

I. The “transitional” work plan will be reviewed by the RTW team every 30 days to determine the suitability of the work and if the employee is still in transition based on physician recommendations.



- J. An employee who refuses to return to “transitional” duty for which they were medically cleared will be reported to the Office of Risk Management for appropriate action.

- K. Civil Service rules, including those outlined below, will govern personnel actions for employees accepting “transitional” duty assignments.
 - a. Employees may be detailed to special duty, with Civil Service approval, for a period not to exceed one year (usual time required for an employee to remain on Workers’ Compensation). No extension of this type of detail shall be authorized.
 - b. The detail to special duty may be lateral or downward. This type of detail will generally receive rapid approval.
 - c. Details to a higher position will be allowed and approved on a case-by-case basis, when justified.
 - d. A position may be double encumbered, if necessary.
 - e. The employee’s pay cannot be reduced.

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