



Nicholls State University

Transitional Return-To-Work Program

I. Purpose and Scope

The health, well-being, and safety of all employees is of great importance to Nicholls State University. Therefore, it is the purpose of the University to establish a Transitional Return-to-Work Policy and make a reasonable effort to return to the workplace those employees of the University who have sustained job-related injuries or illness.

Nicholls State seeks to provide a Transitional Return to Work Program which will implement a safe transitional return to work, with the goal of reducing the duration of time needed to transition back into full duty, retain valuable employee skills and physical conditioning, reduce workers compensation claims, cost, and overall facilitate a safer working environment for all employees.

A Transitional Return to Work Team has been developed as part of this program to assist in the implementation of any job-related return to work through transitional duty. This team will, at a minimum, consist of the following individuals: Human Resources Director (Return to Work Coordinator), Director of EH&S and EOC, HR Compliance Specialist, and Employee's Supervisor.

II. Policy

Transitional return to work duty is modified duty/light duty which allows a worker to return to duty early, within the physical restrictions determined by a physician or other qualified provider, and the constraints of job duties and tasks, until the worker is capable of returning to full duty. The transitional return to work program is based on medical prognosis and recovery.

Transitional duty as part of the Transitional Return to Work Program is offered for the length certified by a physician or other qualified provider but may not extend for longer than one year. Classified employees' transitional duty is limited to six months and a request for additional time, up to the one-year limit, must be made to the Director of Civil Service.

Nicholls State does not guarantee placement in the Transitional Return to Work Program and this program shall not be construed as a contract for such placement or an obligation to offer, create, or encumber any specific position for the sole purpose of returning an employee to transitional duty.

This program is not intended to interfere with the procedure applicable to employees who are otherwise eligible for reasonable accommodation under the Americans with Disabilities Act (ADA). In a case where an employee refuses an accommodation or reassignment to duties, which is within their restrictions and ability to perform, the university is not obligated to provide further alternatives. If all efforts fail to “return the employee to work,” it may be necessary to terminate the individual.

The University will hold a return to work meeting with the employee to review the plan before the employee returns to work. Once the meeting has taken place, an offer of transitional duty employment will be made in writing. This offer shall contain a copy of the Physician’s Modified Work Information Sheet, or the physician’s work status indicating release with restrictions, the return to work date, the duties required to perform, the hours of work, and the duration of the modified work placement.

In the event the employee refuses the Transition to Work Program plan, that is within the employee’s restrictions and ability to perform, the University is not obligated to provide alternatives. The employee must sign the rejection of the Transition to Work Program. An employee who refuses to return to transitional duty for which he or she was medically cleared will be reported to the Louisiana Office of Risk Management for appropriate action, including possible termination of employment.

IV. Responsibilities

In the event a University employee sustains a job-related illness or injury, there are responsibilities for the employee, the supervisor, the Return to work Coordinator, the Human Resources Office, and the Transitional Return to Work Team.

1. Employee Responsibility

- a. Report on the job injury/illness to the supervisor immediately.
- b. Complete the (Insert name and link to form).
- c. Contact Human Resources at 985-448-4051 prior to physician care unless there is a life or limb emergency.
- d. For injuries which involve lost time, provide your physician with Job Description and Physician’s Modified Work Information Sheet, provide completed forms to Human Resources.
- e. Comply with medical treatment and maintain all medical appointments.
- f. Follow appropriate call in procedures and leave policies which are related to absences.
- g. Return to duty when requested/offered, whether full duty or transitional duty.
- h. Maintain contact with supervisor and Human Resources to provide ongoing physician documentation required by leave policies.
- i. Cooperate with Transitional Return to Work Team to assist in development and understanding of transitional duty and offer of such.

2. Supervisor

- a. Participate with the Safety Officer in conducting any investigation necessary.
- b. Inform Human Resources of any updates received from employees.
- c. Participate with the Transitional Return to Work Team to develop a Transitional Return to Work Plan if necessary.

- d. Monitor employee progress during transitional duty participation.
 - e. Maintain confidentiality of employee and program.
- 3. Human Resources**
- a. Process claim electronically, complete necessary paperwork for choice of physician, and maintain documentation of claim.
 - b. Provide employee updated job description and Physician's Modified Work Information sheet to provide to the certified health care provider.
 - c. Provide employee rights under Family or Medical Leave Act, if appropriate.
 - d. Contact Transitional Return to Work Coordinator through email for meetings when applicable.
 - e. Process Transitional Return to Duty Letters of Offer and Plans within guidelines.
 - f. Process personnel actions required in temporary reassignments or details to duty.
 - g. Monitor progress and maintain reporting statistics.
 - h. Maintain confidentiality of employee, program, and abide by all HIPPA regulations concerning medical documentation and privacy of employee records.
 - i. Notify Claims Adjuster and/or Office of Risk Management on employee status.
- 4. Transitional Return to Work Coordinator**
- a. Responsible for overall coordination of Team and Team Meetings
 - b. Develop, facilitate, and monitor transitional return to work program and team activities.
 - c. Develop and facilitate accommodations as necessary.
 - d. Monitor progress and maintain reporting statistics and compliance.
 - e. Provide notices to employees.
- 5. Transitional Return to Work Team**
- a. Return the employee to work as effectively and efficiently as possible on a transitional duty plan.
 - b. Understand and follow/abide by HIPPA related rules and regulations concerning medical documentation of employees while maintaining the confidentiality of the program.
 - c. Review job duties and tasks of employees.
 - d. Review and consider physical capabilities worksheets or functional capacity surveys provided by physicians.
 - e. Assist to define job specific tasks and assignments that may provide a return to traditional duty in the same department or alternate department within guidelines.
 - f. Assist to develop a Transitional Return to Work Plan to meet specifications of job and employee restrictions.
 - g. Reevaluate the plan every 30 days with the assistance of Human Resources.
 - h. Seek assistance from Claims Adjuster and/or Office of Risk Management for vocational rehab counseling.

IV. Authority

[Louisiana Revised Statute 39:1547](#) and [Office of Risk Management Transitional Return to Work Policy](#)