

# Transitional Work Program

## Supervisor's Tool Kit



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## Supervisor Information Sheet

UC Berkeley values its employees and their contributions; therefore, we must provide an injured or disabled employee the opportunity to return to temporary or transitional work as soon as his/her condition permits. Transitional work allows an employee with temporary work restrictions to work in a modified, alternative, or reduced-hours capacity, for a defined period of time, while recuperating from an illness or injury. Not only can this program improve the health and morale of the injured/disabled employee, it can also have a positive impact on the department, as a whole, by improving morale and decreasing turnover.

As a supervisor, you play a very important role in the recovery of an injured/disabled employee. One proven way of decreasing a disabled employee's recovery time is by allowing him/her to return to work with temporary work restrictions. A shorter recovery period often results in a quicker return to regular job duties, which benefits both the employee and the department.

UC Berkeley's Transitional Work Program is how to accomplish your employee's return to work. This program allows an employee with temporary work restrictions to work in a transitional position, for a defined period of time (up to 60 days), while recuperating from an injury or illness. Transitional work can be:

- Modified Work – Changing, transferring, or eliminating specific job duties within the employee's regular job to meet the temporary work restrictions;
- Alternative Work – Offering the employee a position other than his/her regular job to meet the temporary work restrictions;
- Reduced-Hours Work – Offering less than full-time work to meet the temporary work restrictions.

The success of a transitional return-to-work program relies on the collaborative efforts between the employee and you. Both parties need to be a part of this process to ensure success. The following is the typical Transitional Work process:

- Treating physician releases employee to transitional/temporary work.
- Treating physician provides work restrictions in writing to employee.
- Employee provides work restrictions to supervisor.
- Supervisor and employee engage in an "interactive" dialogue to discuss possible temporary job modifications, alternative work, and/or reduced-hours work.
- Supervisor and employee determine start and end date of this Transitional Work Agreement.
- Supervisor completes Transitional Work Agreement document once the details have been agreed upon.
- Supervisor reviews Transitional Work Agreement with employee.
- Supervisor reviews "Employee Information Sheet" with employee and gives a copy to employee.
- Supervisor and employee sign and date Transitional Work Agreement.
- Supervisor gives copy of signed Transitional Work Agreement to employee.
- Supervisor keeps copy of signed Transitional Work Agreement in employee's medical file, separate from employee's regular personnel file.

- Employee starts transitional work as agreed upon.
- Supervisor should inform his/her DPM as to this Transitional Work Agreement.
- Supervisor monitors employee's work progress, as he/she does with his/her other employees.
- Supervisor reviews the progress of the Transitional Work Agreement with employee at an agreed upon date (e.g., midpoint).
- Supervisor and employee, at the conclusion of the Transitional Work Agreement, meet to discuss whether the plan should be terminated, extended, or altered.

Supervisor should contact Disability Management Services (510) 642-1914 or (510) 643-9316 for assistance during any part of this process.

## Supervisor Tips on Transitioning an Employee Back to Work

Returning to work after a leave of absence due to an illness or injury can be a difficult transition for an employee. How easily an employee transitions back to work will depend upon a number of factors. For example, factors such as the length of the absence, the effectiveness of the accommodations, and how welcome and included the employee feels upon his/her return can all impact the ease in which an employee transitions back to work.

As a supervisor, your actions can also have a positive impact on your employee's transition back to work. Below, are a few tips you can follow to make your employee's return to work as smooth as possible.

- Prior to the employee's first day back at work:
  - Inform your staff of the employee's return to work and the specific date.
  - Do **not** disclose or discuss the employee's disability details with your staff. Simply tell your staff that the employee is returning to work from his/her leave of absence.
  - If the employee's return to work impacts other employees' job duties, inform them of the changes.
  - If needed, prepare and arrange for work space, computer access, phone set-up, training, re-orientation, etc.
  - If needed, arrange for a computer workstation evaluation by contacting your department's computer workstation evaluator. If your department does not have an evaluator, please contact Disability Management Services (510) 642-1914 or (510) 643-9316 for assistance.
  
- On the employee's first day back at work:
  - Personally greet and welcome the employee back at work.
  - Introduce the employee to new staff members, if any.
  - Re-orient the employee to your department if there have been any organizational and/or procedural changes.
  - If you have not already done so, review with the employee the completed Transitional Work Agreement and the "Employee Information Sheet."
  - Ask the employee to sign and date the agreement.
  - Remind the employee that his/her health/safety is the primary concern; therefore, if he/she is asked to perform a task that exceeds his/her work restrictions or he/she feel unable to perform a task, he/she should immediately notify you.
  - Reassure the employee that his/her disability details have not been shared with his/her co-workers and that he/she should not feel compelled to do so.
  
- While the employee continues to work:
  - As you do with your other employees, periodically check-in with the employee to see how he/she is doing.
  - Meet with the employee on the agreed-upon date (e.g., midpoint) to formally note his/her progress.

## Transitional Work Agreement

This Transitional Work Agreement is to document the temporary arrangements made in order to allow the employee named below to continue to work while recovering from an injury or illness. The purpose of this agreement is to facilitate recovery, prevent deterioration of work skills, and return the employee to work as soon as medically possible. The agreements made in this plan were reached through an interactive discussion between the employee and supervisor. These agreements were made to accommodate the temporary work restrictions provided by the employee's treating physician. Attached, please find medical documentation stating these work restrictions. All parties understand that they need to strictly adhere to these work restrictions.

Employee: \_\_\_\_\_ Department: \_\_\_\_\_  
Job Title: \_\_\_\_\_ Supervisor: \_\_\_\_\_

Transitional work assignment details (use additional pages as necessary):

This Transitional Work Agreement will be from \_\_\_\_\_ to \_\_\_\_\_ (please specify dates-typically not more than 60 days unless approved by Disability Management Services).

This Transitional Work Agreement will be reviewed with the employee and updated, if necessary, on the following date: \_\_\_\_\_ (e.g., midpoint date).

Employee confirms that he/she received a copy of the Employee Information Sheet

Initials
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*It is understood that these are temporary arrangements designed to allow UC Berkeley employees to continue to work while recovering from illness or injury. This Transitional Work Agreement does **NOT** represent a permanent change of duties or responsibilities. It is understood that any problems that may arise during this transitional work period shall be discussed between the supervisor and employee. If assistance is needed, please contact Disability Management Services at (510) 642-1914 or (510) 643-9316.*

Employee Signature: \_\_\_\_\_ Date: \_\_\_\_\_

Supervisor Signature: \_\_\_\_\_ Date: \_\_\_\_\_

## Employee Information Sheet

UC Berkeley values its employees and their contributions; therefore, the University strives to provide an injured or disabled employee the opportunity to return to temporary or transitional work as soon as his/her condition permits. Transitional work allows an employee with temporary work restrictions to work in a modified, alternative, or reduced-hours capacity on a temporary basis, while recuperating from an illness or injury. In most cases, transitional work has a positive impact on an employee's recovery time while preparing to return to regular work.

In your particular case, your treating physician has released you for transitional work and your department can accommodate your work restrictions. Depending on the nature of your work restrictions, your transitional work may or may not be that different from your regular job. Your supervisor will discuss the details of your transitional work plan with you. These details will be documented in a Transitional Work Agreement so that your supervisor and you will both have a clear understanding of your job duties and/or work restrictions. Please understand that this is not a permanent change in your position.

If your transitional job is full-time, you will receive your regular pay and benefits during your transitional assignment. If you have only been released to work on a part-time basis, your pay, benefits, and hours will be adjusted accordingly. Please see your department benefits representative to determine how your pay and benefits will be affected if you return to work on a part-time basis.

To ensure a successful Transitional Work Agreement, your cooperation is vital. You need to be an active participant in this program to make it work. Therefore, the following provides some guidelines for you to follow:

- Follow the work restrictions recommended by your physician. If asked to perform a task that exceeds your restrictions or you feel unable to perform a task, it is your responsibility to immediately notify your supervisor.
- Follow all work and safety rules at the location of your transitional work assignment.
- Total working hours are not to exceed physician recommendations or pre-injury appointment.
- Notify your supervisor by the start of your shift if you are unable to report to work for any reason.
- Try to schedule doctor and physical therapy appointments at time when you are not scheduled to work. If you must leave work, you must receive prior approval from your supervisor.
- Perform your transitional work in a professional and responsible manner, just as you would in your regular position.

- Notify your supervisor immediately, and provide medical documentation, if your physician:
  - Takes you off of work.
  - Changes your work restrictions.
  - Releases you to your regular position without work restrictions.

If you have any questions or concerns with this Transitional Work Program, please contact your supervisor or Disability Management Services at (510) 642-1914 or (510) 643-9316.