

## Returning to Work From Leave

### Employee Responsibilities

- ❖ If returning after your own medical leave, you are required to present a fitness-for-duty (return to work) release to Benefit Services prior to being restored to active employment. The release must indicate any restrictions that must be adhered to and for what time period. Updated medical information must be provided to Benefit Services as restrictions change. If a release is required but not received, your return to work may be delayed until the proper release is provided. *Do NOT return to any active duty until a release from your doctor is provided to Benefit Services. This includes any work from home.*
- ❖ Once you have a release to work from your doctor and have provided it to Benefit Services, work with your supervisor on a plan to transition back to work.
- ❖ If your release to return to work contains restrictions, every effort will be made to return you to your prior role. It may be necessary to temporarily assign you to a position/duties that meet your temporary work restrictions. Benefit Services will work with your supervisor to ensure your transition is appropriate given your work restrictions. As those restrictions change, Benefit Services will continue to work with your supervisor to ensure appropriate job duties are assigned. When you are able to meet the requirements (with or without an accommodation) of the position held prior to your leave, you will be transitioned back to the same/similar position as required by law.

- ❖ If the circumstances of your leave change and you are able to return to work earlier than the date previously indicated, notify **Benefit Services** at least two work days prior to the date you intend to report for work. The same applies if you are not able to return on the anticipated return to work date.
- ❖ If you fail to return to work following a medical release from your physician you may be considered to be absent without approved leave. Eligibility to protect your employment and benefits may be affected as a result and may subject you to disciplinary action, up to and including dismissal.
- ❖ It is important to stay in contact with the specialist in **Benefit Services** to provide updates regarding your medical condition for the duration of your leave. This enables a seamless coordination of benefits, payroll, and transition for your department in your absence and upon return to work.
- ❖ If covered by the University sponsored disability program, you continue to receive benefits for as long as you continue to meet eligibility.
- ❖ Any unpaid balance for your benefit contributions that was not paid while out on leave will be deducted in full from the first paycheck (and others if necessary) after returning to work.
- ❖ Any questions or concerns with regards to the transition back to work can be discussed at any time with a specialist in **Benefit Services**.
- ❖ Communicate ongoing with your supervisor upon your return to work to ensure your transition back to work is occurring as expected.

## Supervisor Responsibilities

- ❖ Ensure that the same position the employee held is available on the employee's return. In certain circumstances an employee may be moved to a position with the same pay, status and duties as they held prior to leave. Please work with your **HR Business Partner** if you anticipate making any changes to the employees' job.
- ❖ Do not allow the employee to return to any type of active duty without receiving notification from **Benefit Services** that the employee has been released to work. This includes any work from home.
- ❖ Once notified that an employee can return to work, a transition back to work plan should be discussed with the employee.
- ❖ Avoid discussions or inquiries about any medical information or conditions.
- ❖ If the employee's release to return to work includes modified and/or work restrictions, adherence to those restrictions are required.
- ❖ Should an employee's work restriction(s) be expected to be chronic and not progressively improve, accommodation of disability under **ADA** should be explored. Coordinate with your **HR Business Partner** to determine suitability for work place accommodations under **ADA** or for other suitable options as appropriate.
- ❖ Please remember to adjust work expectations to reflect employee's release, i.e. an employee released for 4 hours of work per day cannot be expected to produce full time work.

- ❖ Every effort to accommodate work restrictions is required in an effort to transition employees back to work in a timely manner. Benefit Services will work with you, the department, and other departments on campus as appropriate to accommodate the employee and their restrictions. Keep in mind, it may be necessary to transition the employee back to work in a different type of position that meets their restrictions but enables us to meet the criteria to return them to work. Returning an employee to their prior position will occur when a release allows them to perform the functions of that role with or without an accommodation. Benefit Services will work with you to transition the employee appropriately.
- ❖ Any medical information received must be sent to Benefit Services and not kept at the department level.
- ❖ Every effort should be made to transition the employee back to work without causing them to feel overwhelmed. For example; allowing all the work to back up in their absence and then expecting them to complete it and new assignments upon their return would likely be overwhelming to an employee who has just returned from leave. This could cause additional time away and not be a smooth transition back to work. If you need assistance in strategizing how to meet the work demands while the employee is out, please work with your HR Business Partner.
- ❖ Communicate with the returning employee continually upon their return to ensure the transition back to work is going as expected. Regardless of the need for the leave, a transition back can be difficult and continual communication will help ensure the transition is smooth.

- ❖ Any questions or concerns with regard to the employee on leave, the transition back to work, or after an employee has left can be discussed at any time with a specialist in Benefit Services.