



**The Employee's Guide to
UCSB's
Transitional Work Program
(TWP)**

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What Is The Transitional Work Program (TWP)?

The Transitional Work Program (TWP) is a proactive approach to providing assistance to faculty and staff who remain working or return to work when a medical condition or disability interferes with the ability to perform job duties. This program assists employees with work-related and non-industrial injuries and illnesses. Although employees with injuries and illnesses may be unable to perform their regular jobs, they can often do alternative productive work while recovering fully from injuries and illnesses. Oftentimes this alternative work simply involves a temporary restructuring of their regular job. A Transitional Work Program will provide temporary alternative work to employees who have suffered a work-related and non-industrial injury or illness that is consistent with the medical restrictions prescribed by their treating physician.

Why Have a TWP Program for Employees?

UCSB's TWP program is designed to reduce the negative impact of job related and non-industrial injuries and illnesses. Studies have shown that injured workers recover faster when they have the opportunity to participate in Transitional Work Programs. Studies also indicate such a program can have a positive impact on employee morale and decrease employee turnover.

What Are the Benefits of TWP?

Though employees with work-related injuries or illnesses are eligible for Workers' Compensation benefits, those benefits are not equal to an employee's full benefits while working. Modified work reduces the financial hardship that is caused by injuries by allowing an employee to work while recovering from the injury and to receive full compensation and benefits; sick leave and vacation time continue to accrue. Modified work reduces the psychological hardship of work-related and non-industrial injuries and illnesses by giving the employee the opportunity to remain a productive part of the work group and to maintain communication with co-workers and supervisors during the transition from disability to full recovery. Such a program benefits both the campus and the employee by preventing the deterioration of employees' work skills, health, and attitude that may result from a prolonged absence from work as well as helping employees develop new skills. In addition TWP is a constructive program to reduce workers' compensation costs and minimize loss of productivity.

What Qualifies You for TWP?

Employees with temporary physical limitations sustained as a result of a work related or non-industrial injury/illness are eligible for TWP modified work assignments. These assignments are always TEMPORARY. Employees with restrictions that would permanently prevent them from returning to their full-time jobs will not be provided TWP work assignments. TWP work is progressive so that there is evidence of recovery.

When Are You Eligible for TWP?

Employees with temporary partial disabilities, recovering from an industrial or non-industrial injury/illness, are eligible for TWP assignments when they obtain written medical clearance from their treating physician who will specify what the employee's work restrictions are.

Who Says You Can Participate in TWP?

You can participate in the TWP program only with the permission of the treating doctor after he/she deems it medically feasible for you to do so. The program will then provide short-term, work assignments for employees temporarily disabled by a work related or non-industrial injury or illness who are unable to perform their regular duties. The TWP assignments will be consistent with and not exceed the restrictions and limitations set by the physician.

Can You Choose Not to Participate?

The TWP program is not voluntary. When an injured employee is released to work in the TWP program by their treating physician, participation is mandatory if modified work is available. An eligible employee cannot substitute paid sick leave because he/she does not feel ready to perform modified work. Refusal to participate will place an employee's workers' compensation benefits in jeopardy.

Where is the TWP Assignment?

The Vocational Rehabilitation Counselor will try to place the TWP assignment in the employee's home department by modifying the employee's job duties. However, if a department is unable to provide work for an injured employee that is compatible with his/her restrictions, the TWP assignment may be placed in another department. It is the option of the campus to change regular days off and work hours while an employee is on TWP. No overtime will be allowed while in the TWP program.

How long does TWP Last?

All TWP assignments are temporary accommodations. An employee's initial period of participation is 30 days with start and end date specified in TWP agreement. Each assignment is reviewed every 30 days and will generally not extend beyond 90 days unless there is evidence the employee is recovering. If the employee is not expected to return to regular work within 180 days, they may be taken off modified work until an expected return-to-work date has been determined. Permanent accommodations of medical restrictions will require a formal review by employee, department and Vocational Rehabilitation Counselor.

What Are the Key Steps that You Must Know about Work-Related TWP Assignments? For Non-Industrial TWP Assignments refer to Steps 4-10.

- (1) You are injured.
- (2) You report your injury to your supervisor.
- (3) You go to the Occupational Medicine to be seen by a physician.
- (4) At some point, the treating physician will release you to return to either your full duties or modified work.
- (5) When you are released to full duties, you must report back to your supervisor. If you are released to modified work, it is your responsibility to call your Supervisor and the Vocational Rehabilitation Counselor and tell them that you have been released to work.
- (6) The Vocational Rehabilitation Counselor will work with you and your department to find work for you that is consistent with your doctor's restrictions and limitations. In your phone conversation with him he will talk to you about what your modified duties are, where they are, and when you are to report to them. (If the Voc Rehab Counselor cannot find work in your department, he will try to locate it in another department).
- (7) You must report to your TWP assignment as directed by the Vocational Rehabilitation Counselor. You must return to work as soon as the physician releases you to do so.
- (8) At some point soon after you have returned to work you will meet with your TWP supervisor and the Voc Rehab Counselor and review your assignment and your medical restrictions.
- (9) You and your supervisor will review and then sign the *Employee Participation Agreement* which clearly defines the TWP assignment, the length and dates of your assignment, and your medical restrictions.
- (10) During your TWP assignment your progress will continue to be monitored by your doctor and the Third Party Administrator (TPA). The Voc Rehab Counselor will remain informed about your condition. It is your responsibility to perform within your treating doctor's restrictions and limitations.

- 11) You can only return to your regular duties when your treating doctor has cleared you in writing to do so. When the treating physician releases you to your regular job duties, you must let your supervisor and the Vocational Rehabilitation Counselor know as soon as possible.

What Are Your Responsibilities for Work Related Injuries/Illnesses? For Non-Industrial Injuries/Illnesses refer to 3-6.

- (1) Always notify your supervisor as soon as possible when you have been injured.
- (2) Go to the Occupational Medicine to be seen by a doctor when you are injured.
- (3) As soon as you have been released to TWP work notify your supervisor and the Vocational Rehabilitation Counselor.
- (4) When involved in a TWP assignment, never exceed your medical restrictions.
- (5) Notify your supervisor at least three days prior to any scheduled physical therapy and/or medical exam appointments during working hours.
- (6) Notify your supervisor immediately if you are unable to report for your TWP assignment.

How Are You Paid While Working a TWP Assignment?

An employee is paid his/her current rate of pay regardless of the TWP assignment. The employee's Home Department pays the salary and benefits of employees participating in the TWP Program. If receiving Workers' Compensation temporary disability benefits they will stop when an employee is participating in the TWP program provided the number of hours worked is the same as the employee's regular scheduled hours. If full-time employees return to modified work on a part-time basis by order of the treating physician, all WC benefits and coverage to which the employee is legally entitled will supplement the employee's salary.

Medical Treatment While in the Program

Appointments for physician office visits and physical therapy shall be scheduled during nonworking hours, or by using sick leave or vacation time and with supervisory approval.

Definitions

Transitional Work Assignment

A temporary assignment (30 days) within any department that fulfills a necessary job function(s) and is medically suitable. Work may not be usual and customary but is compatible with employee skill and experience and within physical and mental abilities.

Occupational injury or illness

Any injury or illness arising out of, or in the course of, employment with the University of California, Santa Barbara and compensable under the Workers' Compensation laws of the State of California.

Non-Industrial

Any injury or illness arising outside of the course of employment.

Temporary partial disability

A disability that temporarily limits an employee's capabilities and prevents an employee from performing the regular duties of his/her job. A temporary partial disability does not necessarily prevent the employee from performing work dependent on capabilities not affected by the disability.

TWP PROCESS

