

BRYN MAWR COLLEGE
Policy and Procedure for Employees
Assigned to Restricted Duty due to Workplace Injuries

Purpose

When an employee is injured on the job, there may be a recovery period during which the employee is unable to perform their regular duties. Bryn Mawr College attempts to return employees to work as quickly as medically possible after an occupational injury. In order to accommodate restrictions, it is sometimes necessary to assign an employee to a position outside of their regular department. This document describes policies and procedures to be used when an employee is subject to restricted duty by a workplace injury or occupational illness. (All references to “workplace injury” hereafter also apply to work-related illness.) It also outlines the steps to be taken when an employee is reassigned to a different supervisor while recovering from an injury.

Scope

This policy applies only to temporary, partial disabilities that occur due to workplace injuries recognized and treated under the College’s Workers Compensation Program.

It applies to employees, their regular supervisor, and any supervisors to whom an injured employee is temporarily assigned.

Treatment of Injuries

Workplace injuries must be reported and treated in accordance with the College’s Workers’ Compensation Policy. Upon initial treatment of an injury, the physician provides a written report to the College describing the employee’s fitness for duty. The report specifies the employee’s expected return date and any medical restrictions imposed by the injury. If an employee receives initial treatment from a hospital emergency room, personal physician, or other non-panel medical care provider, the College will require the employee to be seen by a designated panel physician to determine their fitness for duty. “Panel physician” includes health care facilities listed in the College’s current list of Workers’ Compensation Designated Health Care Providers as well as specialist physicians to whom an employee is referred by a designated health care provider.

Determination of Fitness for Duty

All absence and duty restriction determinations will be based upon the panel physician’s written opinion. When an employee undergoes prolonged treatment, the panel physician shall periodically report on the employee’s recovery. Typically, medical restrictions are progressively reduced during the recovery process.

Accommodation of Medical Restrictions

The employee must notify their supervisor immediately of any absence or medical restrictions imposed by the examining panel physician. Upon learning of medical restrictions, the supervisor shall consult with the Environmental Health and Safety office (EHS) to assess whether the restrictions can be accommodated within the employee's regular position. Accommodation of medical restrictions within an employee's regular position is desirable when feasible.

If the employee's restrictions cannot be accommodated within the employee's regular position, the supervisor will endeavor to place the employee in an alternative position within the department, working with the department head and EHS.

If a medical restriction cannot be accommodated within a department, the department head shall advise EHS. Upon agreement, EHS shall attempt to find a temporary assignment in another department.

Assignment to an Alternate Department

If EHS identifies an available position in an alternate department, the employee and original supervisor shall be notified. The employee will be assigned to a temporary supervisor in the alternate department, and will be advised when and where to report.

The employee's wages will be paid by the original department while an employee is assigned to an alternate department.

Employees assigned to an alternate department shall adhere to the policies and practices of the alternate department for the duration of their assignment, as explained by their temporary supervisor. These include, but are not limited to the following:

- Time card use,
- Attendance (authorization for use of vacation, etc.),
- Attire,
- Break times,
- Safety and work rules,
- Attending staff meetings with the alternate department.

Employee Rights and Responsibilities While Working Under Medical Restrictions

The employee will retain their rate of pay when performing restricted duty.

The employee shall notify their regular and (if applicable) temporary supervisor(s) promptly of any change in status of their medical restrictions, as reported to them by their panel doctor.

The employee shall notify the supervisor to whom they currently report of scheduled medical appointments at least 48 hours in advance.

The employee will be paid for missed work time incurred due to travel to and attendance of injury-related medical appointments, including regularly scheduled, approved therapy. Hours used for this purpose shall be recorded as “WC” on time cards. The employee shall endeavor to schedule appointments outside of work hours, or at the beginning or end of the work shift to the extent feasible. When employees must leave work for a mid-day appointment, they are expected to return to work if time permits. EHS may schedule appointments on behalf of employees, or direct care to facilities closer to work when deemed appropriate.

The employee may be scheduled to work hours different from their regular hours when assigned to an alternate duty, based on the needs of the department.

Employees shall not be scheduled to work overtime while working under medical restrictions, unless overtime is specifically authorized by the treating panel physician.

When an employee is scheduled to work fewer hours per week than they would ordinarily, the employee shall be compensated for the difference through temporary partial disability payments in accordance with the Pennsylvania Workers’ Compensation laws. A change in hours may occur due to such circumstances as:

- A medical restriction which imposes a maximum workday duration that is shorter than the employee’s regular workday.
- Temporary assignment to an alternate position or department involving a workday shorter than the employee’s regular workday. (e.g., moving from a 40 hour a week position to a 35 hour per week position).

Responsibilities of Supervisors Accommodating Employees from Other Departments

Upon the employee’s assignment to an alternate department:

- EHS shall provide a copy of the employee’s work restrictions to the alternate supervisor, and verify that the medical restrictions are accommodated.
- The temporary supervisor shall orient the employee to the department’s procedures, and begin maintaining a time card for the employee.
- If applicable, the temporary supervisor shall ensure that the employee receives relevant safety training and protective equipment before beginning the assignment.

The temporary supervisor shall coordinate the employee’s time card with the original department, and ensure that the department receives the card in a timely manner.

The temporary supervisor shall include the employee in relevant activities of the department. The employee shall attend staff meetings and receive information from the College in the same manner as other employees in the department.

Responsibilities of Supervisors Whose Employees are Temporarily Assigned to Alternate Departments

Supervisors shall coordinate with temporary supervisors to obtain time card and attendance information for their employees assigned to alternate departments.

Supervisors shall retain responsibility for submitting their employees' time cards for each pay period.

Supervisors shall promptly forward College information/mailings (e.g., HR mailings) to their employees by providing such information/materials to the employee's temporary supervisor.

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