SNU Policy: Worker's Compensation Modified Duty (Light Duty) Policy
SNU Policy ID: Benefit Information D-8B
Reviewed by: Director of Human Resources
Approval Authority: Chief Financial Officer
Effective Date: April 27, 2026
Next Review Date: April 27, 2031

1. Purpose

The purpose of this policy is to support the safe and timely return to work of employees who have experienced a work-related injury or illness. Modified duty assignments provide temporary, medically appropriate work that accommodates an employee's functional limitations while they recover.

2. Scope

This policy applies to all university employees who:

- Have a **work-related injury or illness** covered under Workers' Compensation; and
- Have written **medical restrictions** from an authorized treating provider.

Modified duty is not guaranteed and is provided only when operationally feasible.

3. Definitions

Modified Duty / Light Duty:
Temporary work assignments that accommodate an employee's medical restrictions and support early return to productive work.

Medical Restrictions:
Functional limitations provided in writing by an authorized medical provider (e.g., lifting limits, sitting/standing requirements).

Transitional Assignment:
Short-term work tasks that bridge the gap between injury recovery and full-duty capacity.

Maximum Medical Improvement (MMI):
A medical determination that the employee's condition is stable and not expected to improve significantly with additional treatment.

4. Eligibility for Modified Duty

An employee is eligible for modified duty when:

1. The injury or illness is deemed compensable through Workers' Compensation.
2. The authorized medical provider documents specific work restrictions.
3. The university has available work that meets those restrictions and does not create undue hardship for the department.

Employees with **non–work-related injuries or illnesses** may be accommodated through ADA/interactive process procedures but are not covered by this policy.

5. Approval Process

1. **Medical Documentation**
    - Employees must submit written restrictions to Human Resources immediately upon receipt.
    - Restrictions must be updated after each medical appointment or as required.
2. **Assignment Review**
    - Human Resources will evaluate available duties within the home department or another department on campus.
    - Supervisors must collaborate to identify tasks that align with restrictions.
3. **Assignment Authorization**
    - Human Resources must approve all modified duty assignments before the employee begins work.
    - Employees may not perform tasks outside their approved restrictions.
4. **Notification**
    - Human Resources will issue a written Modified Duty Assignment Notice outlining duties, schedule, duration, and restrictions.

6. Modified Duty Assignment Guidelines

- Modified duty assignments typically will not exceed 90 days in total duration, including extensions, unless exceptional circumstances exist and are approved by Human Resources and Senior Leadership.
- The employee's **regular position, schedule, and duties may be temporarily adjusted**.
- Work may be assigned within the employee's current department or another university department if needed.
- Modified duty does **not** require that the employee be placed in their "regular" job functions; alternative tasks may be assigned.
- Employees must **adhere strictly** to medical restrictions and notify their supervisor if symptoms worsen.

7. Pay and Work Hours

- Employees on modified duty will be compensated at their **regular rate of pay** for modified work within their home department.
- If reassigned to a different department or role, pay will remain at the employee's regular rate unless otherwise required by law.
- Employees must comply with university attendance and work-hour expectations, including clocking in/out (if applicable).

8. Employee Responsibilities

Employees on modified duty must:

1. Follow all medical restrictions and university safety policies.
2. Attend all scheduled medical appointments.
3. Provide updated medical documentation after each appointment.
4. Perform assigned tasks as directed and request clarification when needed.
5. Notify their supervisor immediately of any difficulty in performing modified tasks.

Failure to follow restrictions or assignments may result in disciplinary action and/or impact Workers' Compensation benefits.

9. Supervisor Responsibilities

Supervisors must:

1. Provide appropriate tasks that align with approved restrictions.
2. Monitor performance and compliance with restrictions.
3. Communicate regularly with Human Resources regarding the employee's progress.
4. Report concerns or potential non-compliance promptly.
5. Ensure duties do not exceed the employee's limitations.

10. Duration, Review, and Ending Modified Duty

- Modified duty is **intended to be short-term** and will be evaluated at least every 30 days.
- Assignments may be adjusted or ended based on updated medical documentation, operational changes, or completion of treatment.
- If the employee reaches Maximum Medical Improvement (MMI) but is not able to return to full duty, Human Resources will coordinate next steps (e.g., ADA/interactive process, reassignment consideration, long-term disability options).

11. Refusal of Modified Duty

If medically approved modified duty is available and the employee refuses the assignment:

- Workers' Compensation wage benefits may be reduced or suspended according to state law.
- The refusal may result in disciplinary action.

12. Confidentiality

Medical information and claim records are confidential and maintained separately from personnel files in compliance with HIPAA and ADA and applicable state regulations and privacy laws.