

Return to Work | Guide

HR Professional's Checklist

- Set a calendar reminder to track employee's anticipated return to work date.
- Email the employee within 15 days of their anticipated return to obtain a completed medical release form.
- Copy the employee's supervisor to keep all parties informed and aware of expectations.
- After receiving the medical release from the returning employee, review for completion and sign.
- If applicable, address restrictions. If unable to accommodate, notify the employee and provide next steps/alternatives.
- When entering the Return to Work ePAF, attach the completed medical release form.

Email Template

Below is UFHR's suggested template for communicating with returning employees during this stage of the process. Please customize this to best suit your unit's employee population.

Hello **[NAME]**,

I hope this message finds you well! We want to ensure your transition back into your position is smooth, so we are reaching out to provide you with some important information about the [return to work](#) process.

You are scheduled to begin working again on **[DATE]**. Please confirm that you will be returning to work on that date. You are required to provide a medical release form before you can begin working. I have attached one here for your convenience. Please complete this form and send it to me by **[DATE]**. Please note that your health care provider must sign the form and fill it out completely. Your return to work may be delayed if the medical release is not completed accurately.

Please respond no later than **[DATE]** to let us know that you are planning to return to work on the scheduled date.

We have missed you and are excited to welcome you back!

Employees on a full leave or reduced work schedule for their own condition must provide a medical release before returning to work. If an employee gave birth, a medical release is required only if they plan to return to work in less than the standard recovery timeframe for their respective type of delivery (6 weeks for vaginal birth, 8 weeks for Caesarean-section birth).

Please note: A medical release is **not required for intermittent leaves** or any leave to care for a family member (some exceptions may apply).

Return to Work ePAF

When ready, upload the medical release, if applicable, and the amended or modified ELOA to the Return to Work ePAF.

Reminder: Do not submit the ePAF until all awarded Paid Family Leave hours have been used and taken by payroll.

- If Paid Family Leave hours have not been exhausted, please review the employee's timesheet to ensure time has been entered appropriately.
 - Check time-reporting codes to ensure FMLA is reported accurately.
 - Ensure the 10-day waiting period for medical leaves was met before Paid Family Leave hours were entered.
 - Verify with the employee that they are not using the remaining Paid Family Leave hours.
- Indicate in the comment section if Paid Family Leave hours have not been used.
 - Include the number of hours unused for Central Leave to remove.

What's Appropriate?

Do	Do Not
Refer employees to Central Leave if they have questions or would like additional assistance.	Do not ask for diagnoses or personal medical information. As an HR professional, your focus should be the restrictions and associated timeframes – NOT the employee's medical history.
Ensure that a medical release is completed for employees returning from continuous or reduced work schedule for the employee's own health condition.	Do not alter dates on Extended Leave of Absence forms without contacting UFHR Central Leave.
Reach out to the health care provider for clarification on medical release documents (missing dates, conflicting information, restriction end dates, etc.).	Do not enable supervisors to contact employees about work matters or ask them to perform work assignments while they are out on leave.
Contact Employee Relations if you notice abnormal behavior upon the employee's return.	Do not allow supervisors to reach out to their employees' health care providers.

Reviewing Medical Release Forms

Medical releases must be completed with all necessary information provided. **Please note:** If the health care provider indicates restrictions, they must indicate the begin and end dates during which those restrictions apply.

Important Points to Review:

- All fields pertaining to the employee are completed.
- Is the employee returning later than the originally scheduled date? If so, how many dates later?
- What additional documentation is required?
 - If the employee is eligible for and would like to be awarded additional Paid Family Leave hours, they must provide Central Leave with either a new medical certification or a signed doctor's note on letterhead that clearly supports the extension of the continuous leave. UF Central Leave will amend the ELOA for signatures. Paid Family Leave will be awarded once we receive the fully executed ELOA.

Reminder: Paid Family Leave can only be used for continuous leaves of absence for medical events.

- If the employee is not eligible for additional Paid Family Leave hours, the medical release form is sufficient documentation.
- If the extension of the leave of absence is **3 workdays or longer**, notify Central Leave so we can amend the ELOA for signatures.
- If the extension of the leave of absence is **fewer than 3 work days**, please work with Central Leave to modify the return-to-work date by drawing a line through the date, adding the new return to work date, and initialing the change.
- Did the health care provider sign and date?
- Are there restrictions? If so, do they have an end date?
- Does the health care provider need to clarify what they intended the restrictions to be?
- Can you accommodate the restrictions? If not, please provide the employee with contact information for UF's ADA office.

Reminder: Employees are encouraged to work with UF's ADA office at any time. However, it is especially important in cases where a department cannot accommodate the necessary restrictions.

- If the employee indicates that they will not return on the scheduled date, notify UF Central Leave. We will engage the employee in conversation about what is required to extend the leave.
- Complete the HR Admin section before uploading the form to the Return to Work ePAF.

UFHR Resources & Links

UFHR Webpage	https://hr.ufl.edu/leave/extended/return-to-work/
Central Leave Email	central-leave@ufl.edu .
UFHR Medical Release	Medical Release Form
UFHR Supplemental	Supplemental Physical Requirements Form