



PPSM-66: Medical Separation

Responsible Officer:	Vice President – Systemwide Human Resources
Responsible Office:	SHR – Systemwide Human Resources
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Scope:	Non-probationary career (regular status) employees who are Professional & Support Staff, Managers & Senior Professionals, and Senior Management Group Members

Contact:	Aafia Ali Khan
Title:	Systemwide HR Policy Specialist
Email:	Aafia.alikhan@ucop.edu
Phone:	(510) 987-0549

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I. POLICY SUMMARY

The policy and procedures describe the basis for medically separating a non-probationary career (regular status) employee from University employment when the employee can no longer perform the essential functions of the employee’s position with or without reasonable accommodation due to a disability, and reassignment is not an option under [Personnel Policies for Staff Members \(PPSM\) 81 \(Reasonable Accommodation\)](#).

II. DEFINITIONS

Detailed information about common terms used within *Personnel Policies for Staff Members* can be found in [Personnel Policies for Staff Members 2 \(Definition of Terms\)](#).

Disability: (1) A physical disorder or condition that limits a major life activity; (2) a mental or psychological disorder or condition that limits a major life activity; (3) a Medical Condition that is (a) a cancer-related physical or mental health impairment from a diagnosis, record or history of cancer; or (b) a genetic characteristic that is known to be a cause of a disease or disorder that is associated with a statistically increased risk of development of a disease or disorder, though presently not associated with any disease or disorder symptoms; and (4) any other condition recognized as a disability under applicable law.

Extended Sick Leave: Leave provided to an eligible employee who has exhausted accrued sick leave and is unable to work due to a work-incurred injury or illness (See Section III.D.9.b of the Absence from Work policy)

Interactive Process: The process by which the University and the employee engage in a dialogue about the employee's functional work limitations due to a disability and any accommodation that can be provided that would enable the employee to perform the essential functions of the position.

III. POLICY TEXT

A. General

A non-probationary career (regular status) employee may be medically separated if the employee becomes unable to perform the essential functions of the employee's position with or without reasonable accommodation due to a disability, and reassignment is not an option under [Personnel Policies for Staff Members 81 \(Reasonable Accommodation\)](#).

Prior to medical separation, the University will engage in the interactive process in accordance with the provisions of [PPSM 81 \(Reasonable Accommodation\)](#). As part of the interactive process, the employee will be offered the option to explore reassignment, if appropriate. An employee medically separated under this policy is eligible for special reemployment as described in Section III.F.

B. Bases for Medical Separation

There are two circumstances in which medical separation is appropriate: (1) when the interactive process has been exhausted and a determination is made that the employee cannot be reasonably accommodated absent undue hardship; or (2) when the employee has been approved to receive disability payments from a retirement system to which the University contributes.

1. Medical Separation after Exhaustion of the Interactive Process and Determination that the Employee Cannot Be Reasonably Accommodated

In these circumstances, the medical separation is based on: (a) a written statement by the department head or designee describing the essential functions the employee is unable to perform; and (b) a written review prepared by a Disability Manager or other appropriate University representative documenting that the interactive process was exhausted and confirming that no reasonable accommodation could be provided without causing undue hardship per [PPSM 81 \(Reasonable Accommodation\)](#).

2. Medical Separation Based on Employee's Receipt of or Approval to Receive Disability Payments from a Retirement System

In these circumstances, the medical separation is based on: (a) documentation establishing the employee's receipt of (or approval to receive) disability payments from a retirement system to which the University contributes, such as UCRP or PERS; and (b) a written review prepared by a Disability Manager or other appropriate University representative documenting that the interactive process was conducted.

C. Leave Entitlements Prior to Medical Separation

1. Except as provided in Section III.C.3, an employee will not be medically separated under this policy: (a) while the employee is actively using sick leave; (b) while using Extended Sick Leave; (c) while using the extended illness and bereavement leave bank provided under a Paid Time Off (PTO) program at a location that offers such a program; or (d) prior to the exhaustion of all leave to which the employee may be entitled under the Family and Medical Leave Act, the California Family Rights Act, and/or the California Pregnancy Disability Leave Law.
2. An employee who is a member of the Senior Management Group may be medically separated after exhausting any leave provided to the employee under [PPSM II-42 \(Disability Leave\)](#), whether or not the employee still has accrued sick leave or PTO remaining.
3. An employee who is a safety employee may be medically separated after receiving leave with full salary for a period not exceeding one year in accordance with [PPSM 2.210.III.D.9.d \(Absence from Work—Leave Related to an Employee's Work-Incurred Injury or Illness—Safety Employees\)](#), regardless of whether the employee still has accrued sick leave remaining. Safety employees are (a) members of the University of California Police Department whose principal duties consist of active law enforcement and (b) members of the University of California Fire Department whose principal duties consist of active firefighting and prevention service.

D. Supporting Documentation

The University may request that the employee provide documentation from the employee's health care provider to confirm that the employee has a disability and to

identify the employee's functional limitations. The employee has an obligation to promptly comply with such requests.

The information in this documentation may be subject to confirmation by the University. When the University determines that such confirmation is necessary, the University may require that the employee be examined by a University-appointed licensed health care provider. In such circumstances, the University will pay the costs of the examination and reimburse the employee for any reasonable out-of-pocket travel expenses incurred in connection with the examination.

E. Notices

1. Notice of Intent to Medically Separate

The University will provide the employee with advance written notice of the University's intention to medically separate the employee. The notice will: (a) state the reason for the intended medical separation; (b) include copies of the statement prepared by the department head or designee and any other pertinent material considered, including the written review prepared by the Disability Manager or other appropriate University representative; and (c) state that the employee has the right to respond orally or in writing within eight (8) calendar days regarding the intended medical separation.

After the employee has responded or after eight (8) calendar days, whichever comes first, management will review the response, if any, and inform the employee of the action to be taken.

2. Notice of Medical Separation

If the University has determined that proceeding with medical separation is appropriate, the University will provide the employee with advance written notice of the medical separation date and notice of the right to appeal.

The effective date of medical separation will be at least ten (10) calendar days from the date of the University's issuance of the notice of medical separation or 18 calendar days from the date of issuance of the notice of intent to medically separate, whichever is later.

F. Special Reemployment

To be considered for Special Reemployment, an employee who has been medically separated must notify the University of their interest and provide documentation from a licensed health care provider that establishes that the former employee has been medically released to return to work, with or without reasonable accommodation.

After such notice and documentation are provided, for a period of one year following the date of a medical separation, the University will assist the former employee in identifying appropriate positions for which the former employee may apply at the same location. If the former employee receives disability benefits from a retirement system to which the University contributes, the Special Reemployment period will be three years from the date benefits commenced. If the former employee is reemployed within the allowed period, a break in service does not occur.

In Special Reemployment situations, the employee may be selected for a position without the requirement that the position be publicized, per [PPSM 20.III.G.3 \(Exemptions\)](#).

IV. COMPLIANCE/RESPONSIBILITIES

A. Implementation of the Policy

The Vice President–Systemwide Human Resources is the Responsible Officer for this policy and has the authority to implement the policy. The Responsible Officer may develop procedures or supplementary information to support the implementation of this policy. Such supporting documentation does not require the approval of the President. The Responsible Officer may apply appropriate interpretations to clarify the policy provided that the interpretations do not result in substantive changes to the underlying policy. The Chancellor, Lawrence Berkeley National Laboratory Director, and Vice President–Agriculture and Natural Resources are authorized to establish and are responsible for local procedures necessary to implement the policy.

In accordance with [Personnel Policies for Staff Members 1 \(General Provisions\)](#), the authorities and responsibilities delegated to the Chancellor in this policy are also delegated to the Executive Vice President–Chief Operating Officer, Vice President–Agriculture and Natural Resources, Principal Officers of the Regents, and the Lawrence Berkeley National Laboratory Director. Also in accordance with [PPSM 1](#), the authorities granted in this policy may be redelegated except as otherwise indicated.

B. Revisions to the Policy

The President is the Policy Approver and has the authority to approve policy revisions upon recommendation by the Vice President–Systemwide Human Resources.

The Vice President–Systemwide Human Resources has the authority to initiate revisions to the policy, consistent with approval authorities and applicable *Bylaws* and *Standing Orders* of the Regents.

The Executive Vice President–Chief Operating Officer has the authority to ensure that policies are regularly reviewed, updated, and consistent with other governance policies.

C. Approval of Actions

Actions within this policy must be approved in accordance with local procedures.

Chancellors and the Vice President–Systemwide Human Resources are authorized to determine responsibilities and authorities at secondary administrative levels in order to establish local procedures necessary to implement this policy.

All actions applicable to PPSM-covered staff employees who are not Senior Management Group members that exceed this policy, or that are not expressly

provided for under any policy, must be approved by the Vice President–Systemwide Human Resources unless otherwise indicated.

D. Compliance with the Policy

The following roles are designated at each location to implement compliance monitoring responsibility for this policy:

The Top Business Officer and/or the Executive Officer at each location will designate the local management office to be responsible for the ongoing reporting of policy compliance.

The Executive Officer is accountable for monitoring and enforcing compliance mechanisms and ensuring that monitoring procedures and reporting capabilities are established.

The Vice President–Systemwide Human Resources is accountable for reviewing the administration of this policy. The Director–Systemwide Human Resources Compliance will periodically monitor compliance to this policy.

E. Noncompliance with the Policy

Noncompliance with the policy is handled in accordance with PPSM [62](#), [63](#), and [64](#), and with PPSM-[II 64](#) pertaining to disciplinary and separation matters.

V. PROCEDURES

Any Local Procedures implemented will be consistent with the following Universitywide Procedures.

A. Exhaustion of the Interactive Process

If the employee cannot be reasonably accommodated in the current position absent undue hardship but there is a possibility that the employee could perform other University work and the employee is interested in reassignment, reassignment in accordance with [PPSM 81.III.D \(Reasonable Accommodation—Reassignment\)](#) will be pursued, unless the employee declines that option. If reassignment is pursued but not successful, the reassignment effort will be documented, including an explanation of why the employee cannot be reasonably accommodated through reassignment.

The interactive process is exhausted when a determination has been made that the employee cannot be reasonably accommodated in the employee's own position or through reassignment without causing undue hardship. At that point, the department may propose medical separation.

B. Medical Separation Based on Exhaustion of the Interactive Process and Determination that Employee Cannot Be Reasonably Accommodated

In these circumstances, the medical separation is based on: (a) a written statement by the department head or designee describing the essential functions the employee is unable to perform; and (b) a written review prepared by a Disability Manager or other appropriate University representative documenting that the interactive process

was exhausted and confirming that no reasonable accommodation could be provided without causing an undue hardship. The review by the Disability Manager or other appropriate University representative will either document that the alternative job search was conducted under [PPSM 81.III.D \(Reasonable Accommodation—Reassignment\)](#) or include an explanation of why it was not conducted.

The written statement by the department head or designee should contain the following:

- a description of the essential functions of the position that the employee is unable to perform, with or without reasonable accommodation, due to the disability;
- an explanation of why the employee cannot be reasonably accommodated in the employee's current position, including, where applicable, whether reasonable accommodations were attempted and were unsuccessful;
- relevant documentation from the employee's health care providers;
- written documentation of the interactive process conducted at the departmental level; and
- other pertinent information.

A current job description and/or other documentation that outlines essential and non-essential job functions, documentation of functional limitations, and any other information relevant to the medical separation will accompany the written statement. The department head or designee's written statement and supporting materials will be submitted to the local Disability Manager or other appropriate University representative for review.

The Disability Manager or other appropriate University representative will then review the department head or designee's written statement and supporting materials to ensure that the interactive process was appropriately completed and documented at the departmental level.

C. Medical Separation Based on Employee's Receipt of or Approval to Receive Disability Payments from a Retirement System

In these circumstances, a medical separation is based on (a) documentation establishing the employee's receipt of (or approval to receive) disability payments from a retirement system to which the University employee contributes, such as UCRP or PERS; and (b) a written review prepared by a Disability Manager or other appropriate University representative documenting that the interactive process was conducted.

D. Recordkeeping

Copies of the notice of intent to medically separate and the notice of medical separation are placed in the employee's personnel file. Any associated medical documentation should be treated as a confidential medical record for purposes of record storage.

VI. RELATED INFORMATION

- [Personnel Policies for Staff Members 81 \(Reasonable Accommodation\)](#) (referenced in Sections I, III.A and III.B of this policy and Sections V.A. and V.B of these procedures)
- [Personnel Policies for Staff Members 2.210.III.D.9.d \(Absence from Work—Leave Related to an Employee’s Work-Related Injury or Illness—Safety Employees\)](#) (referenced in Section III.C.3 of this policy)
- [Personnel Policies for Staff 20 \(Recruitment\)](#) (referenced in Section III.F of this policy)
- [Personnel Policies for Staff Members 1 \(General Provisions\)](#) (referenced in Section IV.A of this policy)
- Personnel Policies for Staff Members [62](#), [63](#), and [64](#) (referenced in Section IV.E. of this policy)
- [Personnel Policies for Staff Members II-64 \(Termination of Appointment\)](#) (applicable to Senior Management Group Members) (referenced in Section IV.E of this policy)
- [Personnel Policies for Staff Members II-42 \(Disability Leave\)](#) (applicable to Senior Management Group members) (referenced in Section III.C.2 of this policy)

VII. FREQUENTLY ASKED QUESTIONS

TBD

VIII. REVISION HISTORY

Policy changes effective as of **December 13, 2018**:

- Language expanded, clarified, and reformatted throughout
- Definitions of “Disability,” “Extended Sick Leave,” and “Interactive Process” added in Section II to provide clearer guidance
- “Special Reappointment” changed to “Special Reemployment” and text added in Section III.F to provide more guidance regarding that process
- Duplicative language removed from Section V
- Remediated to meet Web Content Accessibility Guidelines (WCAG) 2.0.

As a result of the issuance of this policy, the following document is rescinded as of the effective date of this policy and is no longer applicable:

- *Staff Personnel Policy 66 (Medical Separation)*, dated June 1, 2006

Policy changes effective as of **July 1, 2012**:

- Reformatted into the standard University of California policy template.

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The following policy has been rescinded and is no longer applicable:

- *Staff Personnel Policy 765 (Medical Separation)*, dated January 1, 1981