



# UFHR Forum

---

January 8, 2025

903 W University Ave. Gainesville, FL 32601-5117  
HR.UFL.EDU | (352) 392-2477



# AGENDA

Communications & Worklife | [Patricia Alba](#)  
Classification & Compensation | [Kenya Williams](#)  
Leave and Benefits | [Cole Gruensfelder](#)  
Important Dates



# Communications and Worklife

---

Patricia Alba

UF

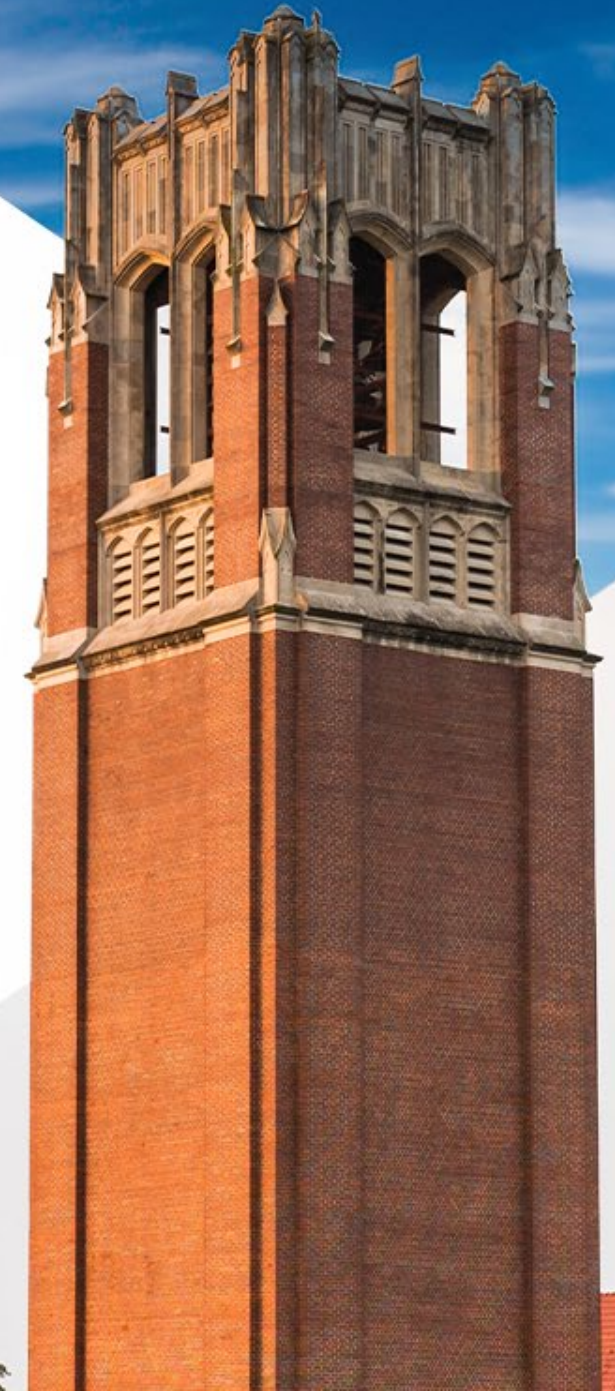
Human Resources



**Human Resources**

# **Spring 2025 wellness programming**

903 W University Ave. Gainesville, FL 32601-5117  
HR.UFL.EDU | (352) 392-2477



# Apps to support your well-being

- Calm Health
  - Sleep and meditation
  - Mental health programs developed by psychologists
  - Available to 5,000 employees

The logo for the Calm app, featuring the word "Calm" in a blue-to-purple gradient cursive font.

# Happening this spring

## In-Person Fitness Classes

**Total Body Conditioning:** 6–6:45 p.m.  
Thursdays: Student Rec & Fitness Center

**Yoga:** 12:15-1:00 p.m.  
Tuesdays: Ustler Hall Atrium

**Zumba:** 5:30-6:15 p.m.  
Tuesdays & Thursdays  
UF Health Professional Park

## Streamed Classes

*15 minutes at noon each day*

**Mondays:** JumpStart

**Tuesdays:** Relax

**Wednesdays:** Build

**Thursdays:** Unwind

**Fridays:** Align

**RecSports YouTube**  
30–60-minute videos



# UF Community Supported Agriculture Program

## Registration is open

- Available to faculty and staff across various counties
- Select between two farms
  - Frog Song Organics
  - Siembra Farm
- \$50 and \$25 discounts available for CSA memberships
- Weekly and biweekly CSAs are available for the spring



# Worklife at UF on-demand wellness programs

## Employee Wellness Series

- Caregiver Support Workshop
- Compassion and Resilience at Work (CREW)
- Strategies to Handle Workplace Conflict
- Explore the Mediterranean Diet workshop
- Office Ergonomics

## Financial Literacy Series

- Using the FRS to Plan for Your Retirement
- Take the First Step to Investing
- Home Ownership Series
- Basic Investment Concepts
- Fundamentals of Retirement Income Planning
- Mindfulness and Money

Visit our website: [worklife.hr.ufl.edu](https://worklife.hr.ufl.edu)





# UF Employee Assistance Program

- Request up to 6 free visits per person, per event, per calendar year.
- Available to all faculty, staff, graduate assistants, non-student OPS, house staff/residents and postdoc associates, as well as their spouses or domestic partners.
- Three on-campus therapists available to meet in person or via telehealth.
- Individual, department and manager resources available on the EAP website.



**Massiel Snow, Psy.D.**  
Licensed Psychologist



**Devin Shorey, M.Ed.,  
Ed.S., LMHC, LMFT**  
Licensed Mental Health  
Counselor



**Allison Rider, MA**  
Registered Mental  
Health Counselor Intern

# UF Employee Assistance Program

- To learn more about the EAP and explore available resources, please visit <https://eap.ufl.edu/>
- You can also email [eap-help@ufl.edu](mailto:eap-help@ufl.edu) to:
  - Request a presentation for your department.
  - Provide us with feedback or ask questions.



# Stay in touch

## UF at Work

Website: <https://news.hr.ufl.edu>

Facebook/ X /YouTube: @UFatWork

Instagram/Threads: @UF\_atWork

## Worklife at UF

Website: <https://worklife.hr.ufl.edu>

Email: [worklife@hr.ufl.edu](mailto:worklife@hr.ufl.edu)

## Patricia Alba

Assistant Director, Communications & Worklife

UF Human Resources

(352) 294-3894/ [patricia@ufl.edu](mailto:patricia@ufl.edu)





# Classification & Compensation

---


Kenya Williams



UF

Human Resources

# Graduate Assistant Salary Increases

- The salary increase calls for each GA09 on a .50 FTE appointment to receive a minimum stipend of \$20,600, and each GA12 will receive a minimum of \$27,467 effective as of October 1, 2024
  - One-time merit increases of \$800 for GA09 and \$1,067 for GA12 who have been employed for at least one full semester
  - Supplementary increase will be applied to reach the minimum for any graduate assistant below the new minimum stipend first, then one-time merit increases
  - Graduate assistants will see the finalized salary increases and any retroactive pay owed reflected in their January 24 paycheck
- 

# Postdoctoral Associates – Effective January 1

- Effective **January 1, 2025**, the minimum annual salary of UF postdocs increased to \$58,656
- UF Research funded a percentage of the salary and fringe benefit increases
  - Funded via sponsored programs for the 2025 calendar year

Questions? Classification & Compensation - [compensation@ufl.edu](mailto:compensation@ufl.edu)



# Leave and Benefits

---

Cole Gruensfelder



UF

Human Resources

A photograph of four business women in a modern office setting. They are gathered around a table, looking at a laptop. One woman is pointing at the screen. The office has large windows and a clean, professional atmosphere.

# Return to Work Process

- **Leave Team & Strategic Initiatives Team Partnership**  
*Return to Work (RTW) from Extended Leave Plan – Managed by Departments Starting February*
- **Key Benefits:**
  - **Improved Efficiency and Responsiveness:**  
Allowing departments to manage the RTW process enables quicker responses to employee needs, ensuring smoother transitions back to work by addressing individual circumstances.
  - **Closer Collaboration with Employees:**  
Departmental management fosters a more personalized, supportive approach for employees returning from FMLA leave. Managers and HR partners in the department often have better insight into the employee's role, ensuring the RTW process aligns with job expectations and any accommodations needed.
  - **Accountability and Compliance:**  
Departments will take direct responsibility for tracking and ensuring compliance with FMLA regulations. This increases oversight, helping both departments and employees follow proper procedures and reducing the risk of errors or violations in documentation and timelines.



# Leave of Absence Medical Release Form

- Provides instruction on who needs to submit the form.
- Outlines information required from the provider.
- Allows for additional instructions on any restrictions that may be necessary.

11/2024

**UF Human Resources**

## Leave of Absence | Medical Release

Employees on a full leave or reduced work schedule for their own condition must provide a medical release before returning to work. If you gave birth, a medical release is required only if you plan to return to work in less than the standard 6 (or 8) weeks. A medical release is not required for intermittent leaves or any leave to care for a family member (some exceptions may apply).

**Employee Instructions:** Please return this form, or a similar medical release, from your health care provider within 15 calendar days of your anticipated return date. The form should include your return-to-work date and any applicable restrictions.

Before you return, you must submit the completed medical release to your human resources administrator and/or supervisor.

**Employee Information**

Employee Name: \_\_\_\_\_ UFID: \_\_\_\_\_

Job Title: \_\_\_\_\_

Expected return to work date per the approved leave documentation: \_\_\_/\_\_\_/\_\_\_\_ (date)

**Completed by Health Care Provider**

**Health Care Provider Instructions:** Please complete all fields and checkboxes below. If the employee has any restrictions, please provide specific details and the duration of those restrictions.

I have discussed the essential functions of the position with the employee, and they may return to work with **no restrictions** on \_\_\_/\_\_\_/\_\_\_\_ (date).

I have discussed the essential functions of the position with the employee, and they may return to work on \_\_\_/\_\_\_/\_\_\_\_ (date) **with restrictions**. The following restrictions will end on \_\_\_/\_\_\_/\_\_\_\_ (date):

\_\_\_\_\_  
\_\_\_\_\_  
\_\_\_\_\_  
\_\_\_\_\_

Name of Health Care Provider	Signature of Health Care Provider	Date

Phone Number	Type of Practice	Name of Practice

**To be completed by Departmental HR admin only:**

Received by: \_\_\_\_\_ Signature: \_\_\_\_\_ Date: \_\_\_/\_\_\_/\_\_\_\_

# Leave of Absence – Medical Release Supplemental Physical Requirements Form

- Allows HR department to communicate with provider using a standard method.
- Covers and communicates physical requirements of the position description.
- Allows for additional information that may not be covered in the PD.

12/2024

**UF Human Resources**

**Leave of Absence - Medical Release**  
Supplemental Physical Requirements Form

**Completed by Departmental HR**

**Instructions:** Please provide a list of the physical requirements that the employee is required to do to complete their day-to-day work.

Employee Name: \_\_\_\_\_ UFID: \_\_\_\_\_  
Job Title: \_\_\_\_\_ Department/Unit Name: \_\_\_\_\_

The position requires the employee be able to perform the following physical demands:

<input type="checkbox"/> Animal contact	<input type="checkbox"/> Operation of specialized equipment or vehicle
<input type="checkbox"/> Asbestos abatement	<input type="checkbox"/> Patient contact
<input type="checkbox"/> Commercial driving	<input type="checkbox"/> Pesticide use
<input type="checkbox"/> Climbing	<input type="checkbox"/> Repetitive bending
<input type="checkbox"/> Contact with human blood or other infectious material	<input type="checkbox"/> Repetitive pulling and pushing
<input type="checkbox"/> Frequent reaching from the shoulder	<input type="checkbox"/> Respirator use
<input type="checkbox"/> Heavy lifting	<input type="checkbox"/> Scientific diving
<input type="checkbox"/> BioPath	<input type="checkbox"/> Work in areas of excessive noise
<input type="checkbox"/> Kneeling	
<input type="checkbox"/> Law Enforcement	

If necessary, please provide additional information below:

\_\_\_\_\_  
\_\_\_\_\_  
\_\_\_\_\_

**Acknowledgement of Health Care Provider's Review**

\_\_\_\_\_  
Name of Health Care Provider      Signature of Health Care Provider      Date

# Return to Work Guide

- HR Professional's Checklist
- Email Template
- Return to Work ePAF
- What's Appropriate?
- Reviewing Medical Release Form
- Useful Links

**UF** Human Resources  
University Benefits

## 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.	<b>Do not</b> 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.	<b>Do not</b> 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.).	<b>Do not</b> 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.	<b>Do not</b> 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

<b>UFHR Webpage</b>	<a href="https://hr.ufl.edu/leave/extended/return-to-work/">https://hr.ufl.edu/leave/extended/return-to-work/</a>
<b>Central Leave Email</b>	<a href="mailto:central-leave@ufl.edu">central-leave@ufl.edu</a>
<b>UFHR Medical Release</b>	<a href="#">Medical Release Form</a>
<b>UFHR Supplemental</b>	<a href="#">Supplemental Physical Requirements Form</a>



# Important Dates

January 20 • UF Closed – MLK Day

January 23 at 12:00 PM • Benefits Lunch & Learn on Limits Monitoring

February 5 • HR Forum

UF

Human Resources