



GUIDELINES ON STATE WORK STUDY

West Chester University

I. PURPOSE:

The purpose of this guideline is to facilitate a better understanding of the operational parameters of student employment under the state work study program (SWS) for participating University departments. The guidance is intended to help avoid uncertainties and misunderstandings which might have the effect of interfering with collective bargaining agreements or unintentionally violating SWS program rules. These guidelines may also be used generally, for any student employment situation when bargaining unit work has the potential to become an issue.

II. DEFINITIONS:

- A. State Work Study Program: The Program is a self-help program for undergraduate and graduate students with financial need. It helps pay for their educational expenses of post-secondary study by creating part-time employment opportunities for students to allow them to gain career-related work experience that is high-tech or to demonstrate and gain experience using the student's classroom knowledge and skills. The guidelines for Pennsylvania's Work-Study Program state that a work study student may not displace bargaining unit employees from the normal work force (including those on lay-off or on strike) or otherwise impair or interfere with existing (collective bargaining) contracts. The guidelines go on to point out that the program's intent is to primarily create additional training opportunities for post-secondary students.
- B. Bargaining Unit Work: Bargaining unit work is work of a nature that has typically been performed exclusively by the bargaining unit. The University, through its collective bargaining agreements, agrees to meet and discuss regarding the assignment of bargaining unit work to non-bargaining unit members. Exempted from this requirement is work by non-bargaining unit members designed for substantially instructive purposes, to lend an occasional hand, in emergency situations, or to assist in the work with direct supervision from a bargaining unit member.

III. GUIDELINES:

- A. General: The University, as a participating employer in the State's Work Study Program, will provide to the extent possible, career-related experiences to eligible state work study students. This work experience will include opportunities for students to use classroom knowledge and skills and gain high tech educational experiences working on campus. The University will not use work study students to displace bargaining unit members, to avoid returning bargaining unit members from lay-off or to avoid filling vacant bargaining unit positions. Students should also not be used for tasks involving access to employee personnel files or medical records, course tests or scores, or similarly sensitive information with apparent privacy, confidentiality or security interests. Use of computers, software of various types, phone skills, working with others, collecting information, preparing reports, and verifying inventories are all work skills that complement and reinforce almost any educational program and career goals. SWS also encourages employment opportunities that provide an environment of growth and stimulation. Some SWS students, through a combination of education and familiarity with the work by assignment in the same department for a number of years, can also gain increased competency in the complexity of the tasks they are performing.
- B. Appropriate Student Work:
1. **Clerical Duties**: Work study students may do work such as answering phones, copying, filing, pick-up and delivery duties and other lower level office services under the guidelines of this policy.
 2. **Break and Meal Coverage for a Bargaining Unit Member**: Work study students may cover for bargaining unit employees during break and meal periods, so long as they are competent to perform such duties. Students should be considered competent if they have previously performed such duties successfully under the supervision of the bargaining unit employee or by other qualifying means such as course work or prior experience.
 3. **Coverage for Absence of a Bargaining Unit Employee**: Work study students may cover for no more than one day and no more than four (4) hours in that day for the absence of a bargaining unit employee, so long as they are competent to perform such duties. Students should be considered competent if they have previously performed such duties successfully under the supervision of the bargaining unit employee or by other qualifying means such as course work or prior experience. There may be instances where a work study student may cover for an absence but be permitted only to handle such tasks as they are competent to perform, rather than all the duties of the bargaining unit employee.

4. **High Tech Experiences:** High Technology (IT) experiences are intended to be substantially educational or practical in nature. They are intended to help the student gain familiarity with IT equipment or software for career-related purposes, or to actually practice an IT knowledge or skill learned in the classroom. The intent is not for the work study student to engage in purely productive activities intended to avoid filling a vacancy or bringing a bargaining unit employee back from lay-off or avoid assigning the work to another bargaining unit member during an extended absence, for example.

IV. PROCEDURES:

- A. Supervision: **This is the single-most important aspect of the program.** A work study student must be directly supervised. Supervision need not be minute-to-minute, but the student should receive specific assignments each day and the supervisor should be accessible to monitor the work and be available to answer questions or make corrections as necessary that day, and to review finished work. There may also be situations when a student is performing work off-campus that the student should, for reasons of safety or other specific needs, be accompanied by a supervisor. The immediate supervisor should be designated prior to a student's semester work study placement.
- B. Job Description: Each work study student must have a job description before beginning a semester's work assignment. Job descriptions can be briefer than what is normally considered a job description for permanent employees, and a single job description may be used for a group of work study students doing similar work in a department. These job descriptions should be written and available in the department.
- C. Departments Operating at Reduced Staffing Levels: If a department is operating with reduced staffing levels due to a hiring freeze, lay-offs, or reorganization, the level of use of students in those departments may not be increased.
- D. Consultation: If a department is uncertain as to a proposed use of a student employee, the department head should consult with the University's Associate VP for Human Resources and the Work Study Program Director for advice. If a bargaining unit has an issue with the use of a student employee, that unit and the University should meet and discuss on the issue as a first resort.