



# **FEDERAL WORK STUDY STUDENT EMPLOYMENT HANDBOOK**

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## **AN OVERVIEW AND GUIDE TO THE FEDERAL WORK STUDY PROGRAM FOR STUDENTS & SUPERVISORS**

***(Tips to help make Federal Work Study  
Work for Everyone)***

**The purpose of this handbook is to provide guidance  
and clarity to the Federal Work Study Student Employment  
Program.**

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## **Introduction**

The purpose of the Federal Work Study (FWS) Student Employment Program at West Chester University is to stimulate and promote the part-time employment of students who are enrolled as degree-seeking undergraduate, graduate, and professional students who are in need of earnings from employment to pursue their course of study AND to encourage students receiving Federal student assistance to participate in community service activities that will benefit the Nation and engender in the students a sense of social responsibility and commitment to the community.

The FWS employment opportunity should enhance the student's academic experience, provide the student with opportunities to acquire, develop and cultivate skills applicable to their field of study. In addition, the experience should offer students the opportunities for personal growth and challenges designed to encourage the student to reach their fullest potential as an individual and a valuable member of a team.

Federal regulations governing the Federal Work Study Program and guidelines set forth in various Collective Bargaining Agreements- CBA, prohibit a Federal Work Study employee from working in a manner that may displace or disadvantage regular WCU employee, including those on strike, a medical/personal leave of absence status. As such, Federal Work Study student employees may not impair existing service contracts.

## **Application Process**

To apply students must complete and submit the appropriate year's **Free Application for Federal Student Assistance (FAFSA) and a WCU Federal Work Study Student Employment Application**. Both applications are available in **January**. The FAFSA should be submitted in compliance with the **March 1<sup>st</sup>** priority deadline. Please refer to the **WCU Federal Work Study Student Employment Application** for the priority deadline, as it is subject to change from year to year. The FAFSA is used to determine the student's eligibility, financial "need" to participate in the program. The WCU Federal Work Study Student Employment Application is used to determine the

departmental assignment. . The priority deadline is used as an equitable method of determining the order in which applicants are reviewed, awarded and removed from the waitlist.

### **Program Eligibility**

The WCU Federal Work Study Student Employment Program is a "**Need based**" federally funded program. Students must meet the federal regulations governing the program. Funding is limited. As such, all students cannot be offered work study and all will not qualify.

In an effort to provide employment opportunities to as many students as possible students participating in the federal work study program may hold only one job processed by the university's payroll office.

Only degree seeking undergraduate and graduate students, who are U.S. citizens or who are in the U.S. on a permanent resident visa are eligible to participate in the program. Graduate students that are offered Federal Work Study are subject to the Federal Verification Process. Applicants must be admitted to the university and enrolled at least half-time (6 credits) during the academic year. Enrollment is not required during the summer. However, if the student must be enrolled at least half-time for the upcoming fall semester. All students must be in compliance with federal regulations governing the program including the financial aid office's SAP-Satisfactory Academic Progress requirements.

### **Award Process**

**New** students will be offered Federal Work Study (packaged) beginning late March, when the university begins packaging aid for all new incoming students. Federal Work Study (FWS) awards appear as part of the student's financial aid package and will be listed in the Financial Aid Award Notice (FAN). This information is also accessible on-line at myWCU via [www.wcupa.edu](http://www.wcupa.edu), provided the student has satisfied the admissions deposit requirement to gain access to myWCU.

**Currently** enrolled students will not be packaged until spring grades have been processed and academic progress has been determined by the aid office.

## **Amount of Award**

The award is the total gross dollar amount the student may earn during the award period. The terms and conditions of the award are set forth in the student employment contract issued to every eligible federal work study employee.

A student should not be permitted to work in excess of their contracted hours. Doing so is a violation of the contract and may cause what is referred to as an “**Over award**”. Expenditures are monitored bi-weekly. Violations of the contract may cause the student to be removed from the program prematurely, fiscal liability on the part of the department, reduction or cancellation of other aid in the student’s financial aid package. For these reasons a student should not be permitted to work more hours than stipulated in the contract.

Note that changes in policies, regulations, financial need, verification corrections, enrollment, housing, and financial aid resources may cause a student’s federal work study employment award to be adjusted and/or cancelled. Should this occur, the student and the department will be notified and instruction provided.

## **Applicant Placement**

**New** students are assigned to a department their first year.

**Currently** enrolled students are encouraged to secure the signature from a representative of the department in which they desire employment, this includes students interested in work off campus in Community Service positions. Awards for currently or previously enrolled students will not be made until spring grades are posted and academic progress has been determined.

## **Notification of assignment**

Federal Work Study Student Employment Contracts, for the academic year, are mailed home during the summer, beginning in June. Employment offers made after August 1st are sent to the student via their WCU email account. The student is instructed to 1-keep a copy, 2- return a copy to the aid office by the stated deadline and 3- submit a copy to their supervisor, when they report to work.

The contract states the student's ***job location and terms of employment*** such as, departmental information, length of the employment, hourly wage and

maximum earnings. Additional information regarding the department or agency is available on the [Federal Work Study Positions](#) by Department page of the financial aid office's web site.

## **Community Service**

Community Service Work-Study positions offer students the opportunity to earn their Federal Work Study Student Employment award while serving the community in such areas as, education, recreation, child care, tutoring, mentoring, health and public welfare agencies and organizations.

These positions both on and off-campus benefit the student as well as the community by increasing awareness of community needs through employment in areas that are dedicated to improving the quality of life for community residents—particularly low-income individuals—or to solve problems related to their needs.

Off-campus employers may not permit WCU students to work until an **Agreement** between the **University and the Agency** has been signed and is on file with the university. Agreements must be renewed each year and in the event the leadership/director changes the Agreement will cease to be valid.

The agency is required to provide a general description of its mission and financial statements, attend an off-campus FWS Workshop or meet with the Associate Director one-on-one to discuss the terms of the agreement.

Off-campus positions often require additional training, skills, experience and legal clearances that on-campus positions do not, as such, student's employed in these positions are compensated at a higher hourly wage. The Office of Service – Learning and Volunteer Programs in addition to determining the placement of students determined eligible for Federal Work Study by the financial aid office, will provide support in this area. Students who express an interest in working in a community service position are first assigned to the Office of Service – Learning and Volunteer Programs. Students are required to contact the Office of Service-Learning and Volunteer Programs placement determination. Once an assessment has been made the Office of Service-Learning and Volunteer Programs will reissue a contract for that community agency.

## Payroll Process

The **Federal Work Study Student Employment Contract** must be returned to the financial aid office by the deadline to secure the Federal Work Study Student employment position. Contracts not received by the deadline will suggest that the student is no longer interested in participating in the program and cause the student to be removed from the program.

**Payroll Forms I9 and W4-** New student employees are required to submit I9 and W4 forms, in person, to the Payroll Office. In addition, there may be additional forms required by the university. The Payroll Office is located at 201 Carter Drive. The Payroll Office will request your social security card, to confirm the accuracy of your social security number.

**Direct Deposit Forms** – To ensure that you are paid in a timely fashion, we encourage you to complete a Direct Deposit Authorization Form, also available in the payroll office.

## Reporting to work

**FWS Student Employees** should report to work during the **first week** of the session they are offered a position. Departments are not required to contact student employees. Student employees are required to contact the departments.

Students that fail to report to work are at risk of being reported as a **NO SHOW** to the office of financial aid, by the department.

**Supervisors** please confirm the student's employment status, by viewing the **Show Dept. Student Workers** transaction available in People Soft, prior to permitting the student to begin working. Only **ACTIVE** students should be permitted to begin work. Only ACTIVE students will have a timesheet generated by the payroll office.

The financial aid office will not assume the financial liability for unauthorized hours worked by an inactive student or the legal liability for permitting a student to work without valid contract, **I9** and/or **W4** forms. Departments that allow unauthorized students to work will be responsible for securing funds to pay them.

**Only ACTIVE** students are authorized to work. A **Time Sheet** will be generated and distributed by the Payroll Office. The **time sheet** is the “official” document used to record and submit the hours worked by a Federal Work Study Student employee. Time sheets should contain the following data and those that do not will be considered incomplete and withheld from processing.

1. The date and the actual hours worked by the student.
2. The time the student signed in and the signed out of the department.
3. The signatures of the student and the student’s supervisor
4. The telephone number of the student’s supervisor.

To ensure the student’s accurate and timely compensation for hours worked the supervisor should ensure that the timesheet is accurate, complete and submitted in compliance with the payroll schedule provided by the payroll department. All students should receive a paycheck, compensation, on a bi-weekly basis for the hours worked.

To ensure prompt payment/compensation for the hours worked students are encouraged to complete and submit a Payroll Direct Deposit Form.

All University employees have rights as well as responsibilities. Every individual hired by the University, in any capacity, has responsibilities to their department and the department in turn has a responsibility to the employee.

A student with access to confidential information must sign a **Confidentiality Form**. Any violation of this policy will result in termination.

Federal Work Study students are employees who are being paid to work and will be held to the same/similar standards as other University/Agency employees. Standards should be reasonable and in line with the type of work being required, work location, and all federal, state and local laws.

Federal Work Study Student employees should never be asked or required to participate in activities that would violate the Nondiscrimination/Affirmation Action, Sexual Harassment, ADA, and or Civility Policies. Nor should Federal Work Study Student employees be asked or required to engage in any activity that would violate the Student Code of Conduct, the Policy on Confidentiality, The University’s Values Statement, Computer Use Policies or any Collective Bargaining Agreement.



Federal Work Study Student employees will not be authorized to work in departments that have not completed and submitted a Job Description to the Financial Aid Office. The supervisor is responsible for providing the job description to the Financial Aid Office.

The Federal Work Study employees must receive daily supervision from a fulltime regular employee of the WCU department or Office campus agency to ensure that the work performed by the student employee is consistent with the expectation of the department and with the purpose of the Federal Work Study Program.

The supervisor should ensure that student employment experience enhances the student's academic experience, where possible. The supervisor is responsible for providing opportunities for students to obtain skills they can apply to their field of study or meet future life requirements.

### **Transfer Process-**

A transfer may be initiated by either party. The transfer form may be obtained from the Financial Aid Office or via the financial aid section of the WCU web site. Transfers are not guaranteed and reassignment is based on the vacancies available at that time. Before a transfer is requested we ask that

- 1- The student first report to the assigned department
- 2- That any misunderstandings be addressed before submitting the request.

Both parties must sign the form. Return the form to the Aid Office.

### **Expectations**

#### **Attendance, Absenteeism and Tardiness-**

##### **FWS-Employee:**

You should arrive promptly and be ready to begin working at the time you are scheduled. You should be reliable in coming to work and always call prior to being late or if you are unable to be there for a scheduled shift. Sign in when you arrive and sign out right before you leave.

##### **DO NOT SIGN IN & OUT AT THE SAME TIME.**

You should be informed of the department/organization's policies regarding absenteeism and showing up late for work as soon as you report to work.

Missing work without calling first or without an explanation is not acceptable.

**FWS-Supervisor:**

Instances of continued tardiness or absenteeism should be addressed right away with the student. If the behavior continues please notify the financial aid office in writing of the action taken, to resolve the situation.

**FWS-Employee:**

Such behavior may result in your removal from the department and/or the FWS program.

**Work Performance-****FWS-Employee:**

Your supervisor will communicate their expectations regarding job performance and work quality as soon as you report to work. Be courteous and friendly.

Have a positive attitude- Be enthusiastic, friendly and show initiative. Avoid complaints and criticism. Use appropriate language when speaking with your supervisor and co-workers.

Be productive- Complete the tasks you are given in a reasonable amount of time. Follow directions and ask questions if you need clarification or further information. Take pride in the quality of work you produce.

If your performance is not meeting these expectations or standards, your supervisor will address these concerns with you so that the problem can be rectified. Address Concerns- If you have concerns about your position or the work you are doing, don't be afraid to ask your supervisor. Avoid misunderstandings.

If there is a slow period when there is not enough work to fulfill your hours, you may be given the option to assist with other tasks or to work less hours during the "down" time.

**WORK STUDY DOES NOT MEAN THAT YOU COME TO WORK TO STUDY  
AND DO YOUR HOMEWORK.**

**FWS- Supervisor:**

Please communicate your expectations regarding job duties, performance, department etiquette, policies and procedures as soon as your FWS Student employee reports to work. In today's employment market, a Federal Work job may be the student's first job experience. As the supervisor you are

responsible for ensuring that you train and orient the student employee to the position and work in your department/organization.

We ask that you be patient and understanding, recognizing that this too is a learning experience. As the supervisor you are responsible for setting the standard and tone for the work environment. Be open and available to questions presented by your FWS employee. Be courteous and friendly.

The supervisor is responsible for monitoring the time worked and recorded by the student(s) assigned to the department. This includes reviewing the timesheets for accuracy, completeness and signatures. The student has rendered services faithfully and as such the supervisor is responsible for ensuring that the student is paid for those services promptly. Timesheets are to be submitted bi-weekly, on time, in accordance with schedule provided by the Payroll office.

Only students that appear as ACTIVE should be permitted to work. Please confirm the status of your students via People Soft.

### **Meals/breaks:**

Time may be given off for a meal or break if the shift falls over a mealtime or is long and warrants a break. It is important to note however, to understand that students are NOT BE PAID FOR TIME AWAY FROM THE JOB FOR MEALS OR BREAKS.

### **Personal Appearance-**

#### **FWS-Employee:**

It is understood that you are a *Student* however, as a student **employee**, you are expected to maintain a personal appearance that is appropriate to the job and the setting in which you are working. As a student employee you too represent your department and the University. First impressions are not only first but lasting. Your attire should be neat, presentable and consistent with any safety guidelines and policies of the University and the department/organization where you are working. Please make certain you understand the culture of your department.

#### **FWS-Supervisor:**

Please advise your student employee of any policies regarding dress when they report to work. Please make certain you communicate, clearly, the culture of your department. If at any time the student does not dress in a

manner deemed appropriate for the workplace, please address this with compassion and diplomacy, immediately.

## **Personal Business**

The work environment is just that the work environment. However, it is understood that from time to time the need to do something not related to the job may arise. Additional guidance should be provided by the department where it is required.

### **FWS-Employee:**

Limit and or eliminate the use of personal devices while at work. This includes accessing the internet for information on WCU equipment as well as on personal devices (smart phones, ipads etc.) not related to your work study assignment. If you need to use your phone please share this with your supervisor. Be courteous and friendly.

## **Corrective Action**

As with all relationships some may require more work than others. We ask that should a problem arise between yourself and your student employee that you first try to work things out.

Unfortunately, there are times when corrective action may be required. If the situation cannot be resolved the following steps should be followed.

**Step1-** Discuss the problem, immediately, with the student and develop a course of action required to resolve the problem. Develop a written plan of action.

**Step2-** If the problem continues the student should be advised that they have not lived up to the plan and that the Financial Aid office will be notified of the situation.

**Step3-** Send information regarding the situation, history and the steps attempted to resolve the matter, in the financial aid office. The student should then be referred to the aid office to schedule an appointment.

**Step4-** The meeting will assess if a work study opportunity elsewhere is feasible or if this may not be the best time or in the best interest of the student to participate in the program.

### **Some behavior that may lead to Corrective Action**

1. Failure to report to work.
2. Failure to report to work as scheduled.
3. Poor attitude.
4. Insubordination
5. Repeated tardiness
6. Unprofessional attire
7. Failure to perform tasks as assigned.
7. Falsification of times sheets or other documents
8. Destruction or theft of University property
9. Threats or use of physical force or obscenities. Incivility
10. Violation of confidentiality agreement.
11. Violation of office practice and protocol.
12. Violation of the **“Student Code of Conduct”** as outlined in The Ram’s Eye View publication.

Early dialogue between employees and supervisors concerning expectations, performance, and office protocol should result in an enhanced and more meaningful work experience for all parties involved.

The University expects to graduate young men and women with an enhanced ability to acquire knowledge, to think clearly and critically, to communicate effectively, to respect and understand diversity, to appreciate the aesthetic value of life, and to possess the skills necessary for a career and the continuing process of lifelong learning.

**As we strive to embrace West Chester University’s Strategic Plan towards “Building on Excellence” we do so with the understanding that “Education is the passport to the future, for tomorrow belongs to the people who prepare for it today.”**

Let us prepare and lead the way for our young people as they prepare academically, emotionally and socially for their tomorrows.

August 1, 2014