



OVERVIEW

Virginia Commonwealth University is proud to sponsor the Federal Work Study program which is administered by The U.S. Department of Education's Federal Student Aid Office. Federal Work study allows students with financial need to work and contribute to their cost of attendance. It provides eligible students with valuable employment opportunities and helps them earn money for education and living expenses.

Federal Work Study provides Virginia Commonwealth University departments and community organizations in Richmond with needed support staff as well as providing our students the convenience of learning new skills and exploring career opportunities in Richmond.

To assist you with the Federal Work Study (FWS) Program process, information about student eligibility, processing, restrictions, and departmental responsibilities appear below.



THE PROCESS

The process for participating in the Federal Work Study program is comprised of 3 easy steps:

Filing the Agency Agreement (Off-Campus ONLY)

- All off-campus employers must complete and return the Off-Campus Agency Agreement Form. Original signatures are needed. Faxed copies will not be accepted. Additionally, non-profit agencies that have tax exempt status with the Internal Revenue Service must submit a letter from the IRS indicating the organization is classified as a 501(c)(3). All materials must be submitted to the Federal Work-Study Coordinator for review and consideration.

Posting a Position

- Employing departments may submit a FWS job posting on HireVCURams. If you are rehiring a student or have a student that has already expressed interest in working, you do not need to post the position. Simply fill out the online Hire Request Form.
- Employers can confirm FWS eligibility during the interviewing process. Review the student's 2016-2017 Financial Aid Award Notification to ensure that a tentative FWS award is listed, and make a note of the amount of the award. In certain cases, the student's eligibility may change at a later time if the student is receiving an additional resource such as a scholarship. Employers should ask if there is other anticipated funding that might affect the student's future work-study eligibility (e.g., new incoming scholarship funds)
- Once a student has been selected for a position, fill out the online Hire Request Form.



Verifying Employment Eligibility

- Once the employer has submitted the Hire Request Form, either the Department PA (On-Campus) or the Work-Study Coordinator (Off-Campus) will be required to gather necessary HR paperwork. This includes: I-9 Documentation, A State Application, Payroll Direct Deposit Authorization form, Child Support Disclosure, Personal Data Form, Form VA-4, Form W-4, FWS Acknowledgement Form, and the PAF
- Failure to have these documents filled out could delay a student's ability to start working.
- The Federal Work-Study Coordinator will notify the employer of the student's eligibility for work-study (approval) or rejection (ineligibility). The Financial Aid Office will not be responsible for earnings by students who start work before the Earliest Start Date indicated on the Confirmation Memo.
- Students may not earn FWS funds without a Confirmation Memo on file for the FWS period during which the student is employed. Additionally, FWS student earnings may not exceed their FWS award amount.



RESTRICTIONS

- Students may only hold one federal Work Study job at a time.
- Students must be enrolled full-time. Full-time enrollment is defined as at least 12 credit hours per semester for an undergraduate student and 9 credit hours for a graduate student.
- The last day to work for Fall is January 9, 2017. For Spring the last day to work is May 9, 2017.
- FWS employees are not eligible for fringe benefits. Fringe benefits include holiday and sick pay, overtime, unemployment compensation, and paid lunch periods. However, FWS employees are exempt from social security taxes provided that they are enrolled full-time.
- Students cannot be hired into the Work Study program to replace a regular full-time employee (FTE).
- Schedules must be carefully planned between the student and the employer. Students can work up to 29 hours per week during the regular semester, students **must** adhere to this maximum during finals week. When classes are not in session, each FWS employee is limited to a total of 40 hours per week. The Federal Work Study Coordinator will send communications indicating the specific dates when 40-hour work weeks are permitted. If hours worked in a single week exceed 29, supervisors must ensure that hours worked in other weeks are limited so that work hours average to 29 or less per week over the 12 month period of May 1 - April 30.
 - Understand student's academic schedule and needs have priority over part-time employee's task and responsibilities
- It is the policy of the FWS Program that a paid fifteen-minute break is allowed for every continuous 4 hours worked. Breaks are not provided for periods of less than 4 hours. Breaks cannot be used to arrive late or leave early. A 30-minute unpaid meal break must be taken for shifts of 6 hours or more of consecutive work.
- Students that have been placed on a Satisfactory Academic Progress (SAP) Contract with the Financial Aid Office are not eligible for Work Study.



DEPARTMENTAL RESPONSIBILITIES

- Employing departments must determine the rate of pay within the guidelines below:
 - The rate of pay just be at least the federal minimum wage of \$7.25 (effective July 25, 2009) per hour. Wage rates may be higher depending upon the complexity of work being performed, prior experience, special skills, and training.
 - Clerical and General Administrative Positions: \$7.25 - \$10.00 per hour
 - IT and Lab Assistants: \$7.25 - \$12.00 per hour
- To initiate the hiring process, employers must complete the online Hire Request Form. Do not complete a Hire Request Form unless you are hiring a student that has already accepted the offer of employment in your department. For each Hire Request Form submitted, the supervisor and personnel administrator will receive an eligibility approval (i.e., a Confirmation Memo) or rejection.
- Once a position has been filled by your department, please go back to HireVCURams and close the position. This allows students to know which jobs are still available.
- Supervisors must monitor the student's Work Study limit. It is important to monitor the FWS earnings by semester to ensure that the student does not exceed the award amount. FWS award amount for 2016-2017 aid year can be up to \$4,000. The award amount already includes the amount that the university will cover (25%) and the amount paid by federal funds (75%).
- A student's FWS Fall award allotment may be earned between August 25, 2016 and January 9, 2017.* Students cannot earn more than their Fall award amount during the Fall semester. A student's FWS Spring award allotment may be earned between January 10, 2017 and May 9, 2017. These dates are in alignment with Banner payroll dates. Federal Work Study is not available over the summer.

*Note: On-campus Federal Work Study students are permitted to start up to 10 days before the semester begins for training and orientation purposes.

- Spring FWS award funds CANNOT be rolled back into the Fall semester to cover Fall earnings that exceed the student's Fall FWS award. Employers will be charged 100% of any earnings that exceed the FWS award amounts so please monitor each student's earnings each pay period.



- Once the student has reached their FWS award limit, whether it occurs for the semester or the year, the employing on-campus department must change the employee class to student worker. If this change happens during the fall semester a revised PAF is needed to change the employee class back to work-study for the Spring semester. Any earnings that exceed the work-study award will be charged back to the department's budget at 100%.
- Departments & Organizations must comply with VCU Payroll procedures including but not limited to the submission of all payroll forms by the deadlines listed in the VCU Payroll Calendar.
- Hiring Employers must assume complete responsibility for the conduct of its FWS employees, in addition to public liability, worker's compensation liability Insurance coverage, and unemployment compensation.
- Hiring Employers must advise students on procedures to follow for reporting emergencies, accidents, problems, or potential hazards in the work environment.
- Comply with the Title IV Civil Rights Act of 1964, Title IX of the Educational Amendments of 1972, the Americans with Disabilities Act and Section 504 of the Rehabilitation Act of 1983 and not discriminate on the grounds of sex, race, color, national origin, or disability.

ADDITIONALLY:

Departments & Organizations are responsible for ensuring that the hiring of FWS students will not result in the displacement of permanent, full-time staff or the impairment of existing contracts for services.

Departments & Organizations are responsible for maintaining the following records for 3 years from the end of the academic period in which the transactions occurred:

- Current job descriptions for each FWS position.
- FWS Confirmation Memo for all FWS employees.
- Course registration schedules for all FWS employees for all employed semesters.
- Copies of Performance Appraisals for all FWS employees for all employed semesters.

Departments & Organization must provide proper working conditions and permit FWS Coordinator to inspect the premises if it elects to do so



FWS WORK AUTHORIZATION: THE CONFIRMATION MEMO

Work Authorization provides official approval for the student to earn FWS funds. Authorization will come in the form of a Confirmation Memo which will indicate the student's earliest start date as well as the award amount. Students are not allowed to begin work before the Earliest Start Date listed on the Confirmation Memo. Failure to comply with this regulation will result in the hours worked being charged back to the individual department or agency.

*Note: Employers must notify the FWS Coordinator of any change in employment status, including termination, change in department, position, or hourly wage. Failure to do so may cause payroll problems or result in cancellation of the student's FWS award.

RESIGNATION OR TERMINATION

If a student is terminated from employment in your department or organization, you must submit a separation PAF to Human Resources as well as the Termination Form on the Federal Work-Study website.

While a student may discontinue employment at any time without penalty, a minimum of two week notice is requested when resigning from any FWS position. FWS jobs should be treated like any other professional employment.

FWS employers may terminate student employees at any time for unsatisfactory performance although it is asked that employers give the student ample warning and a chance to correct the problem before resorting to his/her termination.

FWS employment may also be terminated if the student fails to meet satisfactory academic progress (SAP), which are federal and state requirements intended to monitor the academic progress of potential and current financial aid recipients.

Financial aid applicants must comply with the Satisfactory Academic Progress Policy (SAP) as a condition of initial or continued eligibility. Additionally, if a student drops below full-time status, FWS employment will be terminated.



INCLEMENT WEATHER OR EMERGENCY SITUATIONS

In an emergency, the campus or a portion of the campus may be closed from normal business operations, either prior to or during a work shift. If this should occur, appropriate announcements will be made through various means of media and communication.

Canceling classes or closing state buildings does not necessarily mean that the campus will be closed for normal operations. Students should consult with their supervisor regarding any specific inclement weather and emergency conditions procedures for their departments. In the event of inclement weather or other emergency conditions, students may contact the VCU's Alert Line at (804) 828-6736 (VCU-OPEN) for recorded updates on University closings. Please be aware that students should NOT be paid for hours they cannot work because the University is closed, even if they were scheduled to work that day.



PAYROLL POLICIES & PROCEDURES

REALTIME

Students that participate in the FWS program are required to enter their time into the RealTime system, a timekeeping system that VCU uses to track worked hours.

Missed clock times or adjustments must be reported to your supervisor. Instructions and a training manual for RealTime can be found at <http://www.hr.vcu.edu/media/hr/documents/VCURealTimeUserGuide.pdf>

- Off-Campus & RealTime

Students that work off-campus through the Federal Work Study are also required to clock in to the RealTime system upon arrival, clock out and in for breaks, and clock out at the end of their work period. Missed clock times or adjustments must be reported to the FWS Coordinator:

Matthew A. Chambers
Title IV Coordinator - Office of Financial Aid
Virginia Commonwealth University
Grace E. Harris Hall
1015 Floyd Avenue
Richmond, VA 23284
(804)828-6342

Off-campus student workers are additionally required to print out a hard copy of their RealTime each week, have a supervisor sign the hard copy and submit to the FWS Coordinator.

*Note: Forgery of a timesheet submission is not permitted. Departments or organizations will be responsible paying all forged hours and the student worker may be terminated from the FWS program.

COMPLETING NEW FWS PAYROLL (ON-CAMPUS PROCEDURES)

Department Personnel Administrators must submit hiring paperwork as required by Human Resources for each work-study student. The required paperwork can be found on the Quick Reference for New Hires and Rehires at the following HR link: <http://www.hr.vcu.edu/media/hr/documents/QuickReferenceNewHire.pdf>



PAY WAGE INCREASE

Student employees shall be informed at the beginning of the performance period, or upon hire, of the objectives and factors on which their performance will be evaluated. While increases may be offered at the discretion of the employing department, standard increases may be offered based on the following criteria:

- Promotion to higher level position with related increase in job duties and/or complexity of work.
- Longevity/length of employment
- Additional skills, education, and/or experience gained in the prior term of employment.
- Positive performance evaluation for the prior term of employment

PAY GUIDELINES

Many students feel they are eligible for an increase in pay once they receive an increase in their FWS awards. Pay rate increases should be given on a merit basis, not due to an increase in funds. When a student receives an award increase this does not mean he/she should receive a wage increase to help him/her earn the entire award. FWS awards are increased in order to allow students to work for a *longer period of time* in their employment department rather than having them leave their positions due to lack of funds.

STUDENT FWS EARNINGS E-MAIL NOTIFICATIONS

The Office of Financial Aid will send email notifications to students and copy the department's/organization's contact person for students who have \$500 or less remaining in their award.

*Note: Please keep in mind that the information will be one pay period behind the payroll schedule.



OVERAGES, CHARGEBACKS & RECONCILING

It is the employer's responsibility to monitor FWS earnings. Students found to have earnings without a proper award will be notified and the illegitimate earnings will be charged back to the department's account.

Similarly, departments/agencies will be charged for any amount earned by students who begin working prior to the Earliest Start Date indicated on the Confirmation Memo.

TAXATION/BENEFITS FOR FWS STUDENTS

Federal, State, and Local Taxes

All wages paid to FWS and non-FWS student employees are subject to withholding of federal, state and local income taxes unless the student qualifies for exemption.

Unemployment Compensation

FWS and non-FWS student employees are not entitled to Unemployment Compensation through VCU.

FICA (Social Security Taxes)

The IRS revised the regulations that governed the exemption from Social Security and Medicare taxes (FICA) for students enrolled in colleges and universities. Student employees are exempt from FICA taxes if they are enrolled full-time regardless of the number of hours they may work.

1. A student employee is exempt from FICA taxation if s/he is enrolled full-time. Any undergraduate who enrolls for at least twelve credit hours for the spring and twelve credit hours for the fall semester will be considered enrolled as a full-time student for FICA purposes.

2. In the spring and fall semesters, graduate students will be considered full-time if they are enrolled for at least 9 credit hours each semester.



3. Verification of enrollment status must be done twice during the semester. The first time must be at the end of the add/drop period and the second time may be done at the University's discretion, but prior to the end of the semester.
4. Student employees may work any number of hours (within FWS regulations) without becoming eligible for FICA taxation.
5. Student employees will continue to be exempt from FICA taxation for services performed during the winter break providing the student was exempt on the last day of the fall semester and is eligible to enroll for the spring semester.
6. Student employees are exempt from FICA taxation for work performed during any period that partially falls within the academic year.
7. Student employees must be working in a student position and not a career position as defined by the IRS. A career position is more narrowly defined as one that is eligible to participate in the University's retirement plans.

Workers Compensation

Student workers employed at Virginia Commonwealth University may be eligible for Worker's Compensation in the event of an injury/illness arising out of and in the course of official work-related duties. If an injury/illness occurs, on the job, the employee should report the injury to his/her supervisor immediately. The supervisor and employee should contact Human Resources Worker's Compensation Office to complete an Accident Report Form. The form may be found at:

<http://www.hr.vcu.edu/media/hr/documents/AccidentReport.pdf>.

Student workers may be eligible for the following Worker's Compensation insurance benefits:

1. Medical Coverage - Medical bills for treatment, therapy, and/or prescriptions resulting from a work related injury are covered. All bills should be forwarded to the Human Resource Worker's Compensation Office and the Occupational Health Unit on campus.
2. Lost Wages - Student employees may be eligible to receive compensation for wages lost as a result of the injury/illness after a seven-calendar day waiting period. The compensation benefit is 66 2/3% of the student worker's average weekly wages.



Rights and Responsibilities

EACH FEDERAL WORK-STUDY STUDENT HAS THE RIGHT TO:

1. Information regarding their award amount, rate of pay, average number of work hours per week, and general FWS policies.
2. A specific job description including supervisor's expectations and standards.
3. A clearly defined work schedule which accommodates their course schedule and academic requirements.
4. Adequate training to perform assigned tasks.
5. A safe, clean, and professional working environment.
6. Supervision and direction.
7. Instructions for recording hours worked, as well as information regarding the University's payroll procedures and payroll calendar.
8. Instructions regarding procedures to be followed if the student cannot report for a scheduled work period.
9. A grievance procedure for stating concerns related to the award, the job, or the supervisor.

EACH FEDERAL WORK-STUDY STUDENT IS RESPONSIBLE FOR:

1. Maintaining 12 credit hours of enrollment.
2. Maintaining Satisfactory Academic Progress.
3. Reporting any changes in enrollment to the FWS Coordinator.
4. Submitting time to RealTime and the FWS Coordinator if working off-campus. A supervisor **MUST** sign the timesheet if working off-campus, submissions can be sent to:

Email: Faworkstudy@vcu.edu,

Fax: 804-827-1589, or

Submitted in person at:

Grace E. Harris Hall 1015 Floyd Ave, Richmond, VA 23220

5. Adhering to their work schedule and communicating any changes or absences directly to their supervisor.
6. Understanding the specific job responsibilities, including the supervisor's expectations and standards.
7. Completing duties as assigned and not conducting personal business at work unless authorized to do so by supervisor.



8. Dressing appropriately for the workplace.
9. Adhering to any confidentiality/security agreements set forth by employer
10. Adhering to VCU's policies and guidelines as they pertain to discrimination or harassment on the basis of race, color, religion, sex, sexual orientation, gender identity or expression, age, disability, marital status, citizenship, genetic information, or any other characteristic protected by law.

*Note: Grievances related to the above policies, to FWS awards, the job, or the supervisor may be directed to faworkstudy@vcu.edu.