It is the responsibility of the FWS Supervisor to be familiar with the material in this guide. All questions pertaining to the Federal Work-Study program should be directed to Financial Aid. Employers who violate any of these policies face immediate cancellation of their Federal Work-Study participation and loss of future Federal Work-Study eligibility.
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WHAT IS FEDERAL WORK-STUDY?

Federal Work-Study (FWS) is a program that provides part-time employment opportunities to eligible students to help meet the costs of a post-secondary education. Based on the results of the Free Application for Federal Student Aid (FAFSA), eligible students are awarded FWS funds, which may be earned through part-time employment in approved positions either on- or off-campus. The program is designed to provide students with an opportunity for employment arranged around class schedules. Students must be enrolled in an eligible degree or certificate program to be eligible to work in this program.

FWS provides students an opportunity to earn money for their college expenses, gives them a chance to learn the basics of the workplace, provides an opportunity for them to work in a “field” that may be of interest, and helps prepare them to enter the workforce. Virginia Commonwealth University (VCU) also benefits from the unique talents and experiences students bring to the campus. A job contributes to more than just financial assistance for a student’s college education; it also offers the opportunity to gain valuable work experience, and learn skills to assist with educational and career goals.

As an added benefit, the money a student earns through this program is not used to determine their financial need on the FAFSA for the next year. While a student must pay federal and state taxes on their earnings, the wages earned during the tax year can be excluded from their income when filing the FAFSA.

PURPOSE OF FEDERAL WORK-STUDY

The law states two general purposes for the FWS program. The first and original purpose is to stimulate and promote the part-time employment of enrolled students who need employment to pursue courses of study at eligible institutions.

The Higher Education Act of 1992 added a second purpose: To encourage students receiving federal student financial 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.

Both of these purposes are vitally important to the development of job opportunities offered at VCU. All job positions at VCU are part-time and should not interfere with the academic success of our students. Students are encouraged to consider community service positions to broaden their view of the Richmond community and actively participate in all that is offered in the area.

AWARD AMOUNTS

Each student is limited in the amount of wages they may earn based on the student’s federal financial aid award, which is determined by federal regulations. Financial Aid (FA),
in accordance with federal regulations, determines this award by taking into consideration the following:

- Funds available to the University
- Number of eligible FWS students
- Number of available positions for students

The student is limited in total earnings to the award amount. Once the award amount is reached, the student must stop working. Employers may request an extension of the student award if the department plans to keep the student employed, but approval is dependent on available FWS program funding or the employer may choose to become responsible for 100% of all wages that exceed the award amount. Award amounts are subject to change.

**Employer Hiring Process (both on-campus and off-campus)**

The hiring process is fairly simple. Please follow the checklist below when hiring a student:

1. Develop the Position Description.
2. Post open position(s) to Handshake.
3. Select desired candidates for interviews.
4. Offer position to selected candidate(s).
5. Complete the Job Action process to inform the OFA that the student has been hired.
6. OFA to provide a Confirmation Memo to the supervisor listed in the job description.

The hiring process is slightly different from this point depending on whether you are an on-campus or off-campus work site. Please follow your specific steps from this point.

7. Complete required onboarding process.
8. Complete the student employee’s EPAF and submit to Payroll.
9. FA will review and approve the EPAF unless corrections are needed.
10. Student can officially begin working once the process is completed.
Step 1- Develop the Position Descriptions

Per federal guidelines, all FWS jobs must have position descriptions on file even if the position is not advertised. Under federal regulations, the position must not displace employees or impair existing service contracts. This includes the replacement of permanent staff in vacant positions. FWS positions must not involve constructing, operating, or maintaining any part of a building used for religious worship or sectarian instruction.

All positions must include:

1. Name of position (Title)
2. Classification of the position (e.g., office assistant 1, office assistant 2, etc.)
3. Name and address of the student’s employer
4. Department or office in which the student will be employed
5. Location of job
6. Name of the student’s supervisor
7. Purpose/role of the position within the organization
8. Duties and responsibilities
9. Rate of pay for the position
10. Hours per week
11. General qualification for the position and specific qualifications for various levels and pay rates
12. Length of the student’s employment (start and end dates)
13. Procedures for determining a student’s rate of pay when position has multiple rates

VCU Career Services will review job descriptions based on the requirements set by FA and approve the position for posting on Handshake.

Step 2- Posting to Handshake

If an employer does not already have a Handshake account, they must create one. Visit, HireVCURams.com and click on Create an account. For more information and step-by-step instructions on how to create your account, read these articles from the Handshake Help Center.
Once the employer is registered, they can begin to post positions as needed. It is important to remember that only those students who have already been awarded FWS can view FWS job postings. If an employer wishes to hire both FWS and student wage employees for the same position they must post the position twice, once as FWS and once as a student wage position.

When posting positions please remember the following:

- You must list your position(s) as “Temporary/Seasonal” and include your preferred start and end dates. For 2020-2021 the eligible employment date is 8/10/2020.
- Include the following in the job description:
  1. Number of hours per week
  2. Preferred schedule (or list “flexible schedule”)
  3. Job classification, if applicable
- A contact person should be included for each position posted.
- When the position is filled, it is the responsibility of the supervisor to close the position.

Step 3 - Interviews

Once the position has closed and a diverse applicant pool is achieved, the screening process may begin. Within Handshake, all students who have access to apply to an FWS position have already been awarded FWS for the current aid year. Employers can be confident that their applicants have FWS when considering a student for an open position. Of course, it is important to remember that a student’s FWS award is contingent upon their entire financial aid package and may change at any time.

Employers can select any number of students who applied and then interview those who meet their requirements. The FWS supervisor should conduct the interviews. They can be made as formal or informal as desired; however, keeping a professional decorum is important and supervisors are encouraged to keep the interview as professional as possible.

It is the goal of the FWS program to give students the opportunity to gain real-world experience, beginning with the job search and interview process, thus preparing them to enter the workforce post-graduation.

Step 4 – Offering the position

Once a candidate is selected an offer can be made. Although not required for FWS, VCU Career Services directs that the best practice is to notify the student if they have been selected or not within two weeks of the interview. This is an important teaching moment and helps students prepare for the ups and downs of the employment process, whether hired or not, especially if this is their first experience with searching for a job.
Step 5 – Completing the Job Action Process

On-campus departments and off-campus agencies must submit a New Hire Request through the Job Action process for each student they wish to hire in an FWS position. The Job Action New Hire Form is processed by FA and is the only avenue by which an employer will receive the FWS Confirmation Memo authorizing the student to work as an FWS employee.

Once the student has accepted an offer of employment, the employer should use the Job Action process to notify FA that the student has been hired utilizing the New Hire form.

The Job Action process has two other action forms.

- An Information Update, including
  - a change in the name of the supervisor, or
  - a request to increase a student’s FWS award, or
  - a change to student worker from FWS due to an exhausted award. The student will remain an employee but the department, agency or company will assume all payroll costs, or
  - a request to increase the hourly rate of the FWS student, or
  - a change in job title of the FWS student to a new position with the same employer.

- A Termination Update, including
  - a student resignation, or
  - the FWS award has been exhausted and the employer will not retain the student, or
  - the end of an appointment to a position, or
  - graduation, or
  - a performance related issue.

Step 6 - Student Employment Work Authorization

The 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 and total FWS award amount. Students are not allowed to begin work before the earliest start date listed on the Confirmation memo.

A Confirmation Memo will be sent to the employer after a New Hire Request has been submitted through the Job Action process and the student’s eligibility for FWS has been verified.
Failure to comply with this regulation will result in hours worked being charged back to the employing department or agency.

Please refer to the appropriate employer section for the next steps.

ON-CAMPUS EMPLOYERS

Employer Eligibility
Most departments on campus are able to hire FWS students on both of VCU’s campuses. Positions include office support staff, research positions, laboratory support, tutoring, athletics support, and many more. Due to federal regulations, FWS positions must follow certain guidelines and therefore all positions must be screened by the Assistant Director of Federal Work Study.

The FWS program will subside 75% of a student's wage while the institution covers the remaining 25%. At this point, there is no requirement that on-campus departments provide any funds from their own budgets.

Step 7 – Onboarding and ePAF Process
It is important for FWS supervisors to onboard student employees to ensure a clear understanding of the department’s work requirements, security protocols, dress code or other important items that assist the new employee with assimilation into your work area.

Program Assistants and Supervisors must follow VCU’s HR and Payroll policies and procedures for hiring FWS student employees. All student employees must complete a background check, all required employment paperwork, and direct deposit form before starting their work hours.

Work Study New-Hire/Rehire (WSHIRE) ePAF

- Log in to Banner (go.vcu.edu/adminpages)
- Key NOAEPAF in the Go to box and press “Enter”
- Enter/Select the following:
- ID: Enter the VID of the desired employee.
→ If the VID is not known, use the Search functions on the right-hand side of the ID field. See separate instructions for person searching on POIIDEN.

- **Transaction**: Leave blank
- **Query date**: Effective Date
- **Approval Category**: WSHIRE
- **Approval Type**: WSHIRE
- **Position**: W00001  **Suffix**: 00
- **Click Go** (or Alt + PgDn)

**In the "New Value" column, complete the following fields** (*required):

- **Jobs Effective Date**: Enter the effective date
- **Home Organization**: Enter the Home Organization code
- **Distribution Orgn**: Enter the 4 digit Home Organization code
- **Timesheet Orgn**: Enter the Timesheet Organization code
- **Supervisor ID**: VID of Supervisor
- **Title**: Enter the Employee Position Title
- **Regular Rate**: Enter hourly pay rate for employee
- **FTE**: Defaulted to the maximum value of “.50”, but can be edited
- **Hours per Day**: Defaulted to maximum value of “4” but can be edited
- **Hours per Pay**: Defaulted to maximum value of “43.34” but can be edited
- **Citizenship**: 'Y' or 'N'
- **New Ethnicity**: Enter ‘1’ for Not Hispanic or Latino or ‘2’ for Hispanic or Latino.
- **Race Code 1**: Select the "Search" button under the "New Value" and double click on a value
- **Veteran Classification**: looking at the bottom of the block you can select from a description of values.
- **Armed Forces ServMed**: 'Y' or 'N'
- **Disabled Veteran**: 'Y' or 'N' or leave blank

**Note**: Remember to navigate to Page 2 for additional fields, or increase the number of fields to show all fields on one screen.

<table>
<thead>
<tr>
<th>Veteran Classif.</th>
<th>Arméd Forces ServMed</th>
<th>Disabled Veteran</th>
</tr>
</thead>
</table>

Press LIST for valid codes.

Click "Save" then go to Tools > Next Action

**Labor Distribution Information**

- **Effective Date**: Enter employees effective date
- **COA**: Defaults to "V"
- **Index**: Work Study Index Code
- **Fund**: Auto-populates
- **Organization**: Auto-populates
- **Account**: Work Study Account Code 534110
- **Percent**: Percent of funding provided by this Index

**Note**: Labor Distribution must always equal 100%. To add additional lines, click "Insert", to remove lines click “Delete” located in the upper right-hand side of the current block "New Job Labor Distribution".

Click "Save" and go to Tools > Submit Transaction

**If Routing is not setup**: Go to "Routing” tab and select the correct users in User ID field.

For more information refer to [Setting up a Routing Queue](#)
Work Study Job Change ePAF

- Log in to Banner (go.vcu.edu/adminpages)
- Key NOAEPAF in the Go to box and press “Enter”
- Enter/Select the following:
  - **ID**: Enter the VID of the desired employee.
- If the VID is not known, use the Search functions on the right-hand side of the ID field. See separate instructions for person searching on POIIDEN.
- **Transaction**: Leave blank
- **Query date**: Effective Date
- **Approval Category**: WSCHG
- **Approval Type**: WSCHG
- **Position**: W00001  **Suffix**: Use 00 if updating current job or if this is the first work study job for the academic year. Use 01 if moving to a new work study position within the same academic year.
- Click Go (or Alt + PgDn)

**In the "New Value" column, complete the following fields (**required):**

- **Employee Class Code**: Defaults to “WS”
- **Job Change Reason**:
- **Begin Date**: Enter the effective date
- **Jobs Effective Date**: Enter the effective date
- **Personnel Date**: true effective date. *In most cases, effective date and personnel date are the same, unless it's a retroactive transaction.*
- **Home Organization**: Enter the Home Organization code
- **Distribution Orgn**: Enter the 4 digit Home Organization code
- **Timesheet Orgn**: Enter the Timesheet Organization code
- **Supervisor ID**: VID of Supervisor
- **Title**: Enter the Employee Position Title
- **Regular Rate**: Enter hourly pay rate for employee
• **FTE**: Defaulted to the maximum value of “.50”, but can be edited
• **Hours per Day**: Defaulted to maximum value of “4” but can be edited
• **Hours per Pay**: Defaulted to maximum value of “43.34” but can be edited
• **Contract Type**: Defaulted to P
• **Employee Class Code**: Defaulted to “WS”

Click "Save" then go to Tools > Next Action

**Labor Distribution Information**

• **Effective Date**: Enter employees effective date
• **COA**: Defaults to “V”
• **Index**: Work Study Index Code
• **Fund**: Auto-populates
• **Organization**: Auto-populates
• **Account**: Work Study Account Code 534110
• **Program**: Auto-populates
• **Percent**: Percent of funding provided by this Index

  **Note:** Labor Distribution must always equal 100%. To add additional lines, click “Insert”, to remove lines click “Delete” located in the upper right-hand side of the current block “New Job Labor Distribution”.

Click "Save" and go to Tools > Submit Transaction

**If Routing is not setup:** Go to "Routing" tab and select the correct users in User ID field.

For more information refer to [Setting up a Routing Queue](#)

**Step 8 – EPAF Approval by the Office of Financial Aid**

Before students can begin to work, the employer must have a valid EPAF for each work-study student employed. New in 19-20, all EPAF setups must be approved by Financial Aid before the HR Payroll system is opened for students to log their hours.
During peak season (August – October), EPAFs will be approved on a daily basis (M-F). During non-peak season, EPAFs will be approved twice a week (W & F).

If an EPAF is not approved it will be for one of two reasons.

1. The EPAF Form has been completed improperly. The EPAF will be returned to the department for corrections. A message will accompany the electronic return.
2. There was a change in the student's financial aid and the student is no longer eligible for federal work-study. The Assistant Director of Federal Work Study will contact the student and supervisor if this is the case.

Financial Aid will return the EPAF for corrections or approve the EPAF if the setup is correct. Issues with incorrect indexes, account numbers, student classifications or placement codes will require corrections and has created problems with the financial management of the Federal Work-study program. Reconciliation of the FWS program is a critical federal requirement and student payroll records must be accurate.

**Step 9 – Student can begin working.**

Once all the above steps have been met, the student may begin working. The earliest start date for the coming year is August 10, 2020. Please remember that these jobs are part-time and may never exceed 20 hours per week during enrollment periods, and 29 hours per week during non-enrollment periods (winter and spring breaks). FA recommends that students be limited to 10-15 hours per week to ensure that the student has time to focus on their academic success.

Students are prohibited from working during their scheduled class times. If a class is cancelled, and the student is requesting to work, the student must submit proof with a written statement from the professor, or academic department. The student can forward an email to their supervisor that includes the date, time, and name of the course. This statement must be submitted to the supervisor before the requested shift, otherwise, the student will only be allowed to work their next scheduled shift.

Supervisors must ensure that student work hours are not scheduled during the student’s scheduled class time, even if the class has been cancelled. If a student requests to work during a cancelled class period, the supervisor must have documentation from the professor that the class was cancelled. Federal regulation prohibits students from working during scheduled class time and violation of this regulation can jeopardize the institution’s participation in the FWS program.

Supervisors also are responsible for ensuring that students are working at reasonable and appropriate hours for the job position. Students working in an office setting would be expected to work between 8 a.m. and 5 p.m., while a student working in a theater may work during the evening. Whatever the hours, the students must be supervised at all times. Work hours are monitored by FA to ensure compliance.

For more information about Work Schedules, please see the Work Schedule section of this Handbook.
OFF-CAMPUS EMPLOYERS

Employer Eligibility
VCU’s eligible FWS students have the opportunity to work with off-campus non-profits, local schools, and government agencies. The FWS program will subside 75% of a student’s wage, while the institution covers the remaining 25%. At this point, there is no requirement that off-campus employers provide any funds from their own budget.

Organizations interested in pursuing an FWS partnership with VCU must complete the Off-Campus Employer Questionnaire. Once the form is completed, it must be submitted to FA for review. The Assistant Director of Federal Work Study will follow up with a telephone interview and later reply with a decision and if approved, the Off-Campus Employer Agreement and various other forms will be sent to the organization for completion and submission. **The original agreement must be returned by mail. E-mailed or faxed copies will not be accepted. Employer must have agreement in place before hiring any students as FWS employees.**

Welcome Packet

VCU will provide approved off-campus employers with a Welcome packet that will provide instructions and materials to be used for FWS employment. The Welcome packet will include:

- **The Off-Campus Agreement** – A copy of the fully-executed, signed agreement for your records.
- **VCU Payroll Schedule** – The document will provide the dates that timesheets are due to workstudy@vcu.edu.
- **Student Employment Work Confirmation memo** – The confirmation is required before a student may start working and is created in response to the Job Action process New Hire submission.
- **Employer Handbook** – for the organization to keep as a reference. All employers must read it.
- **Student Handbook** – currently being updated and will be provided to the employer to keep as a reference in the near future.
- **FWS Student Award Tracker link** – for tracking of student hours and FWS award usage
Step 7 - Onboarding

As with any new job, it is important for FWS supervisors to onboard student employees to ensure a clear understanding of the company’s work requirements, security protocols, dress code or other important items that assist the new employee with assimilation into your work area.

The student employee is part of your workforce and should be held to the same work standards that you expect of your permanent employees.

Off-campus employers may not require a student to become a member of any organization or charge a fee for services to work at the agency.

In addition, students are to be provided with all necessary computer equipment, software, security access, training or materials to accomplish their job duties. A student is not required to utilize their own computer or software to perform their job.

Step 8 - Payroll Setup process

VCU handles the payroll setup process for off-campus employers. Students are notified to visit the Student Financial Management Center in Grace E. Harris Hall to complete all of their payroll paperwork and eligibility to work documents.

Students should complete the payroll process by the end of the first week of the semester to ensure proper payroll payment.

Step 9 – Student can begin working.

Once all the above steps have been completed the student may begin working. Please remember that these jobs are part-time and may never exceed 29 hours per week per VCU policy and federal law.

FA recommends that students be limited to 10-15 hours per week to ensure that the student has time to focus on their academic success.

Supervisors must ensure that student work hours are not scheduled during the student’s scheduled class time, even if the class has been cancelled. If a student requests to work during a cancelled class period, the supervisor must have documentation from the professor that the class was cancelled. Federal regulation prohibits students from working during scheduled class time and violation of this regulation can jeopardize the institution’s participation in the FWS program.

Supervisors also are responsible for ensuring that students are working at reasonable hours for the job position. Students working in an office setting would be expected to work between 8am and 5 pm while a student working in a theater may work in the evening. Whatever the hours, the students must be supervised at all times. Work hours are monitored by FA to ensure compliance.
For more information about Work Schedules, please see the Work Schedule section of this Handbook.

WAGES AND PAY INCREASES

It is up to the supervisor to set the hourly pay rate for the position job description. Supervisors must keep in mind the amount and type of work the student is hired to do when setting a wage. They also must make sure that the student FWS award is able to accommodate the rate and number of hours, as well as any increase if desired in the future.

Wages can vary anywhere from $7.25 to $12.00 per hour. The minimum wage is concurrent with the Commonwealth of Virginia and is set at $7.25 per hour.

Hourly Rate Averages per Position Type

<table>
<thead>
<tr>
<th>Job Description</th>
<th>Pay Range</th>
</tr>
</thead>
<tbody>
<tr>
<td>Office Assistants</td>
<td>$7.25 to $8.75</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Customer Service/Receptionist</td>
<td>$8.50 to $9.00</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Lab Tech/Monitor</td>
<td>$9.00 to $9.50</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Research Assistant</td>
<td>$9.75 to $11.00</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Multimedia Assistants</td>
<td>$11.00 to $12.00</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Mentors</td>
<td>$11.00 to $12.00</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Other Specialized Positions</td>
<td>$11.00 to $12.00*</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>(jobs that require specialized skills/certifications)</td>
<td></td>
</tr>
</tbody>
</table>

*Please note that any position with an hourly pay rate of over $12 will need to be documented and approved by the Assistant Director of Federal Work Study.
Pay increases should be given when it is determined that the student has been there for at least one year of time or the student’s role in the department has gained further responsibilities. The length of time in between increases is determined by the supervisor/department. If the student’s responsibilities have increased then a new position description should be written up and submitted through the Career Services Handshake system.

WORK SCHEDULE

It is up to the supervisor and student to agree upon a work schedule for the student. The student must make every possible effort to adhere to the schedule. If anything should come up, it is up to the student to discuss this with their supervisor.

**Students must not work more than eight hours in one day.** It is the policy of the FWS program that a paid fifteen-minute break is allowed for every continuous four hours worked. Breaks are not provided for periods of less than four hours. Breaks cannot be used to arrive late or leave early. A 30-minute unpaid meal break must be taken for shifts of six hours or more of consecutive work. Students and supervisors need to monitor the number of hours they work each term in order to not exceed the FWS amount awarded.

Supervisors can use the FWS Student Award Tracker to keep track of their students’ hours worked and earnings. The tracker can be downloaded from the FWS website. If needed supervisors can contact the FWS staff for assistance.

When creating a work schedule with the student it is important to remember:

- The student’s work schedule should not interfere with their class schedule.
- Once the schedule is set it should be carefully followed.
- Students are responsible for adhering to their work schedule and should be paid only for hours worked.
- If the student is unable to come to work, the student must notify the supervisor in advance.
- If a supervisor is not able to host a student for work whether for an office closure, holiday etc., it is the responsibility of the employer to notify the student in a timely manner.
- During final exams and midterms supervisors must accommodate the student’s study/exam schedule.

Students cannot be paid for hours worked when it is determined that they should have been attending classes during that time. Employers will be held responsible for reimbursing the FWS program for earnings determined to be ineligible. It is recommended that supervisors ask for a copy of the student’s class schedule, as to ensure that students do not work when they should be in class.

TIMESHEETS, PAYMENT AND RECORDKEEPING

Students will earn a bi-weekly paycheck, which is direct-deposited into their personal bank account according to the VCU payroll schedule.
On-campus students: Timesheets must be submitted to RealTime, on time. For more information on this please visit: [http://hr.vcu.edu/](http://hr.vcu.edu/) Supervisors must approve time worked by the student(s) in RealTime when required by the VCU payroll schedule.

Off-campus Students: Students must enter their work hours in the RealTime system through VCU but the off-campus supervisor must also keep a record of work hours at the work site. Students are required to print off their timesheet from RealTime and have the supervisor sign the copy and return it to VCU. The VCU RealTime timesheet will be used to substantiate the work hours entered by the student in RealTime and must be returned by the appropriate due date on the VCU payroll schedule.

Adherence to the FWS Award Amount: Employers will be notified by the OFA when a student(s) FWS award is close to being expended. Once the student(s) has earned the full award, the employer will receive a termination notice from the Assistant Director of Federal Work Study at which time the student may no longer work unless:

- The Assistant Director of Federal Work Study has approved a written request by the supervisor to increase the award. Award increases are contingent on available FWS funds and the student’s financial aid status. Requests for increases must be submitted through the Job Action process on the Update form.

- The on-campus department agrees to pay the student from their own budget. The student will be switched to a wage position using the PHARED process.

- The off-campus employer hires the student as a permanent employee.

Recordkeeping: At any time during the fiscal year, the Assistant Director of Federal Work Study or the Associate Director of Compliance and Reporting may audit supervisors for verification on reported hours for any FWS student employee. Supervisors must keep a record of all the hours worked per pay period and are responsible for knowing how the number of hours worked affects the use of the FWS award.

OVER AWARDS

Although it is the responsibility of the student and supervisor to keep track of a student’s earnings, sometimes an over award does occur. The FWS staff also monitors earnings to determine if an over award has occurred. If an over award does occur a reallocation of VCU departmental funds may be needed.

Before a reallocation is done within your on-campus department, please email the FWS staff at workstudy@vcu.edu to determine the appropriate course of action.

As previously discussed, in some instances, students may stay employed on FWS:

- If the student has unmet need left and there are still FWS funds available an FWS award increase may be granted.
- A student’s financial aid budget may be adjusted to increase the student’s eligibility so that the over award may be eliminated.
Off-campus employers have a different process. If the Assistant Director is unable to reconcile the over award by making an adjustment listed above, the Assistant Director will contact the employer to discuss the issue. If needed, a student over award must be refunded to VCU.

Financial Aid will send an invoice for repayment of the ineligible FWS funds. Refunds to VCU must be resolved within 10 days of the receipt of the invoice. Failure to reimburse the university can result in the termination of participation in the FWS program.

RETAINING A STUDENT WORKER OUTSIDE THE FWS PROGRAM

For situations where a student cannot be kept on FWS because:

- the FWS award has been fully utilized
- the FWS program has ended for the year
- the student has become ineligible for an FWS award
- the student has graduated from VCU

An on- or off-campus employer can decide to retain the student as a paid worker form their own department or company budget. For on-campus departments, an EPAF to terminate the student’s FWS must be processed for these changes.

Off-campus employers will receive assistance from the FWS staff in terminating a student from an FWS position. Off-campus supervisors should contact workstudy@vcu.edu regarding any changes.

CONCURRENT EMPLOYMENT

Students cannot hold more than one FWS job at a time at VCU. Supervisors must notify FA when a student is terminated or voluntarily quits their job. It is important that changes in employment are reported to FA Work Study staff no more than two days after a student leaves their job. Job change information should be submitted using the Job Action process.

If a student wishes to switch positions, they must first quit their previous position before starting the new one. FA will need to create a new work-study position to ensure proper crediting of work-study earnings to the appropriate job. Notification must be sent to the FWS staff via the same email address before the student may begin working in the new position. It is suggested that position switches occur at the end of a payroll period.

RESIGNATION AND TERMINATIONS

There are times when student employees do not meet the requirements of the position for which they have been hired or their academic schedule does not accommodate the hours that are needed by the employer.
For these reasons or others, it may be necessary to end the employment of student. Students should be encouraged to give a notification of at least two weeks if planning to resign from their FWS position.

A student’s continued employment is contingent upon satisfactory performance as determined by their supervisor. If the supervisor decides that the student’s performance is not satisfactory, the student may be dismissed.

If a student knowingly submits fraudulent information, students will be dismissed from the program by Financial Aid and may face legal consequences. In addition, submitting fraudulent information constitutes a VCU Honor Code violation and the student will be reported to the Honor Council for further review and action.

Failure to abide by FA’s Satisfactory Academic Progress (SAP) Policy is grounds for termination from the FWS program. The student can be reinstated to the FWS program once they have been re-approved for financial aid by FA’S SAP appeals committee. The employer is not required to rehire the student.

Terminating Students

FA understands that terminating students can be difficult for both the student and the supervisor. We ask that before a student is terminated, they be warned and asked to rectify their behavior. If the issue is not corrected within a timely manner, a termination may be suitable; however, the OFA understands that there are instances that merit an immediate termination without a warning period.

If a student is terminated from their position please submit a Termination notice through the Job Action process to FWS staff as to why the student was terminated. Any and all termination policies set by the university must also be followed.

The FWS staff will send a Student Evaluation Form to the supervisor to be completed within three days of the termination. This documentation assists FA when discussing the issues surrounding the termination with the student and becomes part of the student financial aid record. Evaluation forms should be returned to the FWS staff within two days of receipt.

ACADEMIC CREDIT AND FWS

At this time, there are no Federal Work Study jobs that provide academic credit while working in an FWS position. Students working on a Capstone project in their senior year may not be paid for their personal research time. In addition, students are not permitted to complete class assignments or study for exams while working at their job.
SUMMER FEDERAL WORK-STUDY

At this time, students are not authorized to work during the summer months. FWS work authorizations expire at the end of the last week of the spring semester.

GRADUATING STUDENTS

For students who will be graduating in fall, spring or summer: Their last day of work is on their last day of classes in their final semester. The student employee must be terminated immediately and no longer allowed to work using FWS funds.

If the student continues to work after their last eligible day, either the student or department must reimburse the earned monies as soon as possible.

TERMS AND CONDITIONS OF FEDERAL WORK-STUDY: STUDENTS

- Each student must file a FAFSA and be determined to have financial need.
- Student must have FWS awarded on their financial aid package prior to starting work.
- Be enrolled in an eligible degree or certificate program.
- Enrolled undergraduate and graduate students are eligible to work as student employees. If a student has graduated, they are not considered a current student and therefore are not eligible for FWS student employment.
- Be a U.S. Citizen or eligible non-citizen.
- Be achieving Satisfactory Academic Progress (SAP); please look on the FA website for our SAP policy.
- Not be in default on any student loan.
- Submit all documents required by FA.
- Students may not work more than 20 hours per week during the fall and spring semesters. Students may work up to 29 hours a week during winter and spring breaks (non-enrollment period). Students cannot exceed 29 hours in a week.
- Students may not work more than 8 hours in one day, and must take a one-half hour break when working six or more hours
- The Fair Labor Standards Act of 1938 prohibits employers from accepting voluntary services from any paid employee. Any student employed under FWS must be paid for all hours worked.
• Working during class time is prohibited.
• Overtime payment: FWS is designed as a part-time program so overtime should be avoided at all costs.
• Student wage rates will be determined by the employer within the guidelines provided by VCU.
• No student may earn more than his/her award per academic year.
• Any unearned funds will be forfeited.
• Students may not work more than one FWS job simultaneously.
• VCU has the right to terminate any FWS position due to changes in the availability of FWS funds or due to changes in the student status that could affect continued eligibility for financial aid. Failure to abide by VCU policies and procedures, unsatisfactory performance, and poor attendance are grounds for termination.

TERMS AND CONDITIONS OF FEDERAL WORK-STUDY:
EMPLOYERS/SUPERVISORS

• The employer/designated supervisor should establish and maintain a regular work schedule based upon the student's class schedule and the needs of the employer.
• The employer or supervisor should provide the student with a detailed job description and sufficient training to function effectively on the job.
• The employer should make every effort to give the student sufficient work-hours so the FWS award may be earned.
• The employer/supervisor must ensure the student does not work during times when it is determined the student should be in class.
• The employer must notify the FWS office, in writing, whenever a change is made: revision of job descriptions, change in pay rate, position termination, change in supervisor, etc.
• The employer may be asked to evaluate a student’s work performance at the end of the award period. The evaluation criteria will be productivity, dependability, attitude, initiative, attendance, and relationships with coworkers.
• The employer/supervisor agree to all regulations stated in the Employer and Student Handbooks.
• VCU has the right to terminate any FWS position due to changes in the availability of FWS funds or due to changes in the student status that could affect continued eligibility for financial aid.
• Failure of the student or the employer to abide by VCU policies and procedures, and unsatisfactory performance are grounds for termination from the FWS program.
• Students may not work more than 20 hours per week during the fall and spring semesters and no more than 29 hours per week during winter and spring breaks.

• Students may not work more than 8 hours in one day, and must take a one-half hour break when working six or more hours.

• Supervisors are responsible for tracking work hours and the usage of the FWS award during the year. Over-expenditures of the award will require the employer to reimburse the FWS fund.

• The Fair Labor Standards Act of 1938 prohibits employers from accepting voluntary services from any paid employee. Any student employed under FWS must be paid for all hours worked.

• Overtime payment: FWS is designed as a part-time program so overtime should be avoided at all costs.

Frequently Asked questions
Can a student “study” while performing a Federal Work-Study job?

Despite including the name "study," the purpose of the program is not to pay students to study; however, the nature of some employment positions includes some "down time." Employers are expected to ensure that student employees have sufficient work to be completed during work hours. Employers are expected to provide professional experiences to students and therefore VCU expects that students are working during paid hours.

As long as FWS employees are not given special allowances not provided to "regular" employees, and the FWS job duties are predominantly work needed within the department or agency, it is permissible to allow these FWS employees to study during slow times on the job; however, this time must be documented by the supervisor and presented, if asked, during an internal audit.

Is training available to my staff on how to best manage the FWS program within my department or agency?

Yes. FA, in coordination with VCU Career Services and Human Resources, provides annual training in the months of August and January for all supervisors.
and department heads. Off-campus employers also may attend these trainings. In the future, an online training course also will be available.

Do students also receive training regarding student employment requirements?

Currently, students are not required by the university to attend a training session; however, online information on the FWS website and an informational video are being developed to help students understand the requirements of the program.

Can a student work in an FWS job while studying abroad?

No, a student is not able to work at an FWS job while studying abroad. An employer may decide to hold an on-campus position for a student who has left for a semester abroad or for the next academic year, but there is no requirement to do so.

Can FWS employees be paid sick leave?

No. Sick leave cannot be paid with the federal share of FWS funds. FWS funds cannot be used to provide fringe benefits.

Is a student teacher receiving course credit eligible for FWS?

While a student teacher could be paid using FWS funds, VCU does not have sufficient funds to cover these students. VCU does not cover any earnings with FWS funds for work hours that are also receiving course credit.

Can a student work over time?

No. Students should abide by the regulated hours of 10-15 hours per week during the fall and spring semesters and never more than 29 hours per week under federal part-time employment laws.