



Federal Work Study Program Manual

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Definition of Federal Work Study

Federal Work Study (FWS) is a form of financial aid that provides employment opportunities to help students meet educationally related expenses. FWS is awarded in combination with other aid programs to meet students’ financial needs. An undergraduate, graduate or professional degree student that is enrolled or accepted for enrollment at least half-time and demonstrates financial need may be eligible for FWS. International, Global Gateway, Continuing Education students and full-time UVM employees may not be hired into a Federal Work Study job.

All FWS employment is governed by employment conditions (including pay) that are appropriate and reasonable according to the type of work performed, the geographic region, and the employee’s proficiency. Federal, state, and local laws governing regular employment also apply to FWS. FWS employment may not be used to replace or displace regular employees. Moreover, if the employer is not the school itself, the school must have a written agreement with the organization providing the job. The link to the US Department of Education FWS program manual is included in the Regulation Resource section of this manual.

As a need-based federal financial aid program, FWS cannot be awarded to students who do not file a FAFSA and that do not demonstrate financial need.

US Department of Education FWS Regulations

Academic Credit

Academic Credit may be earned as well as compensation for FWS jobs. Such jobs include but are not limited to internships, practicum, or assistantships. However, a student employed in an FWS job and receiving academic credit for that job may not be:

- Paid less than they would be if no academic credit were given
- Paid for receiving instruction in a classroom, laboratory, or other academic setting
- Paid unless the employer would normally pay a person for the same job

Working for a Professor

Permitted as long as the area of work involved is the type which the institution would normally support under its own employment program. The assignment of students to serve as research assistants to professors is one example. This is appropriate as long as the work performed by the students is in line with the professors' official duties and is considered work for the institution itself.

Community Service

Community service positions, on or off campus, must equal at least 7% of the institution's FWS allocation with at least one FWS student who serves as a reading tutor for children in elementary school or younger.

Community Services are defined as services that are identified by an institution of higher education through formal or informal consultation with local nonprofit, government, and community-based organizations, as designed to improve the quality of life for community residents, particularly low-income individuals, or to solve particular problems related to their needs. These services include but are not limited to fields such as:

- Health care
- Child care
- Literacy training
- Public safety
- Crime prevention and control
- Recreation
- Support to students with disabilities
- Mentoring
- Tutoring
- Supporting educational and recreational activities
- Counseling
- Community improvement

Working Off-Campus

Working off campus for non-profits or government agencies is encouraged but not required. Work performed off campus must be in the public interest which is defined as work performed for the welfare of the nation or community rather than work performed for a particular interest or group. The nonprofit organization must be incorporated as nonprofit under federal or state law. All off-campus employers must have a written agreement with the institution in which the students are enrolled. The agreement should specify what share of student compensation and other costs will be paid by the off-campus organization.

Political Employment

Employment positions must be free of political involvement. Under this prohibition, students cannot be assigned to work for individual members of Congress. However, students could be assigned to the staff of a standing committee of a state legislature if the selection of staff for such a committee and the work performed by such a staff is conducted in a nonpartisan fashion. Further, the political support or affiliation of students may not be prerequisites or considerations of employment. Positions that involve lobbying at the federal level are also prohibited.

Religious Employment

Employment positions must not involve constructing, operating, or maintaining any part of a building used for religious worship or sectarian instructions. The key issues in determining “religious work” in regards to work performed by FWS students are:

1. The main purpose of the building in which the work is taking place
2. The actual job that is being performed.

For example: FWS students may work in a non-profit day nursery operated by a church, as long as the nursery is open to the public on the same basis as for members of the church (i.e., is in the public interest) and as long as the particular positions to which the students are assigned do not involve sectarian instruction or the religious activities of the church. In determining whether any FWS employment will violate this restriction, the FWS office will consider the purpose of the work rather than just the nature of the employing organization. An example of employment not eligible for FWS is work maintaining a chapel which does not serve any but religious purposes. Maintenance of college auditorium which is only occasionally used for religious services would be eligible employment under FWS. In this case, the main purpose of the auditorium is not for religious worship or sectarian instruction.

Timesheets

All Campus and Off Campus Employers: Timesheets for students employed in Federal Work Study positions are not required in addition to the electronic UVM payroll system; PeopleSoft. It is however, considered to be a “best practice” especially for departments whose supervisors are not the ones approving student hours in PeopleSoft. **Remember**, no one except the student can enter worked hours in PeopleSoft except the student who worked them. This policy is clearly stated on the bottom of an employee’s time reporting sheet in PeopleSoft: “By pressing the submit button below, I certify that all hours reported as being worked by me are correct and I understand that falsification may result in disciplinary action up to and including termination of employment”.

Wages

Wages of pay for students in a FWS employment position should commensurate with the responsibilities of the job in which they were hired and cannot be less than the federal and/or state minimum wage.

Things to consider when determining the hourly rate:

- The skills needed to perform the job
- How much persons with those skills are paid in the local area for doing the same type of job
- Rates the school would normally pay similar for non-FWS employment positions
- Any applicable federal, state, or local laws that require a specific wage rate

UVM FWS Program Requirements for Students and Supervisors

established 2/24/1987

FWS Program begins the first day of the fall semester and ends on the last day of spring final exams. If any of the required tasks to secure a student's FWS award aren't completed the full award will be canceled on the applicable deadline.		
FWS Award Options	Required Task to Secure FWS Award	Deadline
Fall or Full Year	Be hired into a FWS job & receive approved hire email notification from SEO	1-Oct
Decline Fall & Keep Spring	Email or go to Student Financial Services to cancel fall & keep spring award	1-Oct
Spring Only	Be hired into a FWS job & receive hire email notification from SEO	15-Feb

Special Note: once a student secures a FWS job, they may be hired into additional FWS employment positions up to a maximum of three jobs.

Holidays and Dates of Non-Attendance

Student employees with our without work study are permitted to work on holidays and/or during dates of non-attendance as long as they are an enrolled student. Holiday pay is not provided for student employment positions.

Hours

Student employees who are working in a federally funded work study position are allowed to work no more than 8 hours per day or 20 hours per week among all work-study jobs combined. UVM strongly encourages supervisors to **NOT** place their needs ahead of a student's academic focus and overall health and wellbeing.

Supervisors are strongly encouraged to limit a student's fall semester earnings to that of half of their full academic year award. For example, if a student is awarded \$1,800 for the year, supervisors are encouraged to limit each semester's earnings to \$900. If a student decides to withdraw or study abroad in the spring semester, any earnings exceeding half of their full year award will be charged to the department that employs the student.

Students who accepted or were awarded fall semester work study only, may not earn beyond the last day of fall final exams. In the event they do, earnings beyond this date will be charged to the employing department. Records in PeopleSoft will also be terminated for all fall only awarded students after the payroll period has posted with the last day of fall final exams as the effective date.

A student's FWS award may also change in the midst of the academic year due to a variety of reasons (see Work Study Award Changes section of this manual). Also keep in mind that the more hours you provide a FWS student with, the faster they will use their award. Ultimately, this may be a disservice to them and you.

Managing a Students FWS Award

Managing a work study award will allow the student the best opportunity to commit ample time towards academics, maintain structure/balance in their weekly schedule and to earn consistent wages. Please utilize the below recommendations into your FWS management practices.

Scheduling:

Halve the students' full FWS year award, divide by the # of weeks the student is able to work during the semester and then divide by the hourly rate. This number is the weekly allotted hours the student can work. **Example:**

$$\$900(\text{half of the full year award}) / 16 (\text{\# of possible work weeks}) = 56.25 (\text{hours}) / \$12.00 (\text{hourly rate}) = 4.70 \text{ hours/week}$$

Monitoring a Student's Federal Work Study Award Balance:

Students: will receive an email notification from the payroll office on "pay day" and that indicates the amount earned in Federal Work Study as of the last payroll period and the amount remaining in dollars and in hours.

Supervisors: can run a PeopleSoft Federal Work Study Award Earnings Report:

1. Login to PeopleSoft: HR System
2. Select UVM Reports and Queries
3. Choose Reports and select Work Study Award from the drop down filter
4. In the Search Results box, select the Run Control ID you want or create a new run control report (no spaces) by clicking on Add New Value
5. For Fiscal Year, enter the year in which the academic year will end. IF you are using a saved Run Control ID (this will populate updated information) enter the Dept ID or your Supervisor ID. IF you're not using a saved Run Control ID simply click Run in the top right corner.
6. Process Scheduler Request Screen- simply click OK
7. Click on Process Monitor
8. The report you just generated will be the top one in the process list and should have a "Queued" run status, click the refresh button (may need to happen multiple times) until the run status changes to Success and the Distribution Status is Posted- then click Details
9. Click the View Log/Trace button at bottom of screen
10. Click on the report that ends with .PDF
11. Voila! UVM Work Study Award and Earnings Report

Note: earning amounts are as of the last process payroll period.

Federal Work Study Award Changes

A student's FWS award may sometimes change due to the listed reasons below. In the event that any of the listed reasons below occur, you will be notified to discuss the change in the student's award and modify their schedule accordingly (which may include immediate removal). In the event that the student has earned more than the amount that their award has been changed to, your department will be charged the overage and their record in PeopleSoft will be terminated.

Possible reasons for changes in a student's FWS award:

- Student has withdrawn from school for the current or upcoming semester
- Student has dropped classes and is now enrolled less than half-time
- Student has received an additional financial aid award which meets their financial need

- Student has been academically dismissed and financial aid has been cancelled
- Student is not meeting the university satisfactory academic progress standards for financial aid eligibility and financial aid is cancelled. Student may keep what has already been earned
- Student owes a refund to a federal grant program or is in default on a federal loan
- Student's budget has decreased resulting in decreased financial need which is met or exceeded by other awards and FWS earnings to date
- Student's expected family contribution has increased, resulting in decreased financial need which is met or exceeded by other awards and FWS earnings to date
- Student has graduated or is not eligible for second semester

Regulation Resources

[Free Application for Federal Student Aid \(FAFSA\)](#)

[Federal Student Aid: Types of Financial Aid- Federal Work Study](#)

[UVM Supervisor Terms and Conditions for Student Employment](#)