

# FEDERAL WORK-STUDY OFFSITE EMPLOYER HANDBOOK



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## Federal Work-Study Description and Contact Information

Federal Work-Study (FWS) provides part-time jobs for undergraduate and graduate students with financial need and is funded by the US Department of Education and/or employers. Positions should pair with student majors. Questions about this program should be directed to:

**Mindy Taliaferro, Federal Work-Study Coordinator**

**Direct Email:** [tmindy@vt.edu](mailto:tmindy@vt.edu)

**General Office Email:** [finaid@vt.edu](mailto:finaid@vt.edu) (students generally contact this email and student reminders are sent from this email-please ensure that this email is not screened by your IT Department)

**Telephone:** 540-231-5179 (Ask for Mindy)

## Eligibility Requirements and Checklist

### Employer Eligibility Requirements

Federal Work-Study eligibility and designation is determined by University Scholarships and Financial Aid. Here is a list of general requirements for employers:

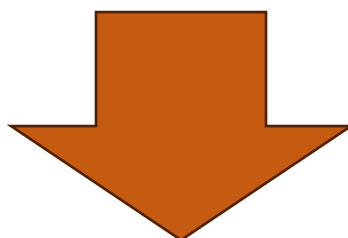
#### Employer Designations

- **Community Service** - An agency where services are designed to improve the quality of life for community residents or to solve problems related to those residents' needs.
- **America Reads** - Local elementary schools, middle schools, or a local literacy and/or math program which enables students to serve as tutors in an effort to increase literacy nationwide.
- **Non-Community Service** – Private sector employers that are generally do not meet the criteria for Community Service or America Reads Programs.

#### Required Documents

- **Federal Work-Study Agreement** - Serves as a contract outlining responsibilities or parties involved with Federal Work-Study, completed via [DocuSign](#).
- **Need Assessment Form** - Allows Virginia Tech staff to determine employer designations and how many positions to anticipate onboarding. Completed via [DocuSign](#).
- **Contacts List** – Provides contact information for agency oversight, human resources, and invoicing. Completed via [DocuSign](#).
- **Job Description** – Completed via [DocuSign](#) after above documents are satisfied.
- **Signed W-9 Form** – Needed for invoicing. Submitted via secure [uploader](#).

**Please Use the Next Page as a Checklist During Onboarding for Each Hire**



# Federal Work-Study Employer Checklist

## DocuSign Forms to Complete

- Employer Agreement
  - Contacts List
  - Need Assessment Form
  - Job Description(s)
  - W-9 Federal Tax Form
- 

## Interviewing Students

- Setup a Handshake Account, Found Here: <https://career.vt.edu/job-search/Handshake.html>
  - Post Job Positions, Select “Intern” and “Federal Work-Study” While Posting
  - Interview Candidates and Select Student Employees
  - Email Student Names and student employee email addresses to [tmindy@vt.edu](mailto:tmindy@vt.edu) for Onboarding
  - Remove Handshake Posts After Positions Fill
  - Await an Email from Our Office for a Start Date
- 

## Before Students Can Work, They Must Setup an Appointment with Our Office and:

- Sign a Code of Conduct
- Setup DocuSign
- Submit Work Authorization Documents
- Complete their I-9
- Clear a Conviction Check
- Determine Start Date

## Once Hired, Here Are Some Reminders

- Students Enter Time Worked in Timeclock Daily
  - Students and Employers Sign Timeclock Logs, Emailed Twice Each Month
  - If Students Exceed Yearly Budgets, Employers Can Hire Students as Wage Employees
  - Students Cannot Work During Class Time
  - Students Must Take a 30 Minute Unpaid Break for Every 6 Hours Worked
  - Employers Can Coach Students, Please Document and Email [tmindy@vt.edu](mailto:tmindy@vt.edu) if Any Issues Arise
  - Students Cannot Work During Federal Holidays
- 

## Begin and End Dates

- During the hiring process, students must wait for approval from University Scholarships and Financial Aid before they can start working for an offsite employer.
- Students Cannot Work Between December 19 and January 1 for Fall 2024/Spring 2025 (During Winter Break), Fall Graduates Must Stop Working December 18.
- Students Can Begin Working January 2 for Spring 2025 (After Winter Break, if Enrolled at Least Half-Time During Spring 2025).
- Students Cannot Work Past May 14 for Spring 2025 (After Spring Semester Ends)
- We Will Onboard Employers Again for 2025-2026 Starting May 2025
- Invoices Will be Emailed Monthly, Starting September and Ending the Following June

## Student Employee Eligibility Requirements

Federal Work-Study eligibility is determined by University Scholarships and Financial Aid. Here is a list of general requirements for students:

- File a relevant [FAFSA](#).
- Have sufficient remaining need. Students are not permitted to work as a Federal Work-Study employee if allocated funds run out. If funds run out, the Federal Work-Study position ends and employers may offer to hire the student and pay 100% remaining wages for the remainder of the academic year. Federal Work-Study student employees can earn up to \$6000 per year (this amount is for fall and spring combined). Enroll in at least six credits each semester in a degree-seeking program (students can only work during the fall and spring semesters).
- Meet [Satisfactory Academic Progress](#).
- Apply for position(s) through [Handshake](#).
- Complete Onboarding. Onboarding requirements are:
  - Complete I-9 through Virginia Tech's New Hire Center.
  - Pass Conviction Check, which University Scholarships and Financial Aid will request.
  - Supply Work Authorization Documents to University Scholarships and Financial Aid.
  - Review Code of Conduct with University Scholarships and Financial Aid.
  - Submit a FERPA Release to University Scholarships and Financial Aid.

## Family Educational Rights and Privacy Act (FERPA)

FERPA is a federal law designed to protect the privacy of a student's educational records. The notice is also printed on the Registrar's webpage at <https://www.registrar.vt.edu/FERPA.html>. Students will be asked to sign a FERPA Release each year so that we can discuss remaining account funds with employers.

## General Responsibilities of Employers

- Determine and create a job description for each student position in [Handshake](#).
- Discuss budget limitations with student employees. Minimum wage cannot be less than \$12 an hour. Federal Work-Study student employees can earn up to \$6000 per year (these amounts are for fall and spring combined). If students run out of funds, their position will be terminated and employers have the option to rehire the student and pay 100% of their salary. It is important to be mindful of this while determining their work schedules.
- Interview and select student applicants for positions.
- Email University Scholarships and Financial Aid (contact information is provided on page 3) and include selected students' names, email addresses, and phone numbers so that students can be onboarded.
- Do not permit students to begin working until emailed by University Scholarships and Financial Aid.
- Remove or make inactive job postings in [Handshake](#) when positions are filled.
- Review the position description with the student employee on the student's first date of work.
- After class schedules have been finalized, establish a compatible work schedule for each student. Once again, please be mindful that Federal Work-Study student employees can earn up to \$6000 per year (this amount is for fall and spring combined). Once students exhaust funds, their position will be terminated and employers have the option to hire them and pay 100% of their salary.
- On the first day of work, coordinate a group/individual orientation session with all students to establish the nature of the students' duties, expectations concerning punctuality, dress code, confidentiality of assigned work (if applicable), emergency procedures, training and compliance with time-keeping regulations, and other general responsibilities.
- Ensure detailed timesheets are approved on time each pay period (generally on the 15<sup>th</sup> and final day of each month). Timeclock entries will be provided through [DocuSign](#).
- Ensure that Retroactive Pay Forms are submitted if time worked is reported late.
- Email University Scholarships and Financial Aid regarding any student who has resigned from work. Emails should be sent to (contact information is provided on page 3).
- Ensure that students are working on their assigned tasks.
- Provide the students with feedback on their performance in a timely manner.

## Employer Onboarding and Student Hiring Procedures

### Request Program Participation and Attend Employer Onboarding

Offsite employers may reach out to University Scholarships and Financial Aid (USFA), if interested in Federal Work-Study Participation. USFA will determine eligibility and whether an employer will be designated as Community Service, America Reads, or Non-Community Service (see Employer Eligibility Requirements) during an Onboarding meeting. To contact USFA and make requests, please email [tmindy@vt.edu](mailto:tmindy@vt.edu).

## Attend Onboarding

Employers may set up an Onboarding meeting by emailing University Scholarships and Financial Aid (USFA). USFA will review general information such as designation, documents needed (please refer to Employer Eligibility Requirements), responsibilities, expectations, hire requests, etc.

## Submit Onboarding Documentation

Employers must generally provide the following documents before participating:

- **Federal Work-Study Agreement** - Serves as a contract outlining responsibilities or parties involved with Federal Work-Study, completed via [DocuSign](#).
- **Need Assessment Form** - Allows Virginia Tech staff to determine employer designations and how many positions to anticipate onboarding. Completed via [DocuSign](#).
- **Contacts List** – Provides contact information for agency oversight, human resources, and invoicing. Completed via [DocuSign](#).
- **Job Description** – Completed via [DocuSign](#) after above documents are satisfied.
- **Signed W-9 Form** – Needed for invoicing. Submitted via [DocuSign](#).

Document instructions will be emailed to employers upon conclusion of an Onboarding meeting and after an employer is approved to participate.

## Post Position(s)

Employers will create an account and post positions in [Handshake](#). A Handshake Quick Guide can be found here: <https://career.vt.edu/for-employers/post-jobs.html>. Employers should always request that a position be a Federal Work-Study (FWS) position and state “must have Federal Work-Study (FWS)” in Job Qualifications section.

A current and accurate job description is required for each student job. The job description should be maintained in office files and include the following:

- Job title.
- Name and address of student’s employer.
- Location where the student will perform their duties.
- Name of the student’s supervisor(s).
- Duties and responsibilities associated with the position and how they relate to the purpose/role.
- Relevant major that pairs with the position.
- Rate of pay for the position\*.
- Work schedule.
- Projected Employment Start Date.
- Projected Employment End Date.

\*Student wage rate depends upon several factors including what specific skills are needed to perform the job. FWS students may not be paid more or less than other student employees because they are FWS students (*Virginia Minimum Wage is \$12.00 an hour; current average pay rate at Virginia Tech is \$15.00 an hour*).

## Review Applications

Log into [Handshake](#) and review applications and other requested documents, such as resumes, cover letters, etc. thoroughly for each applicant. Compare their skills, talents and experience to the job description created for the position. Select the best applicants that meet your needs to interview.

## Interviewing and Reference Checks

Employers will interview applicants and perform reference checks. When planning for interviews, all applicants should be asked the same set of questions to ensure fairness and accuracy in the selection process. References should be checked and interview comments recorded. Human Resources has a webpage dedicated to offering interview suggestions. Found Here: <https://www.hr.vt.edu/hiring-employee-transactions/hire/resources/interview-types.html>.

## Submit Hire Selection to University Scholarships and Financial Aid and Await Approval

Email [tmindy@vt.edu](mailto:tmindy@vt.edu) once a hiring decision is made so that University Scholarships and Financial Aid (USFA) can begin the Federal Work-Study student's Onboarding process and include a requested start date, their name, and university email address. Wait for an email from our office to confirm the student's start date. USFA will follow-up via email with the student and employer once the student's Onboarding is complete.

## Offer Position(s)

Contact the student(s) you have selected to work in your office first and get confirmation that they accept the position you are offering. We recommend contacting the other candidate(s) you interviewed to let them know of the decision.

## Termination Procedures

All Federal Work-Study students are instructed to give two weeks' notice while reviewing our Code of Conduct. We understand that some students may not adhere to this guideline. Upon resignation of a Federal Work-Study Student, email University Scholarships and Financial Aid (contact information is provided on page 3) and obtain any supplies/equipment, etc. issued to them. **Employers should not immediately terminate students and should email University Scholarships and Financial Aid if there are disciplinary concerns**, so that we can first try to work with the student to correct any issues. More information pertaining to disciplinary concerns can be found under Disciplinary Actions and Procedures.

## Work Schedule Guidelines

### Permittable Work Hours

Federal Work-Study students are eligible to work up to 20 hours per week during the fall and spring semesters only. Federal Work-Study student employees can earn up to \$6000 per year (this amount is for fall and spring combined). Students are not permitted to work during winter break or summer semester. Students employed as Federal Work-Study cannot begin work until the first day of each semester and cannot work past the last day (final exam day) of each semester. Student employees should be working at least once every 30 days or Timeclock access will be turned off.



## Semester Start/End Dates

Students employed as Federal Work-Study cannot begin work until the first day of each semester and cannot work past the last day ([final exam day](#)) of each semester.

## Breaks

Students cannot work more than six hours unless they take an unpaid 30-minute break. They must clock in and out for their 30-minute break. If they take a break, for any reason, they must clock in and out via Timeclock.

## Class Time

Federal Work-Study students cannot work during class time. Should they work during class, they will not be paid during that time.

## University Closings

### Holidays

Students should not work on the following times/holidays:

- Martin Luther King Jr. Day
- During any point of summer break. Summer break starts May 15 in 2025.
- Labor Day
- Thanksgiving (they can work during Thanksgiving break, just not on Thanksgiving Day).
- During any point of winter break (December 19, 2024-January 1, 2025).

### Inclement Weather

Unless a student has a remote position, Federal Work-Study students should not work if the university closes due to inclement weather. Furthermore, students should not be working during delayed or early closings. Announcements are made on the [University Status](#) page.

## Reporting and Approving Time Worked

Students will report time worked in [Timeclock](#) Plus and should enter time as they work. In other words, they should enter Time In immediately when arriving to work or coming off any breaks and Time Out when entering breaks or before leaving work. Employers will be responsible for approving time worked at the end of each day. Unapproved time will require a Retroactive Pay Form if the pay period has already ended. Controller's Office has a webpage dedicated to [Training Tutorials](#). Student employees must be paid for all hours worked and cannot volunteer their services.

## Pay Schedules

Controller's Office will post Pay Schedules (<https://www.controller.vt.edu/resources/payroll.html>) to a dedicated Payroll webpage. Students can reference Pay Schedules to determine when they will be paid and employers can reference Pay Schedules to determine when time worked is due to be approved or if a Retroactive Pay Form must be submitted. If assistance is needed, employers may email University Scholarships and Financial Aid.

## Political Campaigning and Religious Activities

Federal Work-Study student employees cannot be involved in political campaigns. Furthermore, they cannot be involved in the construction, operating, or maintaining of any part of a building that is used for religious worship.

## Invoicing

Invoices to Community Service and Non-Community Service employers will be emailed via DocuSign once a month, during fall and spring semesters. Individuals designated as “Invoicing” during onboarding, via employer-provided Contacts List will be emailed. Due dates and payment instructions will be provided on individual invoices and in emails, employers generally have one month to settle bills.

## Disciplinary Action and Procedures

Federal Work-Study students can be dismissed or terminated from a FWS job just like any other type of employee. If the student is not meeting their responsibilities, behaving inappropriately, or having attendance issues or other troubles, a verbal warning is first recommended. The next step is a written warning to the student, then termination. Please email [tmindy@vt.edu](mailto:tmindy@vt.edu) and cc [finaid@vt.edu](mailto:finaid@vt.edu) if any issues arise so that we can work together for resolution.

## Accident Reporting and Safety in the Workplace

In the event of an emergency, Federal Work-Study Students should immediately call 911. Employers are responsible for reviewing their emergency procedures on the student’s first day of work. If an accident occurs, please email [tmindy@vt.edu](mailto:tmindy@vt.edu) and cc [finaid@vt.edu](mailto:finaid@vt.edu) so that our office can initiate a claim.

## Title IX Incidents (Sexual Harassment and Violence)

All employees that work for Virginia Tech’s University Scholarship and Financial Aid (USFA) Office are required to report any known incidents that fall under Title IX to Virginia Tech’s Title IX Office. This means that if incidents are discussed with USFA staff, regardless of if a student or employer contacts our office and no matter where an incident takes place, incidents will be reported. There are no exceptions.

If a student reports that they have experienced sexual harassment and/or violence, here are some resources that are available:

- CARES Program (Campus Advocacy, Resources and Education for Survivors): 540-231-7806 | [CARESupport@vt.edu](mailto:CARESupport@vt.edu) | [womenscenter.vt.edu/advocacy](http://womenscenter.vt.edu/advocacy)
- Cook Counseling Center: 540-231-6557 | [ucc.vt.edu](http://ucc.vt.edu)
- Women's Resource Center of the NRV: 24/7 Crisis Hotline 540-639-1123 | [wrcnr.org](http://wrcnr.vt.edu)
- Title IX Coordinator Katie Polidoro: 540-231-1824 | [polidoro@vt.edu](mailto:polidoro@vt.edu) | [safe.vt.edu](http://safe.vt.edu)
- Dean of Students Office: 540-231-3787 | [dean.students@vt.edu](mailto:dean.students@vt.edu) | [dos.vt.edu](http://dos.vt.edu)
- Virginia Tech Police Department: 540-382-6411 | [vtpolice@vt.edu](mailto:vtpolice@vt.edu) | [police.vt.edu](http://police.vt.edu)

## Disability and Reasonable Accommodations

The Americans with Disabilities Act (ADA) prohibits employees with disabilities from being discriminated against. An employee with a disability is defined as a person who has a physical or mental impairment that substantially limits one or more major life; has a record of such an impairment; or is regarded as

having such an impairment. If an employee qualifies as disabled as defined by the ADA, the employee is entitled to a reasonable accommodation to facilitate employment, so as long as they can perform the essential functions of the job that they are being hired to do. To initiate a collaboration, please email [tmindy@vt.edu](mailto:tmindy@vt.edu) and cc [finaid@vt.edu](mailto:finaid@vt.edu) so that our office can reach out to Office for Equity and Accessibility.

## Tips for Federal Work-Study Student Success

**Communicate and set clear expectations.** Communicate the job standards, responsibility, and expectations to your student employees clearly, precisely and on day one of their job.

**Explain the mission and purpose of your site.** Relate the student's responsibilities with the mission, purpose and/or goals of the organization.

**Share goals and vision.** Invite student employees to regular staff meetings and allow for input. Encourage them to become part of the team.

**Supervise.** Specify who the student should report to for daily tasks/assignments or priority projects.

**Emphasize attendance and punctuality.** Be sure to specify how many times can a student be absent or tardy without jeopardizing their position.

**Train, train, train.** Take time to train students in other skills other than what is specifically listed in their job description such as time management, phone skills, quality customer service skills, general work habits and most certainly how to deal with difficult situations.

**Address physical appearance.** Review the workplace dress code.

**Reinforce positive attitude.** Discuss attitude expectations and how to handle stressful situations.

**Maintain confidentiality.** Specify if the student has access to confidential information. Explain the confidentiality policy pertaining to how the information should be handled.

**Educate.** Determine how you and your organization can contribute to the education of your student.

**Provide recognition.** Acknowledge student's accomplishments whether privately or in front of peers or staff.

**Be fair and consistent.** Do not be too lenient. Campus jobs are substantive work experiences. Treat student employees as you would any other employees in a given situation.

**Provide plenty of feedback.** Provide consistent and appropriate feedback to student employees on a regular basis and provide it with a positive spirit when possible.

**Be flexible.** It is important to be flexible to accommodate their academic obligations.

**Be an example.** Remember they will watch and listen, so your daily approach to work will be a perfect example from which student employees can learn and model.