

FEDERAL WORK-STUDY EMPLOYER HANDBOOK (ON-CAMPUS) 2025-2026



Virginia Tech
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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. Questions about this program should be directed to:

Elissa Waybright, Assistant Director of Federal Work-Study and Compliance

Direct Email: ewaybrig@vt.edu

General Office Email: finaid@vt.edu (Students use this e-mail address to contact our office.

Student reminders are also sent from this email so please ensure that this email is not screened by your IT Department.)

Telephone: 540-231-5179 (Ask for Elissa)

Eligibility Requirements and Checklist

Employer Eligibility Requirements

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

Employer Designations

- **On-Campus** – Any other department or organization on Virginia Tech’s campus. On-campus departments and organizations receive a FWS wage split of 75% federal share/25% non-federal share; **USFA will cover 75% of the wages for a FWS student working for an on-campus agency.**
- **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. “Community” is not defined as the Virginia Tech community, but the greater community of Blacksburg, Montgomery County, the surrounding localities, and/or New River Valley. This designation receives a FWS wage split of **80% federal share/20% non-federal share**; USFA will cover 80% of the wages for a FWS student working in a community service position. **USFA must confirm/approve all community service designations. Please contact ewaybrig@vt.edu for approval.**

iGROW@VirginiaTech
Guided Reflection On Work

It is **strongly recommended** that campus partners wishing to be FWS employers participate in [iGROW @ Virginia Tech](#), a program offered by Virginia Tech Career and Professional Development. The iGROW program supports guided reflection on work for Virginia Tech employees, including faculty, staff, and graduate assistants, who supervise both undergraduate and graduate students. **Worried about the time investment?** Only a one-hour information session and four 15-minute meetings (per semester) with each student worker is required!

Please Use the Next Page as a Checklist During the Hiring Process



Federal Work-Study Employer Checklist

FWS Employer Walk-in Hours

Available every Thursday from 9:00 AM to 10:00 AM for current and prospective FWS employers.

Employer Resources

- [Handshake Guide for Virginia Tech Departments](#)
- [iGROW @ Virginia Tech](#)
- [Procedure 23820: Timekeeping System](#)
- [Banner Time Entry \(BTE\) Resources](#)
- [TimeClock Plus \(TCP\) Resources](#)
- [RJASEAR Access Request](#)

Hiring and Interviewing Students

- ☐ Setup a Handshake account, using information found [here](#).
- ☐ Post job positions. Check the “Work-Study” box while posting. This ensures that only FWS students can see your posting. If you want all students to see your posting, please add “FWS eligible” in the title and description.
- ☐ Confirm candidate FWS eligibility on Banner screen “RJASEAR” (real-time information). Request access [here](#).
- ☐ Interview candidates.
- ☐ Select the best candidate(s).
- ☐ [Close the job posting](#) (in Handshake) after a position is filled.
- ☐ Enter the employee and position into Banner.
- ☐ Contact ewaybrig@vt.edu to approve the position in Banner.

Important Reminders

- **Students must take a 30-minute unpaid break for every six hours worked.**
- Students cannot work during Federal holidays.
- If students exceed their yearly award, employers can hire (and pay) students as wage employees.
- Students cannot work during class time.
- Employers can coach students. Please document and e-mail ewaybrig@vt.edu if any issues arise.

Time Worked

- ☐ **Enter Time Daily:** Students must enter time worked in your department’s respective system: [Banner Time Entry \(BTE\) Resources](#) or [TimeClock Plus \(TCP\)](#).
- ☐ **Approve Time Weekly:** Supervisors must review and approve time worked each week.
- ☐ **Run FWS Balance Report After Each Pay Period Processes.** This process runs about a full pay period behind. Supervisors must keep track of how many hours the student has left to work/how much money the student has left to earn.
- ☐ **Wage Payroll Schedules:** Includes export dates. The schedule for the next fiscal year is usually released in December.

Important Dates (2025-2026)

- ☐ **July 1, 2025:** [Handshake](#) opens for students.
- ☐ **August 17, 2025:** First possible day to work for FWS (Fall 2025). Students must be enrolled at least half-time (UG: at least six credits; GR: at least five credits) for the Fall term.
- ☐ **August 29, 2025:** Campus Student Employment Fair. A career fair hosted by USFA and Career and Professional Development to connect on-campus employers with student workers. Register for the fair in [Handshake](#).
- ☐ **September 30, 2025:** Students must secure a FWS position by this date to guarantee FWS funding.
- ☐ **December 17, 2025:** Last possible day to work for FWS (Fall 2024).
- ☐ **January 2, 2026:** First possible day to work for FWS (Spring 2025). Students must be enrolled at least half-time (UG: at least six credits; GR: at least five credits) for the Spring term.
- ☐ **January 31, 2026:** Students must secure a FWS position by this date to guarantee FWS funding (Spring-only award).
- ☐ **May 13, 2026:** Last possible day to work for FWS for 2025-26/Spring 2026).
- ☐ **May 31, 2026:** Deadline to job-end FWS positions.

Student Employee Eligibility Requirements

Federal Work-Study (FWS) eligibility is determined by University Scholarships and Financial Aid (USFA). 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).
- **2025-2026 FWS award amounts are as follows:**
 - First-time FWS recipients: \$5,000 maximum award (for the year).
 - Returning FWS recipients: \$6,000 maximum award (for the year).
- Meet [Satisfactory Academic Progress](#).
- Apply for position(s) through [Handshake](#).
- Complete Onboarding through the Virginia Tech Human Resources New Hire Center. Human Resources will send a link to employee via e-mail.

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

- Meet with USFA staff during FWS walk-in hours (walk-in hours are every Thursday 9am-10am) to discuss any questions you may have about the FWS process.
- Determine and create a job description for each student position in [Handshake](#).
- Discuss budget limitations with student employees. Minimum wage cannot be less than \$12.41 per hour as of January 2025 (the State of Virginia minimum wage requirement). Federal Work-Study student employees can earn up to \$6,000 per year (these amounts are for fall and spring combined); awards vary per student. 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 or else you may have to complete a labor redistribution if the student works over their allocated award.
- Interview and select student applicants for positions.
- E-mail USFA (contact information is provided on page 3) and include the selected student name(s), email address(es), and phone number(s) so that the position(s) can be approved.
- Do not permit students to begin working until all positions are approved by USFA and the student completes on-boarding.
- Remove or inactivate 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 \$6,000 per year** (this amount is for fall and spring combined); **the award amount can vary per student**. 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 15th and final day of each month).
- Ensure that Retroactive Pay Forms are submitted if time worked is reported late.
- E-mail USFA regarding any student who has resigned from work. E-mails should be sent to ewaybrig@vt.edu.
- 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

On-campus employers may reach out to USFA if interested in Federal Work-Study (FWS) participation. USFA will determine eligibility and whether an on-campus employer will be designated as Community Service (see Employer Eligibility Requirements) during an Onboarding meeting. To contact USFA and make requests, please email ewaybrig@vt.edu.

Attend Onboarding

Employers may set up an Onboarding meeting by emailing ewaybrig@vt.edu. USFA will review general information such as designation, responsibilities, expectations, Banner set-up, etc.

Post Position(s)

Employers will create an account and post positions in [Handshake](#). 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. Employers will also need to check the “Work-Study” box in order for only FWS-eligible students to see the job posting.

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 \$12.41 per hour; current average pay rate at Virginia Tech is \$15.00 per 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 ewaybrig@vt.edu once a hiring decision is made so that University Scholarships and Financial Aid (USFA) can approve the position in Banner.

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.

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 maintenance of any part of a building that is used for religious worship.

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 ewaybrig@vt.edu 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 \$6,000 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 for until a specified date and cannot work past the final exam day of each semester. Please see the supervisor checklist for more details.

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 14, 2026.
- Labor Day
- Thanksgiving Day
- During a portion of winter break (December 18, 2025-January 1, 2026).

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 either Banner Time Entry (BTE) or TimeClock Plus (TCP); Payroll notifies each department/office on which system is to be used. Students should enter time as they work. In other words, they should enter Time In immediately when arriving at 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 for both platforms. Student employees must be paid for all hours worked and cannot volunteer their services.

Pay Schedules

Controller's Office will post Wage Schedules (<https://www.controller.vt.edu/payroll.html#select=1>) 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. The Controller's Office

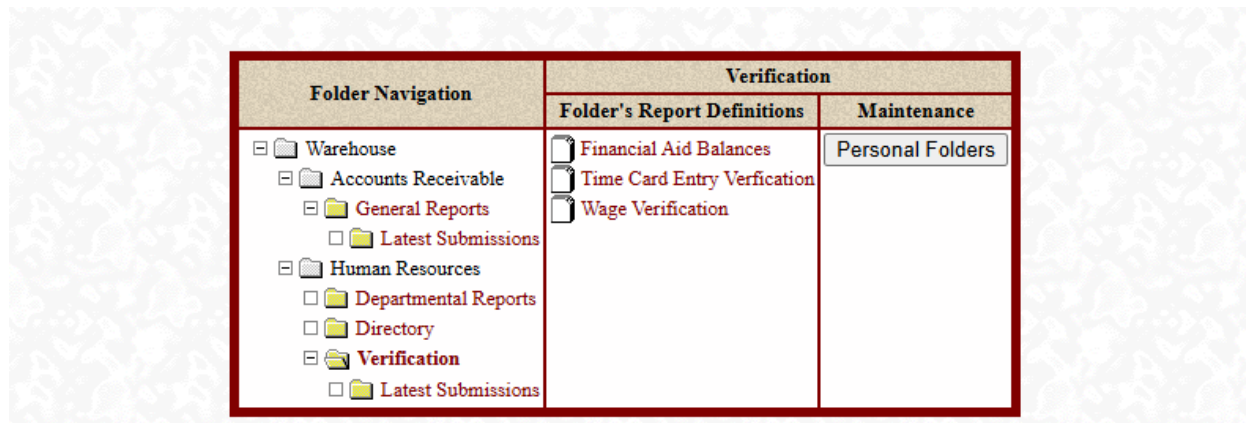
Federal Work-Study Award Maintenance

Reviewing FWS Award Balances

From the Controller's Office [Timekeeping System \(Procedure 23820\)](#): Departments should run The Work Study Balance from Legacy web reports, to check the balance of all work-study employee awards **after each pay period processes**. If their balance is low, the department should follow the student wage hiring process and Banner enterer procedure to establish a student wage position to pay hours that exceed the balance to ensure the employee is paid timely.

To run The Work-Study Balance report:

- Go to <https://www.controller.vt.edu/>
- Scroll down to “General Accounting” and click “Legacy Web Reports”
 - Use your Oracle password to log-in
- Under the “Human Resources” folder, you’ll find the “Verification” folder. Click on “Financial Aid Balances”



- Enter your organization code(s) as requested
- Select Sort Order as needed
- Click Submit

This report will itemize students and show their position, remaining balance, pay rate, and hours available. The “Financial Aid Balance” is their remaining FWS award amount. It is the total amount of money you get by multiplying the “Pay Rate” by the “Hours Available.” It also denotes if a student has an active FWS position in another department and if the student’s FWS balance is \$0.

This report only includes information up through the last processed pay period.

Best practice: Discuss the student’s future (employment) with the department when their remaining balance is ~\$1,000. This threshold gives all parties enough time to plan a student’s FWS off-boarding since the payroll process runs about a full pay period behind; no one wants the student to be terminated effective immediately. Students are also instructed to start this conversation at the ~\$1,000 threshold with employers via messaging in HokieSPA.

Labor Redistributions

It is important for a supervisor to keep track of time worked by a student so that the student does not exceed their FWS award. If the student's paid amount is more than their FWS award, a labor redistribution must be completed, and the employer must cover 100% of the overage. If a supervisor allows a student to earn over their FWS award, a labor redistribution will need to be initiated by the Controller's Office and not by the employing department. **This process has changed** due to limitations with updating the account code from 11460 (FWS) to 11440 (regular student wage) in the LR system; **Payroll must initiate a Labor Redistribution (LR) on the department's behalf. USFA will notify the student's supervisor if an overpayment has occurred and copy the LR team (laborredist@vt.edu).**

The only actions required by the department to help in resolving the overpayment:

- Set up a regular student wage position in Banner for the student to record time with going forward if you can continue employing them. It's best practice to set up the mirroring regular student wage position at the time of the student's original hire so it is ready for use when the student exhausts their FWS funds.
- Approve the LR that is initiated by Payroll on the department's behalf when it is ready.

More information about labor redistributions can be found on the Controller's website here:

<https://www.controller.vt.edu/resources/payroll/laborredistributions.html>

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 ewaybrig@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 ewaybrig@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 | womenscenter.vt.edu/advocacy
- Cook Counseling Center: 540-231-6557 | ucc.vt.edu

- Women's Resource Center of the NRV: 24/7 Crisis Hotline 540-639-1123 | wrcnrv.org
- Title IX Coordinator Katie Polidoro: 540-231-1824 | polidoro@vt.edu | safe.vt.edu
- Dean of Students Office: 540-231-3787 | dean.students@vt.edu | dos.vt.edu
- Virginia Tech Police Department: 540-231-6411 | vtpolice@vt.edu | 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 ewaybrig@vt.edu so that our office can reach out to Office for Equity and Accessibility.

Tips to Ensure 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 the 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.

Want to take the FWS employment experience to the next level? Career and Professional Development have two complimentary programs that can support on-campus FWS employers: [iGROW @ Virginia Tech](#) (participation in iGROW is strongly recommended for FWS supervisors) and [Campus internEXP](#).