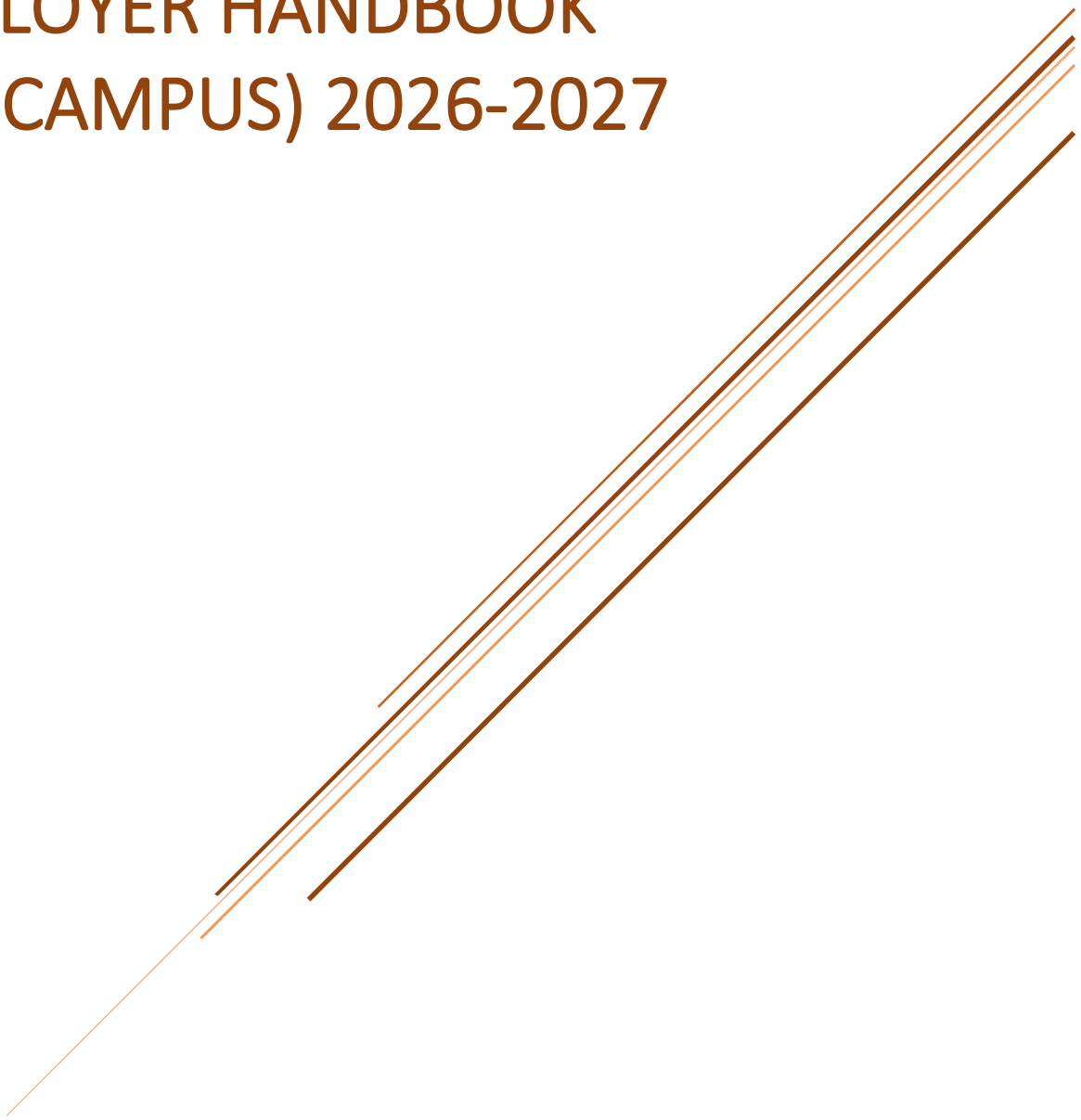
FEDERAL WORK-STUDY EMPLOYER HANDBOOK (ON-CAMPUS) 2026-2027



Virginia Tech
May 2026

Table of Contents

Federal Work-Study Program Information and Student Eligibility Requirements 2

Federal Work-Study Program Information 2

Student Employee Eligibility Requirements 2

Employer Eligibility Requirements and Checklist 2

(NEW AND IMPORTANT) Employer Eligibility Requirements 2

Best Practices 5

Hiring and On-boarding 5

Administrative 5

Developing the Student Worker 6

Employer Onboarding and Student Hiring Procedures 6

Hiring with Handshake 6

Political Campaigning and Religious Activities 7

Review Applications 7

Confirm Federal Work-Study Eligibility 7

Interviewing and Reference Checks 8

Offer Position(s) 8

Work Schedule Guidelines 8

Permittable Work Hours 8

Semester Start/End Dates 8

Breaks 8

Class Time 8

University Closings 9

Holidays 9

Inclement Weather 9

Reporting and Approving Time Worked 9

Pay Schedules 9

Federal Work-Study Award Maintenance 9

Tracking FWS Award Balances 9

Labor Redistributions 10

Disciplinary Action and Procedures 11

Accident Reporting and Safety in the Workplace 11

Title IX Incidents (Sexual Harassment and Violence) 11

Disability and Reasonable Accommodations 11

Federal Work-Study Program Information and Student Eligibility Requirements

Federal Work-Study Program 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. On-campus agencies receive a FWS wage split of 75% federal share/25% non-federal share; **the Office of University Scholarships and Financial Aid (USFA) will cover 75% of the wages for a FWS student working for an on-campus agency.** Questions about this program, including those regarding a possible community service designation (80/20 split), 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 (Student communications are also sent from this email so please ensure this address is not screened by your IT Department.)
> Telephone: 540-231-5179 (Ask for Elissa)

Student Employee Eligibility Requirements

Not all students qualify for Federal Work-Study (FWS). A student's FWS eligibility is determined by University Scholarships and Financial Aid (USFA). Eligible students will be offered FWS as part of their financial aid package so it is not something they apply for. Please confirm a student's FWS eligibility on Banner screen "RJASEAR;" instructions can be found here. Below are some of the current eligibility requirements:

- 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 $6,000 per year (this amount is for fall and spring combined). Students must be enrolled at least half-time each semester in a degree-seeking program (students can only work during the fall and spring semesters).
- **2026-2027 FWS award amounts are as follows:**
  - FWS recipients: $5,000 maximum award (for the year).
  - FWS recipients who secure a position with a community service designation: $6,000 maximum award (for the year). Our office will increase the award once we receive notification that the student has been hired.
- Meet Satisfactory Academic Progress.
- Must have a campus code of "0" (Blacksburg).

Employer Eligibility Requirements and Checklist

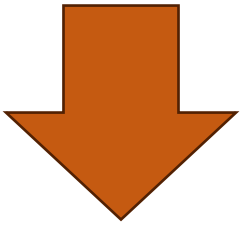
(NEW AND IMPORTANT) Employer Eligibility Requirements

Beginning with the 2026-2027 academic year, departments wishing to participate in the FWS program must complete and submit an On-Campus Employer Agreement before receiving FWS funding for the year.

Departments must submit the agreement using the Microsoft Form here; e-mail attachments or mailed forms will not be accepted.

It is <u>strongly recommended</u> 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 Student Employment Life Cycle



***NEW* FWS Employer Agreement is REQUIRED**

Departments must complete and submit an On-Campus Employer Agreement to secure FWS funding for the 2026-2027 academic year.

Employer Agreement Dates and Deadlines:

☐ **June 15, 2026:** Priority submission date for On-Campus Employer Agreement.

☐ **July 15, 2026:** Submission deadline for On-Campus Employer Agreement to guarantee funding.

☐ **September 30, 2026:** On-Campus Employer Agreement "last call" submission deadline; submissions after this date will not be accepted.

FWS Employer Walk-in Hours

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

Employer Resources

- HR Banner Enterer Guide
- iGROW @ Virginia Tech
- Procedure 23820: Timekeeping System
- Banner Time Entry (BTE) Resources

Hiring and Interviewing Students

☐ Set up a Handshake account using the Handshake Guide for Virginia Tech Departments.

☐ Post job positions in Handshake. Check the "Work-Study" box to only advertise to FWS students. Please add "FWS eligible" of "Federal Work-Study eligible" in the title and description.

☐ Confirm the candidate's FWS eligibility on Banner screen "RJASEAR" (real-time information). Request "RJASEAR" view access here.

☐ Interview candidates.

☐ Re-confirm a candidate's FWS eligibility in "RJASEAR."

☐ Select the best candidate(s).

☐ Close the job posting (in Handshake) after a position is filled.

☐ Enter the employee and position into Banner.

Important Reminders

- **Students must take a 30-minute unpaid break for every six hours worked.**
- Students cannot work during Federal holidays.
- Employers can hire (and pay) students as wage employees once their award is exhausted.
- Students cannot work during class time.

Time Worked

☐ **Enter Time Daily:** Students must enter time worked in Banner Time Entry.

☐ **Approve Time Weekly:** Supervisors must review and approve time worked each week. Check the wage payroll schedule for approval deadlines. The schedule for the next fiscal year is usually released in December.

☐ **Run the FWS Balance Report after each pay period processes** as departments must keep track of how many hours the student has left to work/how much money the student has left to earn.

Important Dates (2026-2027)

☐ **July 1, 2026:** Handshake opens for students.

☐ **August 17, 2026:** First possible day to work for FWS (Fall 2026). **Students must be enrolled at least half-time** (UG: at least six credits; GR: at least five credits) for the Fall term.

☐ **August 31, 2026:** Campus Student Employment Fair. Connecting on-campus employers with student workers. Register for the fair in Handshake.

☐ **September 30, 2026:** Students must secure a FWS position by this date to guarantee their FWS funding (Fall-only and Fall/Spring awards).

☐ **October 7, 2026:** Deadline to enter FWS positions into Banner. Students who have FWS on their account, but no FWS position in Banner by this deadline will have their award canceled.

☐ **December 16, 2026:** Last possible day to work for FWS (Fall 2026).

☐ **January 2, 2027:** First possible day to work for FWS (Spring 2027). **Students must be enrolled at least half-time** (UG: at least six credits; GR: at least five credits) for the Spring term.

☐ **January 31, 2027:** Students must secure a FWS position by this date to guarantee FWS funding (Spring-only award).

☐ **Spring 2027 (Date TBD):** Campus Student Employment Fair connecting on-campus employers with student workers. Register for the fair in Handshake.

☐ **Spring 2027:** HR IT will job-end any remaining "active" FWS positions with a 5/12/27.

☐ **May 12, 2027:** Last possible day to work for FWS for 2026-27/Spring 2027).

☐ **June 2027:** Final deadline to submit P10s for award overages to Payroll (2026-2027).

Best Practices

The best practices below are meant to be used to support the employer responsibilities as outlined in the On-Campus Employer Agreement.

Hiring and On-boarding

- Wages
  - FWS students cannot be less than $12.77 per hour as of January 1, 2026 (the State of Virginia's minimum wage requirement). Any updates to minimum wage will be announced by Virginia Department of Labor and Industry (DOLI) and by VT Human Resources.
  - Determine the position's hourly wage by using the Virginia Tech Student Wage Pay Structure chart.
- Handshake
  - Make sure positions are posted in Handshake by the end of June so they are available when Handshake opens for students on July 1.
  - Remove or inactivate job postings in Handshake when positions are filled.
- On-boarding
  - Be transparent with the student about what must happen when the student exhausts their FWS award (continue working as regular student wage or off-boarded).
    - Enter a corresponding non-FWS student wage position in Banner to have hours moved to should the student earn more than their award.
  - Do not permit students to begin working until all the student completes their New Hire Packet including Part Two of Form I-9.
  - After class schedules have been finalized, establish a compatible work schedule for each student.
  - On the first day of work, review the job description with the student and mention what success looks like for this position. Also discuss expectations concerning punctuality, dress code, confidentiality of assigned work (if applicable), emergency procedures, training and compliance with time-keeping regulations, and other general responsibilities.

Administrative

- Contact a University Scholarships and Financial Aid (USFA) if any questions arise. Individual support is available via meetings via Zoom and in-person as well as during FWS walk-in hours (walk-in hours are every Thursday 9am-10am).
- Ensure accurate timesheets are submitted and approved in a timely manner for each pay period. Deadlines can be found on the wage payroll schedule.
- Complete and submit a P10 form to resolve an overpayment of FWS funds by the next Labor Redistribution (LR) cutoff date as listed on the Labor Redistribution Processing Calendar.

Developing the Student Worker

The purpose of FWS jobs is to help our students gain valuable work experience, not only by learning specific skills, but also by helping them become strong, contributing members of the workforce.

- **Communicate and set clear expectations.** Communicate the job standards, responsibility, and expectations to your student employees clearly and precisely from the beginning. This includes having a transparent conversation about whether you'd like the working relationship to continue.
- **Explain the mission and purpose of your work.** 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.
- **Emphasize attendance and punctuality.** Be sure to specify your tardy and absence policies.
- **Train, train, train.** Take time to train students in other skills other than what is specifically listed in their job description such as soft skills.
- **Reinforce positive attitude.** Discuss attitude expectations and how to handle stressful situations.
- **Educate.** Determine how you and your organization can contribute to the education of your student.
- **Be fair and consistent.** 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. Also provide recognition when it is earned.
- **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 and students: iGROW @ Virginia Tech (participation is strongly recommended for FWS supervisors) and Campus internEXP.

Employer Onboarding and Student Hiring Procedures

Hiring with Handshake

Employers must create an account and post positions using Handshake (Handshake resources for faculty and staff can be found here). Employers should always include "Federal Work-Study," "FWS" or "work-study" in the Job Qualifications section. Employers only wishing to advertise to FWS students need to check the "Work-Study" box when prompted.

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. Visit the VT Student Wage Pay Structure for more details. FWS students must not be paid more or less than other student employees because they are FWS students, nor can they replace full-time employees.

Political Campaigning and Religious Activities

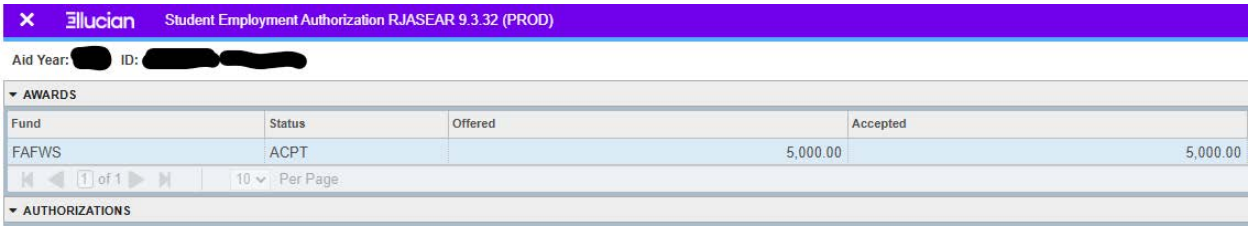
Federal Work-Study student employees **cannot** be involved in political campaigns. Furthermore, they cannot be involved in the construction, operating, or maintenance of any part of a building that is used for religious worship.

Review Applications

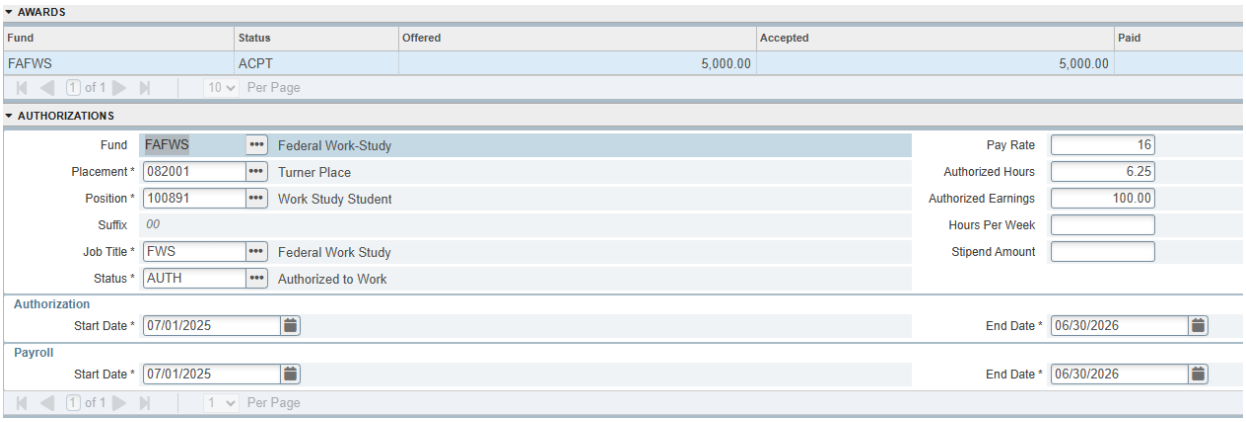
Log into Handshake and review applications and other requested documents, such as resumes, cover letters, etc. thoroughly for each applicant. Compare their skills, talents and experience to the job description created for the position. Select the best applicants that meet your needs to interview.

Confirm Federal Work-Study Eligibility

Navigate to Banner screen "RJASEAR" to confirm a student's FWS eligibility in real-time. If a student has FWS, Fund "FAFWS" will be shown under "Awards," and its status will be listed as "OFRD" (offered) or "ACPT" (accepted) as shown below. If the student's award is showing in "OFRD" status, please instruct them to accept it immediately. **Please confirm eligibility right before extending an offer to the student as it is subject to change.**



If the student already has an "active" FWS position, a record will show under "Authorizations" (pictured below). Please note that even if there is a record listed, they still may not have earned any FWS funds for the year; the "Paid" and "Remaining" fields can show what amount of their award is left as of the last processed pay period.



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 that can be found here: https://www.hr.vt.edu/hiring-employee-transactions/hire/resources/interview-types.html.

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.

Work Schedule Guidelines

Permittable Work Hours

Federal Work-Study students are eligible to work up to 20 hours per week (best practice) during the fall and spring semesters only. Students are not permitted to work during winter break or summer. Please see the checklist included in this handbook for the exact dates.

Semester Start/End Dates

Students employed as Federal Work-Study cannot begin work until a specified date and cannot work past the final exam day of each semester. Please refer to the 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. If a student gets out of class early or their class is canceled, the employer must keep documentation of those situations in the event that the student works during their normal class time.

University Closings

Holidays

Students should not work on the following times/holidays:

- Martin Luther King Jr. Day
- During any point of summer break
- Labor Day
- Thanksgiving Day
- During a portion of winter break

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 Banner Time Entry (BTE) and 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. **Student employees must be paid for all hours worked and cannot volunteer their services.**

Pay Schedules

Students and employers can reference the wage payroll schedule to determine when timesheet submission deadlines, approval deadlines, pay dates, etc. If assistance is needed, individuals may contact the Payroll Office at timekeeping@vt.edu.

Federal Work-Study Award Maintenance

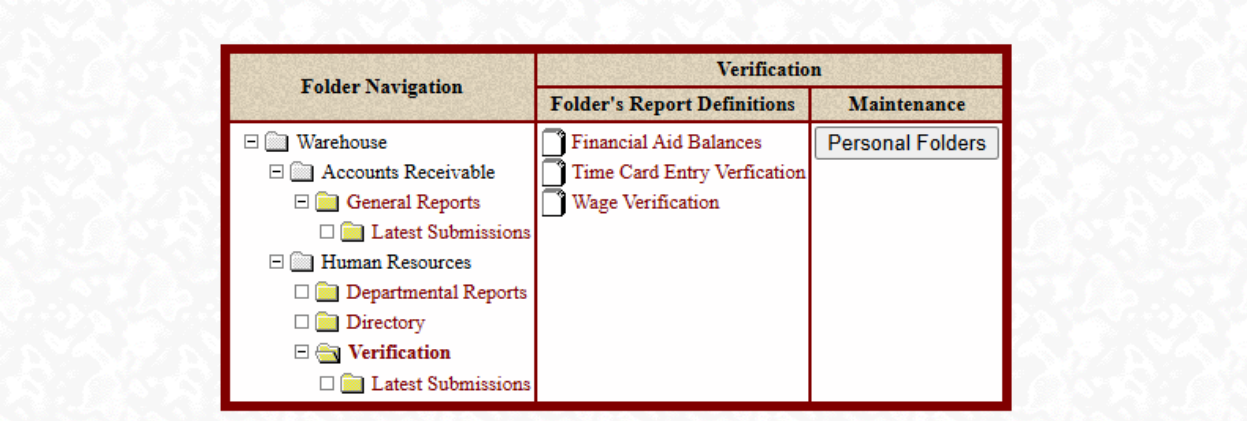
Tracking FWS Award Balances

From the Controller's 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. This would also include "terming" or "job ending" the student's FWS position so it is no longer clockable.

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 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 My Virginia Tech.

Labor Redistributions

As previously mentioned, 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, the employer must cover 100% of the overage.**

If an overage occurs, do not initiate a labor redistribution in the Labor Redistribution (LR) System! Due to limitations with updating the account code from 11460 (FWS) to 11440 (regular student wage) in the LR system, it will not be correct if departments try to initiate an LR themselves.

Instead, resolve the overage by following the steps below:

- “Term”/job-end the FWS position.
- Establish a regular student wage position so hours can be recorded correctly or hours moved from the work study position for the current pay period, if one has not already been established.
- Instruct the student above to start recording time on the new position instead, immediately.
- Complete a P-10 Form and then submit it to Payroll’s dropbox, here. By the next LR cut off date listed on the Labor Redistribution Processing Calendar.

- Move any hours recorded on the FWS position during the current pay period to the non-FWS position using PHAHOUR.
- Approve the funding change that is initiated by Payroll on your behalf when it appears in your approval queue.
- Contact laborredist@vt.edu with any questions related to this process.

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 whether 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 l 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 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 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.