

WORK STUDY
PROGRAM GUIDE



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Introduction

The Federal Work-Study (FWS) Program--- formerly called the College Work-Study (CWS) Program—provides part-time employment to undergraduate and graduate students who must earn a part of their educational expenses in order to continue and/or complete their academic goals.

The Federal Work Study Program (FWS) is a government subsidized student employment program designed to assist students in financing their post secondary education. In order to be eligible for Work-Study, students must document financial need every year by completing the Free Application for Federal Student Aid (FAFSA).

The program encourages community service work and work related to each student's course of study. Not all students with financial need are guaranteed to receive work-study. Students are generally awarded work-study based on availability of funding, on a first-come, first-serve basis to students enrolled at least six hours and who demonstrate financial need.

Work-Study gives the student a right to “earn as he or she learns.” Individuals on the work-study program are paid on a monthly basis for hours worked. Students can work up to 20 hours and earn \$6.75 an hour.

Compliance

Since the Federal Work-Study Program is federal/state funded, compliance with each program regulation is essential for continuation of the program at Lamar University. ***Compliance is the responsibility of all members of the campus community, so it is important to become familiar with the requirements listed herein.*** It takes everyone's cooperation and understanding to develop and carry out a successful FWS Program. Failure to comply with all federal/state regulations could result in the loss of, or reduction of federal/state financial aid funds provided to the university and off-campus employer participation.

Program Eligibility

Since work-study is a form of federal/state financial aid, a student must complete a need analysis application (FAFSA) and exhibit need in order for Federal Work-Study (FWS) to be awarded. FWS is frequently awarded in conjunction with other types of financial aid in a “package”. This package may consist of various types of aid such as grants, loans, and/or scholarships.

Applicants for the work-study program must be admitted to the university as regular student during the semester of employment. The student must be enrolled for a minimum of six (6) credit hours and be in good standing as determined by the Office of Student Financial Aid. Students are reviewed for academic progress at the end of each semester.

Enrollment is continuously monitored and verified by the Work-Study Office each semester. Once the student ceases to maintain the minimum enrollment hours required, employment will immediately be terminated and the FWS award will be null and void.

In a nutshell the following criteria establish a student's eligibility for FWS at Lamar:

- A student must show documented financial need every year by completing the *Free Application for Federal Student Aid (FAFSA)*. Need is determined by an analysis of financial resources available to the student.
- A student must be awarded Federal Work Study and accept that award on SIS.
- A student must meet Satisfactory Academic Progress Policy Standards as set by the Office of Financial Aid.

Community Service

Community Service Work-Study is a federally-funded program that allows students to earn their Work-Study award while serving the community in such areas as education, recreation, health care, public safety, social services, crime prevention, and tutoring and mentoring.

Community Service positions benefit the student as well as the community by increasing awareness of community needs through employment in areas that are dedicated to improving the quality of life for community residents--particularly low-income individuals--or to solve problems related to their needs.

Community Service is much more than a definition. . . It's the satisfaction a student gets from knowing that through their time and efforts, they've helped to make their corner of the world a better place to live in.

Amount of Award

The Department of Student Financial Aid will determine the student's Work-Study Award. The award represents the total gross dollar amount a student may earn during the award period. (Ex: Student awarded \$1000; the student's gross earnings may not exceed \$1000) Award amounts are dependent upon each student's financial need and available funding. Depending upon the student's award, work schedule and rate of pay, the student may or may not earn his/her entire award.

Once awarded, each student will receive a notification on SIS Online under the tab Financial Aid- Accept Awards. The award will indicate the total dollar amount awarded

for FWS each semester. The student must accept the Work-Study Award in order for the award to be activated. If the student exceeds his/her award for the entire academic year the department/organization will be held responsible for amounts over the award limit.

Tracking of Award

The tracking of the award is the responsibility of the student, department/employer, and the Financial Aid Office. As a courtesy to both the student and the employer a financial aid representative will call departments when balances appear low.

Award Revision

Students should be aware that their limits may be decreased during the academic year if unanticipated resources (e.g., scholarships, additional grants, and loans) affect their aid packages. It is the student's responsibility to periodically check their award balance and notify their employers if the amount changes. Students should note that if a change in the financial aid package is necessary, it may be possible to decrease the loan amount instead of the earnings limit. If interested in the possibility, students should contact a financial aid representative for further information.

A student is never allowed to earn more than the amount of the FWS award!
**The Work-Study Office will not reimburse a department
for hours paid in excess of the award.**

Award Periods

The award period is the period during which students may earn their FWS award. Award periods (also known as employment dates) for 2006-2007 are as follows:

Sum 1 2006
Sum 2 2006
Fall 2006
Spring 2007

Salary

Students employed on campus under the FWS Program are never paid a salary, commission, or fee basis (this includes variable pay rates of any kind). They are paid instead on an hourly basis for their *actual time spent on the job*. Currently all jobs pay \$6.75/hr.

Employees are **NOT** eligible to receive Federal Work-Study funds for hours worked:

1. in excess of the students FWS award;
2. prior to the start date or after the end of the Award Period;
3. beyond 8 hours per 24-hr period;
4. beyond 20 hours per week.

Work Hours Per Week

Total work hours per week are contingent upon the amount awarded. During the Fall/Spring semester, a student may not work in excess of twenty (20) hours per week in any week that classes are scheduled, including final examination week. An exception to the twenty (20) hours per week schedule is between semesters. At this time a student may work up to forty (40) hours per week contingent upon the amount of the award remaining. Currently students work an average of twelve (12) to eighteen (18) hours per week.

Work Schedule

Prior to employment, the supervisor and the student will determine an agreeable work schedule. The student should make a copy of their class schedule available to their supervisor. It is the responsibility of the student to notify the supervisor if he/she is unable to meet the agreed work schedule. This notification must be made either prior to the intended absence or as soon as physically possible if the absence is unexpected. If the student has academic problems during the semester that may affect his/her work schedule, the student must notify his/her supervisor so hours may be changed or arranged accordingly. It is ultimately the supervisor who establishes the work schedule and determines any changes.

Pay Periods/ Time Reports

All pay periods for work-study employees are monthly. Each paycheck will reflect hours worked in the preceding month. The student should have some form of tracking and documenting actual hours worked to account for time on a daily basis. The student should sign in when reporting to work and sign out upon leaving. The daily log should be placed where it can be monitored. A FWS student should be supervised at all times. Each department will complete a Time Sheet, which is to be signed by the student and submitted to the departmental supervisor for signature approval. Enter only actual hours worked each day and the correct totals for each day and week. The supervisor approves the hours worked and completes time-card for payroll.

Signed time reports are then submitted to payroll by deadline established. Late time sheets cannot be processed with those submitted on time and will result in late paycheck or no paycheck. Therefore, it is imperative that time reports are submitted to payroll in a

timely manner. Work-Study students are only paid for actual hours worked. Work-Study time is not to be projected.

Paychecks are released in the department by the student's supervisor on the 15th of each month. Student employees under the Work-Study Program are paid on the basis of "an hour's pay for an hour's work."

NOTE: *Time-sheet Falsification is time reported on a time sheet that was not actually worked. Supervisors should routinely review the accuracy of time reports.*

Employee Benefits

Work-Study students do **NOT** earn vacation, sick leave or holiday pay due to the irregular nature of employment. Work Study program employees are not eligible to apply for leave of absence or receive unemployment benefits.

Dress Code

The Work-Study Program does not establish a dress code for student employees. Neat, clean, and tasteful clothing is always appropriate. Remember, student employees on campus are representing Lamar University to prospective students and/or parents, as well as currently enrolled students. Suggestive or potentially offensive clothing (i.e., halter tops, short shorts, torn jeans, offensive or suggestive language on clothing, etc.) is never appropriate work attire.

However, depending upon where the student is employed, a dress code may be required. Each department is entitled to set a dress code. Work-Study employees who are employed in departments with a dress code are required to adhere to that dress code. The department should review dress code requirements with Work Study employees prior to hiring. Always check with your supervisor if you need advice regarding what clothing is appropriate for safety, comfort, and appearance.

Terminations

There are three (3) broad categories under which a student may be terminated

1. The student may be terminated by the Work-Study Program
2. The student may voluntarily terminate employment, or
3. The employing department may initiate an involuntary termination

Types of Termination

Work Study Program

The Work-Study Program terminates a student who has earned enough to meet his/her financial need for the academic year. A student may also be terminated if no longer enrolled; if satisfactory academic progress is not maintained in the course of study; or if the minimum course load is not maintained.

Both the student and employing department will be contacted of termination when initiated by the Work-Study program. Reason for termination and the effective date will be given. Once a department has been notified that a student is no longer eligible to continue employment they will not be reimbursed for any hours worked beyond the notification.

Voluntary Termination

The student will be terminated upon request. Such a request should be presented to the supervisor two (2) weeks prior to the effective date. It is preferable the request be in written form.

Involuntary Termination

Involuntary termination results when the employee, (a) does not perform in a satisfactory manner, (b) has committed a minor offense, (c) has committed a major offense such as theft, insubordination, gross misconduct, etc., (d) has excessive unexplained absences, (e) walking off the job, or (f) after an absence without permission or notice, except when an emergency situation precluded giving such a notice.

Program Responsibilities

The Office of Financial Aid and the University Career Center

Every effort will be made to assist the student in obtaining part-time employment, however employment is not guaranteed. Information and counseling will be provided to students and supervisors who have questions or concerns regarding Work-Study employment. Procedures and policies will be clarified upon request.

The Financial Office will provide a Balance Sheet for any department that requests it. The student and supervisor are responsible for keeping an accurate account of the student's earnings to date.

It is the department's responsibility to ensure that proper credit is given to their department for the gross wages of the student. The Labor Distribution must show the gross amount of the check for each pay period in which a reallocation is being requested. Reallocations on CWS employees should be submitted monthly. Departments must submit reallocations in a timely manner. Labor Distribution should be checked on a monthly basis.

Student Employees

The student is expected to earn the entire Work-Study award. However, earning the amount awarded **cannot be guaranteed**, as the student's work schedule and rate of pay may not permit the student to earn his/her entire award. Any funds unearned at the end of the award period will be forfeited. The student should consider the amount of their award when applying for positions. The award is the total gross dollar amount a student may earn during the award period. The student and supervisor share responsibility for keeping track of the student's monthly earnings in order to avoid an over-award situation.

The student is to meet his/her work schedule and be on time. Each student is expected to perform his/her work assignments in a satisfactory manner. Students may not "fill in" for another student at work. It is the student's responsibility to notify the supervisor in sufficient time if he/she is to be absent. Each employee is responsible for the accuracy of the time reported as worked.

Student's Rights and Responsibilities

By accepting a FWS position, students become members of a department or agency that depends on them. Students should report to work on time, notify the supervisor when they will be late or absent, and dress appropriately for the work location (dress code should be discussed during the interview). When asking for time off, students should consider the employer's needs as well as their own. In addition, some WS positions may require access to confidential information--abuse or misuse of such authorization is grounds for dismissal!

Students **cannot earn more** than the Work-Study award as listed on the *Financial Aid Notification*. It is the student's responsibility to monitor earnings to be sure they do not exceed the award.

If a problem develops on the job, the first point of contact should be the supervisor. If the problem cannot be resolved, the student should contact the Work-Study Office in the Office of Financial Aid. Quitting a WS job should be a decision of last resort. There is no guarantee that the Work-Study award can be replaced with another type of aid or that the student can secure another WS position.

Students agree to abide by the regulations and policies as outlined in the **Student Work-Study Program Guide**. Failure to follow these policies and regulations may result in the cancellation of the Work-Study award and the loss of the Work-Study position.

Acceptance of a position through Work-Study implies a commitment to the employer for at least one semester.

Supervisors

Employers are responsible for clearly explaining positions, responsibilities, performance, expectations, pay rates, and work schedules to students. The supervisor should hire only those students who will meet the department's need. Every effort should be made to ascertain the level of skills possessed by the student and to determine whether the student has the level of skill needed to perform the job.

It is essential that the supervisor clearly explain the performance expected to each student employee, and provides sufficient opportunity for questions and clarification if needed. If the student is not performing in a satisfactory manner, the supervisor needs to contact the Office of Financial Aid.

The supervisor is also responsible for the accuracy of hours reported on the time card and time sheet. Each department should establish a procedure for recording time worked daily, for obtaining student and supervisor signatures, and for ensuring that time cards have been sent to payroll, properly signed and dated on the 5th of the month.

The supervisor is expected to develop a work schedule with the student employee that will allow reasonable earnings of the Work-Study Program award amount.

Supervisors are expected to see that student employees have enough work to do. Since it is illegal to pay a student Work-Study Program funds if the student is not working, supervisors should assign temporary work if there is a slack period.

Supervisors **MUST** ensure the accuracy of the student's time sheets and cards. Paychecks will not be written for a time card without the signature of the supervisor. Copies of Work-Study Program time card are considered official University records for audit purposes; therefore, all copies must be retained by the department and kept readily accessible for at least five (5) years.

NOTE: *Any time sheet not correctly certified by the appropriate supervisor may result in the employing department being required to pay the 75% Federal share at a later date based upon audit findings.*

All employees related problems should be discussed directly with the student involved. The Work-Study Office is available as a resource only after all the avenues for solution of a problem have been explored.

Common Work-Study Questions:

Q. What is Work-Study?

A. The Work-Study Program (CWS) provides jobs for students who need financial aid and who must earn a part of their educational expenses. You may apply if you are enrolled at least half-time (six (6) credit hours) as a degree-seeking student in an eligible program.

Q. How do I apply?

A. Complete a FAFSA yearly and request interest in CSW in FAFSA application.

Q. When do I apply?

A. Due to the length of time in filing and receiving results from a financial need service, it is recommended that a student complete these documents in February.

Priority deadline for all Financial Aid applicants is **April 1st**.

Q. What determines the amount of Work-Study Awarded?

A. The amount of your Work-Study Program award depends on the student's financial need and the availability of funds at the University.

Q. Once I am hired for a job, how will I be paid?

A. All Work-Study students are paid monthly. Paychecks will be released for hours worked the preceding month on the subsequent 15th of each month.

Q. Are Work-Study jobs on-campus or off-campus?

A. Both. A Work-Study job may be located off-campus with a public or private non-profit agency.

Q. May I have more than one Work-Study job?

A. No. Due to the demand for Work-Study Program employment each student is limited to one Work-Study Program job. This is an institutional policy. Therefore, each student should carefully consider the amount of his/her award, the rate of pay and the job's work hours prior to applying for or accepting a position.

Q. May I have a Non College Work-Study job in addition to my Work-Study employment?

A. No. A student must choose either Work-Study employment or Non College Work-Study employment. Any employment that is not Work-Study (on-campus) is considered Non College Work-Study. If the student rejects Work-Study for Non College Work-Study, the earnings from such employment may affect future financial aid.

Q. What if I do not earn my entire award? Can I carry my remaining award to the next term?

A. No. Work-Study Program is awarded for a specific academic period either Fall/Spring. Fall/Spring award is an academic year award. This means that if the student has money left over from the Fall award the Office of Student Financial Aid will increase the Spring at their discretion. This balance MUST be utilized by the end of the Spring semester. However, a remaining award that is not earned at the time will not be carried forth into summer or the next academic year.