



University of the Incarnate Word Federal Work-Study (FWS) Question and Answer Guide

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The WORD on Work-Study

What is the Federal Work-Study Program (FWS)?

The FWS program provides part-time employment to undergraduate and graduate students with financial need, allowing them to earn money to help supplement the costs of a postsecondary education. It also encourages students receiving FWS assistance to participate in community service activities and develop real world employment experience.

What are the benefits of the FWS program?

The FWS program offers students the chance to earn federal funding in exchange for time worked. The FWS program offers students a chance to experience a professional work environment that could help prepare them for future career opportunities. The FWS program allows students the chance to learn and perform general duties. It also allows them the chance to interact with other professionals in a work setting and develop critical communicative and organizational skills needed to become a participating member of the work force.

Why is the Federal Work Study Program important?

FWS funds are awarded to institutions on a participation basis. This means that the more money spent, the more money received each year (*in accordance with allocations from the Department of Education*). Funds must be spent, or they are lost; not just for that year, but possibly for future years.

- **How does loss of funding affect UIW?**
 - On average UIW employs anywhere from 250-400 FWS students annually. If we lose funding, that means 250-400 students will be short \$2000-\$3000 or more in need-based aid. This is critical to many students who depend on this aid to help them pay for the cost of their education and to gain work experience.
 - This also means that with the loss of federal funding, departments lose portions of their own departmental staffing. Many departments on campus rely on FWS employees to help with day to day operations.

How many hours must a student be enrolled to use FWS?

All students must be registered at least half-time, with priority given to full-time students:

- Undergraduates: - 6+ hours per semester (*half-time*)
 - 12+ hours per semester (*full-time*)
- Graduate Students: - 3+ hours per semester (*half-time*)
 - 6+ hours per semester (*full-time*)

In addition to the above, FWS applicants must:

- be in a degree-seeking program
- be eligible for federal financial aid
- have completed their financial assistance file
- have a valid award letter indicating their FWS award
- not currently be employed on a Student Employment, GA or RA agreement.

What is the process after a student accepts the position?

A student will be offered the position and the supervisor will contact the OFA to confirm eligibility. Once eligibility is confirmed, the supervisor submits the agreement request form to the OFA establishing the amount and pay-rate of the agreement. Once created by the OFA Coordinator, the supervisor will be contacted saying the agreement is now ready to be signed. Once signed, the agreement is submitted to HR who will process and submit to Payroll. Students **may not** begin working until the Payroll Office updates the Web-time system and their name shows up for your department/division.

Simultaneously, any NEW students must complete the FWS Training module online and present a copy of the certificate to the OFA and supervisor. Returning students who have already completed this module do not have to complete it again unless they want a refresher.

In addition, all NEW students must fill out the I-9 and W-4 with HR before they will be allowed to work.

When can a student begin working?

A student can begin working once the agreement is signed, online FWS training is completed, all HR documents submitted (I-9 and W4) and Payroll creates the Web-time Entry account.

Students and Supervisors will not be notified by Payroll once the Web-time Entry timesheet is available. It is the student/supervisors responsibility to check the status by logging into Web-time and reviewing the eligible timesheets.

How many hours a week can a student work?

FWS employees **may not** work more than 40 hours per pay period (20 hours per week) and they cannot work while they are scheduled to be in class. FWS employees cannot also have an active Student Employment, Graduate Assistant or Resident Assistant agreement on file. FWS students also can never volunteer, they must get paid for their job duties.

Who monitors work hours?

The amount of the student's FWS award may not be exceeded. ***The supervisor and the student share the responsibility of monitoring the amount of money earned.*** Supervisors are encouraged to develop their own time log to monitor the number of hours the student works and the money earned for each pay period to ensure that the student does not earn more than the amount of the FWS award. Federal regulations require this to be heavily monitored, so it is imperative that there are no overages on agreements at any time.

When are Timesheets Due?

Timesheets are due on the 1st and 15th of every month. Supervisors **MUST** approve timesheets online (or sign the paper version) and on time if they want their employees to be paid timely. In addition, students **MUST** log in everyday to track their time. Students should not wait until the end of each cycle to input their time all at once. This can cause errors, delays and compliance issues in processing with the UIW Payroll Office.

Can a student work during the summer?

YES! If a student has an established agreement (*worked in spring*) the student can work until June 30th as long as the student has funds remaining in the agreement. On July 1st, a student can work the remainder of the summer on a **new** agreement as long as the student is enrolled at least 6 hours in summer or pre-enrolled for fall. If not, the FWS agreement is terminated and the student must be employed through Student Employment if the supervisor wants to continue employment.

Students who are graduating in the Fall/Spring **may not** work the week of finals. Their last day of employment must be the last Friday before finals week. Supervisors must notify the OFA of any graduating employees so agreements can be properly terminated.

Who contacts HR and Payroll to cancel a FWS agreement?

The OFA FWS Coordinator submits the request for termination, not the supervisor. It is the supervisor's responsibility to contact the OFA to terminate an agreement, giving the last day of employment and purpose for termination. The FWS Coordinator will contact HR and Payroll once the evaluation of awards and termination is complete.

What about switching a student from FWS to Student Employment?

Before any student is switched from a FWS agreement to a student employment agreement the FWS Coordinator should be contacted to review allocation amounts and budgets in order to determine if an increase can be done to the FWS agreement before it is cancelled. It is better for the Department and the OFA to exhaust all FWS fund options before switching to SE funds.

What is the difference in Federal Work-Study funds and Student Employment funds?

These are two separate lines of funding. FWS is funded from the Department of Education (ED), given to UIW and monitored through the Office of Financial Assistance. FWS has its own set of rules and regulations, which are monitored closely by the ED to make sure we are in compliance.

Student Employment is funded internally (*through department budgets*) and monitored by Human Resources.

Student Employment agreements are set up through HR and FWS agreements are established through the Office of Financial Assistance. It is important to always ask the OFA about a student's FWS eligibility before putting a student on Student Employment so that; 1. We utilize the funding for FWS and 2. We save the departments money within their own budgets.

For general information regarding day to day operations/supervision/hiring/termination please refer to the "Supervisor's Handbook".

FWS Program Point of Contact:

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