

FEDERAL WORK STUDY PROGRAM HANDBOOK

2025-2026
ACADEMIC YEAR

Introduction

According to the Economic Opportunity Act of 1964, the goal of the Federal Work Study (FWS) Program is to "stimulate and promote the part-time employment of students in institutions of higher education who are from low-income families and are in need of the earnings from such employment to pursue courses of study at such institutions." At Buffalo State, we offer this type of employment opportunity to our students to aid in their financial, professional, and educational development.

Definition

FWS is incorporated into the financial aid package for eligible students based on financial need, as determined by the Free Application for Federal Student Aid (FAFSA). The student works either on campus or at an off-campus community service location and is paid on a biweekly basis for only the hours worked. Work study awards are not applied towards the tuition bill. Unfortunately, we cannot guarantee that all students will secure a position. An award authorizes the student to seek a work study job and sets an earnings limit. The student should plan accordingly to be sure to work enough hours to reach the earnings limit and budget the earnings to last throughout each semester.

A Work Study student makes a commitment to work for the supervisor. The Work Study job is second only to academics. Students are limited to working a maximum of 10 hours per week, or 20 hours biweekly. Supervisors should be accommodating with Federal Work Study student work schedules.

Eligibility

The following are general eligibility requirements that students must meet in order to be considered for Federal Title IV Financial Aid. Students must:

- Demonstrate financial need, as determined by the FAFSA.
- Have a high school diploma or General Education Diploma (GED) certification.
- Be enrolled or accepted for enrollment as a regular student working toward a degree or certificate in an eligible program.
- Be a U.S. Citizen or eligible non-citizen.
- Have a valid Social Security Number.
- Meet satisfactory academic progress standards set by the Financial Aid Office according to federal guidelines set by the US Department of Education.
- Certify that you will use federal student aid only for educational purposes.
- Certify that you are not in default on a federal student loan and that you do not owe money on a federal student grant.

Students must also be enrolled in a minimum of six credits which are required for their degree completion.

Additionally, to be authorized for Federal Work Study, a student must have a Federal Work Study award listed on their Financial Aid awards in Banner for the current academic year. Awards for Federal Work Study funds are made on an annual basis. Students who apply on-time through the FAFSA will be considered for our limited supply of campus based Federal Work Study funding. Funds are awarded based on the annual allocations received from the U.S. Department of Education.

Job Search

A few weeks prior to the beginning of the semester, the student will receive an Eligibility Letter for Work Study. This letter details the amount of the award and instructs the student to visit the job database in BengalLink.

BengalLink is available one week prior to the first day of classes. The job posting is meant to be a description of the expected duties and responsibilities, and to help match the student with work that will benefit the student educationally and professionally. It is the student's responsibility to conduct the job search and contact the supervisor for an interview.

Interviewing

Students must take the authorization form that they receive via email to the interview. If they have misplaced the letter, they may pick up a form at the Financial Aid counter in Moot Hall, 230.

Students should dress appropriately and act professionally during the interview. It is important for the student to understand the responsibilities and expectations and then communicate what they hope to gain from this work experience. Please refer to the interview tips from the Career & Professional Education Center at the end of this Handbook.

The student may be hired on the spot, so they should be prepared with the proper identification as outlined elsewhere in this handbook and a copy of their class schedule.

Working

The supervisor and employee should determine the work schedule together. The work schedule must not conflict with the student's class schedule. **Remote work assignments are strictly prohibited.**

In the Fall, Work study students may work from August 25 until December 11, 2025. In the Spring, work study students may work from January 26 through May 14, 2026. Students are also allowed to work over breaks within the semester, including the spring break, provided there is supervision on site. Students are not allowed to work over the summer and winter breaks including J-Term, unless otherwise notified by the Financial Aid Office.

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If a student does not use their entire semester award the unused portion of the award will be forfeited. The award is given on a semester basis and does not carry over from the fall to the spring. The supervisor and student should take care in scheduling so the student earns as much as possible without exceeding the amount of the award by the end of each semester. Once the student reaches the semester maximum, the student may no longer work for the semester.

Any overages will be the responsibility of the department and must be paid from the departmental budget.

It is the responsibility of both the student and supervisor to track earnings. Please feel free to download the FWS calculator to your desktop for this purpose. *Please note that any change in the amount of Federal Work Study in a student's award will change the calculation.* Students should review their awards and messages in Banner and monitor their campus e-mail for any changes.

Supervisors should notify the Work Study Coordinator in the Financial Aid Office as soon as jobs are filled. The job number is listed with the job description on BengalLink.

Documentation

All students must have their supervisor complete the supervisor's section of the Appointment Form and complete form HRMS-2 Personal Data Collection Form. All students must also complete the Conditions of Student Employment form.

- **Appointment Form**
- **HRMS-2**
- **Conditions of Student Employment** (the FWS supervisor only retains this for their files)

Students who have not worked on campus in the past 36 months must also complete the:

- **Retirement Form**
- **IRS Form I-9**
- **State IT-2104** (Students from New York City and Yonkers who are claiming exemption from withholding must also file **the IT-2104_E**)
- **Federal W-4**

All forms are available on the Financial Aid website under **Work-Study**.

It is the student's responsibility to return the completed forms to the Financial Aid Office. The Appointment Form must be completed by the student's employer and returned to the Financial Aid Office before work can begin.

A student may not work more than one Work Study job simultaneously. If a student changes positions mid-year or mid-semester, the new supervisor must complete the hiring process as if the student were a new hire.

Supervisor Checklist:

- Appointment Form is filled out completely and signed
- HRMS-2 Personal Data Collection Form is complete
- Conditions of Student Employment form is complete and is retained by Supervisor
- I-9 citizenship box is checked
- Copies of acceptable documents are attached to the I-9
- Certification portion of I-9 has been completed by the supervisor
- Federal Tax Form W-4 is completed and signed by the employee
- NYS Tax Form IT-2104 is completed and signed by the employee
- NYS Tax Form IT-2104-E is completed and signed by the employee if claiming exemption from withholding (students from New York City and Yonkers only)
- Any changes to the forms are initialed

Timesheets

Timesheets are found online in the [SUNY Secure Employee Services Portal](#):

Instructions for completing your time sheet should be discussed with your supervisor, however, in all cases the following regulations must be adhered to:

- Students and supervisors must keep track of all hours worked.
- **Time sheets should be completed by both the student and supervisor on the last working day of the pay period.** It is suggested that the supervisor authorizes an alternate person designated to approve the student's timesheet on the supervisor's behalf, should they be absent or unavailable. This is done through Payroll.
- **Students must not be permitted to work after the final day of fall semester, or the final day of the spring semester.** Students who do work beyond the last day must be paid from the departmental budget.
- Supervisors must submit time sheets according to the schedule provided. Timesheets submitted after the final deadline of the semester must be paid from the departmental budget. **The final deadline is seven days after the final day of the program for the semester.**
- Time sheets must be submitted in quarter hours (i.e., 3:15, 3:30, 3:45, 4:00). There is neither overtime nor special holiday pay.
- For every 4 continuous hours of work you may take a rest break not to exceed 15 minutes. This applies only if it is your employer's policy is to permit such breaks for other employees.
- A lunch break is required after 6 consecutive hours of work, per New York State law. It must be indicated on the time sheet. Please note that even if the student does not take a lunch break, the ½ hour will still be deducted from total hours worked.

It is critically important that the student and supervisor follow the prescribed procedures listed above. Failure to do so increases program administrative workload locally and at the SUNY Administration level, and carries serious consequences, such as:

- complete termination of the position from the Federal Work Study program;
- late processing of the student paycheck; and
- student wages being paid from the departmental budget.

Any student employed under Federal Work Study must be paid for all hours worked. The Fair Labor Standards Act of 1938, as amended, prohibits employers (including schools) from accepting voluntary services from any paid employee.

Pay

Earnings are paid directly to the student by paycheck (distributed in the Payroll office, GC 408) or by direct deposit on a bi-weekly basis. At no time will earnings be credited to a student's bill.

Direct deposit forms are available at Payroll. Students who use banks that do not have a local branch should bring a voided check, copy of a check, or a printout from the bank with a routing number and account number for direct deposit.

To be paid correctly and in a timely manner, it is the student's responsibility to complete the timesheet bi-weekly. Timesheets submitted past the stated deadlines may cause a delay in pay. A time sheet from a previous semester must have written authorization from the Financial Aid Office before it can be processed.

2025-2026 Work Study Payroll Schedule

Pay Period	Work Period Start Date	Work Period End Date	Timesheet due in Payroll/Thurs	Date Paid
FALL SEMESTER 2025				
11	8/14/2025	8/27/2025	8/29/2025	9/18/2025
12	8/28/2025	9/10/2025	9/12/2025	10/2/2025
13	9/11/2025	9/24/2025	9/26/2025	10/16/2025
14	9/25/2025	10/8/2025	10/10/2025	10/30/2025
15	10/9/2025	10/22/2025	10/24/2025	11/13/2025
16	10/23/2025	11/5/2025	11/7/2025	11/26/2025
17	11/6/2025	11/19/2025	11/21/2025	12/11/2025
18	11/20/2025	12/3/2025	12/5/2025	12/24/2025
19	12/4/2025	12/17/2025	12/19/2025	1/8/2026
20	NA	NA	NA	NA
SPRING SEMESTER 2026				
21	NA	NA	NA	NA
22	1/15/2026	1/28/2026	1/30/2026	2/19/2026
23	1/29/2026	2/11/2026	2/13/2026	3/5/2026
24	2/12/2026	2/25/2026	2/27/2026	3/19/2026
25	2/26/2026	3/11/2026	3/13/2026	4/2/2026
26	3/12/2026	3/25/2026	3/27/2026	4/16/2026
1	3/26/2026	4/8/2026	4/10/2026	4/30/2026
2	4/9/2026	4/22/2026	4/24/2026	5/14/2026
3	4/23/2026	5/6/2026	5/8/2026	5/28/2026
4	5/7/2026	5/20/2026	5/22/2026	6/11/2026

The Fall 2025 program runs 8/25/25 -12/11/25. The Spring 2026 program runs 01/26/26 - 05/14/26. Official College holidays are observed: 9/1/25, 10/13/25, 11/11/25, 11/27/25 and 02/16/26.

All wages earned under the Federal Work-Study program are subject to Federal and State Income Taxes. Statements of wages earned are issued by the Payroll Office, GC 408, at the end of the calendar year.

Timesheets must be completed accurately and truthfully. Falsification of a time sheet is a serious offense. The consequences are:

- Immediate removal from the Federal Work Study Program.
- The amount of Federal Work Study awarded will be cancelled and will not be replaced with any federal, state, or institutional assistance.
- A Termination Notice will be placed in the student's file indicating the reason for removal.
- This matter will be referred to Student Conduct and Community Standards for appropriate disciplinary action.
- Payroll will be notified of the correct hours worked, and financial restitution of the federal funds must be made.
- Current financial aid awards and future federal aid eligibility may be jeopardized.
- Student may be reported to the US Department of Education Office of the Inspector General or local law enforcement authorities.

Changes to the Award

When a student's work study award is changed, a revised Financial Aid Award is prepared for the student. The Financial Aid Office will notify Payroll, the supervisor, and student noting what changes have occurred in the student's award. The student's work schedule should be adjusted immediately to prevent exceeding the award amount.

Work Ethic

Work Study is a real job. Supervisors and employees must adhere to all College policies and procedures. For more information please visit the Buffalo State Human Resources website. As members of a civil and caring community, Work Study students must treat those on campus and in the community with courtesy and consideration.

The supervisor and department depend on the student to be at work during their scheduled hours to keep operations running. It is expected that the student will notify the supervisor if there are any schedule conflicts or other reasons they cannot be at work as scheduled. Students who worked in the fall should set a new work schedule for spring no later than the first week of spring classes.

Student employees should report to work on time with a positive attitude and good behavior. Supervisors should provide instruction on office etiquette, expectations, training, and attire, and be supportive of the student in any way possible.

Work Site

Students are not permitted to work remotely; students must work under the direct supervision of the Federal Work Study supervisor who signs the timesheet.

Sexual Harassment Training

All Federal Work Study employees are required to complete an online sexual harassment training each year. Materials will be delivered through Brightspace at the beginning of the fall semester (new spring hires will receive it in spring).

Confidentiality

Work Study students must be informed of, and abide by, College policy and federal guidelines on the confidentiality of private or sensitive information.

Dismissal

Students may be terminated for a variety of reasons. The reasons for termination may include, but are not limited to:

- Failure to report to work as scheduled, and/or poor attendance
- Repeated tardiness
- Poor attitude
- Insubordination
- Failure or inability to perform the tasks required
- Falsification of time sheets
- Theft or embezzlement
- Destruction of College property
- Threats or use of physical force
- Any illegal activities conducted on College property, including alcohol or drug use
- Failure to comply with department policies and procedures
- Failure to comply with College policies and procedures
- Suspension or dismissal from the College

Instances of these behaviors should be documented and discussed with the student. If the behavior continues, the student should be given a written warning detailing the issues and consequences, as well as a plan of action and timeframe by which to resolve the conflict.

In certain instances, when the safety and/or well-being of the campus or its constituents are at risk, an immediate dismissal may be required. For this reason, the above and any additional policies of the department should be reviewed with the student. The Federal Work Study supervisor should present the policies in writing and have the student signoff on them prior to beginning work.

Terminated students may be allowed to fill a different vacant position only after meeting with the Financial Aid Office Federal Work Study Coordinator. This is dependent on job availability.

If for any reason, the student wishes to separate from the Work Study position, they must submit written notification to both the supervisor and the Financial Aid Office. If possible, the student should continue in the position until the end of the semester, unless an earlier date is

mutually agreeable to the supervisor. Placement to another position is dependent upon a meeting with the Financial Aid Office Federal Work Study Coordinator and job availability.

In the event of a termination or resignation, the supervisor must notify the Financial Aid Office Federal Work Study Coordinator. The supervisor may elect to re-post the position at that time or a later date.

Applying for the Following Year

Financial aid packages are reviewed and revised annually. Student eligibility and earnings limits may change from one academic year to the next. Students must apply for federal aid on an annual basis at www.fafsa.gov and respond to any requests from the Financial Aid Office. Students should watch for notices of priority filing dates. If the returning student does not receive a work study award, they should contact the Financial Aid Office immediately.

Alternative Employment

If the student is not hired through the Federal Work Study program, they should visit the **Career & Professional Education Center** in Cleveland Hall for information on other campus and local jobs.

Supervisor Timeline

May

- Request any changes to job descriptions and identify returning students

August

- Job allocations determined
- Eligibility letters sent to students
- Jobs typically go live the week before classes begin
- Interviews begin
- Students hired, email notification sent to the Federal Work Study coordinator, and paperwork completed prior to student working
- Students may commence working on or after the first day of classes

October

- Online Sexual Harassment Training must be completed
- Remind continuing students to file the FAFSA at <http://www.fafsa.gov>

December

- Last day students may work is December 11, 2025
- Report vacancies to Federal Work Study coordinator for January posting

January

- Eligibility letters sent to students who have Work Study for spring only
- Database generally opens one week before classes begin
- Interviews begin
- Students hired, email notification sent to the Federal Work Study coordinator, and paperwork completed prior to student working
- Students may commence working on or after the first day of classes

February

- Online Sexual Harassment Training for spring hires must be completed

May

- Remind continuing students to verify they have Federal Work Study on the award letter
- The last day students may work is May 14, 2026; final timesheets are due.

Contact Us

Please refer any comments or concerns to the Financial Aid Office or Payroll Office.

Financial Aid Office
Moot Hall 230
(716) 878-4902

Payroll Office
Grover Cleveland 408
(716) 878-4124

Disclaimer

The college reserves the right to terminate or alter program policy and procedure. All efforts will be made to accommodate students within the parameters provided by federal, state, and college guidelines.

Interview Tips

As adapted from the SUNY Buffalo State Career & Professional Education Center's website.

The Interview

The single most crucial part of the job hunt process is the formal interview. During the interview, both parties see if they like each other and how they can satisfy each other's needs. Not only will you be letting the employer know about your best qualities, you will be attempting to gain a clearer concept of the employer and the position available. Now is the time to sell yourself!

A good interview is a well prepared presentation and it requires skilled communication, whether the interview is a face-to-face or phone meeting. Rarely do you get a second chance in an interview. From the moment you greet the interviewer(s) until you say good-bye, you will want to create a favorable impression. Making a formal, personal presentation of your knowledge, attitudes and skills as related to the job you are seeking means preparing with research and practice.

A good interviewer will be attempting to evaluate those qualities you have that are not revealed in your resume or cover letter: what motivates you, what kind of personality you have, what you value, whether you are a leader, what your ambitions are, how well you communicate, how much career planning you have really done, etc. The interview will be a test of preparation and your ability to communicate it.

Before the Interview

The path to performing well in a job interview is preparation, and there are a number of things you should do before the interview begins.

- ✓ **Research the organization:** The more information you have about a prospective employer, the better prepared you will be during the interview.
- ✓ **Self-assessment:** It is also important to assess your own strengths and weaknesses as a candidate for employment. Before going to an interview, you should be able to identify your relevant skills, qualifications, and other characteristics related to the position. You should be able to demonstrate how your experience, training and activities qualify you for the job. Be able to answer the question, "Why should I hire you?"
- ✓ **Verify the particulars:** When you are setting up an appointment for an interview, be sure to find out the exact time and location of the interview, and the interviewer(s) name(s) and title(s). You should also make sure that you know exactly how to get to the interview location, how long it will take you to get there, and what building entrance you should use. You will want to avoid being late for a job interview, so plan to arrive five to fifteen minutes early.
- ✓ **Practice your answers:** Prepare by reviewing the list of frequently asked interview questions. You should practice answering them aloud with a friend, or schedule a mock interview at the CAPE.

- ✓ **Dress appropriately:** You are not only being evaluated by what you say in an interview, but how you present yourself. Dressing professionally is essential for creating a favorable impression.

During the Interview

The Structure of the Interview

Some job interviews may be conducted one-on-one, but many times there will be two or more interviewers. The format of each job interview may vary, but most interviews have several phases:

Introduction

The interviewer and candidate usually engage in a bit of small talk to establish some rapport. The interviewer will usually extend his/her hand for a handshake. Be sure yours is firm, not too weak or too strong. Remember, you are being evaluated from the moment the interviewer sees you. Although this first phase is often light and casual, don't underestimate its importance. People form a first impression and you should make sure that yours is both positive and favorable.

Background Analysis

Once the ice has been broken the interviewer will normally shift the conversation to questions about your background. The purpose here is to gain information about your skills, qualifications, experience, education, and extra-curricular activities. In addition, an employer will be attempting to reach some judgments as to your attitude, self-confidence, ability to communicate, and how you handle yourself.

Matching Candidate to Position

After the interviewer has the background information, they will begin to match your qualifications and the kind of person you are with the position for which they are recruiting.

Closing

Normally, you will be given the opportunity to ask questions or comment on what the interviewer has told you. Although the best questions are usually those that directly follow up on what has been discussed in the interview, you should have some questions in mind that you wish to ask. The interviewer will usually indicate through some verbal or non-verbal action when the interview is over. As a general rule, the more interested the interviewer is in you, the more certain they will be that you understand the next step. However, if the interviewer says nothing, you need to clarify the next steps. It's important to maintain your enthusiasm in the last moments of an interview. Try to briefly summarize the key points brought out in the interview and the procedures to follow. This will give the interviewer an opportunity to verify or correct your assessment of the interview and will provide assurance that there is no misunderstanding.

Answering Interview Questions

Non-verbal communication: In an interview, how you present yourself is just as important as what you say. Your posture, eye contact, grooming, facial expression, and what you do with your hands when you speak communicate a message about yourself to the employer.

Stay positive: Maintain a positive, confident attitude. Be honest when you are asked about weaknesses or past failures and avoid making excuses or blaming others. Focus on what you learned from the experience or what steps you are taking to improve yourself.

Stay focused: Give clear, direct, well-organized answers to the interviewer's questions. Focus on making a presentation of your skills and abilities as a candidate for the job. Do not ramble.

Illustrate your answers: Keep your answers brief and on point, but don't just give "yes" and "no" responses. Create a "word picture" for the interviewer by illustrating your personal qualities and strongest abilities with examples from your past. Try to address any underlying questions you think the employer might have about your suitability for the job.

Ask questions when indicated: Prepare at least 4 - 6 questions to ask the interviewer. Never say you don't have any!

Be yourself: Try to relax and be yourself. Don't present an image of someone you think they want because it won't be genuine.

After the Interview

Following the interview, you will want some kind of decision about your standing with the organization, even if it is a rejection. A few organizations will send a rejection letter, while other organizations are negligent about letting you know anything. Whatever the case, there are a few things you should do after the interview:

Thank-you Letter

It is a good practice to send the interviewer a thank-you letter within two days after the interview, thanking them for their time and consideration. Consider including the following in your letter:

- ✓ Remind the employer of the interview and the qualifications you possess which are especially significant to the position.
- ✓ Accent and emphasize a specific point which was well-received by the employer during the interview process.
- ✓ Share your afterthoughts as a way of supplying important information which was left out of the interview.
- ✓ Communicate your continued interest in the position and that you would like to work for the organization.

Be sure to get the correct name, title, and address of the interviewer(s), so that you know how to address your letter. You may want to ask for their business card at the end of the interview.

Send Requested Materials

Provide any references, credentials, transcripts, or other materials requested by the interviewer as soon as possible after the interview.

Follow up

If you get no response from the thank-you letter, or if the date has passed when the employer was supposed to contact you, don't hesitate to contact the organization again with a phone call or email. Above all, let them know of your continuing interest in them. Even if the organization has no opening for you now, there is always a chance something will become available later.

Job Search Tracker

Print out the following page and use the JOB SEARCH TRACKER sheet to assist you while finding a position.

Job Search Tracker

#	Date & Time	Department, Contact Person, Phone, Location	Position	Applicable Skills	Thank you sent?	Follow-Up and Notes
1						
2						
3						
4						
5						
6						
7						