

Supervisor's Handbook

UNIVERSITY OF MISSOURI



PREPARED BY: MU CAREER CENTER – OFFICE OF WORK STUDY EMPLOYMENT

wrkstudy@missouri.edu

INTRODUCTION

Federal Work Study (FWS) is designed to give part-time employment to undergraduate and graduate students who need the income to help meet the costs of post-secondary education, and to encourage FWS recipients to participate in community service activities.

In 1994, the University of Missouri's Financial Aid Office and the MU Career Center joined together in the administration of the Federal Work Study Program. While the Financial Aid Office determines eligibility and allocates Work Study funds to students, the MU Career Center established a Work Study Employment Office, which develops employment opportunities, assists students with the selection of positions, conducts Work Study Employment workshops/orientations during Summer Welcome, and provides training for employers. At this time, the Work Study Employment Office has developed a database of 2000 opportunities and referred 1200 to 1500 students to positions per year. Some of these positions involve community service opportunities.

The program is designed for students that need employment to assist in financing their college costs, and preference is given to students with the greatest financial need. Many eligible students will not get a work study award as the list of eligible students extends beyond the financial resources of the program, so it is important that the students receiving an award use it properly. In general, student employees have unique characteristics that distinguish them from regular employees. Consequently, they may require different styles of supervision. We must also remember that a student's principal responsibility is to be a student first and employee second.

PROGRAM OBJECTIVES

1. To foster student career development through a variety of employment experiences.
2. To provide a broad range of job opportunities that will provide career, leadership, and transferable life skills as well as personal growth for student employees.
3. To provide student employees with employment opportunities in jobs that are important to the operation of the University and the community.

SUPERVISION

A supervisor may also be a mentor, trainer, confidant, and surrogate parent. Supervisors will find themselves in a variety of roles when it comes to working with student employees. Students will often have a closer and more long-term relationship with their work supervisor than with any other faculty, staff or advisor on campus. As a result, the supervisor can be a key figure in the student's college experience, which is also directly related to retention of those students at the institution.

RESPONSIBILITIES

1. Explaining to students their role in the school, college, department and/or agency.
2. Explaining the standards of behavior expected of employees.
3. Providing training in skills and procedures necessary to perform tasks.
4. Ensuring adequate supervision of student work.
5. Keeping lines of communication open, clear, and constructive.
6. Ensuring that students are **not** scheduled to work during established class times, labs, tests, etc.
7. Treating all students in accord with their rights, which are the same as all employees' rights as defined by applicable state, federal, and University regulations.
8. Ensuring the accuracy of student time sheets.

SUPERVISORS RIGHTS

1. Expecting quality work from your student workers.
2. Expecting your student workers to follow the work schedule you have agreed upon.
3. Expecting confidentiality from your student workers.
4. Expecting your student workers to follow any particular requirements of your office or department.
5. Informing your student workers of any unsatisfactory work performance.
6. Terminating your student workers with proper documentation and after discussing the reasons with those students.

Supervisors should try to ensure that the students they hire have an employment experience that is educationally enhancing. We encourage students to seek positions that are related to their chosen major or career area. The job responsibilities in many positions may not be directly related to a student's course of study, yet the student can still learn new usable skills and begin developing a network. They can also learn a great deal about careers or occupations, and, in general, the world of work as the work environment. So regardless of the work responsibilities, working in the environment can be very revealing.

Most students will need some training as many arrive on campus with little or limited job experience. Supervising, training, and mentoring your work study student(s) will be your investment.

CREATING A POSITIVE WORK EXPERIENCE

Some of the things you can do to make a make a critical difference in the work climate are:

1. *Get to know your students.* Talk to them about classes, outside interests, family, etc. Let them know that you are interested in them as individuals.
2. *Be clear about the assignment.* Before you ever talk to your student employees, think the job through. What exactly are the results you want? What is the deadline? What options do the students have as they tackle the assignment? Try to give the assignment in such a way that students have some options as they do the task. This way they will have more of a sense of responsibility about the work they are doing.
3. *Be sure that the student assigned to the job has the time and resources to do the job.* It does not hurt to ask for that extra effort from your students, but be sure in your own mind that the assignment is reasonable.
4. *Monitor to be sure that the job is underway and performed correctly.* Do not wait until the deadline to check with your students to see how things are going. Be friendly and helpful as you monitor.
5. *Do not ignore non-performance.* As soon as you realize someone is not doing the job, check to see what is happening. Again clarify instructions and expectations.
6. *Provide feedback to let students.* Provide assistance as needed to complete an unusual or difficult task. Even when the performance is okay, be sure to tell students what they have done well. Don't miss any opportunity to give praise or recognition.
7. *When the job is finished, thank your students for doing the job.* Be generous with praise and be sure that they receive credit for the work they have done.
8. *Remember that the most important intangible part of the work climate is a healthy sense of self-esteem.* When students feel good about themselves, about the university and the work they do, it will be much easier to get them to cooperate.

These additional tips are based on feedback from students and supervisors.

1. State your expectations clearly.
2. Give a positive work experience - make it fun, and teach responsibility.
3. Outline procedures clearly - assume nothing.
4. Treat student employees as you want to be treated.
5. Be firm, yet flexible.
6. Make student employees feel important and needed.
7. Treat student employees as individuals.
8. Address problems (or potential problems) as they arise - don't let them build up.
9. When a student employee's main function is to answer telephones, give them more meaningful work when you have it.
10. Treat students as adults rather than kids – it encourages responsible adult behavior.
11. Be sensitive to student appointments with faculty members. If it becomes a habit for them to make appointments during working hours, discuss alternatives with them.
12. Host an office party for your student employees or invite them out to eat – it can be a great way to show your appreciation for the work they do.
13. Remember: a student employee's first job is to be a student; the supervisor's first job is to recognize this.

EVALUATION

Although evaluations of student workers are not required, supervisors may wish to give written evaluations to student employees. These evaluations not only serve to give positive reinforcement to students but also are valuable when preparing letters of recommendation for student employees. In the event a student does not perform satisfactorily, supervisors should maintain documentation of this for future reference. Should supervisors decide to discontinue the student's employment, they are required to notify their department contact. A sample evaluation form is attached.

PRAISE MOTIVATES

A very close relative of feedback is praise and reinforcement. Feedback is simply a matter of telling people when their performance is on or off track. Feedback should be constructive and done often so that the students work can be reinforced or corrected. Praise is the added ingredient that says, "You did a really good job." "I appreciate your work." "You're a pleasant person to work with." Praise needs to be honest; it should come from someone who understands the job, and it does not need to be elaborate.

If you ask supervisors how to motivate an employee, many of them will immediately suggest that you give that student a raise; the fact of the matter is most supervisors do not have enough control over wages to use wages or money as a motivator. The most powerful motivator that is within the reach of every supervisor is the use of praise.

PROBLEM SOLVING

It is important that each student understands the significance of her/his position. Students should arrive on time, complete assigned tasks, and stay until they are scheduled to leave. If they are ill or unable to come in as scheduled, students should inform their supervisor prior to their scheduled time. Supervisors may vary on how they deal with their own employees but should be fair and consistent. Supervisors should address expectations such as confidentiality, dependability, dress code, office etiquette, work ethic, and job requirements and explain the relative weight of each.

There will be times, however, in spite of your best efforts and careful planning, that performance problems will arise. At this point, you are going to have to take some time to stop and examine what happened, discuss the problem with the student, and try to come up with some kind of a solution. Here is a basic approach.

1. *Define the problem.*
2. *Before you even talk to the student, consider some possible, acceptable solutions.*
3. *Meet with the student.*
4. *Present the problem to the student in as clear a way as possible.*
5. *Get the student's input.*
6. *Pick a mutually agreeable solution.*
7. *Get a commitment from the student.*

Your goal throughout this process is to establish a spirit of cooperation. It is important that there be a feeling of trust between the student and the supervisor. The student employee will be most likely to respect a supervisor who has been fair, consistent, open, and honest.

As you work through a problem, try to take away any threat to the student. Use your energy trying to understand the problem clearly. Look for solutions. It is easy to get trapped into a long and involved argument about who was at fault. Fault-finding burns up energy that could be used to solve the problem, so try to avoid it.

Soliciting the solution from the student is very important. You literally want the words to come out of the student's mouth. If the student tells you his/her plan for resolving the problem and the solution is an acceptable one, he/she will be more likely to remember the solution, commit to it, and follow through with it.

CORRECTIVE/DISCIPLINARY PROCEDURES

Disciplinary action is a constructive means of dealing with unacceptable behavior or performance deficiencies on the part of an employee. The supervisor should meet with the student employee about any aspects of work performance that fail to meet standards and provide an opportunity for improvement. Disciplinary action is intended to assist and encourage employees to correct their conduct and to achieve satisfactory work performance and should include a series of progressive actions. Prior to the termination of a student employee and depending upon the seriousness of the offenses, one or more of the following steps should be taken: Sample forms are attached.

1. Oral warning: discuss the problem with the student.
2. Written warning: discuss the problems with the student explicitly; notify the student of the possibility of termination if corrective action is not taken.
3. Final Probation: again discuss the problem with the student, give them a time period to correct the problem or suggest that they consider resigning.
4. Termination Notice: inform student of his or her termination.

We recommend that supervisors give students two weeks notice of termination. Immediate termination of a student is expected for gross misconduct, including but not limited to actions threatening the safety of others, malicious use or theft of agency property, or falsification and/or forgery of time sheets or other documents. Supervisors should report such cases. A student's record of involuntary termination for gross misconduct may result in further disciplinary action by the University.

Once a student is terminated, the supervisor should notify the Work Study department contact so that the student can be released from the position.

PROCEDURES FOR DEVELOPING A WORK STUDY POSITION

1. Determine how many hours per week you need assistance, and how many students you will require. Keep in mind that the typical student works 5 to 12 hours a week.
2. Create a job description (use key words, as students can find your position by a key word search). Your department contact can give you an outline of the required information.
3. Your department contact will post the positions online for you.
4. You may also wish to post notices in your building and classrooms.
5. (Optional but suggested) Interview the applicants. This may just be a cursory interview, but it provides students with an opportunity to practice interviewing.
6. (Optional but suggested) Ask students for a resume. If they do not have one, the MU Career Center staff will be happy to help them create one.

HOURS AND WORK SCHEDULE

Work Study students may not work more than 20 hours per week. The average award amount will limit the number of hours a student can work and be paid by FWS.

EXAMPLE

Award Amount	\$1200 (yearly average) divided by
Wage	\$7.70 (minimum) divided by
Weeks	30 (allowing for missed work) equals
Hours per week	5.22

If Work Study students work more hours than indicated, they will expend the award money early in the semester and they will either have to discontinue working or their hours will be charged to the department.

NOTE: WORK STUDY STUDENTS WHO HAVE EXPENDED THEIR WORK STUDY AWARD MAY NOT CONTINUE WORKING UNLESS THE DEPARTMENT PAYS 100% OF THE STUDENT'S SALARY.

Students should never be asked to miss class to work. Their work schedule must be arranged around their class schedule and should allow time for study, lunch, dinner, etc. The student may also need time to study for tests or write papers, programs, etc. and they should inform you in advance of the occurrence. Remember, their first priority is to be a student and you should reinforce that.

LACK OF AVAILABLE WORK

If it becomes necessary to release a student mid-program due to lack of available work in the department, the supervisor should refer the student to the MU Career Center so that a Career Specialists may assist the student in finding another suitable position.

Be certain your student workers have sufficient work to do during their scheduled hours. Homework is not a suitable substitute for work, and is not allowed. If you find you do not have enough work for your students, you may want to re-negotiate their hours or release them so that they can find another place of employment. Students may only have one work study position at a time, so adding another position so that they can maximize the use of their award is not an option.

TIME SHEETS

Students will submit their time sheets online at MY HR. Failure to submit time may result in students not receiving their checks until the next pay period.

STUDENT WAGE SCALE

The attached wage guidelines are used in assigning hiring rates and pay increases for student employees. These guidelines help ensure a level of wage equity for students performing similar responsibilities. Each student-held position is assigned to one of the levels.

A FEW MORE ORGANIZATIONAL TIPS

1. Keep a copy of the work schedule in a central location. This gives you and the student(s) an easy reference to see who else will be working and at what times. This is especially helpful if students are required to find their own replacements when they need time off. It also gives both supervisors and students a chance to record and double-check hours worked.
2. Keep a message board or notepad in the same place as schedule. This gives you an opportunity to communicate with students who work shifts without your supervision and gives the students a chance to communicate with one another. One possible use would be when a student knows in advance that they are going to miss a particular shift; they can offer it to anyone else who would like to take it. Thus, your area remains staffed by trained personnel. Many places on campus make it the student's responsibility to find replacements; this gives students ample opportunity to do it.

TEN THOUGHTS FOR SUPERVISORS OF STUDENT EMPLOYEES

1. **Be an Example.**
Model strong work habits through efficient, dedicated work practices.
2. **Be Flexible.**
Understand that student employees are students first, and employees second.
3. **Communicate Expectations.**
Communicate the job standards and expectations to your student employees.
4. **Give Feedback Frequently.**
Provide consistent and appropriate feedback to your student employees.
5. **Be Fair.**
Supervisors who are too lenient are not doing students any favors. Campus jobs are "real jobs."
6. **Train, Train, Train!**
Take time to train your students in important work skills, attitudes, and habits such as perseverance, time management, phone skills, quality service practices, and handling difficult situations.
7. **Be a Team Player.**
As a team leader, develop and nurture the unique contributions of each team member. Take a global perspective.
8. **Give Recognition.**
When you see a student "going the extra mile" or "persevering through difficult situations," acknowledge this in front of other staff and peers. People need to feel appreciated.
9. **Share the Vision.**
Have regular staff meetings with your student employees, and inform them how their work fits into the larger purpose of the department and institution. Remember, purposeful work is meaningful work.
10. **Be an Educator.**
To the degree that we each contribute to the lives of others, we are all educators. How can you contribute to the education of your student employees?

OTHER QUESTIONS

Our staff would like to ensure that you have the best possible experience working with MU's Work Study students. For additional information and ideas - <https://career.missouri.edu/seed>

Please feel free to contact us with any questions or comments.

Email: WorkStudy@missouri.edu

Phone: (573) 882-6801

University's policies provide for equal opportunity and affirmative action in employment and admission to all programs of the University.

