



Handbook for Federal Work-Study Student Workers at Tennessee Tech University

Prepared by

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Tennessee Tech University is fully in accord with the belief that educational and employment opportunities should be available to all eligible persons without regard to age, sex, color, race, religion, national origin, disability, veteran status, or sexual orientation.

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Welcome to the Federal Work-Study Program

Dear Student:

Welcome!

We are glad you have accepted your Federal Work Study offer and have chosen to work on campus for the current school year! We hope you will find your work here to be informative, rewarding, and fun!

Student worker positions provided through the Federal Work-Study (FWS) program are very important to the life of the university. First, they provide a major source of financial aid to help students meet their educational expenses. Secondly, student workers provide a vital supplement to the university staff. Many departments and offices, such as the library, the fitness center, and even financial aid could not operate without student workers. Finally, the FWS program provides valuable work experience to students that aligns with the Strategic Plan of the university. Student employment gives TECH's students an opportunity to develop personal and social skills sought after by most employers.

We hope you will enjoy being a part of the team. We encourage you to work with TECH Pride, an attitude of kindness and cooperation, so your objectives and the goals of the university can be accomplished. We value your service to the university!

Best wishes for a successful academic and work year.

Wings Up,

The Office of Financial Aid

What is Federal Work-Study (FWS)?

Federal Work-Study (FWS) is an employment program intended to encourage and promote the part-time employment of students with demonstrated financial need, as well as assist the university. This award is primarily offered to undergraduate students with financial need, as determined by the information provided in the Free Application for Federal Student Aid (FAFSA). Due to funding restrictions, there is no guarantee FWS will be awarded to all eligible students.

Will FWS pay towards my student account balance?

FWS money is not credited to your student account and cannot be used to confirm registration. You are expected to budget carefully and use your FWS income wisely to support your educational expenses. Income earned through FWS does not have to be repaid. Your FWS hourly salary will not be lower, but may exceed, the federal minimum wage. You are paid once a month for hours worked.

What does the FWS student worker need to know?

- You do not earn time for holidays, vacations, sickness, etc.
- You do not accrue benefits.
- Awards are based on an average of 5-10 hours a week to earn each term's full award. You are permitted to work up to 29 hours per week with the permission of your supervisor, given you are not scheduled during regular class hours. Please note, choosing to work more than the average 5-10 hours per week can lead to reaching the maximum amount of your allotted FWS funds earlier in a semester. *Beginning Fall 2026, ALL awarded FWS students are required to work a minimum of 30 hours per term to be reviewed for eligibility for upcoming terms.*
- If you work six hours or longer, you are required to take **at least** a 30-minute break during your shift.
- **If you earn your maximum award for the Fall term, you may not start earning your Spring term award early.**
- **You can never volunteer in positions in which you were previously paid.**
- **You must never work when there is not a designated supervisor present.**
- You must consider how the combination of work and study hours will affect your health and academic progress when creating your schedule for each term.
- **You can only be employed in one FWS position at a time; however, you may hold another non-FWS job.**
- You cannot work when regular university employees are off due to holidays, special events, weather, etc.
- You will have an employment record. If future employers wish to verify that you worked at Tennessee Tech during a certain period, they may submit an "employment verification" request to financialaid@tnitech.edu.

What's the process to get a work-study job?

Once FWS awards are accepted, applicants can search for available positions through the Student Job Portal. You are encouraged to apply for more than one position to improve the odds of receiving the position you find most desirable. You are also asked to review the position details closely to ensure that you understand what will be expected of you in that position.

Once the supervisor has selected a student to hire, they will submit a hire request to the Office of Financial Aid (OFA). Once the OFA has received the paperwork, an email will be sent to the student and department notifying them of the student's eligibility to begin working. **Please note that all I-9 and W-4 paperwork must be completed and submitted to Human Resources prior to beginning student employment.**

As soon as you have accepted your preferred position, we ask that you decline all other job offers to let the supervisors know that you are no longer available for hire. This is another professional step in the hiring process.

When do I start looking for a work-study job?

You should begin searching for potential positions prior to the start of the fall semester each year, as we expect campus employers to post available positions in the Student Job Portal over the summer months. You will be notified by the Office of Financial Aid when the Student Job Portal begins accepting applications for positions.

Most supervisors seek students who can work for the entire academic year (both fall and spring semesters) but, on occasion, departments will hire for a single semester only. Read all descriptions carefully before applying for or accepting a job offer.

Where do I search for a work-study job?

The Student Job Portal is accessed from the Tech Express dashboard by clicking on the "JobPortal" QuickLink icon.

Students must ACCEPT their FWS Award offer through their Eagle Online account before logging in to the Student Job Portal and searching for positions. Please allow 24 hours from the time you accepted your FWS award to begin your search.

- Available jobs are posted within the Student Job Portal, which is accessible through Tech Express.
- Applicants can contact departments of interest directly to ask if FWS student jobs are available.
- Contact studentjobs@tnitech.edu for questions or help with a job search strategy.

What do I need before I can start working?

First time FWS applicants only: You will need to obtain an I-9 Employment Eligibility Verification card (see QR code below) and fill out a [W-4 Tax Form](#), both of which must be completed and submitted in the Human Resource's office in Derryberry Hall, Room 146, Monday – Friday, 8:00AM - 4:30PM.



To start the I-9 process:

1. Create an account. Already have an account? Click on Log in Now.
2. HireRight will send you an email confirming your registration. Click on the link located in the body of the email.
3. Log In with the username and password you created.
4. Complete section 1 of the I9 form.
5. Once you have completed section 1 of the I-9 form, go to the Office of Human Resources and show your acceptable documents to receive your Golden I-9 card.
6. Show your I-9 card to your supervisor. This card is required to work on campus.

Questions? Contact the Office of Human Resources at 931-372-3034 or hr@ntech.edu

Offices are in Derryberry Hall, Rm 146. Hours of Operation 8:00 AM – 4:30 PM.

I've accepted a job – now what?

Beginning a new job is a major step, so it's important to start it off on the right foot! Here are a few questions you should ask your supervisor at your first meeting:

- Who is my direct supervisor? If my supervisor is absent for a workday, who is their replacement?
- How do I input my time?
- What is the dress code?
- What should I do if I need to miss work?
- Am I allowed to have a cell phone while I am working?
- Will training be provided, and who should I ask if I don't understand a given task?
- Will you be completing a performance evaluation of me? If yes, what will I be evaluated on?

When and where do I report my time?

PLEASE NOTE: Hours worked daily must be recorded at the start and end of each shift on an individual timesheet located in your Student Job Portal. Failure to do so may result in the loss of your FWS award. If you happen to miss a clock in/out or need an incorrect clock in/out fixed, you must submit a request to your FWS Supervisor to make the correction to your time. We strongly suggest that you email your FWS Supervisor from your **campus email** to make this request. You are required to submit your monthly timesheets to your supervisor for approval by 11:59PM on the last working day of each month. When approved, your supervisor will report your hours worked to the Payroll department the following work day.

Direct Deposit

Please visit <https://www.tntech.edu/businessoffice/payroll/forms.php> to set up your direct deposit information prior to beginning your first day of employment. If you have never received FWS pay and have not been previously enrolled in direct deposit, your first check will need to be picked up in the Bursar's Office. Please make reasonable efforts to pick up your paycheck as soon as possible after payday. After your first paycheck, you will then begin receiving all additional paychecks within the designated direct deposit.

NOTE: It is your responsibility to keep the Office of Human Resources informed if your bank information or account information changes. The direct deposited funds will continue to go to the bank and the account you designate until any changes are made. The bank used for the spring term will be the same one used for the fall term unless the information is changed.

Payday

You are paid on a bi-monthly pay system. If pay dates fall on a holiday or weekend, paychecks will be deposited on the workday prior to the weekend or holiday.

****Starting January 2026 paychecks will be deposited twice per month.***

What TECH expects of an FWS Student Worker

Along with the advantages and opportunities offered to students by FWS employment with the university, there are certain responsibilities and obligations you will be expected to meet:

- A TECH student's primary responsibility is to attend all class and laboratory meetings for those courses in which he/she is enrolled. **You must never work during a scheduled class time, even if that class is cancelled or given early dismissal.** In the cases of hybrid classes or alternate class times due to COVID, you must abide by the class schedule listed within the Student Job Portal. If you receive the alert, "Unable to clock in due to scheduled class time" that means you should not be working until your scheduled class time is over, regardless of that class's cancellation.
- Another responsibility is to do good work on the assignments given by your supervisor. Your supervisor is responsible for the work you complete, so respect their experience, listen to their instructions, and be sure to carry out said instructions promptly and to the best of your ability.
- In addition to following instructions, positions may require students to think for themselves, to ask questions, and make constructive suggestions. You will find that your supervisor is interested in your ideas and will appreciate your efforts.
- Doing a good job also implies certain other obligations on your part, such as maintaining good health and mental awareness, personal hygiene, and dressing and conducting yourself appropriately while working.
- The "personality" of the university is reflected in the personality of its employees and students. As a student worker, you are a part of the university's image. You represent the university to fellow students, faculty, staff, administration, and the public, so you should always treat them in a friendly and respectful manner.
- While working, you may learn a great deal about other students, parents of students, and university personnel. Such **information must be held in strict confidence and not discussed with others unless required in the official performance of duties.** This is especially true for students working in the placement of Bursar, Student Affairs, Counseling Center, Admissions, Residential Life, the CDL, and Financial Aid offices.
- ***All FWS student must be enrolled in at least 6 hours towards their course program of study (CPoS) to remain eligible for Federal Work Study.***

- The Office of Financial Aid follows the Confidentiality of Student Records and FERPA Compliance Policy 1206. Student workers may be required to sign a Statement of Confidentiality. The requirement of a signed confidentiality agreement is up to the discretion of each individual department. All compliance forms and records are to be maintained by each department as well.

I really don't feel like going to work today. Is that okay?

You are expected to arrive for work at the time assigned by your supervisor. Remember, only scheduled classes and labs should take priority over work. The only valid reasons for missing work are illness, emergencies, and attendance of scheduled classes and labs. Social activities, trips, and review/study for exams do not take priority over work assignments, unless previously cleared with a supervisor. If, for any reason, students are unable to be at work at their assigned time, *students must notify their supervisor prior to missing work.*

Can my friends come hang out? Can I have my phone while I'm at work?

You have accepted a job offer and are expected to work during your assigned times. Please ask friends/family to visit during nonwork hours.

While at work, you are expected to exercise discretion in using personal cellphones. Excessive personal calls during the workday can interfere with your productivity, be distracting to others, and/or cause a breach of confidentiality.

How do I answer the office phone?

Answering the telephone in a friendly manner shows the caller that you are interested in helping them. The principles given below can serve as your guide in using the telephone:

1. Answer promptly and courteously.
2. Identify yourself by name and department.
3. Give an accurate and careful answer.
4. When appropriate, offer to take a message or have the supervisor return the call.

Traffic on our telephones is especially heavy and lines must be kept open for university business. Therefore, you are not to use the telephone for personal business, except in a case of emergency.

Do I get paid for travel?

You are employed through Federal Work-Study (FWS) and may not count travel time as working time. For example: A student assigned as a physical therapist for athletics may not count the time to and from the game as time worked.

Can I work in what I wear to class?

You are expected to always present a neat and clean appearance while working. Each supervisor has the authority to require their workers to present a reasonable personal appearance concerning dress, hair, beards, and personal cleanliness. These rules may vary somewhat from one department to another, depending on responsibilities. If a supervisor or department has established a reasonable dress code, they must be applied to all employees in an equitable manner.

How do I know if I'm doing a good job?

Evaluation and feedback are provided on an ongoing basis by a supervisor. You may be counseled about areas where work is above average and where work improvement is needed. Open lines of communication between you and the supervisor play an important part in the success of the FWS program.

Performance factors that may be addressed either by evaluation or feedback include **Quality of Work** (accuracy, timeliness, neatness, and thoroughness), **Quantity of Work** (productive output), **Dependability** (follows instructions, shows good judgment, punctuality, and attendance), and **Compatibility** (attitude toward the university and supervision, cooperation with fellow employees and faculty).

I'm not happy in my job. Is it possible to switch positions?

To be considered for a new position, you must first submit a formal resignation email to your current supervisor and the Office of Financial Aid, notifying them of your intent to switch positions or search for another job. You should provide reasonable notice (no less than two weeks) to your current supervisor to allow them time to adjust working schedules and attempt to secure a replacement.

Once you have officially resigned from your current position, you will need to apply for new positions within the Student Job Portal. Please note that jobs are based on an entire award year, so **choosing to resign from a FWS position, for whatever reason, does not guarantee you a position in another department.**

Additionally, if you wish to cancel your FWS Award altogether, you must formally resign by notifying the Office of Financial Aid and your supervisor.

Declining a FWS Award or resigning from a position for one year does not jeopardize your FWS eligibility for future terms, but may affect a department's willingness to hire you again.

Discharges/Terminations – Appeal Process

If you fail to meet the requirements of your position as an FWS student worker, your supervisor has the right to terminate your employment with their department. **At no point may a supervisor or department deny you the right to earn your FWS award due to performance reasons.** A formal notice will be sent to your campus email stating the termination of your position and possible removal of your FWS Award.

If you wish to appeal the supervisor's termination of your position, you must submit a letter of appeal documenting the extenuating circumstances surrounding your termination to studentjobs@tnitech.edu within 14 days of the date of the termination memo.

Upon review, the Office of Financial Aid reserves the right to either:

- deny the termination appeal, resulting in the immediate removal of future FWS earnings, **or**
- approve the termination appeal, allowing you to continue utilizing your FWS award and seek new placement through Student Job Portal.

Will I get FWS again next year?

FWS is a need-based award determined by the FAFSA application and offered on a first come, first serve basis. **Due to limited funds, the FWS award is not guaranteed year to year.**

If you are not offered a FWS award next year, contact Student Jobs at studentjobs@tntech.edu and request that your name be placed on the FWS Waiting List. Make sure you include your full name and T# in the submitted email. Our office awards students on the Waiting List quite frequently throughout an aid year, so make sure you submit a request if you wish to obtain a FWS award.

I need help... what do I do?

Here at Tennessee Tech, we want you to know that we are here to support you. If you are having a difficult time coping with school, work, or day-to-day activities, please don't hesitate to reach out to your supervisor. If you don't feel comfortable making that connection, the [TN Tech Counseling Center](#) offers brief, short term, therapeutic interventions for our students. The staff of the Counseling Center are available to assist students with their personal and social concerns, as well as offer a wide range of mental health, educational, and consultative services to students. [Services](#) offered by the Counseling Center are free for enrolled students of Tech and are confidential.

TN Tech Counseling Center (931) 372-3331, RUC Room 307 or counsel@tntech.edu

Eagle Eye After Hours Crisis Hotline: (855) 206-8997

There is also an app for that! Well Track is an interactive self-help therapy app for Tech students. You can [visit here](#) for other helpful apps!

Policy on Nepotism

The Office of Financial Aid will follow the policy of nepotism set forth by Human Resources. The nepotism policy is designed to prevent occurrences whereby relatives who are employees of the university are in direct supervisory line with respect to each other. To guard against these practices, the university prohibits university full-time/ part-time students or temporary employees who are relatives from being placed within the same lines of supervision where one relative is responsible for supervising the job performance or work activity of another relative. For this policy, a "relative" means a parent, parent-in-law, child, spouse, brother, sister, grandparent, grandchild, spouse, son-in-law, brother-in-law, daughter-in-law, sister-in-law, or other family members who reside in the same household. To see the complete policy of nepotism, visit Policy Central (<https://tntech.policytech.com/>) and Policy No. 685. So, please be sure that you do not apply for a position under a family member!

FWS and COVID 19

The FWS program will adhere to policies set forth under [Return to Tech](#). It is up to you to adhere to the necessary COVID 19 policies set forth by your individual department. The Office of Financial Aid is not responsible for COVID guidance as it applies to students or the campus.

In Conclusion

We want you to have a positive experience as a work-study student worker. If you have any questions about your student employment, want to share your work experience, or just want your best bud to work alongside you, contact the Office of Financial Aid for more information at 931-372-3073, studentjobs@tnitech.edu, or visit us at Jere Whitson Building, 3rd Floor, Room 301.