



Handbook for Federal Work-Study Supervisors at Tennessee Tech University

Prepared by

The Office of Financial Aid

Tennessee Tech University

Box 5076

Cookeville, TN 38505

Phone (931) 372-3073

Fax (931) 372-6309

Financialaid@tntech.edu

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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Introduction

Dear Supervisor,

The Office of Financial Aid would like to express our gratitude for your participation in the Federal Work-Study (FWS) program. It's because of your participation that we can employ many talented Golden Eagles each year. Our campus job opportunities allow our students "self-help" financial aid and an opportunity for career, social, personal, and educational growth.

The Handbook for FWS Supervisors has been created to help you understand the FWS program and to help us better manage the program. We hope that you will take the time to read this handbook that has been prepared to better acquaint you with the FWS program requirements.

By understanding the goals of the FWS program, we hope that you will value being a part of this team. We encourage you to show your TECH pride by actively supervising your students and giving them real-life work experiences. With your cooperation, the goals of the university's Strategic Plan will be accomplished. We value your service to this university and to our Golden Eagles.

Best wishes for a successful work year!

Wings up,

The Office of Financial Aid

What is Federal Work-Study (FWS)?

The Federal Work-Study (FWS) program is a federally funded program designed to provide financial assistance to students through part-time employment. In addition to providing opportunities for students to earn a portion of their educational costs, the program provides experience in developing skills, innovation, and responsibility. Student development and preparation for the job market are fundamental goals of this program.

We seek to provide our FWS students with:

- Opportunities for Career Development
- Opportunities for Personal and Professional Growth
- An Environment to Serve Others
- “Self-help” Financial Aid with Less Long-Term Debt

Who is Eligible for FWS?

Students must demonstrate financial need to be eligible to participate in the FWS Program. This process requires students to submit the Free Application for Federal Student Aid (FAFSA). **Funding for the FWS program at Tennessee Tech University is limited; therefore, we can't emphasize enough the importance of early FAFSA application submission to our students. To work in a FWS position students must:**

- Be awarded an FWS by the Office of Financial Aid
- Be enrolled in at least six (6) credit hours towards their course program of study (CPoS) for Fall and Spring semesters
- Maintain Satisfactory Academic Progress (SAP)
- Beginning Fall 2026, All FWS student are required to work a minimum of 30 hours per term to be reviewed for eligibility for upcoming terms. For example, they must work a minimum of 30 hours in the Fall term to remain eligible for Spring term.
- Beginning Fall 2026, Pay will increase to \$12 per hour for all jobs & awards will increase to \$3,000 per aid year/ \$1,500 per term.

How are students awarded FWS?

Students who have been awarded FWS will receive an award notification email indicating the maximum amount they are eligible to earn for the entire award year. FWS awards may differ based on cost of attendance and other aid eligibility. Because of our limited funding, we are not able to offer a FWS award to all students who are deemed eligible. FWS is awarded on a first come, first serve basis, as determined by a student's FAFSA application submission time. Students are not guaranteed FWS eligibility for every year they are enrolled; eligibility is determined each year based on their updated information provided in the FAFSA. If you wish to check the FWS status of a previous hire, please reach out to studentjobs@tntech.edu mid-May when returning students are awarded.

Financial Aid Awards/Revisions/Increases

Students' awards are limited based on their cost of attendance. The Office of Financial Aid is required to prioritize financial aid; grants and scholarships have first priority, while FWS has second priority. A FWS Award may decrease at some point during the academic year if the student becomes eligible for additional grants or scholarships. Departments will be informed as soon as possible when these changes occur. Some students may become eligible to have their FWS award increased; the decision to increase a student's award is based on eligibility, funding availability, and work history. To request an increase, please wait until your student has earned 50% of their award and then send an email to studentjobs@tntech.edu. Please note, the Office of Financial Aid will do the utmost to accommodate all requests based on funding, eligibility, and department and student compliance.

Steps to Hiring FWS Students

- Complete a Job description and post on the Student Job Portal (SJP).
 - [Instruction for how to use the Student Job Portal.](#)
- Review the applications of students who applied for the job posted in the SJP.
- Select applicants for possible interviews or complete and submit a hire request to the Office of Financial Aid for approval. **We strongly encourage interviewing student applicants if your department has specific concerns or requirements for the position you list.**
- New FWS students must complete their I-9, W-4 and direct deposit forms. They may not begin work until all forms are submitted to the Office of Human Resources, Derryberry Hall, Room 146. All Federal Work Study Hire Dates for each year are listed [here](#).
- Once forms have been completed, Student Job Admins approve the submitted hire request and the student then has the option to either accept or decline the position offer in the Student Job Portal.
- Once the student has accepted, the supervisor and student receive an email stating they can begin working. We ask students to decline all other job offers once they have accepted a position in the Job Portal.

Payroll

Students are paid once a month, **on the 12th day of every month**, for work performed during the prior month. 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.**

- Students are encouraged to set up a direct deposit here:
<https://www.tntech.edu/businessoffice/payroll/forms.php>
- If a student has never received FWS pay and has not been previously enrolled in direct deposit, they will need to pick up their first check at the Bursar's Office in Derryberry Hall, 1st floor, Cashier Windows 1-4.

Students do not earn time for holidays, vacations, sickness, etc.

Submission of Monthly Timesheets

For each day your student works, they must clock in and out of their shift utilizing the Student Job Portal to remain compliant with not working during scheduled class time. If a student misses a clock-in/out or needs to correct an incorrect clock in/out, they must submit their timesheet to their supervisor so corrections can be made.

Additionally, supervisors can view their student workers' timesheets at any time by logging in to the Student Job Portal. It is strongly advised that all supervisors continue to monitor their students' timesheets throughout the academic year to make sure they are accurately recording their time and clocking in/out of work as required. If you notice any discrepancies in a student's timesheet, you should request that the student submit their timesheet to you, so the appropriate corrections are made. **Please note, students must submit their timesheets to supervisors before edits can be made.** Once edits are completed, supervisors can return the timesheet to their students. **It is highly recommended that you check for and resolve timesheet inaccuracies frequently and throughout any given work month instead of waiting until the payroll deadline.** If your student workers are not following these guidelines, please be sure to remind them that accurately reporting their work time is imperative and, if not done so, can result in the loss of the Federal Work Study award.

Please do not allow student employees to mass input hours at the end of each month or keep a handwritten log of hours. This is a violation of our compliance policy and directly effects the awarding of other campus-based aid programs.

On the last working day of each month, the student is required to submit their timesheet for review by 11:59PM on the last working day. The supervisor is then responsible for reviewing and approving the timesheet by 11:00AM on the first working day of each month. All missed punches should be corrected, either by the supervisor or the student. Our offices will send a monthly reminder to both supervisors and students to complete the timesheets at the end of each month.

If a student fails to clock hours worked, they will still need to be paid for hours. Unfortunately, these hours cannot be paid by FWS funds and will have to be paid for out of the department's budget. To do this, the supervisor will need to complete a [Student Employment Form](#) with Human Resources and work with the Payroll department to pay the student for the unpaid hours. There is no appeal process to keep departments from paying student workers in violation of this compliance policy.

Supervisor Responsibilities

- Must comply with the university's policy on Equal Opportunity and Sexual Harassment.
- Must comply with the university's policy on Equal Opportunity and Sexual Harassment.
- Must also comply with Title I of the Americans with Disabilities Act, which prohibits employers from discriminating against a "qualified individual with a disability" in all aspects of employment, including application for employment procedures, hiring, compensation, training, discharge, and benefits. Please visit [Policy Central](#) for more information.
- Be present – or have planned with a fellow full-time employee department/office member to be present in your absence – when FWS students are clocked in and working.
- Monitor total hours worked each month to ensure the student is not exceeding their awards or maximum hours per week.
- Notify the FWS Coordinator if the student worker has quit or has not reported to work.
- Assume full fiscal responsibility for earnings of students during any period when the student is or was ineligible to receive Federal Work Study funds (example: working during class time).
- Must notify the FWS Coordinator if a student worker has not fulfilled the responsibilities and obligations as required by the Handbook for Federal Work Study Student Workers. Supervisors will need to document all conversations and report those within a timely manner. Do not withhold disciplinary communication from FWS Specialist as we are here to assist each supervisor in correcting any issues to prevent loss of FWS employment.

Federal and Institutional Requirements

Due to the specific nature of the FWS Program, there are multiple federal & institutional requirements that must be followed to remain in compliance. Failure to comply with these requirements and deadline dates could result in your department's termination from the program.

Listed below are the requirements and deadline dates that you must fulfill to be a Federal Work Study supervisor.

1. All employing departments must read and follow the Handbook for Federal Work Study Supervisors and all procedures and instructions as stated. **The action of posting a job position**

within the Student Job Portal implies that the employing department supervisor has read the Handbook for FWS Supervisors.

2. The Office of Financial Aid must receive an up-to-date job description that lists the number of available FWS positions on file before a department may begin hiring for that job. If the department serves both FWS and University Academic Service scholarship students, they will need to make two job descriptions – one for FWS only and one for UAS only. Departments may also use our suggested job descriptions found [here](#). All job vacancies and job descriptions will be posted within Student Job Portal.
3. During the interview process or at the beginning of a student's employment within your department, please establish a work schedule with the student and explain the purpose/role of the job and general qualifications. ***Federal guidelines prohibit students from working during scheduled class times, even if the classes are cancelled or given early dismissal. Students may never work during a scheduled class time and report their hours as "other time worked."***
4. FWS students must clock in and out at the beginning and ending of each work shift to ensure working during class time is monitored as the class schedule exists for that day. ***Failure to clock in/out daily may result in the student losing their FWS award and the department paying for hours worked out of departmental funds.***
5. **Supervisors are accountable for the accuracy of the timesheet records, which are audited by state and federal authorities.** All time must be electronically approved by the supervisor no later than the 1st working day of every month within Student Job Portal. **We strongly recommend supervisors log in to Student Job Portal daily to confirm that students are correctly logging their work hours.**

Conditions of Employment

A. Awards are established for 5-10 hours a week for the student to work throughout the term. If a student and the supervising department agree, a student may be allowed to work additional hours if they are eligible to do so and the additional hours do not interfere with their scheduled class time. Doing so could result in the student reaching their maximum award faster and finishing their hours earlier in the term. Once a student has earned at least 50% of their reward, they may be eligible for an increase based on financial aid status and funding availability. To request an increase, please send an email to studentjobs@tntech.edu.

B. Under no circumstances should a student exceed 29 hours per week. If a student is working six hours or longer, they are required to take **at minimum** a 30-minute break during their shift.

C. If a student earns their maximum award for the fall term, they may not begin earning their spring term award early.

D. Students may never volunteer in positions in which they were previously paid.

E. A student must never be allowed to work when there is not a designated supervisor (paid university employee) present. If a supervisor is unavailable for a scheduled FWS student work shift due to illness or other university responsibilities, it is their responsibility to guarantee that a full-time employee is present to supervise student workers in their absence. Students and supervisors must consider how the combination of work and study hours will affect their health and academic progress when making their schedule for each term. Student schedules should not exceed the hours of availability under Scheduling Options located within the job description.

F. Student Job Portal will issue a warning alert to both the departmental supervisor and the student when the student's earnings are within \$500, \$250, and \$50 of their maximum award for the aid year. Student Job Portal will stop a student from clocking in for fall term once they have reached the 50% mark of their total award (typically \$1250 per term) or the end of the work period for fall semester - whichever comes first. Once the warning has been received, we strongly encourage supervisors meet with their students to reevaluate schedules as necessary to ensure the student does not exceed their award and the department is not left short-staffed. On the occasion that a Federal Work Study student worker reaches their maximum award limit, they may be hired as a regular student worker paid for by the department. Once the spring semester starts, the student worker will then resume earning their FWS award.

G. Students can only be employed in one FWS position at a time; however, the student may hold another non-FWS job.

H. Students may not work during their scheduled class periods, even if classes are cancelled, given early dismissal, or are considered Hybrid classes.

I. All supervisors are required to keep record of a proposed work schedule for each term for compliance purposes. This schedule must be emailed to studentjobs@tntech.edu within the first month of each semester. In the event of a National/State Emergency (such as COVID19) we must have a proposed work schedule on record to pay FWS earnings to students.

J. A student's FWS hourly salary will not be lower but may exceed the federal minimum wage. FWS students are currently earning \$10.00 per hour.

K. Replacement is interpreted as displacement. **Replacing a fulltime employee whose position was eliminated (for any reason) with a student employee paid with FWS funds is prohibited.** The FWS program is an award and not intended to provide a short staffing solution.

Failure to adhere to the above Conditions of Employment may result in your department losing the ability to hire and employ FWS students.

Confidentiality of Student Records and FERPA Compliance

The Office of Financial Aid will follow the Confidentiality of Student Records and FERPA Compliance Policy 1206. To see the policy, visit [Policy Central](#). The requirement of a signed confidentiality agreement is up to the discretion of each individual office. All compliance forms and records are to be maintained by each office as well.

Cell Phone Use and FWS Employees

When it comes to supervisors texting student workers, the Office of Financial Aid suggests evaluating whether there needs to be a record of the conversation – either for legal reasons, or record keeping purposes.

Texting can open the university up to various legal issues, so supervisors must be cautious. Because text messages can be deleted, supervisors have a duty to preserve text messages related to work. We strongly encourage the use of texting programs (such as Tech Connect) owned by the university. It is also acceptable to communicate to your student employees via campus email.

FWS and COVID 19

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

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. In order 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 the purpose of 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](#) and Policy No. 685.

Evaluations and Feedback

Supervisors should provide evaluations and feedback on an ongoing basis. Students may be counseled about areas where work is above average and where improvement is needed. Open lines of communication between the supervisor and the student play an important role 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). Should there be any major disciplinary issues, please document all conversations and forward onto the FWS Specialist as soon as possible. This allows the Office of Financial Aid to try to resolve any issues prior to the loss of the FWS student worker.

Please email studentjobs@tntech.edu for a student worker evaluation form if your department does not already have one in place.

New Placement and Resignation

To be considered for a new placement, students must formally resign in writing from their current FWS position by notifying both the Office of Financial Aid and their supervisor. Students should provide reasonable notice (no less than two weeks) to their present supervisor. This courtesy of advance notice will allow the supervisor time to adjust working schedules and attempt to secure a replacement.

Students must then search for additional placement opportunities within Student Job Portal. Please note that job postings are based on an entire award year. **The resignation of a student worker does not guarantee additional availability for transfer to another department or guarantee the department will receive an additional student to fill their recently vacated position.** Supervisors will need to work with the FWS Coordinator to post, hire, and fill the vacant position.

A Note Concerning Unforeseen Circumstances

The Office of Financial Aid adheres to **Policy 141 (Prohibited Discrimination and Harassment)** for all Federal Work Study Students.

If a FWS student reports feeling harassed or discriminated against in their current position for any reason, it is the supervisor's responsibility to relay this information to Human Resources and the current Federal Work Study Coordinator or have the student contact the Federal Work Study Coordinator in the Office of Financial Aid so that they are made aware of the situation and can assist the student if needed. If necessary, it is the supervisor's responsibility to support the student while the Financial Aid Office helps the student seek out a new FWS position with another department.

Please note that failure to follow these procedures may result in your department losing the ability to hire and employ FWS students.

Discharge/Termination – The Appeal Process

If a student fails to meet the requirements of his/her position as a FWS student worker, the student's supervisor has the right to terminate their employment. The Office of Financial Aid requests that supervisors **document** discussions with students leading up to possible termination:

- Issue 1- Verbal evaluation/feedback.
- Issue 2- Written notice accompanied by a verbal evaluation/feedback- Supervisor/student signs.
- Issue 3- The supervisor emails student directly (individually) and CC: studentjobs@tnitech.edu stating the reasons why they no longer wish to employ the student.

At no point may a supervisor or department deny the FWS student the right to earn their FWS award due to Performance Factors, such as removing them from the work schedule. If a student wishes to appeal the supervisor's request for termination, they must submit a letter of appeal documenting the extenuating circumstances surrounding their termination to studentjobs@tnitech.edu within 14 days of the student receiving a termination memo from the Office of Financial Aid.

Upon review of the appeal, 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, resulting in allowing the student to continue to receive the FWS award and seek new placement through the Student Job Portal.

A department choosing to terminate their FWS student does not guarantee the department will receive an additional student to fill their recently vacated position. Supervisors will need to work with The Office of Financial Aid to post, hire, and fill the vacant position.

Supervisory Changes and Training

Please notify the Office of Financial Aid at studentjobs@tnitech.edu of any personnel changes as soon as possible. Failure to report changes in personnel could lead to timesheet submission issues and create confidentiality problems. The Department will need to provide the new supervisor's or supervisors' name(s), location(s), email(s), and phone number(s). Additionally, if your department moves locations on campus, please notify us of your new campus location. Departmental supervisors are not chosen by The Office of

Financial Aid. Should you have a question on why you are the departmental supervisor, please contact your Department Chair or Head.

Training materials can be found within Student Job Portal and Departmental Supervisor Financial Aid website: <https://www.tnitech.edu/private/facstaff/financialaid/index.php> . As new training materials become available, we will update the above sites. *New supervisors are encouraged to request training by emailing studentjobs@tnitech.edu and complete training as soon as possible.*

TN Tech Counseling Center

Part of our role as supervisors is to keep an eye on our students, look for signs of concern, and contact them if something seems out of the norm. Below is an excerpt from the TN Tech Counseling Center's website of Signs of Distress or Disturbance to keep an eye out for:

- A student seems excessively tired, anxious, depressed, irritable, angry, or sad.
- You notice marked changes in a student's appearance or habits (e.g., deterioration in grooming, hygiene, marked change in weight, hyperactivity or exhaustion, interpersonal withdrawal, acceleration in activity or speech, or change in academic performance and classroom participation and/or attendance).
- A student seems hopeless or helpless.
- Use of alcohol or other substances interferes with a student's relationships or work.
- Emotional over-reaction such as spells of crying, outbursts of anger, over-sensitivity.
- Excessive contemplations or worry.
- Thoughts or actions that appear bizarre or unusual.
- Physical complaints of unknown origin (e.g., headaches, skeletal pain, frequent illness).
- Inability to concentrate or focus, persistent memory lapses, restlessness.

If you have a student who misses multiple work shifts, seems withdrawn, or doesn't work well with others, please don't assume they are a "bad" student and write them off. DO NOT BE AFRAID TO REACH OUT. Ask questions, dig deeper. You might just save their life or the lives of others.

TN Tech Counseling Center (931) 372-3331, RUC Room 307 or email them at counsel@tnitech.edu

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

If you would like more information about the TN Tech Counseling Center and what is available, what to look for, or how to prepare for different situations, [visit their site](#) for workshops, help guides, and more.

In Conclusion

We want you to have a successful experience as an FWS supervisor. Our office is here to support you in your supervisor role. If you have any questions about FWS student employment, please contact the Office of Financial Aid at 931-372-6733, email us at studentjobs@tnitech.edu or visit us at Jere Whitson Building, 3rd Floor, Room 301.

All questions regarding University Academic Service (UAS) Scholarship students should be directed to The Office of Scholarships at scholarships@tnitech.edu or 931-372-6159.