INTRODUCTION

This handbook is designed to provide the FWS supervisor with the policies and procedures of Greenfield Community College’s Federal Work Study Program (FWS) and to help answer commonly asked questions. Supervisors are responsible for reading the handbook and being familiar with its policies and procedures.

If a student has questions or concerns regarding FWS job qualifications, or a conflict in the workplace, the student should first discuss the matter with the supervisor. The financial aid office is available to help the student determine award eligibility and assistance with FWS related documentation.

Notification of a Work Study Award (FWSP) is made through an award letter from the Financial Aid Office. Only students with a FWSP award are eligible to apply to FWS positions. The financial aid will verify the student’s FWSP eligibility on a term basis. Jobs become available throughout the year as students leave GCC or are dismissed from their positions; therefore, we encourage all students to review the list of available jobs throughout the school year.
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INTERVIEWING AND HIRING THE FWS STUDENT

Students contact supervisors directly about job openings in the manner indicated on the supervisor’s job posting (ex., in-person, phone, email, etc.) The FWS Supervisor is responsible for setting up interviews and making final hiring decisions.

Although we do not provide specific guidelines for interviewing potential student employees, here are some suggestions you may want to consider:

- It is usually preferable for the interviewer to be the person to whom the student will report. This gives both parties an opportunity to clarify job roles and expectations before a commitment is made to hire.

- It is a good idea to prepare for the interview by developing a clear job description, identifying essential functions of the job, identifying skills necessary to perform job, and developing questions to determine skills.

- If the position requires a specific set of skills, like data entry, spreadsheet creation, software maintenance, etc., you may want to develop a skills-based test as part of the interview process. GCC’s Human Resources Office can suggest online resources for developing skill-based tests.

- Ask each student similar questions so the interviewer is able to compare answers.

- It is beneficial, during the interview process, to provide the applicant with a job description to ensure s/he has a clear understanding of job responsibilities, skill requirements, etc.

- When hiring Federal Work-Study eligible students, it is important that both the employer and the applicant recognize the amount of hours the applicant is able to work based on his or her FWS award and class schedule.

Does the financial aid office pre-select FWS student workers?
The financial aid office determines the student’s eligibility for a federal work study award based on several criteria presented on the student’s FAFSA application. We do not interview students or collect references to determine the student’s hiring qualifications.

As a FWS Supervisor it’s important for you to know that students with Federal Work Study Awards are not guaranteed automatic job placement, rather, like any part-time employment, jobs are available to which the student worker submits an application. The FWS Supervisor makes her own hiring decisions based on the student application and interview.
Can I require the student to complete an application form?
Clearly stating your expectations during the interview and hiring process may alleviate workplace conflicts and confusion in the long run. Departments, both on and off-campus, have the right to use a FWS job application form. Some departments on campus already use an application form and find it helpful during the hiring process.

I’ve just hired a student worker, are there any required forms?
Absolutely!

- *GCC Federal Work-Study Job Authorization/Acceptance Form* – this tells us that you hired a student worker and initiates the payroll authorization for your FWS allotment. You and the student must complete and sign the Job Authorization form every term, even if the same student continues to work for you throughout the year. *Whenever you hire a student, you and the student must complete this form and hand it in to the financial aid office. Your student will not be paid if this form is not returned to the financial aid office.*

Can a FWS student worker be dismissed from FWS employment?
As with any employment, each student is responsible for working arranged hours. Punctual, efficient, and cooperative performance on the job is always expected. If illness, study obligations, or some other unforeseen circumstance prevents a student from working, he/she must notify his/her supervisor in advance. Failure to report without adequate reason may result in termination of employment and disqualification for future work study.

Student workers can be released from their FWS job at the Supervisor’s discretion. Reasons for dismal include, but are not limited to the same conditions as any other part-time employment, like not adhering to department policies and procedures, regularly missing work days/times, failure to communicate absences with the FWS Supervisor in a timely manner, and not completing work as assigned.

**SOME GUIDLINES FOR DISMISSING THE STUDENT WORKER**

There are many reasons student dismissal is necessary and student workers can be released from their FWS job at the Supervisor’s discretion. Reasons for dismal include, but are not limited to the same conditions as any other part-time employment, like not adhering to department policies and procedures, regularly missing work days/times, failure to communicate absences with the FWS Supervisor in a timely manner, and not completing work as assigned.
Probationary periods
Sometimes students cannot master the necessary skills to complete their assigned tasks. Quickly identify performance problems and communicate these problems to the student clearly so action can be taken. Special arrangements may be needed to deal with new student workers still in their learning phase. Consider setting a specific time frame in which the student is allowed to develop the necessary skills and increase job performance. Evaluate the student’s performance and have frequent discussions with the student during this period. Let the student know how well s/he is progressing. Thoroughly document everything.

Dismissing a FWS student can be difficult and should be done carefully and with consideration. Although we do not provide specific guidelines for dismissing student employees, here are some suggestions you may want to consider:

- **Never** dismiss the student via voice mail or email. Dismissals should always be done in person in a private meeting. Include only you, the student, and your supervisor if you feel it’s necessary.

- **Be prepared and be specific.** If you issued the student warnings and asked him to stop the misconduct or improve the poor performance, have the history of the incidences and warnings with you. (It is advisable that these be given before any dismissal).

- **The employee should be given the reasons for the decision that you eventually reach.** Have examples ready for discussion.

- **Keep the dismissal meeting short.** Simply state that you have made this decision and today is the student’s last day of FWS employment.

- **Contact the Human Resources Office for suggestions and support, before the meeting occurs.**

- **Refer them back to the financial aid office to obtain a listing of currently available jobs on campus.**
KEY POINTS REGARDING THE WORK STUDY PROGRAM

Federal Law clearly stipulates that students cannot work during scheduled class time. It is the responsibility of both the FWS Supervisor and student worker to set forth a work schedule that accommodates the student’s class schedule. Students can work when classes are canceled, but the Supervisor must include this information on the time sheet which is submitted to payroll.

Allowable Work Hours

- Work hours should be scheduled at a mutually agreeable time between student and supervisor.
- *Federal regulations prohibit scheduling work hours or working during scheduled class periods.*
- Work done during a regularly scheduled class period because a class was cancelled, etc. must be noted on the time sheet.
- It must be indicated in the appropriate column of the time sheet, next to the hours worked - "CLASS CANCELLED” and initialed.
- Student must stop working when they reach their CWS award amount.

SUMMER WORK STUDY

There are a small number of positions available during the summer terms.

The **Summer I session** begins shortly after the spring semester ends and runs through the third week in June. You don’t have to be enrolled during the summer to qualify for Summer I FWS but you must have been enrolled during the spring semester.

The **Summer II session** begins a new school year. In order to qualify the student must have a completed [FAFSA application](#) for the new school year and have received a FWSP award. You don’t have to be enrolled during the summer to qualify for Summer II FWS but you must be enrolled for the fall semester.

A FEW NOTES FOR FWS SUPERVISORS

Employment Conditions and Limitations

A school must make FWS jobs reasonably available to all eligible students at the school. *To the maximum extent possible, a school must provide FWS jobs that complement and reinforce each recipient’s educational program or career goals.*
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General Restrictions on Employment
FWS employment must not displace employees or impair existing service contracts. Also, if the school has an employment agreement with an organization in the private sector, the organization’s employees must not be replaced with FWS students. Replacement is interpreted as displacement. At GCC, this means that students cannot be hired to assist any department that finds itself short-staffed.

Under no circumstances can FWS wages be earned for hours worked while fulfilling course requirements. Even if an internship or practicum may be a part of a degree requirement, it does not qualify as CWS. Work Study wages may not be paid for receiving instruction in a classroom or any other academic setting.

SUPERVISOR FREQUENTLY ASKED QUESTIONS

How is Federal Work Study Funded at GCC?
Every year the college submits the "Fiscal Operations Report and Application to Participate (FISAP)" for the three Campus-Based programs: Federal Perkins Loan, Federal Supplemental Educational Opportunity Grant (FSEOG), and Federal Work-Study (FWS).

The Department of Education awards the college FWS funding annually based on the data provided in the FISAP report and the availability of federal funding for Title IV programs. GCC’s federal work study award has remained level funded as far back as 2003. Historically federal funding has made up 93% of the college’s overall FWSP budget.

Why isn’t FWS considered to be a part of my annual department budget at GCC?
FWS is federal financial aid awarded to the college solely to provide financially eligible students with the opportunity to earn money through on/off-campus employment. Your department receives an annually allocation in order to provide employment positions to these students.

What if my student worker wants to receive payment for his hours in one lump-sum?
Students must be paid for the hours they work as that work is completed. No student can request that his/her timesheets be "held" for any extended period of time. The FWS fund functions like a regular payroll account and cannot be used as a pseudo savings plan. Failure to submit time sheets on a regular basis will result in loss of pay.

Both the financial aid office and payroll monitor the fund on a bi-weekly basis as a normal part of funds management. Therefore, it’s crucial for us to be aware of expenditures as they occur.

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Why do I have to submit time-sheets on a regular basis?
The FWS Fund functions as a payroll fund and the fund balance must be reconciled on bi-weekly and monthly basis. GCC provides monthly reconciliation records to federal and state auditors upon their request. Accurate record keeping depends on the regular and timely submission of time sheets.

When is it ok for the student worker to submit his or her own timesheets to payroll?
It is the FWS Supervisor's responsibility to submit the signed time sheets to payroll on a regular basis. This responsibility rests solely with the supervisor. Under NO circumstance should a student worker ever be given the time sheet once it is signed by the supervisor.

Who has the authority to sign FWS time sheets in my absence?
Only you have the authority to sign your student worker’s timesheets. You can however, in advance, make arrangements with the financial aid office for another staff member to provide a signature in your absence. We must have the appropriate supervisor approval and signatures on file and ready to provide to the auditors upon their request.

By signing the time sheet you are verifying that the student worked the hours noted on the sheet and that the student is indeed entitled to receive a payment for those hours.

If you’d like to grant another staff member the authority to sign and submit your student worker’s time sheet, just call the financial aid office and we can send you the proper form.

How does payroll work for FWS students?
Greenfield Community College pays student employees on a biweekly basis by direct deposit or check, on the identical schedule to other college employees. Students submit timesheets to their supervisors who verify the hours worked and forward the Timesheets to Bjorn Silvia in Payroll every Wednesday.

Supervisors contact Bjorn Silvia in Payroll at x1316 to request Timesheets. Bjorn can also be reached at SilviaB@gcc.mass.edu.

Copies of the most recent payroll calendar are available in the financial aid office.

My student worker works on Fridays. Can I sign off on her projected Friday hours to get the time sheet turned in on time each week?
If your student is reliable and you know that she will come in on Friday, you can go ahead and submit the timesheet. If for some reason she doesn’t come in, you can submit a correction to the timesheet, but the correction must be submitted to payroll by Monday afternoon.
COMMUNITY SERVICE JOBS AND AMERICA READS

Employing an FWS student in these positions serves the needs of the community and gives the FWS student an enriching and rewarding experience. Each school must use at least 7% of its FWS allocation to employ students in community service jobs. Community Service jobs can be either on-campus or off-campus. Nonprofit agencies can qualify as community service employers if the work performed meets the definition of community services in the regulations.

At least one of the FWS students whom GCC employs to fulfill this requirement must perform family literacy activities in a family literacy project that provides services to families with preschool age children or elementary school children; or, serve as a reading tutor for children who are preschool age or are in elementary school.

Community services eligible for FWS

Community services are defined as “services that are identified by an institution of higher education through formal or informal consultation with local nonprofit, government, and community-based organizations, as designed to improve the quality of life for community residents, particularly low-income individuals, or to solve particular problems related to their needs”.

There is no restriction as to whether these jobs are located on or off-campus. At GCC these services are provided through the following on/off-campus locations:

**America Reads Program**
- Big Brothers/Big Sisters
- Greenfield Community College’s Library Services
- The Greenfield Public Library
- The Literacy Project
- The Wheeler Memorial Library

**Community Service**
- Franklin County Courthouse
- The Greenfield Housing Authority
- GCC Office of Public Safety

To be considered employed in a community service job for FWS purposes, a FWS student does not have to provide a “direct” service. On-campus jobs can meet the definition of community services, provided that the services are designed to improve the quality of life for college and community residents, or to solve problems related to their needs, and that they meet the regulatory and statutory provisions pertaining to the applicable FWS Program employment limitations and conditions.
Off-Campus Agreements
If you are an off-campus organization wanting to employ GCC FWS students, you must enter into a written agreement—a contract—with the Office of Financial Aid at the college. Contracts are renewed on an annual basis.

Before an agreement can be entered into, GCC must make sure the off-campus organization is a reliable agency with professional direction and staff and that the work to be performed is consistent with the purpose of the FWS Program.

The agreement specifies what share, if any, of the student’s compensation and other costs will be paid by the off-campus organization. All off-campus agencies should contact Amy Proietti, Coordinator of Financial Aid, atmailto:proietti@gcc.mass.edu to make off-campus FWS arrangements and obtain yearly contracts.