College Work-Study Handbook

Introduction
The work-study program is another type of financial aid for undergraduate college students, which provides part-time employment to assist with their educational costs. Unlike other employment, employers understand that the students’ education comes first. They ensure that their job duties and class schedule does not interfere with school performance.

Work-study jobs are either:

- On campus in various college departments
- Off campus in non-profit, governmental, or other community based organizations

TSC pays work-study and student-employees on a bi-weekly basis and at least the federal hourly minimum wage. All students considered for employment under the college work-study program are given an equal opportunity without discrimination on the basis of race, religion, color, natural origin, gender, age or handicap.

TSC participates in two work-study programs:

- Federal Work-Study (FWS) Program, funded under the authority of Higher Education Act of 1965 (as amended under Title IV, Part C; 42 U.S.C. 2751-2756b) and administered by the U.S. Department of Education, and the
- Texas College Work-Study Program funded by the State of Texas and administered by the Texas Higher Education Coordinating Board (THECB).

Advantages and Disadvantages of Work-Study for the Student

Advantages

- Gains work experience;
- Possibility of full-time position after receiving associate degree;
- Employing departments work around student’s class schedule;
- Develops friendships among other student-employees during college years;
- Transportation cost savings (student already on campus).

Disadvantages

- Pay rate is at least the federal minimum wage;
- May only work a maximum of 19 hours per week.
Applying for Work-Study and Eligibility
The TSC Financial Aid Office will consider students for work-study who:

- Submit a Free Application for Federal Student Aid (FAFSA). Students must submit a FAFSA for each academic year in which they want to participate in the work-study program.
- Are citizens or permanent resident of the U.S.
- Have financial need, as defined by work-study program regulations.
- Meet Satisfactory Academic Progress (SAP) requirements.
- Are registered at least half-time:
  - 6 credit hours in fall or spring semesters, and
  - 1 credit hour each summer session.

Not all students who qualify for work-study will secure employment:

- There are limited funds for work-study programs.
- There are limited jobs available.
- The Financial Aid Office cannot over-award students. At any time, the work-study award may be reduced or cancelled for some students to adjust unmet need against other types of financial aid, such as scholarships, state grants, student loans and/or sponsorships.

Hiring Process
Hiring a work-study student-employee is a process involving the student, the departmental supervisor, the Financial Aid Office and Human Resources:

1. Student reviews the work-study vacancy list posted online in the Financial Aid website and submits the following documents to the Financial Aid Office first:
   - A resume with 3 references
   - A valid photo identification card
   - A copy of the students’ Social Security card
2. Financial Aid will pre-screen the applicant.
3. If eligible, student submits a resume to the hiring department.
4. Hiring department schedules interviews with successful candidates.
5. Supervisor conducts friendly, professional personal interviews with each candidate in which they:
   - Question the student about their experience, strengths and abilities.
   - Allow the student ample time to respond and clarify their answers.
   - Thank the student for their interest and time.
   - Conclude the interview.
   - Supervisor calls the references listed in resume
7. Financial Aid Office fills out the “College Work-Study Referral Form”. The referral specifies the number of hours and maximum total pay for which the student is qualified.

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9. Human Resources conducts Criminal Background Check (CBC). Once the CBC has cleared, Human Resources signs the “Referral Form” and returns it to Financial Aid Office.

10. The Financial Aid Office processes the “Referral Form” and notifies the hiring department of approval.

11. The hiring department will then contact the student to fill out additional employment verification forms with Human Resources.

12. Supervisor and student accepting work-study position will:
   - Review the “College Work-Study Job Referral” and “College Work-Study Program Contract”.
   - Agree to terms in the contract.
   - Sign the “College Work-Study Referral Form” and the “College Work-Study Program Contract”.

13. Supervisor returns the signed “College Work-Study Job Referral” and “College Work-Study Program Contract” to the Financial Aid Office.

14. Student is now ready to begin employment at Texas Southmost College.

**Timecards and Payroll**

TSC pays work-study and student employees on a bi-weekly basis, at the beginning and middle of the month, according to payroll schedule. All work-study student employees must complete a semi-monthly timecard and submit before 10 a.m. on the due date as noted on the payroll schedule:

1. Student completes the time card.
2. Supervisor reviews the timecard, comparing to student’s log sheet.
3. Both, the student and supervisor sign the timecard.
4. Student and supervisor make a copy of timecard for their records.
5. Student or supervisor (or designee) submits the timecard to the Finance Office by 10 a.m. on the pay period deadline. The Finance Office will not pay students for late timecards until the following pay period.
6. Payroll will either send a check to the student employee’s department on the scheduled payday, or make a direct deposit to their bank account.

**Transferring to Another Position**

Work-study student employees may transfer from one position to another, but may only:

- Transfer at the beginning or end of a payroll period.
- Hold one position at the college at a time, including non-work-study positions.

To transfer, the student employee’s current departmental supervisor must submit a “College Work-Study Employee Evaluation-Termination Notice” to the TSC Financial Aid Office.

**Evaluations**

Supervisors give student employees an evaluation (review) at the end of each academic year and summer session. The supervisor:

1. Completes a “College Work-Study Employee Evaluation/Termination Notice”.
2. Evaluates the student employee’s performance.
3. Modifies the student employee’s duties, if needed.
4. Shares the evaluation with the student employee, providing:
Areas of improvement
- Praise for successes
- Submits the form to the TSC Financial Aid Office by the end of the semester.

Grievances

Student employees have the right to submit a written grievance (appeal or complaint) regarding working conditions that they feel are unjust or inappropriate. They should follow these procedures:

1. Student employee meets with the supervisor to explain the student employee’s concerns. The student employee and the supervisor should attempt to resolve the problem and define a solution.
2. Student employee meets with the department head or office director if a reasonable amount of time has passed and the supervisor has not resolved the problem.
3. Student employee sends the Financial Aid Office a written grievance within 30 days of meeting with the department head or director if they have not resolved the problem.
4. Financial Aid Office mediates between the supervisor and the student employee and helps define a solution.
5. Student employee sends a written grievance to the Vice President of Student Services or Human Resources, or both, if they feel that their problems have not been addressed.

Note: Supervisors may also submit a written grievance by adapting the above procedure.

The Financial Aid Office is available to students and supervisors at any time for advice and information about policies, procedures and interpretations relative to student employment and work-study programs.

Terminating Employment

Voluntary Termination (Resignation)

A student has the right to terminate their work-study employment at any time.
- The student must provide a two-week written notice.
- The supervisor must complete and submit a “College Work-Study Evaluation-Termination Notice” to the Financial Aid Office on the same day as termination.

Involuntary Termination for Job Performance Problems

Supervisors must follow counseling process for student-employees with job performance problems before terminating them:

1. Privately explain to the student how they are not meeting expectations and help them develop an improvement plan.
2. Allow a reasonable amount of time for the student to improve and provide them verbal direction during this time.
3. Inform the student in writing how they fail to meet expectations, if they have not improved, and give them a deadline to meet improvement goals.
4. Meet with the student-employee and an impartial witness to tell them you are terminating their employment, if they have not improved.
5. Outline in detail how they have not met expectations.
   - Avoid argument; stay calm.
   - Assure the student-employee that you will respect their confidentiality about the termination.
   - Mention the student’s positive attributes as an employee (if applicable).
6. Complete and submit a “College Work-Study Evaluation-Termination Notice” to the Financial Aid Office on the same day as termination.

**Involuntary Termination for Impersonal Reasons**

Supervisors may terminate student-employees involuntarily for reasons not related to the student’s performance, such as budget constraints or scheduling problems. To terminate student-employees for impersonal reasons, the supervisor must:

- Give a two-week notice to the student-employee. Try to give the student-employee notice at the beginning of the pay period so that they can obtain another position without losing pay.
- Complete and submit a “College Work-Style Evaluation-Termination Notice” to the Financial Aid Office on the same day as termination.

**Requesting a Work-Study Student Employee**

College departments can request work-study student employees from the Financial Aid Office. The steps are:

1. Department determines the required number of work-study positions needed for the academic year.
2. Department completes a “College Work-Study Request and Justification” form. Departments use the same form for requesting both rehires and new student employees.
3. Financial Aid Director determines the number of positions granted to each requesting department, after the college work-study budget has been approved.
4. Financial Aid Office prepares a “College Work-Study Referral Form” for student employees, advertises vacancies, or both.

Note that the departments pay 25 percent of the salary of each work-study student employee, whether the work-study position is funded through the federal or state work-study programs.

**Rights and Responsibilities**

**Student Employee**

- Inquire about your award amount, rate of pay, and the number of weekly work hours stated on your “College Work-Study Referral Form”. You have a right to this information.
- Find a suitable job by getting a clear description of the assignment and the supervisor’s expectations.
- Follow the proper hiring procedures. Review the “Hiring Process” section.
- Track your hours each payroll period.
  - Work no more than 19 hours a week
  - Work no more than the maximum hours stated on the “College Work-Study Job Referral Form”
  - Do not work extra hours voluntarily
  - Put your school before your job
  - Submit your timecard to payroll on time
- Perform your assigned tasks in an efficient, timely manner.
- Adhere to all ethical and privacy rules required by the college and your employing department. Ask your supervisor for clarification if necessary.
• Notify your supervisor immediately when illness or other circumstances keep you from coming to work. Ask your supervisor ahead of time how to best notify them.
• Do not abuse rest and coffee breaks. This privilege is up to the discretion of your supervisor.
• Follow the correct procedures for changing work-study jobs and resigning. See “Transferring to Another Position” and “Terminating Employment” sections of the handbook.
• Wear attire must be suitable for the office.

**Supervisor**

• Ensure that a full-time employee of your department supervises all student employees.
• Follow all the proper procedures for requesting a work-study student employee. See “Requesting a Work-Study student employee” section of the handbook.
• Define and clearly communicate to the student, before they accept the position:
  - Work schedule and hours (work with the student's class schedule)
  - Pay rate
  - Job expectations
  - Nature of the work
  - Policies and procedures
  - Expected duration of employment
• **Ensure that all student employees read the “College Work-Study Program Handbook” on their first day of work.**
• Train the student employee on all assigned duties and tasks.
• Track the student employee’s balance of hours each pay period.
• Verify that the hours on the student employee’s timecard are correct before signing it.
• Keep separate file for each student employee’s records, such as timecards and class schedule.
• Ensure that the student employee complies with all rules and regulations listed in the “College Work-Study Program Handbook.”
• Evaluate the student employee at the end of each semester. See “Evaluations”.
• **Mentor our student employee. The role of the supervisor is that of a teacher who trains, motivates, communicates, guides and evaluates the student employee.**

**NOTE To Supervisors: Working during scheduled class time is prohibited!**

*In general, students are not permitted to work in work-study positions during scheduled class times. Exceptions are permitted if an individual class is cancelled or if the instructor has excused the student from attending for a particular day. Any such exemptions must be documented.*