



# Student Employer Handbook

A guide for Widener student employee supervisors



Widener University

## **Introduction**

This handbook is designed to give supervisors a basic understanding of the student employment programs and administration at Widener University. The success of the programs, as an aid to both students and the University, depends on an active partnership among students, the departments and the Financial Aid Services Office. The Financial Aid Services Office serves as the Student Employment Office at Widener. We believe that the information in this handbook will encourage your active participation in the future development of the student employment program at the University.

We in the Financial Aid Services Office hope you will contact us if you have any questions after reading this handbook or at any other time.

## **Student Employment at Widener: Two Distinct Categories**

### **I. Federal Work Study Program**

Widener's on-campus FWS program provides employment in University departments to qualified students, based on need, to help defray some of the student's educational expenses. The program allows students to develop academically, professionally and socially through their work experience. To work in a FWS position, the student must apply for financial aid via the FAFSA and be awarded FWS funds. The FWS program encourages community service activities whenever feasible.

Under the guidance of Federal regulations, the University is responsible for the day-to-day operation of the program. This operation includes eligibility determination, job evaluation, placement management, overall program supervision, record-keeping, student payroll and reporting.

Students are paid with a combination of Federal and University funds. A majority of the funding, seventy-five percent, is federally based while twenty-five percent is University based. Thus, a department budget is only charged for 25% of a student's gross earnings.

### **II. Widener Institutional Student Employment (full pay non work-study)**

Under this program, students who do not qualify for FWS funds, or have used all of their FWS award, may still be eligible to work in selected University positions.

Students are paid solely with University funds. All of the student's earnings are charged to the department's budget.

## **Employer Participation**

Any campus department with a budget allocation for Federal Work Study or Widener Student Institutional Employment may apply to participate in the student employment program.

Prospective student employment supervisors must annually review rate according to tier and wage rate guidelines and submit Job Descriptions to the Financial Aid Services Office to renew participation.

The Financial Aid Services Office will review all student employment positions submitted and approve them based on campus employment practices, along with state and Federal regulations.

Employers may not employ students in jobs that are not annually reviewed and approved by the Financial Aid Services Office.

### **Employment Conditions and Limitations**

All students must have a completed Student Employment Agreement on file in the Financial Aid Services Office for the job they are to perform **before** starting work in that position. Employers who habitually have students begin working before having a valid student worker agreement on file with FAS and the Payroll Office may lose their ability to hire student employees.

New Student Employment Agreements must be filed for each student at the beginning of the term of employment. New employment agreements are required at the beginning of the summer semester and beginning of the fall semester. The only time that a student does not have to complete a new Student Employment Agreement is at the beginning of the spring semester if the student worked in the same position for the same department during the fall semester.

A New Student Employment Agreement must be completed for each student who changes jobs within a department.

No student may ever serve in a capacity as another student's supervisor. Only regular University employees may serve as supervisors of student employees.

No student may ever request or receive a Student Employment Agreement for another student.

All student employees must be paid for all hours worked. The Fair Labor Standards Act of 1938, as amended, prohibits workers from volunteering their services after their eligibility for employment is exhausted.

### **Student Eligibility**

To participate in the student employment program, students must meet the following criteria:

Students must be determined to be eligible to work in the United States according to guidelines and regulations of the Department of Home Land Security.

Students must have a completed Student Employment Agreement on file in the Financial Aid Services Office for each position before beginning work.

Students must complete an IRS Form W-4 and a DHS Form I-9. DHS Form I-9 requires either one or two forms of original identification be provided in person at Lipka Hall. The most common forms of identification submitted by our students include an original passport, or a picture ID along with an original Social Security card or birth certificate.

Students must provide all requested documentation to the Financial Aid Services Office.

### **Regulations specific to the FWS Program:**

Students in FWS positions may not complete job assignments that would be considered:

- Lobbying on the Federal level

- A profit-making activity
- Partisan or non-partisan political activities
- Construction, operation or maintenance of any part of a facility used for Religious or sectarian worship
- Promotion of religion or of a religious belief

FWS employment must not displace employees or impair existing service agreements. Replacement is interpreted as displacement.

Students must have all applicable local, Federal and state taxes deducted as required by law.

Students must be matriculated and enrolled for each semester working, except in the summer, when they must be registered for the upcoming fall semester.

### **Criteria specific to FWS student-employees:**

Students must be enrolled at least half-time per semester. Students who choose to work during the summer do not have to be enrolled for summer classes, but they must register for at least six credits for the upcoming fall semester.

Students must have completed the financial aid application process and been awarded FWS eligibility by the Financial Aid Services Office.

Students may not begin working until their financial aid packages are finalized. Students may not work on campus using FWS funds until they have received their completed financial aid award letter.

Students must maintain satisfactory academic progress in accordance with the University's policies and those set forth in the Financial Aid Handbook.

Students may not displace regular employees.

### **Regulations specific to the FWS Program:**

Once a student has earned his or her maximum FWS award, he or she must stop working in the program. If it is mutually acceptable, and the department has funding for non-work study student payroll, the student may continue in the same job as a non-work study student employee. Employers must notify the Financial Aid Office if a student will be continuing in the same position payed as a non-work study student employee. Students who continue in the same position after FWS eligibility has been exhausted may need a new Student Employment Agreement.

Unused FWS eligibility cannot be carried from one award year to the next.

### **Hiring Procedures**

It is the policy of Widener University that to the extent possible, departments must hire student employees with Federal Work Study eligibility before hiring non-FWS-eligible students. Before hiring a non-FWS employee, supervisors should ensure that they have no FWS-eligible

students interested in the job and check with the Financial Aid Services Office that there are no FWS-eligible students who are currently seeking employment.

The following is the procedure to hire student employees:

1. Determine the student staffing needs of your department and your budgetary constraints related to filling those needs. Please note, the Financial Aid Office does not keep track of individual department budgets.
2. Complete a job posting through the Handshake portal for each position you need to fill noting the job title, number of students required, the hours per week required of students, the requested wage of the position, the skills required, a description of the responsibilities the position entails and whether the position is a FWS position or not.
3. The Financial Aid Services Office will be notified of the posting in Handshake and will either approve or deny the job application.
4. Students will contact the position supervisor directly for an interview either through Handshake or via email.
5. If you wish to hire the student, you should send the student to the Financial Aid Services Office to get a Student Employment Agreement with sections A and B completed by the Student Financial Services Office. The position supervisor should complete section C and have the student complete section D. The supervisor keeps the yellow copy of the Agreement for department records and gives the pink copy to the student. The white copy is returned to the Financial Aid Services Office.
6. Section C of the Student Employment Agreement should be filled out in its entirety. If Department account numbers or position numbers are unknown or not yet created, contact the Budget Office for assistance.
7. Departments wishing to hire a student for more than one position will need separate agreements for each position.
8. The student may begin work only **after** the Student Employment Agreement has been completed. Any hours worked by the student prior to completing the Agreement will be charged 100% to the department budget regardless of the student's possible eligibility for FWS funding.
9. If the student has not completed verification, the department will be notified that he or she is not eligible for the FWS program and his or her wages will be fully charged to the department.

### **Summer Agreements**

Students must complete a new Student Employment Agreement for the summer before they may begin working. Summer Student Employment Agreements expire no later than the day before the start of the fall semester.

Students who have applied for or intend to apply for financial aid must also have their eligibility for FWS determined before they may begin working.

## Wage Rates

### **Undergraduate Wage Rates for the 2022-2023 Academic Year.**

#### **Tier 1**

The starting wage rate in the student employment program for first-time, entry-level student workers will be **\$7.25** per hour.

Examples of positions in this wage class are: lab or hall monitors, general office worker, etc. These jobs require little responsibility, independent judgment or training and should be paid at the lowest wage rate.

#### **Tier 2**

Positions that require additional responsibility and training may be paid at a higher rate. For example, students employed in positions that require previous training, significant interaction with the public and some independent judgment will be **\$7.50** per hour. Examples include money handlers, student tutors and assistants with specialized training and responsibilities.

#### **Tier 3**

Students with special skills or extensive experience and training qualify for the third wage rate of **\$8.00** per hour. Examples of these kinds of skills would be computer programming, life-saving ability, or ability to work on independent projects.

#### **Tier 4**

**Widener Reads/Counts Program** is for work-study eligible students only that are interested in going off campus to tutor children in reading and math. This special program is compensated at the rate of **\$12.00** per hour. Students meeting the requirements are to contact the Widener Reads/Counts Program Office.

#### **Tier 5**

**Graduate students** whose job responsibilities require a bachelor's degree qualify for **\$13.85** per hour. Students must be performing work that requires the degree to qualify for this wage. ***If a student has a bachelor's degree but performs tasks similar to a Tier 1, 2, or 3 position, the student must be paid according to the lower tier wage rate.***

### **Merit/Seniority Increases**

Every September, departments may review student employees for wage increases. Students who worked in the same department in the same job the previous year and accrued at least 170 hours of service in that year may be granted a **wage increase of up to \$0.25 per hour** at the supervisor's discretion.

Students may not receive pay increases during the year unless they change positions to a job in another tier. A change such as this requires the completion of a new Student Employment Agreement.

Departments are responsible to report the tier level for each job they want to fill. The job title, tier level and wage rate for each student must be reported on his or her Student Employment Agreement. Any Student Employment Agreement that is submitted without a wage rate will be processed **at the Tier 1 rate of \$7.25**.

The Financial Aid Services Office will review all wage rates submitted and approve them based on campus employment practices and Federal regulations.

The wage rate policy will be reviewed by the University on an annual basis.

### **Work Schedules**

Supervisors are encouraged to plan student time for the entire period of employment in order to use student help efficiently. Care must be taken so that an FWS-eligible student does not prematurely deplete or exceed his or her eligibility.

Students may only be paid for hours actually worked. For example: a 9:00 a.m. to 5:00 p.m. work day in a typical University office is seven hours of work and one hour lunch for student employees. Students who work for the Maintenance Department may have a work day that consists of 7:00 a.m. to 3:30 p.m. with a one-half hour unpaid lunch. Students cannot be paid for lunch or coffee breaks, sick leave, inclement weather days, vacation days, holidays or overtime.

Undergraduate students may work up to 20 hours per week during the academic term and up to 30 hours per week during any time school is not in session. Graduate students may work up to 25 hours per week when enrolled in courses and 30 hours per week when they are not enrolled in courses. These totals include all Widener employment if students are working multiple jobs.

Over periods of non-attendance (Fall Break, Thanksgiving, between fall and spring semesters, Mid-Term Break, Spring Break and summer) students may work up to 25 hours per week if the break is five days or longer. In the case of breaks shorter than five days, a student may work up to eight hours per day, but no more than 30 hours in a week. It is University policy that students should not work more than 8 hours per day regardless of whether class is in session, as it would be considered overtime.

Graduating seniors must stop working on the last day of the spring semester.

A student who is not actively taking courses over the summer semester may begin working 30 hours per week for summer break as soon as the spring semester is officially ended according to academic calendar.

Student scheduling should take into account how the combination of work, study hours, classes and other activities will affect the student's health and academic progress.

Students may not work when they should be attending a scheduled class.

FWS employers are expected to supervise and keep records of hours worked by FWS students. FWS students may not work hours that would result in earning beyond their award.

FWS employers are notified when an FWS student employee is within \$500 of their

earnings limit. The student is also notified via Widener email. These notices are sent as a courtesy of the FAS office; employers are still individually responsible for keeping track of all student employee earnings.

### **Changes to FWS Award**

To ensure that all aid does not exceed a student's financial need, it may be necessary to reduce or cancel a student's FWS award. Supervisors should note that these changes could occur at any time during the year. It is the responsibility of the student-employee to keep track of any changes to their award eligibility sent via MyWidener, and to update their supervisors accordingly.

Students who have their FWS award eliminated because they failed to complete verification will cause their employing department to be fully charged for their earnings at the regular rate rather than at the 25% FWS rate.

### **Payroll**

Student payroll is processed by the University on a bi-weekly basis. Supervisors are required to submit approved hours online via Web Time Entry to the Payroll Office no later than 10am on the Monday preceding a payday. The Payroll Office is located on the Ground Floor of Old Main. A schedule of timesheet due dates/paydays is available from the Payroll Office and also Financial Aid. The Payroll Office makes this schedule and guidelines for timesheets completion available to students and employers each fiscal year.

It is the student's responsibility to properly submit their time via Web Time Entry and submit them to their supervisor for review and signature. The **supervisor** must submit them to the Payroll Office by the payroll deadline.

Timesheets must be turned in every two weeks for any student who worked at all during that two week period. Failure to properly complete a timesheet may result in a delayed paycheck for students.

Students must have a completed Student Employment Agreement on file in the Student Financial Services Office by noon on the Thursday preceding the end of their first payment period. No student may begin work until this Agreement has been turned in to the Student Financial Services Office. Failure to turn in the completed Student Employment Agreement by the Thursday preceding the end of their first payment period may result in pay being delayed until the next pay period.

**\*\*\*It is required that each student worker complete a direct deposit form to have their paycheck deposited directly into their bank account.**

### **Confidentiality**

It is understood that some student employment jobs may allow students access to information that must be treated as confidential. Such information may relate to University business, student information (particularly academic, disciplinary, counseling and/or financial information), computer records and/or other matters. Supervisors are responsible for the proper training and supervision of students with access to any information that could be confidential. Because of the importance of confidentiality, any breach, either deliberate or through carelessness, will be grounds for dismissal from the Student Employment Program. Cases involving confidentiality breaches should be referred to the Dean of Student Life for adjudication.

### **Termination**

Supervisors are requested to submit written notification to the Financial Aid Services Office when a student is terminated for cause.

Once you hire a student, the student's continued employment is contingent on satisfactory job performance. Satisfactory performance includes, but is not limited to: reporting to work on time, promptly and accurately completing all work assignments, maintaining appropriate office behavior, as well as meeting the expectations detailed during the initial interview and training period.

Unsatisfactory job performance should be handled within the employing department. Prior to termination for cause, the supervisor will provide verbal warnings indicating the nature of the problem and suggestions for improvement. Additional infractions should prompt written warning notices with a copy sent to the Financial Aid Services Office. Continued unsatisfactory performance will ultimately result in termination.

Student forgery or fraud relating to completion of a timesheet is grounds for immediate dismissal from the Student Employment Program. Any violation of the University's Student Code of Conduct while students are at work or that in any way pertains to their employment by the University may be grounds for dismissal from the Student Employment Program. Cases of this nature should be referred to the Dean of Student Life for adjudication.

Students who feel that they have been unfairly terminated should be referred to the Work Study Coordinator in the Financial Aid Services Office.

### **Troubled Students**

Supervisors often have the opportunity to note when students are having personal troubles. Some symptoms of distress are perfectly normal during exam times and should disappear when academic stresses subside. When these symptoms occur during times of lower academic demand, it may indicate a more serious problem. It is not the supervisor's responsibility to step into a student's world, yet when job performance is affected a supervisor needs to know the cause. Often a quick reminder to the student that his/her job performance is lagging will trigger a helpful conversation that results in a student getting back on track. In some cases, it is obvious that severe stress and/or other problems are affecting job performance and probably other areas of a student's life. At this point it is advisable to consult with the Dean of Student Life, or the Counseling Center. These offices have staff members trained to help students with a wide range of difficulties.

## **Reapplication**

New FWS student eligibility and position approvals must be established every year. Because students are not automatically eligible for FWS from one year to the next, students must be re-hired every year. FWS eligibility is need-based, and student need and funding levels can change from year to year. No students can be carried from one year to the next without completing the hiring process again. New Student Employment Agreements must be completed for each student at the beginning of each summer and fall term, or at any other time they begin or change jobs in the department.

## **Graduate Students**

**Graduate Assistants (GAs)** are full-time students (except in the final semester of study or summer term) who shall only have functions that support the academic enterprise, and that directly relate to their master's or doctoral degree program. There are two types of graduate assistantships:

- **Graduate Assistantship - Regular**: These graduate assistants receive at least partial tuition waiver plus stipend OR at least a partial tuition waiver only.
- **Graduate Assistantship – Grant/Special**: These graduate assistants receive a stipend only, which must be based on no less than Pennsylvania or Federal minimum wage, whichever is higher.

Both types of assistantships require up to 20 hours of academic work per week. Permissible responsibilities include (1) supporting faculty in research, (2) supporting faculty in instructional support activities, or (3) duties that provide the student with a clinical or practical application of their graduate program theory to practice (e.g. MBA students working in Marketing; Higher Education students working in Student Affairs, etc.). Graduate Assistants must be supervised by a faculty member in an academic unit or a professional staff member in an administrative unit. They shall not be assigned to clerical duties, or used to replace what would typically be a staff position. Graduate Assistants are not permitted to work as an employee elsewhere on campus in any capacity.

Graduate Assistant stipends will be paid on a prorated basis over the course of the semester. Tuition waivers may be taxable as income for the student, depending on federal law at the time of the appointment. All hiring of Graduate Assistants takes place through the Financial Aid Services Office (Lipka Hall). Prior to filing paperwork with Financial Aid Services, a position description must be submitted to the Associate Provost for Graduate Studies to ensure compliance with the policy as outlined above and verify eligibility for admission/enrollment in a graduate degree program.

Graduate Assistants are not permitted to teach as Adjunct Instructors on campus during the term of the assistantship agreement.

**Graduate Administrative Assistants (GAAs)** are full-time graduate students (except in the final semester of study or summer term) who provide administrative/clerical support to academic and non-academic programs. They are compensated with a stipend (which must be based on no less than Pennsylvania or Federal minimum wage, whichever is higher) and at least a partial tuition waiver in exchange for up to 20 hours of work per week. This tuition waiver may be taxable as income for the student, depending on federal law at the time of the appointment. GAA responsibilities are administrative, clerical, or professional in nature and consist of duties unrelated to research, instruction or clinical practice. Any full-time student accepted into a master's or doctoral degree program may be appointed as a GAA, and may be placed in any unit on campus regardless of academic degree program. Graduate Administrative Assistants are not permitted to work as an employee elsewhere on campus in any capacity, and are not eligible to serve as an adjunct instructor on campus during the term of their GA agreement.

Graduate Assistant stipends will be paid on a prorated basis over the course of the semester. All hiring of Graduate Administrative Assistants takes place through the Financial Aid Services Office (Lipka Hall).

**Graduate Student Employees (GSEs)** may be part-time or full-time graduate students. They are paid an hourly wage (no less than Pennsylvania or Federal minimum wage, whichever is higher), may work up to but no more than 20 hours per week, and are subject to federal work study regulations based on placement. Graduate Student Employees may be paid through federal work study, if student is eligible, or institutional work study if departmental budget is available. They are not eligible for tuition remission or waiver. Their work assignments may include administrative, programmatic and/or clerical work, and should be defined by a job description developed by the hiring manager. All hiring of Graduate Student Employees takes place through the Financial Aid Services Office (Lipka Hall).

Graduate Student Employees working 10 or fewer hours per week may also serve as an Adjunct Instructor for a maximum of one course per semester during the period in which they are employed, provided such appointment is deemed appropriate by the academic department or program, and approved by the college/school dean and Associate Provost for Graduate Studies.

**Graduate Student – Adjunct Instructor** Graduate students serving as Adjunct Instructors shall be subject to and must adhere to the same guidelines as other adjunct faculty working in the same academic department or program, and are paid a stipend for their work. They are not eligible for tuition remission, waiver, or other benefits, and must work fewer than twenty (20) hours per week. All hiring of graduate students serving as Adjunct Instructors takes place through the office of Human Resources.

***Graduate Assistants and Graduate Administrative Assistants are not permitted to teach as an Adjunct Instructor on campus during the term of their assistantship agreement.***

## **International Students**

International students must be approved for employment by the International Student Services (ISS) Office before seeking employment at the University. Once an employment position is secured, international students must apply for a Social Security Number or a copy of an application for a Social Security number on file with Lipka Hall prior to working. If a student does not currently have a Social Security Number, they must apply through the Social Security Office. Once a Social Security card is received, it is the responsibility of the student to bring the original documentation to Lipka Hall so that a copy can be kept on file. International students also need to obtain a completed International Permission to Work form from the ISS Office each academic year in which they are working.

### **Important Program Contacts:**

**\*New general email for worker and employer questions: [workstudymc@widener.edu](mailto:workstudymc@widener.edu)**

**Those who answer this email, processes all initial paperwork and student employment agreements. They are available for specific and/or detailed questions relating to the program.**

**Wendy Kern ext. 4167 [wgkern@widener.edu](mailto:wgkern@widener.edu)**

Wendy approves all position announcements. She is also available for specific and/or detailed questions relating to the program.

**Lori Carney, Payroll ext. 4597 [lscarney@widener.edu](mailto:lscarney@widener.edu)**

Payroll processes Student Employment agreements and student timesheets for payroll. She prepares student payroll checks for all students submitting timesheets who have a current, completed Student Employment Agreement on file. Payroll can answer questions about a student's specific paycheck or timesheet.

*It is the policy of Widener University not to discriminate on the basis of sex, handicap, disability, race, age, color, religion, national or ethnic origin, marital status, or sexual or affectional preference in its educational programs, admissions policies, employment practices, financial aid, or other school-administered programs. This policy is enforced by federal law under Title IX of the Education Amendments of 1972, Title IV of the Civil Rights Act of 1964, Section 504 of the Rehabilitation Act of 1973, and the Americans With Disabilities Act of 1990. Further, in compliance with state and federal laws, Widener University will provide the following information upon request: a) copies of documents pertinent to the University's accreditations, approvals or licensing by external associations, agencies or governmental bodies; b) reports on crime statistics and information on safety policies, procedures and preventative programs; c) information regarding gender equity among the University's men's and women's intercollegiate athletic programs. Requests for any of the above information and questions or comments regarding these policies should be directed to the Assistant to the President for University Relations, Widener University, One University Place, Chester, PA 19013-5792, (610) 499-4123.*