



# **STUDENT EMPLOYMENT**

# **AT SUNY POTSDAM**

Handbook for Students and Supervisors

Federal Work-study and  
Student Assistantship Payrolls

*Prepared by the Offices of  
One Stop And  
Human Resources*

*Revised 2025*

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## **A. Who is Eligible for Student Employment?**

Student employment is available to undergraduate and graduate students currently enrolled in classes at the State University of New York under the Student Assistantship Program or the Federal Work-study Program. Students who have withdrawn, have been dismissed from school or have graduated must immediately stop work.

### **1. Student Assistantship Program**

All registered students are eligible for employment under this program, regardless of the number of courses for which they are enrolled. No demonstrated financial need required. The maximum number of hours that can be worked during the Thursday through Wednesday work week is **29**.

### **2. Federal Work-study Program**

#### **(a) What is the Federal Work-study Program?**

Federal Work-study is a federally funded financial aid program. Students who work under this program will receive a paycheck that can be used to assist with their educational expenses. In addition, this program provides students with valuable job experience within the campus administrative and academic settings as well as off-campus community service locations.

The Federal Work-study program at SUNY Potsdam follows the guidelines set forth by the Federal Department of Education, namely:

- To encourage part-time employment of students who demonstrate financial need;
- To provide these same students with practical job experiences that may prove beneficial to them when they leave SUNY Potsdam; and
- To provide work assistance to the college's academic and administrative departments in carrying out their operations.

#### **(b) Who is Eligible for Federal Work-Study?**

Federal Work-study is available to undergraduate and graduate students. Eligibility is based on documented financial need and, if eligible, students can earn up to the packaged award amount during the academic year.

To be eligible to participate in the FWS program, a student must:

- Have a high school diploma or recognized equivalent
- Be enrolled at least half-time as a matriculated student
- Be either a U.S. citizen or eligible non-citizen
- Be making satisfactory progress in a degree program
- Demonstrate financial need (as determined on their financial aid application)
- Complete the Free Application for Federal Student Aid (FAFSA) each academic year.

#### **(c) How Do Students Apply for Federal Work-study monies?**

Students who wish to be considered must:

- Complete the Free Application for Federal Student Aid (FAFSA).
- Once received by the Financial Aid Office, applications are reviewed to determine which students demonstrate financial need.
- Once eligibility has been determined, students will receive an award notification indicating that they have been awarded Federal Work-study for the academic year. The Work-study award must be accepted in BearPAWS by the deadline indicated in the notification.
- Federal Work-study funds are limited and are awarded on a first-come, first-served basis.

- (d) Proof of Eligibility for Federal Work-study  
Students who have accepted an award can see the verification on BearPaws.

### **3. Employment of International Students**

All students must have a US Social Security number to be placed on the payroll. A college assigned number cannot be used for payroll processing. Students wishing to apply for a social security number should contact the local Social Security Office to obtain the appropriate application and necessary documentation that will be required by the Social Security Administration Office.

Students who are non-US citizens must report to the Human Resources Office with the appropriate visa documentation. Please note that per USCIS regulations, students in F-1 status are allowed to work **20 hours per week** during school session, and may work full-time during official school breaks.

## **B. Student Assistantship Budget Allocations/Federal Work-study Awards**

### **1. Student Assistantship Budget Allocations**

Student Assistantship allocations are funded by departmental funds.

### **2. Federal Work-Study**

The FWS program is a federally funded initiative. Therefore, supervisors are encouraged to expend all FWS funds before expending departmental funds. This also helps to ensure that SUNY Potsdam utilizes all of the annual FWS allocation given to the university by the federal government. Department allocations for FWS funds are reviewed annually by the Financial Aid Office. It is very important that a student does not earn more than their award, and that the department does not spend more than the department allocation. The maximum earnings for each federal work-study student is determined by the amount of the Work-study Award. If the department lets the student work more hours than the award allows, the department will be responsible for transferring the student to a student assistantship position and will need to fund those additional hours with departmental funds.

At the point of hire, students and supervisors should discuss the maximum earnings allowed for the appointment. A procedure should be established to ensure that the student's earnings are monitored against the available award or allocation that was granted. For example, a spreadsheet could be used to track hours worked and ending with the available balance. A sample Excel version of an Expenditure Tracking Spreadsheet is available on the web at: <http://www.potsdam.edu/offices/hr/student>.

**Students must stop working when their allocation is exhausted!**

Departmental representatives may also obtain a summary of student earnings via the BI Dashboard to verify the charges to their accounts are correct. Contact the Business Affairs Office for more information.

## **C. Summer Jobs (Student Assistantships)**

There are a limited number of summer positions available for student assistantships in the summer. Students may only work a maximum of **29** hours per week. To be eligible for summer student employment, a student must be enrolled in classes at a SUNY institution in the summer or upcoming Fall Semester. If not enrolled at SUNY Potsdam, the student will be required to submit to the Office of Human Resources official notification of their enrollment at the other SUNY school. Once a student graduates they are no longer eligible to work as they are no longer a student.

## **D. How Do Students Apply for Jobs**

Employing departments announce job openings for students by posting the job in [Handshake](#). It is the student's responsibility to contact the department directly if interested in the position posted. Departments conduct their own applicant interview process.

### **Sample Interview Topics**

- Detailed description of job requirements, attendance, performance, and any skills required or preferred
- Rate of pay
- Schedule of hours (Be sure the student can work the number of hours per week that is expected. Also be sure that the student's class schedule does not conflict with the times he/she would be expected to work)
- Discuss any training that might be available to the student
- Discuss departmental policies relating to confidentiality, professionalism, phone courtesy, dress, breaks and absences
- It is an expectation that the student will commit to work the agreed upon schedule. If conflicts arise, discuss expectations of how to request permission in advance to be absent, or outline who the student should contact if a last minute absence should be necessary.

## **E. Rates of Pay**

Students are employed at varying rates of pay. Differences in pay are dependent upon the funding source from which they are paid, job duties, how long they have been in the same job, etc.

Effective 1/1/2026, the new minimum hourly rate is \$16.00. The maximum rate is set by the funding source, but no more than \$28.27 per hour.

Students are not eligible for overtime pay.

### **\* Minimum Wage Increases**

Changes to the minimum wage are generally done for Jan 1<sup>st</sup> of each year, subject to an indexed schedule to be set by the Director of the Division of the Budget in consultation with the Department of Labor following an annual review of the impact.

#### **1. Federal Work-study**

Federal Work-study students can be paid from a minimum of \$16.00 per hour, up to a maximum of \$28.27 per hour with increments of up to 25 - 50 cents an hour. The student's wage may be increased for the following reasons:

- If the student is returning to the same position as the year before.
- If the position has a higher skill level requirement.
- If this is a hard-to-fill position. For example, based on the type of job or the time of the job.

**Please note that the higher the rate a student is paid, the fewer hours it will take that student to earn their award.**

It is not acceptable to base the wage rate on need or any other factor not related to the student's skills or job description.

To calculate how many weeks a student can work, multiply the number of hours per week the student can earn by the hourly rate, then divide that amount into the total award amount (example 6 hrs per week x \$16.00 per hour = \$96.00 weekly. \$2000 divided by \$96.00 weekly = 20.75 weeks).

Please be extremely cautious, as with each student earning different pay rates it will be very easy for departments to over-expend their total allocation. Please monitor your payroll expenditures frequently, as your allocation is for the academic year and cannot be increased. It is advised to keep an Expenditure Tracking Spreadsheet for each student. One can be found at: <http://www.potsdam.edu/offices/hr/student>.

## **2. Student Assistantships That Are Funded By Departments**

Student assistantships that are funded by departments can be paid from a minimum of \$16.00\* per hour, up to a maximum of \$28.27 per hour with increments of up to 25 - 50 cents an hour. The student's wage may be increased for the following reasons:

- If the student is returning to the same position as the year before.
- If the position has a higher skill level requirement.
- If this is a hard-to-fill position. For example, based on the type of job or the time of the job.

The same pay rate incentives listed above for the Federal Work-study students also apply to these assistantships.

## **F. Work Schedules/Breaks**

Although it is not always recommended, students who are in good academic standing may be allowed to work no more than 29 hours a week while classes are in session, under the Student Assistantship program. Students who are struggling academically should continue to be limited to 20 hours per week. Students are allowed to work up to a maximum of 29 hours per week (for those students working in multiple positions, this is a combination of all hours submitted - not 29 hours per position).

**The exceptions to this rule are F-1 students and Federal Work-Study students who are only allowed to work a maximum of 20 hours per week while school is in session.**

Students working more than 6 hours are required to take a one-half hour break, which must be recorded on the time record.

Breaks should be established for the student employees in the same manner as granted to other employees within your department.

## **G. Benefits**

Students are in the non-competitive class of Civil Service and are not assigned to a bargaining unit. No fringe benefits are accorded to individuals in these positions. Their work status is temporary and no long-term commitments are possible. Student employees are paid at an hourly rate only for hours actually worked.

### **1. New York State Employees' Retirement System**

Student employees are eligible to enroll in the New York State Employee's Retirement System. Enrollment requires a 3% salary contribution to the Retirement System. The equivalent of ten years of full-time service is needed to become eligible for pension benefits. For more information on the Employees' Retirement System, please visit [www.osc.state.ny.us/retire/](http://www.osc.state.ny.us/retire/). Interested students should contact the Office of Human Resources to enroll.

### **2. Worker's Compensation**

Student Employees are covered by the College's Worker's Compensation Policy. If injured while on-the-job, the student should complete an Accident Report form, available from the

Office of Human Resources as soon as possible. Students should call the accident into the 1-888-800-0029 number and write the assigned number on the top of the accident form and return it to Human Resources. They should seek medical care if needed by a facility that accepts workers comp. All bills should be directed to the New York State Insurance Fund. If prescriptions are needed, the pharmacy should be told it is a work-related injury, and these too should be billed to the New York State Insurance Fund. Students are not paid for time lost due to injury.

### **3. Supplemental Retirement Annuity**

The State University of New York provides employees with the opportunity to save for their retirement through the SUNY Voluntary 403(b) Tax-Deferred Annuity Program and the NYS Deferred Compensation Plan. Participating in a tax-deferred voluntary savings plan is a great way to build your retirement savings and reduce current taxes. All employees, including students, are eligible to participate in the SUNY Voluntary Savings Programs. More information is available at: <http://www.suny.edu/benefits/vsp/>.

## **H. Social Security and Medicare Withholdings**

Student employees are typically exempt from Social Security and Medicare withholdings as long as they are enrolled full-time in classes. During the summer, FICA is withheld from student checks unless they are enrolled in a minimum of 6 credit hours for summer classes. Students holding J-1 and F-1 visas are always exempt.

## **I. Forms Required for Appointment to The Payroll**

The employing department representative and newly hired student must complete the:

- Student Employment Appointment Form
- Confidentiality Statement
- Form I-9 Employment Eligibility Verification, and
- Form W-4 Federal Employee's Withholding Allowance Certificate
- Form IT-2104 NYS Employee's Withholding Allowance Certificate or  
IT-2104E Certificate of Exemption from NYS Withholding

These forms must be **fully completed** and delivered to Human Resources **before** their first day of work begins. Appointments to the appropriate payroll cannot be processed until all forms are complete and filed with Human Resources. Do not allow a student to begin work until these forms are completed and delivered to Human Resources. Appointments to the payroll system are processed on a biweekly cycle with a strict deadline schedule imposed by the Office of the State Comptroller. Any contracts not received by the appropriate deadline will have to be recorded within the next payroll cycle, which will result in a delay in the first paycheck.

### **1. Student Employment Appointment Form**

Student Employment Forms are available on the [Student Employment web page](#). These forms contain the basic appointment information (appointment dates, pay rate, account number to be charged, as well as information relating to the student employee).

Any change to this initial data (pay rate, account number, appointment dates) will require an email be sent to Human Resources with the effective date of the change(s).

### **2. I-9 Form Employment Eligibility Verification**

This form is required by federal law to show eligibility to work in the United States. To complete the I-9 Form, students must present the original copies (photocopies are not acceptable) of the documents listed on the I-9 Form. One document from list A, or a combination of one document from list B and one from list C is required. Without this form,

the student cannot be hired or paid.

### **3. Tax Withholding Forms**

Student salaries are subject to federal and New York State tax withholdings. All student employees must complete a W-4 form and either a IT-2104 NYS Employee's Withholding Allowance Certificate or a IT-2104E NYS Certificate of Exemption from Withholding. These forms should be read carefully to determine the appropriate withholding status. Students ARE NOT automatically exempt from tax withholding.

### **J. Time Records**

The Office of Human Resources uses an electronic time reporting system called SUNY HR, which is accessible from any computer with internet access. Timesheets are completed electronically via SUNY HR under Time and Attendance, the direct link to SUNY HR is [www.suny.edu/hrportal](http://www.suny.edu/hrportal).

Student employees are paid at an hourly rate only for actual hours worked which must be indicated in one-quarter hour increments (i.e. 2:15 pm – 4:45 pm, not 2:17 pm – 4:43 pm). It is very important that the student complete the appropriate time record for the job they are hired under. Please keep in mind that time records cannot be accessed until the Student Employment Form, the I-9 and tax forms are on file in Human Resources.

Students and supervisors should review each time record for accuracy and completeness before submitting to Human Resources for processing. Please remember, it is the responsibility of the student and the supervisor to insure that the information provided is as accurate as possible.

You will know the student has been hired by reviewing your **Supervisor Work Roster**. A PowerPoint of the directions to use the Time and Attendance system for both the students and supervisors can be found at: <http://www.potsdam.edu/offices/hr/student>.

Students and supervisors should make sure time records are submitted to the Human Resources Office by the established deadlines. Time records received after the established deadline will be processed with the next payroll cycle. The deadlines are strict deadlines set by the Office of the State Comptroller. They are not campus deadlines that can be changed for "special circumstances".

### **K. Paychecks**

Paychecks are issued on a delayed biweekly cycle, on Thursdays. Paychecks are automatically mailed to the home address, unless enrolled in direct deposit. Please share a copy of the Payroll Calendar with your student or have them visit the Student Employment webpage under Human Resources at [www.potsdam.edu/offices/hr/student](http://www.potsdam.edu/offices/hr/student).

### **L. Direct Deposit**

Direct deposit offers you a safer, faster and easier way to receive your pay. Students may have their paychecks (or just a portion of each paycheck) deposited electronically into their checking and/or savings accounts -- at one or more financial institutions.

To enroll in direct deposit, simply complete the direct deposit form. One can be found at <http://www.potsdam.edu/offices/hr/student>. You will also need to obtain documentation from your bank that shows your entire routing number and account number. This document could be a letter from the bank, copy of a bank statement, a voided check.

Student may now elect to opt-out of receiving an advice if they are 100% enrolled in Direct Deposit. In SUNY HR where students complete their time record there is also an icon labeled "NYS Payroll Online", this is where students will go to opt-out of their advice. Once they log in

they will choose the option to Update Pay Statement Option.

#### **M. W-2 Forms**

W-2 forms report the student's earnings for the calendar year, and are necessary for filing federal and state tax returns. W-2 forms are printed by the Office of the State Comptroller in Albany and are mailed to the address that appears on the paycheck/direct deposit advice. Students should notify Human Resources of all home address changes. The payroll address information is not updated from the Bearpaws system.

#### **N. Self-Service Options**

By choosing the icon "NYS Payroll Online" in [SUNY HR](#) students have the ability to do the following:

- View Paychecks – view your past and present pay stubs
- Add/Update/View Direct Deposit Account(s) – add, update and view own direct deposit
- Go Paperless – opt out of receiving printed pay stubs
- Update Tax Withholding – view and update your Federal, State, and Local tax withholding information
- View W-2 – View and print your past and present W-2s

#### **O. Student Rights**

- Receive confidentiality in all matters relating to your financial background and award.
- Be given meaningful work in an amount sufficient to earn your full award/allocation.
- Contact the Financial Aid Office or Human Resources Office if a serious matter develops in the work situation that cannot be solved.
- Know the reasons for being dismissed.

#### **P. Responsibilities of Students**

- Contact supervisors to arrange interviews.
- Submit all required paperwork to the Office of Human Resources prior to beginning work.
- Honor the employment contract for the entire academic year. Once the work begins, the student should remain employed with the employer for the period specified. The student should understand the job requirements before agreeing to be hired.
- Report to work on time each scheduled day. If there is a need to be absent due to illness, it is your responsibility to contact the supervisor immediately. Permission to be absent should be requested, not expected.
- Maintain the same standards of conduct as those expected of other employees.
- Dress appropriately for the work environment.
- Act in a professional manner.
- Maintain confidentiality at all times.
- Report actual hours worked on each time record. Under no circumstances may non-worked hours be reported.
- Keep track of your earnings. Discuss with your supervisor the maximum amount you are allocated to earn. Federal Work-study students cannot earn more than their award amount.
- Discuss with your supervisor any intentions of terminating employment. You should give your supervisor two weeks notice.
- Ensure that you do not exceed more than the federal limit of 20 hours per week for all FWS students or 29 hours per week for Student Assistant students

## **Q. Supervisor Rights**

- Hire student(s) you feel are the most qualified for your positions(s).
- Expect students to report on time unless the student has made other arrangements with you in advance.
- For the student(s) you employ, you have the right to know their FWS award to assist them in tracking their earned wages. Remember that students may not earn more than their FWS award.
- Be given notice if student(s) wish(es) to terminate their employment.

## **R. Responsibilities of Supervisors**

- Interview students for allocated positions. Establish and discuss specific guidelines and expectations with the student before they begin work.
- Complete all the necessary paperwork with the student. Be sure the paperwork is delivered to Human Resources before allowing the student to work.
- If the student is being hired as a Federal Work-study student, be sure to verify the student's eligibility from their BearPaws account before you hire them.
- Notify the Career Services ([Handshake](#)) when all allocated positions are filled.
- Provide job training.
- Ensure adequate supervision.
- Provide sufficient work for scheduled hours.
- Provide safe and reasonably comfortable working conditions.
- Verify and submit time records to Human Resources. Pay close attention to submission deadlines. Late time records may cause late paychecks for the students.
- Keep track of the biweekly earnings of the student and be sure that the student does not earn more than their student assistantship allocation, or their Federal Work-study allocation. It is the department's responsibility to pay for any wages earned in excess of these amounts.
- Ensure that the FWS student(s) and students with F-1 visas do not exceed the 20 hour workweek limit.

## **S. Confidentiality Statements**

It is highly recommended that student employees sign a statement of confidentiality. This statement ensures that students understand their responsibility to protect confidential or sensitive information seen or heard at their workplace. Statements should be discussed between the supervisor and student, and signed prior to the start of employment. One can be found at: <http://www.potsdam.edu/offices/hr/student>.

## **T. Campus Policies**

### **1. Reasonable Accommodation**

SUNY Potsdam is committed to assuring equal employment opportunity and equal access to services, programs and activities for persons with disabilities. It is the policy of SUNY Potsdam to provide reasonable accommodation to a qualified person with a disability to enable such person to perform the essential functions of the State government position for which he or she is applying or in which he or she is employed.

### **2. Discriminatory Harassment**

SUNY Potsdam is committed to maintaining an academic, residential, and working environment which is free of inappropriate and disrespectful conduct of a derogatory nature regarding any protected category: age, race, religion, national origin, sex, disability, or sexual orientation, especially when such conduct adversely affects a student's or an employee's work/educational environment or creates an intimidating, hostile or offensive campus environment.

### **3. Workplace Violence**

SUNY Potsdam has adopted a policy of zero tolerance regarding workplace violence. Our goal is to create and maintain an environment free from threatening behavior, acts of violence,

and harassment. SUNY Potsdam will not tolerate violence, threatening behavior, or harassment of any type, from any source. It is the responsibility of all college employees to create and maintain a workplace free from threats and acts of violence.

**4. Equal Opportunity/Affirmative Action**

It is the policy of SUNY Potsdam to provide equal opportunity in employment and upward mobility for all qualified persons, to prohibit discrimination in employment because of race, sex, age, national origin, religion, marital status, disability, veteran status, or sexual orientation.

**5. Generally Applicable Management Policies and Procedures**

The New York State Governmental Accountability, Audit and Internal Control Act of 1987 (Chapter 814 of the Laws of 1987), which became effective April 1, 1989, includes a provision requiring the University to "make available to each officer and employee of the agency a clear and concise statement of the generally applicable management policies and standards with which the officer or employee of such agency will be expected to comply."

The purpose of this memorandum is to provide you with a statement of generally applicable management policies and standards as required by the New York State Governmental Accountability, Audit and Internal Control Act of 1987. In addition to these generally applicable policies and standards, you are expected to comply with those standards and policies applicable to your specific duties and responsibilities.

Specifically, you are expected to comply with those policies and standards applicable to all campus employees including the campus smoking policy, the campus traffic and parking regulations, the sexual harassment policy and other policies and standards. You may review these policies in the Office of Human Resources.

**U. Termination of Employment**

Appointments to the student payrolls are temporary. The student, or the supervisor, can terminate the appointment at any time.

The student and the supervisor should work together to try to resolve any problems, if at all possible, that might arise that could lead to possible termination (unacceptable work performance, excess tardiness or absence without prior notification, improper dress, breach of confidentiality, etc).

Students should notify the supervisor as soon as possible if they cannot continue in their job for any reason. It is preferable that a two-week notice be given.

Supervisors should first notify the student of any problem with verbal warnings. A meeting between the supervisor and the student should be held detailing the problem, suggested possible solutions, and a date established by which these improvements should be noticeable. It is important that any dates set should be promptly monitored. If the problem is still not resolved by the date established, the supervisor may want to present the student with a written warning. If problems still continue, it is recommended that once again a meeting be held with the student and follow it up with a written statement documenting the conversation. If the problem still persists, a job change or termination may be necessary. The supervisor should notify the student in writing of the termination, with an appropriate effective date, with a copy to Human Resources for processing.

Any student that goes more than 3 months without working will be automatically terminated. To be rehired a new Student Employment Appointment Form will need to be submitted.

## **V. Who to Contact With Questions**

Questions relating to Financial Aid eligibility and awards should be directed to:  
One Stop, Raymond Hall 4th Floor, 267-2943

Questions relating to appointment and payroll should be directed to:  
Office of Human Resources Raymond Hall 2<sup>nd</sup> floor, 267-4816

Student Employment Web Address

<https://www.potsdam.edu/about/offices/hr/student-employment>