



Financial Assistance
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Federal Work Study Program Frequently Asked Questions

BENEFITS OF FEDERAL WORK STUDY

- **On campus employment is convenient**
- **Flexible Scheduling - work around your class times**
- **Reporting Work Study earnings on the FAFSA can increase a student's eligibility for aid, as work study earnings are not counted when determining future assistance**
- **Work Study positions can provide valuable experience for your post graduate career**

What is the Federal Work Study Program (FWS)?

The Federal Work Study Program is a need-based Federal Aid program that is paid out through the wages (generally minimum wage) earned via employment to eligible students through work either on- or off-campus. The government allows USI to make an allotted amount of Work Study awards each year. As a result, Work Study is awarded on a first come, first served basis.

Since it's called *Work Study*, do I get to study on the job?

Generally, departments and supervisors will be flexible when scheduling a student for work around class and study time. Some jobs on campus may allow students to study while working, but departments are not required to allow students to study on the job. Students are not allowed to work over 20 hours per week, when classes are in session, so as not to detract from a student's studies.

How does the Office of Student Financial Assistance determine my eligibility?

In order for the Office of Student Financial Assistance to determine if a student is eligible for the Work Study Program, a Free Application for Federal Student Aid (FAFSA) must be completed and filed each year. Interest in the Work Study program must be indicated on the FAFSA form. Only students with enough financial (unmet) need, as determined by the FAFSA, are eligible to participate in the Work Study program. Students who do not qualify can work on campus through Regular student employment.

What is the difference between Regular student employment and Work Study employment?

The difference between the two programs is where the funding to pay the student comes from. The Federal government pays 75% of the wage for the Work Study student. Work Study and Regular Student workers get the same types of jobs, work the same number of hours (limited to 20 hours per week when classes are in session) and earn the same wages.

What is a Work Study award?

Based on a student's unmet need and eligibility, the Office of Student Financial Assistance awards a set amount for the eligible student to *earn* per semester after a position has been secured through the interview and hire process. After the full award amount is earned, the award is exhausted.

How do I get a Work Study position?

A Work Study resume must be submitted to the Office of Student Financial Assistance by the deadline *each year* for priority consideration. Once submitted, Student Financial Assistance helps to place eligible, students in open positions, which can be limited based on job availability. Students are encouraged to actively pursue jobs on their own initiative. Because returning students often return to the position they previously held, Work Study awards may be more limited for new freshmen or returning/transfer students who were not employed in the Work Study Program in the previous year.

On-campus employment can be with any USI department. Departments interview and hire Work Study students based on qualifications and experience. Departments are not required to hire a student based on their Work Study eligibility. Off-campus employment is placed through the Office of Student Financial Assistance with local non-profit organizations or public agencies that have partnered with USI.

How do I receive my Work Study award? Does Work Study help pay tuition and other fees?

The award is paid through the form of a bi-weekly paycheck. All student workers are requested by Human Resources to have their paychecks direct deposited into the bank of their choice. Students may use the money from their paycheck to pay their tuition bill with the University, but no amount is automatically deducted from the paycheck for the tuition bill.

Are there any limits to the Work Study Program?

Because the Work Study program is a Federal Aid program, students must comply with all Federal requirements including but not limited to Verification and the Satisfactory Academic Progress policy to remain eligible. Copies of these policies are available in the Office of Student Financial Assistance and on our webpage, <https://www.usi.edu/financial-aid/manage-your-aid/satisfactory-academic-progress>.

FOR ACCURATE AND UP-TO-DATE INFORMATION PLEASE CHECK YOUR MYUSI REGULARLY!