



Eastern University Student Employment Handbook



Eastern University Student Employment Handbook (Revised 1/2026)

1. Introduction & Goals

The intent of this handbook is to provide equity and consistency in student employment. It serves as a guide for requirements and responsibilities for both students and supervisors. This version supersedes all previous versions and is subject to change at any time.

Goal: To provide students with valuable professional experience and the opportunity to earn supplemental income to help meet their educational expenses.

- **Supplement, Not Replace:** Student employees supplement departmental functions; they do not replace professional staff.
- **One-Job Policy:** To ensure maximum job availability, students are generally limited to one on-campus job.
 - *Exceptions:* Tutors, Teaching Assistant, Lab Assistants, Resident Assistant, and temporary assignments may hold a second position. A full list of approved jobs is available in the HR office.

Employment Status: All student positions are “**at-will**.” Either the student or the University may terminate employment at any time, for any reason, with or without notice.

Equal Opportunity Employer: Eastern University is committed to a policy of equal opportunity. In accordance with Title VII of the Civil Rights Act of 1964 and other applicable federal and state laws, the University does not discriminate on the basis of race, color, sex, age, national origin, or disability in its employment practices.

Questions: Questions regarding the information contained in this Handbook or any of the Student Employment processes, policies, or procedures, should be directed to the Student Employment Coordinator, Andréa Ruth- aruth@eastern.edu.

2. Employment Basics: Who, What, When, Where

Who Qualifies

Most students enrolled at least half-time in a degree-seeking program are eligible. Requirements include:

- Valid U.S. citizenship, permanent residency, or work authorization.
- A valid Social Security number.
- Completion of all tax and residency forms (W-4, I-9, PA32) **before** starting work.
- Maintenance of **Satisfactory Academic Progress (SAP)**.

Who Does Not Qualify

- Students who have already completed degree requirements or graduated are no longer eligible for student employment.

Types of Employment

1. **Federal Work-Study (FWS):** Need-based funding awarded via the FAFSA.

2. **Eastern Campus Employment (ECE):** Funding provided directly by university departments; available regardless of financial need.
3. **Graduate/Doctoral Assistantships (GA/DA):** Awarded through the Campolo College of Graduate and Professional Studies Admissions Office.

When to Start

- **New Students:** See section 5. Eligible once coursework begins and all required paperwork is completed and delivered to HR.
 - **Returning Students:** May begin once a new work agreement is electronically submitted by both the student and the supervisor.
 - **Summer Employment:** Eligible after completing at least one semester at Eastern. See more detailed information in the Summer Employment section of this handbook.
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3. Federal Work-Study (FWS) Details

Definition & Payment

FWS encourages part-time employment and community service to help students gain professional skills and earn income for educational costs.

- **Earned Wages, Not a Credit:** FWS funds are **not** applied directly to your tuition bill. You earn an hourly wage and receive a paycheck or direct deposit.
- **FAFSA Benefit:** The University reports these earnings directly to the Department of Education. They are excluded from your Student Aid Index (SAI), so they don't count against your future aid eligibility.
- **Want to Pay Toward Your Student Account?** You may voluntarily apply your earnings to your student account by making arrangements with the Student Accounts Office (student.accounts@eastern.edu).

Eligibility Requirements

To keep your FWS job, you must meet these federal and university standards:

- **Enrollment:** You must be enrolled at least full time 12+ credits..
- **FAFSA:** Students must file a FAFSA each year.
- **Grades:** You must maintain **Satisfactory Academic Progress (SAP)**, which requires meeting specific GPA and credit completion benchmarks.
- **Clean Record:** You cannot be in default on any federal student loans or owe a refund on a federal grant.
- **Annual Renewal:** FWS eligibility is determined year-by-year based on your FAFSA results; an award one year does not guarantee an award the next.

Important FWS Deadlines

- **Job Placement:** You must secure a FWS job by the **last Friday in September** (or the end of January for the spring semester).

- **Limited Funding & Waitlist:** If you lose your award due to a deadline or if you weren't originally awarded FWS, you may email finaid@eastern.edu to request a spot on the **FWS Wait List**.
- **Monitoring Earnings:** Students are responsible for tracking their earnings. If you exceed your award, your other financial aid (loans/grants) may be reduced to remain in federal compliance.
- **Unearned Awards:** If you do not work, the award has no value. Reducing an unearned award does not increase your tuition bill.

FWS Community Service & Tutoring

Program Overview

Eastern University is committed to community engagement through the Federal Work-Study program. By law, the University utilizes at least **7%** of its FWS funding for community service, including the **America Reads** program, where students serve as reading tutors for preschool and elementary-aged children.

- **Public Interest:** Community service positions must primarily benefit the community (local residents, particularly low-income individuals) rather than the University itself.
- **Employment Status:** You are a **paid employee** of Eastern University, even when working off-campus. Because Eastern chooses not to charge non-profit partners for your wages, you are often viewed as a "volunteer" by the host agency.
- **On-Campus Options:** Certain on-campus roles (working in areas that serve the public) may also qualify as community service.

Off-Campus Partnerships

If you wish to work at a non-profit agency not currently on the University's approved list, follow these steps:

1. **Initiate Contact:** Inquire if the local non-profit (e.g., American Red Cross) is interested in hosting an FWS student.
2. **Request Paperwork:** Obtain an **Off-Campus Agreement Form** from the Student Employment Coordinator.
3. **Submit for Approval:** Ensure the agency signs the agreement and returns it to the Coordinator. Work may **not** begin until this agreement and your student work agreement are fully processed.

Transportation & Travel Pay

- **Commuting:** Students must provide their own transportation to off-campus sites.
- **Travel time:** Federal Work-Study students in community service roles are eligible for travel time pay. However, under the **Fair Labor Standards Act (FLSA)**, the following rules determine exactly when that pay begins and ends.

1. The Home-to-Work Rule (The "Normal Commute")

Generally, travel from home to your first work site is considered an ordinary commute and is not compensable under federal law.

- **The Rule:** Your workday officially begins when you reach your "principal activity" (the work site).
- **Exception:** If you are required to perform a work task **before** leaving your house (e.g., calling a supervisor for specific instructions or loading heavy equipment into your car), your pay starts the moment that work begins.

2. Travel That is "All in a Day's Work"

If your job requires you to travel between different locations **after** you have already clocked in, that time is fully compensable.

- **Site-to-Site Travel:** If you arrive at an off-campus school to tutor, and then drive to a second community center for a second shift, the travel time between those two sites is **paid work time**.
- **Reporting to a Central Hub:** If you are required to report to your college campus first to pick up materials or attend a briefing before heading to your off-campus site, your paid time starts at the campus. The subsequent drive to the off-campus site is paid.

3. Special One-Day Assignments

If you are asked to travel to a "special assignment" in another city or a location significantly further than your normal commute for just one day:

- You are paid for the travel time, **minus** the time it usually takes you to get to your regular work site.
- *Example:* If your normal commute is 20 minutes, but a special event requires a 60-minute drive, you would be paid for 40 minutes of that travel.

4. Leaving from Home (Direct to Off-Campus Site)

If you drive directly from home to an off-campus community service site:

- **FWS Policy:** You may record the travel time on your timecard as part of your community service hours.
- **FLSA Note:** The school may choose to deduct your "normal" commute time (the time it would have taken you to get to campus) to ensure they are only paying for the "additional" burden of the off-campus site.

Tutoring (America Reads)

Reading tutors help children develop essential literacy skills. These roles can be in schools, libraries, or community centers.

- **Parochial (Religious) Schools:** Tutoring at religious schools is permitted only if the work is non-sectarian, uses non-religious materials, and does not involve religious instruction or the maintenance of worship spaces.
- **Background Clearances:** Many sites require criminal background checks (Child Abuse, FBI, etc.). While federal law does not mandate these, state laws and agency policies often do. **Students are responsible for any costs associated with these mandatory clearance checks.**

Important Reminders for Community Service Workers

- **Pre-Approval:** Never begin work without written approval from the Student Employment Coordinator.
 - **Professionalism:** You represent Eastern University while off-campus; professional conduct and dress are required.
 - **End of Funding:** You may be asked by an agency to continue volunteering once your FWS funds are exhausted. While encouraged, this is entirely voluntary.
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4. Other Types of Employment

Eastern Campus Employment (ECE)

Program Overview

Eastern Campus Employment (ECE) provides part-time job opportunities funded directly by University departments. Unlike Federal Work-Study, ECE is **not need-based**; it is available to undergraduate and graduate students regardless of their financial status or FAFSA results.

- **Funding Source:** 100% of ECE wages are paid through the employing department's operating budget, with no federal funding involved.
- **Payment:** Students earn an hourly rate and receive a paycheck or direct deposit for all hours worked.
- **Graduate Students in ECE:** Graduate students may be hired for ECE roles, but they are paid at a set rate.

Eligibility Reminder

To work under the ECE program, you must meet the general eligibility requirements found in the "Student Employment – The Basics" section (e.g., enrolled at least half-time, valid work authorization, and maintaining Satisfactory Academic Progress).

Graduate/Doctoral Assistantship Program (GA/DA)

Program Overview

The Graduate Assistantship program is designed to provide graduate and doctoral students with professional work experience related to their field of study or university operations.

- **Application Process:** Interested students must apply through the **Graduate and Professional Studies Admissions Office**. The Admissions Office determines the eligibility criteria, selection process, and specific requirements for each assistantship.
- **Criteria:** Assistantships are awarded based on academic merit, departmental needs, and available funding. Requirements must be met annually to remain in the program.

5. General Employment Information

Required Paperwork (Submit to Human Resources)

Federal law requires all paperwork to be completed and approved by HR **before** any work begins. Failure to do so will delay your start date and your first paycheck.

1. **I-9 Form:** To verify identity and legal work authorization.
 - o **The Strict "Originals" Rule:** You must present **original, unexpired documents** in person to an HR representative. By law, **photocopies, faxes, or digital photos on a phone cannot be accepted.**
 - o **Move-In Day Service:** HR is typically available during Fall Move-In Day specifically to witness these documents. This allows parents to bring the documents and take the originals home immediately for safekeeping.
2. **W-4 Form:** For federal income tax withholding.
 - o **International Students (F1 Visa):** Per IRS regulations, you must check "Single" (regardless of marital status) and write "Nonresident Alien" or "NRA" on the form to ensure correct taxation.
3. **Local Tax (PA32):** For Pennsylvania residency certification. Use your **home address**, not your dorm address, on this form.
4. **Student Work Agreement:** Valid for one academic year only; you must submit a new agreement every year you work.

Getting a Job

1. **Search:** Check the Handshake portal.
2. **Interview:** Contact the supervisor to schedule an interview.
3. **HR Paperwork:** If you are a new student or a student who has never worked on campus, complete HR paperwork. If you are a returning student worker, verify that HR paperwork is up to date.
1. **Work Agreement:** When HR paperwork is complete, HR will email the link to complete the electronic work agreement.
2. **Hire:** Both the student and the supervisor must complete the electronic agreement. The form must be completed at least **one week before** your first day.
4. **Time Cards:** Access your electronic time card via **my.Eastern.edu**.
 - o Instructions for time cards are available in the HR office.
 - o **The "No Volunteering" Rule:** Under the Fair Labor Standards Act (FLSA), you must be paid for **every hour worked**. You are legally prohibited from "volunteering" extra time for a position in which you are normally paid.
 - o All hours worked must be approved **PRIOR** to working by your supervisor

Hours & Regulations

- **During Fall and Spring Semesters:** Maximum **20 hours per week**.
- **During Breaks (Summer/Winter):** Up to **40 hours per week** (requires department approval prior to working the hours).
- **Overtime:** Paid at 1.5x for hours worked over 40 in a single workweek (Sunday–Saturday).
 - Overtime is greatly discouraged by the University at all levels.
- **Lunch Break:** Any lunch break of **30 minutes or more** granted by your supervisor is **unpaid time**.
- **Graduation Cut-off:** Once you have satisfied your degree requirements or graduated, you are **immediately ineligible** for student employment, even if you are waiting for a future program to begin.

Benefits & Conduct

- **Benefits:** Student employees do not qualify for paid time off, medical or other benefit coverage, or retirement contributions.
- **Worker's Comp:** Report any on-the-job injury immediately to your supervisor and HR at **(610) 341-5891**.
- **Confidentiality (FERPA):** You may not disclose confidential student or university information. Unauthorized disclosure is a violation of federal law and grounds for termination of student employment.
- **Equipment:** University tools and systems are for business use only. Safeguard your personal items; the University is not responsible for theft of personal valuables.

6. Universal Policies & Conduct

University Standards

Eastern University is committed to a respectful work environment. Students should refer to the **Human Resources Handbook** on my.Eastern.edu for full policies regarding:

- Sexual & Anti-Harassment
- Mandated Child Abuse Reporting
- Whistleblower & Conflict of Interest

Misconduct & Performance Issues

We utilize a progressive, developmental approach to resolve performance issues.

1. **First Offense:** Verbal Warning.
2. **Second Offense:** Written Warning (**A copy must be sent to HR for the student's permanent file**).
3. **Third Offense:** Termination of student employment.

Gross Misconduct: Immediate termination and a report to the **Dean of Students** may occur for serious violations, including:

- Theft, abuse, or sexual harassment.
- **Falsification of employment documents (including forging a supervisor's signature).**
- Insubordination or use/distribution of controlled substances.

Absenteeism & Tardiness

- **Definition:** Reporting to work more than **five minutes** late is considered tardy.
- **Procedure:** Students must notify their supervisor **prior** to their start time if they will be absent or late. Excessive tardiness or absenteeism may be grounds for termination following the progressive discipline steps above.

Resignation & Termination

- **Resignation:** A **two-week written notice** is requested to be sent to your supervisor and HR to maintain professional standing. A Termination Form must be submitted to HR.
 - **Termination Impact:** Depending on the severity of misconduct or performance, a student may lose employment eligibility for a semester, the academic year, or their **entire academic career** at Eastern.
 - **Final Paycheck:** Under normal circumstances, final paychecks are issued on the **next regularly scheduled payday** following the termination or resignation.
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7. Payroll & Time Reporting

How You Get Paid

- **Bi-Weekly:** Students are paid every two weeks. View the **2025–2026 Pay Schedule** on my.Eastern.edu.
- **Direct Deposit (Highly Recommended):** This is the most secure way to receive your funds.
 - **How to Set Up:** Managed electronically through the **my.Eastern.edu** portal. Detailed instructions for online setup are available in the **Human Resources Office**.
- **Paper Paychecks:** Physical checks are **not** placed in campus mailboxes. They must be picked up in person at the **Mailroom counter** by 5:00 PM on pay day.
 - **Mailing of Paycheck Rule:** During breaks or for students without campus boxes, the system pulls your "**Local Address**" first. If no local address is on file with the Registrar, it defaults to your **Permanent Address**.

Pay Rates & Structure

- **Standard Levels:** Positions are categorized as **Clerk**, **Associate**, or **Specialist**. Pay is based on these levels, not on job titles.
- **Rate Locks:** Pay rates are set at the beginning of the assignment. **Pay raises are not available** once an agreement has been submitted for the academic year.

Time Cards (my.Eastern.edu)

Your electronic time card appears within **two days** of HR processing your electronic Work Agreement.

- **Deadlines:** Students must finalize by **Saturday 11:59 PM**; Supervisors must approve by **Monday at 10:00 AM**.
- **The "No Banking" Rule:** Federal law requires all hours to be reported in the period they were worked. You may **never** "save up" hours to report on a future card.
- **Breaks:** Lunch breaks are unpaid. However, if you are **required to conduct work while eating** (e.g., answering phones), you are not "relieved of duty" and must be compensated.
- **Missed Hours:** Use the **Edit Hours/Comments** section of your current card to report hours forgotten from a previous pay period, listing specific past dates. The missing hours will need to be manually entered into the time card.

Tax Withholdings & Special Rules

- **FICA Tax Exemption:** Social Security and Medicare taxes are **not** withheld while you are enrolled at least half-time.
- **Summer/Breaks:** FICA taxes **will** be deducted when you are not in class.
- **Graduation:** For FWS compliance, the spring payroll period must end exactly on the **day of graduation**.

Missing Checks

- **Lost or Out-of-Date Checks:** Email **payroll@eastern.edu** from your **Eastern account** only. Checks will be given to the mailroom or other arrangements can be made with the employee.

8. Summer Employment

Eligibility & Requirements

Summer work is a separate process and is not automatically guaranteed. To be eligible, you must meet the following criteria:

- **Enrollment:** You must have been enrolled in the preceding Spring term **and** be registered at least half-time (6+ credits) for the upcoming Fall term. For FWS, you must be registered for 12+ credits.
- **New Agreement:** Summer work is not covered by your previous academic year agreement. You must complete a **Summer Employment Application** and a **new** electronic Summer Work Agreement before beginning work.
- **Clearances:** Ensure all background clearances and employment forms are up to date with HR.
- Maintenance of **Satisfactory Academic Progress (SAP)**.

Hours & Limitations

- **Maximum Hours:** You may work up to **40 hours per week** during summer break.
- **The "No Banking" Rule:** Federal law requires all hours to be reported exactly when they were worked. You may **never** "save up" overtime from one week to record on a future time card to meet housing remission requirements.

Federal Work-Study (FWS) Impact

- **Award:** FWS is an academic year award, not a separate summer fund. **Any money earned during the summer is deducted from your total award for the upcoming Fall and Spring.**
- **Exhaustion of Funds:** If you earn your entire award in the summer, you will have **\$0 left** for the academic year. Once FWS funds are gone, the department must pay 100% of your wages from their own budget (ECE funds), or you must stop working.

Housing & Time Off

- **Housing Remission:** Summer employment **does not guarantee** on-campus housing. You must contact the **Housing Office** directly to determine eligibility and rules regarding room remission. Financial Aid and HR do not manage housing.
- **No Paid Leave:** Student employees do not receive paid holidays (e.g., Juneteenth or July 4th), sick days, or vacation time.
- **Vacation Planning:** Discuss your summer travel plans with your supervisor **before** the summer begins to ensure your department can plan for your absence.