

FEDERAL WORK-STUDY (FWS) POLICY

Office of Financial Aid

Sul Ross State University

February 23, 2026

I. Purpose

The Federal Work-Study (FWS) Program provides part-time employment to eligible students with demonstrated financial need to assist with educational expenses. This policy establishes institutional controls to ensure compliance with Title IV regulations (34 CFR Part 675), responsible stewardship of the federal allocation, equitable distribution of funds, and clear accountability for departments and supervisors.

II. Program Overview

Federal Work-Study is funded through an annual federal allocation awarded by the U.S. Department of Education. Funds are limited and must be administered within strict fiscal controls. FWS employment must not displace regular employees, must not occur during scheduled class time, and must align with the student's financial need and award amount.

III. Student Eligibility

Students must file a valid FAFSA, demonstrate financial need, enroll at least half-time in an eligible program, meet Satisfactory Academic Progress (SAP) standards, be a U.S. citizen or eligible non-citizen, and complete required employment documentation prior to beginning work.

IV. Award Determination and Limits

FWS awards are based on financial need and availability of funds and are offered on a first-come, first-served basis. Students may not earn more than their awarded FWS amount. Awards may be reduced if additional financial aid is received to prevent over-awarding under federal cost of attendance regulations.

V. Hour Limit Monitoring and Departmental Accountability

A. Weekly Hour Limit

Students may not work more than 20 hours per week while enrolled. During official breaks when classes are not in session, students may work up to 40 hours per week subject to departmental approval and funding availability. The 20-hour limit is an institutional fiscal control measure and is mandatory.

B. Departmental Responsibility

Departments are responsible for monitoring weekly hours, tracking cumulative earnings, stopping work when award limits are approaching, and preventing scheduling conflicts with academic coursework.

C. Overage Protocol

If a student exceeds the weekly hour limit or total award amount, excess wages will be charged to the department's institutional funds. Retroactive reclassification is corrective and not standard procedure.

D. Consequences for Noncompliance

Repeated violations may result in written notice, suspension of placements, or permanent loss of eligibility to host FWS students.

VI. Payroll and Time Reporting

Students must be paid only for actual hours worked. Work during scheduled class time is prohibited. Supervisors must approve electronic timesheets by payroll deadlines. Falsification of hours will result in termination.

VII. Supervisor Responsibilities

Supervisors must confirm eligibility before employment begins, provide job-specific training, establish compatible work schedules, monitor hours weekly, maintain documentation, conduct evaluations at least once per semester, and ensure compliance with wage and hour laws.

VIII. Student Responsibilities

Students must adhere to assigned schedules, maintain professionalism and confidentiality, submit accurate timesheets, notify supervisors of award changes, and maintain SAP.

IX. Prohibition Against Displacement

Federal Work-Study students may not displace regular employees or fill vacated permanent positions.

X. Summer and Crossover Provisions

FWS earnings are charged to the appropriate award year allocation based on work dates consistent with federal carry-back provisions. Summer participation is subject to available funding and enrollment requirements.

XI. Internal Controls and Audit Preparedness

The Financial Aid Office will reconcile payroll against awards, monitor allocation spending, maintain documentation, and enforce departmental accountability measures to ensure compliance.

XII. Effective Date

This policy supersedes prior versions of the Work-Study Procedures Manual and is effective February 23, 2026