CUYAMACA COLLEGE

Financial Aid Office

Federal Work-Study (FWS) Program

Guide for Hiring Departments

Reference Policy: Cuyamaca Financial Aid Office Policies & Procedures Section 3.3.1, Federal Work-Study Program

Audience: Hiring Department Supervisors

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1. Purpose & Scope

This guide translates the Cuyamaca College Financial Aid Office's policy & procedure Section 3.3.1 (Federal Work-Study Program) into a step-by-step internal processing reference for supervisors and time keepers.

Use this guide for: Understanding the FWS process, understanding Federal Work-Study eligibility requirements, understanding FWS award assignments, tracking student hours & earnings, advertising a FWS position, completing Personal Action Forms & more.

> **POLICY BASIS:** All procedures below implement Federal Work-Study Program Section 3.3.1, its subsections 3.3.1.1 (General Employment Conditions and Limitations), 3.3.1.2 (Federal Share Limitations), and 3.3.1.3 (Fiscal Procedures and Recordkeeping), and applicable Grossmont-Cuyamaca Community College District (GCCCD) policy and California Education Code § 88003.

2. End-to-End Processing Workflow

Follow this sequence in order. Each step names the responsible office and the action that triggers the next step. This process repeats each semester for departments hiring new or returning FWS students.

Step	Responsible Office	Action
1	Financial Aid Office	Automatically package an estimated FWS award for every student who demonstrates financial need and has sufficient room in their financial aid budget. No manual request needed.
2	Financial Aid Office	Include the FWS offer in the student's Financial Aid Offer Letter as an "Estimated" award, with a brief explanation of FWS and a link to the Cuyamaca College FWS website. "Estimated" status means the award is not confirmed and does not guarantee a job or earnings.
3	Hiring Department (If posting a new position)	Completes the Handshake Posting Submission Form to request a new job position be posted to Handshake (available on the Financial Aid/FWS website and the Career Center website),
4	Career Center (If posting a new position)	Receives the Handshake Posting Submission Form and posts the job announcement in Handshake.
5	Student	Creates a Handshake account with a complete profile, filters for Work Study positions, reviews postings, and submits a resume plus a copy of their Financial Aid Offer Letter (showing the estimated FWS amount) for any position of interest. The offer letter serves as the first level of eligibility verification for hiring departments.
6	Career Center	After the posting closes, sends the hiring manager the full list of applicants with resumes and offer letters, so departments can review candidates and independently schedule interviews.
7	Hiring Department / Supervisor	Reviews applications, invites selected students to interview, and selects a candidate.

Step	Responsible Office	Action
8	Hiring Department / Supervisor	Completes the Student Worker Personnel Action Form (PAF) (from the District's Forms Depot) for the selected student, attaching the students resume and sends the packet to the Financial Aid Office / Financial Aid Assistant Sr.
9	Financial Aid Office	Financial Aid Assistant Sr. verifies the student is enrolled in at least 6 units and is meeting SAP, typically within 3–5 business days. Converts the student's FWS award status from “estimated” to “accepted” and records the hire on the internal FWS tracking document & live spreadsheet for supervisors (student name, student ID, confirmed FWS allocation, supervisor)
10	Financial Aid Office	Signs the PAF and forwards it for remaining campus approvals: Vice President of Student Services → Cuyamaca College Business Office → Human Resources. This remaining routing typically takes about 2-3 weeks. FA Assistant SR sends Confirmation of Assignment Letter to the student and supervisor after they are notified the PAF has been forwarded to Business Services. Financial Aid does not track status beyond this point — departments should contact HR directly for hiring status updates.
12	Human Resources	Receives the approved PAF and attachments. Contacts the student directly to complete onboarding if NOT a rehire: I-9 Employment Authorization, Live Scan clearance (if required), and Workday documentation. HR will contact new hires to let them know they are cleared to work. Rehires can begin working once their PAF is received and inputted by HR.
13	Student / Supervisor	Student begins work, no earlier than the first day of the semester. Supervisor and student use the Excel tracking tool to monitor hours and earnings against the award; supervisor ensures the student does not exceed FWS allocation on an ongoing basis. Live spreadsheet should be used to reference in addition to the supervisors own monitoring of student hours.

3. Student Eligibility Checklist

All students must meet the below general eligibility criteria to participate in the Federal Work-Study program. These criteria must continue to be met throughout the duration of the FWS assignment.

✓	Eligibility Requirement	Source
☐	Enrolled in a minimum of 6 units at Cuyamaca College or Grossmont College during the term of employment	§ 3.3.1.1
☐	Demonstrated financial need via FAFSA	§ 3.3.1.1
☐	Meeting Satisfactory Academic Progress (SAP)	§ 3.3.1.1
☐	No unresolved financial aid disqualifications	§ 3.3.1.1

✓	Eligibility Requirement	Source
☐	Verification requirements and outstanding financial aid tasks completed	§ 3.3.1.1
☐	Sufficient room remaining in financial aid budget / cost of attendance for FWS amount	§ 3.3.1 / 3.3.1.3

Reference: GCCCD policy and California Education Code § 88003 — students enrolled in at least 6 units may work in student worker positions, including FWS-funded roles, up to a maximum of 25 hours per week, 8 hours per day, during fall, spring, and summer terms of active enrollment. Actual weekly schedules depend on the FWS fund availability, student availability, and departmental needs.

If a student is not meeting SAP at time of Hiring Department Initiating PAF

A student identified for hire or re-hire who is not meeting Satisfactory Academic Progress (SAP) cannot begin working until a SAP Appeal is submitted and approved. See Section 4 for the SAP appeal procedure and timeline.

If a student fails any requirement

The student must immediately stop working in their FWS position. Any wages earned after the student became ineligible are charged to the **hiring department's budget**, not the federal FWS fund. See Section 8 for details on the ineligibility procedure.

4. SAP Appeals for FWS Eligibility

If a department has identified a student to hire or re-hire, but the student is not meeting Satisfactory Academic Progress (SAP), the student cannot begin working until/unless a SAP Appeal is processed and approved by the Financial Aid Office.

- Students are able to begin submitting SAP appeals shortly after the first day of each semester. This is subject to change in future terms.
- Current SAP appeal review turnaround is **1-3 weeks**.
- Appeals are reviewed on a **first-come, first-served** basis.
- If an appeal is approved and the student is deemed FWS-eligible, the hiring process in Section 5 can then be initiated.

Because the hiring/onboarding process itself can take an additional 2-3 weeks after a PAF is submitted, departments should plan for a SAP-appeal-to-start-date timeline of roughly 6 weeks.

5. Confirmation of Assignment

Confirmation of Assignment letter contents

Sent by Financial Aid Office to the student and supervisor. It includes:

- The student’s semester FWS allocation / earnings limit
- Work hour restrictions: no more than **25 hours per week**, and no more than **8 hours per day**
- Enrollment requirement: students dropping below 6 units are immediately disqualified from continuing work, and the department becomes financially responsible for wages earned after the drop
- Notice to supervisors it is the responsibility of the supervisor & student to monitor FWS fund usage
- How to request an allocation increase (See Section 7)

6. Timekeeping & Monthly Monitoring

Timekeeping tools

Students and supervisors receive an **Excel tracking tool** to monitor hours worked and earnings. Supervisors are responsible for day-to-day tracking; the Financial Aid Office also monitors monthly earnings internally as a second check.

A **LIVE** excel spreadsheet managed by the FA Assistant Sr and updated monthly based on payroll reports, is made available to supervisors for the purpose of cross referencing their day-to-day tracking of FWS student hours worked and earnings. The spreadsheet will be updated at the end of each month upon receival of the current month's payroll report.

FA Assistant Sr. Monthly Monitoring Procedure

Step	Action
1	Payroll sends the Financial Aid Office a report of all student FWS earnings for the month.
2	Financial Aid Assistant Sr. verifies continued 6-unit enrollment for each FWS student.
3	Financial Aid Assistant Sr. tracks each student's monthly earnings internally against their allocation.
4	Financial Aid Assistant Sr. flags students approaching their allocation limit or exceeding their limit, and notifies the hiring department as soon as possible. *
5	Financial Aid Assistant Sr. offers an allocation increase where allowable within budget constraints or requests for an expense transfer to be initiated to transfer the allocation overage from the FWS budget to the hiring departments budget.
6	Financial Aid Assistant. Sr records updated student earnings in tracking sheets if any expense transfers were completed.

Payroll pay periods span between two months i.e., pay date of 9/30/26 would be for hours entered between 8/11/26-9/10/26. Due to the lapse in time between the start of the pay period and the pay date, it is imperative Supervisors are tracking their students' hours according to hours entered in Workday to ensure FWS allocation for their students are not exhausted. The FAO is not made aware of student earnings until the end of the monthly pay period and it is at that time the FAO will notify Supervisors of any students at or exceeding their allocation limit.

7. Award Increase Requests

Requesting an allocation increase

Supervisors or students may request an increased FWS allocation for a student if additional hours or budget room are needed. Increases are reviewed on a case-by-case by the Financial Aid Office and depend on the student's financial aid budget and the availability of FWS funding. The Financial Aid Assistant Sr. also proactively flags students approaching their allocation limit during monthly monitoring and may offer an increase where the student's financial aid budget and available FWS budget allows.

In an effort to maintain transparency and uniformity, beginning with the 2026-27 academic year, the Financial Aid Office has introduced official requests for award increases. This form should be initiated from the student or supervisor returned to the FA Assistant Sr for review. The form titled

"FWS Request for Award Increase" is available to download on the Cuyamaca Financial Aid Website. Requests should only occur once per term for any given student.

8. Ineligibility Procedure

FA Assistant Sr. triggers this procedure immediately whenever monthly monitoring or any other point of contact reveals that a student:

- No longer meets FWS eligibility requirements (including dropping below 6 units); or
- Has exceeded their individual FWS allocation; or
- The college's federal FWS allocation has been exhausted; or
- The student no longer has sufficient room in their financial aid budget.

Required Financial Aid staff actions

1. Immediately notify the student's supervisor.
2. Instruct that the student immediately stop working under the FWS budget. Make it known should the department wish to continue employing the student, any future payroll amounts should be charged to the hiring departments budget and the appropriate procedures should be initiated to do so. (i.e., if department smart key was not listed on original PAF, they should submit a new PAF with their smart key listed).
3. If student allocation was exhausted & there were earnings over the students award, the supervisor should be notified of the overage amount and it should be requested they initiate an expense transfer for the total of the overage, with the Business Services Office.
4. Document the change in the internal FWS tracking record.

9. Term-by-Term Employment Windows

This process repeats each semester for departments hiring new or returning FWS students. Students may begin working on the first day eligible day as determined by HR, and may continue to work through the last eligible day for that term as determined by HR.

For the 2026-27 academic year, the hiring dates as determined by HR are below:

Hiring Period	Fall 2026 + Winter 2027	Winter 2027 (If not registered/incomplete units in preceding Fall)	Spring 2027	Summer 2027
Hire Dates	**8/17/26-1/30/27**	**1/4/27-1/30/27**	**2/1/27-6/3/27**	**6/7/27-8/7-27**
Units Required	**6 units**	**6 units (FWS only)**	**6 units**	**6 units (FWS only)**

SUMMER FWS ELIGIBILITY: Summer FWS availability is subject to fund availability and is determined by the Financial Aid Office at the end of the spring term. There is no standing guarantee of summer FWS employment, and departments/students should not assume summer eligibility unless the Financial Aid Office confirms it after spring term ends.

10. Federal / Institutional Share & Budget Handling

Under the FWS Program, the U.S. Department of Education reimburses the institution for a **maximum of 75%** of total wages paid to an eligible student. The remaining **25% (non-federal share)** is covered by institutional funds.

Cost Category	Who Covers It
Federal share of standard wages (up to 75%) charged to smartkey 1431095	U.S. Department of Education, via institutional FWS allocation
Institutional share of standard wages (25% match) charged to smartkey 1431009	GCCCD — covered by institutional funds
Paid sick leave earned/used by student workers	Fully covered by GCCCD institutional funds (not reimbursed by federal FWS funds)

Time coding requirement

Student time entries in **Workday** must accurately distinguish between:

- **Hours worked** — eligible for FWS federal reimbursement
- **Sick leave hours** — covered entirely by GCCCD institutional funds

Supervisors and departmental timekeepers are responsible in ensuring student workers are coding their hours correctly in Workday to comply with federal and district guidelines. Financial Aid staff also tracks FWS expenditures and ensures proper allocation between federal and institutional shares with the payroll report that is received monthly. The Financial Aid Office is responsible for monitoring overall compliance with federal share limitations.