



# WS Frequently Asked Questions

## Purpose:

The Work-Study Program at UNC is comprised of the Federal Work-Study (FWS) and Carolina Works (CW) programs. Both new participants and those returning often have questions about program operations and logistics. Listed below is a collection of some of the most common questions we’ve received from students in previous years.

## Contents

- Purpose: ..... 1
- Receiving a Federal Work-Study (FWS) Award ..... 2
- Obtaining a Job ..... 3
- Human Resources & Onboarding..... 5
- Working..... 6
- Pay..... 7
- Unused Awards and Conversions ..... 8
- Other ..... 8



## Receiving a Work-Study (FWS) Award

### 1. What is the Federal Work-Study (FWS) program?

Federal Work-Study is a type of financial aid, though it is different from grants and loans. Through the FWS program, students are paid competitive wages in exchange for working in one of a variety of sanctioned FWS positions with on-campus entities or off-campus community service partners. The program also strives to provide students with employment opportunities which will support their academic and professional development as well as deliver a paycheck.

### 2. What is the Carolina Works (CW) program?

Carolina Works is also a type of financial aid program, very similar to the FWS program. Students in CW are paid competitive wages in exchange for working in one of a variety of sanctioned positions with on-campus entities or off-campus community service partners, just like in FWS. Also like FWS, the CW program strives to provide students with employment opportunities which will support their academic and professional development as well as deliver a paycheck.

The main difference between CW and FWS is that CW funding goes to support those students who do not qualify for FWS funding and is comprised entirely of institutional funds. Because of this, students in the CW program are able to do undertake opportunities not open to FWS students such as working over the summer.

### 3. What do I need to do in order to receive a WS award?

FWS awards are provided to undergraduate students who indicate they are interested in participating in the program on their FAFSA and show sufficient need. You'll need to submit a FAFSA and indicate "yes" when asked if you are interested in the work-study program.

CW awards are provided to undergraduate students based on nominations from WS Supervisors and requests from eligible students until all funding has been exhausted. If funding remains after all nominees have been awarded, OSSA personnel will select additional students who have indicated an interest in participating in work-study as noted by the FAFSA.

Please note, graduate students interested in the FWS program will also need to submit an additional application located at <https://unc.studentemployment.ngwebsolutions.com/cimages/GradFWSForm2018-19.pdf>.

### 4. I didn't click "yes" to the work-study question when I completed my initial FAFSA. Can I change that now so I can get work-study added to my financial aid package?

While we're happy to provide WS funding to interested students, our budget is limited. If you didn't indicate you wanted a work-study award on your initial FAFSA, but are interested in the program, send an email indicating this to [work-study@unc.edu](mailto:work-study@unc.edu). If we have remaining funding, we'll update your award.

### 5. Will I receive a WS award each year?

Eligibility for WS awards are recalculated for each student on an annual basis. While we try to award students every year, receiving the award is dependent on the individual's financial need and amount of remaining funding. It is possible to be eligible in one year and not the next. However, choosing to decline or not utilize a WS award will not prevent you from being awarded in subsequent years.



## Obtaining a Job

### 6. What kind of jobs are available?

The list of jobs and employers varies from year to year, but it always includes a variety of positions across campus and in the surrounding community. When the job board and application system is open to applicants (usually August 1 to May), users can review the list of available jobs at [https://unc.studentemployment.ngwebsolutions.com/JobX\\_FindAJob.aspx](https://unc.studentemployment.ngwebsolutions.com/JobX_FindAJob.aspx).

All positions are classified into one of the following categories

#### i. On-Campus Jobs

1. Athletics
2. Clerical
3. Environmental
4. General Office
5. Laboratory
6. Library
7. Makerspace Staff
8. Marketing/Public Relations
9. Research through the [IRIS Program](#)
10. Research Support
11. Student Services
12. Technology
13. Miscellaneous/Other

#### ii. Off-Campus Jobs

1. Tutor
2. Child Care
3. Clerical
4. General Office
5. Program Coordination
6. Research
7. Technology
8. Miscellaneous/Other

### 7. How do I find a job?

Students with WS awards can find a job by going to the [JobX Student page](#) and clicking on the [Find a Job](#) link.

Once there, students can use the Find a Job page to search for jobs by key word, name, department, location, or a variety of other factors. Students should remember to look for positions which will enhance their academic and skills development in addition to providing a paycheck.

### 8. What if I can not find a job?

Historically, the WS program has more open positions than students to fill them, so job applicants should have a variety of options available throughout the year. You should start by completing the steps outlined under question 7.

If you still have trouble finding a position, check out the guides on the [JobX Student page](#). Using a different type of search might reveal additional opportunities of which you were previously unaware.

If you've completed all of those steps and still need help, consider coming by the WS Desk on the 2<sup>nd</sup> floor of Vance Hall or reaching out to the WS Team at [work-study@unc.edu](mailto:work-study@unc.edu).

### 9. How do I apply for a job?

Once you've found a position in JobX that you are interested in, you can submit an application by checking the box next to that position and then using the [Apply for selected jobs] button on the search page. The application system is contained entirely within JobX, so you'll fill out a job application, submit your resume/cover letter, and answer any questions posed by the employer within the system.

### 10. What if I need help applying for a job?

If you need instructions on how to apply to a position, review the JobX Student Training resource on the [JobX Student page](#). This resource provides step-by-step guidance on how to complete an application.



If you've reviewed the guide and still need assistance, consider coming by the WS Desk on the 2<sup>nd</sup> floor of Vance Hall or reaching out to the WS Team at [work-study@unc.edu](mailto:work-study@unc.edu).

**11. Do I have to interview for a job?**

WS students applying to a new position (including a higher-level position with the same employer) are required to complete an interview. University Career Services provides a number of resources on the interview process that can be accessed at <https://careers.unc.edu/students/interviewing>.

WS students who are returning to the same job with the same department can have their interview waived at the discretion of the WS Supervisor. This decision is entirely up to the supervisor.

**12. Can I hold more than one WS job?**

Students can only hold one WS position at a time. Students may choose to change positions during the academic year or between years, but they can not simultaneously hold two or more WS jobs without violating program regulations.

Students interested in working additional hours or obtaining a second position are allowed to take up a non-work-study job in addition to their work-study position. However, we do not recommend that any student work more than 20 hours per week across all positions while taking classes full time as studies show this consistently has a negative impact on a student's well-being and academic performance.



## Human Resources & Onboarding

### 13. After I have been hired, what additional steps do I need to take with HR?

Once you have been hired, you will need meet with the Human Resources officer for your employer to complete onboarding. This will include multiple processes:

- i. Completing I-9 verification
- ii. Completing federal payroll withholding sign-up
- iii. Completing state payroll withholding sign-up
- iv. Completing direct deposit enrollment if working on campus or completing a job-specific process if working off campus.

### 14. What documents do I need to bring with me to complete onboarding and get on the payroll?

Multiple documents will be required to complete onboarding

- i. For I-9 verification, please see the USICS's page on [acceptable documents](#).
- ii. For federal payroll withholding sign-up, you will need to complete a [W-4](#).
- iii. For state payroll withholding sign-up, you will need to complete a [NC-4](#).
- iv. For direct deposit enrollment, you will need to provide an [1106.1.1f](#) form. You will need to have access to a bank account to complete this form and may need to provide a voided check.

### 15. Where can I get the forms needed for onboarding?

After being hired, your WS Supervisor will connect you with their HR representative. This representative will provide you with copies of all of the forms required to complete the onboarding process as well as guidance on how to complete the forms.



## Working

### 16. When do I work (days of the week and hours)?

Your schedule will vary with the position you choose. While most positions are looking for students during normal business hours (Monday to Friday, 8 AM to 6 PM), WS job opportunities are available 24 hours per day, 7 days per week during the academic year. Some positions even work exclusively during evenings and weekends, for those students who prefer to work outside of normal class hours. You should review each job posting in JobX for information on this topic during your job search.

**Please note:** working during your scheduled class time is expressly forbidden by program regulations. You can not work if you should be in class.

### 17. Is the work schedule the same every week?

This will also depend on the job. Some positions require students to work the same weekly schedule, while others vary each week. Some positions even allow students to set their own schedule each week, provided they work a minimum number of hours. You should review each job posting in JobX for information on this topic during your job search.

### 18. How many hours will I work?

On average, students work between 10 and 12 hours per week. However, the exact number of hours worked will depend on the individual and the position. Under program regulations, students can not work more than 20 hours per week. In contrast some positions do not require students to work any hours during specific weeks at points during the academic year.

### 19. Can I start WS in the Spring semesters? Can I work in just the Fall semester?

While the majority of FWS positions are for Fall & Spring, students are allowed to work in only one semester if they chose to do so. Each job posting will state whether it is for the Fall, Spring, or full Academic Year. In contrast, the majority of CW positions are for the Fall, Spring, and Summer combined. However, students are only allowed to continue their work into the Summer if they are enrolled at UNC for the term.

### 20. How long will I stay at the job?

WS positions are normally for the academic year, meaning most students work from the time they are hired until the end of the Spring term. However, many WS students will return to the same position in future aid years if they find it to be a good fit.

Both students and supervisors have the right to cease employment at any time. If a student is unhappy with their position, they are free to leave and search for another job at any point during the academic year.

### 21. What kind of training should I expect to receive?

According to annual survey data, 99% of supervisors provide training for WS students, and 85% of students receiving between 1 and 20 hours of training each year. The exact type of training will vary based on the duties of the position, but all students will receive training on how to track their time worked for payroll purposes. Additionally, all students receive training on any necessary health, safety, and/or confidentiality topics required by the position to ensure the safety of the student and/or stakeholders.



## Pay

### 22. How do I get my pay?

For on-campus students, you'll set up a direct deposit system for your paycheck during onboarding. Through this, your earnings will be deposited into a bank account of your choice.

For off-campus students, you will either set up a direct deposit system or a process specific to your employer. This process may include receiving a paper check.

### 23. How much do I get paid?

WS students are hourly employees; as such, students will be paid according to how many hours they work during a given pay period. In keeping with program regulations, the hourly wage rate for each student is based on duties and requirements outlined on the job posting as well as the student's characteristics.

Students can see the wage range and estimated number of hours per week for each position when reviewing job postings.

### 24. When do I get paid?

Unlike other forms of financial aid, WS funding is not paid out at the beginning of the semester. As such, it is not available to pay for initial balances with the University at the beginning of the semester.

On-campus students are paid on UNC's [biweekly schedule](#), meaning that students are paid every two weeks.

Because of the logistics of payroll cycle, earnings are usually provided to students 2 weeks after the end of the payroll cycle during which work was performed.

Off-campus students are paid according to their employer's pay cycle. For most students, this will be monthly or biweekly. Under program regulations, students must be paid on a monthly basis or more often.

### 25. What can I use my earnings to pay for?

WS earnings are a form of financial aid, and, therefore, can be used to pay for any college-related expense.

This can include charges paid directly to the university as well as charges paid to non-university entities for other expenses related to attending school such as books, food, rent, transportation, medical expenses, or basic living expenses.

Earnings are not intended to cover expenses unrelated to college. Therefore, using WS earnings to cover such items as vacations or gifts would not be in keeping with program guidelines.

Students are not required to submit documentation regarding how their WS earnings are used.

### 26. Can I use my earnings to pay my bill with UNC?

Yes, WS earnings can be used to pay charges to UNC. However, as previously stated, WS earnings are paid out over the academic year as students work rather than being paid out in a lump sum at the beginning of the term. As such, these funds are not usually available to assist with initial Cashier's bills which occur at the beginning of the academic term.

### 27. Will my earnings be taxed?

WS earnings are subject to federal and state taxes, just like earnings through any other employer. However, most students are able to reclaim part or all of their taxed income by filing a tax return.



## Unused Awards and Conversions

### 28. What happens if I don't use the full award by the end of the year?

Unused WS funding remains on the students accounts at the end of the year and no additional wages are paid for unworked hours. Effectively, the student simply does not receive that portion of their funding for the year.

### 29. What happens if I use the full award before the end of the year? Can I get more WS funding?

Students who utilize their full WS award before the end of the year will need to cease their work through the WS program in order to prevent a violation of program regulations. In some cases, students may be able to continue working for their employer once WS funding is exhausted if the department is willing to pay the student out of their own departmental funds.

### 30. What if I don't want to work or am unable to work?

Students with WS awards who do not participate in work-study will not receive funding through the WS program. Students will need to either locate another source of funding to make up for the unearned award or reduce their expenditures to account for the portion of their college cost that is no longer being covered by FWS funds.

### 31. Can I convert the WS funds to something else?

Yes, students have the option of converting their WS award into a student loan using the [Conversion Request Form](#). The WS Team will provide the best possible loan option at the time of conversion, and students can choose whether to accept or decline the new loan funding.

## Other

### 32. Is there summer work-study?

At this time, we do not have sufficient FWS funding to provide summer work-study funding through that program. As such, FWS awards are limited to the Fall and Spring semesters. Some FWS employers do allow students to work over the summer. However, these positions are funded by the individual departments and are separate from the FWS program.

Students enrolled in the Carolina Works program are eligible to work during the summer. However, students have to be enrolled throughout the term in which they are working. That means a student who hopes to work during both the Summer 1 and Summer 2 sessions will need to be enrolled in Summer 1 and Summer 2 classes.

### 33. What happens to my work-study award if I study abroad?

WS opportunities for UNC students are not available outside of the Chapel Hill area. As such, we can not offer work-study to those students who are studying abroad. In most cases, WS funding is converted to loans or grants as part of the study-abroad packaging process.

### 34. Will my work-study earnings impact the amount of financial aid I can receive the next year?

If reported on the FAFSA as work-study income, WS earnings will not affect the need calculation performed by the FAFSA. As such, properly-reported WS earnings do not impact the amount of aid a student can receive in a future aid year.