Federal Work Study

Federal Work Study unlocks access to financial aid by providing modest wages to eligible college students.

Federal Work Study is only for students who meet financial requirements. Amount of financial aid available varies widely by student, college and other factors.

There are no formal evaluations or performance measures for students in the FWS Program.

Work is optional. Only 16 percent of colleges and universities awarded Federal Work Study to every eligible student. Student eligibility for FWS does not ensure participation.

Work Colleges

Work Colleges assist students in mapping out an education plan that integrates Learning, Work and Service activities. In addition to a college degree, graduates earn valuable dividends like reduced debt and work preparedness.

All degree-seeking students at Work Colleges participate in the work program regardless of financial ability. Once enrolled, all residential students are required to participate in the work program along with educational requirements and service expectations.

Student performance evaluations measure work progress and participation. Students also receive constructive advice, reviews and reflection time, which help with work and career preparation.

Work is required by all. One hundred percent of Work College grads have four years of work experience. Participation is a core component of the Work College experience. Competition for work posts with increased responsibility is merit-based, much like in the career world.

There are no specific requirements that support an integrated student work and learning plan. Students are not prohibited from working while in college, but there are no institutional support systems to help balance academics with a job.

All campus-residing students participate in the comprehensive Work-Learning-Service program. The purposeful integration of core competencies helps students graduate with reduced debt, real world experience and a better understanding of community.

Students receive a paycheck for their work. There are no incentives or specific programs to pay off college expenses early. Seventy percent of recent college seniors had student debt—averaging $28,400 upon graduation.

Student earnings are considered ‘self-help payments’ and apply directly to tuition. This allows students to reduce, or in some cases fully pay off, education costs and education expenses while still in college!

* At Berea College students do receive a small paycheck for personal needs, books etc.
Work Colleges graduates enter the workforce prepared with a wealth of experience, robust life skills and reduced educational debt.

Work-Learning-Service helps students learn a critical balance of study, community service and managed work expectations. Work-Learning-Service activities vary on each campus, but reflect the distinctive nature of each colleges’ operations and overall mission.

Students earn a valuable degree plus important life and professional skills. This is especially important to the many first-generation college students who may not otherwise have access or ability to afford a college education.

When Work College graduates enter a chosen career, they’re already equipped with four years of relevant experience and many of the attributes today’s employers say they desire, but have difficulty finding: critical thinking, problem solving, teamwork, decision-making, leadership, professionalism and a quest for lifelong learning.

Graduates go on to be effective and responsible leaders in business, community and government. They’re smart and thoughtful—graduating with considerably less college debt than most of their peers.

1 Chronicle of Higher Education, September 2014
2 Project on Student Debt, http://projectonstudentdebt.org/state_by_state-data.php

It may seem revolutionary and ‘ahead of its time,’ but Work Colleges have been educating and training dedicated, hard working students for over 100 years.

WORK ETHIC
86%
of Work College graduates report their work program experience helped them get along with people with different opinions and attitudes.

FINANCIALLY SAVVY
88%
of Work College graduates agree that their work program experience was an important way to reduce their college costs.