WORK-STUDY EMPLOYMENT PROGRAM
MISSION STATEMENT

The Financial Aid Office at Westmoreland County Community College shall support and maintain a Work-Study Program for eligible students at WCCC to enhance the academic experience with practical work experience in a positive, supportive, learning environment while providing financial assistance to help offset related expenses.
Dear Work-Study Student,

Welcome to the Work-Study employment program at Westmoreland County Community College!

We are glad to have you as a part of our team. Many departments rely on student employees just like you to keep their operations running smoothly and efficiently. As a work-study employee, you will be gaining and developing valuable skills and experience.

What you can expect from the Financial Aid Office

We will…
- Maintain a variety of on-campus work-study job opportunities
- Provide training to prepare you to begin and maintain your work-study employment
- Offer assistance with financial aid and work-study questions

What the Financial Aid Office Expects of You

You should be prepared to…
- Work to the best of your ability and expand your horizons
- Represent WCCC in a positive manner
- Abide by all WCCC and Work-Study policies and procedures
- Maintain good academic standing and enrollment eligibility

The Financial Aid staff has developed this handbook in order to ensure the highest level of success for work-study employees, like you, as well as the departments in which they work. The WCCC Work-Study Employee Handbook is intended to help you feel comfortable in your job by giving you important information about your employment with the college and the policies that affect you.

Please read this handbook carefully in its entirety. We want you to know as much as possible about work-study policies and procedures at WCCC.

Please do not consider this handbook as your only source of information about work-study employment. No handbook can anticipate every circumstance or question about a policy. If you have any questions, please speak with your immediate supervisor or contact Wendy Seman, Financial Aid Assistant in the WCCC Financial Aid Office, Founders Hall, Room 113 or by telephone at 724-925-4056 or internally at extension 4056.

Please be sure to print a copy of this handbook for your own reference purposes. You will be prompted at the end of this document to indicate that you have read and will accept the terms of this handbook.

We hope that you find the WCCC Work-Study employment program to be a positive, supportive and rewarding experience. The Financial Aid Office staff looks forward to working with you.

Sincerely,

Gary A. Means
Director/Financial Aid
GENERAL INFORMATION

I. ABOUT THE WORK-STUDY PROGRAM

Work-study is a form of financial aid that you earn in the form of a paycheck. The program is either federally funded, state, or college funded. The funds are intended to help offset your educational and living expenses. Wages are earned by working on-campus.

You may hold only one position at a time, but you may interview to change positions at any time during the year as long as you are still eligible. It is your responsibility to notify the Financial Aid Office of all changes.

Work-Study Students

All work-study employees are considered employees of WCCC. Funds for work study may be federal, state or college funds. The hourly pay rate as of July 1, 2009 is $7.25/hour. There are a variety of on-campus positions available for work-study employees. Positions will be made available as long as there is funding.

To be eligible for the Federal Work-Study Program, you must:

- Fill out the FAFSA financial aid form
- Complete a work study application
- Interview and be selected for a work-study position
- Complete financial aid orientation and employee paperwork, which includes criminal background check and child abuse check
- Students should be at least 6 credits, preference may be given to full time students
- Maintain at least a 2.0 term and cumulative GPA (grade point average)

II. BEFORE YOU CAN BEGIN YOUR WORK-STUDY ASSIGNMENT

You must not begin working until instructed to do so by the Financial Aid Office.

- After you have been selected for a work-study position, your supervisor will contact Wendy Seman, Financial Aid Assistant in the WCCC Financial Aid Office, Founders Hall, Room 113 or by telephone at 724-925-4056 or internally at extension 4056.
- You will need to attend an orientation session, which includes watching a power point presentation and complete a quiz after viewing the presentation.
- There will be paperwork for you to fill out, and we will need to photocopy a valid photo ID for your file.

III. MAINTAINING GPA & ENROLLMENT REQUIREMENTS

While the Work-Study Program exists to provide practical work experience in a positive, supportive, learning environment, we do not believe it should be at the expense of your academic experience; rather it should enhance it. Therefore, in order to continue working as a work-study employee at WCCC, you will need to meet certain academic eligibility requirements.
III. MAINTAINING GPA & ENROLLMENT REQUIREMENTS (Continued)

- Federal Work-Study employees need to be enrolled in a minimum of half-time and maintain at least a 2.0 term and cumulative Grade Point Average.
- You must be enrolled for the upcoming term to work between terms.
- To continue working after July 1, you must be enrolled in a minimum of half-time for the upcoming Fall term and must have applied for financial aid.

If you drop below the minimum enrollment requirements, you must stop working immediately and notify the Financial Aid Office. Failure to do so could result in not being paid for hours worked or being liable to return monies received for hours worked after enrollment status fall below the minimum.

IV. SCHEDULING

Setting Your Schedule

- You and your supervisor will work together in setting your initial schedule. Have your academic schedule handy at your interview or at the time that your supervisor arranges for working on your schedule. Your supervisor will do his or her best to accommodate your academic schedule, but your supervisor is not responsible for providing your maximum number of hours if department hours will not permit. Each semester you will need to review your schedule with your supervisor.

V. TIME CARDS

Where to Get Your Time Card

- Time cards will be sent to your department. They must be completed honestly and accurately. You should complete the time card after each time you work. **Falsifying a time card is considered a serious offense and may lead to immediate dismissal.** It is the responsibility of the work study student to have them signed by their supervisor and sent to the Financial Aid Office. Time cards received late may not be process for that pay period and may not be process until the next pay date. Time cards need to be in to the Financial Aid Office by 4:00 pm on the following Tuesday after the end of the pay period.

VI. PAYCHECKS

WCCC pay periods are every two weeks. Checks may be picked up in the Accounting Office (Founders Hall, Second Floor) after 9 am on Friday of the pay date. Checks not picked up by the following Monday before 1 pm will be mailed.

VII. TRAINING

There will be training that the Financial Aid Office requires of you in order to prepare you to begin your work-study experience and to enhance the development of your work skills. This training currently consists of an initial orientation, an online work-study handbook and also includes a required review of a WCCC work-study power point presentation. Student must complete a quiz to help verify that they read and understand the handbook.

VIII. EVALUATION PROCESS

Work-Study students will be evaluated at least once a year. New work-study students working for their first time will be evaluated during their first semester. A poor evaluation may make them ineligible as work-study in following terms.
IX. DISCIPLINARY PROCESS

Low evaluations

- Students that receive a poor evaluation will be re-evaluated within 30 days. If supervisor does not feel that their performance has improved, will go before the Director/Financial Aid for review.

Gross negligence of policy/procedure

- If the supervisor feels that a work study student behaved in an improper manner, that student will receive a verbal warning about their behavior. If similar behavior continues, then they should receive a written warning with copy being sent to the Financial Aid Office. A third behavior problem will require that the student be sent to the Director/Financial Aid and student maybe terminated from job.

Severe Infraction

- If a supervisor feels that a work study student knowingly has shown blatant disregard for school policy and has committed an act that could harm themselves or another person either physically, professionally, or academically will be sent immediately to the Director/Financial Aid. The student may be terminated from the work study program.

- Examples of action that could result in termination are breaching the privacy/confidentiality agreement, threatening bodily harm, committing sexual harassment, or falsifying your time card.
POLICIES AND PROCEDURES

I. PRIVACY AND CONFIDENTIALITY

As a work-study employee, your position may grant you access to private and confidential information. **You must not release confidential information to any unauthorized person or organization over the phone or in person.** You should refer to a staff member for assistance if you are unsure of any situation. Any breach of confidentiality will result in immediate termination of employment.

Do not discuss any information about students or employees of WCCC except with staff members in your office. Do not disclose the whereabouts of a student to anyone, even if they have an official warrant. You should refer the individual seeking the student to a full time staff member.

II. CUSTOMER SERVICE

Telephone Tips

- When you answer the phone, always identify yourself and your department, office or work area. Example: “Fitness Center, Robert speaking.”
- Remember that you represent WCCC so it is important that you convey professionalism.
- Always be courteous to the caller – remember what it is like to be on the other end.
- If you need to take a message, be sure to accurately include all the important information given. Read back the information to the caller for accuracy and check for possible spelling errors. Always include information such as:
  - Name of the caller
  - Time of the call
  - Phone number of the caller
  - Best time to return the call
- Do your best to help the caller, but if they require assistance that you cannot provide, then transfer the call to someone who can help them. If you need to transfer the caller to another department, be sure to tell the caller the extension number you are transferring them to in case they are accidentally disconnected. Employees who work on campus can find WCCC extension numbers in the WCCC phone directory.

Handling Difficult Situations

- Listen actively and ask helpful questions that will turn the focus of the situation away from the problem to finding possible solutions.
- Suggest positive alternatives. Sometimes people get so frustrated about their situation they cannot see any way of solving it.
- Some people will continue to be angry no matter what you do. Enlist the assistance of your supervisor or another staff member in cases like this.
- Do not take the situation personally. The person is not really upset with you – they are upset with the situation they are in. Put it behind you when they leave. Treat your coworkers and the next person you help with a smile and the courtesy they deserve.
Go the Extra Mile

- Do more than the minimum work required. Go beyond the scope of your job description. Help your co-workers when they are overwhelmed. Stop to help someone when they look lost or confused – even if it is not your area.

- In the campus environment, you will encounter many different kinds of people, many of whom will be different from you, which is a lot like the working world that many of our work-study employees will enter. Always be courteous and treat everyone with respect. Put yourself in the other person’s shoes and treat them the way you would expect to be treated, regardless of how you are feeling at the moment – and for the extra mile, do it with a smile! Remember that you represent WCCC.

- Think of some of the ways others made you feel special or ways you were recognized that you appreciated. Try to do the same for others. Be creative. This will encourage teamwork and make the working environment more pleasant for everyone.

III. PROFESSIONALISM ON THE JOB

Work-Study Employees are Representatives of WCCC

- Always remember that when working you are at all times a representative of WCCC. As such, you must always act in an appropriate professional manner.

Work-Study Positions are Real Jobs!

- It is a privilege to hold a work-study position. Eligibility for work-study does not guarantee you a position. You are interviewed along with other applicants to secure your position just like a real job. Being hired does not guarantee you will keep your position. Now that you are hired, you need to focus on your job responsibilities during your scheduled hours. Your performance will be regularly evaluated.

Work-Study Does Not Mean You Study during Work

- During your scheduled hours you are there to work. Most work-study supervisors are aware that you are trying to juggle an academic schedule with a work schedule. That is why you and your supervisor will discuss a work schedule that will best accommodate your academic hours and study time. When discussing your work schedule, be sure to leave time outside of your work hours for studying.

Personal Call and Visit

- Do your best to avoid receiving personal visitors or personal phone calls during work hours. Customers and co-workers may become offended and your supervisor needs your attention on your work. Please turn off your cell phone and ask friends and family members to call or visit you only if there is a serious emergency that requires your immediate attention.

Eating, Drinking, Chewing Gum…

- While on the job, you should refrain from eating, drinking and chewing gum in front of customers or using language that may be offensive to others. WCCC would like to project a professional image. Since you, as an employee, represent WCCC, such unprofessional behavior should be avoided.

The Customer Comes First

- If you are in a position of customer service and you are asked to work on certain tasks during slow periods, those tasks should be put aside when a customer approaches you.
IV. DRESS CODE

What IS appropriate dress for work-study employees: Dress/sports shirts, sweaters, casual blouses, casual slacks, jeans in good repair, casual skirts, pant skirts, knee-length Bermuda shorts, loafers, deck shoes, well maintained sneakers and low heeled shoes.

What IS NOT appropriate: Tee-shirts or sweatshirts with large slogans/pictures, tank tops or spaghetti straps, sweats or jogging suits, shorts other than above, inappropriately short skirts, spandex, frayed clothing or clothing with holes, and anything showing a lot of cleavage or the midriff.

Any questions about the dress code should be directed to your supervisor.

V. CONFLICT RESOLUTION

Conflict with a Customer

- After doing your best to provide customer service in accordance with our customer service policies, if you are still unable to resolve the conflict, politely excuse yourself from serving the customer and ask your supervisor or ask a department staff member to handle the situation.

Conflict with a Fellow Work-Study Employee

- When you and a fellow work-study employee find yourselves unable to agree on an issue or unable to work together, you should first discuss the issue one-on-one with each other in a private setting. Pick a time when you are not both already agitated about the situation. Avoid being defensive, listen to each other’s side of the issue and try to understand it from their perspective. If necessary, agree to disagree without letting it interfere with your work.

Conflict with Your Supervisor

- Assuming that you understand that your supervisor is in a position of authority over all work-study positions under him or her, if you feel that you have been treated unfairly or asked to do something unreasonable or unlawful, you should first request an opportunity to discuss the issue one-on-one with your supervisor in a private setting. Pick a time when you are not both already agitated about the situation. Avoid being defensive, listen to your supervisor’s side of the issue and try to understand it from his or her perspective. If necessary, agree to disagree without letting it interfere with your work.

On-Going Conflict

- Our mission is to provide a positive, supportive learning environment for practical work experience. Therefore, if after discussing the issue with your supervisor, you still do not feel like the situation was resolved, and that it may interfere with your work performance, you should contact Wendy Seman, Financial Aid Assistant in the WCCC Financial Aid Office, Founders Hall, Room 113 or by telephone at 724-925-4056 or internally at extension 4056.

VI. SEXUAL HARASSMENT

WCCC does not tolerate harassment of any type towards or by any individual. Work-study employees who believe that they have been subjected to any form of harassment or who believe that they have witnessed harassment of any type, should report such concern to their supervisor who will direct the work-study employee to the appropriate college official(s) to process their complaint or concern. If a work-study employee believes they have been subjected to harassment by their supervisor, they should report their concern to the Director/Financial Aid or his designee who will give the student appropriate direction.

Sexual harassment can best be defined as requests for sexual favors in exchange for employment considerations or behavior that creates a hostile work environment due to its focus on issues of a sexual nature. This includes off-color jokes, comments about body parts or sex life, suggestive materials, etc.
VI. SEXUAL HARASSMENT (Continued)

If you have to ask yourself whether or not something that you are doing may be offensive in any way to any other person, the best advice is **don't do it or say it.**

VII. EMERGENCIES/ACCIDENTS

Any emergency or accident should be immediately reported to your supervisor. If they are not available, then report it to a full time employee of the college or contact Wendy Seman, Financial Aid Assistant in the WCCC Financial Aid Office, Founders Hall, Room 113 or by telephone at 724-925-4056 or internally at extension 4056.

They in turn will contact the appropriate staff. Any accident that happens must have an Accident/Incident Report Form completed.
FREQUENTLY ASKED QUESTIONS

What is the Work-Study employment program?
Work-study employment is a form of financial aid that a student earns in the form of a paycheck. The program may be funded by federal, state or college funds. The funds are intended to help offset educational and living expenses. Wages are earned by working on campus in different departments throughout the WCCC campus.

Who can be a work-study employee?
Students are considered for work-study employment based on financial need. Eligibility is determined by a student’s financial need as determined by the FAFSA grant application. You must be enrolled with a minimum of 6 credits and maintain at least a 2.0 GPA each term.

How do I receive the money?
Unlike many forms of financial aid, the money goes directly to the student instead of to the institution. Funds are received in the paycheck every two weeks. All paychecks are based on a standard hourly wage and the number of hours worked for each pay period.

How much will I get paid?
All federal work-study employees receive a standard hourly rate. The hourly pay rate as of July 1, 2009 is $7.25/hour. Appropriate taxes will be deducted from your paycheck.

When can I begin working?
DO NOT begin working until approval is given by the Financial Aid Office. Before you begin working you will need to complete and return all requested paperwork. All new work-study students must attend an orientation session. This is a requirement not an option.

How many hours a week can I work?
Generally, work-study employees are hired to work between 10-15 hours per week.

Are current work-study employees guaranteed a position next year?
Each academic year begins a new process. Initial approval is for the remainder of that school year provided you continue to meet academic and enrollment guidelines each term (6 credits and a GPA of 2.0 or above each term.) It will be up to each department if they request a student to return to their department.

Who should I contact if I have any questions about the Work-Study employment program?
You can contact Wendy Seman, Financial Aid Assistant in the WCCC Financial Aid Office, Founders Hall, Room 113 or by telephone at 724-925-4056 or internally at extension 4056.