

# ON-CAMPUS EMPLOYER GUIDE

*Student employment policies, best  
practices, hiring steps, and more!*





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## INTRODUCTION

Hiring students for on-campus employment at George Mason University offers a mutually beneficial opportunity for the institution and for our students. Studies show that students seek on-campus employment opportunities for financial support, to gain experience, and to connect with their university community.

As one of the largest public universities in Virginia, George Mason hosts a diverse and talented student population eager to gain practical experience and contribute to the campus community. This guide provides a comprehensive overview of the hiring process, policies, and logistics of employing students.



# STUDENT EMPLOYMENT POLICIES

## Eligibility<sup>1</sup>

Students must be enrolled full-time and in good standing with the university.

- Undergraduate students: **12 credit hours**/semester with a semester and overall GPA of at least 2.0.
- Graduate Students: **9 credit hours**/semester with higher than a C in all courses.

## Hours<sup>2</sup>

Student employees are limited to a **maximum of 20 hours**/week. During semester breaks (winter, summer, and spring break), students may work up to 40 hours/week.

## Types of Student Employment

### Student Wage

Undergraduate and graduate students who work part-time on campus. Roles can include, but are not limited to administrative support, research assistance, event coordination, and technical services.

- **Who is eligible:** Undergraduate, graduate, non-degree, F1, J1, and INTO students.
- **Where to post:** Handshake, email listservs, jobs.gmu.edu

### Federal Work Study

- The Federal Work-Study (FWS) Program is a need-based program that provides part-time job opportunities to eligible students. Funds to hire FWS students are split between FWS funds (75%) and your department (25%).
- **Who is eligible:** Undergraduate and graduate students awarded FWS funds in their aid package.
- **Where to post:** Handshake.

Check with the Office of Student Financial aid at fws@gmu.edu to find out if your on-campus position is eligible to be a Federal Work-Study option.

### Graduate Assistantship

There are 3 main types of Graduate Assistantships.

These opportunities are hosted by individual units and often include tuition reimbursement/stipend.

- **Graduate Research Assistant (GRA):** A student participating directly in research or research-support activities under faculty supervision.
- **Graduate Teaching Assistant (GTA):** A student acting as an instructor under faculty supervision. The student may or may not be the instructor of record.
- **Graduate Professional Assistant (GPA):** A student participating in a non-teaching/non-research position performing work in which they gain experience related to their academic program and that is significantly connected to their fields of study and career preparation.
- **Who is eligible:** Graduate students enrolled in at least 6 credit hours/semester.
- **Where to post:** Handshake, email listservs, jobs.gmu.edu

<sup>1</sup>AP.5 Undergraduate Policies, Academic Standing

<sup>2</sup>Wage Employment - University Policy



## International Students

All departments are encouraged to hire International Students. These hires will need to request an I-20 form from OIPS to be eligible to work on campus, but this is usually completed during the admissions process.

### F-1 and J-1

status students must be enrolled full-time during the fall and spring semesters to maintain their immigration status. Students on an F-1 or J-1 visa may work on any of George Mason's campuses (Fairfax, Arlington, and SciTech). Employment can come from an office or a business on campus (e.g., Barnes and Noble, Sodexo, and food establishments). Students can work up to **20 hours/week** during spring/fall semesters and full-time during breaks (summer, winter, and spring).

- **International students must obtain a Social Security Number from the International Tax Office before their first day of employment.**



## What to expect in the hiring process

### Typical Student Experience Timeline (2 weeks - 2 months on average)

- Apply to job opportunities through Handshake
- Employers will extend an invitation to interview
- Complete your interview
- Receive job offer
- Bring offer to the Office of International Programs and Services (OIPS) Student Union Building I, 4300
- Begin Social Security Number (SSN) process
  - Can take 2-4 weeks on average
  - International students do not automatically receive a social security number. Social security numbers are needed to get paid.
- Start on-campus job opportunity





# EMPLOYER BEST PRACTICES

## Utilize Handshake for Hiring

Post job opportunities on Handshake to reach a broad and diverse student audience. One of the biggest concerns we get from students is not **hearing back from employers**. Remember to decline students after hiring is complete.

## Provide Clear Job Descriptions

Write job descriptions that **outline responsibilities, required skills**, and expected outcomes. Ensure job descriptions use inclusive language to promote inclusive hiring practices.

## Offer Competitive Wages

Ensure student wages are competitive and reflect the skills and effort required for the role. The minimum required wage for student employees is minimum wage. Check the [U.S. Department of Labor](#) to find the current rate for minimum wage.

## Prepare For an Increase in Applications

In recent years, the average number of applications for on-campus employment positions has significantly increased. This increase is attributed to the university's growing enrollment and the reliance of international students on on-campus employment. Some recommended ways to manage this influx of applications are to **partner with a colleague to review applications** when possible, be specific with your application requirements, and use Handshake filters.

## Avoid Unconscious Bias

Unconscious bias in the hiring process happens when you have unintended favoritism towards or prejudice against people of a particular ethnicity, gender, or social group that can **influence perceptions**. This can lead to forming an opinion about candidates based solely on first impressions. Even in the early hiring stages, a student's name, major, or even hometown can influence your opinion more than you think. Encourage hiring managers and staff to recognize, address, and **avoid unconscious bias** in the hiring process.

## Combat the Use of AI

Students are encouraged to customize their application materials to align with the job description. Recently, we have observed a growing trend of students using generative AI to write cover letters. To identify AI-generated content, we recommend inputting your job description to an AI writing tool, such as ChatGPT, to **generate a sample cover letter for comparison**. Additionally, examples in AI-generated cover letters may not align with the experiences listed on the student's resume.



# POSTING JOBS IN HANDSHAKE

- **Determine if your department has a Handshake account.**
  - **If it does:** Create an employer account in Handshake using your NetID and connect to your department's employer profile.
  - **If it doesn't:** Create an employer account in Handshake using your NetID and request to connect to George Mason University. It can take a couple of days to get approved in the system.
- **Once your account is approved, you can post On-Campus positions.**
- **Mark positions as "on-campus employment" when posting in Handshake.**
- **Review applications** received through Handshake and shortlist candidates based on their qualifications and your job requirements.

**TIP:** Automate the process by setting up an auto-responder.

## TIPS FOR HIRING STUDENTS

- **Communicate with applicants in a timely manner**
  - Update them via Handshake using our Email Message Templates
- **Interview candidates to assess their fit for the role.**
- **Extend job offers** after determining the best candidates:
  - This can be done over email or by phone. An example of a student wage welcome letter can be found here: Hiring Resources – Human Resources
- **Onboard new hires once the offers are accepted** to integrate students into their new roles. Your department office manager can usually set this up or you can reach out directly to HR.





# FAQS AND RESOURCES

## Onboarding Wage/Student Wage Employees

- [Hiring Resources – Human Resources](#)
- [Hiring Toolkit: Wage – Human Resources](#)
- [EPAF/Non-Benefited Onboarding – Human Resources](#)
- [HR Liaison Directory – Human Resources](#)

## FAQ: Links Open on Handshake's Help Site

- [How to Post a Job](#)
- [How to Find Closed/Expired Positions](#)
- [How to Filter Applicants](#)

## Contact Us

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