University Life
UNIVERSITY CAREER SERVICES
George Mason University®

UCS Student Staff Member Policies & Procedures

Updated July 2025

Table of Contents

Hiring

Before Recruitment

- ☐ Review hiring policies and procedures
  - ○ Click here for more information on how to hire Graduate Assistants
- ☐ Have an idea of how many working learners you would like to hire
- ☐ Draft interview questions
- ☐ Craft job description in Handshake
- ☐ Gain approval from your supervisor

Learning Objectives for On-Campus Employment

Working Learners will:

- Employ appropriate communication across a variety of professional situations
- Practice the ability to navigate ambiguous job situations by applying problem-solving strategies to achieve clarity and task completion
- Identify appropriate technology for completing specific tasks
- Display effective work habits appropriate to the work environment

During Recruitment

- ☐ All positions must be posted in Handshake
- ☐ Once applicants have been reviewed, interview selected candidates, in-person or virtually, who meet job requirements
  - ○ Ex: GPA, skills, customized documents, work availability, etc.
- ☐ Make verbal offer to preferred candidate(s)
  - ○ Send offer letter to new hire once they have accepted the position verbally (cc Office Manager)
    - ▪ Offer Letter template can be found here
- ☐ Notify unselected candidates (can be through email) and decline them in Handshake
- ☐ Remove posting from Handshake if the position has not closed already

After Job Acceptance

- ☐ Send Office Manager the students' information below so they can create an Electronic Personnel Action Form (EPAF):
  - ○ Full name
  - ○ Gnumber
  - ○ GMU email address
  - ○ Phone number
  - ○ Start date
- ☐ Send Technology Manager:
  - ○ Student's full name
  - ○ Position title/office assignment (if applicable)
  - ○ GMU email address
  - ○ Physical technology equipment needs

- Handshake and shared drive folder access requirements (if needed)
- To request career services level Patriot Connect access for your student, use this [link](#)

UCS Office Policies

Pay Rates

Position	Starting Pay	Start Date Guidance
Graduate Assistants	Check here for most up to date information.	Must be the 10th or 15th of the month. Contracts are for 9 or 9.5 months.
Front Desk	$13	Any
PCA	$13	Any
ERSA	$13	Any
Employer and RSO Liaison	$13	Any

*Student wage increases $0.50 each year of employment (or in line with any minimum wage increase). Please notify the Office Manager before the start of the semester if your working learner has been employed for 1 year with our office and needs a payment increase.

Student Telework Policy

George Mason University Human Resources introduced an update to Policy 2202 (Flexible Work) in Summer 2025 with an addition to include student wage employees. To qualify to telework, students must live and work in Virginia due to payroll and tax implications. **Fully remote work is not permitted for student wage employees.**

Items to note:

- As with other employee groups, teleworking is not a guaranteed benefit and can be modified or discontinued at any time based on operational needs and job performance.
- Forms can be found on the HR Flexible Work website and must be submitted before telework can begin. Supervisors will need to sign the Student Wage Hybrid Telework Agreement on the student's behalf.

Inclement Weather Policy

In the event of inclement weather or other emergencies that lead to a university closure, supervisors are responsible for promptly notifying their working learners about any changes to their work schedule.

Key Guidelines:

- If George Mason University is officially closed, student employees are not expected to report to work.
- In most cases, student staff **do not telework** during university closures unless otherwise instructed by their supervisor and approved by leadership.
- Be proactive in monitoring university communications during severe weather events, and ensure you have updated contact information for your team to relay information quickly.

Tip: You may wish to establish a communication protocol in advance (e.g., group chat, email thread) for weather-related updates to ensure everyone stays informed.

Timesheets

All working learners are required to record their hours worked using the timesheet system in Patriot Web. Timesheets are submitted biweekly and must be completed and approved on time to ensure timely payroll processing.

Supervisor Responsibilities:

- Remind working learners to enter their hours by the established due date every pay period.
- Review and approve submitted timesheets by the payroll deadline.
  - Information on how to do this can be found here.
- In cases where a student forgets to submit their timesheet on time, they may add those hours to their next pay period. This method should be used only as needed. Please encourage your students to submit their timesheets on time to prevent recurring late submissions.

Required Trainings

All required student trainings can be completed through Mason LEAPS. You can find the GMU HR required trainings below.

1. FERPA – All George Mason University employees who handle or have access to education records must complete FERPA training upon employment. This training must be completed every two years.
2. IT Security Awareness Training – New Employees - IT Security Awareness Training is required to be completed by all new and re-hired employees within 14 days of being hired. It provides Mason faculty and staff with information to help them stay safe online. Training covers how to increase safety and security online, how to minimize risks and how to recognize possible attacks.
3. Emergency Preparedness Training (Annual) – Helps you understand emergency management principles, plan for known threats and potential hazards, and review emergency response roles within the Mason Community.
4. IT Role Based Training: Highly Sensitive Data Custodian Training - George Mason University maintains data essential to the performance of university business and which are valuable assets. The Highly Sensitive Data Custodian training enables the University to protect all elements of data in terms of confidentiality, integrity and availability. This training, which is required annually, has been developed for employees and contractors throughout the university whose role has been found to have access to highly sensitive student data.

These trainings should be automatically assigned to your working learner prior to their first day of employment. You can review the article here to see how to assign additional trainings to your student staff in Mason Leaps.

Dress Code

Working learners will have the option for "dress for your day". They should be comfortable but ensuring that everything fits well and is appropriate for the work place. They should reach out to their supervisor with any questions or financial concerns regarding the dress code.

Allowed Clothing: Polos, Jeans, Khakis, Plain T-Shirts, Mason Swag, Skirts and Dresses (appropriate length), Cargo Pants, Cardigans, Blazers, Hoodies, Sweatshirts

Not Allowed Clothing: Holes in Your Jeans, Leggings, Shorts, Athleisure Wear, Shorts, Cropped Tops, Graphic T-Shirts (ex: no "I like to fart t-shirts"), Flip Flops

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This dress code does not include the dates listed below

Special Days

University Life/Mason Events

Special Event	Are We Open?	Drop-Ins?	Attire?	Optional
UL Day of Service (Summer)	No	No	Casual	Virtual, Part-Time, GA if not held during your regular work hours

+Optional categories: All Staff, Virtual Employees, Part-Time Professional Staff, Grad Student Employee

Career Services Events

Special Event	Are We Open?	Drop-Ins?	Attire?	Optional
Boutique Career Fairs (ex: Health, Internship)	Yes	Yes	Business Professional	Virtual, Part-Time, GA if not held during your regular work hours
Cleaning Day	Yes	Yes	Casual	Virtual exempt, GA optional
Just in Time Hiring Fair*	Yes	No	Business Professional	Virtual, Part-Time, GA if not held during your regular work hours
Office Retreats*	No	No	Casual	Virtual, GA, Intern
Part Time Job Fair*	Yes	Yes	UCS Polos and Jeans/Khakis	Virtual, Part-Time, GA
Resume Clinic*	Yes	No	Business Casual	Virtual, Part-Time, VA
Spring and Fall Career Fair*	No	No	Business Professional	GA depends on schedule

Holidays (UCS is closed and there are no drop-ins): Juneteenth, 4th of July, Labor Day, Memorial Day, MLK Day, Election Day, Thanksgiving (Wednesday – Friday) and Winter Break

<u>Onboarding New Student Employees</u>

Prior to the Employee's Arrival

☐ Send email to the student with information they need to know for their first day (ex: dress code, time to arrive, items to bring, shift schedule, office location, etc.)

☐ Set up their workstation with any necessary supplies

☐ It is a best practice to develop a binder for student staff containing essential information, office/university policies, and resources to assist with training/onboarding.

      o Examples of these documents can be found in the Teams folder

Technology Access

Your working learner may need access to specific technology while working in our office. Please follow the instructions below to gain access.

Handshake – Email the Technology Manager with any additional Handshake permission needs.

Please note, the student will have needed to produce a certificate of FERPA completion to gain access beyond their student account.

Patriot Connect – Please fill out this form with your students information to get additional access to Patriot Connect.

Please note, the student will have needed to produce a certificate of FERPA completion to gain access beyond their student account.

25Live – Faculty/staff can request a 25Live access account. To request an account, please fill out this form. Once your account is created, you can view a training video on MasonLeaps. Training is not required, but encouraged for best use of the system.

Teams – Please contact the Office Manager or the individual team owner to give your student staff member access to additional Teams groups such as the UCS All Staff teams.

Mason 360 – To gain faculty/staff access to Mason 360, please visit this website to submit a form for your student.

Onboarding Supervisor Checklist

"*" notes highly recommended items, everything else is mandatory.

First Day

☐ Share training expectations and timeline

☐ Complete a tour of the office

☐ Introductions to members of the team*

☐ Have your student complete FERPA and any other required training on Mason Leaps and send you the completion certificate

      o Send completion certificates to the Technology Manager so student can gain access to UCS accounts/resources

First Week

- [ ] Review and sign Student Staff Standards of Conduct
- [ ] Show student employee how to submit timesheets on PatriotWeb
- [ ] Share office policies
- [ ] Share individual team policies
- [ ] Discuss appropriate forms of communication with their supervisor, peers and fellow staff
  - o Review how communication is handled differently when they are virtual (if applicable) *
- [ ] Provide training on appropriate office technology *

Within the First Semester

- [ ] Encourage your student to meet with their Career Advisor *
- [ ] Attend one UCS Signature Event *
- [ ] Establish a schedule for on-on-one meetings and all team staff meetings
- [ ] Encourage your student to complete the Google AI Essentials course *
- [ ] Attend one BYOE or site visit event with an employer in your industry *

Communication & Feedback

Set Clear Expectations

Facilitate open communication by:

- Establishing their primary point of contact/where to direct questions at the beginning of their employment
- Connect their role to our mission, vision, and values
- Explain what you consider successful performance behaviors and workplace professionalism
    - Workplace professionalism = attendance and punctuality, attire/dress code, following office protocol, consistency and quality of work, phone and email etiquette, respectful communication, and a positive attitude.

Constructive Feedback

Why does feedback matter? For many student employees, this job is one of their first professional experiences. Constructive feedback helps them understand expectations, build new skills, grow their confidence, and learn from mistakes in a supportive environment.

Before the Conversation
- **Set the stage early**: Let students know from day one that feedback is a normal and expected part of their growth—not a punishment.
- **Create a feedback-friendly environment**: Build trust by regularly checking in and praising progress, not just pointing out mistakes.
- **Be timely**: Address issues close to when they happen, but never in the heat of the moment. Allow time to reflect and choose the right setting.

During the Conversation: A Constructive Feedback Framework
Use the "SBI" method: Situation – Behavior – Impact or Start – Stop – Continue Method

SBI Method Framework
1. **Situation**: Describe *when and where* the behavior occurred.
   "During yesterday's front desk shift…"
2. **Behavior**: Describe the *specific behavior* you observed. Focus on facts, not assumptions.
   "…you were 10 minutes late and didn't inform anyone."
3. **Impact**: Share the *effect* it had.
   "…this left the desk uncovered and created confusion for a guest looking for assistance."
4. **Ask for their perspective/encourage self-reflection**:
   "Can you tell me what happened from your side?" or *"how do you think that went?"*
5. **Collaborate on a solution**:
   "What would help you be on time in the future?" or *"Let's talk about strategies you can use to manage your time better."*

Start – Stop – Continue Framework
1. **Start**
   "I'd love for you to start documenting common troubleshooting steps for frequent issues. This will help streamline support requests and make it easier for both you and your team to resolve problems efficiently."
2. **Stop**

"Try to stop rushing through customer interactions to close tickets quickly. While speed is important, ensuring that users fully understand the solution will reduce repeat issues and improve overall satisfaction."

3. **Continue**
"You're doing a great job staying calm and professional when handling technical problems. Keep up the patience and clear communication—it makes a big difference in helping users feel supported!"

General Tips
- Use "I" statements (e.g., "I noticed…" instead of "You never…")
- Keep it private
- Balance critique with encouragement (no compliment sandwich!)
- Encourage students to view mistakes as learning opportunities rather than failures.
- Feedback isn't about being perfect—it's about **growth**. Your role is to guide, support, and affirm their development as emerging professionals.

After the Conversation

- Follow up in writing with a brief summary if needed (especially for patterns or repeated issues)
- Check in during your next one-on-one to see how they're doing
- Acknowledge improvement

Recognition & Motivation

The National Student Employment Association (NSEA) declares the second full week of April to be [National Student Employment Week.](#) This website has some great ideas of ways to recognize the working learners you supervise.

Recognition helps working learners feel valued, motivated, and connected to the team. For many students, your recognition sets the tone for how they view work, leadership, and their own potential. When recognition is personalized, it has a deeper impact. Celebrate birthdays, work anniversaries, or end-of-semester accomplishments.

Example: Use The 5 Languages of Workplace Appreciation

1. Words of Affirmation: Verbal or written praise that is specific and sincere.

Examples:

- Say "thank you" often and specifically: *"Thank you for jumping in to cover that shift—your flexibility really helped the team."*
- Send a shout-out in a team meeting or WhatsApp/Teams message.
- Write a handwritten note recognizing their effort or progress.

Tip: Be mindful of whether they prefer public or private praise—some students love the spotlight; others prefer a quiet "thank you."

2. Tangible Gifts: Small, meaningful tokens that show appreciation.

Examples:

- Favorite snacks or coffee
- A small item that reflects their interests (e.g., school supplies, stickers, Mason gear)
- Gift cards (even $5-10) to local or campus spots

Tip: This isn't about spending money—it's about thoughtful gestures that show you know and appreciate who they are. Student wage, graduate assistants, and work study employees are eligible to receive Mason Flair and student employee gift cards through GMU HR. You can submit a request through their [website](#).

3. Acts of Service: Helping out with tasks or lightening their load during busy times.

Examples:

- Covering a task they usually do when they're overwhelmed or sick
- Offering to proofread a document or walk them through a tricky assignment
- Taking time to help them solve a problem, even if it's outside your usual scope

Tip: These actions show you're invested in their well-being and success.

4. Quality Time: Focused, undistracted time spent together that builds connection and support.

Examples:

- One-on-one meetings that aren't just checklists—ask how they're doing, not just what they're doing
- Invite them to lunch or coffee (virtual or in person)
- Offer shadowing or mentoring opportunities outside of their normal tasks

Tip: Even short bursts of quality time—like a 5-minute chat after a shift—can go a long way.

On-Going Training and Development

Student Staff Training Day

Every August, the On-Campus Employment Specialist will plan a Student Staff Training Day for all of the working learners in University Career Services. Student participation is highly recommended but not mandatory. During this training, they will review general info to know about UCS, student staff member policies, activities around setting expectations and team building.

Growth Program Evaluations

The Growth Program is a University Life (UL) student talent development initiative focused on enhancing students' on-campus employment through developing and evaluating learning outcomes that contribute to post-graduate success. This is achieved through a combination of semesterly evaluation cycles using the Career Launch platform and Crucial Conversations.

All University Life units hiring working learners categorized as student wage, graduate assistants, and Federal Work Study are required to participate. This includes graduate and undergraduate students.

Crucial Conversations: Supervisors conduct one-on-one guided conversations with their Student Employees each semester. In these conversations, teams will discuss:

- The students' performance; noting strengths and areas of improvement
- Any discrepancies between the student's self-assessment and supervisor's evaluation scores
- Progress towards student's goals
- Any challenges the student has faced that semester
- How the student can relate their current position to their career goals

Evaluation Rubric: The Growth Program evaluates students' career readiness based on the 8 NACE (National Association of Colleges and Employers) Competencies.

1. Professionalism
2. Communication
3. Technology
4. Teamwork
5. Critical Thinking
6. Career & Self Development
7. Leadership
8. Equity and Inclusion

Goal Setting

- Work together to create one S.M.A.R.T goal around job performance that integrates career readiness
- Ask your working learners about their career interests.
  - Help connect how their current position relates to their desired career
  - Develop a work-related project that builds specific career readiness skills

- - o   Identify university resources and offices that can provide specialized support
- Focus on 1-2 career readiness skills at a time
- Make the goal a win-win for the working learner and your department
- Check in regularly on goal completion, make adjustments as needed, and celebrate success along the way.

Additional Resources to Utilize

LinkedIn Learning – By using their GMU login information, current George Mason students get a free LinkedIn Learning account. Recommended courses for students can be found on their website.

Mason Career Academy – Mason Career Academy gives current students, faculty, and staff FREE access to 90+ online courses and specializations on Coursera. Learn new skills, explore a new subject, or advance your career goals. Click here to access the Career Academy for Current Students.

Mason 101 – Students can sign up on MasonLeaps for this one-time, two-hour workshop to learn more about the history, organization, resources, and future of George Mason University.

Learning Services Workshops – Learning Services workshops can help students improve their academic performance by enhancing their skills in a variety of topics such as scheduling, time management, studying for exams, improving concentration, and overcoming procrastination. The majority of workshops are hosted virtually. You can access an updated schedule of their upcoming workshops here.

Offboarding

Offboarding Checklist

- ☐ Inform the working learner of their official last day of work
- ☐ Notify the Office Manager of the working learner's last day so their EPAF can be updated
- ☐ Inform the Technology Manager of the working learner's last day to ensure their access to UCS applications and systems is removed
- ☐ Have your working learner return any UCS technology they were using during their employment prior to their last day

Graduating Students

A Student Staff Celebration will be held at the end of each semester to celebrate the accomplishments of our working learners, particularly our graduating students.

To celebrate the accomplishments of our graduating working learners, they each receive a personalized framed [Wordle Art](#) and a graduation cord. These can be presented during the Student Staff Celebration or on their last day of employment. Wordle Art can be customized into a shape that reflects the student's personality, role, or interests. Frames and graduation cords are available in the Customer Service Coordinator's office for pickup.

Employee Termination

In some cases, a working learner may need to be terminated due to ongoing performance issues, misconduct, or violation of workplace policies.

If you believe a working learner may need to be terminated:

1. Document concerns: including dates, specific incidents, and prior feedback or corrective actions taken.
2. Consult with your supervisor before taking any formal action.
3. Meet with the student in a private setting, if appropriate, to discuss concerns and give an opportunity for improvement—unless the situation requires immediate separation (ex: severe misconduct).
4. After notifying the student of their separation, please follow up with a written confirmation outlining the reason for the termination. This serves as formal documentation and should be shared with both the student, your supervisor, and the Office Manager.
5. Complete the standard offboarding checklist as you would with any departing student employee.

Note: Termination should never come as a surprise to the working learner. Ongoing feedback and performance conversations should always precede a final decision.