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# Work Study Handbook

## Academic Year 2024 - 2025



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These guidelines, policies, and procedures have been developed to meet the needs of student assistants and their supervisors. Student Assistants are required to uphold all policies and procedures outlined in the handbook. Any questions related to this handbook should be addressed to the Financial Aid ([Financial.Aid@sofia.edu](mailto:Financial.Aid@sofia.edu)) or the Student Services ([Student.Services@sofia.edu](mailto:Student.Services@sofia.edu)) offices.

## Overview

The Student Employment Program is a valuable component of the educational experience at Sofia University. Students who work in the program have the opportunity to earn money toward the cost of their education and expenses while contributing as a temporary employee. Qualified students can earn money through subsidized programs as part of their financial aid package. Work Study is a federally funded program that awards up to \$4,800 per academic term based on need as determined by the FAFSA (Free Application for Federal Student Aid).

Sofia University is an Equal Opportunity employer and does not discriminate on the basis of race, gender, sexual orientation, religion, age, national origin, or veteran's status in any aspect.

### Eligibility

Incoming students will be made aware of work study opportunities as part of their initial consultation with the Financial Aid Office. Job descriptions for each work study position will reside in a "Work Study Bulletin Board" on the Sofia University Financial Aid website.

Student assistants are not eligible to work more than the eligible hours authorized by the Sofia University and Financial Aid office. It is the responsibility of the Student Assistant and their Supervisor to ensure that Student Assistants do not exceed the maximum number of 20 hours per week.

### Job Postings

All available work study positions will be posted electronically on Sofia University's Financial Aid website.

### Application Process

All students are encouraged to complete the FAFSA form at their earliest convenience. Shortly after gaining admission to the University, a student will have a conference with a representative from our Financial Aid office to discuss and determine loan and work-study eligibility.

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## New Applicants

Prospective Student Assistants will be able to view the available work study positions listed in the Work Study Bulletin Board and online through Sofia University's Financial Aid website. If interested in one or more positions, a prospective Student Assistant will forward their Resume and Cover letter to the [Financial.Aid@sofia.edu](mailto:Financial.Aid@sofia.edu) or to the contact/office listed on the job posting.

Interviews for all positions are required. Prospective Student Assistants will be advised of the interview date and time as soon as possible.

When a student is selected for a Student Assistant role, they will be notified by Human Resources, and they will receive an offer letter outlining the details pertaining to the position. When they sign and submit their contract, Student Assistants will be required to provide proof of eligibility to work in the United States (U.S.) e.g., Social Security Card, Passport or Real ID.

## Returning Assistants

Student Assistants may continue their jobs into breaks and summers, or even the next academic year, provided the position is still available, their performance has been deemed satisfactory or better, and they are eligible for Work Study Aid. Although the Student Assistant will not need to interview again to return to his/her old position, it is required that the student re-apply for Work Study through the Financial Aid office to determine eligibility. Once a student's eligibility is confirmed, the student will receive a letter or email with their starting date and payroll information. Each academic year (AY) a new contract will need to be signed and submitted. The requisition will be submitted by the hiring supervisor before the contract is created.

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## Student Assistant Rights and Obligations

A Student Assistant is responsible for demonstrating decent work habits, which include courtesy and dependability. A Student Assistant is expected to conduct themselves professionally and to complete assigned tasks in an effective manner.

Employment records for all Student Assistants will be maintained in the Human Resources office. All activities should be recorded in the student assistant personnel file. These records may be used for future referral in the Student Employment Program and may be used for future credit and/or employment verification from outside organizations. Student Assistants may view their personnel file upon written request.

A Student Assistant's employment status with the University is temporary, part-time (seasonal). Student Assistants, therefore, are not entitled to fringe benefits such as holidays, paid vacation, healthcare, and the like. Because they do not pay any unemployment withholding, Student Assistants are not eligible to collect unemployment insurance benefits pursuant to California Unemployment Insurance Code 642. Student Assistants are considered to hold a nonexempt (hourly) classification.

### Earnings/Hourly Rate

The hourly rate for each position will be detailed in an award letter sent to the student when they are approved for the position. The hourly rate for Student Assistant jobs is \$20. Please note that the hourly rate offered by Sofia University is at or well above the minimum wage rate.

### Hours Worked/Pay Periods

Sofia University uses an HRIS/Payroll platform with a Time and Attendance system to record working hours and pay Students Assistants accordingly. Federal regulations state that a supervisor must approve Student Assistant's times worked verifying that the student has worked and earned the amount being paid and that the work was performed in a satisfactory manner. Federal Regulations also stipulate that the time must be spent performing actual work and not studying during working hours. One of the main intentions behind the Federal Work Study program is to prepare students for the work force and instill appropriate work behaviors and expectations.

### HRIS/Payroll Platform

All hours worked must be recorded on the HRIS/Payroll platform by each Student Assistant for the student to be paid. Student assistants need to clock in when starting the shift, enter lunch out when starting the lunch, clock back in when finished with lunch and clock out for finishing the shift. It is California law that all shifts with over 5 hours require at least a 30-minute meal break. Student Assistants may not work more than 7.5 hours in a 24-hour period without prior authorization from a supervisor. Supervisors will approve

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the times in the HRIS/Payroll platform. If a student assistant forgets to enter the punch, or makes an error, the student should immediately notify the supervisor to correct this. If a supervisor is not available, the Student Assistant may notify the Human Resources Department to make the necessary corrections.

The Student Assistant's times must be approved on the HRIS/Payroll platform by their immediate supervisor before payroll is processed. Supervisors are responsible for the accuracy of the information reported on the HRIS/Payroll platform.

### Pay Periods

Student Assistants are paid semi-monthly. From the 11<sup>th</sup> to 25<sup>th</sup> of the month, the payout is on the last day of the month, and for the period from 26<sup>th</sup> to 10<sup>th</sup> of the month the pay date is 15<sup>th</sup> of the month.

### **Hours/Scheduling**

A Student Assistant is eligible to work a maximum of 20 hours per week. Pursuant to Federal Work Study guidelines, Student Assistants are not permitted to take work home.

Student Assistants may not hold more than two (2) jobs concurrently and the total number of hours worked shall not exceed the 20-hour maximum per week. Work study is paid for through Federal and Sofia Funds, except for students working with Community Service (CS).

Federal Funds: 75%, Sofia Funds: 25%, CS – Federal Funds: 100%

When a Student Assistant is scheduled to work four (4) or more consecutive hours, they will be permitted a paid 15-minute break at a time appointed by their supervisor. A Student Assistant must be given the opportunity to take an unpaid 30-minute meal break when scheduled to work more than six (6) consecutive hours.

Student Assistants may request a reduction in hours or an adjustment to their work schedule during examination periods. Departments are asked to be flexible and cooperative with student schedules during exam periods.

It should be understood, however, that certain departments may have the opportunity to be more flexible than other departments.

### Breaks

Student Assistants may work during semester breaks with the approval of their supervisor and if funding is available.

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## Summer Hours

Student Assistants can work a maximum of 20 hours per week during summer breaks if their eligibility permits.

## Holidays

The university is closed on the following observed holidays and no work will be available for Student Assistants on these days:

### **Observed Holidays**

New Year's Day	Labor Day
Martin Luther King, Jr. Day	Veteran's Day
President's Day	Thanksgiving Day
Memorial Day	Day after Thanksgiving
Juneteenth Observed	Christmas Eve
Independence Day	Christmas Day

**The University is closed from December 20<sup>th</sup> through January 1<sup>st</sup> , in observance of Winter Holidays and no work will be available for Student Assistants.**

## **Student Assistant Evaluations**

At the completion of the duration of the role, or at the end of every term, whichever is less, the immediate supervisor is to hold a one-on-one evaluation with the Student Assistant to assess progress and whether initial goals and milestones have been met. The student's supervisor will fill out the form and discuss it with the student worker.

## **Termination of Employment**

Sofia University has an at-will employment policy which means that employment may be terminated by either party at any time for any reason (as long as, it is not discriminatory). Student Assistant positions are temporary and part-time in nature and may be terminated for a variety of reasons including lack of funding, lack of work, change of duties, etc. Students Assistants should not assume that their job will continue in the next quarter. Student Assistants must continue to make satisfactory academic progress to retain eligibility for employment during the year.

Students wishing to terminate their employment are expected, as a courtesy, to provide their immediate supervisor with a two-week written notice. Student Assistants wishing to seek other work study roles within the University should consult with the Financial Aid office. However, there can be no guarantee that placement to another position can be made.

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## Work-Related Accidents

Any Student Assistant who is involved in an accident or is injured while working for the University should immediately notify the immediate supervisor (within 24 hours). If medical assistance is required, the Student Assistant will be directed to an appropriate facility. The Student Assistant's immediate supervisor will be required to file an Accident and Investigation Report after the incident, even if no medical assistance is required.

## Disciplinary Guidelines

The design of the Work Study Program is to assist students in the development of good work habits and to encourage students to be able to perform well in an employment situation. Conforming to standards set for regular employees of the university, Student Assistants who do not perform at a satisfactory level can be dismissed by their supervisor.

Whenever possible, supervisors are encouraged to work with and coach Student Assistants regarding how to improve performance. However, there may be instances where immediate dismissal is warranted. The following are some examples of behaviors that will result in immediate termination:

- Unauthorized absence
- Using profanity and demonstrating disrespectful behavior
- Willful damage to public or Sofia University property
- Possession and/or under the influence of alcohol or illegal drugs while on campus or while performing work duties
- Insubordination
- Willful violation of any lawful regulation of the university
- Suspension or expulsion from the university
- Disorderly or unlawful conduct involving a student or other persons on campus or while performing work duties
- Dishonesty or falsifying information given to a supervisor

This list is not intended to be all inclusive, but merely to provide some of the behaviors that will result in immediate termination.



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## Family Educational Right and Privacy Act of 1974 (FERPA)

FERPA is a federal law that requires:

- A written institutional policy related to information and privacy must be established; and,
- A statement of adopted procedures covering students' privacy rights must be made available by way of annual notice in the Catalog provided to currently enrolled students.

Sofia University maintains the confidentiality of all educational records in accordance with the provisions of the Act and shall accord the rights of the Act to all eligible students who are attending or who have attended the University. Students in the university employment program may have access to educational and financial records containing personally identifiable information about current and former students. Unauthorized disclosure of any information is expressly prohibited, and if found that a student has violated the FERPA Act, they will be immediately terminated from their student assistant position and the violation will be reported to the Student Services Office for any other appropriate disciplinary action, up to and including dismissal from the university.

All Student Assistants will be required to complete an annual FERPA training course as a condition of employment.

## Anti-Harassment Policy

Sofia University is committed to providing a workplace free of discrimination and harassment based on such factors as race, religion, sex, gender identity, sexual orientation, pregnancy, childbirth, national origin, ancestry, age, physical disability, mental disability, medical condition, marital status, family care leave status, or veteran status.

Sofia University prohibits discrimination and harassment of employees by managers, supervisors, and co-workers. Similarly, we will not tolerate discrimination and harassment by employees of non-employees. The university will also attempt to protect employees from harassment by non-employees in the workplace.

Harassment includes verbal, written, physical, or visual conduct that creates an intimidating, offensive, or hostile working environment or that interferes with work performance. Harassing conduct may take many forms such as slurs, jokes, statements, letters, notes, gestures, pictures, or cartoons regarding an employee's race, color, religion, sex, national origin, ancestry, age, physical disability, mental disability, medical condition, marital status, sexual orientation, family care leave status, or veteran status.

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## Reporting

Any incident of discrimination or harassment should be reported promptly to your supervisor, to any other supervisor, or to the Director Human Resources. Sofia University emphasizes that you are not required to complain to your supervisor if that supervisor is the one discriminating or harassing you or if you are uncomfortable doing so.

Every reported complaint of discrimination or harassment will be investigated thoroughly, promptly, and with as much confidentiality as possible. Sofia University prohibits retaliation against any employee for cooperating in an investigation or for making a complaint.

## Discipline

If a Student Assistant discriminates or harasses another person, the discriminating or harassing Student Assistant will be disciplined. Disciplinary action may range from a warning to immediate termination, depending on the circumstances.

## **Reasonable Accommodation**

The Americans with Disabilities Act (ADA) is a civil rights statute that prohibits discrimination against people with disabilities. The ADA is the protection given to women, minorities, and others since the Civil Rights Act of 1964. At Sofia University, the ADA covers all employees. A person who is otherwise qualified may request reasonable accommodation related to his/her disability, provided the accommodation does not impose an undue hardship on the university. To discuss reasonable accommodation requests contact Rosalie Cook, at [Rosalie.Cook@sofia.edu](mailto:Rosalie.Cook@sofia.edu).

## **Tax/Employment/Training Forms**

New Student Assistants must complete I-9 (proof of eligibility to work), W-4 (federal tax withholding), and DE-4 (state tax withholding) forms on their first day of work and before they perform any work. Completion of these forms is required as a condition of employment.