

Sam Houston State University
A Member of The Texas State University System

Finance & Operations Human Resources Policy – HR-27
Student Employment Policy

SUBJECT: To ensure efficient and compliant process for campus employment opportunities that support the workplace training and development of students.

POLICY: The primary purpose of positions classified as eligible for student employees at Sam Houston State University (the University) is to provide an experiential education opportunity to expand a student’s workplace training and employment experience. This policy provides information for students and departments seeking and managing part-time hourly student workers and graduate student employment. The University follows all federal and state laws and Texas State University System (TSUS) Rules and Regulations.

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1. Definitions:

- a. **Student Worker:** An employment position reserved for currently enrolled University students only. Student workers, except select graduate student employees, are non-exempt and subject to the Fair Labor Standards Act (FLSA).
- b. **Federal Work-Study Student Worker:** A student worker position funded by an award administered through the University’s Financial Aid Office and available to eligible students who show financial need and want to earn a portion of their education expenses.
- c. **Texas Work-Study Student Worker:** A student worker position funded by an award administered through the University’s Financial Aid Office, available to eligible students who are Texas residents, show financial need, and want to earn a portion of their education expenses.

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- d. **Exempt Teaching, Research, or Graduate Assistants:** Teaching, research, or graduate assistants (student employees who directly support the academic function) are classified as exempt employees in accordance with the FLSA.
- e. **Non-Exempt Graduate Assistants:** Other graduate assistants performing administrative (not academic) support are classified as nonexempt employees under the FLSA.

2. Hourly Student Employment

a. Eligibility for Hourly Student Employment

- i. To be eligible for student worker positions, the individual must be currently enrolled at the University and maintain enrollment in at least six (6) semester hours during the fall and spring semesters.
- ii. To be eligible to work during the summer, if not enrolled, student employees must have been enrolled in at least six (6) semester credit hours during the preceding spring semester
- iii. Work-study student employees must maintain $\frac{1}{2}$ time enrollment during the semester that they have been awarded work-study to retain eligibility for work-study funds.

b. Hiring an Hourly Student Worker

- i. The hiring department must post all hourly student employment positions in the Human Resources (HR) applicant tracking system for a minimum of five (5) days before any applicant selection.
- ii. Students apply for employment through the HR applicant tracking system
- iii. The hiring department selects the qualified applicants for prospective hire in accordance with the posted job position qualifications.
- iv. To begin the hiring process, the hiring department initiates a Hiring Proposal within the HR applicant tracking system.
- v. After HR affirms the prospective student worker's eligibility for employment through registration and a background check, HR will begin the new hire process with the new employee and department.
- vi. The student employee may not begin work until all required hiring documents have been submitted to HR and HR processes the student's electronic personnel action form (ePAF).
- vii. Student employees cannot be employed in both an hourly and salaried appointment concurrently nor can they hold multiple work-study appointments. However, a student worker may be concurrently employed in multiple hourly appointments or a combination of work-study and an hourly appointment so long as the total hours of work do not exceed twenty-eight (28) hours in any workweek.
- viii. New hourly student workers are required to attend HR Student New Hire Orientation. The time the student employee spends at orientation or other required compliance or development training must be reported on

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the employee's semi-monthly timesheet and compensated by the hiring department as time worked.

c. Student Employee Work Schedules

- i. Hourly student employees may work a maximum of twenty-eight (28) hours per University workweek (12:01 am Saturday to midnight Friday) or less.
- ii. If an hourly student employee's workweek exceeds twenty-eight (28) hours three (3) times within an academic long semester, summer long semester, or over two (2) short summer semesters, the worker's employment will be terminated unless the department converts the individual to a regular, benefits-eligible, TRS employment position. Once a student is terminated due to exceeding the 28-hour rule, they are not eligible to be rehired as a student until the following semester. (Student employment must also abide by provisions outlined by the Affordable Care Act (ACA) and these provisions will apply to students who work over thirty (30) hours per week.)
- iii. If a student employee has multiple positions, the responsibility for overtime payment is prorated based on the number of hours worked in each appointment during the week in which the overtime occurred.
- iv. **Supervisors are advised to closely monitor hours worked by hourly student employees, especially those working in multiple departments.**

3. Graduate Assistant Employment

a. Graduate/Doctoral Teaching/Research/Graduate Assistants in Academic Departments

To be eligible for Doctoral/Graduate Teaching Assistant (TA), Doctoral/Graduate Research Assistant (RA), or Doctoral/Graduate Assistant (GA) in an academic department, a student individual must meet the requirements in [Academic Policy Statement 890303](#). For exceptions to this policy statement, departments must contact The Graduate and Professional School.

b. Graduate Assistants (Non-Exempt) in Non-Academic Departments

- i. To be eligible for graduate assistant (NE) positions, a student individual must be admitted to a graduate program at the University and maintain enrollment in at least six (6) semester hours during the fall and spring semesters.
- ii. To be eligible to work during the summer, if not enrolled, graduate assistant (NE) student employees must have been enrolled in at least six (6) semester credit hours during the preceding spring semester.

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c. Hiring a Graduate Assistant

- i. Hiring a Graduate/Doctorial Assistant in an Academic Department
 - 1. The department has discretion to elect to post the position through the HR applicant tracking system. Otherwise, the department follows internal procedures for receiving applications and selecting candidates.
- ii. The hiring department notifies HR of the candidate recommended for hire in advance of notifying the candidate.
- iii. After HR affirms the prospective student worker's eligibility for employment through registration verification and a background check, HR begin the new hire process with the new employee and department.
- iv. Graduate student employees cannot be employed in both an hourly and salaried appointment concurrently.
- v. New graduate assistants are required to attend HR Student New Hire Orientation.

d. Hiring a Graduate Assistant (NE) in a non-academic department

- i. The hiring department must post all graduate assistant (NE) positions in the HR applicant tracking system.
- ii. Graduate students apply for employment through the HR applicant tracking system
- iii. The hiring department selects the qualified applicants for prospective hire in accordance with the posted job positions qualifications.
- iv. To begin the hiring process, the hiring department designates the candidate as recommended for hire within the HR applicant tracking system.
- v. After HR affirms the prospective student worker's eligibility for employment through registration verification and a background check, HR will begin the new hire process with the new employee and department.
- vi. Graduate employees cannot be employed in both an hourly and salaried appointment concurrently.
- vii. New graduate assistants are required to attend HR Student New Hire Orientation.

e. Graduate Assistant Work Schedules

Graduate assistants receive a fixed stipend for services. Such employees are expected to devote the number of hours necessary to their assigned duties and are designated as .50 FTE (working approximately twenty (20) hours per week). Any graduate assistant planning to work significantly more than twenty (20) hours per week must receive advance approval from their Academic Dean and may not work more than over .70 FTE (28 hours per week).

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4. Benefits Eligibility

- a. An hourly student worker is not eligible to participate in retirement programs, fringe benefits, or receive holiday pay.
- b. A Graduate Assistant, employed at least half-time (.50 FTE) for a minimum of four and one-half (4.5) months, is eligible for employer group insurance plans administered by Employees Retirement System (ERS), and must pay part of the premium. Graduate Assistants may elect to decline insurance coverage.

5. Workplace Accommodations

- a. To receive workplace accommodations, student employees must follow the procedure outlined in the [HR-06 Workplace Accommodations Policy](#).
- b. Accommodations received through the Services for Students with Disabilities Department only apply to education-related and not workplace accommodations.

6. Supervisor Performance Management

- a. Student employees are valued contributors supplementing the faculty and staff workforce and facilitating the university's mission. Performance feedback is critical to all employees, including those whose primary relationship to the institution is that of a student. Supervisors are encouraged to share performance feedback directly with the student employees they supervise on a regular basis to enable their professional development.
- b. Students who demonstrate unsatisfactory job performance, unsatisfactory work attendance, or violate university policy or procedure may be subject to disciplinary action, up and to including termination of employment.
- c. Although progressive discipline is not required, to ensure student employees receive workplace training, supervisors should follow an incremental process for addressing performance concerns. When encountering unacceptable behavior,
 - i. Supervisors should first revisit and ensure clarity of the job expectations with the student employee.
 - ii. Should similar behavior occur again, the Supervisor should provide the student employee with verbal counseling and maintain documentation of doing so.
 - iii. If the behavior continues, the supervisor should provide the student with a written warning using the [Special Performance Evaluation Form \(SPE\)](#).
 - iv. If the student's performance does not improve after receipt of the SPE, the supervisor may terminate the student's employment. Supervisors should contact Human Resources Employee Relations prior to terminating the student employee for an EEO review.

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- v. All documentation related to the student employees' performance and discipline should be kept by the department and shared with Human Resources in advance of termination.
- d. Serious violations of policy or those creating significant workplace disruptions may result in the immediate termination of a student employee.
- e. Supervisors should contact HR's Student Employment or Employee Relations staff for guidance on the performance management of student employees.

7. Grievance Procedure

- a. HR will assist any student employee in understanding the grievance procedure. Any student employee who has a problem, complaint, or dissatisfaction with the institution as an employer, has a conflict with a supervisor, or dispute with a coworker may file a grievance when there has been a violation of policy, procedure, regulation, or law. The grievance process is available to address issues related to wages, hours of employment, or conditions of work, including work performance-related issues. The steps below are to be followed to ensure prompt and orderly handling of grievances.
 - i. Step One
 - 1. Student employees must first notify their supervisor of the concern, in writing by using the [Grievance Statement Form](#), within ten (10) working days after learning of the action or condition giving rise to the grievance. Within five (5) working days of the notice, the supervisor and student employee shall schedule and hold a meeting to discuss the grievance and develop a written dispute resolution plan.
 - 2. In cases where the problem directly involves the immediate supervisor it is suggested the student employee discuss the problem with the supervisor; however, if this is not conducive to the resolution of the issue the employee should request a meeting to discuss the problem with the individual at the next level of supervision.
 - ii. Step Two
 - 1. If the student employee is not satisfied with the decision of the supervisor and/or department, they may submit the same [Grievance Statement Form](#) to HR Employee Relations within five (5) working days of completing Step One. Upon receipt, HR will review the grievance within fifteen (15) working days and issue a written response within five (5) additional working days.
 - 2. The HR decision on student grievances is final and concludes the student grievance process.
- b. If prior to filing a grievance, or while a formal grievance proceeding is in progress, a student seeks resolution of the grievance in another forum, whether

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administrative or judicial, the University shall have no obligation to entertain or proceed further with the grievance resolution procedures.

- c. Under no circumstances will the University permit retaliation against an individual in any way for presenting a grievance, speaking on behalf of another employee, or assisting another employee with a grievance.
- d. This procedure does not cover grievances related to sexual misconduct or illegal discrimination. For information on filing a sexual misconduct claim see Section 4 of the [Texas State University System Sexual Misconduct Policy and Procedures](#) and/or contact the Title IX office. For information on filing a discrimination claim, see Section 8 of the [PRE-29 Non-Discrimination Policy](#).

8. Student Worker and Student Worker Supervisor Training

- a. Student workers are required
 - i. to attend HR New Hire Orientation prior to beginning employment within the department,
 - ii. complete required online compliance training in Talent Management, and
 - iii. attend HR-provided workplace development training (approximately four (4) hours of training during the student worker's first year of employment).
- b. Student workers shall record time and be compensated by the hiring department for participating in required meetings and training.
- c. Supervisors of student workers are required to complete Student Worker Hiring and Management training in Talent Management.

Effective: August 1, 2023

Review By: Rhonda V. Beassie, Associate VP for People and Procurement Operations