

New Student Work-Study Information

2025-2026 (Fall 2025, Spring 2026, Summer 2026)

What is work-study?

[Work-study](#) is a financial aid program that allows students to work on-campus or with contracted off-campus work-study employer to earn money to pay for college expenses. Work-study is not a grant (you must work to earn it), nor a loan (you don't have to repay it). It's a federal or state funded program that is matched with funds from CU Boulder. By receiving work-study, a student can be eligible for part-time jobs, both on and off-campus, that they may not have otherwise been eligible for.

Available work-study jobs

CU doesn't assign work-study jobs; students get to choose where they want to work. All work-study positions are posted in [Handshake](#) and you can find them by filtering with work-study in the job title.

You can search by type of job, pay rate or other options by selecting filters in Handshake. Each posting provides info about the job duties, pay rate and information for the employer. Select the Apply button when you see a position that you're interested in.

When can I start using Handshake? Wait about 24 hours after enrolling in classes then use your Identitykey to log in. Please [review our reminders to avoid job scams](#) before you apply for an off-campus job.

How much will I get paid? Pay begins at minimum wage, currently \$16.82 on-campus and contracted off-campus work-study employers to a maximum of \$38.70 per hour for skilled graduate positions. Off-campus/non-affiliated state minimum wage is \$14.81, and work-study cannot be used for those employers.

Taxes and work-study earnings

Work-study is taxable income, and students are considered official employees of the University of Colorado. Student employees will complete all normal IRS forms and will receive a W-2 each spring for their previous year's earnings.

Deadline to start working

In order to keep their work-study offer, students should reflect earnings against their work-study offer by **Oct. 1, 2025** for fall semester, or **Feb. 1, 2026** for spring.

If you won't begin working by the deadline, contact our office to preserve your work-study or it will be cancelled for the full academic year.

Work-study limits and semester use

The work-study program provides a subsidy to your employer who typically pays only 30% (on-campus), 40% (off-campus) of your work-study earnings. The amount you have been offered in work-study per semester is the maximum you can earn with the subsidy. You should talk to your employer if you'd like to work more hours than your work-study will cover because they will pay 100% of your earnings once your offer amount has been fully earned.

Students can earn one half of the total academic year work-study in the fall semester. After fall has ended, any unused fall work-study will automatically be added to the spring amount (the full year total remains the same). You must be enrolled in classes by the start of each term to earn your offer. If a student is graduating, they may only work until the day of commencement.

Work-study increase requests

If you and your employer would like you to work more hours than your offer allows, your or the employer can submit a [Work-Study Increase Request form](#). Work-study increases are reviewed on a bi-weekly basis and are approved based on the students' eligibility and our funding.

Work-study periods

Fall semester: Aug. 17, 2025 to Dec. 20 2025
Spring semester: Dec. 21, 2025 to May 9, 2026

Maintaining eligibility

Undergraduate students must be enrolled in at least 6-degree credit hours to remain eligible for work-study; so, if a student withdraws from the university or drops below 6 hours, they must notify their supervisor right away and they will no longer be eligible to earn their work-study.

Working overtime

Any hour over 40 per week must be paid at 1.5 times the regular hourly pay-rate and will not be subtracted from the student's work-study. Students must have their employer's permission before working overtime.

Overtime must be approved by your supervisor prior to working any overtime hours as the university has a work hour policy that must be followed.

Policy for hourly employees: limits student employees to working a maximum of 25 hours per week (or 50 hours per bi-weekly pay period) during the fall and spring semesters and up to 40 hours per week (or 80 hours per bi-weekly pay period) during the summer.

Graduate and international students: will continue to limit them to 20 hours per week during the academic year. The policy does not affect students working in non-University off-campus jobs, though we encourage students to prioritize their academics first when considering outside work commitments.

For more information, view the campus [policy](#) and our [frequently asked questions](#).

Getting paid

Once hired, employers enter students as employees of the university in the CU payroll system. Students are required to have [direct deposit](#) and will receive biweekly pay (every other Friday) and will receive an electronic pay advice. Students can view and print their pay advice in the [MyCUInfo](#) portal. **Payroll direct deposit is separate from the student's university account for tuition billing.**

Please keep in mind student records are maintained by the Registrar and employee payroll records are separate and only linked by social security number (SSN). Students who begin working should make sure their SSN is on file with the Registrar's Office so that they are recognized as an enrolled student by the payroll system.

I-9 Employment Verification Form

All employees are required to complete an I-9 Employment Eligibility Verification Form. This must be done within three business days of the date of you begin working. This will be part of the onboarding process with your supervisor or Human Resources liaison.

New employees complete section #1 of the I-9 form online and **must** take their original documents to the HR Office to complete section 2. Since the dates and locations are subject to change, please see the [Human Resources \(HR\) website](#) for availability.

You must bring the original [acceptable documents](#) to complete the I-9 form. No copies of the documents will be accepted.

Student employee retirement

To comply with IRS regulations, some student employees will automatically be enrolled in a [CU Student Retirement program](#).

Two types of students who will be enrolled in the retirement plan (fall, spring, summer semesters):

1. Undergrad students enrolled in less than 6 credit hours and graduate students enrolled less than 3

credit hours unless they are full-time according to the chart in our [handbook](#)

2. Student employees whose normal work schedules are 40+ hours per week, **regardless** of their credit hours enrolled. Work hours during academic breaks of less than 5 weeks don't count.

In the retirement program, students automatically contribute a 7.5 % retirement deduction and 1.45% Medicare Tax deduction from their pay. Students may withdraw from retirement upon graduation or withdrawal from the university. TIAA is the carrier of investment funds for the Student Retirement Plan. Information packets/enrollment forms are available on the [Employee Services](#) website.

Summer work-study

Each spring, the Office of Financial Aid accepts the Summer Financial Aid Application in [Buff Portal](#). Students use the application to apply for summer financial aid including work-study. Students do not need to be enrolled in summer as long as they're enrolled in the prior spring and the upcoming fall semester by the start of the summer term. More about [summer work-study](#) is available on our website.

For additional Information, please contact:

Student Employment

Regent Administrative Center, Room 175
77 UCB, Boulder CO 80309-0077
(303) 492-5091
www.colorado.edu/studentemployment

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