

MARYLAND DEPARTMENT OF HEALTH WORK STUDY PROGRAM GUIDELINES & PROCEDURES



"PARTNERING WITH YOU TO BUILD A BETTER WORKPLACE"

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WORK STUDY GUIDELINES AND PROCEDURES

The purpose of these guidelines and procedures is to provide information and instruction regarding the Work Study Program application and participation process.

The Maryland Department of Health (Department) supports and encourages employees to continue their learning and educational experience throughout their careers. To assist qualified employees to reach and succeed in their professional or personal development goals, the Department's Work Study Program provides employees with the opportunity to attend class during their **regular work day** for coursework that will benefit the Department. If required courses are available at times **other than the employee's normal work hours**, the employee must take those courses. Online courses are only eligible if they are listed as being synchronous (meaning only available at a specific time).

1. ELIGIBILITY FOR PARTICIPATION

In order to participate in the program, prospective participants must:

- a. Be a merit full-time or part-time (working at least 50%) employees; **contract employees are not eligible.**
- b. Have been employed in their current position for a minimum of one year.
- c. Have a current satisfactory PEP rating at the time of the application, and throughout the program until its completion.
- d. Not be in any type of probationary period.

2. SALARY - BENEFITS

While participating in an approved work study program, the employee is entitled to full salary and membership in the Retirement System and Employees Health Insurance Program. They:

- a. Will continue to accumulate sick leave and annual leave while you're participating in an approved work study program.
- b. Must report any class time lost due to sick leave or accident leave to your supervisor/appointing authority.
- c. Will enter holidays, including floating holidays, as if they were not on work study.
- d. Must report for duty during all school recesses or request time off following normal procedures.

3. COSTS

The employee pays all expenses while participating in an approved Work Study program. This includes tuition, fees, books, supplies, travel, and any additional costs.

4. PROMOTIONAL OPPORTUNITY

Participation in the Work Study Program does not guarantee a promotion but provides an educational experience and the opportunity for employees to enhance or strive for new and exciting careers within the Department.

5. ACCEPTABLE EDUCATIONAL PROGRAMS

These include credit and non-credit courses leading to a certificate or degree. **All colleges/universities must be accredited by the U.S. Department of Education.** Courses may be taken on-site or online, but **only online courses with specific start/end times qualify for the program.** Asynchronous online courses do not qualify for the program because they can be taken any time (meaning - not during normal work hours).

6. PROGRAM MANDATES

- a. This program is administered solely by the Training Services Division (TSD). Individual administrations may not administer this program on their own
- b. Administrations should not alter participants' schedule to accommodate their work study needs, especially when this may cause staffing problems to the unit.

7. ROLES & RESPONSIBILITIES

a. EMPLOYEES must:

1. Complete and submit the certificate for the Work Study online course in the HUB prior to participating in the program.
2. Adhere to all program guidelines, especially the timely submission of required forms and documents, meeting deadlines, not exceeding approved release time, meeting the grade requirement, continued satisfactory work performance and obligated service repayment.
3. Ensure that the application/schedule has been approved by the supervisor, designated appointing authority, and TSD prior to starting coursework.
4. Use only the time that has been approved.
5. Inform the supervisor and TSD if a course is dropped within five days of the action taken.
6. Inform the supervisor and TSD if moving to another MDH office or if resigning prior to the respective action is taken.
7. List clinical and internship classes and include the dates and times required. Provide a letter from the facility which includes the dates and times listed.
8. **Submit approved timesheets by the 15th of each month in the format listed in the instructions. Any travel time must be listed as either personal or accrued vacation.**
9. **Whenever submitted timesheets are incorrect, must correct and re-submit within 5 business days after notification from TSD. The corrections must be made and approved in the Workday timekeeping system.**
10. Submit the Academic Progress Form and a copy of your **official** grade report and/or clinical or internship verification from the institution at the end of each semester.
11. Submit a **copy** of the diploma or certificate from the institution at the completion of the program..

b. SUPERVISOR must:

1. Before approving an employee's application request, consider the staffing and financial implications to your unit. Will approving this application create a negative effect on overall patient care.
2. Complete the Work Study online course in the HUB prior to an employee's participation.
3. Review and approve the employee's Career Development Plan.
4. Ensure that the employee is in a merit position, and has been employed with the Department for one year.
5. Ensure that the employee is not under any type of probation.
6. If the PEP date is not current (within six (6) months), provide a **signed** letter regarding the employee's current work performance status on Agency letterhead.
7. Review and approve the initial and subsequent Work Study Program application requests.
8. Ensure that the employee adheres to all program guidelines.
9. Monitor academic progress and employee work performance during the employee's participation in the program.
10. **Approve timesheets, always checking for the proper code recording and accurate use of work study time used as approved.**

11. Inform all necessary personnel regarding the employee's participation in the program including the appointing authority, human resources personnel, and payroll/timekeeping staff.
12. Notify TSD immediately upon learning that the employee is leaving the Department for whatever reason.

c. **APPOINTING AUTHORITY must:**

1. Review initial and subsequent application/schedules and all related materials to approve or deny program participation.

d. **TRAINING SERVICES DIVISION must:**

1. Be responsible for reviewing, approving or denying application requests.
2. Manage all aspects of an employee's application and participation.
3. Work with the **OHR Payroll Division to discuss and track questionable timesheet entries.**
4. Determine obligated service hours ensuring the correct usage of work study time.
5. Track obligated service hour repayment.
6. Inform the Accounting office of any cash repayment requirements.

8. **OBLIGATED SERVICE:** Employees are required to enter into an obligated service agreement with the Department in order to participate in the program.

- a. The agreement states that the income received while participating in the Work Study program is a loaned salary paid by the Maryland Department of Health. If a participant resigns from the Department before completing their obligated service repayment, they will have to pay the State the "**unpaid**" balance of the "**loan**" in **cash**. Any cash repayments will be paid to the employee's cost center.
- b. The agreement is a legally binding document upon which the employee agrees to repay the Department in obligated service hours at the rate that applies.
- c. The total amount of obligated service hours that are to be repaid is the sum of approved hours used for work study multiplied by the timekeeping conversion chart rate. The hours are calculated on a weekly basis.
- d. If cash payment is required, Training Services will determine the required cash repayment based on the employee's salary rate per hour earned at the beginning of the respective work study program. Training Services will also generate a contract regarding the payment arrangements. The Accounting Department will be responsible for generating and distributing the actual invoice.
- e. Obligated Service repayment begins when: a specific work study program has been completed, a degree or certificate has been earned, or if dismissed from the Work Study Program. **Repayment in the form of service hours will only begin once all required documentation has been received.**
- f. All obligated service must be repaid prior to applying to participate in a new work study program.
- g. The supervisor or appointing authority must notify Training Services Division immediately and prior to an employee's departure, if the employee plans to leave or is terminated. The supervisor will be responsible for notifying TSD of any transfer and for providing the employee's new administration and the supervisor's contact information.

- h. If an employee moves to another Maryland Department of Health unit prior to completing their obligated service repayment, he/she will continue the repayment until there is a \$0 balance.
- i. If an employee resigns, retires or is terminated before completing their obligated service repayment, he/she will pay the "unpaid" balance of the "loan" in cash until there is a \$0 balance. (See the conversion chart)
- j. Unused sick leave remaining at the time of your departure cannot be used as a form of obligated service repayment.
- k. Special Cases:
 - i. If a position is abolished or if an employee leaves at no fault of their own, the obligated service is considered to be satisfied.
 - ii. If the Secretary decides that the separation from Department service is the result of adverse, unforeseen, or extenuating circumstances that impose undue personal hardship, the employee may be released from the obligated service agreement. In order for this consideration, the employee must submit a letter regarding the hardship to the Secretary and the Training Services Division. The employee and their former supervisor will receive a letter detailing approval or denial of the request.
 - iii. If an employee leaves the Department before repayment is complete but returns within three (3) years, the cash repayment will cease and the service hour repayment will begin until there is a zero (0) balance owed to the Department. **It will be the employee's responsibility to inform the Training Services Division regarding their remaining obligated service cash repayment and he/she will only receive credit after the proper forms have been completed and submitted to TSD.** Training Services will work with Payroll Services to determine the amount of obligated service hours that will be required. No prior cash payments will be returned to the employee in exchange for future service. **This option is not available to employees who have been dismissed from the program.**
 - iv. If it is discovered that an employee has engaged in abuse/misuse of work study time, he/she will be permanently dismissed from the Program, and will have to start repayment of accumulated work study hours immediately in the form of service hours. If the employee leaves the Department, they will be required to repay the remaining OBS in cash.

9. APPLICATION PROCESS

Working directly with the supervisor and/or training coordinator, the employee must provide the items listed below. Only one original hard copy of all work study forms is required and may be emailed. Please ensure that all documentation is complete. Carbon copies of college documents are eligible for submission. Initial documentation includes:

1. Work Study Checklist - used as a guide to ensure that all documentation is included in the application. This form must be completed and be submitted with each application packet.
2. Career Development Plan (4774) - only required once for an initial Work Study Program unless the career focus changes.
 - a. List the start date of the first coursework date as listed on the application/schedule and the **estimated date that the degree/certificate will be earned.**
3. Work Study Program Application/Schedule (# 4772).
 - a. A hard copy is the only acceptable form of submission.
 - b. Provide a photocopy of the official catalogue course description(s). It must include course days and times for all course(s) listed.
 - c. Provide a copy of the college catalog course schedule for a specific semester. The dates and times listed on the application/schedule must be reflected on the course schedule.
 - d. Do not list estimated course start dates.
4. Obligated Service Agreement (# 4771) – ensure that the semester start and end dates are listed.
5. Provide a signed letter of support from the supervisor and designated appointed authority on official letterhead **for each session/semester.**
6. Provide a signed acceptance letter from the educational institution or facility for specific course/semester on their official letterhead.
7. Provide hard copy documentation showing that the facility is accredited by the Maryland Department of Higher Learning or the U.S. Department of Education.

8. For clinicals, provide a signed letter from facility/institution where clinical or internship will be performed. The **specific days and hours** must be listed in the letter.
9. If required by the institution, provide a signed letter from the facility/institution indicating why full-time attendance is required. Please be reminded that work study does not include class study time.

10. SUBSEQUENT APPLICATIONS will include:

1. All of the required forms and documents listed above, except the Career Development Plan.
2. Academic Progress Form.
3. A copy of the official grade report.
4. The clinical/internship report of completion from the institution on their letterhead.

11. SUBMISSION PROCEDURES

Application packets must be submitted to the Training Services Division **30 DAYS** prior to the beginning/start of the coursework session.

1. If late acceptance or admission into a program is required by an educational facility, documentation from the facility on their letterhead must be provided.
2. **An employee may NOT use work study coding on their timesheets prior to obtaining approval from TSD.**
3. An employee must not submit an application for a session that has already begun.
4. If for any reason, the educational facility requires an employee to register for a different course(s) other than what was approved for a specific Work Study Program, **the employee must submit a new Work Study application packet to their supervisor and the designated appointed authority for approval and submission to the Training Services Division for review and final approval.** This should be done at least one (1) week prior to the start of the new course(s).
5. If there is a rare occasion where an employee requires extended coursework beyond an approved work study program, the employee must provide a written letter with supporting documentation from the educational institution explaining why an extension is required (only if the employee will continue using work study time). **A new application is required if a change is made by the institution to a previously approved schedule.**
6. The employee must apply for initial entry into the Work Study Program and must submit subsequent applications if they continue to participate in the program until they complete or withdraw from the program.

13. APPROVAL

Requests to participate in the Work Study Program must be approved by the designated appointed authority and the employee's supervisor.

1. All forms must be reviewed and signed by the supervisor and the designated appointing authority.
2. A hard copy with original signatures of the complete application packet must be delivered to the Training Services Division for review and final approval **30 days before** the course start date. Please do not e-mail the application packet.
3. If no discrepancies are found, the Training Services Division will sign the application forms and will return them electronically along with an application acceptance or denial letter for the employee's personnel and personal records.
4. **Participation in the Work Study Program only becomes effective once the employee receives approval documentation from the Training Services Division.**
5. **It is the responsibility of the employee to ensure that their application has been approved prior to the start of their work study program session.**
6. The supervisor should ensure that all respective personnel are aware of the applicant's participation in the program, i.e., human resources, training coordinator, and timekeeping.

14. DISAPPROVAL OF APPLICATION

There may be occasions when program participation is denied by the supervisor, designated appointed authority, or the Training Services Division. If an applicant's supervisor, designated appointed authority, or Training Services Division does not approve the application, the applicant will be **provided with a letter of denial within 10 days** of the denial decision, including the reason for the denial.

15. TEMPORARY/PERMANENT DISMISSAL FROM THE PROGRAM DUE TO NON COMPLIANCE

An employee may be subject to automatic dismissal from the program if they do not adhere to all program guidelines.

- a. If a participant is dismissed from the program, he/she is still bound to repay loaned work study hours via service time and must begin repayment immediately.
- b. If the employee leaves the Maryland Department of Health, they must repay the remaining balance in cash.
- c. The employee is **not eligible to continue with the program after a three year absence**. The employee will receive written notification of their dismissal by email, including the exact reason for the dismissal.

16. TIMEKEEPING

1. Work Study leave hours may be utilized only during the employee's standard work day.
2. The employee must only use the amount of time approved for work study. The work study time used must be recorded on timesheets on the specific dates, with the times that were approved.
3. The employee must submit copies of timesheets or reports showing approved work study days/hours used and/or paid service hours to the Training Services Division by the 15th of each month during participation and repayment of obligated service. **Time should be entered using the WorkTag Remote Work Location and Remote Work Location: Work Study. Any time listed that is not actual class time (as listed on the original application) must be accounted for using personal, annual or comp time. It is recommended that participants complete the SPS course on Timekeeping that is on the HUB.**
4. Work Study time does not include study time. For example, if only 1-4 hours of work study are required, you must return to work for the remainder of the day or use the appropriate leave.
5. The employee may not use Worktag work study codes during a state release, state holiday, or liberal leave day. The same applies if the employee is on annual, personal or sick leave.
6. **Travel time must be accounted for on the time sheet using accumulated annual, personal, or comp time.**
7. **If the employee does not attend class due to a cancellation/school release, they must return to work.**
8. **The employee may not accrue overtime or comp time when work study leave is used. ONLY 8 TOTAL HOURS MAY BE RECORDED ON TIMESHEETS ON DAYS THAT WORKSTUDY IS RECORDED.**

17. ACADEMIC PROGRESS REPORTING

1. The **Work Study Academic Progress form** is utilized by the employee's supervisor to monitor the employee's educational progress and. If an employee experiences any work or course problems on the job that would warrant discontinuing the Work Study program; this **must be reported in writing to the TSD immediately.** This form and supporting documentation is required in order to participate in a subsequent work study session.
2. The form must be completed and submitted to the Training Services Division after each course, semester, or internship completion along with the appropriate supporting documentation. This form and supporting documentation can be submitted electronically. Please use blue ink for signatures.
3. A copy of the official transcript must be included for review and recording purposes by the Department.
4. For internship and clinical rounds completed, grades or documentation indicating completion must be submitted on the facility's official letterhead.

5. Once a specified Work Study program has been completed and a degree, certificate has been earned, a Final Work Study Academic Progress form must be completed and submitted to the Training Services Division along with any outstanding timesheet reports, grade reports, clinical/internship grade report or completion letter, and a copy of the degree or certificate once it has been received.

18. OBLIGATED SERVICE REPAYMENT TRACKING

The **Obligated Service Agreement Repayment Tracking Form** is used to record an employee's obligated service repayment, transfer to another program, and/or resignation. The form must be completed and submitted by the **employee's supervisor** after the employee has earned a degree or certificate and has returned to full-time work status. Once all repayment has been made, the employee's file will be closed.

1. A copy must be submitted to the Training Services Division by the 15th of the month until the obligation has been satisfied. This form can be submitted electronically.
2. **ONLY THE FOLLOWING TYPES OF HOURS CAN BE USED AS REPAYMENT FOR LOANED WORK STUDY HOURS: PERSONAL, ANNUAL, COMP.**
3. Timesheet copies must be submitted for the repayment dates listed.
4. If the employee plans to leave the Agency:
 - a. **Remaining sick leave** is an ineligible form of CASH repayment for obligated service.
 - b. **The employee must inform their supervisor, Human Resource representative, and the Training Services Division of their intent.** The Department may use, **only with the employee's permission**, any unused annual/comp/COE compensatory time towards the repayment of obligated service thereby reducing the amount of cash repayment. This option is only available if done prior to the employee's separation of service.
5. The obligated service is calculated for each week that work study was used, and follows this timekeeping conversion formula:
 - a. Release time up to 10 hours per week = hour per hour payback
 - b. Release time 11 hours through 20 hours per week = 1.5 times per hour payback
 - c. Release time 21 hours through 40 hours per week = 3 times per hour payback
6. The work study program will be listed as completed after a degree or certificate is earned, at which point repayment of the obligated service will begin. If participation is discontinued prior to earning a degree, the employee will not be eligible to participate in the program for three (3) years, and all obligated service must be repaid before you will be able to submit a new application.

19. FILE RETENTION PROCEDURES

All Work Study program applications and related documentation must be placed in the employee's personnel file for reference and auditing purposes at the employee's work location.

1. If the employee moves to another position within the Agency, copies of the documentation must be forwarded to the new supervisor/appointing authority.
2. All work study program documentation must be retained in the respective office of employment until the service or cash obligation has been completed.
3. The respective office and the Training Services Division must retain the documentation for an additional two years after the service or cash obligation has been completed.
4. At the end of the two year period, the documentation will be sent to the State off-site storage facility to be retained for an additional five years.