

Work-Study Duties at Educational Institutions

- **General:** Except as provided under PL 111-275 below, work-study students at educational institutions may assist with the preparation and processing of necessary papers and other documents. **All** duties in work-study job descriptions must deal directly with assisting in the processing of VA paperwork or the gathering of information needed to fulfill VA reporting requirements. Examples of processing VA paperwork include completing education applications, enrollment certifications, and notices of change in enrollment status or doing monthly check-ins whereby students routinely verify their course load information with the appropriate school official. A school official (usually the veteran's certifying official) must supervise these students.

- **Public Law 111-275** expands the definition of "qualifying work-study activities" to include the following **effective October 1, 2011**:
 - ❖ A position working in a **Center for Excellence for Veteran Student Success**, as established under 20 U.S.C. 1161t, which purpose is to support and coordinate academic, financial, physical, and social needs of veteran students;
 - ❖ A position working in a cooperative program carried out jointly by the Department and an **institution of higher learning**; and
 - ❖ Any veterans-related position in an **institution of higher learning**.

Clarification:

- o **Question:** Would "any veterans-related position in an institution of higher learning" include activities outside of working directly for the SCO such as students working in a veteran resource center?
- o **Answer:** Yes, work-study students are allowed to work in any veteran-related position at the institution. The position description must clearly specify the nature of acceptable veteran-related activities to be performed. Acceptable activities include, but are not limited to:
 - Assisting with dissemination of general information regarding veteran benefits and/or services
 - Providing assistance to Veteran students with general inquiries about veteran benefits via phone, email, or in person
 - Maintaining and organizing veteran-related files

Work-Study Position Description

(1) VA must ensure that work-study students are effectively utilized in the activities permitted by law. The law does not assume that an unlimited number of work-study positions may be filled.

(2) **Work-study position descriptions must include an estimate of the number of work hours that a school can effectively use for the academic year plus the following summer term.** The estimate should include the use of work-study students during all intervals between terms as well. For example: A school believes it needs 3 work-study students per semester and for the summer term. The average length of work-study contracts is 400 hours for these students (Based on 25 hours/week for 16 weeks). Therefore, the school should estimate that it needs 3,600 work-study hours for the academic year (400 hours X 3 students X 3 terms (2 semesters and one summer term)).

NOTE: RPOs may not impose an arbitrary formula on the use of work-study students at schools, e.g., one work-study contract per 100 students per semester. The need for work-study students may vary widely among institutions (even institutions with the same VA student enrollment) depending on local circumstances. For example, an institution with a highly automated records system with students who rarely change their enrollment might need fewer work-study students than an institution with a paper bound system with students who frequently change their enrollment. Compliance surveys should routinely verify that work-study students are properly utilized for approved activities.