

WORK-STUDY RESEARCH ASSISTANT PROGRAM (WSRAP)

Student Hiring Process - Interview Guidelines for Faculty



Program Overview

The Work-Study Research Assistant Program is designed to help students develop research skills and explore their academic interests. Our expectation is that the research assistant will be *substantively engaged in your research/creative endeavors* and *will be hired for the full academic year*. These positions are not to be exclusively clerical or lab upkeep positions. Separations after a student has been hired must follow the progressive disciplinary policy put in place by the Student Employment office.

Interviewing Candidates

The Office of Undergraduate Research (OUR) coordinates the WSRAP program, but **OUR does not screen** student applicants beyond confirming that they are undergraduates who have been awarded Federal Work-Study as part of their financial aid package. Faculty are responsible for interviewing candidates to determine the best candidate for their particular research assistant position. It is important that faculty determine whether the position will be fully in-person, fully virtual, or a mixture of both. Faculty should specify the work location at the outset.

Interview Process

Faculty are not required to interview all candidates who apply for their position, but they must be consistent with respect to the candidates that they do elect to interview. *Ask all interviewees the same set of questions and ask questions that are relevant to specific job tasks.* We encourage faculty to develop a ranking sheet to use during the interview process. The ranking sheet should focus on the skills/qualities that are most important given the responsibilities of the specific research assistant position. Interviews by videoconference or phone are likely more viable during the summer months; faculty may utilize the interview modality that works best for them and the student.

Suggested Interview Questions

- Why are you interested in this particular research assistant position?
- Why are you seeking a research assistant position to earn your work-study funding?
- Discuss key components of your particular research assistant position. Focus on transferable skills and [Career Competencies](#) that are needed within the role. Ask questions relative to the skills (computer, programming, lab, etc.) that you are seeking or that would be helpful. If attention to detail or the ability to work independently are important, ask the candidate to provide examples that illustrate their abilities in these areas.
- What skills are you hoping to learn through this research experience?

- How did you select your major?
- What activities are you involved in outside of your coursework?
- How much time do you spend per week on these non-coursework activities? Do you anticipate having 6-7 hours weekly to commit to this research position?
- Tell me about your previous job/class/leadership/extracurricular experiences that you believe have prepared you to be successful within this type of position – type of experience, length of time, skills developed, and challenges.
- How many hours per week are you available to work? What days/times are you available? You may request a copy of the applicant's schedule to reference in your discussion of blocks of time available.
- Ask for a list of references with contact information (if you did not request this as part of the job application). Take the time to contact references with questions specific to the applicant's dependability, skills, communication, etc.
- Do you expect to have another job this semester/year, in addition to the WSRAP position? Note that Federal Work-Study may only be earned through one position. However, students may be employed in another department on Student Labor.

NOTE: Students seeking a work-study job often cast a wide net and apply to many positions. You may ask about the number of WSRAP positions that a student is applying for as long as you ask that question of all students you interview.

Questions You **May NOT** Ask

- Questions related to citizenship - Are you a US citizen?
- Questions related to age and marital status - What year were you born? Are you married/single?
- Questions related to religion - Are there holidays that you do/do not celebrate because of your religion?