

# Student Employment Tips and Tricks



The purpose of this guide is to assist WKU faculty and staff who hire student workers by providing clear best practices for recruitment, onboarding, and supervision. Hiring student employees is an important part of supporting both the university's mission and students' professional growth, but the process can sometimes feel overwhelming or unclear. This resource is designed to simplify that process by offering practical tips and tools that make it easier to post positions, communicate with students, and manage employment requirements. In addition, it highlights strategies to create a positive and engaging work environment that helps student employees succeed while also meeting the needs of your department. By following these guidelines, supervisors can more effectively hire, support, and retain student workers while ensuring a meaningful employment experience that benefits both the student and the university.

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# Creating a Handshake Account

## Sign Up

- Go to [WKU Career Faculty & Staff Tools](#) → click Handshake.
- Or visit [app.joinhandshake.com](http://app.joinhandshake.com).

## Choose Employer Profile

Click “Sign up” (top right).

Under “Are you an employer?” select Register Here.

## Fill Out Information

Use your wku.edu email.

Select “Education” as candidate type.

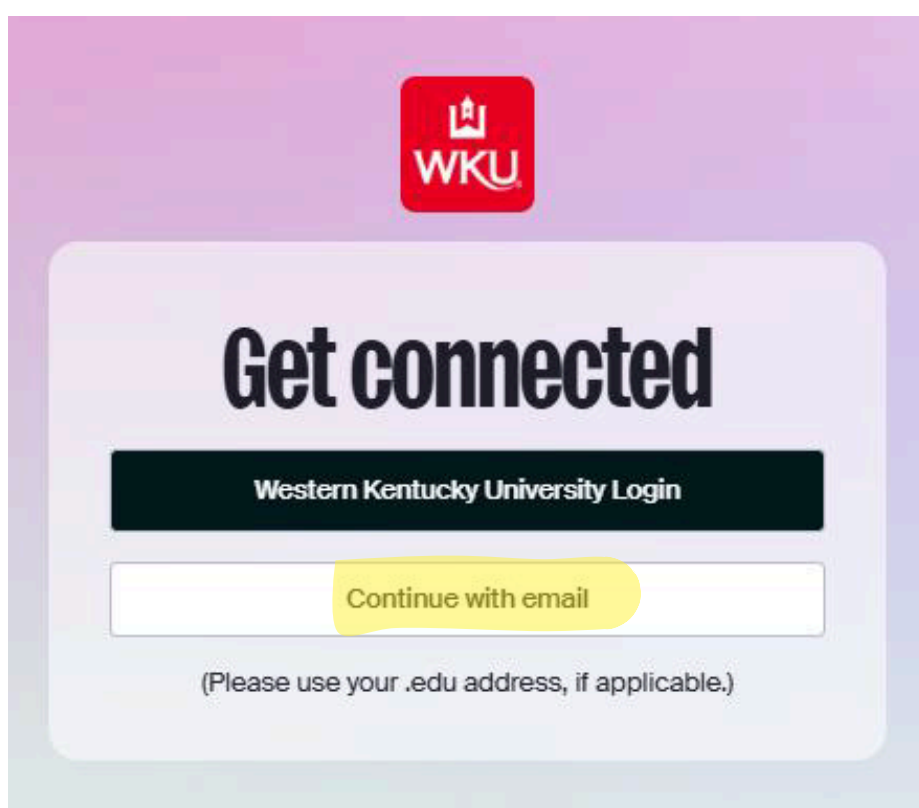
Select No for third-party recruiter.

Confirm via the email sent by Handshake.

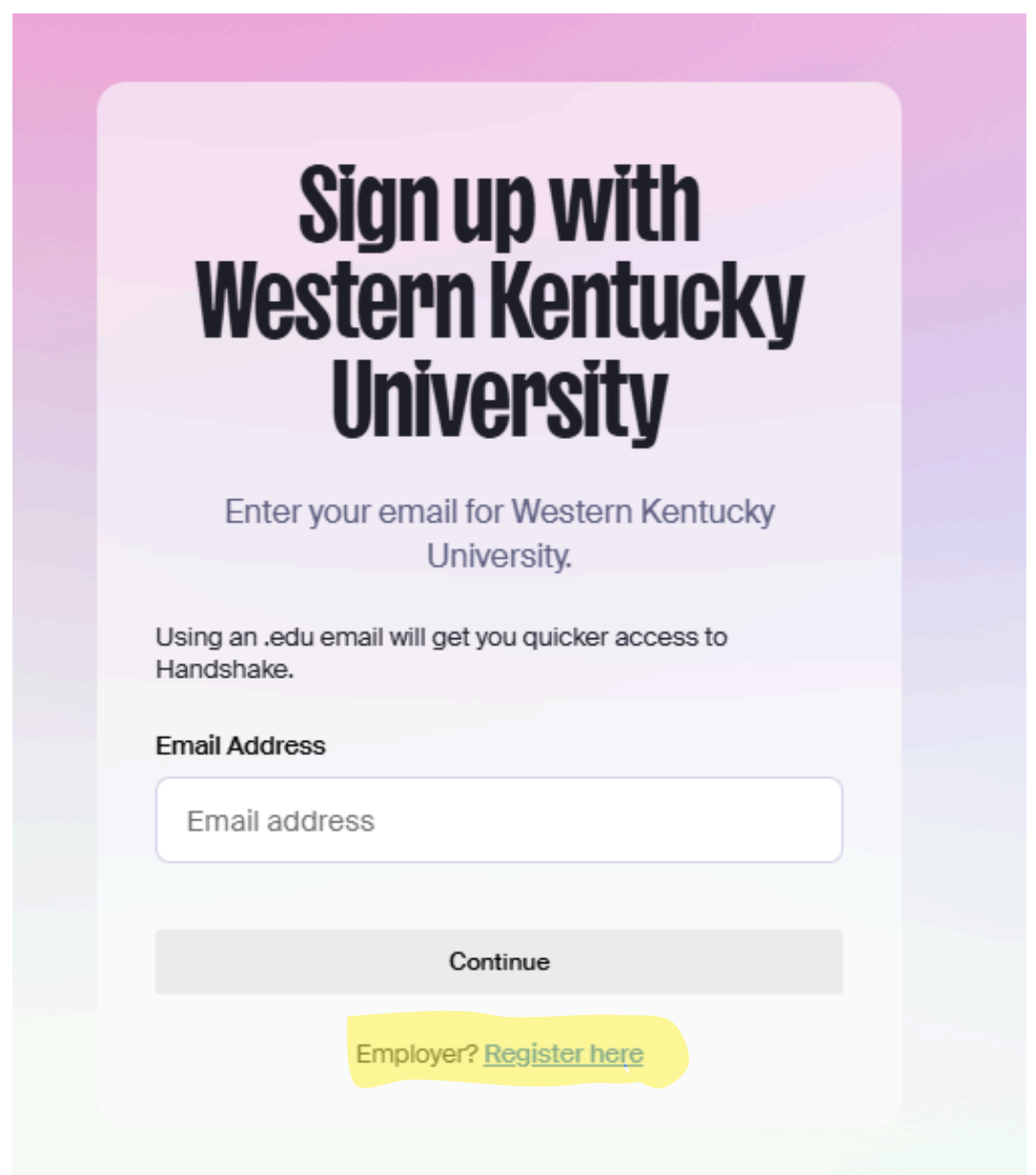
**Join WKU On-Campus Student Employment & Experiences**

Skip “Connect with Schools.”

Request access; Career Development team will approve.



Make sure to click “Continue with Email” and then click register here for employers!



# Posting Jobs on Handshake

- Start a New Post
- Log in and select “Post a Job.”
- Choose On-Campus Employment as the job type.
- Use or Create a Description
- You may copy from an existing posting by typing the job title into the search bar, or
- Write a new description including:
  - Position title
  - Job summary/essential duties
  - Required education or experience
  - Qualifications or skills
- Set Application Requirements
- Indicate any documents students must upload (resume, cover letter, class schedule, etc.).
- Add instructions if you require special information (e.g., availability, references).
- Add Your Hiring Team
- Search for WKU staff names to add as reviewers, or
- Use the “Invite New Teammate” option if they are not already in the system.
- Decide how each person will receive notifications when students apply.
- Finalize & Post
- Review all details for accuracy.
- Click “Post Job” to publish your listing.
- Once approved, the job will appear in Handshake for students to view and apply.

The screenshot displays the Handshake interface for posting jobs. The sidebar on the left includes a 'Jobs' link highlighted with a red arrow. The main content area shows a 'Create job' button in the top right, also highlighted with a red arrow. Below this, there are three job listings under 'Top opportunities', each with details like views, applicants, and match counts. The 'All jobs' section below has search and filter options. A green logo is at the bottom center.

# Example Job Description

When writing a student employment posting, be sure to include the skills students will develop in the role. Connecting these to the Kentucky Graduate Profile (KGP) helps students see how their campus job supports long-term academic and career goals.

By framing positions with KGP skills such as communication, teamwork, professionalism, and critical thinking, you highlight the transferable value of the role and help students better articulate their experience on résumés and in interviews.

Learn more about the Kentucky Graduate Profile here: [Kentucky Graduate Profile \(KGP\)](#).

Here is an example job posting:

## Employer

WKU On-Campus Student Employment & Experiences

## Job description

**Job Title:** Career Student Ambassador

**Hours per Week:** Up to 20 hours per week

**Office hours:** 10:00am-4:30pm

**Pay:** \$8:00 per hour

## Position Overview:

The Career Development Center at Western Kentucky University is seeking dedicated and enthusiastic individuals to serve as Student Ambassadors. As a Student Ambassador for the Career Development Center, you will play a vital role in supporting and promoting career-related services and resources to fellow students and alumni.

This position offers a unique opportunity to develop the following **Kentucky Graduate Profile Skills: Professionalism, Effective Communication, Critical Thinking, and Collaboration.**

Career Student Ambassadors will be doing a variety of tasks including, but not limited to:

- Assist students and alumni with navigating and utilizing Handshake
- Conduct one-on-one sessions to guide students and alumni through resume and cover letter writing
- Support the coordination and execution of career-related events, such as career fairs, employer panels, workshops, and networking events
- Monitor the Career Development Center's help email inbox and respond to inquiries from students and alumni regarding career-related questions, resume critiques, and other career services
- Promote the services and resources offered by the Career Development Center to fellow students and alumni

# Sample Emails for Student Employment

## SAMPLE JOB OFFER EMAIL

**Subject:** Student Employment Offer – [Position Title]

Dear (STUDENT NAME),

Thank you again for interviewing for the position of **[Position Title]** with **[Department Name]**. We are excited to offer you this opportunity to work in our office! As discussed, **[over the phone/in person]**, your official start date will be **[Date]**, and you will be compensated at a rate of **[\$[X]]** per hour. You will be reporting directly to **[Supervisor Name]**.

Before your first day, please complete the following forms: **K-4, W-4, and the Warren County Occupational Tax Form**. These forms can be found on the [Student Employment Office website](#) or within the Student Employment Office located in Potter Hall 317.

If you have any questions along the way, please don't hesitate to reach out. We're looking forward to welcoming you to our team!

Kind regards,

(Your Name)

(Email Signature)

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## SAMPLE JOB DECLINE EMAIL

**Subject:** Student Employment Application – [Position Title]

Dear (STUDENT NAME),

Thank you for applying for the position of **[Position Title]** with **[Department Name]**. After careful review of all applicants, we have decided to move forward with another candidate at this time. We truly appreciate the time and effort you put into your application. While your background and skills are impressive, we received a large number of applications, and others more closely matched the immediate needs of our office.

We encourage you to continue exploring student employment opportunities through Handshake and to consider connecting with WKU's [Career Development](#) Team (Downing Student Union, Suite 2001) for resources such as résumé reviews, interview preparation, and general job search support.

Thank you again for your interest in working with us. We wish you the very best in your job search and future opportunities at WKU!

Kind Regards,

(Your Name)

(Email Signature)

# Sample Interview Questions

## Optional introductions & warm-up

- How is your semester going? How was your summer/winter break?
- Have you chosen a major yet? What do you like about this major?

## Specific questions related to employment (Choose from this list)

- Tell me about some of your work experiences. What skills have you learned?
- What would your last supervisor say about your work performance?
- How would a good friend describe you?
- Give me an example of a time you exhibited one of your strengths.
- Describe a time in which you felt successful.
- What are some areas you are working to improve?
- What motivates you to do a good job?
- Do you prefer to work alone or in team?
- How do you work under pressure?
- What is the best criticism you've ever received?
- What kinds of personalities do you work best with and why?
- Tell me about a time in which you had to juggle multiple assignments/projects at once.
- What do you know about this department/office?
- Why do you want to work for this department/office?
- What do you hope to gain from this position?

## Wrap-up

- Do you have any questions for me?
- Supervisor describes the next steps and timeline in hiring process.

# BankMobile Direct Deposit Instructions

- Go to webpage: [my.wku.edu](https://my.wku.edu)
- Click “Sign In” in upper right corner of screen
- Look under “Campus Information” section
- Click “BankMobile”
  - This will direct you to BankMobile’s webpage
  - The BankMobile webpage may prompt you to “pick your most important options”. This is an optional survey, which you are not required to complete. You can click “skip” in the upper right corner of the screen to get to the next step in setting up your refund preference.
- You may select one of the following options for your refund preference:
  - Direct Deposit to a pre-existing bank account of your choice (have bank account and routing number available to enter when prompted on webpage)
  - Open a BankMobile online bank account

## Student Employment Questions

- For info on eligibility criteria, tax & departmental forms, application process, and FAQ, please find them within the [student employment department](#).
- Any other questions regarding student employment that do not pertain to Handshake will need to be taken to the [student employment office](#) as well.

# Work Request Information

Check if student has current FAFSA on file:

- Topnet
- Select "Advisers & Student Data Inquiry" Tab
- Select current term you are hiring (ex. Spring 24)
- Select "General Student Information"
- Scroll down to "Financial Aid" box and review if FAFSA has been received by WKU

**Student Employment**  
**Student Employment Request**  
Choose the Term required.

Term: NONE  
NONE  
Fall/Spring 23/24  
Spring 24  
Summer 24  
Fall/Spring 24/25

Evaluate Employee

Fall/Spring 23/24 Work Request: 8/14/23 - 5/5/24 payroll	Spring 24 Work Request: 1/15/24 - 5/5/24 payroll	Summer 24 Work Request: 5/6/24 - 8/18/24 payroll	Fall/Spring 24/25 Work Request: 8/19/24 - 5/9/24 payroll
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23/24 FAFSA Eligibility

24/25 FAFSA Eligibility

- A separate Request Form is required for each academic year and for each summer session in which the student will be employed.
- This is necessary because student eligibility is tied to each specific award period, and financial aid status may change.
- Exception: If the student is employed during both the Fall and Spring semesters of the same academic year, only one Request Form is needed for the entire academic year

# Employment Process & Onboarding Tips

It is very possible that this student employment is a student's first professional job, so it is best that we lead our student workers in developing a strong work ethic.

## Student Employment Process

- **Job Posting:** When a department has a job opening, it must be posted on Handshake. A job reference number will be assigned to the job posting and must be included when completing the Student Employment Request form.
- **Student Employment Request Form:** Once a student is selected for hire, the department must complete the Student Employment Request Form for the relevant term, available under the Employee Services tab in TopNet. If access is needed, contact payroll. The background check will be initiated once the form is received.
- **Paperwork Completion:** If the Student Employment Request Form is submitted for a student with complete paperwork (financial aid package and all required tax forms and background checks on file), Student Employment will add the student to the payroll, and the student's name will appear on Web Time Entry (WTE).

## Onboarding Tips for New Student Workers

- Have a plan prepared for your new student worker before they arrive on their first day.
- Make your student worker feel welcome on their first day.
- Make a manual for your student that goes over work expectations, such as:
  - Dress Code
  - Punctuality
  - Requesting Time Off & More
- Allow sufficient training time for students to understand their duties and gradually expand their responsibilities based on their developing skills.

# National Student Employment Week

- Every year, the National Student Employment Association (NSEA) declares the second full week in April to be National Student Employment Week. It was established to increase public awareness and to recognize students who work while attending college. It is also a time to recognize supervisors that oversee the student experience by providing training and development that prepare students for their careers.
- Student employees perform invaluable services with enthusiasm, dedication, and initiative. Setting aside a special week to draw the awareness of others, both on and off campus, is the perfect opportunity to show your appreciation.
- National Student Employment Week takes commitment, planning, and coordination yet, the effort yields great rewards.

## Ways to celebrate your on-campus student employees:

- Give **coupons/gift certificates** for on-campus or off-campus use.
- Prepare "**care packages**" with popcorn, candy, soft drinks, hot chocolate mix, etc.
- Create fun **computerized certificates** - "You Rock" award, "Best Telephone Voice," etc.
- Give them a **basket of home-baked goods**.
- Give an **office "life saver"** a gift bag of Lifesaver candies, "Extra" gum for always going the "extra" mile, etc.
- Have the staff sign a **thank you card** for each student.
- Give students '**good job candy bars,**' coupons, or written acknowledgments of a job well done.
- Display a **collage of pictures** of your students at work.
- **Decorate your students' office** or workspace for the week. This can include creating a banner that reads, "We appreciate Our Student Employees" or "Our Student Employees Rock!"
- Take pictures of your student employees, post them in your department, and list the wonderful things they do for your department.
- Have a **potluck, pizza party or sundae bar** to celebrate your student employees' achievements.
- Tons of Puns – Every day, **give your student a small "gift" with a fun one-liner**, such as a Bag of Lays with a sticker that says, "You're all that and a bag of Chips!" Other ideas: Milky Way bars ("You're out of this world!"), peanuts ("We're nuts about you!"), and/or gum ("You always go the EXTRA mile!").
- **Treat Week** – each day bring something different – cookies, popcorn, candy, etc.
- **Friendship Plants** - take cuttings from a plant in the office and give to each student as a live "connection" to the office.
- **Bright Ideas** - spray paint a light bulb gold, screw into a jar of playdough and make a label around the jar naming who is receiving the "Bright Idea" award.
- **"You Rock" award** - print "You Rock" on a rock and present it to someone when they go a good job. Encourage the student to present it to another member of the staff when they observe someone doing a good job.