



Student Employment at Western Federal Lands Highway Division.

The FHWA Western Federal Lands Highway Division has multiple opportunities for summer employment for students in highway construction.

FREQUENTLY ASKED QUESTIONS (FAQs)

What is the Student Educational Employment Program?

The Student Educational Employment Program has two components; student temporary employment and student career experience. It is available to all levels of students: high school, vocational and technical, associate degree, baccalaureate degree, graduate degree, and professional degree students. Western Federal Lands utilizes this program in the following ways.

Students are typically first employed under the [Student Temporary Employment Program \(STEP\)](#) (See [Recruitment Notice](#) and [Student Agreement](#)). Those showing strong potential may be recruited as “student trainees” under the Student Career Experience Program (SCEP). For those selected as SCEPS, on completion of SCEP and degree requirements, students gain eligibility for conversion to permanent Federal employment.

The Student Temporary Employment Program (STEP) provides an opportunity for students to earn money, continue their education, train with professionals, and combine academic study with on-the-job experience. Students typically work during summer breaks. The one-year STEP employment can be renewed at the supervisor’s discretion.

The Student Career Experience Program (SCEP) is the primary source for external recruitment for entry-level positions at Western Federal Lands. SCEP provides work experience that is directly related to the student’s academic program or career goals. SCEP students may be non-competitively converted to career, term, or career-conditional appointments. SCEP gives students exposure to public service while enhancing their educational goals.

Q. How many times can a student be appointed to the Student Temporary Employment Program? Student Career Experience Program?

A. There is no limit on the number of times a student may be appointed, as long as he/she meets the eligibility requirements for the appointment.

Q. What are the age requirements for students to participate in the Student Educational Employment Program?

A. Participation in this program must be in conformance with Federal, State, or local laws and standards governing the employment of minors.

Q. Can a son or daughter of an FHWA employee participate in that agency's Student Educational Employment Program?

A. Yes. The only requirement is that the parent and student have no direct reporting relationship and that the relative not advocate the employment, promotion or advancement of the student.

Q. Can a student appointed to one of these programs remain on the appointment once they have completed their educational requirements?

A. Students appointed to the Student Career Experience Program may continue on the appointment for 120 days beyond the date of completing their work and academic requirements. At the end of the 120 days, if the graduate has not been converted to a position in the competitive service, he/she must be separated. Once a student appointed to the Student Temporary Employment Program has completed the requirements for his/her degree/diploma/certificate (as appropriate), he/she is no longer a student, and must be separated, even if the NTE date on their current appointment has not been reached. If enrolled or accepted for enrollment in an additional educational program they may be given a new appointment.

Q. Does veteran's preference apply in the selection process for students?

A. Yes.

Q. Are students only paid minimum wage?

A. Students in the Student Educational Employment Program must be paid according to the classification of the job. Students are typically hired at grades GS-3 or 4. Visit <http://www.opm.gov/oca/12tables/html/por.asp> for complete information on pay.

Q. Can students be promoted?

A. Yes. Students in both programs are eligible for promotion.

Q. Are students eligible for annual and sick leave?

A. Yes. Students in both programs earn annual and sick leave.

Q. Are students eligible for health and life insurance benefits?

A. Health and life insurance coverage for Federal employees depends on the type of appointment an employee has and the expectation of substantial employment during the year. Students in the Student Temporary Employment Program are considered temporary employees and are generally not entitled to these benefits. Students in the Student Career Experience Program are eligible for both health and life insurance coverage as long as they are expected to be employed under this appointment authority for at least one year and are expected to be in a pay status for at least one-third of the total period of time from the date of their initial appointment to the date of the completion of the program.

Q. Must students work or attend school during the summer?

A. The intent of the Student Educational Employment Program is that students are always either attending classes, working at the agency, or both. However, agencies may use their discretion to permit a “break in program” during which time a student is neither attending classes nor working.

Q. Do students get within grade increases?

A. Students who participate in the STEP (Student Temporary Employment Program) are not eligible to receive a within grade increase while in a grade. Students who participate in the SCEP (Student Career Experience Program) are eligible for within grade increases.

Q. Are students eligible for retirement benefits?

A. Students who participate in the STEP (Student Temporary Employment Program) are generally ineligible for retirement coverage. Students who participate in the SCEP (Student Career Experience Program) with less than 5 years of prior civilian service, are generally covered by the Federal Employees Retirement System (FERS).

Q. When will the selections be made?

A. First cut selections are typically made by the second week in January. The official offer of employment comes from our Lakewood Administrative Services Team in Lakewood, Colorado by February 15th.

Q. What project will I be assigned to?

A. Students are notified of project assignments in mid-April.

Q. Is travel from my college to the project office paid for?

A. Travel and per diem are allowed for travel from either the college or home to the project office. A travel advance may be processed if the need arises.

Q. I have a weeklong trip planned for the middle of the summer, can I still go on the trip?

A. This needs to be approved by your supervisor so be sure to discuss with him/her early. Typically this can be worked into the schedule. Be aware, you will not receive per diem, lodging, or reimbursement for travel for this trip. Also, if you have not accrued enough annual leave, you may be placed in non-pay status for your absence.

Q. What kind of housing arrangements are available?

A. Generally, students rent apartments or hotel rooms located near the project site for the duration of the assignment. A per diem allowance is provided to cover the cost of meals and lodging if the project is located 35 or more miles from the official duty station, Vancouver, WA.

Q. How do I apply for the PDP program?

A. Visit <http://www.fhwa.dot.gov/aaa/pdp/> for information on the Professional Development Program. You can also contact the Lakewood Administrative Services Team at 720-963-3040.

Q. What will I be doing?

A. Typically, students perform duties in the following areas:

- Inspecting contractor's grading, placement of surfacing, placement of paving materials, drainage structure installation;
- Conducting or overseeing tests of the materials and soils incorporated into the work;
- Highway construction surveying;
- Assisting with field office work;
- Making computations to plot field notes;
- Plotting cross-sections and profile data;
- Computing quantities to verify pay note quantities; and
- Checking field calculations.