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FIELD WORK TERM HANDBOOK

IMPORTANT DATES

October 19 Grant applications due

October 28 Independent Study Proposals due

November 11 Extension requests due, Summer Deferral applications due

November 18 Registration deadline

Students without an extension who register after this date will be fined \$50. Late registration is then noted on the transcript and may affect the student's FWT rating.

December 2 Academic Advisors must approve FWT registration

December 2 Extended registration deadline (with approval)

Students with approved extensions who register after this date will be fined \$50. Late registration is then noted on the transcript and may affect the student's FWT rating.

December 9 All registered students will receive, at their Bennington email addresses, FWT packets that include important FWT information. All supervisors registered by students will be emailed and asked to log into WorkLink to confirm their contact and position information and to agree to supervise students for FWT. Students should check with supervisors to make sure they have received and responded to this email.

December 12 Last day to register late. All students who register after this date will be fined \$50 and will not be

eligible for a full pass.

January 3 FWT begins

January 9 LFE begins

January 15 Last day to register for FWT, last day to request approval for special project to count for supplemental FWT hours (see Hours policy).

January 20 Last day to add a position

February 17 Last day of FWT

February 24 Essays and evaluations due

March 2 Essays (with extensions) due

March 9 Independent study evaluations due

April 27 Summer Individual Study Proposals due

May 11 Last day late evaluations for temporary incompletes accepted

May 11 Registration for summer makeups, Summer Option and Elective Summer Field Experiences due

June 18–August 3 Summer FWT dates

August 10 Essays and evaluations for summer FWTs due

September 30 Summer grades due

MISSION AND OVERVIEW OF FIELD WORK TERM

Field Work Term (FWT) is one of the most exciting aspects of a Bennington education. It has been a central part of the Bennington program since the College opened in 1932. This term provides students with an opportunity to explore connections among their academic experience, personal interests, and the world of

work. Each year all students spend seven weeks off campus working in a job or internship that expands their academic studies and enriches their individual development. Through FWT, students learn what it means to take increasing responsibility for their own education, their own work, and their own lives.

QUICK FACTS

FWT Requirements and Registration

- **Total needed:** One FWT for each year of full-time, undergraduate matriculation.
- **Hours:** 210 hours total are required. A minimum of half time work (20 hours week/140 hours) must be completed at the primary site(s), which is (are) related to the student's educational goals. For this(these) position(s), a student must register and receive an evaluation. If a student cannot get a full 210 hours at the primary site(s), other hours (beyond the 140) must be accounted for and documented but the jobs/ experiences do not need to be registered with the FWT/CDO nor is an evaluation required. Supplemental hours may include:
 - Unrelated job for pay—provide pay stubs or a signed time sheet
 - Classes related to position (such as language classes connected with work abroad)—provide a signed time sheet or letter indicating the amount of time spent in this activity.
 - Registration for a Bennington class offered during FWT.
 - Registration for a Williams College class which starts during the FWT.
 - Participation in Bennington programs such as House Chair training, senior conference, etc.
 - Other circumstances must be proposed and approved by the Director—supporting documentation to be determined based on circumstance. Proposal must be in by January 13.
- **Registration:** All positions must be registered through WorkLink no later than **November 18, 2011**.

- **Supervisor's evaluation:** Supervisors' evaluations are completed online through WorkLink and due by **February 24, 2012**.
- **Essay:** A 3–5 page (approximately 750–1,250 word) essay is due by **February 24, 2012**.
- **Late registration:** Late registrations (not additional positions added to an on-time registration) will not be accepted after **January 12, 2012**. Students not registered by this time will receive a failing grade. Students registering late after the end of fall term, but before January 12, will only be eligible to receive a Marginal Pass.
- **Registration Problems:** Registrations with problems (e.g. missing /inaccurate information) must be corrected within 1 week of notification or they will be considered late and penalized as such.

Special Proposals

There are circumstances not encouraged or that require different consideration for approval if you want to register this as a primary FWT position. For these situations, additional information is required. These special proposals are to be completed as part of the registration process and are due by **Friday, November 18, 2011**. Completing the special proposal for one of the cases below does not guarantee approval: Circumstances requiring a special proposal include:

- FWT positions working for a family member or friend (strongly discouraged)
- Positions unrelated to your educational goals
- Working the same position as a previous year
- Working for a recent alumni (under 5 years out)
- Taking a training course

SUCCESSFULLY NAVIGATING FWT

Planning FWT in Each Phase of Your Bennington Education

Field work experiences should not only build upon a student's classes, but on each other as well. Students should consider all of their FWT experiences as a whole while planning. Sometimes students may learn of a great opportunity that will not be feasible in the current year but should be considered for the following year or a summer experience. The following outline is a way to help students think about how to best use FWT.

Your First Year

EXPLORE—Take this time to try something new. Explore a field you think you may have an interest in (perhaps an interest that has blossomed during your fall term). Try working in an environment different from where you may have worked before. Attempt something you are unsure about. Focus on learning how to:

- get along in a work environment,
- communicate with your supervisor,

- Positions in which your supervisor is off site (not working at the same location as you)

Special proposals questions are listed as part of the registration form in WorkLink.

Independent Study

Independent Study proposals are due by **October 28, 2011**—*no exceptions or extensions* (more information on page 12).

- Not all students are eligible to do an Independent Study.
- You must have completed at least four terms, be in good academic standing, and receive the approval of faculty in your area of concentration.
- You must have a qualified academic sponsor, who may or may not be a faculty member (non-faculty members must submit a CV and be approved), who agrees to oversee and evaluate your Independent Study work.
- Your proposal must be signed by your advisor, the sponsor of your Independent Study, and a member of the faculty in the discipline of your proposed study if not already represented prior to being submitted for approval by the Director of FWT.
- You may only do one full Independent Study during your four years at Bennington.
- You must meet with a staff member of FWT & Career Development Office to request an Independent Study registration form no later than **October 28, 2011**.

The FWT & Career Development Office is open year-round.

| | |
|-----------------------|----------------------------------|
| Summer and FWT: | 8:30 am–4:00 pm Monday–Friday |
| Fall and Spring Term: | 9:00 am–5:00 pm Monday–Friday |

- recognize what you like and don't like about the position,
- recognize how the organization fits into the greater community,
- behave as a productive member of your work community, whatever your role and however you feel about the role.

The LFE is a great option to help you reach these goals.

Considerations

- While it is ultimately *your responsibility* to find and secure a position, there are many people and resources available to help you. This is a great opportunity for you to learn how to use the wealth of resources available to you at Bennington.

You only have three to four months to plan for and be accepted for a position, so waiting until October or later is not a good idea.

Students who did not pre-register for LFE should attend LFE events in the fall. Not only will they be beneficial in FWT planning, but it will allow you to add LFE later, if space is available.

- International experiences require significant initial planning and usually will cost between \$1,500 and \$3,000, plus travel.
- Be sure to work on a “back-up plan” near a place where you know you have housing.
- Some opportunities will be of greater use to you if you have some experience already, so consider positions that will help you develop the skills to obtain these more prestigious/competitive opportunities later on.
- Communicate with the FWT and Career Development Office regarding any questions you may have. A meeting with the Director or FWT/Career Planning Advisor in September is highly recommended.
- Attend the New Student FWT Workshop held early in the fall, and attend the various workshops offered by the office throughout fall term.

Your Second and Third Years

APPLY—Take this time to apply the knowledge you have chosen to focus on at Bennington in the greater world. Use these FWTs to develop special skills in your field of interest and explore broad questions about issues in the world. Take advantage of the opportunities afforded by leaving the classroom and see how you can play a role in dealing with various community problems. For the most eye-opening experiences, think beyond the obvious. In addition to working with independent artists, writers, musicians, and research scientists, consider writing for the communications department of a government agency, testing products in the lab of a processing plant, designing brochures for an advertising firm, or helping to plan the music program for religious communities, for example. Continue to ask what role these organizations, and you as a member of them, play in the local, regional, national and world communities. Rather than focus on particular skills you want to gain, push yourself to explore the bigger questions while working—the skills will come.

Your Final Year

EXPERIENCE—For your last FWT, consider using this opportunity to explore a field in which you might consider working after you graduate. Use all the information you have gathered through your prior FWTs, classroom and summer experiences. Try to explore an area of the country/world where you hope to go after graduation. Seek a position in a field where you hope to make connections for your future. This is an ideal time to “test drive” a position which can be extremely valuable in both clarifying your personal and professional goals as well as making important contacts with future colleagues. These are the people who may become your collaborators and mentors as you begin your life beyond Bennington.

Suggested Timeline and Steps to Secure an FWT Position

Summer - Mid-September

What would you like to do for FWT?

- Brainstorm interests, skills to develop, and fields to explore.
- Think about what you want to get out of your education at Bennington, and this year in particular.

- Visit the FWT and Career Development Office to become familiar with the staff and other resources available.
- Attend a WorkLink workshop.

Summer - Late-September

Prepare your résumé/know how to write a cover letter

- Attend a résumé workshop for help, if needed.
- Come to the FWT and Career Development Office during walk-in hours, or leave a draft in the drop-box for review.
- Explore WorkLink, where you will be able to research positions and access on-line and print resources.

Summer - Early October

Identify employers of interest

- Search for advertised FWT positions online through WorkLink.
- Your username is the same as for your Bennington webmail. You were sent a password (which you may have changed). If you forgot your password, use the “forgot password” option.
- Use paper and online resources available in the FWT and Career Development Office and on WorkLink.
- Talk to other students, faculty, the FWT staff, friends, anyone, and get the names of people who might be able to help you identify employers.
- Use the resources available through the FWT and Career Development Office to find alums and parents who might be able to offer advice.

September - Mid-October

Contact sites

- Apply for advertised positions as requested by site (if specified).
- Call site to inquire about unadvertised positions and to learn how they would like you to apply.
- If no phone number is available, send an email inquiry (be sure to adhere to the standards of professional business correspondence).
- Ask the FWT & Career Development Office to send information about FWT to any employer you are contacting.

Late-September - October

Determine fit with employers

- Interview with supervisors (in person or on the phone) to determine fit.
- Be clear about your goals and abilities when speaking with employers; ask questions to ensure this will be a good opportunity.

Mid-October - Early November

Secure position – start looking for housing

- Finalize position details. Send a confirmation in writing to be sure everything is clear.

- Begin looking for housing – talk to others, use FWT resources, check online resources.
- Apply for an FWT grant if needed (by **October 19**).
- Request an extension if you qualify (by **November 11**).

Early – Mid-November

Secure housing

- Finalize your housing arrangements.

No later than November 19

- Register your position on WorkLink!

Late November

Confirm registration

- Check your Bennington email to be sure your registration was received. Remind your academic advisor that he/she needs to approve by **December 3**. Let your position supervisor know that he/she will be receiving an email from us and will need to review the position and confirm on-line in order for you to be fully registered.

Early – Mid-December

Prepare to go

- Contact the FWT and Career Development Office if you have not received an email to your Bennington email account with your FWT packet.
- Print your FWT packet if you will not have access to a printer over FWT. Don't forget to print one time sheet for each position you have registered!
- Check with your supervisor to make sure s/he has received and replied to the confirmation email sent.
- Touch base with your supervisor to arrange any final details about your arrival, first day, and share your contact information for the winter break.

Professional Etiquette

Before accepting a position, talk to your supervisor about your goals and their needs. Be clear about the hours requirement, and financial and housing concerns. Taking time to clarify issues before accepting a position can save a lot of trouble later on. Confirm with the employer once you have accepted a position. This can be in the form of a letter or email restating the details of the position such as “I agree to start on this date at this time working X hours per week for a total of 210 hours. You can reach me until Dec. X at Y and after that time at Z.” By clarifying things in writing, you can help ensure that you both understood the terms of the FWT accurately.

Once you have accepted a position, *you must withdraw your application from all other employers for whom you cannot work now that you have a position.* It is unprofessional to continue to position search after you have made a commitment to an employer, unless you could complete both position during the FWT.

If you need to break your commitment with an organization before FWT, you must speak with the supervisor and follow up with a letter of regret. This should be typed, free of spelling and grammatical errors, and professional in tone. If you are in doubt, contact the FWT and Career Development Office for help. Remember, every contact you have with an organization is a representation of Bennington College. While a position may not be a fit for you, it may be a great opportunity for future students. How a supervisor remembers her/his experience with “Bennington students” influences her/his decision to work with them again. Even supervisors who are very gracious about your leaving may think twice about Bennington students in the future.

Tips For Starting and Ending on the Right Foot

First impressions count. The first impressions your supervisor and co-workers develop can affect the level of responsibility you are given and how you are treated.

- **Be on Time:** Make sure you know what time you are expected to be at work. Do a trial run before your commute, giving yourself extra time to get to work. There is no good excuse for being late, especially on your first day!
- **Look the Part:** If you're not sure how to dress, it's best to be on the conservative side. Dress appropriately for the type of position you have and follow the lead of your supervisor and co-workers. Ask what is expected if you are unsure.
- **Be Positive:** This is one of the most important factors in creating a good working relationship with your supervisor and co-workers. Avoid complaining and negativity, especially where your position duties are concerned. If you are around people like this at work, don't let them affect your attitude.
- **Set the Tone:** If your supervisor does not initiate it, ask for a meeting the first week of work. Share your goals and learning objectives with your supervisor and discuss the plan for the type of work you'll be doing for the next 7 weeks.
- **Ask Questions:** It's much better to ask about something rather than to not ask and get it wrong. Ask questions throughout your internship. It's a great way to learn. Talk to your supervisor about setting up a weekly meeting. This will be a time you can count on to get any issues resolved or non-immediate questions answered. During the week make notes on what you want to discuss at the meeting as issues or questions come up.
- **Set a Schedule:** Work out a schedule with your supervisor if she/he has not already done so. If your schedule is irregular, write it down, so you won't forget when you are required to work. Remember, even if others at the organization do not seem to be holding a schedule, it is important to be clear about what is expected of you. Your supervisor may be counting on you being there when others are not.

It is important that you fill out your FWT time sheet. You should have received an FWT packet via your Bennington

email from the FWT and Career Development Office before leaving campus, which includes your time sheet and information about FWT. If you need another packet, notify the office immediately.

- **Be Dependable:** Show your supervisor that you are responsible enough to take on challenging work. Complete any routine work to the best of your ability, even if you don't enjoy the task. Always come to work on time and call if you will be late. Ask well in advance for any time off you may need. If you are sick and can't go to work, call to inform your supervisor.
- **Be Involved:** Re-evaluate your objectives periodically. Take the initiative and offer to take on challenging work when opportunities arise. Get to know your supervisor and co-workers. The informal conversations you have at work can improve your relationships and teach you a lot.
- **Don't be Afraid to Say "I'm new here.":** If you don't know the answer to something, tell the person asking that you're new to the job but will find out the answer and get back to them. Then do it!

End of FWT

- Make an appointment with your supervisor for a closing interview. At this time you should remind your supervisor that the FWT evaluation is due to the FWT and Career Development Office by **February 24**.
- Thank your supervisor and co-workers.
- Review both finished and ongoing projects with your supervisor and co-workers. Organize your work so someone else can pick up where you left off.
- If you have been working with students, clients, or customers, make sure they know in advance when and why you are leaving. This is particularly important if you are working with children or people who are unfamiliar with internships.

Handling Common Job Problems

In all likelihood, your FWT will be a positive experience. If conflict should arise, deal with it early. Approach conflict in a direct, non-accusatory way. Regardless of the cause, problems need to be resolved as soon as possible, ideally with a solution agreeable to all involved. If you need help with how to handle a problem, call and speak with the Director of FWT. Remember, learning how to deal with work-related problems is an important part of the FWT process.

Conflict Management

- Recognize that there are many points of view and that everyone is entitled to an opinion.
- Address problems early.
- Listen without being defensive or judgmental.
- Concentrate on finding a resolution rather than finding fault.
- Make sure proposed and final solutions are understood and agreed upon.

Examples of Potential Problems and Suggested Solutions

- **Not Challenged at Work:** Understandably, you want to be challenged during FWT. Keep in mind that everyone completes some routine work as part of their job. This type of work can be a good way to learn how an organization operates. If you find yourself completing an excess of routine work, demonstrate your ability to handle more. Show that you are organized, responsible, and dependable. Talk to your supervisor and co-workers about projects you'd like to get involved in or learn more about. Explain that you are willing to continue completing routine work, but would like to participate in more challenging work as well.
- **Problems with Co-workers:** Most people enjoy working with interns. However, sometimes employees may feel that interns receive preferential treatment or that working with interns is too time consuming. Hopefully your supervisor has introduced you around and explained your role. If not, take the responsibility of doing so yourself. Show that you are there to assist, not to be a burden. Be dependable and complete quality work. Avoid conflicts when possible, especially if they do not involve you. If you are having trouble with a particular co-worker, try talking with him/her to find out what the problem is. It could be something unrelated or something you can solve together. If this approach fails, talk with your supervisor diplomatically about a solution.
- **Office Politics:** It's easy to get caught up in the internal politics of an organization. Avoid getting involved in disagreements between individuals or departments when possible. Most likely, there is a history behind the problem that goes beyond your time with the organization. If you are already involved in a political situation, avoid further involvement if possible (conversations, action, etc.) as this may only escalate the situation.
- **Communication:** Misunderstandings due to poor communication can escalate into huge problems. Communication is probably the simplest and most effective way to solve and prevent problems at work. Poor communication can create problems very quickly. Never assume that you already know the answer or reason behind something. Make sure you understand clearly and fully what is expected of you. Ask questions if you are unfamiliar with an area of your job or a situation at work. Becoming competent in your field is a learning process. If you have an idea, suggestion, or proposal for a new project, be clear in your explanation and do some research on the feasibility of your idea before presenting it.
- **Overwhelmed:** If you are feeling overwhelmed by a problem at work, step back and look at the situation. Sometimes a change in perspective can make all the difference. Speak to your supervisor or contact the FWT and Career Development Office for advice if you are unable to resolve the situation on your own.

Where Can I Live During FWT?

Off Campus

Students are required to secure their own housing for FWT. If students opt to complete FWT someplace other than home, they traditionally have secured low-cost housing through personal contacts or sublet/rent as a group. Housing options posted in the FWT and Career Development Office include listings from Bennington alumni and parent hosts as well as job listings that offer housing in exchange for work. The FWT and Career Development Office also provides various resources to help students find low-cost rentals for FWT. Students can seek roommates by posting their interest on the FWT/CDO Facebook Group.

Students should consider their housing options carefully when planning their FWT experiences and should carefully research rental costs, particularly in major metropolitan areas. The FWT and Career Development Office strongly encourages students to have a parent or legal advisor review any lease with them before signing it and to meet with the landlord if at all possible prior to entering a housing arrangement.

On Campus

Limited, low-cost, campus housing is available for select students during FWT. Students must apply to be considered for housing. Priority is given to students participating in the Local Field Experience, first-year international students, seniors completing an Independent Study on campus, and students working in a Bennington College office for FWT. If space is available, students completing FWT within commuting distance to Bennington College may also be considered. All students applying for housing on campus during FWT will be subject to an internal reference check as part of their application for housing. Living on campus during FWT is a very different experience than during term. The community is smaller and students live much more independently. Before opting for campus housing students should be aware that during FWT many campus services available during fall and spring term are not open, including the dining halls and health services. Access to other campus buildings, such as VAPA and the recreation center are limited and administrative offices maintain an abbreviated schedule. Students who wish to use the resources in VAPA must apply to rent studio space. For more information on this process, hours available for use, and the costs, contact Linda Hurley at 802-440-4547 or lhurley@bennington.edu.

How Do I Finance My FWT?

While no tuition is charged for FWT, students are responsible for meeting their own expenses during this term. The cost of FWT will vary greatly depending on the student's job and housing arrangements. If you will need to pay for housing, food, and transportation on your own for FWT, you should budget at least \$2,000–\$3,000, plus the cost of travel to and from your site. Obviously, if you will be provided housing,

food, or transportation, this cost will be reduced significantly. It is important to create a budget and to plan accordingly for FWT. See sample budget sheet (page 7).

Grants for FWT Positions and Independent Study

The FWT and Career Development Office awarded approximately \$25,000 in grant money to assist with FWT expenses last year. Awards are generally around \$500, but vary depending on the financial need and number of qualified applicants.

We now have a special grant available for students doing work in Public Action. Students may apply for the TELOS Public Action Grant, with awards up to \$2,500 per student by the same deadline as other grants.

Application forms and information describing available grants are online in the document library of WorkLink. A potential FWT arrangement is required in order to apply for a grant. Applications involve estimating your FWT expenses, contributions, and financial needs during the FWT. Additionally, **two faculty recommendations are required**. A committee of College administrators selects grant recipients. If you receive an FWT grant and do not complete the job for which the grant was awarded for or leave the College, the funds must be repaid to Bennington. Applications for FWT grants must be received by **October 19**. Grants are extremely competitive and not guaranteed.

Students completing an Independent Study (IS) may apply for an FWT grant. Applicants should clearly demonstrate the importance of the IS project to their Plans, and the expenses must be well justified. For example, a student writing her/his book in southern Italy because it is more inspirational than her/his home in western Ohio would not be as strong a candidate as someone who must be in Italy in order to interview people for an anthropological project. If a student will need help financing an IS she/he may also want to explore independent grants using a resource such as the Foundation Center. Their website, www.fdncenter.com, has an excellent tutorial designed to guide grant seekers through the process. It is best to start planning to fund an IS early (the year prior is recommended), since many outside grants have very early deadlines and can be quite competitive.

Paid Opportunities

There are a limited number of FWT opportunities that either pay a regular wage, offer a stipend, or provide room and/or board. Many students also choose to take a part-time job during FWT in addition to their FWT job in order to help meet their financial needs. If a student has financial need, she/he may be able to count some of the hours worked at a part-time paying job toward her/his FWT hours requirement. However, at least 140 of her/his counted hours must be in a field experience that makes sense given her/his educational goals whether or not it is paid. If a student wants to count a part-time job as part of her/his FWT hours, she/he does not need to register the job, but must provide a copy of pay stubs or a signed time sheet to document the hours worked.

Tips For Planning Your FWT

You should seriously consider the logistics involved in an FWT experience before accepting. With planning there are ways to reduce your costs to make a great job feasible. The longer you wait to start planning, the more difficult it becomes to make something work out.

Living

Where will you be living? Do you have housing secured? If not, how do you plan to secure housing? What will you do if you cannot secure housing?

Estimate these costs:

| | | |
|---------------|----------|-----------------------|
| Rent | \$ _____ | /month x 2 = \$ _____ |
| Heat/Electric | \$ _____ | /month x 2 = \$ _____ |
| Food | \$ _____ | /month x 2 = \$ _____ |
| Phone | \$ _____ | /month x 2 = \$ _____ |

Commuting

How will you get to work every day? Are you dependent on other people (such as a friend driving you)? If so, what is your back-up plan? Do you have a car? Is there reliable public transportation in this region? How long will it take you to get to work each day?

Estimated costs:

| | | |
|---|----------|-----------------------|
| Public transportation | \$ _____ | /week x 7 = \$ _____ |
| Gasoline | \$ _____ | /week x 7 = \$ _____ |
| Car insurance | \$ _____ | /month x 2 = \$ _____ |
| Car maintenance | \$ _____ | /month x 2 = \$ _____ |
| Tolls | \$ _____ | /week x 7 = \$ _____ |
| Cost to travel to FWT worksite from where you will be in Dec. | | \$ _____ |
| Cost to return to Bennington after FWT (from site) | | \$ _____ |

Working

Are there any expenses related to your job?

| | |
|-----------------------------|----------|
| Fees for abroad programs | \$ _____ |
| Appropriate attire/uniforms | \$ _____ |

Miscellaneous

Are there any additional expenses that you anticipate?

| | |
|--|----------|
| Regular monthly expenses (i.e. credit card payments) | \$ _____ |
| Savings for school | \$ _____ |
| Entertainment | \$ _____ |
| Other | \$ _____ |
| Total Expense | \$ _____ |

This is how much you need to make either through wages, savings, grant money, or family assistance.

Organize Your Contacts

Stay organized and keep track of contacts and the status of each job for which you applied. Creating a sheet like this will help if you need to apply for an extension, and will also help you to be more prepared when someone calls you back.

Date: _____ Job applied for: _____

Company name: _____

Person called/emailed: _____

Phone number: _____ Email: _____

Important information: _____

Follow-up plan:

- | | | | |
|--------------------------------------|--|--|--|
| <input type="checkbox"/> Interview | <input type="checkbox"/> Sent thank-you letter | <input type="checkbox"/> Sent acceptance letter | <input type="checkbox"/> Withdrew other applications |
| <input type="checkbox"/> Job offered | <input type="checkbox"/> Accepted | <input type="checkbox"/> Sent declination letter | |
| <input type="checkbox"/> Declined | | | |

Notes:

Keep notes for additional employers in a notebook. You should apply to a number of employers: 2–3 reaches, 3–5 good chances, and 2–3 “safety” positions. Once you’ve accepted a position, you should withdraw all other applications. Keep applying until you have received a job offer.

Leaving a Job Before the End of FWT

Occasionally, problems are irreconcilable and a student may need to leave the job before the end of FWT. If you are considering leaving your job you should:

- **Contact the FWT and Career Development Office immediately!**
- Make an appointment to speak with your supervisor to:
 - Explain your concerns in a non-accusatory way (this should not be your first conversation with your supervisor).
 - Outline your goals and your concerns about staying at the site.
 - Let your supervisor know that you are considering leaving.
 - Give him/her an opportunity to respond.
 - Engage in problem solving strategies to see if there is a way you can maintain your commitment.
- **Listen!** Sometimes a supervisor has reasons for her/his decisions that you may not be aware of. Keep in mind that your supervisor may be dealing with issues and demands that exceed your own, which might be influencing her/his choices.
- Ask what you can do to make the transition easier. Complete any projects you have begun, and update him/her on anything you have been working on.
- Agree on a final date and what needs to be done by that time.
- Remind your supervisor that you will need the completed time sheet and evaluation before you leave.
- After you leave, send a follow-up letter thanking your supervisor for the opportunity provided, praise what went well, and express your regrets that things did not work out as planned.

FIELD WORK TERM REQUIREMENTS

General Requirements

Every full-time, undergraduate student is required to complete one FWT for each full-time year she/he attends Bennington. A student can earn a grade of “Pass,” “Marginal Pass,” or “Fail” for FWT. In order to “Pass” Field Work Term, a student must meet the following requirements.

- Submit the completed FWT position or independent study registration form, employer evaluation, and reflection essay on time.
- Complete 210 hours of work—verified by supervisor). At least 140 of these hours must be completed in no more than 3 registered positions related to the student’s goals. If the full 210 hours will not be earned in these registered positions the additional 70 hours may be earned in an unrelated job or through a project which has been approved by the Director of FWT. Unrelated jobs do not need to be registered, but students must submit proof of hours either by submitting a signed time sheet or copies of pay stubs. Project hours will be accounted as determined by the FWT Director. Students must submit proposals for supplementary projects by **January 20, 2012**.
- Receive a positive supervisor evaluation.
- Write and submit a satisfactory 3-5 page (approximately

750–1250 word) reflective essay, due **February 24, 2012**. Final FWT ratings appear on each student’s academic transcript and employer evaluations become part of a student’s cumulative academic record. Failure to register or complete an FWT can adversely influence a student’s academic status and potentially affect her/his financial aid package. If a student does not annually receive a “passing” rating for FWT, she/he may be required to make up the requirements during the summer. Summer make-ups are determined by the Director of FWT. Additionally, FWT make-ups must be successfully completed before approval for graduation can be given. See **FWT evaluation criteria** for more information on FWT requirements.

Graduation Requirements

Students are required to successfully complete one FWT for every year of full-time matriculation. Therefore, a student starting as a first-term freshman will need to have passed four FWTs in order to graduate. If an FWT has been waived due to a leave of absence or study abroad, for example, the student would be allowed to graduate with only three FWTs. Transfer students should meet with the Director of FWT to ensure that they have enough FWTs to graduate. A chart depicting how many FWTs are required for graduation is included below.

| TRANSFER AS A FIRST-YEAR STUDENT | | | |
|--|-----------------|-----------------|----------------|
| Start as first-term freshman in spring, 3 FWTs required (4 years full-time study). | | | |
| | Fall Term | Field Work Term | Spring Term |
| Year 1 | | | First-Term Fr. |
| Year 2 | Second-Term Fr. | FWT | First-Term So. |
| Year 3 | Second-Term So. | FWT | First-Term Jr. |
| Year 4 | Second-Term Jr. | FWT | First-Term Sr. |
| Year 5 | Second-Term Sr. | Graduate | |

Note: If you study abroad for a term and do not complete FWT, you will need to make up an FWT during the summer or complete one during FWT in year 5 and graduate in absentia in spring of year 5.

Start as a second-term freshman in fall, 3 FWTs required (3 full years of study).

| | Fall Term | Field Work Term | Spring Term |
|--------|-----------------|-----------------|----------------|
| Year 1 | Second-Term Fr. | FWT | First-Term So. |
| Year 2 | Second-Term So. | FWT | First-Term Jr. |
| Year 3 | Second-Term Jr. | FWT | First-Term Sr. |
| Year 4 | Second-Term Sr. | Graduate | |

Note: If you study abroad for a term and do not complete FWT, you will not need to make up an FWT.

TRANSFER AS A SOPHOMORE

If you start as a first-term sophomore in spring, 2 FWTs are required (3 full years of study).

| | Fall Term | Field Work Term | Spring Term |
|--------|-----------------|-----------------|----------------|
| Year 1 | | | First-Term So. |
| Year 2 | Second-Term So. | FWT | First-Term Jr. |
| Year 3 | Second-Term Jr. | FWT | First-Term Sr. |
| Year 4 | Second-Term Sr. | Graduate | |

Note: If you study abroad for a term and do not complete FWT, you will need to make up an FWT during the summer or complete one in year 4 and graduate in absentia in spring of year 4.

If you start as a first-term sophomore in fall, 3 FWTs are required (3 full years of study).

If you start as a second-term sophomore in spring, 2 FWTs are required (2 full years of study).

| | Fall Term | Field Work Term | Spring Term |
|--------|----------------|-----------------|-----------------|
| Year 1 | First-Term So. | FWT | Second-Term So. |
| Year 2 | First-Term Jr. | FWT | Second-Term Jr. |
| Year 3 | First-Term Sr. | FWT | Second-Term Sr. |

Note: First-term fall sophomore transfers: If you study abroad for a term and do not complete FWT, you will not need to make up an FWT.

Second-term spring sophomore transfers: If you study abroad for a term and do not complete FWT, you will need to make up an FWT during the summer.

If you start as a second-term sophomore in fall, 2 FWTs are required (2 full years of study +).

| | Fall Term | Field Work Term | Spring Term |
|--------|-----------------|-----------------|----------------|
| Year 1 | Second-Term So. | FWT | First-Term Jr. |
| Year 2 | Second-Term Jr. | FWT | First-Term Sr. |
| Year 3 | Second-Term Sr. | Graduate | |

Note: If you study abroad for a term and do not complete FWT, you will need to make up an FWT during the summer or complete one during FWT in year 3 and graduate in absentia in spring of year 3.

TRANSFER AS A JUNIOR

If you start as a first-term junior in spring, 2 FWTs are required (2 full years of study).

| | Fall Term | Field Work Term | Spring Term | Summer |
|--------|-----------------|-----------------|----------------|---------------|
| Year 1 | | | First-Term Jr. | Summer FWT |
| Year 2 | Second-Term Jr. | FWT | First-Term Sr. | or Summer FWT |
| Year 3 | Second-Term Sr. | Graduate | | |

Note: If you study abroad for a term and do not complete FWT, you will need to make up an FWT during the summer or complete one during FWT in year 3 and graduate in absentia in spring of year 3.

If you start as a first-term junior in fall, 2 FWTs are required (2 full years of study).

| | Fall Term | Field Work Term | Spring Term |
|--------|----------------|-----------------|-----------------|
| Year 1 | First-Term Jr. | FWT | Second-Term Jr. |
| Year 2 | First-Term Sr. | FWT | Second-Term Sr. |

Note: If you study abroad for a term and do not complete FWT, you will need to make up an FWT during the summer.

BA/MAT and MAT Requirements for FWT

Before beginning the student teaching year, MAT students must complete at least one FWT. For this FWT, they must work in a public school in the United States; they must acquire a deep and critical understanding of that school's culture; and they must complete 210 work hours. In addition, they need to have a practicum experience with both ends of the grade-level spectrum for their certification level. For those in Early Childhood Education, this means one with ages 0–5 and one in grades 1–3; for those studying Elementary Education, one in grades K–3 and one in grades 4–6; and for those in Secondary Education, one in grades 7–8 and one in grades 9–12. This will allow for the greatest flexibility in choosing the student teaching placement. It will also require students to do a full year student teaching in one classroom—although splitting the FWT between two different classrooms (and/or age groups) is an option. BA/MAT students who are juniors or seniors and have questions regarding specific FWT experiences, contact the FWT and Career Development Office.

Although an FWT in a public school is nonnegotiable, students can elect to engage in additional teaching activities. The Field Work Term and Career Development Office can help students find resources to arrange a volunteer position with one of the local schools or a Federal Work Study position with Reading Counts, for example. Alternatively, the Community Outreach Leadership Team (COLTs) offers volunteer opportunities from kindergarten Reading Buddies to High School mentoring. Contact the COLTs in the Office of Student Life for more information.

Types of Primary FWT Experiences and Who Qualifies

The following are potential options for meeting the FWT requirement. Please note that **not all students are eligible for every option.**

- Local Field Experience
- Relevant FWT Job
- Independent Study
- Entrepreneurship Project
- Professional Training Course

Local Field Experience

The Local Field Experience (LFE) is a Field Work Term option offered to first-year and transfer students that focuses on community engagement in the local area. The LFE program is designed to provide students with civic and professional opportunities at the same time it more fully introduces them to the Bennington community. All LFE participants work with organizations that have partnered with the College. In the past, these opportunities have included: Bennington Free Library, North Bennington Graded School, Bennington Museum, United Counseling Service, Centerline Architects, WBTN. During the term, the LFE program provides on-campus housing, meals, as well as public transportation to and from the internships as a way to enhance the community aspect among students. Recreational and social activities are planned for off-hours to further connect and support students. Because space is limited, students must complete an application to be considered for the program.

The Local Field Experience provides students with a rich FWT experience in a supportive environment at a more affordable cost than most FWT experiences away from home. This program offers:

- A position with an interesting organization where you are given real responsibility
- A familiar living environment with fellow students, both new students and upper class students who are staying on campus to complete an independent study or work locally
- Skills to help you be successful in your work and life

Students need to apply during the summer or early fall to participate and complete preparatory workshops in the fall. Through this, students will be guided in securing an LFE site in addition to learning more about the local community.

LFE is a special partnership with our local community whose success is based on full student participation. Below are policies particular to this option.

- LFE runs January 9 – February 18
- Students will register for their LFE site on WorkLink.
- Students will earn all of their hours only through full participation in the LFE. Students may not participate in only part of the program, miss work or programming hours unless due to an excused absence, even if they secure additional work outside of the LFE to make up missed hours.
- LFE participants must work at one of the designated LFE sites (listed on WorkLink). If a student would like to propose a new site for the LFE, he/she should speak with the Director of FWT.
- All College policies are to be adhered to while participating in the LFE, both when on and off campus. Failure to do so will be subject to disciplinary action as outlined in the *Student Handbook*.

Relevant FWT Position

Most field experiences during FWT are considered “positions,” While not prohibited, they do not need to be actual paid positions. The organizations for which you work might call it a volunteer, internship, or co-op experience. Primary FWT positions must:

- Be a primarily professional experience (not a class, personal enrichment or travel experience);
- Be working/volunteering for an organization;
- Be connected to helping your supervisor with her/his professional work (as opposed to something unrelated like childcare, housekeeping, etc.), if the employing organization is a sole proprietorship not affiliated with a greater organization, such as an independent artist, performance group, photographer, etc.;
- Have a supervisor who is experienced and knowledgeable in her/his field, who is **not** a family member, who will sign your weekly time sheet and submit an online evaluation in English upon completion;
- Have a connection to your educational goals, though they need not be directly in your focus (i.e. you may be focusing

in painting, but do not need to be painting or working with a painter for FWT).

Independent Study

Select students may apply to spend one FWT pursuing an independent project. This alternative to employment offers the time to delve into a particular problem, research area, theme, or question, working in association with a sponsor. A sponsor must be someone whose area of expertise is appropriate to the Independent Study. Please note: **Faculty members are neither required nor expected to sponsor independent studies over FWT, and agree to do so based on their availability and interest.** Students who are interested in pursuing an Independent Study must submit a complete request form (available to potentially eligible students from the FWT & Career Development Office) along with a proposal describing the goals and methodology of the work. A project proposed for Independent Study is, at minimum, equivalent to the hours required for FWT. The student’s sponsor, academic advisor, a representative from his/her concentration discipline and the Director of FWT must approve the Independent Study proposal. **The Independent Study project is only available to students who have completed at least 4 terms (juniors and seniors) in good academic standing and is generally used by seniors preparing a final thesis or project.** A student must receive the support of the faculty in their academic concentration in order to be considered for an Independent Study. Independent Study approval is not guaranteed; it is an option available to strong students completing advanced work, who have a solid independent proposal.

Because Independent Studies require significant planning and coordination with your sponsor and advisor, students should begin preparations early. Independent Study should not be used a “back up” plan for a Field Work Term position. As such, all initial proposals for Independent Study must be received by the FWT & Career Development Office by **October 28, 2011** (two weeks prior to the FWT registration extension). This will give students the opportunity to revise their proposal, or apply for an extension to find an FWT position, if the proposal is not approved.

Independent Study Proposal and Registration

- Complete a proposal (two to three pages) detailing the project the student intends to undertake, as outlined on the Independent Study Request form.
- Find a qualified sponsor familiar with the proposed subject material. Please note: Faculty members are neither required nor expected to sponsor independent studies over FWT, and agree to do so based on their availability and interest. If the sponsor does not already have a relationship with the College, a C.V. and other documents which indicate his/her qualifications to sponsor an Independent Study will be required to be submitted with the proposal. A sponsor may not be a family member or a recent undergraduate college graduate (within 5 years). Arrangements for frequency and type of contact between sponsor and student during FWT are made individually. A sponsor must be willing to review

and write an evaluation of your work at the end of FWT. Please note, the FWT and Career Development Office does not have the funding to pay sponsors.

- Attach and complete an Independent Study Application (available by request, to eligible students from the FWT & Career Development Office).
- Obtain signatures from **your sponsor, academic advisor and a faculty member in the concentration of your study** (if your academic advisor is in a different discipline) indicating approval of your proposal. Submit completed proposal and application to the FWT Office by **Friday, October 28, 2011**.
- The FWT & Career Development Office will notify you whether your proposal is accepted or declined within a week.

Independent Study Sponsor Evaluations

At the end of FWT or start of spring term, all students completing an Independent Study arrange to meet with their sponsor to review work completed. Sponsors then submit written evaluations and assign a final “pass/fail” rating. Administrative aspects of Independent Study evaluation are handled by the FWT & Career Development Office. Independent Study topics and final ratings become part of a student’s academic record. Sponsor comments are only included if a specific request is made when requesting a transcript from the Dean’s Office. All students should arrange to review their work with their sponsor before **February 24, 2012**. All Independent Study Sponsor evaluations are due **March 9, 2012** as sponsors need ample time to complete evaluation requirements.

Entrepreneurship Project

Many students are interested in learning how to start and run their own business or organization and want to use FWT to begin this venture. Since this type of experience requires exceptional planning and commitment in order to be successful, the following criteria must be met:

- The student must have successfully completed at least one FWT job in a prior year and be in good academic standing.
- In addition to the registration form, the student must submit a business plan that indicates specific goals, how these goals will be met, and resources to be used. A guideline sheet is available in the Document Library of WorkLink.
- The student must secure a business mentor to act as a supervisor and submit a résumé of this mentor, which demonstrates her/his knowledge and ability to guide and advise the student in the entrepreneurial endeavor.
 - Mentor may NOT be a parent, other immediate family member, or spouse/partner.
 - Mentor should have experience running an independent business/organization, or a combination of business knowledge and knowledge of the field directly related to your work.
- Entrepreneurial FWT experiences cannot be used exclusively for creating work to be sold, but must encompass the greater aspects of running one’s own business or organization (for example: Working on writing a book that will be submitted for publication does not meet these criteria).

Professional Training Course

FWT is intended to get students out of the classroom, exploring interests in a professional setting. As such, students are not allowed to take classes as the primary job part of their FWT requirements. The following experiences cannot count toward primary FWT hours:

- Credit and noncredit-bearing classes at other colleges.
- Preparatory courses for graduate and professional school programs.
- Being tutored in a particular subject (such as language, writing, or other independent instruction).
- Personal enrichment, meditation, and self-help programs.
- Independent art, dance, acting, language, and music classes not affiliated with a job.

Exceptions may be made for professional training experiences. These include:

- Training programs necessary to be allowed to do a registered job (i.e., CPR certification, child abuse reporting course, computer skills training course, etc.).
- Hands-on experiential training programs resulting in a certification required for a particular professional field (i.e., massage therapy certification, EMT training, etc.).
- Apprenticeship programs where you are working directly with an artist or craftsman on her/his work to learn a particular technique, style, approach, etc. Students proposing a professional training program for FWT must provide documentation that explains the nature of the program, accreditations, and certifications earned upon completion. You may not do a professional training program for more than one FWT requirement.

FWT for Transfers, Part-timers, Parents, International Students and Early Graduates, House Chairs and Conference Attendees

- **Transfer Students:** Transfer students do not have the opportunity to complete as many FWTs as their classmates. They should meet with the Director of FWT to determine if it is in their best interest to complete an extra FWT over the summer. See charts on pages 9–11 to determine how many FWTs you will need to do.
- **Part-time Students:** Part-time students are required to complete one FWT for every 32 credits earned at Bennington. It is recommended that you meet with the Director of FWT to determine the best time to fulfill your FWT requirement. Part-time students who work full time may have the FWT requirement waived or modified. As such waivers are not guaranteed, students should speak with the Director of FWT about their situation.
- **Parents:** Parents of young children are given flexibility and reduced hours in their FWT requirement. Such students are required to fulfill the 140 hours of the primary job and will not be asked to provide supplementary hours.

- **Early Graduation:** If a student is allowed to graduate early she/he is required to complete one FWT for each full-time year at Bennington.
- **Early Returners:** Students who need to return early from FWT to participate in a college sponsored event (such as House Chair training or Senior Conference) will be granted supplementary hours. The number of hours awarded will depend on the date of expected arrival for the program.

International Students

Immigration and Naturalization Service regulations affect FWT for international students during their first year. **International students who have been in the country for less than nine months are not eligible to work off campus in the United States for any type of compensation (pay, room and board, etc.).**

Options for First-Year International Students are:

- Local Field Experience
- Working as a volunteer off campus.
- Setting up an FWT position at home.

Most first-year international students choose to stay on campus or return home. The LFE is an excellent option as it offers valuable field work experience off campus but provides students the ability to live on campus. After nine months of full-time residency in the United States, international students can take regular FWT jobs as part of their curricular practical training (CPT).

FWT and Leaves and Withdrawals

There are circumstances under which the FWT requirement for a given year may be waived.

Leave of absence: When applying for a leave of absence, the student must decide whether the leave will include FWT. Students taking a leave for the fall must decide if their leave ends in December or February and students taking a leave for the spring must choose whether the leave will start in January or at the beginning of the spring term. If a student wishes to take a leave, but complete the FWT, the effective start and return dates on the leave of absence application from the Dean's Office should be marked appropriately. If a spring term leave is requested after the final date of FWT, the student must complete the FWT requirement.

Students can request a leave during FWT for the FWT and the upcoming spring term. To do so, the "leave effective date" on the leave of absence application must be marked "FWT." Students cannot request a leave for FWT alone. If a student requests a leave to begin during the FWT, all registered supervisors will be contacted to inform them that the student is no longer registered in the FWT and will not be receiving credit for this experience.

Please note that only one required FWT may be waived for any reason, so a student who takes multiple leaves of absence may be required to make up an FWT during the summer in order to meet the graduation requirement. Students taking a

leave in the fall but completing FWT should also be aware that the last day of class will be listed as the last actual date of class attendance, not the end of FWT, however, they will still be considered registered for the FWT following their term of leave.

Any student on leave who wishes to complete an FWT must register by the registration deadline and is responsible for contacting the FWT and Career Development Office with any questions.

Study Abroad: Students who are participating in an approved study abroad program in the fall or spring may have the FWT requirement for that academic year waived due to differences in academic schedules at other schools. Students who are studying abroad in the fall and would like to complete FWT must contact the FWT and Career Development Office prior to the registration deadline to register. Students who are planning to study abroad in the spring but wish to complete an FWT should register as usual. Students who are applying to study abroad in the spring but are still awaiting a decision regarding acceptance into a program by late October should meet with the FWT Director to discuss options.

Withdrawal, Dismissal, Suspension and FWT

Students who withdraw, are dismissed, or are suspended from the College in the fall term or during the Field Work Term will not receive any FWT credit for any work completed during FWT for that academic year. Any registered supervisors will be notified that the withdrawn/dismissed/suspended student will not be receiving credit for the term and that any continued working relationship between the former/suspended student and the site is independent of any relationship with the College. Students who withdraw/are dismissed or are suspended after the last day of FWT must complete the FWT requirements (essays and evaluations) or receive a grade of Fail for the FWT, which will appear on the academic transcript. Withdrawn/dismissed and suspended students wishing to reapply to Bennington at a later date to complete their degrees will need to meet with the FWT Director to discuss makeup requirements after being readmitted.

Students who have been on a medical withdrawal, but have received clearance to return to the college prior to the last date to register a FWT late (January 12) may elect to complete a FWT. These students should contact the FWT Director prior to registering. Registrations will not be approved prior to the FWT and Career Development Office receiving notification from the Dean of Students that the student has been cleared for reentry. Students who do not receive clearance prior to the January 12 deadline will not be eligible to complete FWT.

Completing FWT Requirement During the Summer

The only students permitted to fulfill their FWT requirements during the summer are students who:

- Fail an FWT;
- Receive an incomplete for an FWT;

- Will not have the ability to complete the required number of FWTs before their scheduled graduation date because they have transferred to Bennington or have missed normally scheduled FWTs due to a leave of absence or returning after a withdrawal.
- Were granted a deferral for summer (see below).

All summer FWTs count toward the academic year which they follow. With the exception of students transferring as juniors, students may not apply a summer FWT to the next academic year.

Makeup Terms

Students granted a half or a full incomplete or who are required to make up an FWT due to failure must register for a summer makeup. Students will receive a reminder to register in mid-April; registration forms are due **May 11, 2012**. A one-week extension may be given at the discretion of the Director of FWT. The seven-week summer makeup period is **June 18 to August 3, 2012**. At the completion of the FWT summer makeup period, students should submit reflective essays directly on WorkLink. The evaluations and students' reflective essays are due **August 10, 2012**, even if the student will continue working at the site for the remainder of the summer.

Eligible students required to complete a summer FWT may opt to complete an Independent Study. Students interested in this option should meet with the Director or Assistant Director well in advance of the April 27 registration deadline.

Elective Summer Field Experience

Students who wish to complete a job or internship and to have this included as part of their academic records beyond the

required FWT (such as during summer) must apply for an Elective Summer Field Experience (ESFE). Permission to complete an ESFE is granted by the Director of FWT. To be considered for an ESFE, students are required to submit a registration on WorkLink which must be approved by their advisor. *All deadlines and requirements are the responsibility of the student.* If necessary information is missing for an ESFE, the FWT and Career Development office will not send reminders or follow up. An ESFE, which becomes part of a student's academic record and official transcript, *cannot be used to replace future FWT requirements.* The student is required to submit the employer's evaluation and essay for an ESFE. If the requirements are not met, the grade of "Marginal Pass" or "Fail" will be included on the student's transcript. This option is offered as a courtesy to students who either wish to have a particular experience included in their transcripts or who are required by an employer to receive college credit in order to be hired. Since ESFEs do not count toward regular FWT requirements, it is not recommended that students register an ESFE unless they need it on their transcripts or are required by the site to receive credit.

Summer Deferral Option

In order to provide greater flexibility to students, we now offer the option to defer FWT to the summer. Sophomores or juniors who have already completed at least one FWT may apply. Applicants must demonstrate that they have an FWT opportunity which can only be realized in the summer. Applications are due by October 28, 2011, and for the pilot are available in the Document Library of WorkLink.

REGISTERING FOR FWT

How to Register for FWT On-line

All FWT jobs must be registered by **November 18, 2011**. Registration will occur on-line through the WorkLink system. Students can access WorkLink by going to the Bennington website, selecting "Students", and "WorkLink" which will take you to this site: <https://bennington-csm.symplicity.com/students/>. The username is students' Bennington College email address. If a student has not already set up a password, select "Forgot my password" and WorkLink will send a new password to that email, which can then be changed.

Once in, follow the shortcut to "Field Work Term." Select the "Add New" and complete the on-line form. Students must complete a new form for each job they are registering. Detailed directions are available in the Document Library of WorkLink. There will also be a number of workshops held throughout the year explaining how to register on-line, or students can stop by the office for help.

Information Needed to Register

For every FWT job registration you must provide two things:

- **Site and position information:** Organization name and address, supervisor's name, job title, telephone number, email address, job description, and your title. You will need to provide this for every job you have during FWT.
- **Fit with your education at Bennington:** Explain your learning objectives, what you will be doing, and how this fits into your educational goals at Bennington and how you will assess your personal success. You must speak with your advisor regarding your plans before registering. He/she will need to approve your plans on-line no later than December 2. FWT registration forms must be filled out completely in order for you to be considered properly registered. You are unable to register an FWT job by November 18, please contact the FWT and Career Development Office as soon as possible. A late registration fee of \$50 is charged to your account if you have not registered an FWT job by the November 19th deadline. Extensions may be granted in situations where you are unable to register for circumstances beyond your control. (See **Extensions**) We do not need your housing information as part of your registration.

Once we receive your registration, we will contact your academic advisor and your registered supervisor. Your advisor will need to approve your registration by **December 2**. This can be done on-line through WorkLink. Your supervisor will need to review the position information you provided, confirm that this is correct, that he/she will be working with you and that he/she agrees to the requirements for supervision. **You will not be fully registered without advisor approval and supervisor confirmation**, so it is important that you speak with both ahead of time regarding the process and your plans.

All positions will be reviewed and must be approved by the Director of FWT. You will receive an email at your Bennington address within two to three weeks following registration to notify you that your FWT position has been approved. If additional information or corrections are needed, you will be emailed. You will have 1 week to correct the problem before being marked as late. Positions must meet criteria listed on page 9.

Registering a Job Which is Considered a Special Circumstance

If a student is considering a position that falls under any of the following circumstances or varies from the specifications of FWT as stated, a special proposal is required. This is to ensure that all parties involved fully understand the criteria for evaluation and that the experience will fit into the mission of FWT.

- If you are working for a family member, partner, or friend (strongly discouraged);
- If the only job you register is unrelated to your education at Bennington;
- If you are working at the same position for two or more consecutive years;
- If your supervisor is a recent college graduate (within five years);
- If the position you registered is a professional training course (see page 13);

FWT EVALUATIONS

Evaluation Criteria and Grading

Adherence to FWT Due Dates

FWT is an opportunity for students to experience the world of work and to be evaluated on their performance based on how the professional world operates. For this reason, FWT due dates for registration forms, reflective essays, evaluations, and time sheets are firm, and a student will be held accountable to meet these dates. If due dates are missed, a student's final FWT rating will be adversely affected. Remember, meeting deadlines ensures that everyone involved has enough time to complete everything necessary so that things are set for your FWT. A missed due date impacts everyone's workflow and may delay the processing of your registration.

- If your supervisor is not at the same site where you will be working.

Registration Extension Policy

You are expected to start your job search no later than September and to have your job secured by the November 19 registration deadline. If you know you will be unable to secure your job situation for reasons beyond your control by this time, you must submit an Extension Request Form by **November 11**. You will be notified within the week via your Bennington email as to whether your extension has been granted, denied, or if more information is required. *Extensions are not guaranteed and are considered on a case-by-case basis.* Even after you have applied for an extension, you should continue to search for a position. If an extension is granted, you will be given until December 4 to solidify your job plans without incurring a \$50 fine or academic penalty. If you are not approved for an extension, you are expected to submit all necessary registration information by **November 19**. If, due to an emergency, you need to request an extension after November 13, you must make an appointment to meet with the Director of FWT.

FWT Registration Updates

If you need to change, update, or add to your FWT information, **you must inform the FWT and Career Development Office immediately**. Failure to do so will adversely affect your FWT final rating. *Credit for FWT 2012 is not given to FWT jobs registered after January 22, 2012.* Please remember that any employer you register will be contacted and sent an evaluation form that must be completed, even if you do not finish your FWT there. If you feel you need to change employers, you must contact the Director of FWT and Career Development first, then resign in a professional manner. All evaluations will be reviewed when determining your FWT rating. (See page 8 for tips on changing jobs.)

Student Performance Evaluations

Students will receive a link to important information about FWT in their Bennington email before the end of term. This includes a time sheet for the students and supervisors to complete together weekly, a copy of the essay requirements and an information packet with important information. It is the student's responsibility to review **all** the information in this email and maintain the time sheet. Supervisors will be sent a separate email with their login and password to access WorkLink, as well as information about FWT by the end of December. Students must check with their supervisors to ensure the information was received and contact the FWT and Career Development Office if it needs to be resent. Supervisors must have confirmed your position with the office in order to receive a login and password.

- **Student Performance Evaluations:** Written evaluations of student performance are required from all FWT supervisors for primary jobs. These are completed by supervisors online through WorkLink. Once submitted, the forms are received by the FWT and Career Development Office. Student performance evaluations rate the students on a five-point scale on the following criteria: attendance, acceptance of responsibility, working relationships, and skill development and project completion. Supervisors are also asked to indicate the student's strengths and areas for improvement, and to provide additional comments. These evaluations become part of a student's permanent academic record and are considered in a student's final FWT evaluation. Supervisors are asked to document a student's total number of hours worked. Students should remind employers at least a week before they leave the site that they need to submit the evaluation form. If an employer did not receive a WorkLink login, please contact the FWT and Career Development office immediately. Late or poor evaluations may adversely affect a student's FWT rating.

- **Time sheet:** Each student should download the FWT time sheet from the Document Library of WorkLink fill out her/his time sheet with a supervisor's signature on a weekly basis. This will help both the student and supervisor keep track of the hours worked toward the requirement. If the student misses any work time due to illness, or other excused absence (such as a school snow day, observed holiday, bereavement, etc.), this should be noted on the time sheet and signed by the supervisor. At the end of FWT the student should keep a copy of the time sheet for her/his records and give a copy to the supervisor. Students are encouraged to submit the time sheet to the FWT and Career Development Office when they return. This is used to validate the hours worked as indicated on the employer's student evaluation. If we do not have a signed time sheet, the hours reported by the supervisor on the evaluation are used.

Hours for supplementary positions and approved projects (up to 70 hours maximum) must also be documented. Students can use the provided time sheet, the site's time sheet, or pay stubs to document unrelated jobs. Approved projects will be documented in an activity log as discussed with the FWT Director upon approval.

- **Reflective Essay** All students completing FWT jobs are required to submit a reflective essay on **February 24, 2012**. Keeping a journal, notebook, or other record of FWT is optional, but recommended as a tool to facilitate writing the reflective essay. Students completing a full Independent Study (IS) do not need to submit written work to the FWT and Career Development Office beyond the initial Independent Study proposal. Essays are part of a student's final FWT rating. You cannot pass without submitting an adequate FWT reflective essay. Reflective essays are kept with each student's FWT record on WorkLink. Reflective essays submitted after February 24, without a prior extension approval (see below) may adversely affect a student's FWT rating.
- **Student Conduct:** Behavior in violation of the Policies for Student Conduct at Bennington as well as any violations in

conduct as outlined by the site will adversely effect your FWT rating, and may be subject to disciplinary action.

Activity Log and Pay Stubs

If a student will not be earning the full 210 hours at a registered FWT position connected to his/her goals, she may supplement up to 70 hours with a paying job, unrelated volunteer opportunity, participation in a Bennington College class or other approved activity. Students are not required to register these opportunities or receive an evaluation from the supervisor. However, we require documentation of these hours. For paying jobs, we will accept photocopies of pay stubs, which indicate hours worked. For other approved unpaid activities, students must provide a signed, completed activity log (available in the Document Library of WorkLink).

Final Evaluation & FWT Rating

A student's final FWT rating (pass, marginal pass, incomplete, fail) is based on her/his reflective essay, supervisor evaluation(s), meeting the required number of work hours and adherence to due dates. A student's final rating, FWT job title, and the name of the site will appear on her/his academic transcript. All supervisor evaluations will become part of the student's permanent academic file. Supervisor evaluations do not accompany a transcript unless specified when requesting a transcript from the Dean's Office. Student FWT ratings along with a copy of the supervisor evaluations will be available for students to view on-line through WorkLink in early to mid April.

FWT Fail

A FWT fail rating remains part of a student's academic file and official transcript. The Associate Dean of the College will determine the impact of a failed rating on a student's academic standing. Students who receive a fail rating will be required to successfully complete an additional FWT during the summer in order to meet their graduation requirements.

Incomplete

Students with medical, personal, or family-related issues may be granted an incomplete, which allows them to fulfill the FWT requirement over the summer without academic penalty. Students who complete at least half of their required hours may be eligible for a half incomplete. The Director of FWT and the Associate Dean of the College determine this rating on a case-by-case basis; *it is important that students who wish to be considered for an incomplete contact the Director of FWT as early as possible*. The following are examples of the conditions under which a student may be eligible for an incomplete:

- **Medical Emergency:** A doctor's note describing why you are unable to complete your FWT is required. As only urgent medical issues are considered, you should not schedule elective surgery during FWT. Students requesting a medical incomplete will be asked to submit paperwork for a medical withdrawal and may be asked to provide clearance information for spring reentry.
- **Personal/Family Issues:** Such issues might include a terminally ill family member or a recent death in the family.

- **Employer/Housing Issues:** Though it is extremely rare, students are occasionally granted an incomplete due to unforeseen employer/housing circumstances. In such cases, you must pursue an approved backup job search and remain in regular contact with the Director of FWT.

Writing and Submitting Your FWT Essay

All FWT essays must be submitted online. Log into the WorkLink system <https://bennington-csm.symplicity.com/students/> using your Bennington College email address as your username. If you do not remember your WorkLink password, use the “forgot password” option and WorkLink will send you a new one. Once logged in, click “Field Work Term”. Find your FWT registration and click “Edit” next to your current registration. At the top you will see a tab titled “Essay Submission”. Click this tab and follow the directions. When done, select save. In the right hand corner you will see a check list of things you need to complete. If your essay has uploaded, a green check mark will show next to essay submission. Please submit your essay as a “.doc”, “.rtf” or “.pdf” file. We cannot open documents written in “Pages” and other similar software.

Note that students are now given an opportunity to describe and rate the FWT job in a Site Evaluation, which other students may browse. As such, the essay no longer needs to be seen as a place to describe the experience to other students.

Writing and submitting your FWT essay

Reflect on your FWT experiences in the context of both your plan and overall personal development. As you are reflecting and preparing to write your essay, consider what value these experiences hold for you, your line of inquiry for this FWT, how you identified, analyzed and used resources, how you created and revised your work, opportunities you had to present

and explain your work and ways that this FWT fits into broader contexts such as your education, your role in the world, and your growth as a person.

A list of essay prompts can be found in the Document Library of WorkLink.

In a typed essay of 3-5 pages words (approximately 750–1,250), discuss one of the topics sent to you. Then go to WorkLink and upload your formatted essay into the space provided. Keep in mind that the point of the essay is not for you to describe your daily experience in detail but to reflect on your experience and boil it down to key things you learned.

The essay is to be written as a college level paper in essay format. Be sure to address the question fully, or you may be asked for a revision. Samples of good FWT essays are available in the Document Library of WorkLink. You are also encouraged to come to the FWT & Career Development Office to view other examples of essays.

A copy of your FWT essay will be available to your advisor and Plan Committee.

Reflective Essay Extension

Students who feel they cannot write an adequate reflective essay by the deadline may request a one-week extension.

*Extensions without academic penalty will be granted to students who request a reflective essay extension by **February 24, 2012.***

All students who received an extension must submit their reflective essays to the FWT and Career Development Office by **March 2, 2012.** Late papers may adversely affect a student’s rating. *Please note that extensions are for reflective essays only and employers’ student performance evaluations are still due by February 24, 2012.*

SERVICES OFFERED

Assistance Offered

The Field Work Term and Career Development Office is open Monday-Friday during regular business hours. There are 3 professional staff members and 4 trained student FWT Career Assistants available to assist with questions or challenges related to FWT, as well as future career planning. Services offered include:

- Daily appointment times and walk-in hours to meet with the Director and the Assistant Director to discuss anything from figuring out what you want to do to making sense of your experience after FWT – and everything in between.
- Trained student FWT Career Assistants available daily to help with resume/cover letter critiques, assistance with office resources and able to answer general FWT questions.
- Regular workshops run by the Director, the Assistant Director and the FWT Career Assistants on various topics related to FWT.
- On-line job search and job research tools to assist students in learning about career fields, specific organizations and available opportunities for FWT, summer and after graduation as well as campus jobs.
- Assistance with finding a campus job during term, as well as helping students with questions surrounding student employment.

- Books, periodicals and reference materials to research career fields and specific organizations.

Office Hours:

Monday–Friday, 9:00 am–5:00 pm
(Fall and Spring)

Monday–Friday, 8:30 am–4:00 pm
(FWT and Summer)

Field Work Term and Career Development Office Staff

Director: Tammy Fraser

Assistant Director: Janine Burt

Program Coordinator: Betsy Cottrell

FWT Career Assistants: Jessica Bouget, Elissa Daniels, Kian Ross, Gale Stafford

Phone: 802-440-4321

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