

BENNINGTON

FIELD WORK TERM HANDBOOK 2016–2017

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The FWT Handbook is currently in revision for the upcoming 2017-2018 year, and will be updated soon.

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FIELD WORK TERM HANDBOOK 2016–2017

FWT GRADUATION REQUIREMENTS

Students are required to successfully complete one Field Work Term (FWT) for every two terms of full-time, undergraduate study at Bennington. (Part-time undergraduate students are required to complete one FWT for every 32 credits earned.)

FWT REQUIREMENTS

Students complete a minimum of 210 hours of work for FWT. Hours are broken down into primary and supplemental. A primary site is considered one that is approved by the student's faculty advisor and the FWT Office, and is connected to advancing the learning goals of a student's Plan. A supplemental site does not need to be registered with the FWT Office, nor connected to a student's plan, nor approved by the College. It does require proof of hours. Students are required to work a minimum of 140 primary hours, and can do so at up to two primary site jobs. Many students complete all 210 required hours at primary sites. However, students can work up to 70 hours at one supplemental site if desired.

Students may submit up to 30 hours of excused time due to illness or inclement weather. These hours must be signed off by a site supervisor on a student's timesheet. Any excused hours beyond these must be approved by the FWT director and may require a doctor's note or additional documentation as requested by the FWT Office.

PRIMARY POSITIONS

Primary site positions are professional experiences connected to a student's educational/career inquiries. Primary sites require a student to be working or volunteering for an organization or for an individual. The position must have a supervisor who is experienced and knowledgeable in their field, who is available for regular on-site supervision throughout FWT, who verifies and signs weekly timesheets, and who can complete the online employer evaluation (in English) by the stated due date. A supervisor may not be an immediate family member. It would be a conflict of interest for an immediate family member to complete an employer evaluation as these evaluations help determine an FWT grade and become part of a student's permanent academic record. When working for an individual (e.g., a sole proprietorship)—such as an independent artist, performer, photographer, etc.—the position is required to help the supervisor with professional work as opposed to personal needs such as babysitting, housekeeping, etc. Primary positions may be paid or unpaid and/or offer other forms of remuneration, such as transportation or room/board. International students on F1 Visas are ineligible to work for any kind of compensation in the first nine months of study in the United States. See "International Students" for more information. Organizations may consider the student an employee, a volunteer, or an intern.

Primary Site Special Consideration

The circumstances below require special consideration by the FWT Director:

- Jobs with weak learning objectives or objectives unrelated to a student's educational or career interests.
- Working the same job as a previous year.
- Working for a supervisor with less than 5 years of experience in their field, including recent alumni.
- Jobs in which a supervisor is not working at the same location as the student

SUPPLEMENTAL POSITIONS

If the full number of FWT required hours will not be earned in primary positions, up to 70 hours may be earned in the following ways: in any job with a supervisor; through a course that has been pre-approved by the FWT director; or through an independent or collaborative work project that requires a finished product pre-approved by the FWT director. Students may complete only one supplemental position per FWT. Supplemental opportunities offer students the chance to: make money over FWT at a side job not connected to their Plans; take additional special coursework; put focused time toward a self-directed professional work-related project that may not have a supervisor. Supplemental jobs do not need to be registered, but students must submit proof of hours either by submitting a supervisor signed timesheet or copies of pay stubs. Noncredit coursework requires a course description and a signed timesheet or an instructor letter confirming time and attendance. Credit-bearing courses require a course description, proof of grade, and credit earned. Independent or collaborative professional work-related projects require proof of the agreed-to finished project and a work log documenting hours and activities. Work logs are available in the Document Library of WorkLink.

Supplemental hours may include:

- An unrelated job for pay.
- Non-credit-bearing classes or training programs related to a registered FWT job (i.e., CPR certification, computer skills training course, etc.)
- Credit-bearing courses.
- Participation in approved Bennington programs that require an early return to campus prior to spring term, such as House Chair training. (Number of hours awarded will depend on the date of expected arrival for the program.)

Note: Supplemental positions are not allowed for a half Independent Study/half Field Work Term option. In this case 105 hours must be completed at one Field Work Term primary site.

ADDITIONAL FWT OPTIONS

Bennington College Course Option

Occasionally, Bennington College faculty offer credit bearing courses over FWT. In order to allow students to participate in a course, the College will generally waive a portion of the required FWT hours, based on the length of the class. This waiver is only offered once and may not apply to students who transfer in, who study abroad/study away, or who qualify for a reduced FWT requirement in another way.

The hours waived will be subtracted first from supplemental hours, and then primary hours if applicable. Any required remaining primary or secondary hours are expected to be completed during the winter Field Work Term. If a waiver is not granted, students can apply to defer their full 210-hour FWT to the summer in order to take part in the desired course. Summer deferrals are not guaranteed. Students should meet with the FWT director prior to FWT registration to clarify their FWT requirement when completing a class.

Professional Training Option

FWT is intended to get students out of the classroom, exploring interests in a professional setting, and is not intended for additional course-based trainings. However, exceptions may be made for:

- Hands-on experiential training programs resulting in a certification required for a particular professional field (i.e., massage therapy certification, EMT training, yoga teacher training, etc.)
- Apprenticeship programs where a student is working directly with an artist or craftsperson to learn a particular technique, style, approach, etc.

Students wishing to complete a professional training toward primary FWT hours must apply via the FWT Registration Form in WorkLink. Students must provide documentation to the FWT Office that explains the nature of the program (i.e., course syllabus) and accreditation prior to registering the training.

Additionally, proof of successful completion (e.g. certifications or grade earned) will be required when handing in reflective work at the end of term. If approved, a student may only do a professional training program for one FWT.

The following experiences cannot count toward primary FWT hours:

- Credit and noncredit-bearing courses at other institutions.
- Preparatory courses for graduate and professional school programs.
- Being tutored in a particular subject (such as language, writing, or other independent instruction).
- Personal enrichment and self-help programs.
- Independent art, dance, acting, language, and music classes.

Entrepreneurship Option

Many students are interested in learning how to start and run their own business/nonprofit, or launching themselves as an

independent artist. FWT can be used to begin this venture. Students may elect to use one of their FWTs to take advantage of the Entrepreneurship Option, which qualifies for primary hours. Since this type of experience requires exceptional planning and commitment in order to be successful, the following criteria must be met:

- A student must have successfully completed at least one FWT job in a prior year. (Exceptions may be made for transfer students coming to Bennington in their junior year or for students who enrolled in a fall entrepreneurial course with a pre-approved FWT project.)
- A student must be in good academic standing.
- The student must submit an Entrepreneurial Application via the FWT Registration Form in WorkLink, that indicates specific goals, how these goals will be met, and resources to be used. The student must secure a business mentor to act as a supervisor and submit a résumé or LinkedIn profile of this mentor that demonstrates the mentor's knowledge and ability to guide and advise the student in the entrepreneurial endeavor.
- A mentor may not be a parent, other immediate family member, or a spouse/partner.
- Mentors should have experience running an independent business/organization, or possess a combination of business knowledge and knowledge of the field directly related to a student's 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/organization or launching oneself as a working artist in a professional and fiscally sustainable way.
- A student who has completed an entrepreneurial FWT in the past will need approval from the FWT Director to complete a second entrepreneurial option associated with a Bennington College course.

REGISTERING FOR FWT

FWT Proposals, Approvals, Registration and Due Dates

All students submit an FWT Proposal by Friday, September 30, 2016, via an online form emailed to all students. Students wishing to complete an Independent Study, Summer Deferral, Study Abroad, or Leave of Absence during the 2016-2017 academic year are still required to fill out the FWT Proposal form. Specific instructions are outlined on the form.

All students must meet with their faculty advisors by the Wednesday, October 12, 2016 to review their proposal, dialog about academic connections, brainstorm additional ideas/contacts, and clarify next steps. Faculty do not have to approve FWT proposals in the 2016-2017 academic year, but they will record the date of their FWT Proposal review meeting and share this with the FWT Office. Ongoing fall advising sessions scheduled at student/faculty discretion may offer additional opportunities to check in about FWT planning before the FWT registration date.

This process ensures that all students have the opportunity to gain faculty insights and assistance early in the fall FWT planning timeline. Students then complete an online FWT registration form through the WorkLink system by Friday, November 11, 2016. Once a student registers, the FWT Office will:

- Review the student's FWT position information; discuss concerns with students as necessary; email advisors regarding any issues of concern.
- Contact the registered site supervisor to confirm the position.
- Secure faculty advisor approval and determine FWT Office approval.
- Email students before the end of term to notify them whether their FWT position has been fully approved. Note: Position confirmation may happen later for students who register late.

Note: Adherence to due dates is considered in determining a student's final FWT grade. A late registration fee of \$25 is charged if a student misses the registration deadline. Additionally, a student's FWT grade is adversely affected by each day an FWT Proposal and/or FWT registration is late.

A student's registration status is considered complete only after it receives advisor approval, supervisor confirmation, and FWT director approval. Students will receive an email at their Bennington address within two to three weeks following registration to notify them whether their FWT position has been fully approved. (If additional information or corrections are needed, students have one week to correct the problem before being marked late.)

Registration Extension Policy

Students unable to secure an FWT position for rare, urgent, or unforeseen reasons beyond their control by the registration deadline need to submit a Registration Extension Request Form by Friday, November 4, 2016, in order to avoid the penalties of a late registration. Students will be notified within a week via their Bennington email whether their extension has been granted. Extensions are not guaranteed and are considered on a case-by-case basis. Extensions are not granted for reasons related to workload, time management, or late planning. If an extension is granted, students will be given until Monday, November 21, 2016 to solidify job FWT plans without incurring the \$25 fine or academic penalty. If, due to a documented emergency, a student needs to request an extension after the due date, they must make an appointment with the FWT director.

The Registration Extension Form is available under the FWT pages of the Bennington website.

FWT Registration Updates

If students need to change, update, or add to their FWT registration, they must inform the Field Work Term Office immediately. Failure to do so will adversely affect their FWT

final grade. To be counted toward FWT 2017, primary site positions must be registered by the stated due date.

All registered sites will be sent an evaluation form that must be completed, even if a student does not finish an FWT experience there. All evaluations will be reviewed when determining a student's FWT grade, including evaluations from withdrawn sites.

Students who feel they need to change sites must contact the FWT director to discuss the situation before resigning.

Remaining In Communication Over FWT

Students are expected to stay available for phone and email communication from the College over FWT and are responsible for information sent to them. If access to one's Bennington email account over FWT will be limited or inhibited, alternate contact information needs to be supplied to the FWT Office before the conclusion of fall term. Students are also expected to be in prompt and ongoing communication about any problems with, or significant changes to, their FWT sites. Students who notify the FWT Office as soon as an unexpected issue arises that could impact their FWT grade, and who continue to work with FWT Office on resolving the issue, are likely to find a workable solution with the FWT Office. Problems that are brought to the attention of the FWT Office without sufficient time to problem-solve or after-the-fact, are far less likely to be granted leniency or offered approved alternative options

FWT GRADES

A student's final FWT grade is based on: adherence to due dates; supervisor evaluation(s); meeting the required number of work hours; and a quality reflective project. A student will receive a grade of "Pass," "Marginal Pass," "Fail," or "Incomplete" for FWT. An FWT final grade, FWT job title, and the name of the site will appear on a student's 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. If a student does not annually receive a "Pass" or "Marginal Pass" for FWT, they are required to make up the requirement, usually during the summer. FWT makeups must be successfully completed before approval for graduation can be given.

Pass – Denotes that a student has satisfactorily met all FWT grading criteria.

Marginal Pass – Acknowledges that a student has met the FWT requirements for the year, but has not satisfactorily met all FWT grading criteria.

Fail – Signifies that a student has unsatisfactorily met a critical portion of the grading criteria. FWT fail grade remains part of a student's academic file and official transcript. Failure to successfully complete an FWT can adversely influence a student's academic status. The associate dean of the College will determine the impact of a failed grade on a student's academic standing.

Incomplete – Students with medical, personal, or family-related issues may be granted an incomplete, allowing 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 FWT director determines this grade on a case-by-case basis. Students who wish to be considered for an incomplete or half incomplete should contact the FWT director as early as possible. A half incomplete refers to hours completed only. Students granted a half incomplete at the discretion of the FWT director are required to provide a reflective project and employer evaluation for hours completed in the winter and summer.

The following are examples of the conditions under which a student may be eligible for an incomplete if they remain in immediate, regular contact with the FWT Office:

- **Medical Emergency:** Students requesting a medical incomplete will be asked to submit paperwork—including a doctor's note of necessity—for a medical withdrawal and may be asked to provide clearance information for spring reentry. Only urgent medical issues are considered.
- **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, a student must pursue a backup job search approved by the FWT Office.
- **Workplace concern issues:** Such issues might include alleged harassment or discrimination, feeling of unsafety, or being unable to complete an FWT due to inappropriate or inadequate supervision.

FWT EVALUATION CRITERIA

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 proposals, faculty approvals, registration forms, reflective projects, evaluations, and timesheets are firm, and a student will be held accountable to meet these dates. If due dates are missed, a student's final FWT grade will be adversely affected.

Student Performance Evaluations – Written evaluations of student performance are required from all FWT supervisors for primary jobs. These evaluations become part of a student's permanent academic record and are considered in a student's final FWT evaluation. Late or poor evaluations may adversely affect a student's FWT grade.

Required Hours – Students are required to complete 210 hours of work. Students can work all of the 210 hours at up to two primary sites, or have the option to use 70 hours towards a supplemental position at a secondary site.

Reflective Project – All students completing FWT jobs are

required to submit a reflective project. A student cannot pass FWT without submitting adequate reflective work. Reflective project guidelines can be found on the FWT pages of the Bennington website. Reflective blogs require students to notify the FWT Office of their selection by Tuesday, January 3, 2017. One week extensions can be requested up to the day the reflective option is due. Reflective projects submitted after their requisite due date without extension approval may adversely affect a student's FWT grade.

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 affect a student's FWT grade, and may result in disciplinary action.

REFLECTIVE PROJECT EXTENSION

Students who feel they cannot complete an adequate reflective project by the deadline may request a one-week extension. Extensions without academic penalty will be granted to students who request an extension before the project's original due date. All students who receive an extension must submit their reflective work to the Field Work Term Office one week after the original due date. Late work may adversely affect a student's grade. Please note that extensions are for reflective projects only, and employers' student performance evaluations are still due by the stated due date.

Reflective Project Extension Requests are available under the FWT pages of the Bennington website.

INTERNATIONAL STUDENTS

First Year International Students

The Department of Homeland Security regulations affect FWT options for international students during their first year. International students on F1 visas who have been in the country for less than nine months are generally not eligible to work off-campus in the United States for any type of compensation—including pay, room and board, academic credit, etc. As such, FWT options for first-year international students include:

Working a paid position on campus – Jobs on campus over FWT are limited, and some may not qualify as an FWT site if they do not have a substantial connection to a student's educational or career inquiry. First-year international students who secure a paid on-campus job that doesn't meet FWT requirements can still work on campus over January and February, but must defer their official FWT to the summer.

Defer their first FWT to the summer – This option allows first-year international students to wait until they have been in the U.S. for nine months before doing their first FWT so that they are eligible to secure an internship in accordance with Curricular Practical Training criteria (see below). First-year international students are guaranteed the summer deferral option but still need to submit a completed summer deferral application form by the stated due date. Applications forms are available on the FWT pages of the Bennington website.

Apply for an FWT position in one's home country – Students who select this option should speak with Bennington's designated school official (DSO) in Academic Services during the fall term regarding any potential concerns related to reentry into the U.S. at the completion of FWT.

Arrange an FWT position abroad – Students should research a country's relevant visa requirements and remain in compliance with such requirements. Students selecting this option should also speak with Bennington's designated school official (DSO) in Academic Services during the fall term regarding any potential concerns related to reentry into the US at the completion of FWT.

Note: First-year international students who remain in F1 status and who leave the US to complete their first FWT abroad will still be eligible to work for compensation through Curricular Practical Training at the end of their first nine-month academic year.

Curricular Practical Training (CPT)

After nine months of full-time residency in the United States, international students can take FWT jobs in the U.S. (paid or unpaid) as part of their Curricular Practical Training (CPT). International students should speak with Bennington's designated school official (DSO) regarding timelines and forms related to securing CPT in time for the start of FWT. As described on the Department of Homeland Security Website, CPT requirements are stated as:

- CPT must relate to your major and the experience must be part of your program of study.
- Your DSO will provide you a new Form I-20, "Certificate of Eligibility for Nonimmigrant Student Status," that shows that the DSO has approved you for this employment.
- You can work on CPT either full time or part time.
- CPT requires a signed cooperative agreement or a letter from your employer.
- If you have 12 months or more of full-time CPT, you are ineligible for OPT (optional practical training), but part-time CPT is fine and will not stop you from doing OPT.

International students who secure work as an intern with a recognized international organization as described above can do so without it impacting one's CPT allotment. Go to the Department of Homeland Security's Employment Guidelines for additional details.

Summer Deferrals for International Students

International students who defer their FWT to the summer and who are planning to work in the U.S. must meet with the FWT director to discuss securing a summer FWT that is directly connected to their academic work in order for it to be in compliance with CPT requirements. Similarly, students need to meet with Bennington's designated school official (DSO) in Academic Services promptly as possible to secure necessary paperwork in time for the start of the FWT Summer Makeup period.

FWT INDEPENDENT STUDY REQUIREMENTS

This alternative to employment offers time to delve into a particular problem, research area, theme, or question, working in association with a sponsor. Independent Study (IS) is an option available to students who have completed at least 4 terms (juniors and seniors), are in good academic standing, and who are completing advanced work. Students are allowed to complete one Independent Study. This can be completed all during one FWT or can be broken down into a half IS in a junior year and a half IS in a senior year. Independent Studies may only be 105 or 210 hours. Supplemental hours cannot be used towards the completion of IS hours.

Sponsors

All Independent Studies require a Bennington faculty or staff sponsor who demonstrates expertise appropriate to the proposed work. Bennington faculty members are neither required nor expected to sponsor Independent Studies over FWT, rather they agree to do so based on their availability and interest. Arrangements for frequency and type of contact between sponsor and student during FWT are made individually, but must include check-ins every other week at a minimum, and need to be noted in the IS proposal. A sponsor is required to review and write an evaluation of a student's work at the end of FWT.

Independent Study Proposal

Students who are interested in pursuing an Independent Study must complete an online application available under the FWT resources section of the Bennington website. The application requires a detailed description of the goals and methodology of the work and the proposed final product. An Independent Study is at minimum, expected to be equivalent to the hours required for FWT. The student's sponsor, academic advisor, and the FWT director approve the Independent Study proposal. The Field Work Term Office must receive all Independent Study proposals by October 28th, 2016, two weeks prior to FWT registration. This gives students the opportunity to revise their proposal, or apply for an extension to find an FWT position, if the proposal is not approved.

Sponsor Evaluations

At the end of FWT, all students completing an Independent Study arrange to meet with their sponsors to review work completed. Sponsors then submit written evaluations and recommend a pass / marginal pass / fail grade, which is determined by the FWT director. Independent Study topics and sponsored evaluation grades become part of a student's academic record. All students should arrange to review their work with their sponsor before the stated due date. All Independent Study sponsor evaluations are due by Friday, March 3, 2017. Students completing a full Independent Study are not required to submit a reflective project to the FWT Office.

FWT APPROVED WAIVERS*

An FWT may be waived in a few specific situations, including:

- A transfer student starts at Bennington in the spring (excluding juniors).
- A first-term or third term student starts at Bennington in the spring.
- A student takes a leave of absence.
- A student participates in study abroad/study away.
- A student participates in an approved Bennington faculty member course over FWT and receives a partial waiver of required FWT hours.

*If more than one of the above conditions applies to a student, they will be required to make up an FWT. Additionally, transfer students who begin as 4th term sophomores in the fall or as juniors in the fall or spring, must complete a minimum of two FWTs to graduate, even if they take a leave of absence or study abroad/study away. A student whose situation includes one or more of the above scenarios should meet with the FWT director to ensure they have enough FWTs to graduate.

Special Student Circumstances

Part-time Students – Part-time students who work full time may have the FWT requirement modified and should speak with the FWT director about their situation.

Students Who Are Parents – Parents of young children, who notify the FWT director of their parental status by the registration deadline, are only required to fulfill the 140 hours of the primary job and will not be asked to provide supplemental hours.

FWT AND LEAVE OF ABSENCE

Students cannot request a leave for Field Work Term alone. If a student takes a leave for fall or spring term, but wishes to complete FWT, the effective start and return dates on the leave of absence application from the Dean's Office should be marked appropriately. Any student on leave who wishes to complete an FWT must register by the FWT registration deadline. Students taking a leave for spring term, who have chosen to complete FWT, should be aware that for federal reporting purposes, the last day of class will be listed as the last actual date of fall class attendance (mid-December), not the end of FWT (late February).

If a spring term leave is requested after the final date of FWT, the student must complete the FWT requirements and will be graded accordingly. 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 for the FWT and will not be receiving FWT credit for this experience.

Students who have been on leave of absence or medical withdrawal, but have received clearance to return to the College prior to the last date to register a late FWT position (Friday, January 13, 2017), may elect to complete an FWT. These students should contact the FWT director prior to registering. Registrations will not be approved prior to the Field Work

Term Office receiving notification from the associate dean of the College that the student has been cleared for re-entry. Students who do not receive clearance prior to the deadline will not be eligible to complete FWT.

FWT AND ACADEMIC WITHDRAWAL, DISMISSAL AND SUSPENSION

Students who withdraw from the College during the fall term are not required to complete 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 FWT credit for any work begun or completed during FWT for that academic year. All registered supervisors will be notified that the withdrawn/dismissed/suspended student will not be receiving FWT 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 must inform the FWT director if they plan to appeal their dismissal and intend to continue their FWT work in the event an appeal is granted. Students appealing their dismissal should continue working at the FWT site in order to ensure completion of hours and unaffected grading.

Students who withdraw, are dismissed, or are suspended after the last day of FWT will need to complete all FWT requirements including the Reflective Project according to stated due dates. Withdrawn, dismissed, and suspended students wishing to re-apply 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.

FWT and Study Abroad/Study Away

Students who are participating in an approved study abroad/study away 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/studying away in the fall and would like to complete FWT must contact the Field Work Term Office prior to the registration deadline to register. Students who are planning to study abroad/study away in the spring but wish to complete an FWT should register as usual. Students who are applying to study abroad/study away 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 their options.

COMPLETING FWT DURING THE SUMMER

Summer FWTs count toward the academic year that they follow and are required for students who:

- Received a Fail, half Incomplete, or full Incomplete grade for the winter FWT.
- Were granted a deferral for summer.
- Due to transfer/study abroad/study away/leave/etc. need the summer to complete FWTs to graduate on time.

In April, students required to complete an FWT Summer Makeup will receive a reminder from the FWT Office about site registration, due by Friday, May 5, 2017. A one-week extension, if requested on time, may be given at the discretion of the FWT director. The seven-week summer makeup period is Monday, June 12, 2017–Friday, July 28, 2017. At the completion of the FWT summer makeup period, students should submit a reflective project to the FWT Office. Employer evaluations and reflective projects are due by the stated due date, even if a student continues working at the site for the remainder of the summer. Students required to complete a summer FWT may opt to complete an Independent Study if they are eligible. Students interested in this option should meet with the FWT director and submit an Independent Study proposal by the stated due date.

Summer Deferral and Advisor Approval

Students who have already completed at least one FWT, and first-year international students ineligible to work for pay in the U.S., may apply in the fall to defer an FWT to the summer. Seniors who defer an FWT to the summer will impact their graduation date, and should speak with Academic Services for more information regarding “in absentia” status. Applicants must demonstrate they have FWT plans that either could not be realized during the winter term, or would be more beneficial to be completed in the summer. Applications are due by Friday, October 28, 2016 and are available on the FWT pages of the Bennington website.

Students applying to defer to a Summer FWT must still submit an FWT proposal form by the stated due date. Advisor-reviewed FWT proposals will be considered by the FWT Office when reviewing a summer deferral application. Final approval of a summer deferral is granted by the FWT director on a rolling basis. Students who have deferred their FWT and plan to register a summer site or experience outlined in their advisor-approved proposal do not need to secure an additional advisor approval in the spring. Any unexpected changes to an original proposal that may develop over the spring term, however, will require a student to gain advisor approval prior to the FWT Summer Makeup registration due date. Final approval is granted by the FWT director following review of a student’s registered site(s).

Advisor Approval for Students who Received a Fail or Incomplete or who Need to Complete an Additional FWT to Graduate On Time

Students who receive a Fail, half Incomplete, a full Incomplete in the winter, or who otherwise need to complete an additional FWT to graduate on time should discuss their FWT Summer Makeup plans with their faculty advisors well in advance of the FWT Summer Makeup registration due date.

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 can apply for an Elective Summer Field Experience (ESFE) by the Summer Makeup Registration due date. Permission to complete an ESFE is granted by the FWT director. To be considered for an ESFE, students are required to submit a registration on WorkLink. 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 meet all FWT Summer Makeup requirements for an ESFE, including required hours, a positive employer’s evaluation and a reflective project. Additionally, all related due dates are expected to be met. If the requirements are not adequately met, the grade of “Marginal Pass” or “Fail” will be included on the student’s transcript.

The ESFE option is offered as a courtesy to students who either wish to have a particularly compelling summer work experience included on their transcripts or who are required by an employer to receive college credit in order to be hired. In the case of the latter, please note that the FWT Office can only confirm that the experience will be graded and become part of a student’s official academic transcript; and that participating in ESFE will require the student to meet all related requirements of hours, employer evaluation, reflective work, etc. The FWT Office cannot confirm that ESFEs are an academic requirement for graduation as we can for FWT experiences.

International Students and ESFE

International students cannot use Curricular Practical Training (CPT) towards an ESFE completed in the U.S., as an ESFE is not required by the College. International students interested in pursuing an ESFE would likely need to use part of their Optional Practical Training allotment and should promptly speak to the DSO in Academic Services for guidance. Please keep in mind, that according to the Department of Homeland Security’s website, OPT requirements are described as follows:

- OPT must relate to your major or course of study.
- You can apply for 12 months of OPT at each education level, (i.e., you may have 12 months of OPT at the bachelor’s level and another 12 months of OPT at the master’s level).
- Your DSO will provide you with a new Form I-20 that shows the DSO recommendation for this employment.
- You must apply for work authorization by electronically filing a Form I-765, “Application for Employment Authorization,” with U.S. Citizenship and Immigration Services (USCIS) and paying a filing fee. USCIS will send you a Form I-766, “Employment Authorization Document,” (EAD) upon approving your Form I-765.
- Wait to start work until after you receive your EAD.
- While school is in session, you may only work 20 hours per week.

International students who secure a U.S.-based summer internship at a recognized international organization within the meaning of the 59 Stat. 669, International Organization Immunities Act can do so without it impacting one's CPT or OPT allotment, and such a site would be eligible for an ESFE. Again, see the Department of Homeland Security's Employment Guidelines for additional details, and keep in mind the 2–3 months needed to process the required application.

HANDLING WORKPLACE PROBLEMS

Your FWT will likely be a positive experience. If conflict should arise, however, remember that learning how to deal with work-related problems can be an important part of the FWT process. That said, you don't have to manage it on your own. The Field Work Term staff is available to help you think through ways to best address an issue, as well as to offer resources and provide support as you navigate the transition from student to professional. Workplace (and residential) issues should be handled promptly, as they tend to worsen if gone unaddressed. If you need help and/or if your situation is likely to impact any FWT grading criteria outlined on page 6, call and speak with an FWT staff member as soon as the issue arises. The Office will work with you on resolving the situation in a way that will least impact your grade. Issues that have not been promptly brought to the Office's attention are less likely to receive special consideration. A guide on addressing job problems is available here. Visit the website for an overview of professional expectations and etiquette that may help you proactively ensure workplace success.

DISCRIMINATION / SEXUAL HARASSMENT

Discrimination, including sexual harassment, subverts the educational mission of Bennington College and is unethical. Under certain state and federal employment laws, it may also

be illegal. If you experience discriminatory practices including sexual harassment in the workplace, please contact the FWT & Career Development Office immediately. After discussing the issue, next steps will be agreed upon between you and the FWT director or dean. These might include: helping you to address the issue directly with your supervisor to find an immediate resolution; having the FWT director or dean contact your supervisor to address the issue; changing your department or supervisor within the company; leaving an FWT site and getting support in finding an alternative employer; waiving the effect of an employer's evaluation on your final FWT grade; removing a site or supervisor from the FWT database; and providing you with additional support resources. The College has no legal jurisdiction over an FWT employer's treatment of staff. However, if after consulting with an employment attorney you determine that your work situation is deemed to be illegal under state or federal law, you may also choose to file a formal complaint with the company's affirmative action office and/or with the appropriate state or federal agency (i.e. the U.S. Equal Employment Opportunity Commission).