

BENNINGTON COLLEGE

Field Work Term: Just the Facts

What is Field Work Term?

Field Work Term (FWT) has been a central part of Bennington's educational requirements since the College was founded in 1932. During this seven-week period in January and February there are no academic classes on campus. Students work in a variety of fields and geographic locations all over the world, pursuing interests discovered or developed at Bennington. FWT is designed to allow students to forge professional connections, develop practical experience, and begin to discover both their role in and responsibilities to the world. For every two terms a student is enrolled, one FWT must be completed.

How do students find FWT jobs, and who helps?

Students find jobs by pursuing a combination of their own resources and the resources available through the FWT and Career Development Office, which lists job opportunities in a variety of fields and locations. FWT staff members are here to help students prepare a résumé, apply to advertised positions, or develop their own FWT opportunity with a site that has not worked with Bennington before. Even if a student does not have a lot of work experience, securing a good internship is possible with the proper preparation. Every year, more than 600 FWT positions at companies from across the country and around the world are listed on the College's online WorkLink system.

Is the FWT & Career Development Office open during FWT?

Yes. During January and February, the FWT Office is open Monday through Friday, 8:30AM–4:00PM EST. Staff are available to answer student and employer questions and to assist with any problems that may arise during FWT.

How much does FWT cost?

Tuition is not charged for FWT, but students are responsible to cover any costs associated with the term. Expenses to budget for include those required for travel, housing, meals, and local transportation.

Is financial aid available for FWT?

As tuition is not charged for this term, FWT is not covered by student financial aid packages. A limited number of need-based grants are awarded annually through the FWT and Career Development Office ranging from approximately \$500-\$1500. FWT grant applications are due by mid October and require potential FWT arrangements in order to estimate expenses. AmeriCorps members who have completed their service can apply to use their AmeriCorps Educational Service Award to cover FWT expenses.

What are the housing options during FWT?

Most students secure low-cost FWT housing through personal contacts, by subletting/renting as a group, or by returning home. Housing options include listings from Bennington alumni and parent hosts and listings from employers offering housing in exchange for a job. About half of first-year students will live at home during FWT, having secured positions nearby. For first-year international students with demonstrated financial need (and whose work options are limited due to visa regulations), low-cost on-campus accommodations are available during FWT.

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The Plan: Term-by-Term

At Bennington, students design their own courses of study and work, taking full advantage of the College's resources both inside and outside the classroom. They identify one or more areas of interest that spark their intellectual curiosity and provide a foundation for academic and field work, and pursue that work with ongoing guidance from their faculty. *This is the Plan.*

A successful Plan demonstrates that a student has developed, in increasingly sophisticated ways, several fundamental capacities: to construct a course of inquiry; to perform research; to make their own work; to engage with others; and to communicate their work to the world. Each of these capacities intertwines with, and builds on, the others.

First Year

The first year is one of grounding and exploration. Students take a variety of courses, explore new subjects, and begin to build an education around their interests.

First-year plan requirements:

- Advising: Ongoing advising sessions with faculty advisors.
- First-Year Reflection Essay: Students reflect on their transition to Bennington, their experiences to date, including their first Field Work Term, and how their Plan might unfold in the coming years.

Second and Third Years

The second and third years allow students to dive into a particular discipline, a cluster of disciplines, or a question, discovering the power and limitations of immersion.

Second-year plan requirements:

- Advising: Ongoing advising sessions with faculty advisors.
- Plan Proposal Essay: Students detail the questions and objectives that are central to their Plans.
- Plan Committee Meeting: Students discuss their Plan Proposals with their faculty Plan committee.

Third-year plan requirements:

- Advising: Ongoing advising sessions with faculty advisors.
- Plan Progress and Advanced Work Essay: Students evaluate their success and progress in implementing their Plan, and propose the curricular structure for their next year.
- Plan Committee Meeting: Students present their Plan progress to their Plan committees, who determine whether they have made satisfactory progress in their Plans and advise them as to how to move forward for the following year.

Fourth Year

The final year is an opening outward, when students explore how their own work relates to others' and how a deepened understanding of a subject or craft might matter to the rest of the world. Students may also choose to conclude their work at Bennington with a senior project or thesis paper.

Fourth-year plan requirements:

- Advising: Ongoing advising sessions with faculty advisors.
- Senior Reflection Essay: Students review their Bennington education and finalize their projects and work.