

The State of Student Employment

Arizona State University



Academic year 2024 – 2025

Table of contents

Executive summary	Page 1	Learning and key takeaways	Page 10
The ASU commitment	Page 3	Accomplishments	Page 13
History & why behind the work	Page 5	Thinking big: innovative initiatives	Page 16
ASU stakeholders in student employment	Page 6	Future work	Page 17

Executive summary

Arizona State University (ASU) is pioneering a transformative model of student employment that integrates work and learning to enhance student success, skill development, and career readiness.

Guided by the ASU Charter and championed by senior leadership—including Provost Nancy Gonzales—this commitment redefines student employment as a developmental, inclusive, and high-impact experience.

The Work+ initiative stands at the heart of this transformation **where student employees are recognized as working learners.**



Vision and framework: The ASU commitment

ASU's redesigned student employment model is rooted in the belief that campus jobs should be more than just a paycheck—they should serve as a platform for building career competencies, personal growth, and mentorship.

The institution-wide Work+ framework provides clarity on the outcomes student employees can expect, including increased career readiness, strong supervisor relationships, and confidence in articulating transferable skills. Central to this effort is the empowerment of supervisors as educators and the intentional integration of professional development into daily work.

Key goals and strategic pillars

The Work+ team has developed and is scaling a strategic framework focused on:

Scaling Work+ across ASU: Expanding the model to over 8,000 student employees.

Institutionalizing the framework: Embedding Work+ principles into policies and infrastructure.

Empowering supervisors: Offering robust training and tools so supervisors can effectively support working learners.

Enhancing career readiness: Helping students connect student employment experiences to long-term goals.

Strengthening mentorship: Encouraging supportive supervisor-student relationships.

Measuring impact: Using data to guide continuous improvement.

Progress and accomplishments (AY 2023 – 2024)

Over the past academic year, ASU has made significant strides:

Supervisor foundations training: Launched to standardize and strengthen supervisory training and practices.

Recognition programs: Introduced Student Employee and Supervisor of the Year awards.

Digital communities: Created Slack channels for student employees and supervisors to foster connection and peer support.

Expanded professional development: Offered more learning opportunities for both groups, resulting in increased engagement.

Feedback systems: Enhanced mechanisms for students and supervisors to give and receive feedback and align on development goals.

Student employment insights and impact

ASU administered its first institution-wide Student Employment Survey in February 2024. Key findings include:

High confidence among student employees: 93.1% felt confident in completing job duties.

Career competencies: ~80% reported improved understanding of the NACE career competencies.

Development gaps: While many supervisors offer regular feedback, only 64.9% actively monitor professional development.

Supervisor-student alignment: Discrepancies in perceptions around when and how professional development occurs indicate a need for clearer communication and streamlined resources.

Innovative pilots and national impact

ASU has also launched pioneering initiatives that continue to support the evolution of student employment:

SkillsFWD: Enables students to earn skills-based credentials linked to ASU's SmartResume and job marketplace.

ASU Student Employment Project Portal: Offers flexible, short-term project work across departments, expanding experiential learning.

Future work

To continue its momentum, ASU plans to:

- Launch a new centralized student employment web presence.
- Integrate Supervisor Foundations into Workday Learning for wider access.
- Introduce Work+ Certified, a verified digital badge, recognizing supervisors who deliver high-quality, development-focused student employment experiences.

ASU's reimagined approach to student employment, led by the Work+ team and supported by university-wide collaboration, is setting a new national standard for integrating career development into campus jobs. By scaling this model, enhancing supervisor capacity, and centering access to opportunities, ASU is ensuring that all working learners are better prepared to thrive during college and beyond.



The ASU commitment

Student employment at ASU is an integrated working and learning experience, driven by ASU's Charter and designed to impact student success.

Student employment will contribute to working learner's career growth through:

Student employment will contribute to working learner's career growth through:

- **Increased career readiness**
- **Enriched supervisor and working learner relationships**
- **Improved confidence of working learners in articulating transferable skills and connecting them to post-completion opportunities**

Arizona State University is committed to redesigning the student employment experience across the institution to create a dynamic environment where work and learning go hand in hand. By transforming campus jobs into meaningful opportunities for skill development and personal growth, ASU empowers students to gain hands-on experience that complements their academic pursuits.

This initiative aligns with the university's broader mission of fostering innovation, inclusivity, and lifelong learning. Through mentorship, professional development, and real-world practice, students can build valuable competencies, enhance their career readiness, and make meaningful contributions to the university community. ASU recognizes that student employment is not just a paycheck but a pathway to success, helping students thrive both during their time on campus and beyond graduation.

With these aspirations in mind, a cross-discipline leadership team from across the university set out to create an institution-wide commitment to student employment that would serve as the vision for these efforts. In addition to providing an overall mission for student employment and a breakdown of the key outcomes each student employment experience should meet, it also defines what a working learner should expect from their institution when it comes to their career development and readiness.

The Work+ team has centered their efforts around ensuring that supervisors have the resources and support they need to seamlessly integrate the practices that will achieve these institutional student employment outcomes.



In Spring 2024, Provost Nancy Gonzales, announced the official launch of Work+ as the new model for student employment at ASU. Her call to action inspired departments to engage and support the rapid scaling of Work+ across the institution, demonstrating the support for this work from the highest levels of leadership at ASU.

[**Hear from Provost Gonzales**](#) about ASU's commitment to enhancing the student employment experience.

The Work+ team, in partnership with university student employment leadership, have identified and continue to pursue key goals that will ensure the transformation of student employment.

Scale Work+ across ASU

Expand Work+ to reach all 8,000+ student employees, ensuring consistent, high-impact experiences across the university.

Institutionalize the Work+ framework

Embed the principles of Work+ — career readiness and replace intentional learning with skills development, student employment policies, practices, and infrastructure.

Empower supervisors as educators

Equip supervisors with training, tools, and resources to create meaningful, developmental experiences for working learners.

Ensure access and outcomes

Design student employment experiences that are inclusive and supportive of diverse learners.

Enhance career readiness and skill Development

Help all student employees articulate and apply transferable skills that align with their academic and professional goals.

Foster strong student-supervisor relationships

Promote mentoring and feedback practices that support student growth and engagement in the workplace.

Measure impact and drive continuous improvement

Collect and analyze data on student outcomes and workplace practices to refine and improve Work+ over time.

History & why behind the work

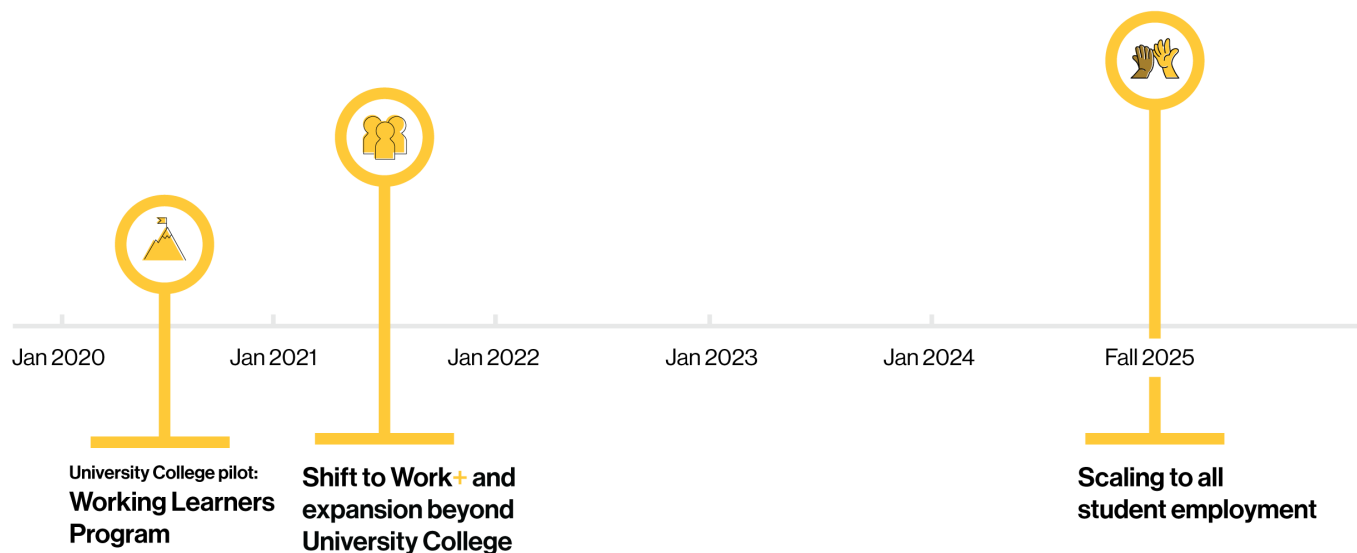
ASU began its efforts to more focus on the design of student employment in Spring 2020, expanding on a body of work that was attempting to address the need for a greater diversity of options in the space of experiential learning at ASU. At the time, approximately 8,000 students were working on campus and very little was done to directly support their career readiness through their student employment.

University leadership identified student employment as a way to scale the number of hands-on learning opportunities offered to students- and to think beyond the traditional confines of a formalized internship and provide greater access. The typical population of students working at ASU includes high numbers of first-generation students, students from underrepresented groups and those with high or very high financial need.

One of the most pivotal and comprehensive studies that has impacted the redesign work was published in 2019 by NASPA: Student Affairs Administrators in Higher Education.

This was the first time in which student employment was specifically examined as a high-impact student success strategy. Key findings from the report helped to inform continued iterations of Work+ and how it impacts the student employment experience at ASU.

It inspired the current model for Work+ where an increased focus was placed on the support for student employment supervisors. Understanding the supervisors had the opportunity to most directly impact the greatest number of working learners at the institution.



ASU stakeholders in student employment

Redesigning student employment to emphasize both working and learning requires strong internal support and collaboration across campus departments.

Engaging university leadership—including **Work+, Human Resources, Financial Aid, Career Services and the International Students and Scholars Center**—not only fosters alignment with institutional goals but also ensures that student employment is integrated into a broader framework of career readiness and experiential learning.

Internal supporters and partners bring diverse perspectives, resources, and expertise that are essential to ensure a collaborative and cohesive guidance for the redesign of student employment at ASU. Their involvement helps build a shared vision, sustain momentum, and navigate potential challenges, ultimately ensuring that student employment evolves into a purposeful, developmental experience that meets the ASU student employment commitment.

Leadership guiding this work includes:

Michael Latsko

Vice President and Chief Human Resources Officer

Melissa Pizzo

Associate Vice President - Academic Enterprise Enrollment, Financial Aid and Scholarship Services

Brandee Popaden-Smith

Sr. Director - University College

Sarah Lascuola

Director of Career Services

Holly Singh

Assistant Vice President - International Students and Scholars Center

Daniel Klug

Director - Talent Acquisition

Amanda Butkiewicz

Program Director - Work+

ASU student employment by the numbers

Student employment demographics

In Fall of 2024, the Work+ team launched the first ever comprehensive dashboard for student employment, ensuring access to comprehensive, point in time demographics were accessible to the institution. The following provides a snapshot of the demographics of both student employees and student employment supervisors at ASU during 2023-2024 academic year.

8,000 – 9,000 students

On average, **8,000-9,000 students** are actively engaged in student employment at the institution.

3,971 working learner seniors

The majority of working learners are Seniors (3,971) with them making up about half of the working learner population.

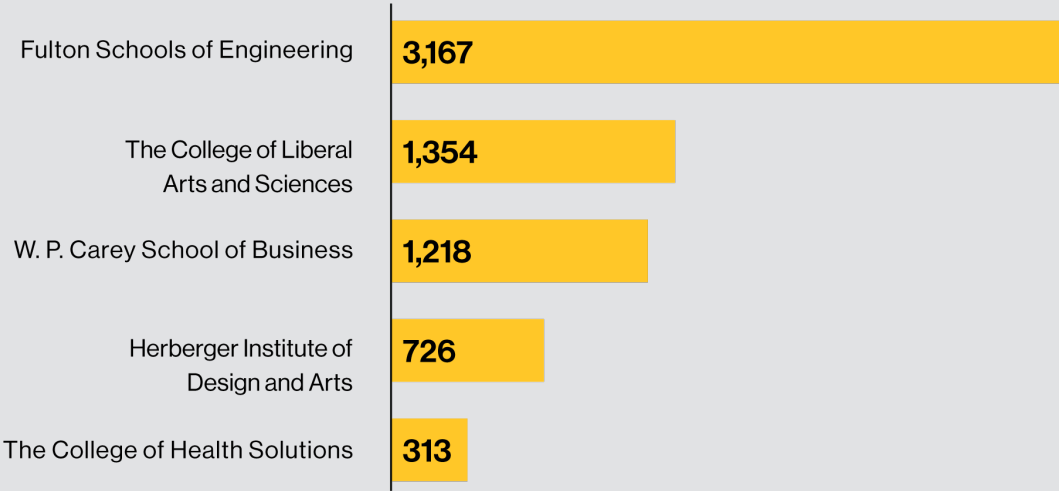
While students work across all campus locations, **the vast majority of students work on the metro Phoenix campuses** — Tempe campus (around 5,500), Downtown Phoenix (just over 1,000), Polytechnic (just over 800) and the West Valley Campus (around 450).

7,000 achieving 3.0 – 4.0 GPA

The vast majority of working learners maintain a high GPA with close to **7,000 achieving a GPA between 3.0 and 4.0.**

Of those working learners who completed a FAFSA, **the majority indicated they were very high (1,757) and high (516) financial need.**

ASU colleges and highest number of working learners



Student employment survey

The student employment survey is an annual institution-wide survey that is facilitated from the mid-February to mid-March. The survey is sent to all working learners and student employee supervisors and is intended to provide a voice to those directly engaging in student employment.

Survey results play a crucial role in shaping the design of institutional support, services, resources, and the overall student employment experience by providing direct insight into the needs, preferences, and challenges of both students and supervisors.

By analyzing feedback on areas such as skill development, job satisfaction, workplace support, and alignment with career goals, ASU can make informed decisions about how to enhance the effectiveness and relevance and impact of student employment. These insights help identify gaps in training, communication, and support systems, allowing for targeted improvements that make student employment experiences more engaging, educational, and career-focused.



During the 2023-2024 academic year the first annual student employment survey was administered. The survey was sent to 13,438 working learners and 2,245 supervisors and of those 3,708 working learners and 801 supervisors responded to the survey.

Working learners:

The sample reflects a diverse cross-section of ASU's student workforce:

More than half of working learners identify as female (53%), and 41% as Asian or Asian American, followed by 38% White and 16% Hispanic/Latino.

Nearly one-third (32%) are first-generation college students, and 18% identify as LGBTQIA2S+.

More than half of working learners (53%) indicated they were between the age of 18-25.

53% of respondents were undergraduate students and 47% of respondents were graduate students.



41% of working learners who responded are international students.

Survey results show that most student employees work 11–20 hours per week (58.5%), with 79% having prior job experience.

Additionally, a number of working learners (23%) have remained in their roles for multiple semesters, demonstrating stability and engagement in student employment.

When asked to select what job category best describes their current role, the top selected responses included research, classroom support, student coaching, tutoring or advising and front desk or administrative support.

Student employment supervisors:

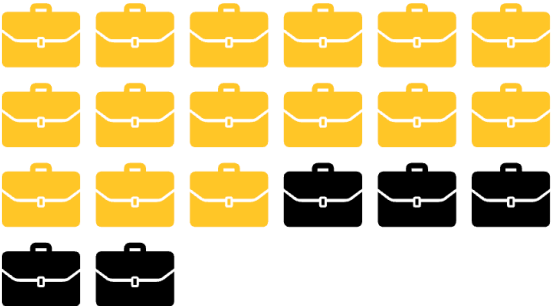
Supervisors are a majority-female (61.5%) and majority-White (65.7%), with modest but notable representation from other gender identities, races, and ethnicities.

About 1 in 10 supervisors identify as LGBTQIA2S+ or have a disability covered under the ADA, pointing to the importance of inclusive workplace policies.

A significant 41.9% were first-generation college students.

Most supervisors indicated they had 1-5 years of supervisory experience.

76% of supervisors were actively supervising 1-5 working learners.



Less than half of supervisors (46.5%) indicated that supervision of working learners was recognized in their formal job description.

“Everything I know about supporting student learners I found out by making mistakes or by speaking with other supervisors of student learners. I really tried to find resources with accurate information published to help me but didn’t find them. I really wish there was a centralized resource with more info about rules and regulations and policies for hiring / supporting student learners.”

— Participating Supervisor



Learning and key takeaways

Student employment at Arizona State University continues to play a significant role in preparing learners for success beyond college. Recent findings from working learners and their supervisors provide insight into the current state of student employment, highlighting areas of strength while also identifying opportunities for strategic improvement.

A central takeaway is that student employees overwhelmingly feel confident in their roles. **In fact, 93.1% of working learners reported confidence in their ability to complete the tasks required of them.** As one described:

“This has been my first job, which has been an incredibly important experience. I’ve learned what aspects of working I’m good at and which ones I need to improve on. It’s helped me a lot with my skills interacting with others, which is something I’ll need a lot of in my future career.”

— Participating Working Learner

This high level of self-assurance points to a generally effective foundation of support and training within campus employment. However, when examining the nature and extent of professional development, it becomes clear that the infrastructure for career growth could be strengthened further.

While many supervisors are actively engaged—between 70.2% and 87.5% reported giving regular feedback, encouragement, and time for growth—**only 64.9% said they monitor their students’ professional development.**

This suggests that while day-to-day guidance is common, long-term development planning may be inconsistently applied. Moreover, supervisors and students appear to differ in their understanding of when and how career development should occur.



About a third of working learners (32.8%) believe they are solely responsible for finding time to do professional development outside of their student employment role.

In contrast, **only 10.5% of supervisors reported placing that responsibility entirely on the student.** Most supervisors believe students engage in development during free time at work or through structured time, but the lack of alignment in perceptions points to an opportunity to clarify and formalize expectations.

“At the time that our team hired our student employee, I expressed that I was new to supervising learning workers but was not instructed of what resources were available or where I should look for training information to create an effective professional development plan.

I marked ‘Dissatisfied’ for this reason, but I would more likely select a neutral option if it were available. I do want to express that I understand there are resources out there; it is just that it was not readily apparent. I would appreciate some guidance to make sure that my student employee is gaining valuable experience and professional development while she is working with us.”

— Participating Supervisor

Knowledge of professional competencies is improving among students. **Approximately 80% of working learners agreed or strongly agreed that their understanding of career competencies—as defined by the National Association of Colleges and Employers (NACE)—increased through their student employment.**

However, students’ self-reported growth exceeds what supervisors report witnessing in the workplace, indicating a potential disconnect between students’ learning experiences and how those experiences are being observed or measured by supervisors.

Working learners identified several resources as particularly valuable to their development, with resume updating (81.8%), understanding job descriptions (75.7%), exploring future careers (73.8%), and informational interviews (73.0%) rated among the highest.

These findings emphasize the importance of career-related tools and learning experiences and suggest that the university can increase its impact by ensuring these resources are both accessible and integrated into work-based learning environments.

Supervisor relationships also emerged as a key factor in student development. **The vast majority of supervisors (89.5%) meet regularly with their student employees, and 83.0% discuss career goals with them.** Yet fewer than two-thirds (64.9%) are actively monitoring professional development progress. These interactions, while positive, could be further leveraged to support long-term student growth.

Notably, the diversity among supervisors adds an additional layer of potential. **Over 41% of supervisors were first-generation students themselves,** and a significant portion identify as members of underrepresented communities, including LGBTQIA2S+ (10.8%), individuals with conditions covered under the ADA (8.1%), and those from racially and ethnically diverse backgrounds (34.3%). This diversity can be a powerful resource in cultivating inclusive, empathetic mentorship models across student employment roles.



Qualitative feedback from students reinforces these quantitative insights. Responses showed that student employment supports the development of transferable skills, such as communication, networking, leadership, and decision-making. Many students also reported gaining clarity on their future careers.

“My student employee position at ASU has significantly contributed to my professional development by providing hands-on experience, enhancing soft skills, fostering networking opportunities, and improving time management abilities.”

— Participating Supervisor

“These experiences have uniquely prepared me for success beyond ASU by equipping me with practical skills, a strong professional network, and the ability to balance multiple responsibilities effectively, but i wish it would count as an internship.”

— Participating Working Learner

However, a small number indicated that their positions did not uniquely prepare them, illustrating the variability of experience across different roles and departments.

What has been accomplished

Work+ has strategically leveraged design thinking to implement innovative initiatives that enhance the student employment experience at ASU.

By centering empathy, ideation, and iterative problem-solving, the Work+ team actively engages with student employees, supervisors, and stakeholders to identify pain points and co-create solutions that align with learners' needs.

This human-centered approach has led to the development of structured on-the-job professional development opportunities, feedback loops between students and supervisors, and resources tailored to help working learners connect their employment experiences to long-term career goals.

Through prototyping and continuous feedback, Work+ ensures that its initiatives remain responsive, scalable, and impactful, ultimately transforming student employment into a more intentional and enriching aspect of the ASU experience.



“I am a Sun Devil through-through. I have a unique perspective because I was a student worker years ago when I was an undergraduate student. I worked on campus as a student worker V and I learned valuable information which turned into me wanting to work for the university.

I know ASU inside and out. I love ASU and feel that I would not have had a successful career in my professional life if I had not started as a student worker.”

— Participating Working Learner



Over the 2023-2024 academic year, **several new initiatives were launched** with a key focus on amplifying the contributions of working learners, growing and more deeply engaging with the student employment community at ASU and deepening the support for our most vital component for scaling, our amazing supervisors.

ASU awarded the first ever Student Employees and Supervisor of the Year

These awards provide meaningful opportunity to recognize excellence, foster a culture of appreciation, and highlight the critical role student employment plays in student success at ASU. The awards celebrate individuals who go above and beyond in their roles—students who demonstrate professionalism, leadership, and growth, and supervisors who actively support and mentor their student employees.

Recognition is awarded for students in the areas of innovation, community service and leadership, as well as, an overall undergraduate and graduate student of the year.

Additionally, an overall supervisor of the year is awarded through nominations that come directly from their working learners. By elevating these stories, the recognition inspires others, promotes best practices, and reinforces the value of student employment as a high-impact learning experience.

A new structure for supporting supervisors was launched

The Supervisor Foundations course was launched in 2023 to ensure consistent and tailored training and support for all student employee supervisors at the institution. This training, offered in both synchronous and asynchronous formats, provides supervisors access to the tools and resources necessary to design and facilitate a student employment experience that meets ASU's commitment.

These tools and resources are crucial for deepening learning, reinforcing core concepts, and supporting real-time problem-solving beyond the initial training session. These include 1:1 and group consultations, inventories that help evaluate their current student employment experience, and enhanced supervisor resources hubs. These tools promote consistency across departments and foster a culture of continuous development. Well-curated supplemental resources enhance the effectiveness of training by making it easy for supervisors to adopt student employment best practices.

Growing community and connection

Student employee and supervisor Slack communities were launched and have provided a dynamic space for connection, collaboration, and support across the university. These digital communities have fostered a sense of belonging by enabling real-time communication and relationship-building among peers who may work in different departments or locations.

Within these channels, members can share best practices, ask questions, celebrate achievements, and access timely resources that enhance their day-to-day experience. For supervisors, it offers a platform to exchange strategies and stay aligned with student development goals, while student employees benefit from peer support and professional growth tips.

Overall, these communities have helped to cultivate a culture of engagement, responsiveness, and shared learning that strengthens the student employment experience across the institution. To date, **723 supervisors** and **1,152 students** have joined these communities.

Enhanced resources and professional development

The Work+ team significantly expanded the number of professional development opportunities and resources for both supervisors and student employees this past academic year. This increase in opportunities was met with a significant increase in attendance and engagement with these events.

This was essential to cultivate more engagement and support for both working learners and their supervisors. For student employees, these opportunities help bridge the gap between academic learning and real-world skills, empowering them to better understand and articulate the value of their work experiences in future career settings.

For supervisors, ongoing development ensured they were equipped to successfully facilitate foundational Work+ practices such as mentor effectively, foster inclusive work environments, and align job responsibilities with career competencies.



Thinking big: innovative initiatives

Along with a continued focus on the scaling and embedding of Work+ as the foundation for student employment, the team has continued to conduct innovative pilots and initiatives aimed at enhancing access and opportunity in student employment at ASU.

These forward-thinking initiatives serve as vital opportunities that often build bridges between academic learning and real-world application, enhancing students' access to skill-building experiences.

SkillsFWD

The SkillsFWD project is a grant funded initiative in which Work+ partners with internal partners such as Enterprise Technology and external partners such as SmartResume. These efforts empower students engaged in work-integrated learning (WIL) experiences—such as student employment—to earn verified skills credentials. These credentials feed into a personalized SmartResume and grant students access to the Sun Devil Talent Marketplace, a platform connecting student talent with student employment job opportunities.

The project aims to recognize and validate students' on-the-job learning while fostering equitable access to student employment. By making skills more visible and portable, it enhances both career readiness and employability.



Student Employment Project Portal

The ASU Student Project Portal is a pilot initiative designed to connect ASU students with short-term, paid project opportunities across university departments. Using the Riipen platform, students apply for projects aligned with their skills and interests, gaining hands-on experience while contributing to real departmental needs. Project commitments range from 15 or 30 hours, with corresponding stipends of \$300 and \$600.

The goal of the ASU Student Project Portal is to provide meaningful, flexible work experience that complements students' academic and career development while also allowing departments to benefit from the diverse student talent that exists at ASU. This is the second semester of piloting, and we have had several returners (both students and departments)—additionally, successful onboarding of multiple departments (17 different departments, 23 projects) and increased student engagement with project-based learning. The Riipen platform has streamlined the matching and feedback process, further supporting a scalable model for expanding work-integrated learning across ASU.

Future work

Arizona State University will continue to focus on the scaling of the Work+ framework, to ensure the enhancement of the student employment experience for all working learners across its campuses.

The scaling strategy will continue to focus on comprehensive supervisor training, the development of digital resource hubs and direct support and engagement of the student employment community at ASU.



Future work includes:

Launch of a new student employment web presence

Consolidating all student employment resources into a centralized location streamlines access to essential tools, guidelines, and support, making it easier for both students and supervisors to navigate the employment process. This unified approach promotes consistency, reduces confusion, and ensures that everyone has the information needed to create and engage in a more effective, supportive, and development-focused student employment work experience.

Integration of Supervisor Foundations in Workday Learning

Key to the scaling of Work+ across the institution will be growing the ability for supervisors to access the Foundations training and its integrated assessment and planning tools. “The Work+ has worked in partnership with ASU Human Resources to incorporate this training into Workday and will continue to ensure all new and current student employment supervisors are made aware and have open access to this essential resource.”

Launch of Work+ Certified

The Work+ team is excited to launch the Work+ certification, which will formally recognize supervisors with a verified digital badge, who have made a commitment to their working learners and the experience they have while employed at ASU. To become Work+ certified, supervisors will commit to the completion of a baseline set of training and activities which are designed to uniquely prepare them in crafting a student employment experience which meets the ASU commitment.

