W-4 Guide

STUDENTS: Neither Student Employment or the Department are able to tell you how to complete this document. Please see advices from a parent/guardian or tax advisor. More information may be found at the IRS website.

You have two choices for your W-4.

1. You can choose to have taxes taken out. The amount of taxes taken out is decided by the total number of allowance you claim on line five.

   By placing a “0” on line 5, you are indicating that you want the most amount of tax taken out of your pay each pay period.

   If you wish to claim 1 for yourself instead, then less tax is taken out of your pay each pay period.

   The higher the number of allowance, the less tax taken out of your pay each pay period. (See Example 1, below)

2. You can choose to have no taxes taken out of your tax and claim Exemption (see Example 2).
   If you are a Federal Work Study student employee, please note this does not automatically make you exempt from taxes. The top of the W-4 does state:

   Note. If another person can claim you as a dependent on his or her tax return, you cannot claim exemption from withholding if your income exceeds $1,050 and includes more than $350 of unearned income (for example, interest and dividends).

   This includes all earnings combined for the tax year. If your income exceeds $1,050 you could end up paying taxes at the end of the tax year. Please contact a tax advisor for more information. If you choose exemption you will be asked to complete another W-4 at the end of the year because it expires (see below). You will be notified via email.

   Exemption from withholding. If you are exempt, complete only lines 1, 2, 3, 4, and 7 and sign the form to validate it. Your exemption for 2016 expires February 16, 2016. See Pub. 505, Tax Withholding and Estimated Tax.

The address you write on your W-4 is the address that will be entered into the Vanderbilt HR payroll system. This should be your permanent address. Please note that if you put your out-of-state home address other taxes may apply. You will be notified by Vanderbilt HR email, if applicable. Again, contact a parent/guardian or an accountant for further advisement regarding this issue.

You can change your W-4 at any time during the year. Download a new W-4 from the Student Employment website and submit to Student Employment for revisions.
Example 1

Line 5 indicates 1 allowance. This means a certain percent of tax will be taken out of each pay period. If you are not exempt, complete only lines 1, 2, 3, 4, and 5 and sign the form to validate it.

Example 2

Line seven indicates Exempt. This means no taxes will be taken out each pay period. If you are exempt, complete only lines 1, 2, 3, 4, and 7 and sign the form to validate it.
Student Employment reviews all W-4 Forms to ensure they are complete and valid as described by the IRS. Prior to sending to Student Employment please review your W-4 form for accuracy.

W-4 forms are determined invalid if it has been:

- Altered in any way
- Is incomplete
- Is completed incorrectly or
- If the employee indicates verbally, when submitting, that the form contains false information
- Completed in pencil

All invalid W-4 forms will be rejected and a new form required before any changes will be made to the employee’s record.

The below line items on W-4 forms are required fields:

1 – Employee’s name and address
2 – Social Security Number
3 – Marital Status (for withholding purposes)
5 – Total number of allowances (leave line 7 blank) OR
7 – “Exempt” (leave line 5 blank)

Employee’s signature and date are also required.

Employees claiming exempt on their W-4 will need to submit a new W-4 Form each year. If a new form is not received by this date specified at the top of the W-4 Form, Vanderbilt will process tax withholdings based on a prior W-4 submitted by the employee which did not claim “exemption”. If there is not a prior applicable W-4 the status will be revised to “single with zero withholding allowances.”

For more information regarding how much taxes will be withheld, please see the Employer’s Tax Guide on the IRS Website.