The George Mason University W-2 demystified.

Understanding what’s on the W-2 can be very confusing. Below is just a quick, line-by-line guide to help decipher it.

<table>
<thead>
<tr>
<th>Box</th>
<th>Description</th>
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<tbody>
<tr>
<td>1.</td>
<td><strong>Wages, tips and other compensation</strong>&lt;br&gt;This amount includes all federal taxable income for wages received during the calendar year such as total wages, bonuses, noncash payments (gift cards), taxable group-term life insurance in excess of $50,000, and non-qualified moving expenses. Pre-tax deductions, such as health insurance, VRS retirement contributions, parking deductions, flexible spending account deductions, and the administrative fee for the flexible spending account, reported in Box 10 and Box 14, have been deducted from your gross wages to determine your federal taxable wages. Tax shelter annuity contributions (Box 12E and 12G) have also been deducted from the gross wages. The amount reported in this box will differ from your gross wages because of these pre-tax deductions.</td>
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</table>
2. **Federal Income Tax Withheld**
   All federal income tax withheld during the calendar year. If you add up all the Federal Income Tax withheld for the calendar year from the deduction history on Employee Self Service, it will total the amount in this box.

3. **Social Security Wages**
   All Social Security (FICA–Social Security) taxable income for wages received during the calendar year. The maximum wages subject to social security tax in 2019 was $132,900. The maximum wages subject to social security tax for 2020 will be $137,700.

4. **Social Security Tax Withheld**
   All Social Security (FICA–Social Security) tax withheld during the calendar year. If you add up all the FICA–Social Security withheld for the calendar year from the deduction history on Employee Self Service, it will total the amount in this box. This amount is equal to 6.2% of the wages in Box 3. George Mason University has made contributions at a rate of 6.2% of the wages.

5. **Medicare Wages and Tips**
   All Medicare (FICA–Medicare) taxable income for wages received during the calendar year. There is no limit on wages for Medicare taxes. Unlike federal wages, certain employee deductions for retirement savings do not reduce Social Security wages. This means that the figure in box 5 may be larger than the amounts shown in box 1 or box 3. In fact, it’s likely the largest number on your W-2.

6. **Medicare Tax Withheld**
   All Medicare (FICA–Medicare) tax withheld during the calendar year. If you add up all the FICA–Medicare withheld for the calendar year from the deduction history on Employee Self Service, it will total the amount in this box. This amount is equal to 1.45% of the wages in Box 5. George Mason University has matched your tax contributions with an equal amount. Please note - Wages paid in excess of $200,000 in 2019 will be subject to an extra 0.9% Medicare tax that will only be withheld from employees’ wages. Employers will not pay the extra tax. The additional Medicare tax withheld is included in the total Medicare Tax Withheld that is reported in Box 6.

7. **Not applicable for George Mason University**

8. **Not applicable for George Mason University**

9. **Not applicable for George Mason University**

10. **Dependent Care Benefits**
    This box includes the Dependent Care Flexible Spending Account deductions. If you add up all the Dependent Care Flexible Spending Account withheld for the calendar year from the deduction history on Employee Self Service, it will total the amount in this box.

11. **Not applicable for George Mason University**

12. **Multiple items may appear in this box**
    They include the following:
    
    C. **Taxable Group Term Life** – for individuals with employer paid life insurance coverage amounts greater than $50,000. The taxable amount reported is added to box 1.
    
    E. **Voluntary Contributions to 403(b)** – includes all voluntary employee retirement contributions. VRS, Optional Retirement Plan, and Cash Match contributions made by the university on your behalf are NOT included in this amount.
    
    DD. **Value of Health Care** – provided for informational purposes as required by the Affordable Care Act.
13. **The following box(es) may be checked**
   Retirement Plan – this box will be checked if you are a member of the Virginia Retirement System (VRS) or the Faculty Optional Retirement Plan or have Cash Match contributions.

14. **Multiple items may appear in this box and are reported for informational purposes only.**
   The following items could appear:
   - Medical Insurance
   - Medical Flexible Spending Account Administrative Fee for Flexible Spending Account
   - Employee family-leave contributions for Massachusetts’ residents

15. **State and Employer’s State ID #**
   States in which state taxable wages are being reported and George Mason University’s state tax identification number.

16. **State Wages, tips, etc.**
   This amount includes all state taxable income for wages received during the calendar year. Pre-tax deductions, such as health insurance, parking deductions, flexible spending account deductions, and the administrative fee for the flexible spending account, reported in Box 10 and Box 14, have been deducted from your gross wages. Tax shelter annuity contributions (Box 12E) have also been deducted from the gross wages, unless you are in a state that does not recognize certain pre-tax deductions.

17. **State income tax withheld**
   All state income tax withheld during the calendar year. If you add up all the State Income Tax withheld for the calendar year from the deduction history on Employee Self Service, it will total the amount in this box.

18. **Local wages, tips etc.**
   This amount includes certain local income for wages received during the calendar year. Pre-tax deductions, such as health insurance, parking deductions, flexible spending account deductions, and the administrative fee for the flexible spending account, in Box 10 and Box 14, have been deducted from your gross wages. Tax shelter annuity contributions (Box 12E) have also been deducted from the gross wages, unless you are in a locality that does not recognize certain pre-tax deductions. For most employees, this box will be blank.

19. **Local income tax**
   Certain local income tax withheld during the calendar year. If you add up all the Local Income Tax withheld for the calendar year from the deduction history on Employee Self Service, it will total the amount in this box. For most employees, this box will be blank.

20. **Locality name**
   Name of locality for which local income taxes have been reported.

**Concerned your W-2 is incorrect?**
If you feel an error has been made in the reporting on your W-2 form, please contact the Human Resources and Payroll Office immediately. The W-2 hotline is 703-993-2311 or w2info@gmu.edu. A review of your records will be performed. If an error is discovered, a Form W2-C (Corrected Wage and Tax Statement) will be issued.