

Project SEARCH Frequently Asked Questions



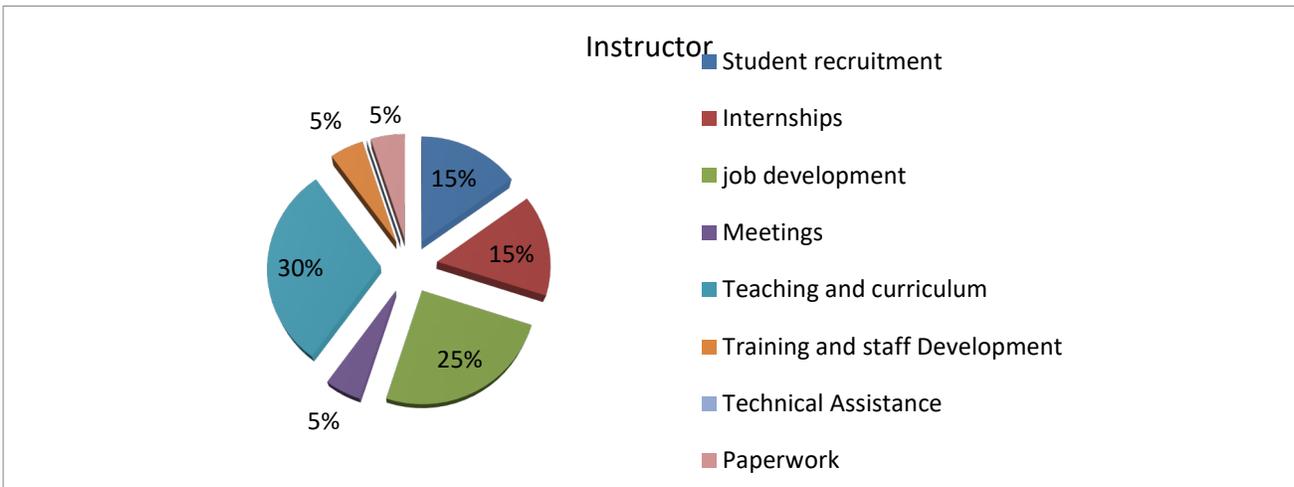
Project | SEARCH®

Is the teacher and/or paraprofessional from the school there all day?

Yes, the instructor needs to be on site at the host business all day. S/he is the on-site coordinator and an integral part of the team. In most Project SEARCH programs, the instructor's role is similar to a case manager or program coordinator for the student interns. The duties include:

- Planning and teaching the Project SEARCH Employability Skills curriculum
- Assisting the student interns with interviewing skills, resume and portfolio development
- Coordinating and implementing the Employment Planning meetings to be held at least twice during each internship
- Completes the Vocational Fit Assessment for the student interns and internships with the skills trainer(s), shares the information with the team and applies the results for meaningful internship selection and final job development
- Developing internship sites with the business liaison and skills trainer
- Ensuring that the student interns learn competitive, marketable, transferable skills and achieve maximum productivity and quality while on their internships
- Developing work accommodations and work aids with the skills trainer
- Evaluating each student intern's progress and filling out required documentation for partners, funders, and the Project SEARCH database
- Providing employer education about disability awareness and supervising people with disabilities
- Recruiting student interns for the next Project SEARCH class and creating a pipeline of potential candidates
- Ensuring that all student interns are eligible for VR, long-term support, SSI, and other appropriate community, state, and federal supports
- Advocating for and facilitating internal job development at the host business
- Developing relationships with potential community employers
- Marketing the program within the host business and to the wider community
- Coordinating the Family Involvement Program with the Family Liaison and other family members

Below is a graph that shows the approximate amount of time that the teacher will spend on the various Project SEARCH-related activities. The activities and time allotted will vary depending on the time of the year.



Who funds the Project SEARCH program or who pays for what?

Partner	Personnel and Supports	Source of Funding
Education	Instructor, curriculum, supplies (sometimes a Teacher’s Assistant or paraprofessional)	FTE for each student from state and local funding.
Vocational Rehabilitation	Sponsors student interns to support skills training and job development.	State/Federal funding – Student interns must be eligible for Vocational Rehabilitation.
Community Rehabilitation Partner	Provides skills training and job development	Vocational Rehabilitation, Medicaid, WIA, etc.
Developmental Disability Agency (Long-Term Service Provider)	Provides long-term employment support for retention and career advancement	Possible sources: Medicaid Waiver DD Support CMH Board Ticket-to-Work
Business	Business Liaison; onsite classroom/training room; internship sites; hosting of some marketing events, such as open houses and fairs. Typically, the Business Liaison is a manager of a large department or from Human Resources, Training and Development, etc.	In-Kind

Is the student on the job site all day?

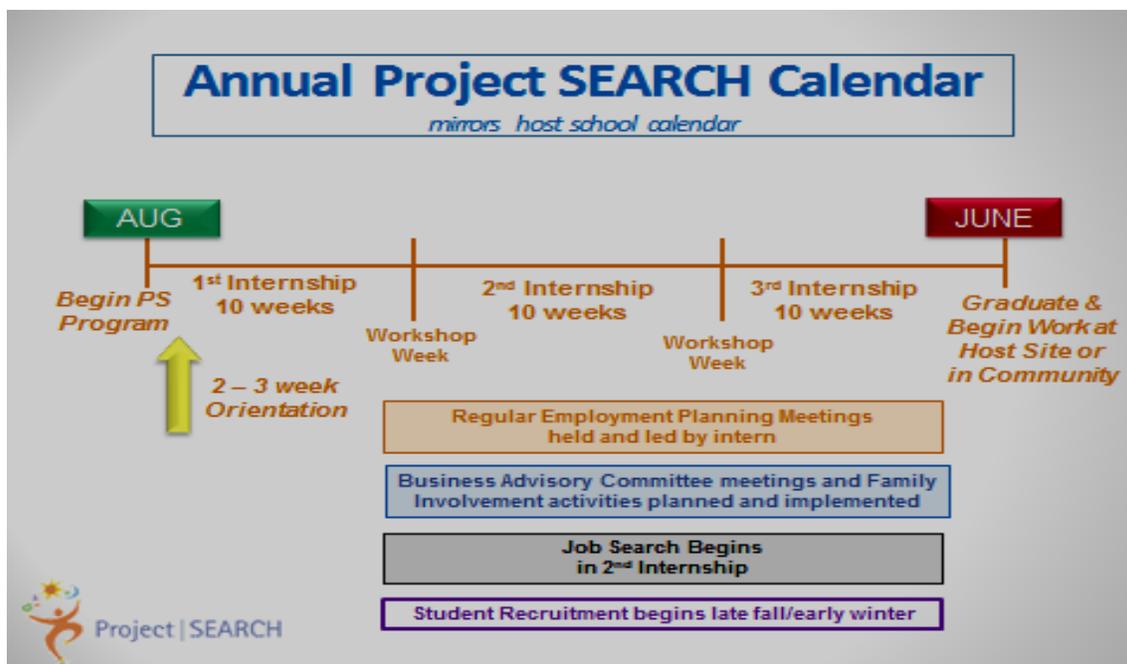
Yes, the student interns arrive directly to the host business via public transportation (if available in your community) or other independent means (i.e. not a school bus). They do not report to the local school at all. Their workday includes approximately 1.5 hours of the Project SEARCH Employability Skills curriculum and 5 hours at their internship (including lunch and travel time to the internship sites). To be eligible for Project SEARCH, the students should be finished with their high school credit requirements their diploma type so that they will be able to focus their entire day on gaining competitive and marketable work skills.

Typical Project SEARCH Daily Schedule (*This is an example and can be modified to fit site-specific needs*). The student interns should be on site at least 6.5 hours. Project SEARCH programs have a training room at the host business that serves as a base for the program and where the employability skills are taught.

- 7:50 am- Arrival at host business site
- 8:00 am- Project SEARCH Employability Skills Curriculum
- 9:00 Internships – learning competitive, marketable skills
- 11:30 am- Lunch
- 12:00 pm- Internships (continued)
- 2:00 pm- return to classroom, review of day, journaling,
- 2:30 pm- Adjournment for day

What is the schedule of major activities throughout the school year?

Below is an annual timeline that notes the major components of the program.



How old do students need to be to be considered for Project Search?

For the high school Project SEARCH program, the students need to be at least 18 years old to be considered. Most student interns are between the ages of 18 and 22.

Does the student need to complete their required courses at their home school?

Student interns should have their necessary classes and testing completed for the diploma option identified in the IEP.

Can the student interns be employed before the Project SEARCH program year is over?

The goal of the program for each student intern is competitive employment. A student intern can accept a job offer during the school year if a good job match is found (at the host site or elsewhere in the community) and the IEP team is in agreement. At this time, the student intern becomes an employee and assumes an employee's schedule. The intern will be withdrawn from the program at that time.

Do the student interns have to rotate to other internships if they like the first one?

Project SEARCH is designed to give student interns the opportunity to have a variety of work experiences, to explore different careers, and to learn competitive work skills in a wide range of settings. This process helps to refine each student intern's career goal and to prepare each student intern for employment. However, if a student intern can gain additional marketable skills *and* if there is a strong possibility of being offered a competitive job, it is often productive for that individual to do multiple rotations at a single internship site.

How do the student interns get to the program?

Students/interns are responsible for transportation to the Project SEARCH site. Wherever public transportation is available, participants should take advantage of this resource. Vocational Rehabilitation, the school district, community rehabilitation programs, and families can work together to provide travel training before the program begins. Project SEARCH strongly recommends that student interns use this transition year to learn to navigate transportation within the community independently.

How many student interns are employed at the host site and what happens to the ones who are not hired?

Our research has shown that about a third of the student interns may be hired at the host business. The other student interns typically find employment in the community using the skills they acquire through their internship experiences. The program partners—the school, Vocational Rehabilitation, families, and the Community Rehabilitation Partner (CRP)—collaborate during the planning process to design the job placement process. The Project SEARCH instructor and skills trainer typically will be able to assist student interns through the application process at the host business when there is an opening that is a good match with the intern's abilities. The CRP usually takes the lead in the employment process for the remaining Project SEARCH student interns.

What do the student interns wear during the Project SEARCH day?

Many programs select uniforms that reflect the host business environment and have the student interns wear a polo shirt with the Project SEARCH logo along with the host business logo. Other programs ask that the student interns wear business casual, scrubs, or other attire suitable to the host business environment. All Project SEARCH student interns are screened and badged by the host business and participate in similar onboarding and orientation procedures as typical employees. Interns will adhere to the attire requirements of the host business.