

# Project SEARCH

On-the-job training for young people with a disability to develop workplace skills

A guide for prospective students and families about opportunities available through Project SEARCH, hosted by UnitingCare in partnership with The Wesley Hospital.



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## Project SEARCH at a glance

UnitingCare is proud to be partnering with Project SEARCH to offer internships to young adults with developmental disabilities.

The nine-month program for people aged 17-23 aims to develop your workplace skills and to secure pathways into stable and rewarding employment.

As an intern, you will complete three 10-week rotations at The Wesley Hospital in Brisbane. Here, you will:

- Participate in a variety of roles within the hospital
- Build competitive, transferrable and marketable job skills
- Increase your independence, confidence and self-esteem
- Receive work-based coaching, instruction and feedback
- Develop links to disability employment services following the internship

## About Project SEARCH

### What is project SEARCH?

The Project SEARCH High School Transition Program is a unique, business led, one-year school-to-work program that takes place entirely at the workplace.

Total workplace immersion facilitates a seamless combination of classroom instruction, career exploration and hands-on training through worksite rotations. Project SEARCH is a non-paid Internship experience.

#### Where will it take place?

Internships are located at The Wesley Hospital in Brisbane, located in the suburb of Auchenflower.

#### Who is eligible to participate?

Students who are 17-23 years of age and desire to work can apply to participate in the program. Access to reliable transportation is essential to be successful in Project SEARCH, as is successful completion of year 12.

### What are the goals of Project SEARCH?

The goal for each student is competitive employment at the completion of their Internship.

The program provides real-life work experience combined with training in employability and independent living skills to help youths with significant disabilities make successful transitions from school to productive adult life.

The Project SEARCH model involves an extensive period of training and career exploration, innovative adaptations, long-term skills training and continuous feedback from teachers, skills trainers, job coaches and employers. As a result, at the completion of the training program, students with significant intellectual disabilities will be equipped for jobs in non-traditional, complex and rewarding fields of employment.



## Key information

### What is project SEARCH?

The goal of Project SEARCH is to help the student Interns gain competitive employment in an integrated setting. Employment in an integrated setting (that is, working alongside co-workers with and without disabilities) is:

- year-round work (not seasonal employment)
- 18 hours/weeks or more
- minimum wage or higher

Interns in Project SEARCH benefit from significant collaboration between the range of people and organisations involved in the program, leading to a seamless and highly collaborative approach to supporting Interns with their training. Interns and their families, UnitingCare, The Wesley Hospital, relevant schools or educational institutions and NDIS and other government agencies are all important partners in ensuring a successful experience for Interns.

The program focuses on serving young adults with a variety of developmental disabilities (acquired before age 23 such as intellectual disability, visual impairment, hearing impairment, orthopaedic impairment, autism, etc).

Interns experience total immersion in the workplace. Student Interns are on the site at the business each weekday for a minimum of six hours for an entire academic year.

There will be consistent on-site staff including a project instructor and job coaches, so Interns will know who they can turn to if they have questions.

Project SEARCH graduates benefit from being linked with other service providers that can assist them to retain employment at the completion of the program, such as Disability Employment Services providers.

Each Project SEARCH program site has a licensing agreement signed with Project SEARCH Cincinnati through Cincinnati Children's Hospital Medical Centre.

# FAQ's

## **What does it mean to be a Project SEARCH Intern?**

An Intern is a student who has been accepted into the Project SEARCH program, has a strong desire to work, has no behavioural/ attendance concerns and is eager to gain employment through a work experience. Students in the program will be referred to as Interns by sponsoring parties as well as co-worker's during the program. They will be expected to participate in The Wesley Hospitals work culture and do their best to uphold their vision and mission and adhere to all relevant policies and procedures.

## **If I'm interested in participating in Project SEARCH, what should I do?**

Get in contact with the Project SEARCH coordinator Michael Nnamdi at Michael.Nnamdi@uccommunity.org.au or on 0426 733 856

## **Why is the Internship considered to be a student's last year of school?**

The goal of Project SEARCH is to provide Interns with marketable and transferable skills that lead to employment. Interested students should anticipate earning employment opportunities once they have completed their Internship experience.

## **What schedule will student Interns follow with Project SEARCH?**

Interns participating in the program will follow the Australian school calendar year.

## **What are the daily hours for Interns of Project SEARCH?**

Interns are expected to work at their job placement site from 8:30 a.m. to 3 p.m. each work day. These times do not include transportation.

## **How do student Interns get to Project SEARCH each day?**

Interns are responsible for their own transportation either through personal or public transportation. Project SEARCH does not provide transportation.



# How to apply

## How do potential student Interns apply for Project SEARCH?

Contact the Project SEARCH Coordinator Michael Nnamdi to receive an application kit. Email Michael.Nnamdi@ucommunity.org.au

## How do I submit an application?

Applications must be submitted via email to Michael.Nnamdi@ucommunity.org.au

## What additional information and forms do students need to submit with their applications?

- Completed application packet
- Immunisation record
- Copy of current Individual Education Program (IEP) including transition goals
- Current Evaluation Team Report
- Include most recent mathematics and reading scores/grade levels
- High School transcript
- Transcript from any other formal training
- Attendance record
- Work-based learning
- Information about any other previous experience in a work environment, if applicable

# Interview and Skills Assessment

Once an application has been submitted, applicants will be notified by letter if they have been invited to the next step of the application process. The next step is a skills assessment evaluation as well as an interview. Based upon the student's performance during the skills assessment, the student will then learn if they have been accepted into the program.

## Where does the Skills Assessment Day take place?

The Skills Assessment evaluations take place at The Wesley Hospital. The specific room location will be provided in a letter that is mailed to the applicant.

## What happens during the Skills Assessment Day?

Applicants rotate through various department modules which may include:

- Replenishing stock
- Cleaning
- Nutritional services
- Preparing hospital rooms
- Identifying and sorting medical equipment/ tools

## There is no need to practice or prepare for this section of the assessment.

The goal for this portion of the Skills Assessment is to learn how applicants would react in certain situations, if they would feel comfortable asking for help and be able to identify who to ask for assistance.

Additionally, applicants will participate in an interview where they will be asked questions by Project SEARCH and The Wesley Hospital representatives.

## What should applicants plan/ prepare for with regards to the Skills Assessment day?

Applicants should treat this experience as they would a traditional job interview. They should wear business professional attire and come prepared to answer (and ask) questions. Portfolios are welcome.

## Are parents part of this day?

Parents are welcome to wait in the lobby area during the applicant's interview.

## How long does the day last?

Most assessments take two to three hours to complete. All applicants will have a scheduled appointment time.

## After the Skills Assessment Day, what happens next?

Based on the applicant's performance during both the Skills Assessment and the interview, applicants will be advised by letter if they have been accepted into the program.

# Getting started with Project SEARCH

## What happens once applicants are accepted into the program?

After receiving an acceptance letter, applicants will be invited to a New Intern Orientation meeting at The Wesley Hospital.

At this orientation all the requirements for getting started with Project SEARCH will be outlined (such as drug screening, tuberculosis testing, background check, etc.).

Prior to commencing students must also attend scheduled support meetings.

## Do Interns need to attend all the support meetings leading up to the first day as a Project SEARCH Intern?

Yes, it is a requirement to attend all support meetings prior to the start of Project SEARCH. It is also mandatory for student Interns to complete all the necessary requirements for new employees (such as drug screenings, background checks, etc) as determined by The Wesley Hospital.

## What happens at the New Intern Orientation meeting?

During this meeting Interns will be introduced to all the Project SEARCH partners and be given a tour of The Wesley Hospital.

## Why do student Interns need to have a flu shot, undertake a drug screening and pass a police check?

As a Project SEARCH Intern, you must adhere to The Wesley Hospitals policies and procedures for their employees. These checks are mandatory for team members at The Wesley Hospital.

## Why do student Interns need to have a new IEP meeting prior to starting Project SEARCH?

In order to be in compliance with Project SEARCH program guidelines, all student Interns must complete a new IEP prior to the start of their Internship experience.

## Why do student Interns need to attend The Wesley Hospital Orientation meeting and what will happen?

As a Project SEARCH participant, student Interns must follow The Wesley Hospitals rules and expectations for their employees. The Orientation meeting will outline these expectations and give Interns an opportunity to ask any questions about The Wesley Hospital that they have.




Once the Internship starts, students will receive a student handbook outlining these expectations.





## Contact information

If you would like more information about Project SEARCH, or have any questions, please reach out to Michael Nnamdi, the Project Search Coordinator.

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