



UPMC Jameson



# Project Search Program Overview

2018-2019  
Academic Year



*Understanding the Opportunities  
Available through Project SEARCH for  
Transition Age Students*

# Table of Contents

Understanding the Program	2
2018 Key Dates/Deadlines	4
Key Messages for Target Audiences	4
Frequently Asked Questions about the Program	6
Application/Interview Process	7
Skills Assessment Day	9
After Acceptance into the Program	10
Key Contacts for Assistance	11

## UNDERSTANDING THE PROGRAM



### What is Project SEARCH?

Project SEARCH 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 internship rotations. Project SEARCH is a non-paid internship experience.

### Where will the program take place?

The program offered in Lawrence County takes place at UPMC Jameson.

### Who is eligible to participate?

Student eligibility criteria for Project SEARCH is as follows:

- Desire and plan to work competitively in the community at the conclusion of the Project SEARCH program
- 18-21 years of age.

## Who is eligible to participate (Continued)?

- Completed high school credits necessary for graduation but has deferred receipt of diploma
- Agree that the Project SEARCH year will be the last year of student services, and will accept diploma at the end of the school year
- Meet eligibility requirements for Vocational Rehabilitation
- Have independent personal hygiene and grooming skills
- Have independent daily living skills
- Maintain appropriate behavior and social skills in the workplace
- Take direction from supervisors and modify performance
- Communicate effectively
- Be able to use public transportation when available
- Ability to pass screening requirements of UPMC Jameson

## What are the goals of the program?

The goal for each student participant is competitive employment. The program provides real-life work experience combined with training in employability and independent living skills to help young adults 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 and employers. As a result, at the completion of the training program, students with significant intellectual disabilities can be employed in nontraditional, complex and rewarding jobs.

"Project SEARCH is a real transition option for individuals moving forward from secondary education. It fosters productive work habits and necessary interpersonal skills for the workplace. Career and technical has joined with business, State, county and non-profit partners to provide exceptional work immersion experiences. This unique opportunity targets successful employment outcomes for our Project SEARCH participants. " **Anne**, Pupil Services Director

## 2018 KEY DATES/DEADLINES

January 24	Open House/Informational Session at UPMC Jameson
March 9	Applications Due
April 5	Skills Assessment/Interview Day
April 13	Letters of Acceptance sent to applicants
August 16	Intern/Parent Orientation
August 28	1 <sup>st</sup> Day of Program

## Key Messages for Target Audiences



The goal of Project SEARCH is to help the student intern gain competitive employment in an integrated setting. Other criteria for competitive employment, other than working in an integrated setting (that is, working alongside coworkers with and without disabilities) includes:

- Year-round work (not seasonal employment)
- 16 hours/week or more
- Minimum wage or higher

Project SEARCH is a business-led program. This means that students learn relevant, marketable skills while immersed in the business and those businesses are active partners.

True collaboration among partner agencies is essential. Collaboration requires a willingness among partner organizations to share resources and adapt policies and procedures to meet the needs of the program. The following are active partners in Project SEARCH UPMC Jameson:

- Office of Vocational Rehabilitation
- UPMC Jameson
- Cray Youth and Family Services
- Lawrence County Developmental Services
- Vocational & Psychological Services

The program focus is on serving young adults from 18-21 with a variety of disabilities including intellectual disabilities, developmental disabilities, autism, etc.

Program participants experience total immersion in the workplace. Student interns are on site at the business each school day for approximately seven hours for an entire academic year.

The partners provide consistent on-site staff including a special education teacher and one or more skills trainers.

Project SEARCH graduates who find employment receive follow-along services to retain employment, assuming availability of funding.

**Student Profile: Daniel**



When Daniel graduated from Project SEARCH in 2008, he was the first of his inaugural class to be offered employment at Seton Healthcare Family, the first employer in Texas to implement the Project SEARCH model. Having experienced success throughout his internship, he found the best match for his skills, abilities, and interests was with the Sterile Processing Department.

Three years later, Daniel has maintained his position as Sterile Processing Tech and is one of the department's only tenured associates. Responsible for assembling the various surgical sets used each day by surgeons and nurses, he prepares instruments for the hefty sterilization process, assembles peel packs, and transports supplies from the lab to surgical services.

"The interns learn jobs that can be accomplished through complex, systematic routines," said Jenny Hawkins, program coordinator for Project SEARCH at Seton Medical Center Austin. "They develop skills that make them attractive candidates for a variety of jobs both at Seton and elsewhere in the community."

## Frequently Asked Questions about the Program

### 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 significant behavioral/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 coworkers during the program. They will be expected to participate in the UPMC Jameson work culture and do their best to uphold UPMC Jameson's vision/mission and will abide by all policies/procedures.

### Why is this considered the 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 school calendar schedule will student interns follow with Project SEARCH?

Interns participating in the program will follow the school year calendar of our educational partner, Cray Youth and Family Services.

### What are the daily hours for Project SEARCH?

Interns are expected to work at their job placement site from approximately 8:00 a.m. to 3:00 p.m. each work day. This schedule is subject to modification prior to the beginning of the school year.

#### Student Profile: Raphael



Raphael was a member of the 2010-11 Project SEARCH class at Cincinnati Children's Hospital Medical Center. Raphael was a student intern in the Division of Developmental and Behavioral Pediatrics where he learned to clean and sterilize clinical and procedural rooms. He learned so fast and worked so efficiently that when a job opening came up in his department, Raphael was hired! He made a very smooth and successful transition from student intern to regular employee. He enjoys helping patients and their families find their way around the clinic, and he loves the daily interactions with his coworkers. When asked about Raphael's hiring, his supervisor says, "We are the lucky ones to have Raphael on our team!"

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

Interns are responsible for their own transportation either through personal or public transportation. The intern's local school district may also be able to assist with transportation. Project SEARCH does not provide transportation.

## **Will interns still be considered a student at their current school/district?**

The Project SEARCH program is a capstone experience for students. As such, each intern's home school/district is responsible for implementing the student's IEP as the operating district.

## **If I have more questions about Project SEARCH, who should I contact?**

Please see the Key Contacts for Assistance section of this document for contact information.

## **Application/Interview Process**

### **Where can potential student interns find an application?**

Applications can be found by visiting the Project SEARCH section of the Vocational & Psychological Services website at [www.vpsdocs.com](http://www.vpsdocs.com) or by contacting one of the points of contact in the Contacts section of this document

### **When do interested individuals submit applications?**

**Applications are due by March 9, 2018.**



Applications can be submitted to the student's special education director/transition coordinator or students may send applications directly to John Grimm at [projectsearch@vpsdocs.com](mailto:projectsearch@vpsdocs.com) or to:

***Vocational & Psychological Services  
115 E. North Street  
New Castle, PA 16105***

Students are highly encouraged to work with the appropriate person at his/her school to complete the application process.

**What information and forms do students need to submit for application to the program?**

- Completed Application
- Behavioral Plan (if applicable)
- Emergency and Safety Plan (if applicable)
- Guardianship Court Documents (if applicable)
- OVR Referral Form (if not currently registered with OVR)
- Current IEP (if not currently registered with OVR)
- High School Transcript (if not currently registered with OVR)

**Once the application has been submitted, what happens next?**

Applicants will be notified whether or not they have been invited to the next step of the application process. The next step is participation in a skills assessment and interview day. Based upon the student's performance during the skills assessment and interview, the student will then learn if he or she has been accepted into the program.

"Serving as the instructor these past 4 years has been the greatest experience of my career. I've loved every minute of Project SEARCH. I've seen the interns grow, learn, and take jobs. The excitement I've derived from seeing my kids get jobs and start their lives has been overwhelming! Never in my life did I expect to have 80% of my students find jobs; my goal for this class is 100%!! I've also been lucky in that my kids live and work around me, so I've been able to keep in touch with them. They will always be a part of my life. How lucky can a girl get?!" **Kay** - Project SEARCH Instructor, Henry Ford West Bloomfield Hospital, MI





## **SKILLS ASSESSMENT DAY**

### **Where does the skills assessment day take place?**

The skills assessment/interview day takes place at UPMC Jameson on April 5, 2018. Specifics will be provided in a letter that is mailed to the applicant closer to the date of the event.

### **What happens during the skills assessment day?**

Applicants rotate through various work stations which may include tasks related to stocking, cleaning, nutritional services, patient transport, identifying and sorting medical equipment/tools, etc. 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. There is no need to practice or prepare for this section of the assessment.

Additionally, applicants will participate in an interview where they will be asked questions by Project SEARCH representatives. Questions will relate to areas such as the applicant's work ethic, attendance, future goals, and their social skills.

### **Are parents' part of this day?**

Parents are welcome to wait in a designated waiting area during the applicant's interview. Parents will also be interviewed by a Project SEARCH representative.

### **How long does the day last?**

Most assessments take no longer than 1-2 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, a letter of acceptance or notification of denial will be issued by April 13, 2018.

## **After Acceptance into the Program**

### **What do applicants do once they are accepted into the program?**

After receiving an acceptance letter, interns and parents receive information that will outline all the requirements such as drug screening, tuberculosis testing, background checks, clearances, etc. and forms/releases that must be signed prior to the start of the program. There will also be an orientation scheduled for interns/parents on August 16<sup>th</sup> prior to the start of the program.

### **What happens at the new intern orientation meeting?**

During this meeting interns will be introduced to all the Project SEARCH partners, take a tour of UPMC Jameson and walk through the requirements leading up to the first day of the program at the hospital. At the orientation, students will receive a student handbook that will outline expectations and procedures relative to their conduct as a Project SEARCH participant. The handbook will discuss dress code, attendance expectations, program hours, etc.

### **Do students need an open case with the Office of Vocational Rehabilitation?**

Yes, a case will need to be open with the Office of Vocational Rehabilitation (OVR) prior to the skills assessment day. OVR will be proactively supporting the student interns throughout their entire Project SEARCH experience

**Do student interns need to take and pass a drug test and complete and pass a background check?**

Yes, it is required for student interns to complete all required “new employee” mandates (drug screenings, background checks, clearances, etc.) as determined necessary by UPMC Jameson. Details will be provided after acceptance into the program.

**Do student interns need to have a new IEP meeting prior to starting Project SEARCH?**

Yes, 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.

**KEY CONTACTS FOR ASSISTANCE**

Gail Steck, District Administrator  
Bureau of Vocational Rehabilitation Services  
724-656-3070  
[gsteck@pa.gov](mailto:gsteck@pa.gov)

Don Kemerer, Director of Educational Services  
Cray Youth and Family Services  
724-654-8422  
[drk1959@aol.com](mailto:drk1959@aol.com)

John Grimm, Program Manager  
Vocational & Psychological Services  
724-730-1422  
[johngrimmvps@gmail.com](mailto:johngrimmvps@gmail.com)

