

Project SEARCH

Bath and North East Somerset - updated January 2015



Internships for Students with Learning Difficulties and/or Disabilities

Information for Managers

People with learning difficulties are one of the most under-represented groups in the employment market, with less than 1.5% of those of working age in full time employment. In the public sector we have a poor track record in employing young people with learning difficulties and/or disabilities so it's time for us to change our expectations.

- Research shows that people with a learning disability want to work, contribute to society and have significantly higher attendance and retention rates than other employees when given a job.
- People with learning difficulties can be extremely efficient employees and are competent in a range of quite complex procedures. They often have a high attention to detail and are naturally meticulous.
- Project Search is challenging traditional perceptions about employing people with learning disabilities.



What is Project SEARCH?

Project SEARCH is a one year college transition program that provides training and education that may lead to employment for individuals with disabilities. Project SEARCH serves as an alternative for students in their last year of high school. It is a partnership which provides internship opportunities for students with developmental disabilities with the hope of them becoming more employable in order to get real paid jobs after completion of the programme. The partners have to be a large 'host' employer, an education provider and a supported employment provider. The

employer organisation who hosts the programme is the *lead* partner.

The programme represents a new approach to developing sustainable employment opportunities by working within a large corporate environment to deliver on site learning and support.

The project targets students whose main goal is employment, and who will benefit from career exploration in a large organisation. What is unusual and unique is that instead of work experience placements there are 3 Internship Rotations each lasting 10 weeks with intensive learning of skills facilitated by Job Coaches on the job and a teacher in the classroom.

The ultimate goal upon completion of the one year program is that the students gain employment (using the skills learned on their internships within the council's departments) with any employer.

Origin of Project SEARCH

Project SEARCH was first set up in a children's hospital in Cincinnati. The project proved that with good longer term instruction and tuition, people with learning difficulties and/or disabilities can perform jobs as well as any non-disabled people and in some cases *even better*. The model has been running successfully for 19 years, in over 300 sites in the states and has now moved into Europe and the UK.



The innovative business model streamlines the supply chain so that it delivers disabled candidates with employment potential to the employer which cuts recruitment costs and maximises benefits for the employer.

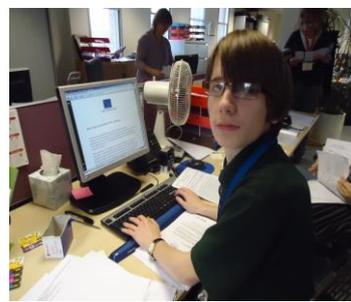
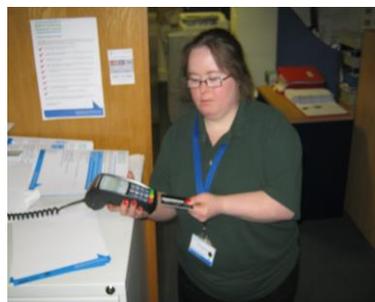
Project Search uses the Training in Systematic Instruction (TSI) method of Job Coaching to support the students in the workplace. The main principles of TSI are that learning for work is best done in a real work place, surrounded by other working people. When individuals are expected to succeed or behave in a certain way they often live up to that expectation.

Following the successful implementation of this model in 2008 by the Royal United Hospital, Fosse Way School and Remploy, the council when it started was committed to establishing internships jointly between the Council, Norton Radstock College and Sirona and the project ran with this partnership for 3 years with internships provided in the Keynsham locality up until the summer of 2013.

Project SEARCH for the academic year 2013/2014 saw the classroom base transfer to Bath and a new education provider join the partnership; City of Bath College. The classroom work supports work skills, employability skills, job applications and interview techniques etc.

Departments in and around the city centre offices including those outside of the city provide the internships for the Project SEARCH job training programme.

The cornerstone of Project SEARCH is total immersion in a large business. For five days a week, students report to the host business, learn employability skills in the classroom and job skills while participating in a variety of internships/experiences.





Day-to-Day (in brief)

Each day, the students report and register in class in the morning before going to the service area for work. They will learn employability skills in the classroom and job skills on site while participating in about 3 rotations during the year. The student's end their day by reflection back at the classroom; problem solving, planning, discussing their key learning's with the tutor and updating their daily learning journal.



Service Area (in brief)

Each day, the students report to the service area after registration and preparation in class. They will learn job skills within the service area. Students participate in regular progress meetings to define their career goal and plan necessary steps to achieve that goal. Service Managers will work a little with the teacher and job coach to support the students. Students will need feedback from the service manager and co-workers at times. They will work for you Mon - Fri 10.00/10.30 - 14.30/15.00 with a break for lunch.



Student Intern (in brief)

The students will be expected to follow rules and regulations at place of work including employee code of conduct. They will be responsible for dressing appropriately and wearing uniform if required. They will be required to attend job induction and training as necessary (but will also have received some induction training prior to starting in the workplace).



Education Provider & Job Coach (in brief)

To identify each students strengths and weaknesses, interests, and abilities related to skill acquisition, job development and placement. The teacher and job coach will be responsible for training students to get to and from their placement and home/classroom. The role of both is to assist the student in being successful in the work place with as much independence as possible. Perform specific job analysis, task analysis, and job matching activities. Develop work portfolios for each student to include credentialing of skills attained

This model has been hugely successful in developing employment opportunities for young people with learning disabilities which also meet the skills and organisational needs of employers. We need manager's participation in offering your service area as a job rotation. The programme promises you will be supported. Please identify areas where the students can learn competitive and complex skills, not just low level tasks. Possible rotations could include departments with a high volume of entry level work or high turnover areas or outsourced functions or departments that have highly trained staff completing routine job functions. We can help you carve up tasks to create a real job for the students for 4 hours a day.

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For further information on Project SEARCH:

www.officefordisability.gov.uk/working/project-search

www.cincinnatichildrens.org/svc/alpha/p/search

See more information on CIS (A-Z)

The Project SEARCH year starts every September.
First rotations start late September early October.

We continually need to find new internships for students so
please let us know if you think you have one to offer.

