

SDSU/Brookings Project SEARCH Intern Handbook 2024-2025

(Last Revision: 4/8/24)



SOUTH DAKOTA
STATE UNIVERSITY

Brookings

Project | SEARCH

South Dakota

Welcome

Welcome to the SDSU/Brookings Project SEARCH Program. The SDSU/Brookings Project SEARCH staff will work hard to ensure that this will be a successful year for everyone. We will demonstrate professional conduct, impartial direction, objective advice, and individualized recommendations designed to teach and establish vocational skills and standards throughout the program. These expectations will prepare interns for the competencies expected in competitive employment. Project SEARCH interns are expected to conduct themselves as an employee would. In addition, Project SEARCH is a Brookings School District program. Interns must adhere to the Brookings School District policies and procedures unless otherwise specified. The District policies and procedures can be found on the Brookings School District website: www.Brookings.k12.sd.us

This handbook serves as a guide and is subject to modifications as needed. Changes are contingent upon decisions made by the Project SEARCH Leadership Team, including but not limited to representatives from the Brookings School District, the Director of Special Services, the Board of Education, the Director of Career Advantage, the Department of Rehabilitation Services (DRS), the Project SEARCH Coordinator, and/or the Project SEARCH Skills Trainer. We are confident that with a clear understanding of our expectations and an enthusiastic and committed approach, you will have an exceptional year.

Contact Information

Parents and guardians should address any questions and concerns regarding an intern's work experience with Project SEARCH staff. Please do not contact job site supervisors directly.

JaColby Anderson (Coordinator)

(605) 688-4407 (Office), (605) 695-9052 (Cell)

Email: jacolby.anderson@k12.sd.us

Ann Pavek (Skills Trainer)

(605) 688-4407 (Office), (605) 695-7544 (Cell)

Email: ann.pavek@advancebkg.com

Internship Rotations

Throughout the year, interns will participate in three unpaid rotations, each lasting 10-12 weeks. The first rotation will be assigned by the program staff; however, interns will have the opportunity to express their preferences for the second and third rotations. While the staff will strive to honor these requests, they cannot be guaranteed. The third rotation may involve competitive employment, which aligns with Project SEARCH's goal of equipping interns with transferable job skills to secure competitive employment. To achieve this goal, interns may complete two similar rotations, but the third rotation must be distinctly different. Although the internships are unpaid, the Department of Rehabilitation Services may provide each intern with a monthly stipend.

Curriculum and Instructional Outcomes

SDSU/Brookings Project SEARCH follows the national Project SEARCH Curriculum. Interns will receive instruction on topics that may include but are not limited to: Team Building, Workplace Safety, Technology, Self-Advocacy, Maintaining Employment, Financial Literacy, Health and Wellness, Healthy Relationships, Social Skills, Interactions, and employment preparation.

Progress

Interns' performance will be evaluated based on attendance, class participation, attitude, work evaluations, and requirements outlined in their Individualized Education Program (IEP). Work evaluations will be conducted by the Skills Trainer, Coordinator, or Supervisor. We will make every effort to ensure that

interns' progress is communicated through newsletters, emails, phone calls, and progress meetings. This communication is designed to ensure that all parties involved support the intern's transition and job goals. Any communication or meetings will involve some or all of the following: Coordinator, Skills Trainer, intern, family members/guardians, Career Advantage staff, Director of Special Services, and representative(s) from the Department of Rehabilitation Services (DRS).

Skills Training

The Project SEARCH Coordinator and Skills Trainer(s) are here to provide indirect support as you complete your internship rotations. They will assist you in learning your tasks and understanding your expectations. However, it is your responsibility to ask for help when needed. Skills Trainers DO NOT work alongside interns throughout the entire day. The goal of Project SEARCH is to foster independence. You are expected to take directions from your work site supervisor and ask questions whenever you need assistance. This approach aligns with our business-led model.

Division of Rehabilitation Services

The Division of Rehabilitation Services meets with interns and creates an Individualized Plan of Employment (IPE). To receive those services, interns are expected to attend required regularly scheduled meetings with their VR counselor. Lack of participation could result in loss of services or a portion of the monthly stipend deducted.

Meals

Interns have several options for lunch. The Project SEARCH office and most rotation sites will have a refrigerator and microwave available. Interns can bring lunch from home or they can purchase lunch from various on-campus options. Lunch break(s) are generally 30 minutes in length; however, this may vary depending on rotation site policy and/or workload. Meal times will vary depending on how busy their job location is.

Interns will be issued an Identification card. If they are working with Sodexo, cards will be loaded with a \$45 credit every week. The credit does not carry over from week to week. They will learn budgeting skills through the Project SEARCH curriculum. The meal card may be used to buy lunch at various locations on campus that accept the employee meal card. Interns must follow Sodexo's employee meal card policy. Meal cards will be deactivated with Sodexo after the intern's rotation is complete; any lost cards will be replaced at the intern's expense.

Medication

Project SEARCH interns are expected to independently manage their medication needs during the workday. The Project SEARCH office will not store or handle any medications. If a special circumstance regarding medication arises, please promptly inform the Project SEARCH Coordinator or a Skills Trainer.

Transportation

Various transportation options are available in the Brookings area. Transportation may be provided by BATA, taxi, the home school district, intern/parent/guardian, and the Brookings School District.

Dress Code and Hygiene

Interns must follow the dress code required for the rotation they are participating in, i.e., black pants (not

black jeans), non-slip shoes, nametags, etc. Closed-toe shoes, clean uniforms, and good hygiene are required. Jeans, shorts, sweatpants, T-shirts, tank tops, camisoles, sandals, and sweatshirts are prohibited unless your direct supervisor has issued or approved the attire. Hair and facial hair must be clean, cut, groomed, and maintained. Antiperspirant **MUST** be used. Bathing and teeth brushing must occur daily. Dressing in layered clothing is recommended so interns are prepared for the various indoor and outdoor temperature changes throughout the day.

Tobacco and Alcohol Use

The Brookings School District and South Dakota State University maintain a tobacco-free policy. The use of tobacco products, alcohol, or controlled substances, is strictly prohibited during school-sponsored activities and programs, including Project SEARCH. This policy extends to all tobacco products. Violating this policy may result in dismissal from the Project SEARCH program.

Respectful Environment

Project SEARCH believes everyone has the right to work in a respectful environment, free of discrimination and harassment. Each intern and each employee has the right to be treated with respect and dignity. Any conduct, comment, or overt or subtle gesture likely to offend someone will be addressed swiftly and seriously. Interns will also be required to follow the specific harassment policies of the participating job site hosts. If an intern feels he/she is the victim of discrimination and/or harassment, complaints can be filed with the Project SEARCH staff. Complaints that are not resolved will be elevated to the appropriate representatives and the Project SEARCH Leadership team.

Attendance/ Unexcused Tardy Policy

Interns are required to call the Coordinator/Trainer to alert them of absences before the Project SEARCH day begins. All interns are allowed five (5) unexcused absences per semester. Unexcused absences of five (5) or more will require a meeting with the Project SEARCH Leadership Team to determine appropriate corrective action. Each excused absence will be evaluated on a case-by-case basis and may be substantiated if staff feel it violates the policy.

1st Unexcused tardy - a verbal warning will be documented

2nd Unexcused tardy - a documented meeting with the P. SEARCH staff and a verbal warning

3rd Unexcused tardy - written warning that is documented will be signed by the intern and staff

4th Unexcused tardy - written warning that is documented will be signed by the intern and staff

5th Unexcused tardy - warrants meeting with team and parents to decide further action and or consequence

Approximate Daily Schedule

1st Rotation	Tasks
7:30 a.m.	Arrive at SDSU
7:30-8:15 a.m.	Instruction
8:15 a.m.	Leave for the job site
2:00 p.m.	Return to the office for reflection
2:30 p.m.	Day Ends

Calendar and Early Dismissals

Project SEARCH follows the Brookings School District calendar; therefore, days off, early dismissals, snow days, etc. will all be under the district calendar. Interns should check local sources for weather-related announcements. Interns' contact information is included in the School Reach system.

Project SEARCH will start August 14 with the first week running 7:30-12:00. The last day will be May 2, 2025.

Calendar 2024-2025

1st Day of Project SEARCH-Monday, August 19th

JULY 2024						
S	M	T	W	T	F	S
	1	2	3	4	5	6
7	8	9	10	11	12	13
14	15	16	17	18	19	20
21	22	23	24	25	26	27
28	29	30	31			

AUGUST 2024						
S	M	T	W	T	F	S
				1	2	3
4	5	6	7	8	9	10
11	12	13	14	15	16	17
18	19	20	21	22	23	24
25	26	27	28	29	30	31

- Early Release days for School Improvement Planning (Early Release Every Wednesday)
- August 26 - New Teacher In-Service
- August 27 & 30 - Staff Development
- August 28 & 29 - Back-2-School Days by Appointment

SEPTEMBER 2024						
S	M	T	W	T	F	S
1	2	3	4	5	6	7
8	9	10	11	12	13	14
15	16	17	18	19	20	21
22	23	24	25	26	27	28
29	30					

OCTOBER 2024						
S	M	T	W	T	F	S
		1	2	3	4	5
6	7	8	9	10	11	12
13	14	15	16	17	18	19
20	21	22	23	24	25	26
27	28	29	30	31		

- September 2 - Labor Day Holiday - NO SCHOOL No Project SEARCH
- September 3 - All Student First Day of School
- October 11 - Staff Development - NO SCHOOL PS is in session
- October 14 - Native American Day - NO SCHOOL No Project SEARCH

NOVEMBER 2024						
S	M	T	W	T	F	S
					1	2
3	4	5	6	7	8	9
10	11	12	13	14	15	16
17	18	19	20	21	22	23
24	25	26	27	28	29	30

DECEMBER 2024						
S	M	T	W	T	F	S
1	2	3	4	5	6	7
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15	16	17	18	19	20	21
22	23	24	25	26	27	28
29	30	31				

- November 1 - End of 1st Quarter
- November 7 & 11 - Evening PT Conferences (conferences begin at 4:00pm and conclude at 7:30pm)
- November 8 - All Day PT Conferences - NO SCHOOL (conferences begin at 8:00am and conclude at 3:20pm) PS is in session
- November 27 - Comp Day (for evening conferences) - NO SCHOOL
- November 28 & 29 - Thanksgiving - NO SCHOOL No Project SEARCH
- December 20 - Noon Dismissal (Hosting the Bell Debate)
- December 23 - January 1 - Winter Break - NO SCHOOL No Project SEARCH

JANUARY 2025						
S	M	T	W	T	F	S
			1	2	3	4
5	6	7	8	9	10	11
12	13	14	15	16	17	18
19	20	21	22	23	24	25
26	27	28	29	30	31	

FEBRUARY 2025						
S	M	T	W	T	F	S
						1
2	3	4	5	6	7	8
9	10	11	12	13	14	15
16	17	18	19	20	21	22
23	24	25	26	27	28	

- January 17 - End of 2nd Quarter/1st Semester
- January 20 - Staff Development - NO SCHOOL PS is in session
- February 11 & 13 - As Needed/Requested ECE-5 Evening PT Conferences (conferences begin at 4:00pm and conclude at 7:30pm)
- February 14 - ECE-5 Comp Day (for evening conferences) - NO SCHOOL for ECE-5 PS is in session
- February 17 - President's Day - NO SCHOOL No Project SEARCH

MARCH 2025						
S	M	T	W	T	F	S
						1
2	3	4	5	6	7	8
9	10	11	12	13	14	15
16	17	18	19	20	21	22
23	24	25	26	27	28	29
30	31					

APRIL 2025						
S	M	T	W	T	F	S
		1	2	3	4	5
6	7	8	9	10	11	12
13	14	15	16	17	18	19
20	21	22	23	24	25	26
27	28	29	30			

- March 7 - NO SCHOOL (Hosting the State Debate & Individual Events Tournament) PS is in session
- March 21 - End of 3rd Quarter
- April 18-21 - NO SCHOOL No Project SEARCH

MAY 2025						
S	M	T	W	T	F	S
				1	2	3
4	5	6	7	8	9	10
11	12	13	14	15	16	17
18	19	20	21	22	23	24
25	26	27	28	29	30	31

JUNE 2025						
S	M	T	W	T	F	S
1	2	3	4	5	6	7
8	9	10	11	12	13	14
15	16	17	18	19	20	21
22	23	24	25	26	27	28
29	30					

- May 2nd- Last day of Project SEARCH
- May 23 - Last Day of School - End of 4th Quarter/2nd Semester (Noon Dismissal)
- May 25 - High School Graduation - 2:00 p.m.
- May 26 - Memorial Day - NO SCHOOL
- May 27 & 28 - Staff Development (May 28 is the Last Day for Teachers)

End of 1st Quarter - November 1 (44 student days)
 End of 2nd Quarter - January 17 (45 student days)
 1st Semester 89 days
 End of 3rd Quarter - March 21 (41 days)
 End of 4th Quarter - May 23 (44 days)
 2nd Semester 85 days
 174 student contact days + 6 Staff Development days = 180 teacher days
 Make up days will be added to the end of the school year

Technology – Email, Cell Phones, Electronics, and Personal Items

Personal cell phone use (phone calls and texts) is not allowed during classroom or work. All cell phone ringers must either be on *silent* or *vibrate*. Project SEARCH staff strongly discourages interns from bringing electronics and personal items to work. Should an intern choose to bring such items to work, it is at the intern's risk. Project SEARCH and job site staff are not responsible for personal items that become lost, misplaced, damaged, and/or stolen. Unless otherwise specified, personal email, cell phones, and electronic devices may not be used, except during breaks. Project SEARCH staff will assist intern(s) with the development of a professional email address, which will be used throughout the year.

Computer/Technology Guidelines

All Project SEARCH interns will be issued a laptop computer at the start of the year. The intern in whose name a system account and/or computer hardware is issued will be responsible at all times for its appropriate use. Non-compliance with the policies of the Brookings School District and Project SEARCH Computer Use Policy will result in disciplinary action. Electronic mail, network usage, and all stored files shall not be considered confidential and may be monitored at any time by staff to ensure appropriate use. The District and Project SEARCH cooperate fully with local, state, or federal officials in any investigation concerning or relating to violations of computer crime laws. Contents of e-mail and network communications are governed by the South Dakota Open Records Act; proper authorities will be given full access to all requested information.

All Interns agree to abide by the following:

- 1) Interns will have access to all available forms of electronic media and communication that support the educational goals and objectives of the Brookings School District and the Project SEARCH Program.
- 2) Interns are responsible for their ethical and educational use of the technology resources of the Brookings School District, Project SEARCH, and the Department of Rehabilitation Services.
- 3) Access to the Brookings School District, Project SEARCH, and the Department of Rehabilitation Services technology resources is a privilege, not a right.
- 4) Transmission of any material that is in violation of any federal or state law is prohibited. This includes, but is not limited to the following: confidential information, copyrighted material, threatening or obscene material, and computer viruses.
- 5) Any attempt to alter data, the configuration of a computer, or the files of another user, without the consent of the individual, campus administrator, technology administrator, Program Coordinator, or Skills Trainer will be considered an act of vandalism and subject to disciplinary action in accordance with the discipline procedures.
- 6) Do not access, use, or change computer files that do not belong to you.
- 7) Do not reveal your full name, phone number, home address, social security number, credit card numbers, password, or other people's passwords.

8) Remember that storage is not guaranteed to be private or confidential; **the District, Project SEARCH, Career Advantage, and/or DRS staff may access anything on your computer at any time, including email.**

9) If you inadvertently access a website containing obscene, pornographic, or otherwise offensive material, notify the Program Coordinator or Skills Trainer immediately so such sites can be blocked from further access. This is not merely a request but a responsibility.

10) Interns should maintain high integrity concerning email content. Always use appropriate language. Do not transmit language/material that is profane, obscene, abusive, or offensive to others.

11) Do not send mass emails, chain letters, or spam. Do not private chat during class.

The aforementioned is a guide and is subject to change as needs arise, or based on decisions made by the Project SEARCH Leadership Team, Brookings School District, Director of Special Services, Board of Education, Division of Rehabilitation Services, Project SEARCH Coordinator, and/or Project SEARCH Skills Trainer.

Discipline Policy/Non-Acceptance

In the case where interns do not demonstrate through behavior or words a commitment to the goals and expectations laid out by the Project SEARCH Program, the Project SEARCH Leadership Team will assess the need for accommodations/modifications, suspension, voluntary withdrawal, or a discharge from the program.

With justifiable grounds, the Project SEARCH Leadership Team and/or home school district reserves the right to discharge any intern from the program. Should the Team deem a discharge necessary, it will meet with the intern, parents/guardians, DRS, and all other relevant parties to determine a new, suitable program plan for the intern.

Acceptance in the Project SEARCH program is based on the national Project SEARCH program standards and selection criteria. The Project SEARCH Leadership Team uses these standards during the selection process to determine if an applicant is a good fit for the program.

Should the intern or representative feel the discharge or non-acceptance is unfair or unwarranted, a grievance should be presented in writing to:

Level I: The Brookings School District Director of Special Services, will schedule an informal discussion of said grievance. It is expected that many grievances may be resolved at this level. The conference will be held within five (5) workdays of the filing date, or at a time and date mutually agreed upon by both parties.

Level II: If the intern or their representative is not satisfied with the resolution at level one, an appeal can be made to the superintendent for an informal conference and discussion of said grievance.

Level III: Complaints that remain unresolved following any action of the superintendent may be referred in writing to the School Board for review. The Board will consider the issue at its next regularly scheduled

meeting, and render its decision within five (5) work days. The Board's decision will be final unless appealed through the court system.

If an intern is determined to be ineligible for VR services or VR-funded services are discontinued, the intern will be informed in writing of the denial decision and due process procedures by their local VR Counselor.

I have received and understand the SDSU/Brookings Project SEARCH 2024-2025 Intern Handbook.

Intern Signature

Date

Parent/Guardian Signature

Date

Project SEARCH Coordinator Signature

Date