

## What to Expect During Internship “Matching” Interviews

Students often ask us how they can prepare for the initial meeting with a prospective mentor and/or principal. Because interviews are conducted at the building level and every school has its own style and format, there are no set rules. *However, there are a few actions you can take to have a positive experience.*

- In most cases, these interviews will be an informal, “meet and greet” opportunity. Because you will work so closely, mentors are looking for a basic personality match, mostly based on intuition. Try to be yourself and present yourself as professional, enthusiastic and ready to learn. *You don’t need to wear a suit, but you should dress professionally.*
- This interview means that the school has already reviewed your resume and placement request from our office and knows a little about you. The initial request also includes general internship dates, although you may need to remind them of these while you’re there.
- You will usually meet with just your mentor (or *mentors* if you have multiple endorsements) and sometimes the principal.
- If we are sending more than one candidate to a school for multiple placements, you may experience a group interview to match the best personalities and working styles.
- You should be prepared to discuss your schedule (when you will start, when you will finish, any evening classes, etc.), which is different per each SPU program.
- You should demonstrate self-awareness about your work habits, personal strengths that you will bring to the classroom, and areas of growth.
- Sometimes new mentors will ask what is required of them. You can tell them:
  - Mentors receive a folder with comprehensive information and support for their role from SPU, including invitations to various orientations and professional development, an SPU supervisor who supports the candidate and mentor, a handbook, a website full of resources, and a regular mentoring newsletter. Mentors will receive a small stipend, and qualify for clock hours.
  - If the mentor wants to see some of these resources first hand during your discussion, you can show them this wiki site for mentors:  
<https://wiki.spu.edu/display/SMTR/SOE+Mentor+Teacher+Resources>.
- Sometimes mentors have questions about to what extent you will need to be the “full time teacher.” In this case, you can tell them that SPU follows the co-teaching model, which assumes that you are collaborating to support the K-12 learners throughout the internship. You will work with the supervisor to determine a span of time to experience the role of “lead teacher” in planning, instruction and assessment, when your mentor moves into more of an active support role. This is flexible and can work around testing windows and other concerns. *The goal is for the candidate to have a fulfilling and authentic learning experience, but also to support the K-12 learners by having two capable adults in the room.*
- Sometimes mentors will ask how much coursework you’ll have on top of your internship responsibilities. This varies with program course sequence and with endorsement requirements, so you should be aware of what classes you need to take and how often you’ll need to be on campus. During internship you will need to complete the Professional Growth Plan, but your SPU courses will support you in this task.