

RESULTS WITH IMPACT: THE ROI OF STUDENT TALENT

Strengthening small and medium bioscience employers through BioTalent Canada's Student Work Placement Program (SWPP)

Small and medium-sized enterprises (SMEs) drive innovation in Canada's bio-economy but often face barriers to recruiting skilled talent due to limited resources. BioTalent Canada's Student Work Placement Program supports these employers by offering targeted paid internships, enabling SMEs to bring in emerging professionals who contribute technical expertise and fresh perspectives from day one. With over 70% of placements occurring in SMEs, the program directly supports the sector's most vulnerable innovators. As the following data from BioTalent Canada's program reveals, SWPP is a vital mechanism not only for workforce development, but also for strengthening innovation and infrastructure capacity.



Employers surveyed who indicated they would consider hiring their student for a long term role after the placement.



16,186
placements
since 2017



Employer engagement

2,523
Employers

3 placements
Average per employer

98.6%
Would participate again

99%
Feel offering this
placement has benefited
their company

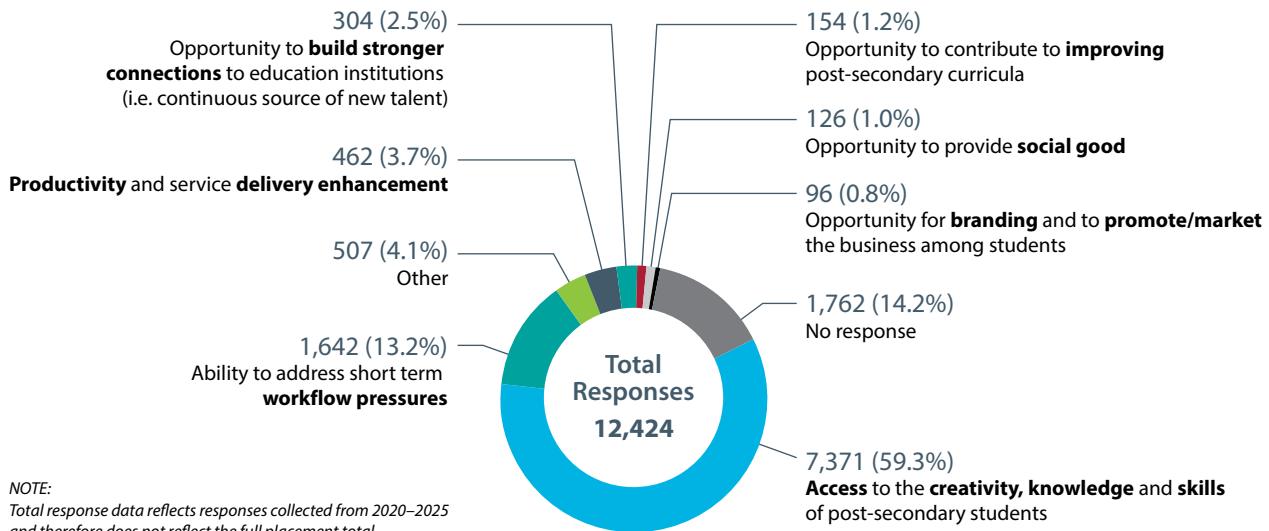
95.2%
Would continue a
collaborative relationship
with post-secondary
institution



Employer benefits

BioTalent Canada’s Student Work Placement Program (SWPP) plays a critical role in addressing the need for skilled talent by enabling small and medium-sized enterprises (SMEs) to attract talent through hands on work experiences. Their program has helped build workforce capacity, strengthening the industry’s long-term resilience.

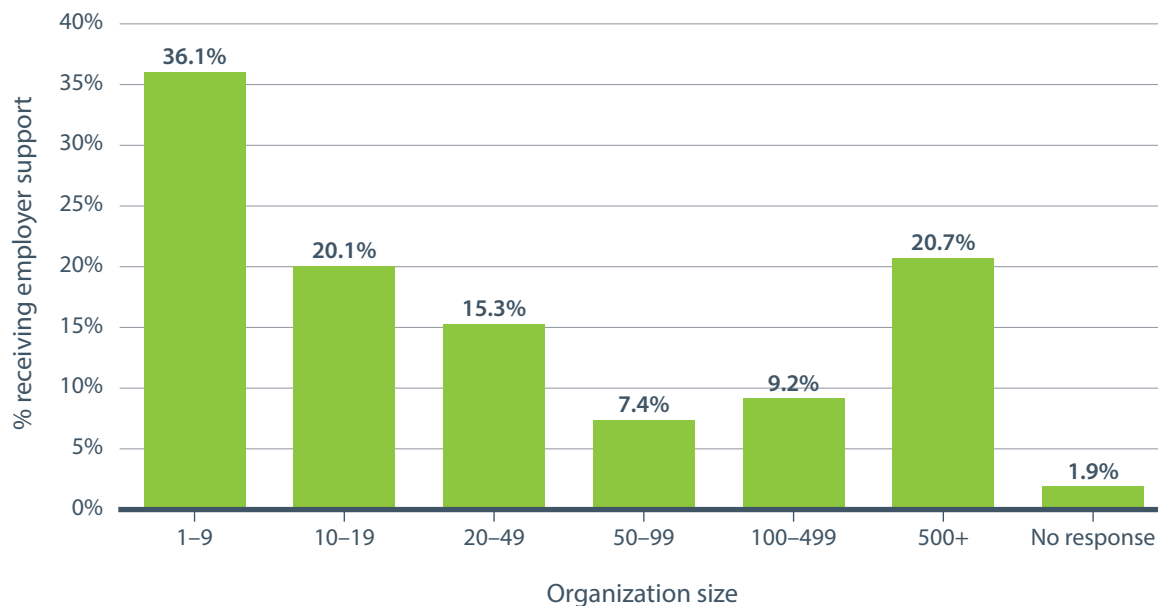
SWPP placement benefits reported by employers 2020-2025



NOTE:
Total response data reflects responses collected from 2020–2025 and therefore does not reflect the full placement total.

BioTalent Canada’s SWPP has proven uniquely effective at reaching Canada’s smallest bioscience innovators—those with fewer than 50 employees—who often lack the resources to compete for top talent. Without this targeted support, many of these firms would struggle to grow, hire or innovate.

Employers by size



Make SWPP permanent: invest in Canada's future

Canada's bio-economy is on the rise, but continued growth depends on talent. BioTalent Canada's Student Work Placement Program (SWPP) has proven to be one of the most effective tools in preparing the next generation of bioscience professionals. From reducing youth unemployment to strengthening small business capacity, BioTalent Canada's SWPP delivers measurable results for students, employers and the broader economy.

But this success story needs stability. Without sustained and renewable federal funding, Canada risks losing ground in the global race for bioscience innovation and talent. Making SWPP a permanent part of Canada's economic strategy will:

- **Secure high-paying jobs** for young Canadians by bridging classroom learning with real-world experience.
- **Ensure long-term resilience** to future challenges—whether in health care, climate change, or global competitiveness.

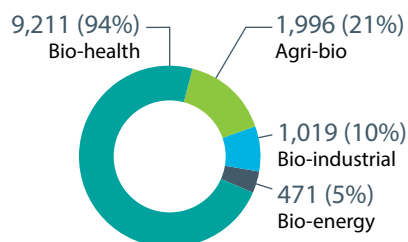
NOW IS THE TIME TO ACT

Embedding SWPP permanently into Canada's economic framework will fuel innovation, create good jobs and strengthen employers across the country.

Placements by industry

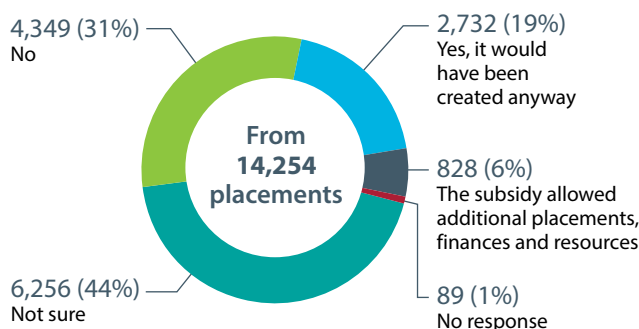
Bio-economy **9,842** Healthcare **6,562**

Placements by bio-economy sub-sector since 2017†



† Placements may fit within multiple bio-economy sub-sectors

Would the co-op position have been created without the SWPP subsidy?

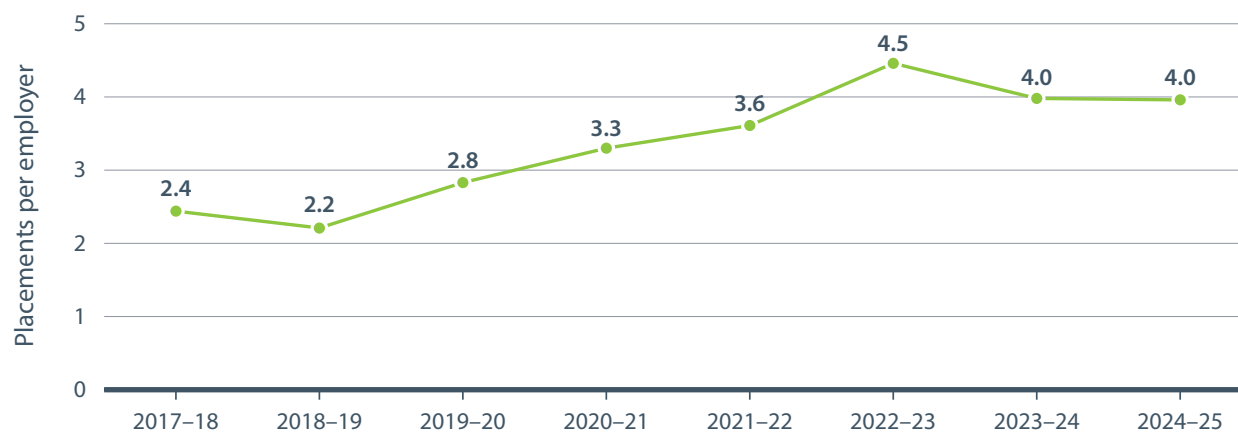


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Stronger Participation, Deeper Impact

The rising number of placements per employer signals that employers are not only returning to the program, they are deepening their participation—underscoring SWPP's value as a long-term workforce development strategy.

Average number of placements per employer



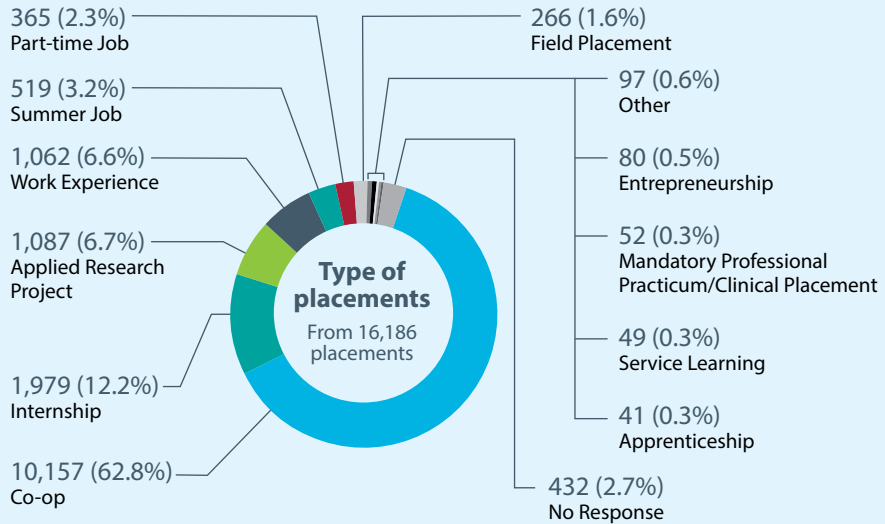


Diverse student engagement



Average annual salary
\$36,554

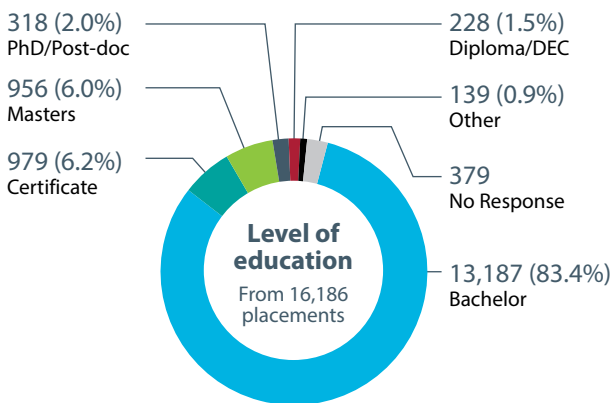
Type of placement



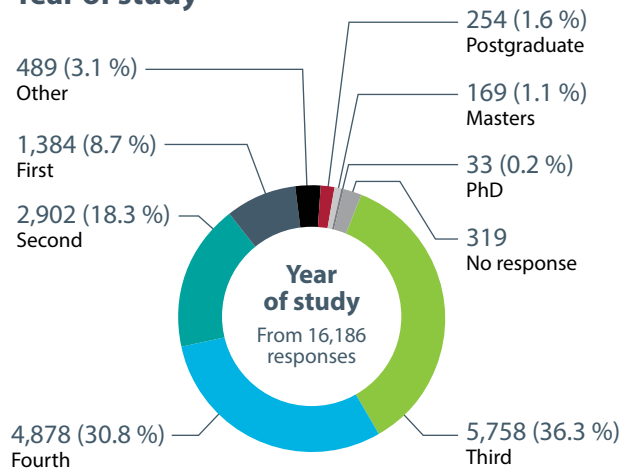
90.2%
of students

Were satisfied with the overall experience.
Felt they were better positioned to secure employment in their field.

Level of education



Year of study



NOTES:
- Student Work Placement Program participant applications as of March 31, 2025, BioTalent Canada
- Charts may not add up to 100% due to rounding

Driving business growth and innovation through student talent

BioTalent Canada's Student Work Placement Program (SWPP) delivers measurable returns for employers and the broader Canadian economy. With 98% of employers working with BioTalent Canada indicating they would use the program again, SWPP delivers clear value—especially for SMEs. Employers point to access to student creativity, knowledge and technical skills as the top benefit, positioning placements as a strategic driver of innovation rather than just short-term support. By reducing onboarding time, improving recruitment outcomes and supporting immediate workflow needs, BioTalent Canada's program helps businesses scale while building Canada's future workforce.

98% of employers indicate they would use the program again. SWPP meets business needs—especially among SMEs.



Inclusion, Diversity, Equity and Accessibility (IDEA) in SWPP

BioTalent Canada's SWPP actively advances equity in Canada's biosciences workforce, with nearly three-quarters of participants self-identifying as part of under-represented groups. This makes BioTalent Canada's program a strategic tool for building a more inclusive and representative innovation economy.

Participants by gender

Females	Males	Preferred not to say	Unknown	No response
7,473	4,981	73	40	275

Participants by under-represented group

New immigrants	Self-identified Indigenous group	Self-identified disability	Visible minorities	Women in STEM
285	139	444	5,930	6,181

73% of students were from under-represented groups

Skills outcomes — Student responses 2020–2025

94%

My problem-solving skills improved

88%

My oral communication skills improved

80%

My written communication skills improved

96%

Gained experience that will help in the workplace after I graduate

92%

My critical thinking skills improved

90%

Feel better prepared to find a job in my chosen field

92%

The work placement contributed towards my professional network (employers, mentors, peers, students) that will help me in achieving future career goals

91%

The work placement was related to my field of study

89%

My time management skills improved

90%

The work placement helped me clarify my potential career path



Post-secondary institution engagement

University participation in SWPP is especially strong, helping translate academic research into applied bioscience innovation.



16,186
Total placements

University placements
14,797

College
879

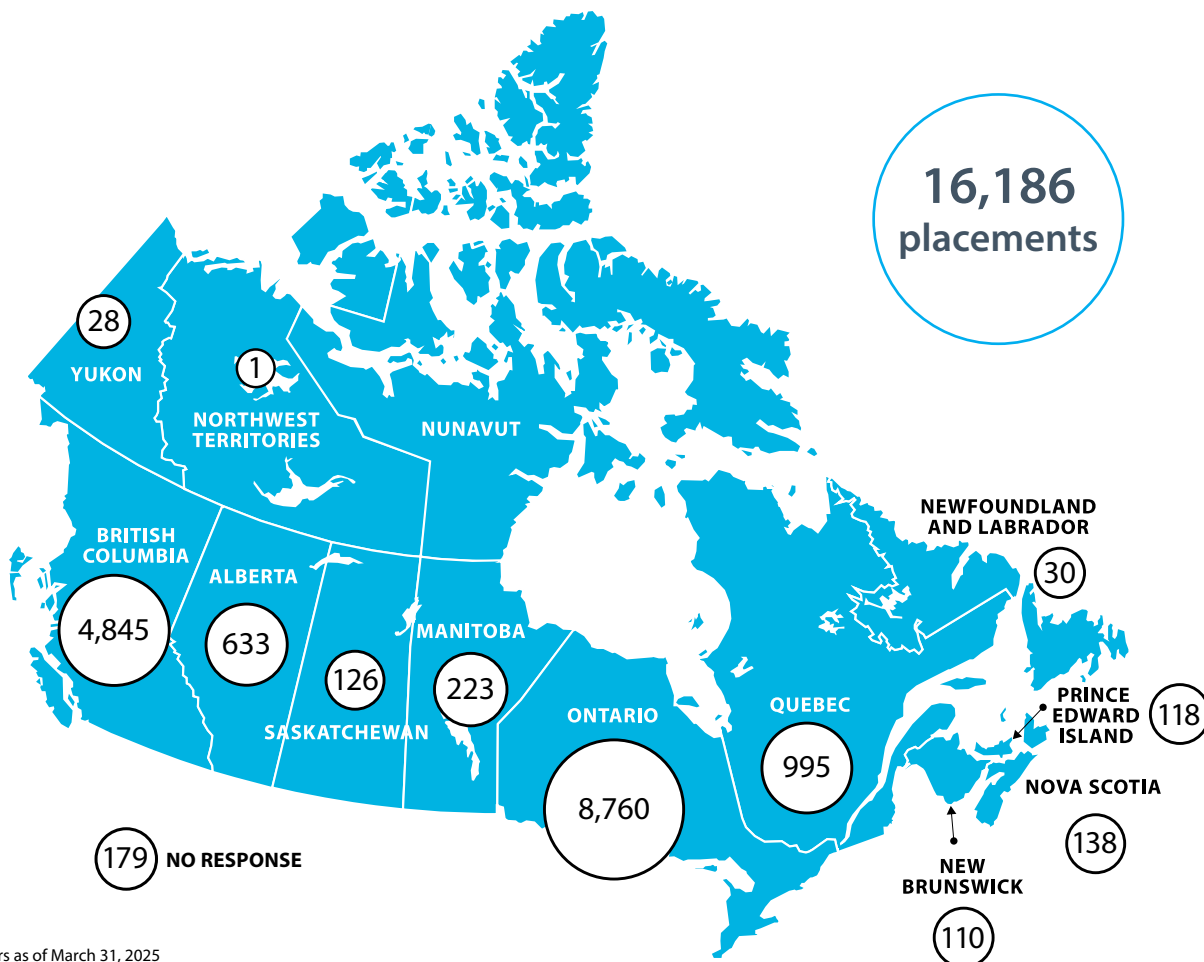
Polytechnics
90

Other
41

No responses
379

Placements by province

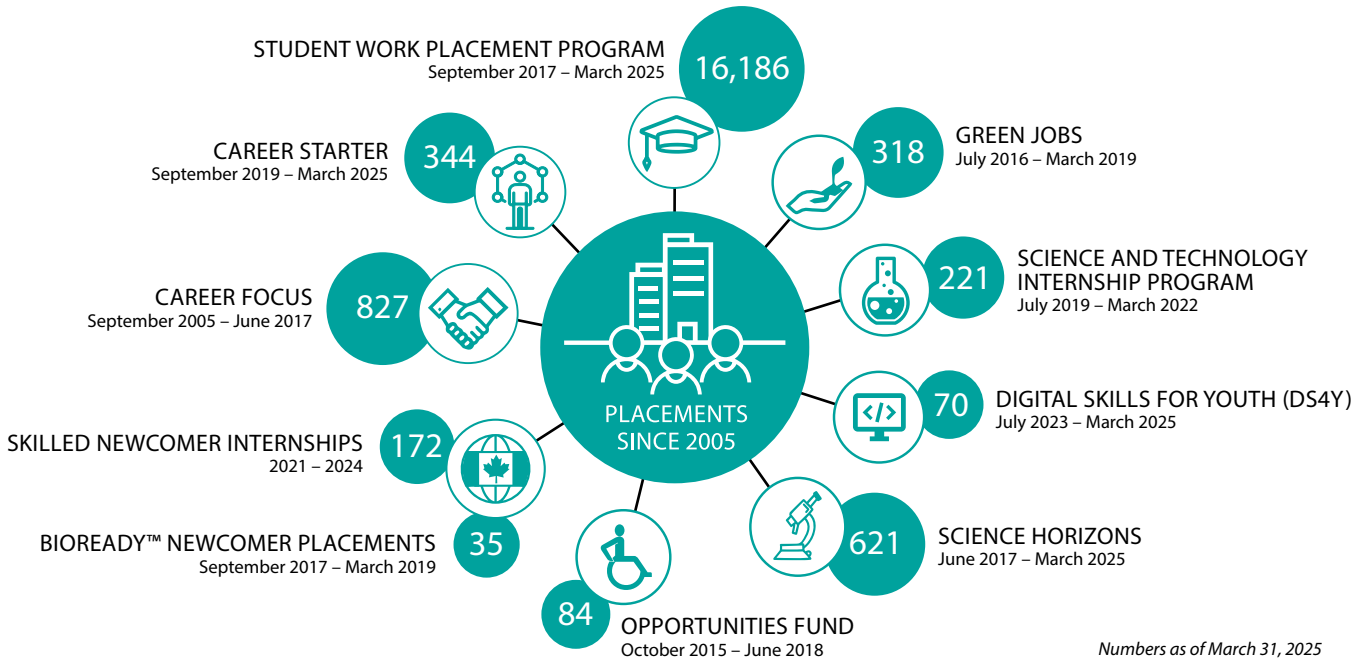
BioTalent Canada’s Student Work Placement Program reaches beyond major cities into rural and economically disadvantaged regions, where attracting skilled labour is often challenging. In these communities, even one student placement can boost local businesses, drive innovation and create jobs. By expanding access to talent and funding, SWPP fosters a bio-economy that is innovative, inclusive and nationally distributed, supporting growth and resilience across Canada.



Numbers as of March 31, 2025

Successful track record

Number of placements by Employer Support Program



Student experience

“I really enjoyed working at Intrepid Labs. I got the chance to work on a number of research and development projects which improved my technical skills and enriched my professional experience. Working closely with a team possessing diverse expertise allowed me to gain a comprehensive understanding of how a biotech company operates and improved my interpersonal skills. Overall, my work experience was highly satisfying and contributed positively to my career development.”

Xuehan Wang, Formulation Scientist at Intrepid Labs, Mississauga, Ontario

“The work experience provided by Coagtech was invaluable. It allowed me to learn many new things that will be useful in my future studies and career. This work experience gave me the opportunity to express myself and ideas in my work, which taught me more about how I work, and how to consistently improve.”

Aiden Corbett, Software Developer at Coagtech, Saskatoon, Saskatchewan

Proof is in the placement

“By reducing the financial burden of hiring interns, Veolia has been able to invest in a larger and more diverse pool of young professionals, fostering innovation and fresh perspectives within the company. The program has not only benefited Veolia by allowing them to access a wider range of skilled individuals but has also created meaningful career development opportunities for aspiring professionals in the water technology industry.”

Cali Fantin, Campus Recruiter at Veolia Water Technologies and Solutions, Oakville, Ontario

“The impacts of this program have been really strong for us so far, both in terms of the work achieved through the placements and also in charting our organizational development and strengthening our relationships with post-secondary institutions.”

Stephen McLeod, Director General at Compost Montreal Inc., Montreal, Quebec

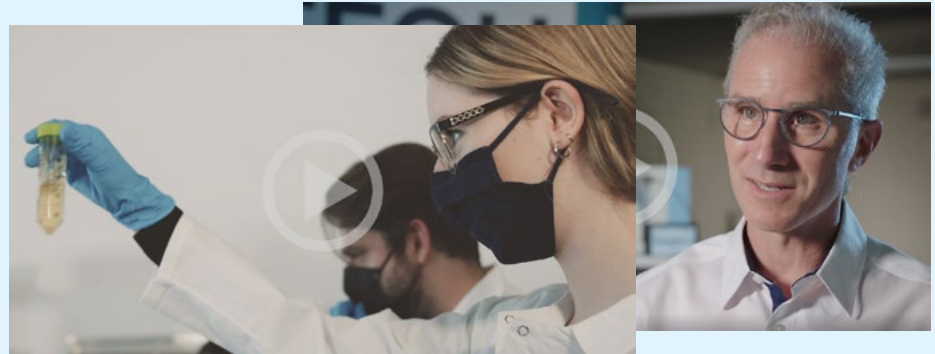
Employer experience

“STEMCELL has a long history of recruiting talented post-secondary students for work placement, with a significant number of them returning as full time employees after finishing their schooling (I myself was one). The funding provided by this program helps to

maintain that mutualistic benefit of young talent for STEMCELL and great learning opportunities for students deciding on their career path”

Cody James, Scientist at STEMCELL Technologies, Vancouver, British Columbia

Hear from students and employers themselves in our *Gaining a Competitive Edge* video series at youtube.com/BioTalentCanada



Featured academic partners



Co-op



University of Manitoba



DeGroot School of Business

LOYALIST COLLEGE



Students from any Canadian post-secondary institution can participate in SWPP.

The opinions and interpretations in this publication are those of the author(s) and do not necessarily reflect those of the Government of Canada.

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