

MEDIA RELEASE

FOR IMMEDIATE RELEASE

SIAST Med Lab Assistant gets national nod

Graduates' credentials will be recognized across Canada

December 16, 2010 – SIAST's Medical Laboratory Assistant program has become the first program of its kind to be endorsed by the Canadian Medical Association Conjoint Accreditation Services. As a result, credentials earned by SIAST's Medical Laboratory Assistant graduates will be recognized across Canada.

"Graduates of SIAST's Medical Laboratory Assistant program have always been valued for the training we provide," says Martine Gauthier, SIAST's dean of Science and Health Services. "Coming from the first nationally accredited program will serve to enhance their marketability."

SIAST's Medical Laboratory Assistant (MLA) graduates work in facilities that include hospitals, medical offices and walk-in clinics, as well as in research and pharmaceutical company labs. Responsibilities can vary according to job environment, but a typical day might find MLAs involved in data entry, specimen processing, and pre-analytical and quality assurance procedures.

SIAST's MLA program is a 21-week applied certificate program delivered at SIAST Kelsey Campus in Saskatoon. It emphasizes a practical, hands-on style of learning. The combination of classroom theory and actual clinical experience is key to the program's success. Students learn how to collect specimens from patients and then process and prepare those specimens for analysis. In addition to basic lab procedures, they develop data entry skills and learn how to perform clerical and specimen management services.

"The Canadian Medical Association Conjoint Committee on Accreditation sets standards for training programs for health professions that serve as benchmarks for both employers and prospective students," says Aleatha Schoonover, SIAST's program head of medical diagnostics programs. "Its criteria include facilities, equipment, faculty credentials and course content, using the competencies from the Canadian Society for Medical Laboratory Science as the foundational knowledge, skills and judgment."

The vigour of the process is standard for all CMA-accredited health professionals. It brings the perspectives of physicians, employers, educators and practitioners to deliberations concerning the education and competence of health professionals, while establishing a reliable measure of educational quality for health professions.

Those interested in learning more about SIAST's MLA program are encouraged to attend a career exploration at the Saskatoon City Hospital Rependa on Wednesday, January 26, 2011, from 10 a.m. to 3 p.m.

SIAST is Saskatchewan's primary public institution for post-secondary technical education and skills training, recognized nationally and internationally for its expertise and innovation. More than 15,000 students were enrolled in SIAST programs in the most recent academic year; additionally, the organization drew almost 25,000 individual course registrations. Through program and course registrations, SIAST served almost 26,000 distinct students with programs that touch every sector of the economy. SIAST operates campuses in Moose Jaw, Prince Albert, Regina and Saskatoon, and provides a number of courses and programs through distance education.

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