SIAST
SASKATCHEWAN INSTITUTE OF APPLIED SCIENCE AND TECHNOLOGY

Biotechnology Program
Frequently Asked Questions

1. ***Why should I consider the Biotechnology (BT)(name due to change in July 2012) program for my education? What sets this program apart from other programs?***

This program will train you in the skills and knowledge you need to become employed in life science- and chemistry-related fields. Many grads work in research labs and agricultural production companies; others in food and pharmaceutical production facilities and civic facilities such as water treatment plants.

Chemistry and applied mathematics are foundational in this field. Expect chemistry and math or related courses every semester. Course content will be both theoretical and applied: about half of the instructional time is in various laboratories. You will use what you learn. At the end of the two-year BT diploma program, you will have the skills you need to step into a laboratory and start working. You could also choose to leverage your education into a bachelor's degree at several universities.

2. ***Is this program accredited?***

The Biotechnology program is accredited by the Canadian Technology Accreditation Board (CTAB), the national accrediting body for science and technology diploma programs. Graduates are eligible to apply for the designation of Applied Science Technologist (AScT) with Saskatchewan Applied Science Technologists and Technicians (SASTT) (www.SASTT.ca) after two years' employment in the field.

3. ***Is SIAST easier than university?***

This is a tough question because its answer varies according to the student. Some students who already hold university degrees find the SIAST workload more demanding. Remember: at SIAST, the skills needed to be employed in the biotechnology industry are delivered within only two years (72 academic weeks).

The course schedule is set and runs more similarly to that of a job or high school rather than that of a university. Expect seven hours of instruction every weekday,

8:00 a.m. to 4:00 p.m., with a break for lunch. Expect related homework in the evenings and weekends in order to keep pace.

Your instructors will know who you are and you will be expected to attend all lectures and laboratories.

4. *Why should I choose this program over a university program in the same field?*

You should choose the option that is right for you. The SIAST and university programs each offer a different route to careers in the same field.

At SIAST, the skill and knowledge needed for employment are delivered in two years of study versus three or four at university. The program has an enrolment limit of 24, so class sizes may be smaller than those of many university classes.

The applied nature of the SIAST program means that in the majority of courses, along with the theory you will be in the laboratory developing hands-on skills. While it is common for degree grads from university to enrol in this program in order to further develop their laboratory skills, it also is common for our program grads to further their training by enrolling in university. Transfer credits apply in both cases. Again: you must seek out the best option for you.

5. *What are the admission requirements?*

Grade 12 with a minimum of 65% in Chemistry 30, Biology 30 and Mathematics B30; a combined average of 65% in English Language Arts A30 and English Language Arts B30 and an English Language Requirement.

6. *Are there any additional requirements following acceptance into the program?*

Students are required to have a clear pair of safety glasses for the science labs and two clean knee-length long-sleeved white lab coats, purchase the required textbooks and ancillary materials for their courses. The first week of classes, students will order name tags that must be worn to all labs and external sites. A working knowledge of the English language including reading, spelling, grammar and understanding oral and written directions is required. Oral and written communication skills are essential employability skills.

7. *Where will the program be offered?*

The program is offered at SIAST Kelsey Campus in Saskatoon.

8. ***How many seats will be available?***

The annual intake is 24 students.

9. ***Will you be considering out-of-province applicants to the program?***

We consider all qualified applicants**.**

10. ***Will you be considering international applicants to the program?***

We consider all qualified applicants**.** Proficiency in written and spoken English and a working knowledge of scientific English are required. Selected applicants must write the Accuplacer English and Math tests.

11. ***Will there be designated seats for Aboriginal students?***

Yes, we have designated seats for Aboriginal students.

12. ***If I have a disability, what type of support services will be available to me?***

Applicants with a professionally diagnosed and documented disability need to meet with the equity counsellor prior to entry into the BT program. At this meeting possible program accommodations will be discussed (including a partial load, an extension to your studies, etc.) and the results relayed to the program head**.**

In cases where a disability is suspected during the course of studies, the student will be referred to the equity counsellor for assessment and accommodation**.** The referral and assessment may take extended periods of time to complete and will delay possible implementation of accommodations, so applicants with a suspected but as yet undiagnosed learning problem should make an appointment to see a counsellor to move the diagnosis and testing process along before registration.

13. ***I'm missing a high school prerequisite. Is there an equivalent course that I can take?***

High School pre-req. courses	U of S* equivalents
BIOLOGY 30	BIOL110.6* (check U of S website for updated course codes)
CHEMISTRY 30	CHEM 112.3

ENGLISH A and ENGLISH B 30	ENG 110.6
MATH B 30	MATH 110.3
High School pre-req. courses	**U of R* equivalents**
BIOLOGY 30	BIO 100
CHEMISTRY 30	Students can take CHEM 100 if they do not presently have CHEM 30 OR if the CHEM 30 grade is below 70% OR if CHEM 30 was taken more than five years ago
ENGLISH A30 and ENGLISH B 30	ENG 100
MATH LEVEL B30	AMTH 002 (non-credit) OR Math 101 (credit)

*Courses from other universities or colleges will be evaluated individually for equivalents.

Students who are missing either the Math or the English prerequisite may write the Accuplacer test at SIAST to acquire the necessary standing.

14. ***What does FQFA (First Qualified / First Admitted) mean?***

When we determine that you meet the program's admission requirements, you will be offered admission based on the date you fully qualify for the program. The earlier you provide the appropriate documents and information that qualify you for admission to the next intake, the earlier you might begin your studies. Your application, once qualified, is always considered for the next intake.

15. ***Where do I apply?***

SIAST Kelsey Campus (Saskatoon)
Phone: (306) 933-5555
Fax: (306) 933-7226
Email: RegServ.Kelsey@siast.sk.ca
Toll-Free: 1–866–goSIAST (467–4278)
Online Admissions Login

16. ***What is the application fee?***

There is a $50 non-refundable application fee.

17. ***Can I apply if I am still in high school?***

If you are currently enrolled in any high-school courses that will qualify you for admission to SIAST's Biotechnology program, you must have your principal or guidance counsellor complete a Preliminary Statement of High School Standing (pdf) form. A conditional admission can be granted based on preliminary results. You must arrange for a final official transcript to be sent directly to Registration Services upon completion of requirements.

18. ***What is the application deadline?***

a. Current high-school students who are enrolled in the grade level that will qualify them for admission to the program may apply on or after September 1 each year. Why do we say this when applications are accepted year round? The cut off date for the current intake is Aug. 1 of each year.

19. ***When will I know if I am accepted into the program?***

You will receive an acknowledgement that your application is being reviewed to determine whether you meet the program's admission requirements. If you do not meet the program's admission requirements, you will receive a letter outlining recommendations for meeting the program's requirements.

20. ***I've received my offer of admission. Now what do I do?***

Once accepted, you will be asked to pay a holding fee for your seat that will apply toward your first year's tuition. Upon receipt of that fee, a letter will be sent to you with information regarding registration day.

21. ***When is the first intake and in what month will classes start?***

Classes start on the last Monday before Labour Day. In 2011 this is August 29.

22. ***How long is the program?***

Biotechnology is a two-year program. Each year contains 36 weeks of classes.

23. ***I am transferring from another post-secondary institution. Will I be eligible for transfer credits?***

Transfer credits are possible depending on whether the contents of the courses are similar enough to those of the SIAST courses and occur within five years of entry to the Biotechnology program. Transfer credit requests are processed the first week of classes and must always be accompanied by an original transcript from the post-secondary institution.

24. ***Can I work part-time while going to school?***

Expect to be in classrooms and labs for seven hours every weekday. Many courses also require an additional two to three hours of homework in the evenings as well as on weekends. For these reasons, it is strongly suggested that students have their finances in place before they start studying in order to avoid having to work while going to school.

25. ***How much are tuition and other fees?***

Current tuition and fees for programs can be found on our Payment of Tuition and Fees page.

26. ***Where can I buy my books and other materials?***

To view the online bookstore, go to the SIAST home page www.gosiast.com and select "Online Bookstore." Next select the campus (Kelsey Bookstore), then from there you can view book lists and/or buy textbooks. Or you can go to www.siast.sk.ca/bookstore and select the campus then decide to buy textbooks or view book lists. Also, students can call the bookstore call centre at 1-866-569-8398 and be "walked through" the steps of online purchase.

27. ***Are scholarships and bursaries available?***

Scholarships are provided to SIAST students thanks to the support of many individuals and groups: alumni, students, faculty, staff, businesses, organizations and foundations.

Please see the SIAST website or contact the Donor and Alumni Relations Office at any SIAST campus for further information.

28. What can I expect to do in a biotechnology career?

Expect to explore and apply science. Expect to seek answers to scientific questions. Expect to research, develop and produce quality products for commercialization.

Our grads are working in research, production, product testing and related areas. Day to day, expect to apply scientific principles and skills in a lab or field environment using instruments and equipment you have been well trained to use.

29. Where am I likely to find employment?

Common employers are government research facilities such as the National Research Council – Plant Biotechnology Institute, Agriculture and Agri-Food Canada, the Vaccine and Infectious Diseases Organization, the Saskatchewan Research Council, the provincial lab and even high-level federal microbiology labs. Other possibilities include the U of S Crop Development Centre and other academic research labs at universities, any of the crop production companies operating in the province, food facilities such as dairies and breweries, and the research and development branches of many small-to-medium-sized companies.

30. Will I be able to work in a hospital?

Our program **does not** train you to become a licensed technologist in medical diagnostics, so don't expect to be employed in a medical testing laboratory. However, you can have the opportunity to work in a medical research laboratory using many of those same skills and techniques. For example, our program currently has grads working in labs studying cancer and Alzheimer's disease.

31. What is a realistic salary range to expect?

Entry-level salaries will likely range from $25,000 to $30,000 ($13 to $16 per hour). With experience, and depending on the employer, salaries may rise into the $60,000 to $70,000 range. Benefits, pensions, profit sharing and share options may also be important to you and will vary with employers. Employers with tight budgets but offering great science might be attractive to those who seek and enjoy the rewards of strong scientific challenge. The average salary in this field is stated as above the provincial average for all areas. Check out Saskatchewan Job Futures 2221: http://www.saskjobfutures.ca/index.cfm?event=page.profile&nocs=2221

32. In what part of the province would I most likely be employed?

Many biotechnology grads end up working in the Saskatoon area. Some opportunities also arise in Regina and in smaller centres, as well as at mines throughout the province.

33. Can I work in other parts of Canada?

Our graduates are eligible for jobs both in provinces across Canada and internationally.