

CASTL BioBridge
adMare Academy Partner

Case Study:

CASTL BioBridge program proves industry-ready talent starts before placement begins.

32	16	10	3
students trained	employer partners	academic partners	training cohorts

Overview

In summer 2025, CASTL launched the BioBridge program, a **subsidized training initiative** funded by the Future Skills Centre. The program provided **hands-on, employer-aligned training for co-op students** pursuing roles in biomanufacturing and bioprocessing, helping **bridge the gap between academic learning and industry-ready skills.**

Who is CASTL:

- The Canadian Alliance for Skills and Training in Life Sciences (CASTL) is **Canada's biomanufacturing training partner**, focused on developing skilled talent for the country's growing life sciences sector.
- We operate **state-of-the-art, GMP-simulated training facilities across Canada** in Charlottetown (PEI), Montréal (QC), and Vancouver (BC).
- We deliver **hands-on, industry-informed training** combined with flexible online learning to **prepare employer-ready talent.**

An evaluation of CASTL's 2025 pilot found that CASTL BioBridge **improved employer confidence, reduced onboarding burden, and strengthened student readiness** for regulated environments.

Employer value at a glance

49% Reduction
in onboarding time / internal training needs

100%
of surveyed employers
found CASTL BioBridge students had better core skills than previous students

100%
of surveyed employers
were very satisfied with the CASTL BioBridge program

Employer Impact

CASTL BioBridge was **designed to close a persistent gap**: employers needed work-ready talent, but many co-op students **lacked cleanroom, GMP, applied lab, and documentation experience.**

The pilot suggests that **targeted pre-placement training can improve day-one readiness** and make work placements more productive for both employers and learners.

> *"The nice thing about the CASTL training is that, as an employer, you can look at it and know what they did. You can get their CASTL records and see that someone has actually observed them doing this skill, and they can do it."*
>
> **— Employer Partner**

Repeatable Model

The model **combined foundational online content, intensive lab practice, and work placement experience**. The strongest employer benefits were observed when training occurred before the placement began.

1

Online foundations

GMP, GDP, biosafety, fill-finish, facility orientation

2

In-person lab training

Hands-on work with cleanroom practices, documentation, gowning, and core biomanufacturing tasks

3

Work placement impact

Faster onboarding, stronger employer confidence, and better day-one readiness

Benefits for Employers

Students arrived with stronger core skill competency than previous students without CASTL BioBridge training.

Report cards made the training transparent and increased employer confidence in what students could do.

Hands-on exposure to GMP, documentation, sterilization, cleanroom work, and related processes helped develop skills that are often lacking among entry-level candidates.

Most employers expressed interest in future work-integrated learning opportunities with CASTL.

Benefits for Learners

87% of students in lab placements and **70%** of students in research placements were very satisfied with the program.

75% reported greater familiarity with career opportunities.

69% reported higher knowledge after training.

What employers valued most

Relevant GMP and documentation practice, access to current equipment, clearer visibility into student capability through report cards, and a stronger bridge between academic learning and industry expectations.

"It was very comprehensive... They included good manufacturing practices, good documentation practices, and a deeper understanding of the biomanufacturing process in general."

— **Employer Partner**

What the pilot suggests for scale-up:

CASTL BioBridge generated employer-facing benefits while also increasing student confidence and career awareness. The evaluation points to a practical model for future work-integrated learning in biomanufacturing.

Signals that matter to employers:



Students were seen as more prepared in core skills.



Onboarding and internal training needs were significantly reduced.



Skills-based reporting increased employer confidence.



Effectively bridged the gap between classroom and industry.

Bottom Line

CASTL BioBridge shows that targeted pre-placement training can make student talent more usable, more visible, and easier for employers to onboard.

“The tips and tricks we learned were invaluable in my work.”

—Student Participant

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CASTL

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