

CASTL Elevate: Delivering Job-Ready Biomanufacturing Talent at Industry Speed

In just six weeks, the CASTL Elevate program equipped underemployed Canadians—including newcomers and youth—with the skills and confidence to step into roles as job-ready biomanufacturing technicians. Informed by industry, the program blended live virtual instruction, flexible online learning, and hands-on GMP training at CASTL's world-class training facilities across Canada.

The Result?

A new wave of diverse, skilled talent now contributing to Canada's growing biomanufacturing sector—and a proven model for bridging workforce gaps, fast.

The Need

Canada must fill **16,000 additional biomanufacturing positions by 2029**, yet the current workforce can meet only **25%** of that demand[1]. Highly educated newcomers and recent graduates are eager to contribute but face well documented barriers: lack of Canadian Good Manufacturing Practices (GMP) experience, limited networks, and employer uncertainty about international credentials. Elevate was created to eliminate those barriers quickly and inclusively.

[1] BioTalent Canada, Close-up on the Bio-economy: National Report, 2024. Available at: biotalent.ca (Accessed February 27, 2025).

Key Highlights

Over
240
graduates



96%
report confidence in applying transferable skills to a biomanufacturing role

90%
agree the program provided the technical skills needed to secure a biomanufacturing role

50%
of graduates employed in biomanufacturing within six months

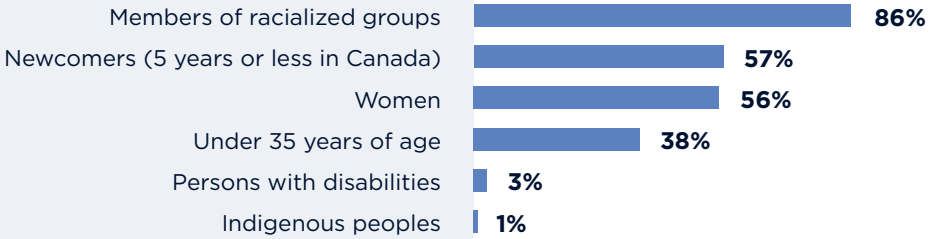
25+
employers across the country hired program graduates

Program Design

COMPONENT	KEY FEATURES
Blended-learning delivery model	• Live virtual classes • Self-paced online modules • One week in-person, hands-on lab training
Curriculum pillars	• Technical GMP skills • Professional/soft skills • Job readiness coaching
Participant Support	• Regional training facilities in Vancouver (BC), Montreal (QC), and Charlottetown (PE) • Financial support for travel to in-person training • Flexible delivery model to allow participants to continue working

Outcomes and Impact

PARTICIPATION AND DIVERSITY



SKILLS GAIN

After completing the program, participants expressed confidence in their:



These outcomes highlight Elevate's dual focus on technical and professional skill development.

EMPLOYMENT OUTCOMES

- **50%** of graduates were employed within 6 months of graduation.
- **Over 25** employers across the country hired program graduates for roles including: Production Associate, Sample Management Associate, Production Specialist, Biomanufacturing Technician, Food Quality Assurance Auditor, Process Development Scientist, Maintenance Technician, Aseptic General Helper, Lab Technician, Packaging Technician, Downstream Processing Technologist, and Lead Fermentation Specialist.

PROGRAM SATISFACTION



TRAINER QUALITY



Participant Journeys

Elena Gamanyuk

Quality assurance-veteran from Europe, transitioned to a deviation specialist role at a biomanufacturing CDMO within weeks of graduation.

Hajira Ahmed Hotiana

PhD, leveraged the program to pivot from academic research to vaccine production at a global biopharmaceutical company.

Ehis Otubor

Seasoned IT professional from Nigeria, landed a production role at a food science company based out of Prince Edward Island just weeks after graduation and earning a promotion within two months.

Nayana Vayalil

Transitioned from a stalled teaching career into a production technician position at a research biopharmaceutical company, after Elevate's résumé strategies generated multiple interview callbacks.

Diae el Azhari

Seasoned regulatory affairs professional from Morocco, now integrates manufacturing insight into her global regulatory affairs specialist role in Ontario.

Shatha Alnour

Former food science specialist from Syria, is now a Specimen Management Associate at a clinical research company.

These stories highlight Elevate's ability to unlock potential—helping talented individuals, whether educated in Canada or internationally, launch rewarding careers in Canadian biomanufacturing in just six weeks.

> "[...] Elevate's technical curriculum is very much on par with what's required in working laboratory environments. Other aspects, like guest lectures from industry representatives, help you understand the various opportunities in the sector and what employers are looking for."
>
> — **Shatha Alnour,** Elevate graduate

> "My time with CASTL was the best educational experience I've ever had. The knowledge and value I received from the Elevate program equipped me with practical and soft skills that have helped me gain the confidence to transition into a new industry. The job readiness portion of the program, in particular, taught me how to network and create stronger job applications. The highlight of the program was definitely the in-person week in Charlottetown for hands-on training. It was an unforgettable experience!"
>
> — **Rodrigo Noriega,** Elevate graduate

Lessons Learned

- **Employer-informed** curriculum helps ensure training relevance and high employer satisfaction.
- **Six-week cycle** delivers a continuous pipeline of job-ready talent.
- **Inclusive eligibility** engages an under-utilized, skilled population.
- **Integrated job search training** plays a significant role in trainee success.

Impact and ROI for Industry and Funders

- **Immediate ROI:** Employers gain job-ready-technicians in six weeks, reducing vacancy costs and onboarding time.
- **Scalable blueprint:** The program's model is ready to expand into new regions and specialties.
- **Inclusive growth:** Elevate taps underutilized newcomer and youth talent, advancing diversity, equity, and regional development goals.
- **Risk mitigation:** A resilient domestic workforce underpins supply chain security and pandemic preparedness, clear priorities for both public and private investors.

The CASTL Elevate program was funded by Upskill Canada (powered by Palette Skills) and the Government of Canada.

Upskill Canada POWERED BY palette skills

Funded by the Government of Canada | Canada

Learn more about training with CASTL at **castlcanada.ca**

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All statistics, testimonials, and program details are drawn from CASTL Elevate internal reports and participant surveys.