

# Building Ontario's Life Sciences Future:

The Vital Role of Universities in Innovation, Talent and Industry Growth

From life-saving health care breakthroughs to agricultural innovations that sustain local communities, universities are partnering to strengthen Ontario's life sciences ecosystem.

The impact of the skilled talent, research and innovation fueled by Ontario's universities has an effect spanning across industries, generating growth and innovation, and advancing Ontario's life sciences future.

Here are a few examples of Ontario's universities' contributions to this thriving sector:



## Building Life Sciences Infrastructure

From 2017–2022, Ontario's universities built 60 major infrastructure projects fostering life sciences research, innovation and talent development across eight campuses. This includes collaborative projects with industry partners who seek access to specialized knowledge, research hubs and institutional facilities to develop and test innovations.

## Generating Homegrown IP

More than **720 start-up companies** were created in life sciences fields across 10 Ontario universities from 2017–2022. Universities also generated nearly **\$141 million in licensing revenue** and provided equity and grant financing for start-ups equal to **\$2 billion** over that same period.

## Developing Health Care Talent

In 2022, Ontario's universities graduated more than **14,000 students** from health care programs. These students will go on to practice in regions throughout Ontario, ensuring that people in communities across the province have access to the health care they need and deserve.

## Driving Partnerships with Industry

Nine Ontario universities reported that more than 2,300 students participated in research internships with industries related to life sciences between 2017–2022. These internships offered students an invaluable opportunity to gain hands-on experience in the field, preparing them to enter into lucrative careers in high-demand fields that are fueling Ontario's economic prosperity.



## Meeting STEM Demand

Since 2010, STEM enrolment at Ontario universities has grown by **76 per cent** and in health fields by **44 per cent**.

## Attracting Global Life Sciences Investment

Since 2018, Ontario has seen **more than \$6 billion** in investments from the life sciences sector. Ontario's supply of highly skilled talent and advanced research and innovation ecosystem are critical to attracting interest from leading companies such as AstraZeneca, Moderna and Roche.



In 2025, AstraZeneca invested **\$820 million** in Ontario to expand clinical research and establish a new state-of-the-art facility in the GTA, creating more than 700 high-skilled jobs and strengthening the province's position as a global leader in life sciences

“ This investment is a reflection of our growing clinical pipeline, our strong belief in Canada's potential as a global hub for life sciences innovation, and the value of public-private collaboration with the Ontario government. We believe the diverse talent pool together with the network of world-class universities, hospitals, and research centres will help us bring new medicines to Canadians and patients worldwide.”  
– Pascal Soriot, Chief Executive Officer, AstraZeneca, 2025



## Fueling a Growing Life Sciences Workforce

More than **500,000 Ontarians** were employed in the life sciences sector in 2017 across nearly **90,000 companies** according to Life Sciences Ontario – meaning one in 13 Ontarians worked in a job connected to the industry.

The number of Ontarians working in the sector has increased in subsequent years as Ontario has continued to attract new investments. As leaders in the creation of life sciences talent, Ontario's universities will continue to play an essential role in fueling this industry.