

## ***MEDIA RELEASE***

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# **SIAST's Skills Passport program opens doors for immigrants**

*Technical, language skills assessment offered in Ukraine, Philippines*

**October 5, 2009** – Skills Passport, SIAST's overseas technical skills and language assessment program, is open for business. The program, which will help employers evaluate potential employees before they immigrate to Canada, has launched its assessment service.

Through the Skills Passport program, a first in Canada, SIAST will guarantee English language proficiency to designated levels and will guarantee technical skills against SIAST certificate and diploma program standards.

The program dovetails with the Saskatchewan government's program to boost immigration and responds to employers' labour market needs. It will enhance the success of employers' international recruitment efforts and will facilitate the integration of immigrants into the local workforce.

"I am delighted with this initiative by SIAST," said Rob Norris, Saskatchewan Advanced Education, Employment and Labour Minister, and the Minister responsible for Immigration. "This service will be most valuable to employers who are seeking to meet their needs for skilled labour."

The Skills Passport currently recognizes English language and welding skills and will expand into other sectors of the labour market in response to employer demand. Future areas for expansion include heavy duty equipment, agriculture machinery technician and carpentry. Assessment services are currently available in Ukraine and Philippines.

"A SIAST Skills Passport can play a vital role in verifying potential employee technical and language skills for employers using the provincial nomination and federal temporary foreign worker programs," said David Harvey, SIAST's director of Business Development

and International Partnership. "The program substantially reduces risk to both the Canadian employer and the potential newcomer by guaranteeing a fit with the technical and language skills needs of the Canadian labour market."

Harvey is showcasing the Skills Passport program at a Conference Board of Canada immigration roundtable this afternoon in Saskatoon. The \$4-million Skills Passport program is funded in part by the Government of Canada's Foreign Credential Recognition program.

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 13,000 students are registered in SIAST programs, which touch every sector of the economy; additionally, the organization draws almost 32,000 individual course registrations. It 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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Information about SIAST can be found at [www.goSIAST.com](http://www.goSIAST.com).