

wītōkamāhtōtān Indigenous Student Success

2023–2024 Report



Saskatchewan Polytechnic serves students through applied learning opportunities on Treaty 4 and Treaty 6 Territories and the homeland of the Métis.



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**miyo wâhkôhtowin/
good relationships**

Indigenous Student Success Strategy



Indigenous students are an important part of Saskatchewan Polytechnic's community. The 2024-2029 Indigenous Student Success Strategy - *Wichitowin ahci kaskihtamâsowin ati nikan* – Michif for helping each other with success - sets the course for the next five years. The strategy outlines actions to continue our work in removing barriers to access and delivering services to support Indigenous student success. The goal of the strategy is to increase recruitment, retention, graduation rates and the overall success of Indigenous students across all programs. Each of the strategy's four goals contribute to achieving this.



Hóʔą (Dene) Welcoming: Help Indigenous students coming to Sask Polytech prepare and be ready for post-secondary life.

Ombi-ah` (Nakawe) Inspiring: Help Indigenous students thrive at Sask Polytech.

Mnihéya (Nakoda) Empowering: Celebrate Indigenous student success and prepare Indigenous graduates for successful lifelong careers.

Heca (Dakota) Belonging: Foster inclusive, respectful and welcoming campuses where Indigenous students feel at home.

The strategy contributes to Sask Polytech's efforts to meet the Truth and Reconciliation Commission of Canada's Calls to Action and to live up to its commitments under the Colleges and Institutes Canada's Indigenous Education Protocol.

The strategy, along with other institutional plans and initiatives, such as Innovation in Action: Academic Plan 2021-2026, are based on *miyo wâhkôhtowin* — good relationships. This Cree phrase expresses the positive value and richness of experience that stems from interconnectedness and relationships. This worldview represents the individual and the community and encompasses the foundation of all we do at Sask Polytech. We honour this principle in every interaction, institutional practice, procedure, policy, and service we provide to learners, faculty, staff, alumni and our communities. We work together to create an inclusive, collaborative and respectful environment in which everyone can grow, thrive and lift each other up.

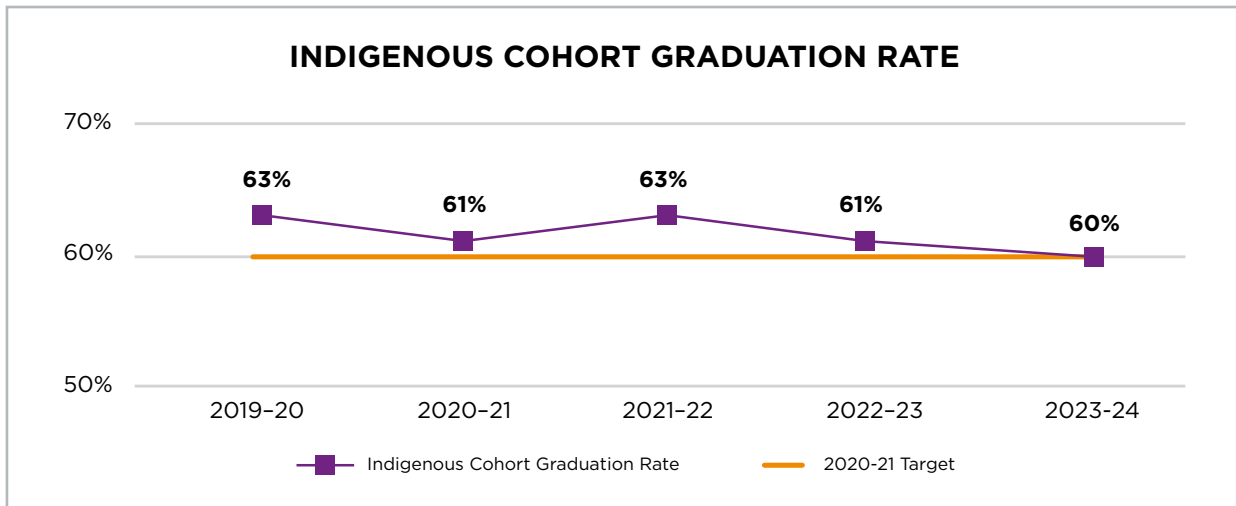
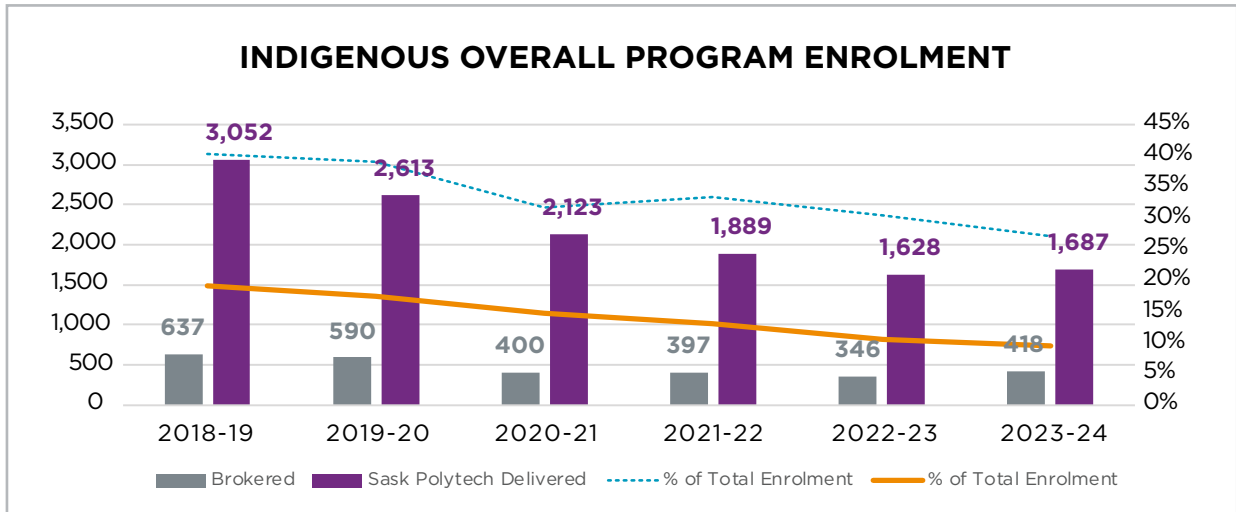
Statistics and balanced report card results



94 per cent of Indigenous graduates find employment



Sask Polytech has 2,050 self-declared Indigenous students* who make up 10 per cent of enrolment.



Note: Indigenous program enrolment includes regional colleges.



Indigenous coordinators had 30,433 student interactions



Indigenous advisors had 35,881 student interactions



Indigenous Community Relations had 21,652 interactions with students/prospective students

Indigenous Student Scholarships and Awards
325 awards valued at \$436,828

Indigenous Student Emergency Bursary
105 bursaries valued at \$85,598

*This is the number of Indigenous students who have self-declared. The actual number may be higher.

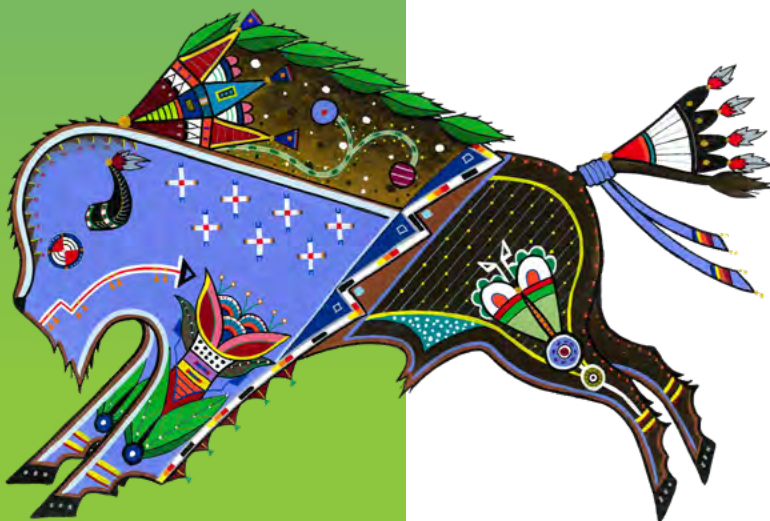
Saskatchewan Polytechnic serves students through applied learning opportunities on Treaty 4 and Treaty 6 Territories and the homeland of the Métis. Learning takes place at campuses in Moose Jaw, Prince Albert, Regina and Saskatoon and through extensive distance education opportunities. Programs serve every economic and public service sector. As a polytechnic, the organization provides the depth of learning appropriate to employer and student need, including certificate, diploma and degree programs, and apprenticeship training. Saskatchewan Polytechnic engages in applied research, drawing on faculty expertise to support innovation by employers, and providing students the opportunity to develop critical thinking skills.

Wichitowin advisory committee

The Wichitowin advisory committee is a multidisciplinary group of individuals who guide strategy implementation, provide support to the institution's process of indigenization and consider additional ways to support Indigenous student success. The committee is co-chaired by the director, wītōkamāhtōtān Indigenous Student Success and special advisor to the provost. It includes representatives from external Indigenous communities, the provost and vice president, Academic, vice provost, manager, wītōkamāhtōtān Indigenous Student Success and associate vice presidents from multiple areas of the institution. It also includes a student representative. Committee members are appointed for a term of three years to allow for planned replacement of committee members. Committee members may serve more than one term.

Committee responsibilities include:

- ➡ Act as champions for the Indigenous student success strategy
- ➡ Receive regular updates on progress
- ➡ Review and provides feedback on recommendations from strategy working committees
- ➡ Provide input on issues that arise as part of the strategy's implementation
- ➡ Review and provide feedback on recommended initiatives, projects and actions to address barriers to student recruitment and program completion
- ➡ Guide prioritization of initiatives, projects and actions



Core functions and services

Indigenous student advisors

Indigenous student success is fostered through dedicated student advisors. Indigenous student advisors cultivate relationships of support to help orient students to Sask Polytech and the community and connect students with outside resources and networks. They help students secure funding, housing, tutorial support, and assist with budgeting and employment information. They also organize study groups and informational, social and cultural events.

Indigenous student advisors work with instructors, program heads and deans to help students achieve academic success in their chosen area of study. Advisors advocate for students if needed.

Advisors share information with faculty Indigenous cultural and academic teachings, and ways of knowing to further the understanding of Indigenous curriculum-building, understanding and miyo wâhkôhtowin—good relationships.

Indigenous students' centres

Indigenous students' centres offer students a safe space to connect with Elders, knowledge keepers and cultural advisors who can provide academic, emotional and spiritual support for Indigenous students. Sask Polytech has an Indigenous students' centre on each campus staffed with Indigenous coordinators and student advisors. In addition to providing a space to study and socialize, with computers and kitchens for use, each centre hosts a variety of cultural activities and events and uses the space to deliver services.

Elder access—One day a week drop in at all centres, special occasions and as needed.

Smudging—Students and employees can stop in at any time if they need to smudge. Ceremonies vary from campus to campus. Prince Albert campus has a weekly smudging ceremony. Regina campus offers guidance if needed every morning.

Soup and bannock—At minimum, monthly at all centres and may happen more often depending on need.

Cree for beginners—Weekly where students and employees can attend in person or join virtually through zoom.

Lunch and learn—At least monthly on various topics and as needed. For example, there is a weekly lunch and learn on beading on Regina campus.



ê-sihtoskâtoyahk Indigenous Students' Centre

Summer Transition Program

The week-long Summer Transition Program is open to all registered Indigenous students. Organized by Indigenous student advisors, the program helps students prepare for student life. Assistance with finalizing funding arrangements is also offered.

The program includes:

- ➡ Cultural information
- ➡ Personal skill development workshops
- ➡ Academic assessment and support
- ➡ Peer group building activities



Honour ceremonies

Sask Polytech has been hosting honour ceremonies to celebrate the hard work, dedication and achievements of Indigenous students since 1990. The theme of the 2024 honour ceremony was *Wichitowin ahci kaskihtamâsowin ati nikan* (Michif): Helping each other with success for the future. Over 600 Indigenous students, dignitaries, guests and employees attended.

The Dakota flower represents growth and evolution of students. The flower is designated special and is to be used only for gifts of higher value and significance. It will be associated with recognition for successful achievement and outcomes for individual students and for those who have made a specific or major contribution to Indigenous student success at Sask Polytech.



Projects

Role model calendar

Continuing to put students' needs first, the Indigenous student success strategy guides efforts to ensure students can see themselves and their culture reflected throughout the institution. To this end, Indigenous role models are featured throughout institutional publications as an important way for students and prospective students to be inspired to pursue and realize their educational and career goals at Sask Polytech.

Indigenous role model photos, stories and videos are shared in our annual calendar, on our website and on social media. Each success story includes information on their learning journey, program and home community.

Each of the stories are unique and describe how services, such as the Summer Transition Program and Indigenous Students' Centres, help students overcome challenges to achieve success.

Representation of Indigenous role models is important to the success of Indigenous students. Since 2013 Sask Polytech has celebrated and shared these success stories through the annual Indigenous role model calendar. In more recent years, these stories have been shared online and on social media.



Season of Sharing

The Season of Sharing featured five days of learning and celebration which included a holiday meal in each of our campus cities, sponsored by Farm Credit Canada. Indigenous Student Success was able to brighten the spirits of many Indigenous students with activities such as ornament and cookie decorating, bingo and ugly sweater day, plus prizes such as holiday gift cards, festive food baskets and treats. 1,600 students participated in the Season of Sharing.

In December 2023, the team handed out over 160 holiday hampers to Indigenous students across the province. The hampers are designed to provide financial and mental health supports for Indigenous students during what can be a stressful time for many people.



Empowering our people

As a part of the Government of Saskatchewan's commitment to advancing reconciliation in collaboration with First Nation and Métis communities, and organizations to address the issues raised in the final report of the National Inquiry into Missing and Murdered Indigenous Women and Girls, we received grants for projects that promote and enhance prevention and build safety for Indigenous women, girls and Two Spirit+ people, along with their families and communities.

These grants were used for a variety of events and teachings. We hosted lunch and learn events with a presentation by Brian Gallagher about the journey and loss he and his family experienced when his daughter Megan went missing. Over 300 people attended in-person and virtually. The Indigenous Student Success team also organized ribbon skirt workshops, healthy relationships workshops, men's and women's cultural teachings, community kitchens and Red Dress Day activities on each campus to honour and remember MMIWG2S+. Our projects also focused on working with students to support them on food security and budgeting.

Study abroad opportunities

Sask Polytech is committed to global engagement, which includes providing opportunities for students to participate in global study abroad opportunities. In the 2023-2024 academic year, 49 Indigenous students participated in a study abroad experience to increase global knowledge, improve intercultural communication and learn more about their field of study.

These global learning experiences were funded by the Government of Canada's Global Skills Opportunity Fund (GSO) which aims to empower post-secondary institutions to increase the participation of Canadians in international learning opportunities — especially Indigenous students, students with disabilities and those from low socio-economic backgrounds who have traditionally faced barriers to participation.



49 Indigenous students participated in study abroad



49% of students participating in study abroad identified as Indigenous



18 Indigenous students with children

25 children requiring care

14 Indigenous students without birth certificates

41 Indigenous students without passports

Events and celebrations

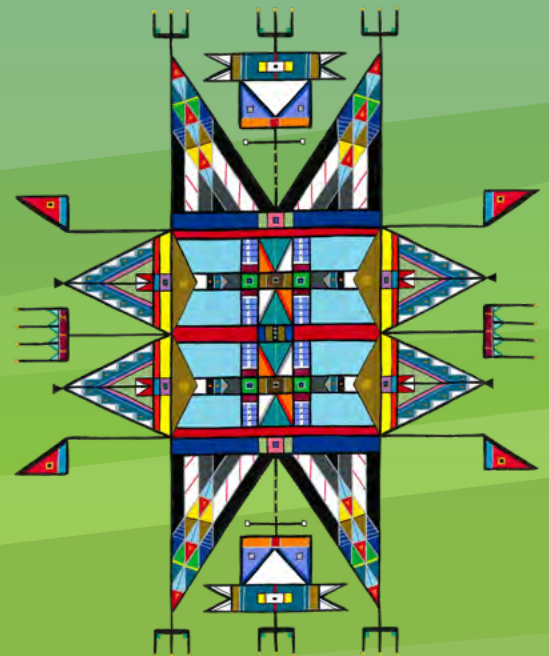
Witōkamāhtōtān Indigenous Student Success has lead Sask Polytech's recognition of the following:

- ➡ Orange Shirt Day / National Day for Truth and Reconciliation—all proceeds from the sale of Orange Shirt Day tee shirts support Indigenous students through emergency bursaries.
- ➡ Louis Riel Day
- ➡ National Day of Awareness for Missing and Murdered Indigenous Women, Girls and Two-Spirit Peoples
- ➡ National Indigenous Peoples Day



Indigenous Belief Statement

We indigenize by holistically integrating Indigenous ways of knowing, teaching, and learning within all of the institutional practices, procedures and services we provide to students, staff and communities. This results in Indigenous people seeing themselves and their realities reflected throughout our institution. It also results in non-Indigenous people gaining the skills and knowledge that enable them to work with and live alongside their Indigenous neighbours knowledgeably and respectfully.



Indigenous Declaration

Saskatchewan Polytechnic is committed to the indigenization of our institution. Indigenization is our social and collective responsibility and it enriches and benefits all aspects of our institutional culture.

Innovation in Action Academic Plan 2021–2026

Innovation in Action Academic Plan 2021–2026 supports the goals of the Indigenous student success strategy to hóʔa — welcome, ombi-ah` —inspire, mnihéya —empower, and heca— belong. Guided by the Indigenous Declaration and in the spirit of miyo wâhkôhtowin, the academic plan outlines desired outcomes and the commitments Sask Polytech is making to achieve these outcomes through to 2026.

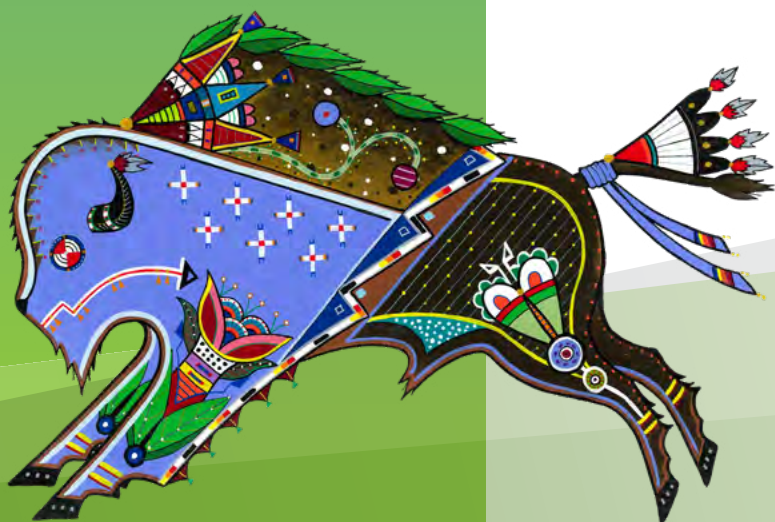
The following highlight select plan commitments:

Enriching the learner experience—Meet learner needs in an individualized, personalized and lifelong way, guided by a fully developed strategic enrolment management plan.

Enhancing programming—Build our curriculum in a way that supports positive relationships with all and an appreciation for diverse perspectives.

Evolving our academic culture—Create a workforce that is reflective of the learner community and society, and develop appreciation of cultural and socio-demographic diversity throughout Sask Polytech.

Embracing community partnerships—Contribute to the progress of reconciliation, working with Indigenous partners and the community.



Indigenous community relations

Community Relations

During this academic year, our teams made many community connections. The Indigenous Community Relations team hosted an Indigenous Post-Secondary Funders Informational Session in January and February. Funders were able to learn what programs, resources and initiatives Sask Polytech has to offer Indigenous students from their communities who may be interested in our programs.

Many Indigenous communities within Saskatchewan have travelled to have campus tours with the team. Dozens of high school visits and presentations across the province have been completed this academic year to date. Booths at career fairs and participation at youth conference, Treaty 4 days and more, provided opportunities for us to share the different programs and resources Sask Polytech has to offer Indigenous students.

We also partnered with the School of Continuing Education to support their Green Building Awareness training for Indigenous people and communities including Sturgeon Lake, One Arrow, Ahtahkakoop, Mistawasis and Montreal Lake First Nations.

Honouring miyo wâhkôhtowin powwow

Sask Polytech hosted its second powwow to honour miyo wâhkôhtowin at Prince Albert campus. Powwows are a central aspect of Indigenous culture and provide an opportunity to celebrate traditions, showcase talent and bring people together in a spirit of unity and friendship. By hosting this powwow, Sask Polytech continues to demonstrate its commitment to miyo wâhkôhtowin, promoting diversity and inclusivity on its campuses and expressing the positive value and richness of experience that stems from interconnectedness and relationships.



Community engagement and outreach

The role of Sask Polytech's Indigenous community liaison is to build community awareness among the Indigenous community, external agencies and businesses about the Indigenous Student Success Strategy as well as Sask Polytech's commitment to Indigenous student success. The work includes developing, maintaining and coordinating relationships and communications with Indigenous organizations that sponsor students to attend Sask Polytech.

An important function is leading the development of the Indigenous student recruitment activities plan for Sask Polytech and work with Sask Polytech's Advancement division to grow an active Indigenous alumni group.

Indigenous student success coaches

Indigenous support coaches are aimed at promoting a positive Indigenous student experience by supporting the Indigenous student success strategy on increasing Indigenous student enrollment and retention. To achieve this, they will prepare perspective Indigenous student for post-secondary by:

- Supporting post-secondary transition programs for Indigenous students based on a clear understanding of education needs
- Being the first point of contact for information and advising future students, counsellors, teachers, parents, external community partners and the public
- Extending invitations to new students to orientation and other events and the planning, implementation, coordination and evaluation of major recruitment events such as selected high school visits, presentations and workshops, guidance counsellor workshops
- Meeting with high schools and adult basic education programs that have a high population of Indigenous students and making classroom presentations
- Advancing reconciliation

Indigenous Strategy funded applications

The fee to apply for admission to Sask Polytech may be waived for Indigenous students based on need. This is intended to remove the financial barrier to apply for admission to Sask Polytech and increase program participation rates. 329 applications were funded in 2023-24.

SGL driving program

Driver training is provided to students enrolled in the Sask Polytech Literacy and Adult Basic Education programs in Saskatoon. The program runs in May and June.

With funding from SGI.

Expenditures

SUMMARY OF EXPENDITURES – 2023-24	
Salaries and benefits	\$ 1,282,100.28
Materials and supplies	\$ 94,649.92
Services	\$ 105,943.65
Travel and PD	\$ 53,539.66
Total	\$ 1,536,233.51

Giving

Sask Polytech received nine gifts totaling \$199,500 designated to the Indigenous Student Success Strategy. The generous support of donors and community partners contributed to meeting strategy goals: hóʔa—welcome, ombi-ah`—inspire, mnihéya—empower, and heca—belong. Their generosity provided direct financial supports to Indigenous students and enabled students to participate in fun, cultural activities as a community. Donors also celebrated Indigenous student successes, by supporting the Honour Ceremony and the Indigenous Role Model Calendar. By supporting programming that elevates Indigenous student success donors honour the hard work and achievements of Indigenous students and share in the future success of Indigenous students at Sask Polytech.

Scholarships, awards and bursaries

Sask Polytech disbursed 325 scholarships and awards valued at \$436,828.50 to Indigenous students. Sask Polytech also disbursed \$22,000 through a donor-supported Indigenous Strategy Emergency Bursary, which provides up to \$1,000 in emergency funds to meet urgent need for essentials like food, shelter, medicine, and unanticipated costs related to being in school.

Through the Government of Saskatchewan Innovation and Opportunity Scholarship program, Sask Polytech accessed two student emergency bursaries which provided short-term financial assistance to students. A total of \$45,450 was disbursed to Indigenous students from the program as follows:

- Valued at \$500 each, a total of \$17,500 was disbursed.
- Valued to a maximum of \$2,500, a total of \$27,950 was disbursed.

The Give Back Collection, a new initiative at Sask Polytech campus stores has featured original artwork by Dakota artist, Chantel Yuzicappi from Standing Buffalo First Nation, Treaty 4 Territory. 25% of all proceeds are given back to the Saskatchewan Polytechnic Indigenous Student Emergency Bursary, which provides funds for Indigenous students to meet urgent needs for essentials like food, and housing. The amount raised by the Sask Polytech Campus store with the Give Back Collection and the Orange Shirt Day t-shirts as of May 2024 was \$17,801.

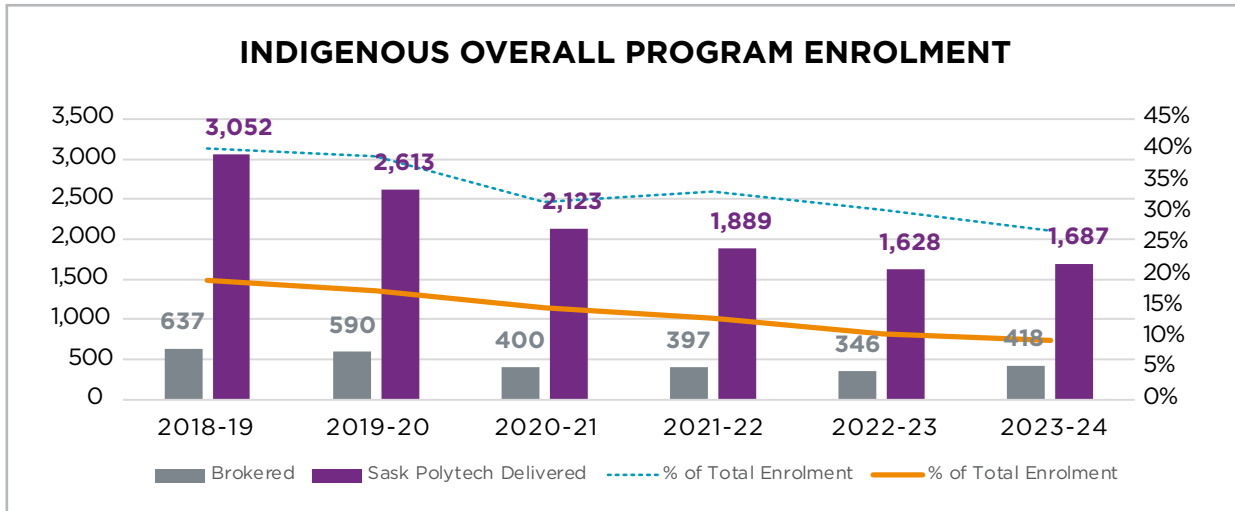
Detail of targeted and actual output and outcome success measures

Sask Polytech has identified outcomes to monitor as the Indigenous Student Success Strategy is implemented. These outcomes focus on increasing Indigenous student enrolment, retention and graduation.

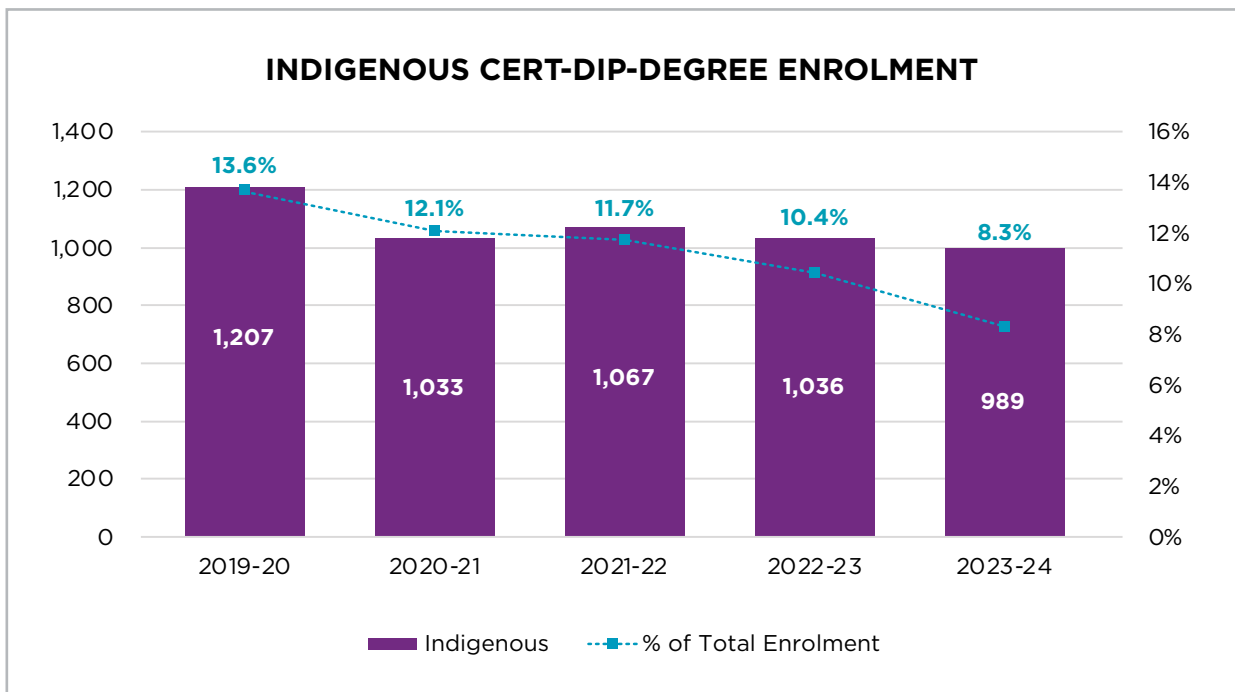
Outcomes and success are measured through the Indigenous balanced report card. The report card will be reviewed, updated and monitored over the course of this strategy (2024–2029).

Indigenous student enrolment, participation and graduation rates

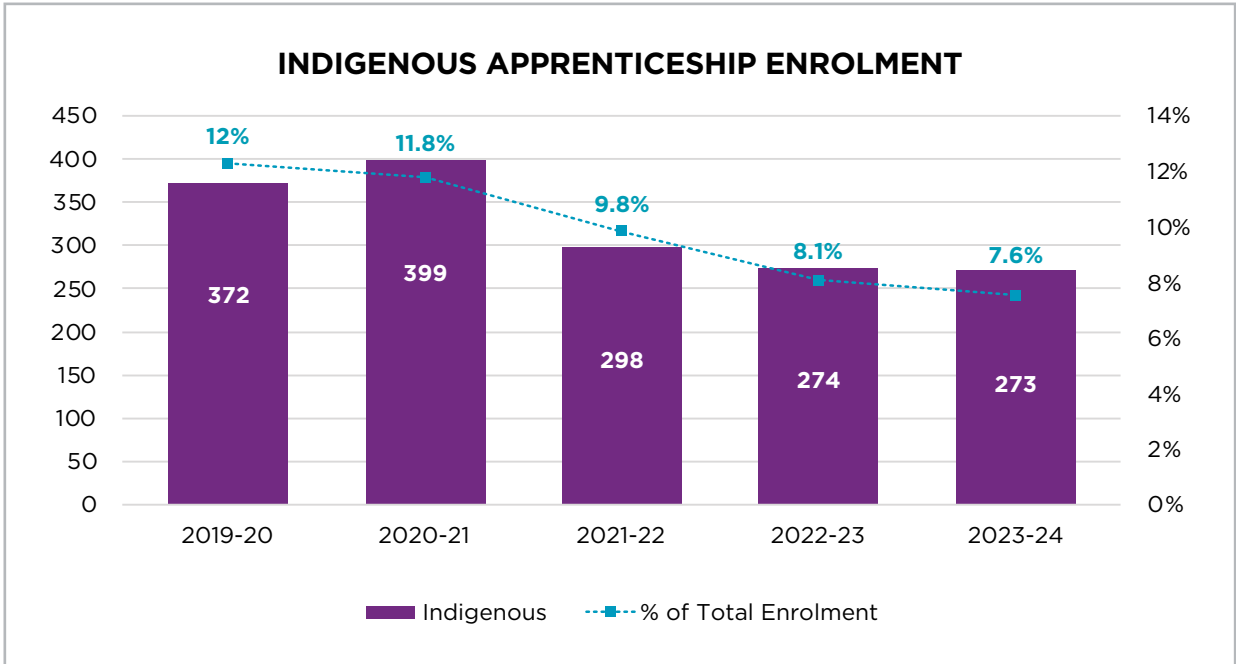
Indigenous student enrolment includes students who self-declare as Indigenous. Indigenous student enrolment, with a total of 1,687 students in 2023-24 makes up 10 per cent of enrolment in Sask Polytech delivered programs.



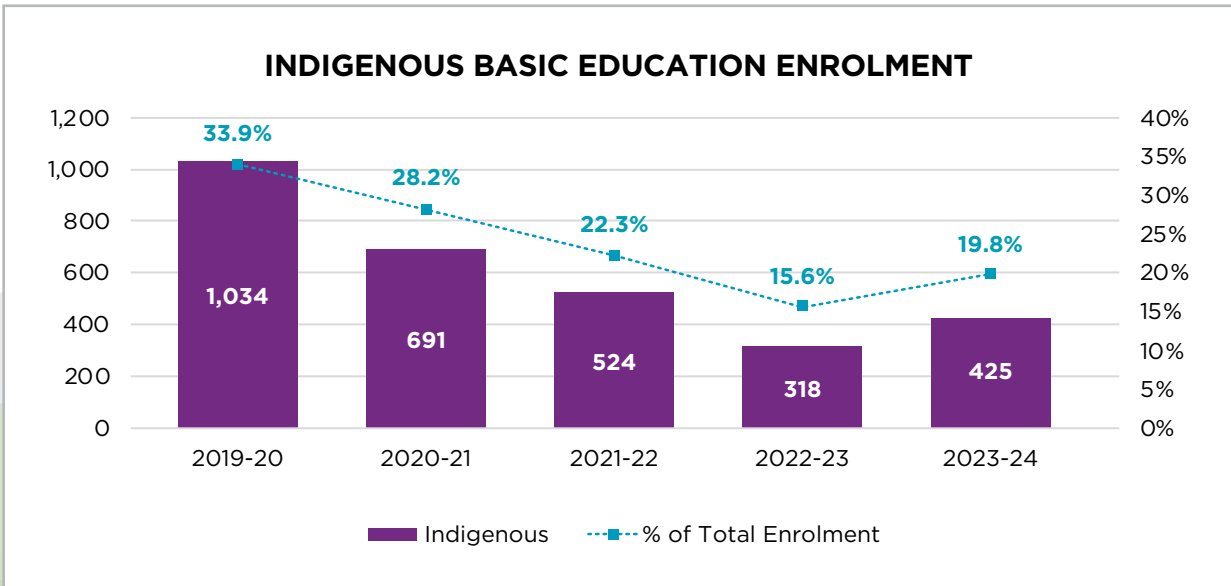
Over the five-year period 2019–2024, the percentage of Indigenous students in certificate, degree and diploma programs has averaged 11 per cent of total enrolment.



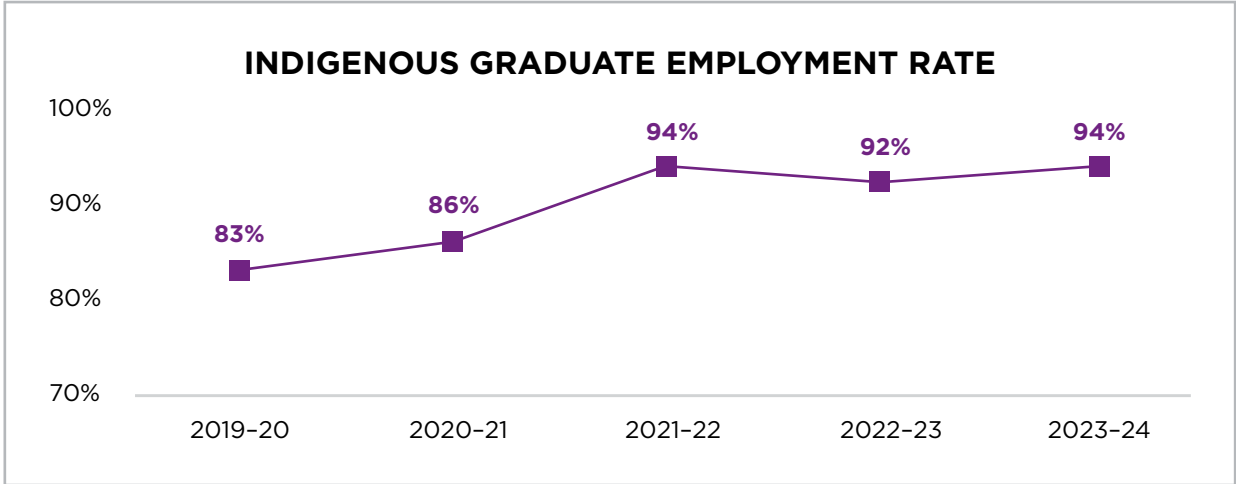
Over the five-year period 2019–2024, the percentage of Indigenous students taking apprenticeship training has averaged 10 per cent of total enrolment. Sask Polytech delivers the in-school portion of apprenticeship training on behalf of the Saskatchewan Apprenticeship and Trade Certification Commission (SATCC). All apprenticeship training is scheduled by the SATCC.



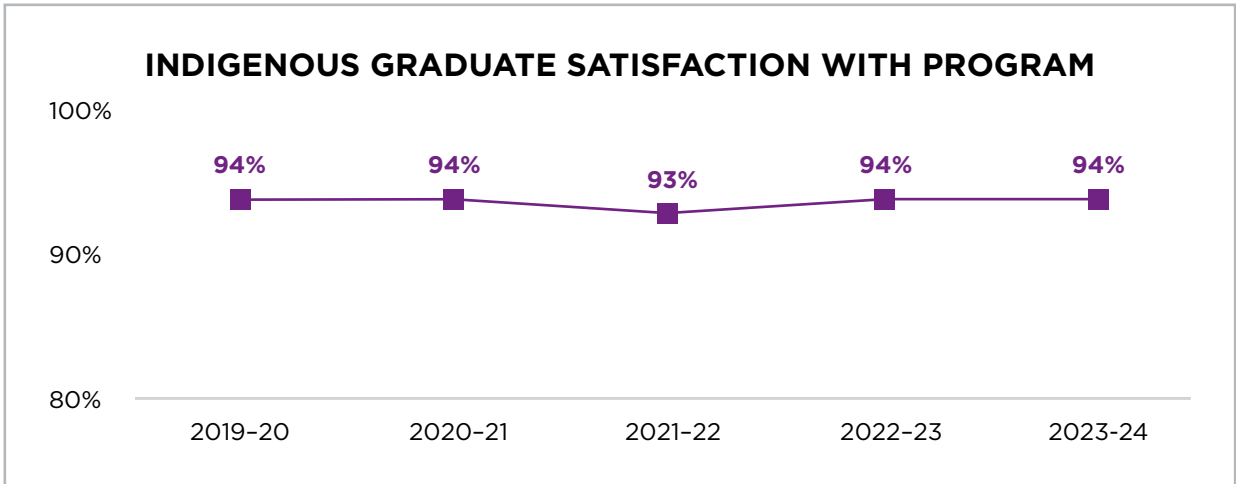
The number of Indigenous students taking basic education has increased in the 2023-24 academic year.



Sask Polytech graduate follow-up survey results show the Indigenous graduate employment rate is 94 per cent; comparable to Sask Polytech's overall graduate employment which is 96 per cent.



The Indigenous graduate satisfaction rate is 94 per cent. This is in line with Sask Polytech's overall graduate employment which is also at 94 per cent.



Sask Polytech student data is compiled annually in mid-September for the preceding academic year; July 1 to June 30. The exception is the graduate follow-up survey. The reported results are based on the 2023-2024 graduate follow-up survey of 2022-2023 graduates from Sask Polytech-delivered programs administered six to 12 months following graduation.



