For the past five years Partners In Research has managed the Sanofi Biogenius Canada (SBC) biotechnology competition. Providing high school students with an unparalleled experiential learning opportunity, by offering participants the chance to refine skills that cannot be learned inside a classroom. The SBC program has nurtured young minds and fostered great talent for the future, challenging high school students to carry out groundbreaking research projects in the field of biotechnology. Students can arrange to conduct their SBC research project as a co-op placement and earn secondary school credit for doing so. Participants are permitted to do research on their own time including afterschool or on weekends. In past years, participants’ elite research projects range in topic, from cancer and Alzheimer’s disease, to agriculture and the environment.

Participate: The SBC competition aims to inspire young scientists by exposing them to the biotechnology field. Competitors work with local mentors, giving students hands-on research experience in a professional laboratory setting. Working under the mentorship of a distinguished professional, participants are given access to facilities and technologies usually out of the reach of high school students. The SBC competition provides one of the most authentic learning experiences available to high school students by exposing them to the groundbreaking research being done by Canadian experts, bridging the gap between what students are taught in the classroom and the application of those skills.

Reflect: The SBC competition exposes students to the vastness of the biotechnology field. Participants experience what it is like to work in research and have the opportunity to discuss potential career paths and the barriers they face along the way with their mentor. Participants of the SBC competition are able to reflect upon what they have learned and observed while working with their mentor. Used in conjunction with what they know about their own interests and skills, students are able to explore possible career opportunities and develop a plan for achieving their goals.

Apply: The SBC competition adds context to what students are learning in the classroom and influences their future career/life planning. Since its conception more than 5000 Canadian students have taken part in the SBC competition, of these 84% say their SBC experience helped determine their field of study or career plan and 74% of participants have gone on to pursue biotechnology-related education or professions.