

TRANSFORMING THE SOUTH AFRICAN SCIENTIFIC MILIEU

The South African Sugarcane Research Institute (SASRI) is committed to the principles of redress, equal opportunity for all South Africans and the creation of an internationally competitive science and technology economy.

Research Internship Programme

As part of this commitment, SASRI has since 2006 engaged actively, through the Agricultural Sector Education and Training Authority (AgriSETA), in the learnership programme of the Department of Labour and has hosted numerous research internships since that time. More recently, SASRI has commenced participating in the internship programme offered by the Department of Science and Technology, which is managed by the National Research Foundation (NRF). For example, in 2017, SASRI is hosting 16 research interns, many of whom are expected to either progress to post-graduate studies at SASRI or secure permanent employment at SASRI or elsewhere.

SASRI regards this engagement as a classic win-win arrangement. The sugar industry benefits from the increased manpower provided by these government-funded internship programmes. The interns participate in formally approved projects within SASRI's programme of work, all of which are directed at promoting the sustainability of the South African sugar industry through research and development.

The interns are afforded the opportunity to further their studies and gain experience at a leading national commercial research establishment. The success of the interns hosted by SASRI has been facilitated by the standards of excellence in science and technology research and development espoused by the institute and its scientific staff.

SASRI's internship programme for candidates with a diploma or degree in the biological and agricultural sciences focusses on optimising sugarcane production. Interns may be engaged in a variety of disciplines, including microbiology, biotechnology, pathology, entomology, geographic information systems, analytical chemistry or safety and environmental health.

Initially, participants are offered a one-year contract, which may be extended if warranted by the project needs and depending on the performance of the intern and the availability of funding. There are opportunities for further studies for students who excel and contribute significantly to the institute's outcomes. After a two-year internship, students may be considered for the post-graduate student programme.

Master's student (plant breeding) Tondani Mishasha examining germinated seedlings in the SASRI Plant Breeding Glasshouse.



In concert with mechanisms of the national Departments of Labour, Science and Technology and Trade and Industry, SASRI and its scientists also strive to contribute to the science and technology base of South Africa.

Post-graduate Programme

SASRI hosts a dynamic post-graduate programme on the SASRI campus in Mount Edgecombe to promote innovation in South African sugarcane agriculture. As part of this highly productive research initiative, the institute participates in the NRF Professional Development Programme which facilitates the placement of recent Masters and Doctoral graduates in industry to gain practical work experience in applied research. Research is conducted under the supervision of SASRI scientists who are affiliated with several leading South African universities, including the University of KwaZulu-Natal, University of Pretoria, University of the Free State, University of the Witwatersrand and Stellenbosch University.

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science and technology base of South Africa. For example, for the period 2000 to date, SASRI scientists have supervised the research of 51 post-graduate students (40 MSc, 11 PhD), a number of whom now occupy leadership positions in the South African science and technology economy. Of this group of graduates, 39 (77%) are from designated South African population groups, while 22 (43%) are female. In the same period, SASRI scientists have published in excess of 129 scientific articles in journals accredited by the Institute for Scientific Information (ISI), thereby elevating the international profile of SASRI and the industry it serves.

