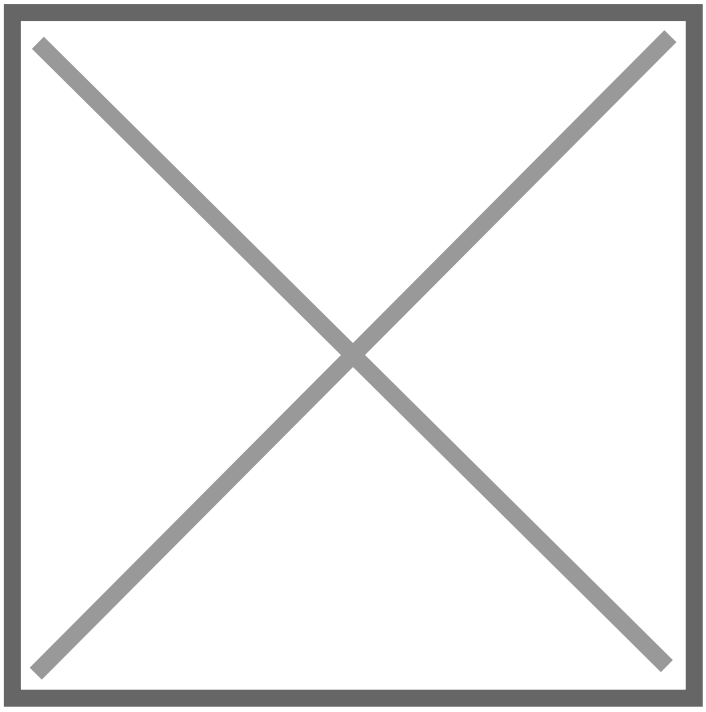
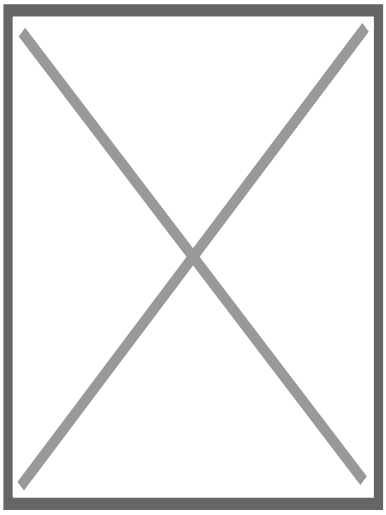
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"LCRA will impart advanced knowledge on clinical research"

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"LCRA will impart advanced knowledge on clinical research"



-Sudhir Pai, managing director, Lotus Clinical Research Academy (LCRA)

The number of biotech institutions is growing in India. The number of people passing out of the institutes is high. Yet, the industry is not able to find the right candidates. The most common reason cited is that the students passing out are not having industry orientation. The problem gets compounded further due to the diverse nature of the industry. The industry cuts across various sectors like the biopharma, bioagri, bioinformatics, bioindustrial and the bioservices, which call for different skill sets. To bridge this prevailing chaos and the gap between the demand and supply, several people from the industry have started academic institutions. BioZeen is a case in point, where top executives from Sartorius quit to start academic programs to train candidates who can be fit into the industry. Now we have Lotus Clinical Research Academy that has been set up as a joint venture between one of India's leading Clinical Research Organization (CRO), Lotus Labs and India's leading biosupplier Labindia, which will address the clinical research industry's requirements.

Sudhir Pai, managing director, Lotus Clinical Research Academy Pvt Ltd (LCRA), shares with BioSpectrum about the programs that the institute has launched.

When did you set up LCRA and who are the people behind the institute?

LCRA was set up on January 15, 2007. The institute is a joint venture between Lotus Labs Pvt Ltd, Bangalore, Labindia Instruments Pvt Ltd, and a group of professionals with vast experience in the clinical research industry. The courses will commence from March.

While Lotus Labs Pvt Ltd, which is wholly owned by Actavis hf, Iceland, one of the largest generic pharmaceutical companies in the world, would take care of the analysis part of the courses like biostudies, Labindia, an ISO 9001:2000 company, which represents leading global suppliers like Perkin Elmer, Applied Biosystems, and Leica in India, will take care of the lab part of training.

What are the facilities in the institute and where is it located?

The institute has been set up in Bangalore (Koramangala) and has the state-of-the-art laboratory equipped with sophisticated instruments like High Performance Liquid Chromatography (HPLC), liquid chromatography coupled with mass spectrometry (LCMS-MS) to provide hands-on-training in the modern techniques used by the clinical research and pharmaceutical industry. LCRA has a good library with the latest collection of national and international journals, besides the ambience of an actual CRO set up.

What are the courses that you have launched?

The courses have been designed in such a way that they suit the requirements of the industry and help the trainees to master the complex procedures in the area of clinical research. Currently we have three courses. One, a certificate course in Bio Analytical Techniques (BAT). Two, a certificate course for Clinical Investigators (CI). Three, a certificate course for Clinical Research Associates (CRA).

What are the criteria for admission and is there an entrance test?

There is no entrance test for the courses. It is on first come, first serve basis. The focus of our teaching is a 50:50 mix of theory and hands-on-training in all the courses. The duration of each of the courses and the qualification required to join them are different. We will not be taking more than 10 students per batch.

BAT is a four-month fulltime course (five days a week). There will be practical assignment for the students along with the theory. The trainees will be training on HPLCs and LCMS and will be asked to develop methods and do validations.

CI is a weekend course spread over three months (eight hours per week). It will help the medical professionals with practical exposure to designing protocols, studies, monitoring, and conducting clinical trials.

CRA is a three-month fulltime course to train people to become successful clinical research associates.

As mentioned earlier, we will not be recruiting more than 10 people per batch. The BAT course will see 60 students graduating every year. The batch starts after every two months. The CI and CRA batches start once in three months and 40 students will be passing out in each course every year.

Would you facilitate placements?

For the BAT program we have tied up with four companies for campus recruitment, which is done after two months of the progress of the course. The course fee for this program is Rs 1.75 lakh excluding the service tax. The student has to initially pay Rs 1 lakh plus taxes. And in case, the trainees get through the campus recruitment process, they would not have to pay the balance Rs 75,000. The recruiter pays the balance 75,000 to LCRA. In case, the trainee gets selected by Lotus Labs Pvt Ltd, the entire fee would be refunded, but the person has to work for two years.