Ontario’s first comprehensive applied research partnership with a major Canadian grocery chain, Sobeys Inc. and its Compliments brand, is situated in George Brown College’s Hospitality and Culinary Arts Program. The Compliments Culinary Centre has conceptualized new products, developed and tested consumer-friendly recipes, and conducted multi-sensory product evaluations and trends research since Sobeys Inc. re-launched its Compliments private label brand three years ago.

The Compliments Culinary Centre supplements Sobeys’ test kitchen facilities in continuously expanding and enhancing Compliments’ market-segmented food sub-brands. Among these are Compliments Sensations, which offers everyday affordable indulgence with superior quality food products that are innovative and exclusive, and the newly introduced Compliments Junior Disney, with healthier and great-tasting ingredients in products designed specifically for children aged 3 – 12.

As a key partner in developing product concepts for the private label brand, the Compliments Culinary Centre also regularly recruits the College’s Chef School students to panels of 50 to 60 participants for multi-sensory evaluations of new products before launch, providing both educational benefits to students and relevant data to Sobeys Inc. The Centre develops recipes that simplify daily meal making, while literature reviews and field testing identify or confirm key food trends – from the introduction of ethnic traditions in product lineups to trends toward smaller portions and less meat. Guided by its food scientist and director Winnie Chiu and resident chef James Smith, the George Brown Compliments Culinary Centre will also play a prominent role in Sobeys Inc.’s innovation in the use of interactive media to assist Canadian consumers in shopping and meal preparation.