

CAREER OF THE WEEK: Chemical Engineer

What does a chemical engineer do?

Chemical engineering involves converting raw materials into a wide variety of products we use every day, such as foods and beverages, cosmetics and cleaning products, and oil and gas. Chemical engineers are responsible for the industrial processes required to make these products hence they are also known as process engineers. Generally chemical engineers either work in the design, manufacture and operation of plants and machinery or the development of new products and technologies.



Chemical engineers work for a variety of employers, such as chemical production companies (for example pharmaceuticals, construction, petrochemicals, food processing, electronics, plastics and polymer manufacturers), the water treatment industry, and the environmental health and safety industries.

The latest innovations developed by chemical engineers include developments in new technologies such as fuel cells, hydrogen power and nanotechnology. Examples of these products are the ultra-strong fabrics used in the automotive industry, compatible materials for implants in medicine, and electronics for military applications.

What can I expect to earn as a chemical engineer?

Starting salaries for graduates are usually around £25,000 to £30,000 per annum, rising to around £54,000 with experience. Senior chartered chemical engineers can earn more than £80,000 per annum.

What subjects should I study to become a chemical engineer?

You will need to have studied qualifications in mathematics and science, particularly chemistry.

How can I start my career as a chemical engineer?

You can become a chemical engineer through a university course, an apprenticeship, or working in the sector and training on the job. From university you will normally need a degree or postgraduate qualification in chemistry, chemical engineering, process engineering, or similar. You may be able to do a postgraduate conversion course if you have a degree in a related area like engineering, chemistry or polymer science.

You may be able to do a science industry process engineer degree apprenticeship. You could also start as a chemical engineering technician and train on the job to qualify as a chemical engineer.

To find local education and training opportunities that could lead to a career as a chemical engineer, visit our partner website www.logonmoveon.co.uk

Other useful websites to find out more about a career as a chemical engineer:

The Institution of Chemical Engineers <https://www.icheme.org/>

The Engineering Council <https://www.engc.org.uk/>

Women into Manufacturing and Engineering <https://greenporthull.co.uk/jobs-training/women-into-manufacturing-and-engineering>

Explore chemical engineering <https://www.ucas.com/explore/subjects/chemical-engineering>

National Careers Service <https://nationalcareers.service.gov.uk/job-profiles/chemical-engineer>



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