

Careers in Medical and Pharmaceutical Chemistry

Guidance for school students in the U.K.

What careers are offered in chemistry?

This document cannot cover all careers in chemistry. The links below focus more on chemical careers in the medical and pharmaceutical industries but offer leads to other industries. Even these call on a variety of different skills, so a career in chemistry is not limited to just one type of person.

Career Stepping Stones

Careers in chemistry also provide opportunities for change, as your interests and employment needs change during your working life, alongside developing knowledge and technology. Some of the jobs which will be needed in 10 or 20 years' time do not even exist yet, so you can't know where your career may take you. Many people will start in one area and this may lead them into a variety of different jobs over their working lifetime.

This means that you can choose a path into chemistry from school, college or university without having to worry that you have made a restrictive career choice for your whole life. Even if you decide to leave the subject completely, the high-level skills you have gained there can enhance your CV for other job applications.

However, because of the required technical training, it is easier to move your career away from a science job into other areas than the other way around.

I don't know what I want for my tea next Tuesday. How can I decide on a lifetime career?

It is not unusual to be unsure about what to do after you finish school. If you are attracted by a particular type of job (the website links below give some examples) you can then find out what qualifications are needed for it.

Another approach is to think about your own interests and needs, then find out what careers can meet those needs. For example, you could ask yourself:

What do I enjoy?	What do I want to do after school?	What do I want from a job?
Design	Employment	Money
Science	Apprenticeship	People
Reading	Further academic study	Interesting work
Creating	Vocational Training	Excitement
Team activities	Get away from home	Travel
Solo activities	Nothing	Respect of other people
People	Don't know	Self-respect
Don't know		Don't know

There are no "wrong" answers and there can be many other things on your own list. You may go on asking these questions at different times throughout your life, and your answers may change as time passes. This is just one way to think about the unknown world after school.

Hint: Schools can only teach a few "platform" subjects compared to the variety of jobs in a given field. If a career or job interests you, don't worry that you won't be able to do it just because it doesn't match your school curriculum. Whatever route you take into the workplace, a good employer will always provide on-going support to make sure you are properly trained to do the job.

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Some useful links

The following websites offer useful information in different formats. They may overlap, or lead to other pages, so the more pages you look at, the more you will get a feel for the breadth of available information.

Chemistry

The Royal Society of Chemistry has some clear pages on different careers in chemistry and the routes into them:

<https://edu.rsc.org/future-in-chemistry/career-options>

The Prospects and the Royal Society of Chemistry websites give examples of careers in medicinal and pharmaceutical chemistry (and many other chemistry careers on linked pages):

<https://www.prospects.ac.uk/job-profiles/medicinal-chemist>

<https://edu.rsc.org/job-profiles/medicinal-chemist/4013025.article>

[Associate scientist, pharmaceuticals](#) | [Job profile](#) | [RSC Education](#)

The UK Government National Careers Service gives a summary of routes into Chemistry and career opportunities:

[Chemist](#) | [Explore careers](#) | [National Careers Service](#)

The UCAS website offers some diverse careers options. Beyond the link below, the UCAS website provides information about chemists but the home page provides huge amounts of information about careers, academic institutions, courses, and ratings:

[Chemical Scientists](#) | [Career profile](#) | [UCAS](#)

Target Jobs has a page describing Research Chemistry (Target Careers also describes broader careers in chemistry):

[Research chemist: job description \(targetjobs.co.uk\)](#)

Individual university websites will also show what careers their students enter after graduating.

Choices at 16+

Science Experience: British Science Association Crest Awards for 16+ projects (with a £20 submission fee):

<https://www.crestawards.org/crest-gold>

Science Experience: Nuffield Research Placements for 16+:

<http://www.nuffieldfoundation.org/nuffield-research-placements>

In2science Year 12 In2STEM programme (website also offers other science experience events):

<https://in2scienceuk.org/students/schools>

The Francis Crick Institute offers some work experience opportunities to local students in Camden, London:

<https://www.crick.ac.uk/careers-study/students/work-experience>

Choices at 18+

UCAS Website:

<https://www.ucas.com/>

Apprenticeships: Information and Examples

<https://www.notgoingtouni.co.uk>

Broad range information & guidance on academic, apprenticeships and vocational opportunities

<https://www.careerpilot.org.uk/>

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