Careers in Chemistry

What Can You Do with a Degree in Chemistry?

10 Great Careers in Chemistry

By [Anne Marie Helmenstine, Ph.D.](http://chemistry.about.com/bio/Anne-Marie-Helmenstine-Ph-D-7815.htm)

**Ads:**

There are lots of reasons to get a degree in chemistry. You might study chemistry because you have a passion for science, love doing experiments and working in a lab, or want to perfect your analytical and communication skills. A degree in chemistry opens doors to [many careers](http://chemistry.about.com/cs/5/f/blcareers.htm), not just as a chemist!

**1. Career in Medicine**

[](http://0.tqn.com/d/chemistry/1/0/5/O/2/146593644.jpg)

*Cultura Science/Rafe Swan, Getty Images*

One of the best undergraduate degrees for medical or dental school is chemistry. You'll take biology and physics classes while pursuing a chemistry degree, which puts you in a great position to excel at the MCAT or other entrance exams. Many med school students say chemistry is the most challenging of the subjects they needed to master, so taking courses in college prepares you for the rigors of medical school and teaches how to be systematic and analytical when you practice medicine.

**2. Career in Engineering**

[](http://0.tqn.com/d/chemistry/1/0/S/n/1/mechanical-engineer.jpg)

*Lester Lefkowitz, Getty Images*

Many students get an undergraduate degree in chemistry to pursue a master's degree in engineering, particularly chemical engineering. Engineers are highly employable, get to travel, are well-compensated, and have excellent job security and benefits. An undergraduate degree in chemistry offers in-depth coverage of analytical methods, scientific principles, and chemistry concepts that translate well into advanced studies in process engineering, materials, etc.

**3. Career in Research**

[](http://0.tqn.com/d/chemistry/1/0/5/b/chemist.jpg)

*Ryan McVay, Getty Images*

A bachelor's degree in chemistry positions you perfectly for a career in research because it exposes you to key lab techniques and analytical methods, teaches you how to conduct and report research, and integrates all of the sciences, not just chemistry. You can get a job as a technician right out of college or use a chemistry degree as a stepping stone to advanced studies in chemical research, biotechnology, nanotechnology, materials, physics, biology, or really any science.

**4. Career in Business or Management**

[](http://0.tqn.com/d/chemistry/1/0/A/O/2/480146135.jpg)

*Sylvain Sonnet, Getty Images*

A chemistry or engineering degree works wonders with an MBA, opening doors into management of labs, engineering firms, and industry. Chemists with a nose for business may start their own companies or work as sales representatives or technicians for instrument companies, consulting firms, or pharmaceutical companies. The science/business combo is extremely employable and powerful.

**5. Teaching**

[](http://0.tqn.com/d/chemistry/1/0/8/O/2/102760313.jpg)

*Tetra Images, Getty Images*

 A chemistry degree opens doors to teaching college, high school, middle school, and elementary school. You'll need a masters or doctoral degree to teach college. Elementary and secondary teachers need a bachelor's degree plus courses and certification in education.

**6. Technical Writer**

[](http://0.tqn.com/d/chemistry/1/0/9/O/2/466573631.jpg)

*J.P. Nodier, Getty Images*

Technical writers can work on manuals, patents, news media, and research proposals. Remember all those lab reports you slaved over and how hard you worked at communicating complex science concepts to friends in other fields? A degree in chemistry hones the organizational and writing skills needed for a technical writing career path. A chemistry major covers all the bases of science, since you take courses in biology and physics in addition to chemistry.

**7. Lawyer or Legal Assistant**

[](http://0.tqn.com/d/chemistry/1/0/7/O/2/91107036.jpg)

*Tim Klein, Getty Images*

Chemistry majors often proceed to law school. Many pursue patent law, although environmental law is also very big.

**8. Veterinarian or Vet Assistant**

[](http://0.tqn.com/d/chemistry/1/0/B/O/2/462754715.jpg)

*Arne Pastoor, Getty Images*

It takes a lot of chemistry know-how to succeed in the veterinary field, beyond what most doctors require. The entrance exams for veterinary school emphasize organic chemistry and biochemistry, so a chemistry degree is a superior pre-vet major.

**9. Software Designer**

[](http://0.tqn.com/d/chemistry/1/0/C/O/2/AB08894.jpg)

*Lester Lefkowitz, Getty Images*

In addition to spending time in a lab, chemistry majors work on computers, both using and writing programs to help with calculations. An undergraduate degree in chemistry can be the springboard for advanced studies in computer science or programming. Or, you may be in a position to design software, models, or simulations straight out of school, depending on your skills.

**10. Management Positions**

[](http://0.tqn.com/d/chemistry/1/0/D/O/2/475089161.jpg)

*Steve Debenport, Getty Images*

Many graduates with chemistry and other science degrees don't work in science, but take positions in retail, at grocery stores, in restaurants, in family businesses, or any of a host of other careers. The college degree helps graduates rise to management positions. Chemistry majors are detail-oriented and precise. Typically, they are hard-working, work well as part of a team, and know how to manage their time. A chemistry degree can help prepare you to succeed in any business venture!