

Chemist

Analyse, formulate and improve materials for industry, government or a research lab.

TYPICAL PAY

\$80,000

a year, full time

PAY RANGE

\$50k to \$137k

starting to experienced

TIME TO QUALIFY

4 to 6 years

after high school

DEMAND

Moderate

job outlook

LICENCE NEEDED

No

anyone can do it

WHERE YOU WORK

**Industrial labs, testing labs,
refineries and mines, government...**

How you get there

- 1 High school** Grades 11 and 12
Chemistry, calculus and physics. Chemistry programs will not admit you without senior chemistry and math.
- 2 Bachelor of Science in chemistry** 4 years
Four years split between organic, analytical, physical and inorganic chemistry, with heavy lab hours. Take a co-op stream if your school has one.
- 3 First lab job** 1 to 2 years
Analytical or quality control work. Expect to spend a year learning the instruments and the paperwork that goes with them.
- 4 Master's or PhD, if you want research** 2 to 6 years
Needed to design chemistry rather than run it. Funded through assistantships.
- 5 Register as a Professional Chemist, if you are in a province that offers it** After about 2 years of work
Alberta and British Columbia both grant the title after a degree plus supervised experience.

Pros and cons

- + A four-year degree is genuinely employable on its own
- + Jobs in every province, not just big cities
- + Clear path from analyst to senior chemist to lab manager
- Entry-level testing work is repetitive and tightly scripted
- You handle hazardous material, so safety rules are constant
- Pay plateaus without a graduate degree or a move into management

Optional boosts

Instrument specialisation. Method validation and quality systems. Formulation. Process chemistry.

Good to know

A Canadian invented the pacemaker's ancestor

John Hopps, an electrical engineer at the National Research Council in Ottawa, built the first external cardiac pacemaker in 1950 while researching hypothermia. Chemistry and physics labs there still work...

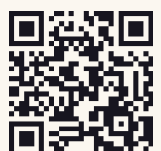
Canada gave chemistry a Nobel in 1986

John Polanyi of the University of Toronto shared the Nobel Prize in Chemistry for work on the faint infrared glow given off by molecules as they react.

Where these numbers come from

Job Bank: Chemist in Canada, wages (updated November 2025)
Chemical Institute of Canada
Association of the Chemical Profession of Alberta
Association of the Chemical Profession of British Columbia

Numbers checked September 2026. Pay figures are typical full-time annual amounts in Canadian dollars, based on Government of Canada Job Bank wage data and published salary grids. They vary by province, employer and experience. Tuition is for domestic students. Sources, links and the click-through version: <https://career.help/ca/careers/chemist>



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