

# Aquaculture Technician

Raise fish and shellfish for food. Outdoors, on the water, in a small industry the country keeps saying it wants to grow.

## TYPICAL PAY

**\$49,630**

a year, full time

## PAY RANGE

**\$36k to \$76k**

starting to experienced

## TIME TO QUALIFY

**1 to 2 years**

after high school

## DEMAND

**Moderate**

job outlook

## LICENCE NEEDED

**No**

anyone can do it

## WHERE YOU WORK

**Hatcheries, oyster and shellfish farms, net pens, research stations**

## How you get there

- 1 High school diploma** Grade 12  
Biology and chemistry are the useful ones. Being able to swim and handle a boat matters more than you would think.
- 2 Get on a farm or in a hatchery** A season  
Summer and seasonal jobs are the normal way in. Oyster farms, trout hatcheries and university research stations all hire.
- 3 Certificate or associate degree** 1 to 2 years  
Two-year aquaculture, marine technology or fisheries programs. Many are run by coastal community colleges.
- 4 Bachelor's degree, if you want to lead** 4 years  
Fisheries, aquaculture or marine biology. Needed for hatchery management, research and most government positions.
- 5 Specialize** Ongoing  
Shellfish, finfish, water quality, fish health or recirculating systems. Each one is a different kind of employer.

## Pros and cons

- + Outdoors and on the water every day
- + You can start with no debt and no degree
- + Real skills in a food industry the country wants to expand
- Pay is lower than most science and trade careers
- A lot of work is seasonal, so winter income can be thin
- Cold, wet, heavy and repetitive

## Good to know

### The country imports most of its seafood

The National Oceanic and Atmospheric Administration (NOAA) puts imported seafood at roughly 75 to 90 percent of what Americans eat. Compare that with beef at around 11 percent. That gap is the whole a...

### Small industry, valuable output

In 2023 United States aquaculture produced about 688 million pounds of seafood worth roughly \$1.6 billion. That is only about 9 percent of domestic seafood by volume but around 25 percent of th...

## Optional boosts

Coast Guard captain's license. Scuba or commercial diving. Water quality and fish health training. Hazard Analysis and Critical Control Points (HACCP) certification.

### Where these numbers come from

My Next Move: Agricultural Technicians (19-4012.00)  
National Oceanic and Atmospheric Administration Fisheries: Aquaculture  
World Aquaculture Society and its United States chapter  
University of Rhode Island, Department of Fisheries, Animal and Veterinary Sciences

Numbers checked September 2026. Pay figures are typical full-time annual amounts in United States dollars, based on Bureau of Labor Statistics wage data and published pay scales. They vary by state, employer and experience. Tuition is for in-state students at public schools unless the card says otherwise. Sources, links and the click-through version: <https://career.help/us/careers/aquaculture-technician>



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