

Laboratory Technician

Run the experiments, keep the instruments honest and record every result. The person who actually does the science at the bench.

TYPICAL PAY

\$57,510

a year, full time

PAY RANGE

\$40k to \$85k

starting to experienced

TIME TO QUALIFY

2 to 4 years

after high school

DEMAND

Moderate

job outlook

LICENCE NEEDED

No

anyone can do it

WHERE YOU WORK

**University and hospital labs,
biotech companies, environment...**

How you get there

- 1 High school** Grades 11 and 12
 Biology and chemistry above everything, plus any class that lets you use real equipment. Ask a local college lab whether they take volunteers.
- 2 Two-year or four-year degree** 2 to 4 years
 An associate degree in biotechnology or laboratory science gets you in the door. A bachelor's in biology, biochemistry or microbiology opens more of the industry jobs and is what most research labs now ask for.
- 3 Get into a lab early** During school
 Work-study in a campus lab, a summer internship or a co-op placement. Employers care far more about this than about your transcript.
- 4 First bench job** After graduation
 Usually titled research assistant, lab technician or technologist. You will spend the first six months learning one lab's procedures in detail.
- 5 Specialize** 2 to 5 years in
 Pick an instrument or a technique and become the person who runs it. That is how this job stops being entry level.

Pros and cons

- + A real science job you can reach with a two-year degree
- + Regular weekday hours in most labs
- + Skills transfer between biotech, environmental and government work
- Pay flattens out unless you specialize or move up
- University lab jobs live and die with the grant
- Repetitive work and long stretches of waiting

Good to know

It is a small field

About 82,700 people work as biological technicians in the United States. Growth is average, around 3 to 4 percent through 2034, with roughly 9,100 openings a year once you count people leaving.

The degree requirement is genuinely mixed

Asked what their job required, technicians split between a bachelor's degree, some college with no degree, and a plain high school diploma. Very few science jobs still have that range, which is why the two-yea...

Optional boosts

Molecular techniques. Cell culture. Instrument ownership. Quality systems.

Where these numbers come from

My Next Move: Biological Technicians (19-4021.00)
 O*NET OnLine: Biological Technicians
 American Society for Clinical Laboratory Science
 Austin Community College: tuition table

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/laboratory-technician>



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