

# Ten reasons to become a chemical engineer

Taken from the [ChemEng blog](#)

## 1. A growing global profession

In some countries membership of professional bodies are in decline but this is not the case for chemical engineers. The Institution of Chemical Engineers (IChemE) has 44,000 members and growing which is mirrored by other institutions around the world, indicating a thriving and like-minded global profession.

## 2. Make a difference

Some professions attract the word “vocation”. Nurses and teachers are often associated with the view that it’s not just about the money, but the satisfaction of knowing that you’ve helped someone personally and profoundly. Chemical engineers have this opportunity too – better nutrition and improved health; greater social mobility; warmth and light; protection of the environment and many other measures valued by society are the result of chemical and biochemical engineers’ hard work.

## 3. Money

Chemical engineers generally feature at the top end of high earners. Graduate salaries give dentists and doctors a run for their money with starting salaries in the UK of around £28,500. Median salaries for Chartered Chemical Engineers reach around £70,000 and are even higher for those working in certain industries, which all leads to a great quality of life.

## 4. Job choice

Undergraduates always have a tricky decision about which course to choose, and there's always a danger that the course they decide on could narrow their future job prospects. That couldn't be said of chemical engineering which opens doors to the following industries and jobs: biochemical engineering, chemicals, consultancy, education, food and drink, health, safety and environment, mining and minerals, oil and gas (exploration and production), oil refining, paper and packaging, petrochemicals, pharmaceuticals and toiletries, plastics, power generation (fossil fuels/nuclear generation or decommissioning/renewable), water, waste management. The list is endless.

## 5. Great (big) companies

Some of the world’s largest companies and biggest brands operate in the chemical and process sector. Not surprisingly, oil and gas feature heavily in the top 50 companies ranked by revenue. So too are energy companies and pharmaceutical suppliers. Impressive!

## 6. Travel and lifestyle

Chemical engineering provides some great opportunities for travel and working in different countries, facilitated by the high proportion of multinational companies operating in the sector. So if you need a work passport, choose chemical engineering – you'll have plenty of chance to work abroad throughout your career.

## 7. Recession-proof

Since the global recession in 2008, by and large, chemical engineers have retained their standard of living. In a

period when many professions have seen their salaries decline in real terms, median salaries for the chemical engineering profession have grown steadily.

## 8. On hand when it matters

In times of trouble, like natural disasters, emergency teams are on the ground as soon as possible. Once their work is over, teams of people – often volunteers – replace them to help establish vital services and infrastructure like clean water, warmth and food. It's always great to know that charities and chemical engineers are part of these invaluable teams.

## 9. Career progression

With so many large employers in the sector, there is an endless opportunity to progress your career as a chemical engineer. Even if you prefer to work for a smaller company, or on your own as a consultant, there is always an opportunity to choose your own career path. The China National Petroleum Corporation reportedly employs 1.6m people. In food, the Compass Group employs over 420,000 people. Even McDonald's, with its chemically-engineered food, employs 1.7m people. The result is a world of opportunity to move up the rungs of a very long ladder.

## 10. Diversity

Recently, IChemE achieved a first by delivering some training at Shell's Gamba site in Gabon, Africa. In addition to French-speaking Gabonese personnel, the site employed an international mix of staff including people from Europe, North and South America, the Middle East, Asia and other African countries. The young and old, senior engineers and student interns all mixed together to create a diverse team. This is not uncommon and represents the diversity of our profession.

Read more from the [ChemEng blog](#)

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