

Science and Mathematics

If you like the idea of developing new food products, testing anti-ageing serums, teaching, setting up businesses or studying the effects of pollution on marine life, then a career in science and mathematics may appeal to you.

You need to be logical, analytical, good at solving problems and accurate in your approach to work.

What areas can I work in?

The science and mathematics career area includes the wide range of careers in maths and the biological, chemical and physical sciences. It also includes materials science and food science and technology.

If you think you may also be interested in other areas of technology you may want to look at the career areas for [Engineering](#), [Computing and ICT](#) and [Health and Medicine](#) (including Medical Technology).

To see the routes to getting into each of these sectors, take a look at our [Career Pathway](#).

What kind of companies can I work for?

Science and mathematics play a part in a wide range of industries, so you could find yourself working for retail companies to local government or research and development firms.

What's the job market like?

Job prospects in this career area still look promising, especially for highly qualified scientists and technicians, as the use of new technologies and products continues to grow.

In the academic year 2021/22, the percentage of science and maths graduates in full time employment after 15 months of graduating was: Biology 47.8%; Chemistry 54.5%; Physical and geographical sciences 59%; Physics 51.3%; and Mathematics 58.3%. ¹

IT was the top destination for physics graduates, with 30% of them entering this industry, with the top job being programmers and software development professionals. For biology and chemistry graduates it was science professionals at 21.2% and 34.5% respectively. The highest percentage of physical and geographical graduates worked in business, HR and finance (19.4%), with the top job being environment professionals. ¹

In terms of salary, in 2022 physics graduates earned the highest salary 15 months after graduation at £32,609 for females, and £32,208 for males, followed by chemistry graduates at £28,826 for females and £28,893 for males. ¹

Scotland has world-class research expertise in areas that support industrial biotechnology including biology, advanced metrology, fermentation, big data, automation, and robotics. ²

A steady investment and innovation in life sciences (human health) continues to create job opportunities with 22,600 people employed in 2024. Skilled individuals are in demand with the sector aiming to grow in turnover to more than £10 billion by 2030. ³

Facts and figures

- In 2024, £847,000 of funding was awarded to the Industrial Biotechnology Innovation Centre (IBioIC) to purchase a 300-litre fermenter to be hosted at FlexBio based at Heriot-Watt University in Edinburgh. This will allow testing and scaling up of processes to industrial volumes, essential for companies to expand into the global market. ²
- Scotland plans to increase jobs in the human health sector by 117% by 2030. ³
- Scotland is home to over 150 companies delivering solutions to the drug development sector. ⁴
- In 2023, 22,000 people were in the Life Sciences sector in Scotland with the highest in City of Edinburgh (3,000) and Glasgow City (2,500), which comprised 13.6% and 11.4% of employment in this sector respectively. ⁵
- Scotland is home to the world-first industry-led £56 million Medicines Manufacturing Innovation Centre. ⁶

Want to find out more?

If you are interested in science careers you might want to visit [Destination STEM](#) which has lots of resources to explore.

Sources

¹ [What do graduates do? Prospects in association with AGCAS \(2024/25\)](#)

² [Sectors: Industrial Biotechnology](#), Scottish Development International website (July 2025)

³ [Sectors: Life Sciences \(Human Health\)](#), Scottish Development International website (July 2025)

⁴ [Life Sciences in Scotland](#) (July 2025)

⁵ Sector Briefing - Life Sciences, Scottish Government (17 June 2025)

⁶ [Health and Life Sciences Industries](#), Scottish Development International website (July 2025)