

## Chemical Plant Process Operative

Chemical plant process operatives work with the equipment and machinery that convert raw chemicals into useful products, such as dyes, fertilisers, fuels, petrochemicals and medicines.

### The Work

You could be:

- cleaning and preparing complex equipment before production starts
- measuring and adding chemical ingredients and controlling the heating and cooling systems
- monitoring the process by checking and recording meter, gauge and other instrument readings and taking samples for analysis
- checking equipment to make sure it is working properly, and reporting any faults to maintenance staff
- closing down equipment once the process is complete
- running the finished product into various containers and tanks
- in some cases packaging products and moving them by forklift truck
- working from a control room, using computers to operate, control and monitor the process
- ensuring that health and safety regulations are strictly followed.

### Pay

The figures below are only a guide. Actual pay rates may vary, depending on:

- where you work
- the size of the company or organisation you work for
- the demand for the job.

Salaries for chemical plant process operatives start around £18,000 a year, rising to around £35,000 a year. You can often earn extra through working overtime and shifts. Operatives working on more complex processes may earn higher rates of pay.

### Conditions

- You may spend time in the control room of the plant, which is normally clean, dry and well ventilated.
- At other times you may be patrolling the plant and checking the machinery.
- You will need to bend, stretch and lift while carrying out this job.
- In large plants with extensive pipework, you may have to spend time outdoors.
- Hours can vary depending on the process. Shift work is common and some workers must be on call at short notice. Most plants operate 365 days a year.
- There may be dust, dirt and fumes.
- You will have to wear protective clothing and safety glasses.
- If you work in the oil and gas industry you might have to work away from home for a few weeks or months at a time, possibly abroad.

## Getting In

- You usually enter directly as a trainee or apprentice.
- There are no set entry requirements, but employers expect a good general education and ability in English and numeracy. Some require 3-5 subjects at National 4 or 5 including Maths and science or technological subjects.
- You may have to take a general aptitude test to see if you are suited to this work.
- You should be reasonably fit.
- Certain colour vision conditions may affect entry to careers in this branch of engineering.
- Employers in the industry range from large international companies to smaller and more specialised local firms.

## What Does It Take

You need to be:

- interested in science and engineering
- very safety conscious
- accurate and methodical
- numerate, for measuring materials
- good at written and spoken communication.

You need to be able to:

- concentrate for long periods doing routine work
- pay close attention to detail
- take responsibility
- react quickly to solve problems
- stay calm under pressure
- work as part of a team.

## Training

- Training is normally on the job through an employer's training scheme or a Modern Apprenticeship.
- You would work towards SVQs at SCQF Levels 4 to 6.
- You will probably also do company training in health and safety, first aid and basic chemical processes.
- You might train to become a qualified forklift operator.

## Getting On

- With qualifications and experience, you could be promoted to jobs such as plant controller and shift supervisor.
- You may move into quality control work.

## More Information

An increasing number of jobs are now in the areas of renewable energy and waste management.

## Contacts

### **Cogent**

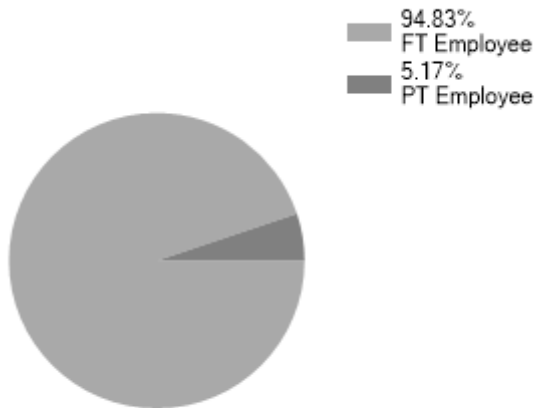
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## Statistics

Employment Status UK %

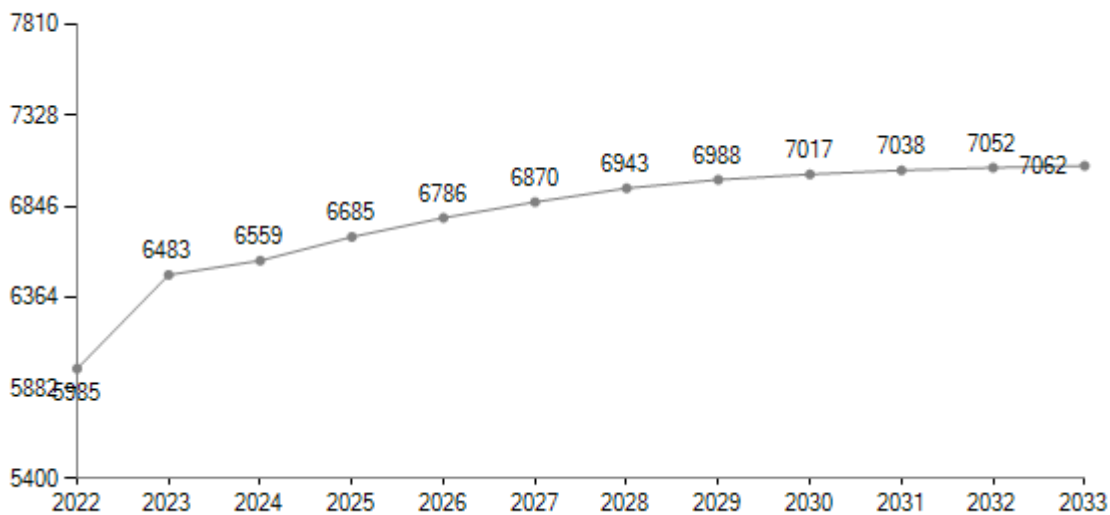


Past Unemployment - Scotland

No Claimant statistics available for Scotland.

LMI data powered by [LMI for All](#)

Predicted Employment in Scotland



LMI data powered by [Lightcast](#)