Offshore Chemist

Offshore chemists analyse samples to make sure that gas, oil and water from oil rig operations comply with operational and environmental regulations. They also use chemicals to keep oil pipes and oil rig equipment in safe working order.

The Work

You could be:

- separating a field sample collected from the oil rig into gas, water and oil
- carrying out tests to make sure that chemicals or bacteria aren't damaging equipment or the pipeline
- keeping track of how much bacteria or bugs are in the oil rig's water supply, and using a chemical called a biocide to kill them
- using buffer solutions to adjust chemicals used to treat pipes and equipment
- testing for metal content in gas samples
- making sure water samples contain minimum amounts of oil, so it can be safely disposed of overboard
- sharing your test results with the control room team, and contacting the environmental team and the offshore manager if any action needs to be taken
- training other staff members on how to take samples and test and analyse them.

Pay

Starting salaries for offshore chemists tend to be around £23,000 a year, rising to around £30,000. With experience, this can rise to between £34,000 and £45,000 a year. Experienced chemists can earn up to £60,000 a year, or more.

Conditions

- You will be based either in a laboratory onshore or at an offshore platform.
- Working hours in an onshore lab is usually 37 hours a week Monday to Friday.
- Working offshore, you would work in shift patterns, such as 12-hour shifts for 3 weeks on, and then taking 3 weeks off.
- You would wear a lab coat or other protective clothing such as gloves or a face mask.
- You may have contact with dangerous or unpleasant substances.
- Conditions on oil rigs can be noisy, stormy, cold and dirty. You would travel there by helicopter.
- When offshore you would wear protective clothing and safety equipment such as gloves, boots and a hard hat. You would live in shared accommodation.

Getting In

- Many entrants have a degree (SCQF Level 9 or 10) in chemistry or a relevant subject, such as forensic science or physical sciences. For entry you need 4 or 5 Highers, normally including Chemistry and another science subject and usually English, Maths and Chemistry at National 5. Some courses may require certain other subjects.

- You could get in with an HNC (SCQF Level 7) in Applied Sciences. You usually need Higher Biology, Chemistry or Physics with Maths or a science subject at National 5.
- Alternatively, you could apply for a post with a company and receive training on the job, studying for a qualification while you work.
- To work offshore, you must have the Basic Offshore Safety Induction and Emergency Training Certificate (BOSIET). Many people do the course at their own expense before looking for work but usually companies sponsor new employees through the course.

What Does It Take

You should be:

- practical, logical and methodical
- accurate and careful in recording results
- observant and analytical
- able to work as part of a team.

You should have:

- strong communication skills
- good problem solving skills
- an enquiring mind
- IT and maths skills to analyse data.

Training

- You would gain experience and knowledge in sampling techniques, scientific analysis and data gathering.
- You would first build up lab experience by taking ad hoc trips, working between onshore and offshore laboratory sites, and eventually working in a fixed position, where you stay at the same platform.

Getting On

After some experience in this role, you could move on to become a manager.

Contacts

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Statistics

Past Unemployment - Scotland

No Claimant statistics available for Scotland.

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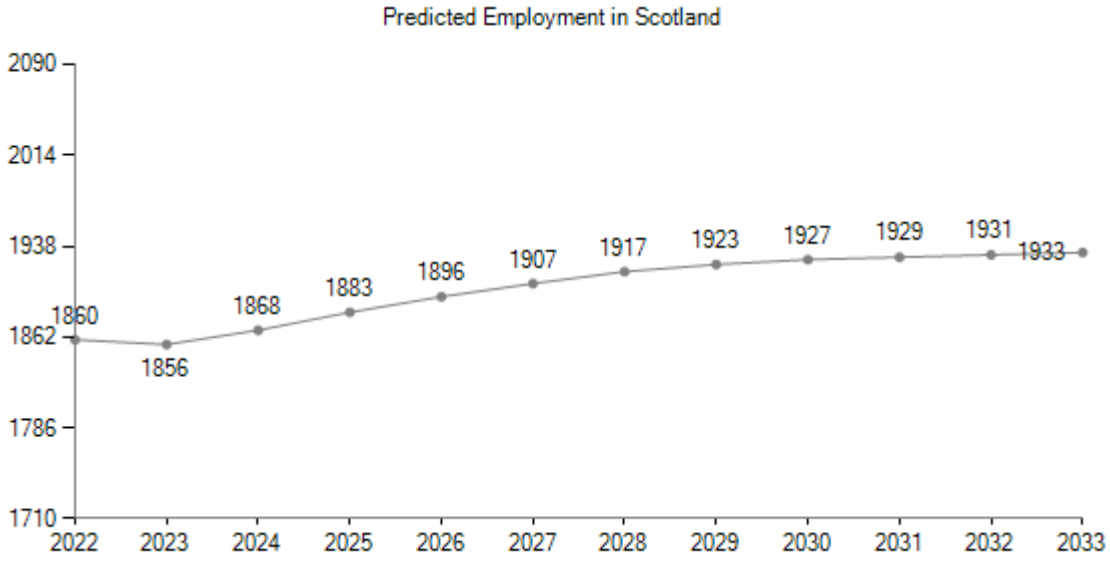

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